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# Practising Place, Performing Memory:

## *Identity Politics in an Australian Town , the 'Village in the Rainforest'*

**Thesis submitted by**

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BA (Hons) *ANU,*   MA *ANU*

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# Abstract

This anthropological study focusing on the small Australian town of Kuranda is an exploration of theoretical and philosophical issues regarding the politics of identity. It is a study of the way people constitute themselves in relation to place and construct, communicate and contest categorical identities generated within the context of a bureacratic state order and global economic and political forces. The study is not about any particular culture or sub-culture, not the European settlers, nor the Aboriginal population, but the practices of both groups at the interface of their social and political engagement. The ethnographic task was to explore the fields of sociality of people who call Kuranda home, in order to discover how they make it such, through their practices of place-*making*.

The thesis is built around a number of linked situational analyses of conflicts that have arisen in the town in connection with both public and private space. These conflicts are analysed and interpreted in terms of Victor Turner's concept of social drama. The social dramas include public performances of protest and, in turn, generate theatrical and other staged performances which allow Kuranda people to reflect on their social situations. These performances are explained as resistance practices of implacement.

The power of the bureaucratic order is felt by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. However they are differentially constituted within it. Unlike non-Aboriginal people, Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary experience of the constituting force of the state is one of total domination. These different experiences of power are expressed in the various performances of protest analysed in this thesis.

Through performance both the indigenous people and the Kuranda settlers confront and resist the discursive practices which generate the categorical identites that constrain them. Performance allows them to explore different possibilities of being and, by bringing body memory into the limelight, to interrogate discursive practices which define the limits of human experience and memory as being exclusively furnished by the human mind.

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# Statement on Sources

# Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

..................................................................        ..............................

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# Table of Contents

# Illustrations

Collection: Mark Weaver

6. Kuranda Amphitheatre Gatehouse, 1996

7. Old Stage and New Stage, Kuranda Amphitheatre, 1996

8. New Stage Under Construction, 1997

9. Kuranda Markets Sign, c. 1995

10. Kuranda Markets Banner, c. 1995

11. Kuranda Market Arcade and Market Sign, 1997

12. Market Sign, 1995

13. Shops in Main Street, Kuranda, 1995

14. Kuranda Bungy, Heritage Markets, Kuranda, 1995

15. Final Resting Place: Final Resting Place, Kuranda, 1995

16. Market Stall, Kuranda, 1995

17. Mona Mona Dancers, Laura Festival, 1997

18. Mona Mona Dancers Performing, Laura Festival, 1997

19. Mona Mona Dancers Performing, Laura Festival, 1997

20. Buskers, Main Street, Kuranda, 1997

21. Learning Language Through Dance, Kuranda Primary School, 1997

22. Aborigines - Mona Mona, 1914

Collection: John Oxley Library, Brisbane.

23. Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, Caravonica, Cairns, 1996

24. Tjapukai Dancers at the Cultural Park, 1996

25. Tjapukai Women Dancers, 1996

26. Cairns-Kuranda Skyrail, 1997

27. Buses in Kuranda, 1995

28. 'The Ark', Main Street, Kuranda, 1998

**Appendix:**

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996 Maps of Mareeba Shire and Census Collection District Boundaries;

Map Showing Land Areas Under Native Title Claim (QC 94/4) by Djabugay Peoples in the Barron Falls-Kuranda Region.

# Introduction

*The Kuranda Experience brings together as one the three greatest mainland attractions in Far North Queensland. The historic, breathtakingly spectacular Kuranda Scenic Railway. New Skyrail, the world's most beautiful and unique rainforest experience. And Tjapukai, the internationally famous, multi-award winning Aboriginal Dance Theatre. You can experience them all in one fantastic day tour for just $72 per person. The Kuranda Experience is a trilogy of the old, new and ancient, a journey through time which begins at your doorstep and ends in unforgettable memories.*

(The Kuranda Experience [tourist brochure] c. 1997)

This is an anthropological study of the politics of place. It is an exploration of how people constitute themselves in relation to place, and actively construct, communicate and contest categorical identities. The place is Kuranda, a small tourist township situated up a winding road at the top of the range from the city of Cairns in the tropical north of Australia, a place I call home. Although it may seem more like the choice of a geographer than an anthropologist, my thesis topic was initially place, rather than people, generated. It is not that I did not see a link between people and place, quite the opposite, but the people were not *given* for me in the same way as was the place. It was only after I began my research that I realised that the place was not given either! I emphasise, therefore, that my project is not a study of a localized pre-existing community. In particular, it does not fit the 'community study' genre which continues to be popular among analysts fixed on such dualities as the Durkheimian distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity, or *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.

Figure 1: Location Map

Torres Strait

Gulf of
Carpentaria

Coral Islands

Mt Carbine

Mona Mona Mission

Port Douglas

Kuranda

Cairns

Mareeba

Normanton

Mission Beach

Georgetown

Palm Island

Townsville

Mount Isa

Queensland

Rockhampton

Brisbane

Northern
Territory

Western
Australia

Queensland

Kuranda

South
Australia

New
South
Wales

Victoria

Indian Ocean

Tasman Sea

Tasmania

N

Gulf of
Carpentaria

**Locality Map**

**Figure 1**

0   25   50   75   100   125              250 km

Figure 2: Artists Impression of Kuranda Village, by Rosemarie Wirth

LEGEND

1. Original Kuranda Markets
2. Kuranda Heritage Markets
3. War Memorial
4. Park
5. Public Toilet Block
6. Kuranda Arts Co-op
7. Kuranda Village Coffee Shop
8. Old Tjapukai Dance Theatre
9. Jilli Binna
10. Corner Grocery Store
11. The Top Pub
12. The Bottom Pub
13. The ARK
14. Kuranda Railway Station
15. Kuranda Skyrail Terminal
16. Kuranda Amphitheatre
17. Entrance to Kuranda
18. Barron Falls Lookout
19. Kuranda State Primary School
20. Service Station
21. Butterfly Sanctuary
22. Police Station
23. Post Office

Kuranda
Village

Figure 2

My study is not about any particular culture or sub-culture, not the European settlers, nor the Aborigines, but the making of Kuranda as a *place*. The ethnographic task I set myself was to explore the fields of sociality of people who called Kuranda home, in order to discover how they made it such, through their practices of place-*making*.

The thesis is based on participant observation, during a total of eight months spent in the field over a period of six years, and one hundred taped semi-structured interviews, as well as extensive library and archival research, particularly with regard to historical accounts of place and people and documentation of native title and other land issues. Documentary sources also included local newspaper reports, community publications, consultants reports on planning and management, native title reports, cultural heritage surveys, minutes, by-laws and reports from the Shire Council, minutes and reports of various community organisations, such as the Kuranda Chamber of Commerce, the Association for Regional Kuranda, and the Kuranda Amphitheatre Society, documents from Aboriginal organisations, and archival material from relevant government departments.

I focus on social dramas in Kuranda which generate moments of transformation from everyday practice to performance, since it is in these transformative moments that identity politics comes to the fore. One of my key questions is how and why everyday political practice comes to be transformed into performances of cultural identity and difference. I argue that it is through the detailed examination of situated moments of

transformation from practice to performance that the *substance*  of identity politics can best be understood.

I attempt to bridge the gap between the phenomenological and the political-economy traditions in anthropological research by looking at the experiential everyday realities of embodied political practices in the context of State formations.  In particular the study focuses on issues of dispute in Kuranda regarding the planning and use of public space.

Initially, one of the fundamental aims of my study had indeed been to tackle the problem of understanding local situations as part of wider political and economic contexts.  I was, however, already suspicious of the idea of the global and the local as two separate realms (say in terms of centre and periphery, or metropolis and satellite).  Grewal and Kaplan (1994:11) note that, '...the parameters of the local and the global are often indefinite or indistinct - they are permeable constructs.  How one separates the local from the global is difficult to decide when each thoroughly infiltrates the other'.

My study, therefore, became an attempt to bridge this divide between the local and the global by drawing on both the phenomenological and the political-economy traditions in anthropological research. I examine closely everyday realities of political practice and experiences of 'being in the world' as constituted through a field of power relations and discursive practices arising within a bureaucratic state order and the operation of 'the global

ecumene' (Hannerz 1996)[1]. My focus is on the local as a practiced experience through which people negotiate memory and constitute themselves both as individuals and as collectivities in relation to place.

The core of the thesis is presented in the form of a series of case studies, focusing on key 'hot spots' of social conflict. These include, among others, the main street, the local tourist markets, an open air community performance venue, a cablecar route through a National Park and World Heritage listed area, and an Aboriginal dance theatre and cultural centre. The term 'hot spot' has been widely used with reference to areas and situations which have a concentration of crime and fear (Nasar & Fisher 1993:187). I use it simply to encapsulate the idea that contested identity and competing discourses, local, national and global, concentrate in certain places which then become the focus for certain political practices.

I should make it clear at this point that the presentation of events and issues covered in this thesis is very much a selective rendition based on my own theoretical interests. Although in my case studies I have quoted extensively in an effort to present Kuranda people's own views as fairly as possible, my own editorial hand is obviously very much present and indeed unavoidable in the overall pattern of my presentation and in determining which events to cover and which statements to include. I predict that there are some Kurandans who will object strongly to the way I have represented particular issues and will say, 'Oh she has got it all wrong'. I therefore assure these readers that I am not claiming any higher 'truth value' of my own collated version/s over theirs. My project is not to tell the 'true' story of Kuranda but to try to understand what the many and various stories about Kuranda mean in terms of how identity categories are made and how community is constructed. In other words, I am concerned with 'the processes and practices

of place making' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b:6) among the different groups of people who call Kuranda 'home'.

I acknowledge, and trace my approach to, the influence of Turner's (1996 [1957]) concept of 'social drama' and the 'extended case study method' developed under the auspices of the Manchester School of Anthropology. This method has been discussed in some detail by Van Velsen (1964; 1967) who prefers to call it 'situational analysis'. Such case studies are not simply a particular way of presenting ethnographic data, but themselves provide a means of theorising the social. They do not simply provide illustration for more general abstractions, but are 'a constituent part of the analysis' (Van Velsen 1967:140). The seeds of this type of analysis were sown by Gluckman (1971 [1940]) in his *Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand*, and grew into fruition in landmark ethnographies by Mitchell (1956) on the composition of the Yao village, and Turner (1996 [1957]) on the Ndembu. Their focus on particular cases of dispute, or rather series of cases, within the villages they chose to study, sprang from a dissatisfaction with, and provided for them a critique of, British structuralism. Yet they departed from a focus on structure only in so far as they wanted to be able to explain its irregularities. As Van Velsen(1967:141) puts it, 'We seek to relate the deviations from structural regularities to regularities of a different order, namely the interpretation of a social system in terms of conflicting norms'. This is where my analysis departs from theirs. I do not use the extended case study method, or situational analysis, in order to study the relationship between norms and actual behaviour, or the deviation from norms as a regularity of social process. My case studies are not about 'norms in conflict' (Van Velsen 1967:146), because they do not rest on any notion of norms as being *a priori*, or on structure as something given. Rather, they are about practices of place and performances of identity as themselves creative acts both constitutive, and

challenging, of structure. They are literally 'situational' analyses because they are about the practices by which people make place and thus *situate* themselves through the memory of place.

**The Study Area**

Kuranda, also known as 'the village in the rainforest', is part of the Mareeba Shire which lies to the west of Cairns (Figure 1). The Shire is generally perceived as a country or 'outback' Shire. Kuranda is in the rainforested north eastern section of the Shire (see Appendix for shire boundaries). The economy of the shire, which has an area of 52,585 square kilometres and a population of approximately 17,500, is predominantly based on primary industry - beef and dairy cattle, tobacco, sugar, fruit and vegetables, with orchard crops including mangoes, avocados and lychees, and timber and mining[2]. Although tourism has had little effect on the general economy of the Shire, it has, as we shall see, had a major impact in Kuranda and this is envisaged as increasing in the future, particularly given the proximity of the town to the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area[3].

In terms of the population, the first categorical distinction to be noted is that between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Non-Aboriginal residents of the Kuranda area tend, in turn, to categorise themselves chronologically, according to their length of residence in the area. Firstly, there are the early settlers and their descendants - families who have lived in the area since the beginning of this century. Then there are the people who moved into the Kuranda region during the nineteen sixties, seventies and eighties, mostly from urban areas in the south of Australia, which Queenslanders refer to as 'down south', in search of an alternative lifestyle. Thirdly, there are the more recently arrived residents who moved to Kuranda as a result of development in Cairns and the tourist boom during the 1980s. For some of these people,

Kuranda is merely a dormitory suburb of Cairns. They work, and play, in Cairns and tend not to become involved in Kuranda activities. Other newcomers, however, particularly those who own or work in businesses in Kuranda, have become big players in village politics.

The Aboriginal population is also not homogenous. One of the ways Aboriginal people categorise themselves, and are categorised by others, is according to whether they are 'traditionals', that is, from the tribe of the Kuranda area known as Djabugay[4], or 'historicals', people displaced from their own tribal territories during the days of forced removal of Aborigines to government reserves and missions. These terms appear to be coming into use quite widely in Queensland and elsewhere in Australia. This usage can be linked to contemporary land rights discourse as expressed in the *Aboriginal Land Act* 1991 (Qld) and the *Native Title Act* 1993 (Cwlth) which makes a distinction between traditional and historical association with land[5], and has been raised as a factor in a number of land disputes among Aboriginal people in Kuranda and elsewhere (see Finlayson 1997; Martin 1997; and MacDonald 1997).

I stress here that although I use the terms Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal in this study and indeed do compare and contrast Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal responses to particular issues, I do not premise this study on any assumed given cultural differences between Aborigines and non-Aborigines. In other words, my project is not a culturalist exploration of two different value systems. Rather, my focus is the overall social situation in which, and through which, the oppositional categories of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal are in fact constituted. The aim is to understand how categorical identities are produced, not to take them as given. My approach is reflected in the way I have structured my chapters. I have attempted to avoid creating separate

chapters devoted to a discussion of Aboriginal practices as if they were somehow isolable from a wider social context.

According to the 1996 Australian Census, Kuranda itself has a population of approximately 663. About one third of the town's population identify as Aborigines (see Table 1). However, like the non-Aboriginal population, the majority of Aborigines who think of themselves as Kuranda people, live in settlements or on properties outside the township. Since these are in different census collection districts to Kuranda, the census figures for Kuranda represent only a proportion of the people who would identify Kuranda as their place. Aboriginal people mostly live in the small settlements along the Barron River - Kowrowa, Mantaka, Koah, Oak Forest - as well as at the old Mona Mona Mission site (Appendix). On the basis of the number of indigenous people[6] counted in the census collection districts in which these settlements are situated, the total Kuranda Aboriginal population is estimated to be 420 (Table 2; see Appendix for census collection district boundaries).

Non-Aboriginal Kuranda people living outside the village are more widely spread than Aboriginal people. They tend to live on rural properties or on acreages in rural-residential subdivisions. Some properties operate as 'tenancy-in-common' or as 'group-title'. Taking into account the people who live outside the census collection district of Kuranda, but who still associate themselves in one way or another with Kuranda, I estimate the total Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population, significant in terms of my study, to be approximately 3000 (Table 2).

But what about all those involved in the making of Kuranda who do not actually live there, the millions of tourists who arrive from all over the world

each year, as well as the itinerant travellers, the so called 'new agers' and 'ferals' who turn up to squat for the dry season?  Kuranda, as a place, is not only made as such by those people who actually live there, although as I demonstrate in this study, residents indeed struggle against outsiders for the control to make and keep Kuranda their own.

The impact of a tourist boom in the 1980s is keenly felt in Kuranda today. Many people think of tourism itself as being a recent phenomenon.  However, the town has, in fact, been a well known Australian tourist destination since the turn of the century, when visitors came not just for the beauty of the rainforest environment but also to satisfy their curiosity regarding the Aborigines who were camped in Kuranda at that time.

Kuranda's fortunes as a tourist destination have of course fluctuated over the years.  Aboriginal people were forcibly removed from the town in 1916 and placed at Mona Mona Mission Station, approximately 25 kilometres away. During the twenties and thirties the town became particularly popular with adventurous honeymooners who used to travel up the Queensland coast by steamship and then to Kuranda by train, to see the Barron Falls, take boat rides on the river, and go walking in the 'scrub', as

Table 1: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Population of Kuranda by Sex (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996 Census of Population and Housing)

|  | Male | Female | Persons |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Indigenous: Aboriginal | 104 | 81 | 185 |
| Indigenous: Torres Strait Islander | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Indigenous: Both Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| *Indigenous: Total* | *113* | *90* | *203* |
| Non Indigenous | 199 | 221 | 420 |
| Not Stated | 22 | 18 | 40 |
| **Total** | **334** | **329** | **663** |

Figure 2: Selected Characteristics by Sex for the Kuranda Area (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, Census Collection Districts: 3,030,303; 3,030,304; 3,030,305; 3,030,311; 3,030, 312; and 3,030,314)

|  | Male | Female | Persons |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Persons** | 1629 | 1613 | 3242 |
| **Aged 15 years and over** | 1247 | 1245 | 2492 |
| **Aboriginal** | 205 | 200 | 405 |
| **Torres Strait Islander** | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| **Both Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander** | 5 | 7 | 12 |
| **Australian Born** | 1112 | 1113 | 2225 |
| **Born Overseas:** Canada, Ireland, NZ, SA, UK, USA | 187 | 177 | 364 |
| **Born Overseas:** Other country | 160 | 156 | 316 |
| **Born Overseas:** Total | 347 | 333 | 608 |
| **Overseas Visitor** | 22 | 28 | 50 |
| **Australian Citizen** | 1354 | 1337 | 2691 |
| **Australian Citizen:** Aged 18 years and over | 866 | 949 | 1915 |

the rainforest was then called, to places with romantic names like 'Fairyland' and 'Paradise'. This practice waned but tourists continued to come to Kuranda for the sake of the dramatic train journey from Cairns through 15 tunnels and past thundering waterfalls through the Barron Gorge to see the famous Kuranda Railway Station. The lush gardens of the Station were kept especially tended while the station itself was adorned with huge baskets of hanging ferns. During the 1950s, before it was closed down, tourists were also encouraged to visit Mona Mona Mission as part of specially arranged bus tours, and to purchase arts and crafts produced for the purpose by the Aboriginal inmates of the mission.

Kuranda has been marketed for tourists as 'the village in the rainforest' only since the late 1970s. This idea of Kuranda as a village is significant in the Australian context, where even the smallest of country towns are usually not referred to as villages. The 'village in the rainforest' was partly a marketing ploy to attract tourists and partly a means by which the new settlers to the area, refugees from the urban jungles of Australia and overseas, sought to redefine Kuranda as their home place. One could be tempted to argue that the village concept reflects their nostalgic search for some kind of Durkheimian *Gemeinshaft*. However this would be too simplistic an explanation. Although, as Newton (1988:55) notes, 'rural nostalgia' was a feature of the counter-culture movement of the time, the village concept in Kuranda is an expression of a discourse that I suggest is best captured by the

term 'rural cosmopolitanism'. Many of the new settlers who arrived in Kuranda during the nineteen seventies and eighties dreamt of recreating Kuranda as a bohemian enclave in the fashion of the inner city villages of New York, London, Paris. The meaning that has become attached to the concept of village in Kuranda exemplifies the way global and local processes actually *assume* , or entail, one another. The village concept not only celebrates the idea of the local in opposition to the global, but also conceptually captures the global in the local. Moreover, I stress that in the Kuranda case, this rural cosmopolitanism, or rural bohemianism, masks an economic rationale. The marketing of Kuranda as 'a village' was a strategic move on the part of the Kuranda Chamber of Commerce, and the village concept in Kuranda cannot be fully understood without a consideration of the essential role of business in the town and the attempt to capture the tourist dollar[7].

**Kuranda as 'the Field'**

This study has involved a total of eight months focused fieldwork in Kuranda over a period of six years. However, if fieldwork implies a bounded site and a fixed period of time, then the use of this term in the context of my study is obviously problematic. After all, I never spent the traditionally continuous twelve to eighteen months in the field. Instead I would travel back and forth several times a year, sometimes to stay for a couple of months, but usually only for a week here, or a weekend there. Moreover, my connection with Kuranda goes way back to my childhood. My family now live in Kuranda and I hope one day to settle there myself. When, in such a situation, does

fieldwork begin and when could it possibly end?  Both the spatial and temporal boundaries assumed in the anthropological concept of 'the field' are here challenged.

Kuranda as a place has been part of the world of my imagination since I was about five or six years old, when we lived in the Atherton tablelands and would drive past the township to visit my grandparents in Cairns.  I have vivid memories of travelling, in the back of my father's truck through the green tunnel of trees that enveloped the endlessly winding, and stomach churning,  single lane down the range[8].  I also remember many a railmotor trip through the Barron Gorge to Cairns to catch the plane to Port Moresby, on the way from the tablelands boarding school I attended during my high school years while my family were living in Papua New Guinea.

Kuranda was just a place we regularly passed by, yet for me I think it always held a fascination.  Perhaps initially what drew me was the green fecundity of the rainforest and the bewitching beauty of the Barron Falls and the Gorge.  However, eventually it became the excitement presented by another world, the world of the hippies I would see sitting at the Kuranda station, or beside the road, hitching rides up and down to the beach and to Cairns.  From the point of view of a teenage Catholic boarding school girl, the hippies were an exotic 'Other' representing, however, not a localized primitive wilderness, but a somewhat dangerous globalized cosmopolitan world 'out there', an escape from the parochiality of northern Australia.  By the 1970s Kuranda had become a recognised destination along a global hippie trail and a haven for the so called counter-culture.  Eventually even my own parents were to join the movement, but not before I had left home to study anthropology in Canberra and had already dreamt of Kuranda as a potentially fruitful field

site for post-graduate study on the social and political interface between Australian Aborigines and this new wave of settlers.

How *should* we as anthropologists proceed when the time comes to choose a field area, and then go into the field and do fieldwork? How *is* it done? And what is 'the field'? Do we begin with a particular problem, or issue of debate and then choose a people, a culture, a society in which this problem or issue is best expressed and therefore which provides material for analysis? Or do we get interested in a people or culture or society first and then find an anthropological issue/s for debate or analysis? And anyway, what about this idea of culture and/or of society as a bounded totality? Perhaps we begin with a culture area, or region of specialisation, become familiar with the anthropological debates distinctive of this region, and then choose a particular field site, or field sites, which allows us to make a worthwhile contribution to the debate/s? After all as Gupta and Ferguson (1997a:8) and others (eg. Fardon 1990) have pointed out, and as is demonstrated by the employment opportunities advertised, anthropological careers are often built upon the ability to claim a regional specialisation of one kind or another.

Anthropologists (see Appadurai 1991, 1996; Marcus 1992, 1995; Gupta and Ferguson 1997a, 1997b; Olwig and Hastrup 1997) have begun to question the concept of 'the field' and the idea of the ethnographic site as part of a more general interrogation of the concept of totalities such as culture and society, or taken for granted notions of community, in the context of globalization processes which are seen as having generated '...a whole new range of conditions and socio-political responses at national, regional, and local levels' (Long 1996:42-43). Linked to this is the recent move away from site-based analyses in anthropology and archaeology to a focus on landscape, whether it

be symbolic, cultural, or social (see for example such collections as Bender 1993, and Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995).

As Gupta and Ferguson (1997a:5) note, it is the 'prior conceptual segmentation of the world into different cultures, area, and sites that make the enterprise of fieldwork possible'. Can fieldwork be done outside of such a site-based framework? The concept of multi-sited ethnography, as described by Marcus (1995) does not, I suggest, provide the solution because multi-sited ethnography, by definition, *assumes* the existence of the field site, albeit in multiplication.

Appadurai (1991; 1996) attempts to escape the segmentation of the world into territorialised cultures with his neologism of 'ethnoscape'. He writes:

> The landscapes of group identity - the ethnoscapes - around the world are no longer familiar anthropological objects, insofar as groups are no longer tightly territorialised, spatially bounded, historically self-conscious, or culturally homogenous (1991:191).

Appadurai argues that we need to define another object of study to replace these cultures that no longer exist. He develops the concept of the ethnoscape and various other *scapes* - mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes - by means of which we can capture for study associated 'global cultural flows' (1996:33). However, I find this emphasis on *scapes* as limiting as the focus on sites because it prioritizes vision and implies a specular distance between subject and object which positions the ethnographer outside the frame.

Appadurai bases his criticism of the study of cultures on the assumption that cultures did indeed once exist as bounded objects, but that the postmodern condition of globalization has led to their breakdown. However, the problem

of defining what it is anthropologists should study does not lie in the fact that cultural boundaries have rather tragically lost their fixity due to colonialism, multi- and trans- nationalism, global flows, networks, or whatever. Rather, the problem lies in what happened to culture as a *concept*, because that is precisely what it is, not a given concrete object, but a concept. Almost unnoticed, even in contemporary writings which ostensibly problematize it, culture has come to be used, not as an analytic, but as a descriptive category. This slippage in the use of analytic categories results in what Whitehead (1938:66) called 'the fallacy of misplaced concreteness'. Raymond Williams (1977:81) for example made a similar complaint about the use of the Marxist concepts of 'base' and 'superstructure':

> Orthodox analysts began to think of 'the base' and 'the superstructure' as if they were separable concrete entities. In doing so they lost sight of the very processes - not abstract relations but constitutive processes - which it should have been the special function of historical materialism to emphasise.

Anthropologists, in thinking of culture as a substantive description, have similarly lost sight of the constitutive social and cultural *processes* that it should be our task to explore. This problem with the culture concept is paralleled by the concept of society as 'a sutured and self-defined totality' (Laclau & Mouffe 1985:111).

The most interesting works generated today by anthropologists, I suggest, are ones which do not accept place and/or the local, and thus the field site, as givens but focus on the process of place-making and on the practice of the local (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997a and 1997b; and Friedman 1997a). I see place making as identity making, or subject making, 'games of truth'[9] played

out in terms of relationships of power (Foucault 1988:16). The ethnographic task then, as I see it, is to expose these games of truth/relationships of power by exploring the fields of sociality which give expression to them.

The solution is not to start with a given totality, either real or conceptual, but to explore the *fields* of human sociality in which they are generated. In other words, our task is to examine how such totalities, whether they be cultures, societies, communities, places, regions, sites or scapes, are discursively constituted so as to become materially powerful. I therefore see my own research as an exploration of the 'articulatory practices'[10] which operate to partially 'fix' the Kuranda people/place nexus as 'an objective and closed system of differences' (Laclau & Mouffe 1985:125). In saying that identity is discursively produced, I do not distinguish between discursive and non-discursive practices. All discourse is practiced and all practices are discursive. The distinction between discursive practices and non-discursive practices is commonly taken to be a Foucauldian one, but Foucault himself although introducing the concept of discursive practice never actually referred directly to such a thing as non-discursive practice. Laclau and Mouffe (1985:107) however argue that the distinction is implied in his *use* of the discursive and they then proceed to reject the distinction as follows (see also Laclau 1988):

> Our analysis rejects the distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices. It affirms: a) that every object is constituted as an object of discourse, in so far as no object is given outside every discursive condition of emergence; and b) that any distinction between

what are usually called the linguistic and behavioural aspects of a social practice, is either an incorrect distinction or ought to find its place as a differentiation within the social production of meaning, which is structured under the form of discursive totalities.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985:108) clarify their concept of discourse by noting that they do not deny that objects really exist outside of thought but that 'they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence'. They affirm the 'material character' of discourse by referring to Wittgenstein's concept of 'language games'[11] as an example of what they call discourse. Discourse is itself a material process which has material effects.

Whether we do single-sited or multi-sited ethnography, as anthropologists we *ground* both our explanations and our interpretations by situating ourselves in a field or fields. This does not mean given, more or less bounded geographical site/s. Nor does it necessarily mean having to invent new concepts like 'ethnoscape'. We already have, in situational analysis, a means of approaching the anthropological field as something unbounded.

Doing fieldwork, I argue, does not mean going to a particular geographical site, it simply means placing oneself in a *field of sociality* generative of an anthropological understanding about how totalities come to be 'fixed' as objective systems in the first place.

My choice of thesis topic was thus partly an attempt to discard the assumption and along with it the idea of, to use Wolf's (1982:6) well-worn analogy, the 'world as a global pool hall' in which different bounded cultures 'spin off each other like so many hard and round billiard balls'. However, this is not simply a matter of contextualising a people or a field area within a global system of integration, which has been the approach by many

anthropologists influenced by 'world systems theory' (Wallerstein 1974). Rather, it is a matter of deconstructing the very idea of the relationship between people and place.

Grounding our explanations and interpretations in ethnographic research does not mean that we need to take 'the field' to mean a given site, or a people, or a culture, or a community. Rather, going into the field means we place ourselves within grasp of a 'situational field' (Gluckman 1971; Van Velsen 1967), and within a field of sociality which allows us to more fully *experience* and thus understand the processes by which identity and difference of peoples and places are, in fact, *made*. Identity and difference is not something given but is discursively produced in economic and political relations of inequality.

Like Gupta and Ferguson (1997b:43), in this thesis my interest is in 'exploring the processes of *production* of difference in a world of culturally, socially and economically interconnected and interdependent spaces'. I consider the link between identity, memory and place, what place means, how through spatial practices people make place and are themselves therefore constituted in place. I focus on how identity categories are actively created, communicated and contested through the practice of place and a politics memory. My interest is in moments when social conflict, or antagonism, comes to the fore because it is these moments that reveal the limits of the social fixity of categorical differences. It is in these moments that the self can be found in the other, and

the other in the self.   Identity is not something given but is discursively *produced* in economic and political relations of inequality.

**Anthropology at Home: Confronting Identity and Difference**

For me Kuranda already existed as a place.  In that sense it was indeed given. However in the experience of being there, in the field, this giveness was challenged.  One by one the boundaries faded, beginning with the traditional anthropological boundary between 'the field' and 'home' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997a:12).   My parents moved to Kuranda with my younger brothers and sisters in the late seventies.  They built a tin shed for a house, on a block of land at the edge of the rainforest, dug a pit toilet, cooked outside on a wood stove, planted fruit trees and a vegetable patch for subsistence, and sold their surplus at the Kuranda Markets.  Today my parents and eight younger brothers and sisters and their families all live in the Kuranda area, and although I have not actually lived there myself except when visiting them, it is a place I also now call home.  Thus Kuranda which, although familiar to me, I had once thought of as an exotic other place and therefore as a potential ethnographic field site, became the home of my very own family.

Fifteen years later when the opportunity came for me to do post-graduate study, I decided that, I would indeed still do a study of Kuranda, not in spite of it now being home, but *because* it was home.  My choice of location was a deliberate attempt to interrogate the concept of 'the Other' by confronting 'the

Self' as informant. This was partly influenced by my own confusion growing up in Australia as the child of immigrant parents, with my mother hailing from Sri Lanka and my father from Germany, about whether I am thought by other Australians to be Self or Other or something else altogether![12] It was also a response to my reading of Marcus and Fischer (1986) and the discomfort I felt with their idea of anthropology as 'cultural critique', that is, the notion that through interrogating 'the other' we can get a better critical understanding of 'the self'. The problem is that, as Gupta and Ferguson (1997a:42) put it:

> The foundation of cultural critique - a dialogic relation with an "other" culture that reveals a critical viewpoint on "our own culture" - assumes an already existing world of many distinct "cultures' and an unproblematic distinction between "our own society" and an "other society".

My task as an anthropologist, I thought, was to study social and cultural identity and difference, not as something given, but as something produced.

By difference I do not mean merely 'diversity'. I use the term difference to mean how social, political, and economic 'otherness' is constructed. Anthropology for me is about the why and how of difference and sameness; why and how difference/sameness (social, political, economic) is constituted, enforced, contested and experienced. The key problem for anthropologists is how to represent the constitution of difference without becoming trapped within the very cultural categories one is trying to understand. As Kirby

(1989:3) puts it, '[t]he problem becomes one of just how to conceptualise difference differently'.

My strategy for attempting to conceptualise difference differently was to do fieldwork at home. If we 'anthropologize the West' (Rabinow 1986:241) we break it down as something unified and universal. The challenge remains however to be able, as an anthropologist, to represent the fragments without resorting to bounded categories of 'otherness'. This is because the idea of cultures as 'bounded real-world objects' is not only pervasive within anthropology, it is also a commonsense assumption that is shared by most of our subjects (Handler 1985:179). The main problem for ethnographers working in their own societies then is to distance themselves from the culture theory of their informants. Handler (1985) examines this problem with regard to his ethnography of nationalism and the politics of culture in Quebec. Referring to the linguistic studies of Edward Sapir, Handler (1985) argues that what is required in this situation is a 'destructive analysis of the familiar'. Sapir used this phrase to refer to his analysis of a simple English sentence. Such analysis he argued was necessary because it allowed one to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about the naturalness of one's own categories and 'apprehend sympathetically the categories of other languages' (Handler 1985:176). Anthropologists have in contrast traditionally started with a *con*structive analysis of the unfamiliar or unhomely (the *unheimlich*), in order to better understand the familiar.

The location of the study in North Queensland, where I was born and where my family live, that is 'at home', thus addresses the issue of the appropriate focus for anthropological research. There has been an increasing interest among anthropologists in applying their theories and methods of research to their own societies. Many contributors to Huizer and Mannheim (1978) for example argued that it was essential for both western and non-western anthropologists to study the West. Contributors to Messerschmidt (1981) discussed methods and issues in the study of one's own society with respect to North America, and in 1987 the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) published a selection of papers from its 1985 Conference which explored the theme of anthropology 'at home'. Since then a number of interesting works have been published in this area exploring the role of the anthropologist and the task of doing fieldwork in 'the West' (eg Eipper 1990; Handler 1985; Morton (in press); Okely 1992, 1996; Rabinow 1986; Strathern 1987). This literature is also linked to a burgeoning body of works on 'indigenous anthropology' and interrogations on the idea of the 'native anthropologist' (see Choong 1990; Fahim 1982; Hastrup 1996; Jones 1970; Limon 1991; Motzafi-Haller 1997; Narayan 1993; Ohnuki-Tierney 1984) and 'an emergent auto-critique of our own knowledge constructions' (Moore 1996:8) focused on the self/other, subject/object dualism which is said to underpin western philosophical thinking. My thesis could very easily take this direction and become yet another such commentary on the discipline of anthropology, the nature of fieldwork, and on the anthropological self. However, this is not the task I have set myself here.

**Previous Work**

Apart from the early anthropological research by Ursula McConnel and by Norman Tindale during his visit to Mona Mona Mission in 1938, previous anthropological work carried out in the area includes Shane Collins' (1981) study on Mona Mona Mission for his graduate diploma in Material Culture and Julie Finlayson's (1992) study for her doctoral thesis entitled *Don't Depend On Me: Autonomy and Dependence in an Aboriginal Community in North Queensland*, which examines the principles of sociality that structure gender roles in domestic relations among Kuranda Aboriginal people. Finlayson (1995, 1997) has also written papers on the Tjapukai Dance Theatre and on Aboriginal organisations, or representative bodies, and has conducted research in relation to the Djabugay native title claim. Frances Claffey also did anthropological research for the claim and produced a report on native title rights and interests for use within the mediation process (Claffey 1995), as well as a land use and management strategy for the Barron Falls National Park (Johnstone and Claffey 1997).

Other recent work includes that of Bruce Kapferer (1995) on the Tjapukai Dance Theatre. There are also two Kuranda residents with qualifications in anthropology: Michael Quinn's work on the Djabugay language has involved continuing anthropological research among Kuranda Aboriginal people (see for example Quinn & Banning 1991, 1992; Quinn 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994a, 1994b, 1995), and Sue Robertson has secured various grants and done a number of research projects. These include an ethnobotanical study and video made in collaboration with Aboriginal people and also linguistic and genealogical work (see Banning & Robertson 1991).

There are also studies on Kuranda done by people with other disciplinary interests. Kay Loftus (1994) produced a Kuranda and district 'youth needs study' as part of her honours thesis for a degree of Bachelor of Community

Welfare. An historian, who has published some material on Aboriginal history in the area (see Bottoms 1992; 1993), is at present undertaking his doctorate on the topic. He also has a local consultancy business and has contributed to a number of consultancy reports (see for example Bottoms, Lee Long and Verevis 1995).

Added to this, there are a number of new researchers beginning work in the Kuranda area, including a PhD student in anthropology from Japan who has just completed her field work, and several students interested in cultural tourism. They have been attracted to Kuranda as a field area because of the internationally recognised Tjapukai Dance Theatre and the new Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park.

My research is unique among all of the previous anthropological studies on Kuranda in that it does not focus specifically on Aboriginal people in the area, but also non-Aboriginal people and particularly on the interface between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal identities. Indeed the main focus of my ethnographic research has been the settler population.

The current popularity of Kuranda as a field site for Aboriginal studies, and the native title situation, has meant that any field work I conducted in Kuranda in the Aboriginal domain required constant negotiation with, and adjustment to, the research activities of others. These other researchers constitute part of my fieldwork situation. I have had to adjust my own research plans in order to take into account the 'symbolic violence' that Aboriginal people might experience by the research 'gaze'. I therefore deliberately withdrew my initial plans to do detailed genealogical work (since it was already being done by the consultant doing the native title report) and avoided, as much as possible, overlapping too closely my visits to Aboriginal

homes with those of other researchers. I also stopped doing formal taped interviews with Aboriginal people. In the long run, I do not think my research has suffered any, but that there have been benefits from my attempt to, if not do away with it completely, at least focus my anthropological lens more softly (Peacock 1986).

**Outline of Thesis**

The first chapter of this thesis is a discussion of my theoretical approach and the key concepts which frame and generate my analysis. In the second chapter I focus on historical conditions for the contemporary practice of Kuranda as a place. I trace the transformation of the lifeworld of Aboriginal people in the area through colonization and missionization (institutionalization). I discuss the colonizing and disciplinary practices which were, and continue to be directed at, an erasure of place memory. I argue that such practices in effect operated to mutilate memory[13], so as to make Aboriginal people passive subjects in a state of domination, or 'docile bodies' (Foucault 1977:135). In other words, the mission worked as an instrument of both corporeal and 'symbolic violence' attempting to generate a new Aboriginal habitus ( Bourdieu 1990:53).

In Chapter Three I move on to consider a second wave of settlement in the Kuranda area which began in the late nineteen sixties and continued throughout the seventies and into the early eighties. I discuss the context of the arrival of these new settlers and the relationships they developed with the established residents of the area. I examine practices of implacement of these settlers, some of whom were then called, among other less complimentary names, 'hippies', 'hairies', 'counter-culture people', or 'alternative lifestylers'. Implacement for these people is, I argue, a practice of liberty. In order to reveal the political and historical conditions for this practice, I examine their

relationship with the local Shire Council with regard to alternative land tenure arrangements ('tenancy-in-common', 'group title') and building regulations. I contrast the place-making activities of these new settlers with the situation of Aboriginal people as two different, but overlapping, discursive fields based on Foucault's (1988:19) distinction between power as 'strategic games between liberties' and as 'the states of domination, which are what we ordinarily call power'.

The next five chapters of the thesis comprise a series of linked case studies, or situational analyses, of social dramas connected with particular places in, or associated with, Kuranda. I analyse these social situations in terms of performances of the tension between identity and difference, which allow for the production of place through a politics of memory.

The first of my case studies, Chapter Four, focuses on the construction of a community performance venue, the Kuranda Amphitheatre, by the new settlers. I analyse the social situation in terms of two types of performances associated with the amphitheatre, performances produced specifically for the stage and the social dramas generated off the stage, by which people place themselves in the world, and through which they explore the relationship between sameness and difference, place and identity.

In Chapter Five, the second of my situational analyses, I focus on a dispute, or disputes, regarding the marketplace, as another hot spot of contested identity in Kuranda. I trace the metamorphosis of the markets from periodic

community events run by the new settlers outside a monetary economy, to the main privately owned tourist attraction in the town. The social dramas associated with the development of the Kuranda tourist markets reveal the tensions that arose between the new settlers, in their attempts to make Kuranda theirs, and forces of commodification already in place in Kuranda. They are an expression of a local articulation of political and economic forces, forces that Kuranda people experience as having their origins on the outside, in the global realm, and which they attempt to resist.

In Chapter Six, I focus on the connection between performance and identity politics in the context of the social situation of the Tjapukai Aboriginal Dance Theatre in Kuranda, and the more recent development of the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park in Cairns. I discuss the strategies and relationships of power which gave birth to these tourist attractions, and the cultural performances by means of which Aboriginal people accommodate themselves to categorical identities, but also redefine themselves in a political context which demands that they establish the authenticity of their claims for recognition in terms of cultural continuity. Performance here becomes an opportunity for Aboriginal people to challenge a legal paradigm which demands that, for recognition of land title, their categorical difference must be supported by cultural continuity, established cognitively, and evidenced by knowledge of the rules of customary law. Dance and other performances, however, assert the embodied nature of culture, and valorise forms of

remembering that are neglected in this overly mentalist paradigm. I refer here to what Casey (1987:147) has termed 'body memory…how we remember in and by and through the body' and to Bourdieu's (1977) concept of 'habitus'. Because cultural performances emphasise the embodied acquisition of culture, through such performances Aboriginal people assert a continuity of connection to place which is otherwise denied them.

In Chapter Seven I explore the articulation of different Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal responses to a tourist development, a cablecar from the bottom of the range to Kuranda through the Barron Falls National Park and Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, known as the Skyrail. I focus on a particular moment of protest action within the Skyrail dispute. Such moments, I suggest, are the key to a better understanding of how political identities are made. In my analysis of this protest situation, I show how identities are not given, but are produced situationally in the performance of a dialectical play between sameness and difference, and in protest actions which challenge hegemonic discourses and allow people to assert local identity in place.

Chapter Eight is the last of my substantive chapters. Here I discuss the concepts of strategic planning and management of place and critically analyse the process as it operates today in Kuranda. I see planning not simply as a cognitive process in which people consciously and objectively organise space. Rather, I take planning to be an example of a politically engaged making of

place, a form of social practice which is constitutive of place memory.  I explore disputes in the town connected to the planning and development of the main street in order to reveal how place becomes an ongoing and dynamic agent in a politics of memory by which people make and remake themselves as social beings, and negotiate categories of identity and difference.  Planning, however, is also a form of disciplinary practice.  Demonstrated engagement in strategic planning is a means by which people can achieve bureaucratic recognition of their claims.  Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Kuranda are increasingly and insidiously swept into this disciplinary process in their attempts to achieve some control over place and identity.

[1] 'Ecumene' (Greek - *oikoumene*) is a term that Hannerz adopted from Alfred Kroeber who used it in his 1945 Huxley Memorial Lecture to the Royal Anthropological Institute. As Hannerz (1996:7) writes, '...the global ecumene is the term I - and some others with me - choose to allude to the interconnectedness of the world, by way of interactions, exchanges and related developments, affecting not least the organisation of culture'.

[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics. Census 1996.

[3] The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area was inscribed on the World Heritage list on 9 December 1988.

[4] Strictly speaking, Djabugay is the name of a language and Djabuganydji is the name for the people speaking that language. However, although they recognise the linguistic accuracy of this distinction, in everyday use, today, people refer to themselves simply as being Djabugay, or as Djabugay people. See Chapter 6 for a further discussion on this topic and on what it means to be Djabugay.

[5] Section 4.03 (1) of the *Aboriginal Land Act* lists 'traditional affiliation' and 'historical association' as two of the grounds on which a land claim may be made. The *Native Title Act*, on the other hand excludes historical association as a basis for claim unless historical association can be shown to amount to 'native title'.

[6] Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

[7] The re-imaging of Kuranda as a village can be compared in this respect to the marketing of the south Australian town of Hahndorf as a pioneer German village and I have in fact heard tourists in Kuranda make this comparison.

[8] The significance of this experience, or sensation of travelling through a green tunnel in order to get to or from Kuranda is one which I have since found I share with many people. It is an important trope in the arrival stories of new settlers, and the preservation of its tunnel-like entrance and of Kuranda as a place surrounded by rainforest is a key issue of concern in planning disputes in the town.

[9] Foucault (1988:16) explains his use of the term 'game' as follows: 'when I say "game" I mean an ensemble of rules for the production of the truth. It is not a game in the sense of imitating or entertaining...it is an ensemble of procedures which lead to a certain result, which can be considered in function of its principles and its rules of procedures, as valid or not, as winner or loser'.

[10] Laclau & Mouffe (1985:96-142) define an 'articulatory practice' as a discursive structure which 'constitutes and organises social relations'. Because there can be no such 'real object' as society, no 'essentialist totalization', articulatory practices operate to constitute society only through a partial fixing of meaning through the construction of 'nodal points'. Articulatory practices work in tension against the 'polysemy that disarticulates a discursive structure'.

[11] 'A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs, and beams. B has to pass the stones, and in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words "block", "pillar", "slab, "beam". A calls them out; B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such and such a call'...'I shall call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the "language game" ' (Wittgenstein cited in Laclau and Mouffe 1985:108)

[12] I must have been asked this question a thousand times and again, this very day, a complete stranger sitting beside me on a bus asked 'What nationality are you?' and I knew that he did not expect me to answer, 'Australian mate!'

[13] The phrase 'mutilated memory' was used by Gruzinski (1990) in the title to his paper 'Mutilated Memory: Reconstruction of the Past and the Mechanisms of Memory Among 17th Century Otomis'.

# Chapter 1

# Place and the Politics of Memory

This chapter introduces the theoretical and philosophical framework for my thesis. I outline an approach which, although in framing my analysis, appears to be independently and externally imposed, is actually grounded in the ethnography itself in the sense that it was generated by my engagement with it. My discussion is organised in terms of four conceptual inquiries. These concern the nature and relationship of: i) place and space, ii) history and memory, iii) identity and difference, and iv) practice and performance. My explorations lead me to a synthesis of ideas which provides a more insightful means of understanding and explaining human sociality as it expresses itself in social conflict generated in Kuranda. In the lived sociality of intense socio-political engagement with one another, people implace themselves. Through performances, both of protest and celebration, they constitute their own lifeworlds, but are situationally limited by political and economic conditions and hierarchies of power that form part of the social fields in which they are emersed.

## Place and Space

There has been increasing interest over the last twenty five years among social scientists in theorising space (see Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Cosgrove 1984; de

Certeau 1984; Foucault 1977, 1986; Gregory and Urry 1985; Harvey 1985; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1994; Moore 1986; Soja 1989; Werlen 1993). Anthropologists, however, have long understood that space is vitally important to social life. According to Moore (1986:xi) anthropological interest in space 'can be traced back to Durkheim's idea of socially differentiated space and before that to Lewis Henry Morgan's work on kinship and territory'. Anthropologists have recognised that the organisation of space can operate as a symbolic code, or communication system, expressive of social categories. Some symbolic/semiotic approaches however tend to deny the agency of social actors and assume that meaning is inherent in space itself. In contrast, Moore (1986) sets out an interpretative approach to the study of space by focusing on power relations and, following Bourdieu, argues that 'meanings are not inherent in the organisation of domestic space, but must be invoked through the activities of social actors'(Moore 1986:8; 1994:76). More recently, anthropologists have become interested in place and locality as a means of interrogating the concept of culture and taken for granted notions of community. Such terms as place, region, border, site, landscape, local, and global, are therefore linked as part of a general spatial lexicon that pervades contemporary literature.

This spatial lexicon tends to be used freely and uncritically. There are, in particular, differences between space and place, as analytical concepts, that require exploration. Even such excellent collections on the topic as Olwig &

Hastrup (1997) and Gupta & Ferguson (1997d) which focus on how people make place, sometimes use the terms space and place interchangeably. Hirsch (1995) is an exception in that he does attempt to specifically theorise a difference between space and place. Hirsch (1995) sees place and space as related concepts distinguishable by the fact that place connotes 'foreground actuality', while space refers to 'background potentiality'. Place is to space as hereness and nowness is to distant horizon, or as insideness is to outsideness, or as image (as lived experience) is to representation (map). However, de Certeau's (1984) distinction between place and space is almost a direct reverse of that of Hirsch, which leads to some confusion. For de Certeau (1984:117) place is equivalent to mere location, 'an instantaneous configuration of positions' that indicate stability. Space on the other hand is the lived experience of place (location). De Certeau's (1984:117) assertion that 'space is practiced place' is thus based on a Cartesian definition of place as equivalent to site. For de Certeau place is for example 'the street geometrically defined by urban planning' (1984:117). Space on the other hand is for de Certeau something produced, in this case by the practice of walking the street.

Is it space is practiced place, as de Certeau would have it, or is it, rather, that place is practiced space? Casey (1997) sheds some light on the issue in his detailed discussion of the philosophical history of the concepts of place and space, from Plato and Aristotle, through Hellentistic and Neoplatonic thought, and such thinkers as Newton, Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Merleau-

Ponti and Heidegger, to Bachelard, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida , and Irigaray. It is a history of transition from 'the placial finitude of cosmos' sensed in 'concrete landscapes as lived, remembered, or painted' by finite bodies in finite place, to the 'spatial infinity of the universe', and back again. Casey (1997) demonstrates how in western philosophical thought, place became buried in the focus on space, in fact, came to be re-thought as space, as non-subjective and geometric. He traces the demotion of place to the speculations of Newton, Descartres and others 'for all of whom space was conceived as continuous extension in length, breath, and width and, thus, as mappable by the three-dimensional co-ordinate system of rational geometry' (1987:185). Places came to be conceived as spatial sites and therefore as mere positions relative to each other. Casey then proceeds to show how a renewed interest in place surfaced in the writings of Kant, Whitehead, Merleau-Ponty, and Heidegger. The renaissance of place as *lived* experience in the works of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger and others has led to a situation in which space can be re-thought as place, rather than place as space. This focus on place is generated by an acknowledgment of the significance of the capacity, both cognitive and corporeal, of human beings to constitute their own lifeworlds. It is this capacity that I explore in my following chapters.

It is through the practice of place, through placing themselves, that people constitute themselves in terms of identity and difference. Underlying the social dramas that erupt regularly in Kuranda, can be found a contradiction

between space and place. The post-Cartesian triumph of space, as the 'indifferent site-space of cartography or rational geometry' (Casey 1987:192), over place is continually resisted by the way people place themselves in the world, through the agency, and relationship, of their lived bodies. Casey (1987:197) writes:

> Places are empowered by the lived bodies that occupy them; these bodies animate places, breathe new life into them by endowing them with directionality, level, and distance - all of which serve as essential anchoring points in the remembering of place.

At this point I should clarify what I understand by the phenomenological concepts of the *lived body* and the idea of *being-in-the world*. What is 'the world' and what does it mean for a body to be 'lived'? My position is that if places are empowered, or animated, by lived bodies, then this is by bodies in intense and active socio-political engagement with one another, not just by bodies as individual psycho-physical objects. The world is not something given out there but is produced within fields of sociality, and is itself an experiential field of sociality. It is what Husserl called a 'lifeworld'. As Jackson (1996:16) writes, 'For Husserl, the *Lebenswelt* was the world of immediate experience, of sociality, common sense, and shared experience that exists for us independent of and prior to any reflection upon it'. Since the lifeworld is inherently social, being in the world is a profoundly social activity. Being in the world, means becoming in the world through *doing* . It is a matter of practice. It is also, however, a matter of performance and is

therefore not entirely independent of and prior to reflection as Husserl would have it.

I see place making as identity making, or subject making, 'games of truth' linked to relationships of power which according to Foucault (1988:12) of necessity entail the possibility of resistance 'for if there were no possibility of resistance - of violent resistance, of escape, of ruse, of strategies that reverse the situation - there would be no relations of power'. Making place is, in other words, a strategic practice of identity making. Collective identity is more than a mere sense of belonging together. Identities are constituted in material conditions and practices of power which inhere in place and which are determinative of people's real life relationships. In the process of making place people bestow on it its own agency so that they come to experience place as itself inherently powerful. Place thus becomes materially determinative of the social.

In Chapter 3 I link this idea of identity in place with Heidegger's (1971) concept of dwelling as explicated in his lecture-essay *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, and with Bachelard's (1969) notion of intense inhabitation. Place making is a spatial practice of being in the world. Heidegger explores this concept as *Dasein* (human being as a 'there-being') in *Being and Time*. *Dasein* is being in the world. As Kule (1997:102) observes, 'It is obvious that Heidegger's principal term - *Dasein* incorporates this idea of belonging to

place...'. *Dasein* is not something that is already given but is an existential possibility articulated through dwelling. Dwelling is also 'building', meaning not simply to construct something but also to care for and cherish. It is through dwelling, through building, that we make place. To illustrate his point Heidegger takes a bridge. He poetically describes the bridge as providing a 'site' into which 'the fourfold' - earth, sky, divinities, and mortals - is 'gathered'. Heidegger (1971:157) neatly expresses his notion of the meaning, and contrast between, place and space as follows:

> To say that mortals 'are' is to say that 'in dwelling' they persist through spaces by virtue of their stay among things and locations...The relationship between man and space is none other than dwelling.

In other words, space is meaningless as a given. We make it significant by 'dwelling', by building, by making place, so that it ceases to be space.

However, what does dwelling entail? How do we, in fact, dwell? I stress that dwelling can be nothing but the *social* engagement of lived bodies, and as much as it evokes notions of 'caring' and 'heeding', such engagement, or being-in-the world, inevitably involves social conflict, generated by inequalities of power that lead to processes of identification and differentiation.

The interdependency of place, real or imagined, body memory, and processes of social and cultural identification and differentiation, means that the loss of

place, or the forcible removal from place, can lead to a profoundly disorienting loss of self.  As Russell (cited in Casey 1987:195) has observed:

> 'Where am I? is, after all, one of the most poignant of human formulations.  It speaks for an anxiety that is intense, recurrent, and all but unbearable.  Not to know where we are is torment, and not to have a sense of place is a most sinister deprivation.

In the following chapters of this thesis I explore this deprivation as it was imposed on Aboriginal people through the European colonization of their lifeworld.

Deprivation of place leads to loss of self because it involves erasure of memory.  Memory is usually thought of as being something to do with the temporality of mind (eg see Halbwachs 1992; Douglas 1995) rather than with the materiality and corporeality of place.  Place however is like a container for memory.  As Casey (1987:186) notes:

> It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability.  An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favour and parallel its own activities.  We might even say that memory is naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported...Unlike site and time, memory does not thrive on the indifferently dispersed.   It thrives, rather, on the persistent particularities of what is properly *in place:* held fast there and made one's own.

However, in reclaiming the importance of place we should not make the mistake of denying altogether the relevance of time.   Memory gathers together time (as past, present, and future) into place, and in so doing

provides the conditions under which people can make political claims of ownership and control of place both in concert with, and against, the claims of others. This is what I mean by the politics of memory.

The politics of memory, as played out in Kuranda, expresses itself partly in terms of a conflict about history, as the factual record of a given past, and other forms of evidence of the connection between people and place. In the next section, therefore, I explore the notion of history, how history is constituted as such, and the relationship between history and memory.

**History and Memory**

In a small booklet published for tourists and entitled *An Explorer's Guide to Kuranda,* resident authors Ron and Anne Edwards (1994:1) note, 'Kuranda does not have a great deal of history. It has plenty of gossip, in fact gossip is one of the town's main activities, but there is very little history'. Whether the authors were aware of it or not, this statement raises an important question and issue of debate within the social sciences. What is history and how is it different from other discourses about the past? How do we distinguish history from gossip, and/or from memory, and what is their relationship?

History carries an authenticity which is not granted to gossip. History assumes truth value and social recognition as factual reality. It is thought of as being a record of a given real past, whereas gossip is thought of as an

ongoing construction, or invention of the past motivated by interested human action. Memory, similarly, is thought to be, by definition, 'a personal activity, subject to the biases, quirks, and rhythms of the individual's mind' (O'Meally & Fabre 1994:5). The 'helter-skelter and dreamy impressionism of human memory' (O'Meally & Fabre 1994:5) is not granted the same authority as is history with its events linearly ordered in time.

It is not difficult to provide a list of defining features to distinguish history from memory. What is more interesting and important, however, is how the distinction between them is, in fact, *made.* History is given its authority over memory by the social recognition granted to it as objectively recorded reality. How is this truth value of history *produced*?

The concept of history has been problematized by a number of social thinkers, and by historians themselves (see White 1973). Key issues that have been raised and continue to be debated include epistemological questions regarding truth and objectivity; the relationship between history and human consciousness, and whether history is the effect of material conditions of existence or of developing consciousness; the nature of time and its relationship to narrativity; the temporality and spatiality of phenomena; the nature of the 'event', the link between disparate events, and whether a causal connection can be established between them; the relativity of historical knowledge; and the difference between history and myth. With regard to the

question of truth and objectivity for example, Levi-Strauss (1962:256-57) pointed out in *The Savage Mind* , '...historical facts are no more *given* than any other.  It is the historian, or the agent of history, who constitutes them by abstraction...'.

The question of the distinction between 'myth' and 'history' has been recently re-addressed in connection with anthropological analyses of Australian Aboriginal narratives of colonial encounters (Morphy & Morphy 1984; Maddock 1988; Rose 1984 and 1994; Austin-Broos 1994; Merlan 1994). Disregarding the finer definitional points raised in this debate, the very emergence of the 'myth-history antinomy' (Merlan 1994:151) as an issue for anthropologists concerned with the Australian Aboriginal material, is based on a questioning of the notion of a totalising History.  This questioning, which I suggest is primarily influenced by the work of Foucault, has led to 'an awareness of the negotiability of history' and a recognition that 'narrative histories' are 'never, simply, factual accounts' (Austin-Broos 1994:133, 136).  In *The Order of Things* Foucault (1970) pointed out that history is itself an historical phenomenon, a discursive practice. Foucault reveals that the social authority of 'History' rests on its compatibility with the dominant discourse. Its official recognition and legitimacy, its truth value, is determined by the particular relations of power in a society.  In turn 'History' legitimates those power relations and enables political and economic control.

Foucault therefore rejected what he calls 'total', or 'global' history ('History'), 'which assumes a spacio-temporal continuity between all phenomena, and a certain homogeneity between them insofar as they all express the same form of historicity', in favour of conducting historical investigations according to particular problems (Young 1990:78). All of Foucault's major works are such histories. At different phases of his career he adopted different terms for these investigations. His early histories he called 'archaeologies', while his later ones he termed 'genealogies'. His final works he referred to as 'problematizations'[1]. What they have in common is that they are particular answers to particular questions, that is, they are particularistic rather than universalising or totalising. Moreover, rather than being explanations of the past, they are 'diagnoses of the present'. They are concerned with the descent (*Herkunft*) as opposed to the origin (*Ursprung*) of practices (Foucault 1988a:140,145). Foucault attempts to account for current social practices by charting them along their historically constituted axes of power and knowledge. It is particularly in his 'genealogy' of the practices of punishment and in his 'problematization' of sexuality, that Foucault elaborates this approach to history, that is, as a 'micro-physics of power' (1977:139).

It is with this Foucauldian approach to history in mind that I write the next two chapters of this thesis. My task is to make present practices in Kuranda intelligible by tracing their descent. I rely not only on primary and secondary documentary sources, but also on the 'narrative knowledge' and recollections

of Kuranda residents since, to borrow from Taussig (1992:163), it is in 'the coils of rumour, gossip, story, and chitchat where ideology and ideas become emotionally powerful and enter into active social circulation and meaningful existence'. However, as will become clear in later chapters, my analysis in this thesis is not just informed by orality, or by what people say about the past, but the past as it is practiced. Here I am referring to bodily knowledge and memory expressed, transmitted and disseminated by means of performance. Through performance Kuranda people contest the bondage of a given past authorized by dominant discourses.

It is not simply the past itself that is contested, however, but also the legitimacy of the means people have of accessing it. For example, in the context of native title claims, what one finds contested is the value of 'narrative knowledge' over documentary evidence. This was expressed by the tension between the legal representatives of the Queensland government and Djabugay people during the National Native Title Tribunal mediation sessions held in connection with the Djabugay native title claim for the Barron Falls National Park which I discuss in Chapter 7. While the claimant Djabugay people considered that their oral evidence presented at the sessions should be sufficient, it was apparent to them that documentary evidence recorded by historians and anthropologists was more highly valued by the non-claimant parties to the mediation.

The Djabugay claimants were attempting, through their 'narrative knowledge', to demonstrate the *continuity* of their connection with the country now designated as a National Park and a World Heritage area, and thereby establish their title in accordance with the requirements of the *Native Title Act* 1993 (Cwlth).  It is however 'scientific knowledge' that is given a privileged place in the broader society, and history tends to be crudely equated with 'facts' that are documented textually[2].  Native title and other cultural heritage issues in Kuranda have brought to the fore the contested nature of the past and the way people 'fashion' the past differently in the practice of place (Greer 1995; Greer & Henry 1995).

There is a growing body of works which have focused on the politics of identity and raised debate regarding the idea of the past as constructed in the present, and of tradition and/or heritage as 'invented' (for example Shils 1981; Herzfeld 1982; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Anderson 1983; Handler & Linnekin 1984; Haley & Wilcoxon 1997; Linnekin 1991; Friedman 1992a, 1992b; Ulin 1995; and also Gellner 1983, 1996; and Smith 1986, 1991, 1996). The issues raised by constructivist ideas of tradition as invented came to a head recently in the Warwick debates (1995) which brought Ernest Gellner and Anthony Smith into intellectual exchange over the sociological *reality* of nations and nationalism.  In his address Gellner, arguing that nations do not have navels, branded himself a 'creationist' and Smith a 'primordialist'. Smith (1996:361) however, attempting to tread a middle path, acknowledged

that although nations 'are connected with earlier ethnic categories and communities and created out of pre-existing origin myths, ethnic cultures and shared memories', they are indeed modern constructions. In his opening address of the debate he refers to the deconstructionist models of Eric Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) and Benedict Anderson (1983), suggesting that in spite of their approaches to the nation as something 'invented' or 'imagined', neither of them 'would regard the nation as a *wholly* imaginary category'(my emphasis). Smith finds nothing contradictory about saying that something is both imagined and real and argues that 'although we can discern elements of deliberate planning and human creativity in their formation, nations and nationalisms are also the products of pre-existing traditions and heritages which have coalesced over the generations' (1996:361).

However, their break with a perspective premised on the existence of any distinction at all between the real and the constructed, or the authentic and the invented, means that Handler and Linnekin (1984), who relativise all discourses about the past, would consider Smith's approach problematic. They distance themselves for example, from Shils (1981) and Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983) who, although arguing that tradition is invented, still maintain the existence of an objectively discoverable past, with which this 'invented' tradition can be compared and contrasted. For Handler & Linnekin (1984) there is no 'essential core'. Any continuities between past and present are

considered to be 'symbolically constituted'. Friedman (1992a:853) appears to adopt a similar position when he notes that his '...argument has rested upon the assertion that the past is always practiced in the present, *not because the past imposes itself*, but because subjects in the present fashion the past in the practice of their social identity' (my emphasis).

Yet Friedman's analysis is not based on an extreme deconstructivist model which takes as equal all discourses about the past. One of the problems with deconstructionist models which reject objectivist views of history, is that they can lead to an extreme relativism. However, as Ulin (1995:526) writes:

> ...not all discourses of an imagined and relativized past have an equal chance of being advanced and recognised as authoritative...The effort to gain recognition for an interpretation of the past involves a political struggle for self-identity and mutual recognition that should not be trivialized by a postmodern equivalence of discourses...

As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the Djabugay native title situation in Kuranda reveals that social constraints engendered by strategies of power limit not only the substance of interpretations of the past but also which interpretations are granted discursive authority.

A perspective which posits that there are no real continuities to be found with any past and treats constructions of such continuities as merely equivalent interpretations, in effect dehistoricizes social phenomena. The logical fallout from such an approach would be to abandon the notion of history altogether

and also any attempt to write my thesis!  However, I do not subscribe to the utter relativising of history as mere interpretation.  After all, as White (1973 :79) points out, 'history is itself a mode of demonstrating the relativity, temporariness, and temporality of phenomena'.  To this Foucault would add spatiality.  Although Foucault is often invoked to justify the a-political postmodern acceptance of all discourses about the past as equivalent, Foucault himself did not celebrate relativity in this nihilistic way.  His rejection of uniform temporalization did not mean that he abandoned history altogether.  His project was to make present practices understandable by tracing their descent as a series of events.  Events are indeed constructed retrospectively as such, however this does not mean that the phenomena we use to make our event-constructions do not have some real occurrence and material impact on peoples' lives.  Moreover, in their capacity as event-constructions they continue to be part of the reality of lived experience for, as Laclau & Mouffe (1985:96) write, '...a discursive structure is not a merely "cognitive" or "contemplative" entity; it is an *articulatory practice* which constitutes and organises social relations'.

Most Kuranda people readily direct anyone making inquiries regarding the history of the place, to the bicentennial publication *Kuranda: The Village in the Rainforest, 1888-1988* by Shep Humston.  I have visited many a Kuranda home in the course of my fieldwork, only to be referred to this book.  Descendants of early settlers would bring it out and establish their authenticity by pointing

with pride to the photographs and names of their forebears printed in black and white for all to see.  In the typical form that local histories take, the book begins with a discussion on the origin of the name 'Kuranda', followed by a section on the physical environment and climate.  This is in turn followed by a chapter on 'the Djabugay People' the traditional 'Rainforest Aborigines of the Kuranda area'.  Here we see reprinted the relevant section from Tindale's (1940) map of tribal boundaries in Australia, and some photographs of material culture (huts, baskets, swords, shields).  Much of the information for this chapter was taken from Dixon's (1972; 1977) linguistic studies of Dyirbal and Yidin, two neighbouring languages of Djabugay, and an unpublished paper written by Julie Finlayson.  Also included, from the *North Queensland Naturalist* , is a paper by Douglas Seaton (1957) entitled, 'The Initiation Ceremony of the Tjapukai Tribe'.

In the next section of the book the author lists 'events around Kuranda before the first survey'.  These include the foundation of Cairns in 1876, the building of a road up the range suitable for dray traffic in 1877, Aboriginal spearings of travellers and packers at Middle Crossing (Kuranda, Barron River) in 1878 and 1879, a list of selectors taking up land in the area in 1885 and 1887, the construction of different stages of the railway in 1886 and 1887, and the opening of the first hotel at Middle Crossing in 1888.  Other sections are on the building of the railway line, the schools, early industries - timber, coffee, tourism, the history of Mona Mona Mission, and the impact of the World

Wars. Although it recognises a prior and continuing Aboriginal presence in the Kuranda area by including the information described above, the book is primarily a celebration and legitimation of the history of white settlement of the area.

Other publications on the history of the Kuranda area focus on the achievements of the early explorers in finding tracks through the range to the coast, of prospectors and the discovery of gold and tin to the west, the establishment of timber industry, the origins of today's towns, the building of the range road and the construction of the railway line from Cairns through Kuranda to the tablelands and beyond, the Barron Falls hydro-electric scheme, and the trials and tribulations of the settlers in establishing plantations, farms, and stations (see, for example, Broughton 1991; and Pike 1984).

Apart from these local histories, there are also such academically reputable general histories of North Queensland as those by Bolton (1963). All these accounts represent a history of economic 'development', of engineering feats, of the construction of buildings, bridges, roads, and railways. It is a celebration of 'man against nature' and the 'taming of the wilderness'. It is a totalising History of origins and progress.

More recently there has been a trend among historians to attempt to make Aborigines present in their writings. Excellent histories of Aboriginal-European relations have been produced by Loos (1982) and also by May (1994), focusing specifically on Queensland, and by Reynolds (1982, and 1987). These works all build on the pioneering work of Rowley (1971; 1972). Their constructions are based on primary documentary sources which include Government records such as the Reports of the various Protectors of Aboriginals, as well as the diaries of explorers and other early travellers in the area, and early newspaper reports. These primary sources portray Aboriginal people as not only 'people without history' (Wolf 1982) but also as people who, rather than *make* history themselves, have to have it *made for* them. Aborigines remain voiceless in these primary documents, their experiences blanketed by the all powerful written word of colonial bureaucrats and lawmakers.

Loos (1982) addresses this issue by specifically reading the documentary sources, for evidence of Aboriginal resistance. His focus on resistance rests on a recognition of the possibility of an autonomy of action on the part of Aborigines. It is interesting to compare Loos's history with that of other historians such as Bolton (1963). The history by Loos, I suggest, can be seen as a politically important resistance work in itself and must be read in the light of the fight against the discourse of *terra-nullius* leading up to the Mabo decision and the recognition of native title in Australia. In particular, to be

able to prove that Aboriginal people had resisted colonisation was considered a means of establishing, that since they had reacted against others 'trespassing' on their land, they therefore had a customary law of trespass implying property rights in land.

The more recent local historical accounts of Aboriginal-European relations produced by Bottoms (1990; 1992; 1993) follow a similar vein. Bottoms however, very self-consciously, attempts to inject an Aboriginal voice into his accounts by peppering them with Djabugay words and place names, in a similar style to the Djabugay language teaching materials produced for children by Michael Quinn. He writes for example:

> It was, nevertheless in the physical world that the GADJA - Europeans - first as visitors, then as invaders, made judgement on the BAMA. The habitable place or BULMBA is a term which covers a wide range of meanings...by the first week in October, in the period of DJUGALAWURDJI [Jur-gal-a-worjee] - heathaze - of GURRAMINYA [Goo-ra-min-yah] - Dry Season - in the GADJA year of 1876, the BAMA BULMBA truly came under siege (1993: 3,12).

Such use of Aboriginal words is an example of a technique which has recently become popular, ostensibly as a means of writing Aborigines into history. It is an attempt, in the writing of the text, to grant voice to Aborigines. However, these techniques actually operate to mask the fact that Aboriginal people remain voiceless. They are an example of the insidiously disguised means by which discursive power operates.

History grants primacy to the written text, or more generally, to an archive of material signs. But the repository of social memory is not just the text, not something that is simply documented through the written records or through material deposits. This is just one kind of transmission across time. Oral transmission of 'narrative knowledge' is another kind. There are also other ways of remembering to which the dominant discourse about what counts as knowledge does not grant a hearing[3]. Casey (1987) distinguishes these 'mnemonic modes' as different forms of recollection, 'reminding', 'reminiscing', and 'recognizing', as well as 'body memory' and 'place memory', which are 'beyond the confinement of the mind considered as the exclusive receptacle of remembering' (1987:141). My analyses of social dramas in Kuranda in terms of practice and performance focus on these other 'mnemonic forms'. In this particular chapter, therefore, I concentrate on narrative knowledge and on recollection.

When asking non-Aboriginal residents of Kuranda what they know about the early settlement history of the area, an immediate response is their recollection of where particular buildings were located, who lived where, how the townscape has changed, how difficult travelling used to be - memories of trips up and down the range by horse and dray, by car, by train, of big wet seasons when the range was closed and it was impossible to get to Cairns. People recall, not just for the ethnographer, but among themselves, images of the townscape and landscape and of their bodily experiences of

being in this landscape. They relate stories of dramatic accidental deaths in the community, someone killed when the bridge collapsed, a woman burned to death when her dress caught fire, drownings in the Barron River, or suicide attempts in the Gorge.

Except for some of the more recent settlers who arrived during the 1970s and 1980s and who, being classed as hippies, experienced for themselves the force of state power directly through the hand of the law, non-Aboriginal informants tend not to place their very localized personal accounts within a more global context, or even within a wider frame of the history and politics of the State of Queensland and the Australian Federation of which they are a part.

Aboriginal people, in response to questions about the past, tend to focus on a few key topics, mainly connected with Mona Mona Mission. Older residents mostly reminisce about growing up on the Mission - the dormitory days, their memories of the 'old people', their parents and grandparents, who were living in camps on the mission[4] and were at one time only allowed visit them on a Sunday. There are fondly remembrances of hunting and fishing trips, treks across the MacAlister Range to the sea, holiday camps on the Barron River at Oak Forest, rodeos at Mona Mona, the Mona Mona rugby team and the brass band. Another common topic is the work experiences of people at the Mission as bakers, cooks, farm hands, timber cutters and millers, and on the

outside in the forestry industry, on the railways, and as domestic labourers. People remember how hard they worked and how little they received in return, how the mission controlled access to their wages and allocated their spending money. Aboriginal people talk about when they lived 'under the Act'[5] and those that received exemptions readily produce their passes as proof of the regime under which they were forced to exist.

Although there are recollections of cruelty and hardship, the days at Mona Mona are often remembered with a certain wistful fondness, or nostalgia. Any bitterness they may harbour for wrongs done to them during the Mission period is only very rarely expressed by people who actually grew up on the Mission. Such feelings tend to be more often articulated by the younger generation, many of whom never experienced Mission life first hand, on behalf of their elders. Younger people think of themselves as the product of this history and as still suffering today because of it.

There is ongoing discussion and debate among Aboriginal people in Kuranda regarding the pros and cons of Mission life. The debate became public recently when a woman who had grown up on Mona Mona revealed to the *Cairns Post* (31 Oct. 1996, pp. 1, 2) the disciplinary practices that she said she had experienced on the Mission. Her accusations against the Missionaries created a furore among other people who had grown up on Mona Mona. She claimed that she had witnessed public floggings on the Mission and that she

had personally experienced, as punishment for alleged misbehaviour, having her front teeth forcibly extracted, her head shaved, and being forced to wear a hessian sack over her bare skin to church on Sunday. She also said that she had often been hungry, was regularly caned, and was locked in the community jail along with other children when she had tried to run away. Other Mona Mona people were very angry that she had allowed this account of her experiences of mission life to be published. Her claims that the missionaries had treated Aborigines with 'extreme cruelty' were rejected in particular by many of the older residents, two of whom contacted the *Cairns Post* with a reply which was published the following day (1 Nov. 1996, p. 2):

> Kuranda Aboriginal elders yesterday said disciplinary measures used by church missionaries at Mona Mona in the 1950s and 60s may have been severe, but they taught their people to respect the law...The elders spoke out yesterday after former Mona Mona resident...claimed she had suffered extreme cruelty as a child at the hands of the missionaries...

It was suggested to me by another elder of the community that some of the forms of discipline this former resident claimed to have experienced had indeed been practiced but only in the early days of the mission and that she had not experienced these first hand but had constructed her account for the newspaper from stories she had overheard from the elders. Extraction of teeth, it was argued had never been carried out as a form of punishment, but only for genuine dental health purposes (pers. comm. M, 7 Jan. 1997)[6].

Mission policy, with regard to the actual form that punishments took, changed according to the Superintendent in charge at the time. Finlayson (1991:114) notes that an ex-resident recalled having had her hair shaved several times as punishment for swearing, and another remembered that the policy at one stage was for someone from the child's own family to be forced to publicly administer twenty cuts with a cane on the back. Other punishments meted out included up to two weeks in the mission gaol on a diet of bread and water[7]. For what were considered more serious offences, such as illegitimate pregnancies, offenders were sent away to Palm Island[8]. According to Finlayson (1991:115) sometimes marriages were held in response to illegitimate pregnancies. These marriages were held in private however. No family members were allowed to attend and the expecting mother was forced to wear a sack cloth and have her head shaved.

The disagreement about the oppressive nature of the disciplinary practices of the missionaries reveals an apparent tension among Aboriginal people between complicity and resistance. There is much concern, among younger people in particular, about the fact that their elders, appear not to recognise their own oppression. They explain the apparent complicity of their elders in their own domination, in terms of 'docility' caused by the 'disciplinary blockade' of the mission (although they do not use such Foucauldian terms themselves). They see many of their elders as being blocked from seeing that they were actually treated badly during the mission days and that they

continue to be oppressed today. However, docility and resistance are not fixed, diametrically opposed ways of being in the world. Resistance overflows docility. People who grew up on the mission have both good and bad memories of the institution. The tension between docility and resistance is not just a tension between different people, or categories of people. Individuals embody both docility and resistance. Aboriginal people experience daily the torment of being subjects of both power and freedom.

As well as reminiscences of life on Mona Mona, Aboriginal people also recount narratives about 'round-ups' and 'massacres'. These narratives are a qualitatively different form of remembering from reminiscences which are not narrative, or only quasi-narrative in structure. Their narrative structure marks their significance as part of a body of collective knowledge with claims for recognition within the dominant discourse as having a truth value equivalent to other historical records.

People whose ancestors were among those rounded up in the Kuranda area to be taken to the Mission retell the stories they were told by their elders about places they used to hide[9], about the violence of the police, and of 'massacres' of Aborigines by white settlers. Collins (1981:20) was told the following story by Cecil Brim, who has since passed away. I quote from his thesis,

> The policeman (from Kuranda) came up there (Speewah). We were well known to him. Some people used to run away from the policeman. They didn't want to go to the Mission in those days. The policeman

> caught us and we walked from there to Kuranda. We saw all the dilly
> bags and spears at the police station that the people had to leave behind.
> We then went up to the Mission and saw our mob there and we started
> to talk language...

Cecil Brim also told this story to his eldest daughter, Marita (pers. comm. 4 Jan. 1995). Other members of the Brim family know of the Speewah round up but it is this particular daughter who is the present keeper and transmitter of 'the story' and when requesting historical details from others, I was referred to her.

Marita also tells a story passed on to her by her mother who had been 'kidnapped' by a policeman from a camp at Mt Carbine and taken to Mona Mona. Her mother's tribal name was Gurruma but she was known as Dinah on the Mission. Gurruma's tribal group was Kuku Yalandji but her father was a white policeman. Because he knew where Gurruma's mother was camped, he was able to capture his daughter. He came one day with a 'black tracker' while the adults were away from the camp and only the children were home. The children had been told to hide from strangers. According to Marita the policeman called out and then set fire to the camp in order to make the children reveal themselves, and Gurruma was caught. They took her because she was considered 'half-caste' and it was the practice to remove such children from Aboriginal influence. This is how Marita understands it:

> ...my mother was half-caste, fair-skinned. In those days the Mission was
> really the place for all the half-caste children. They said they had white
> man's brains and the government thought they might turn against them

or something and they took them all off their parents (pers. comm. 4 Jan. 1995).

The recording of such accounts of round-ups and massacres are important to Aboriginal people in Kuranda not only because they tell 'their side' of the history of European settlement, but because they have contemporary currency in helping to establish their native title rights to country. Massacre and round-up stories, as a genre, are part of a discourse of identity which celebrates Aboriginality on the basis of a common or shared experience of violence[10]. An example of this is the massacre story based on the memories of Granny Buttercup, which is today told in the film screened in the history theatre at the Tjapukai Cultural Centre, which I discuss in Chapter 6.

According to Aboriginal practice in Kuranda, the right to tell such stories is confined to particular individuals. It is a right that rests on means of transmission. A person has the right to tell a story if it was directly transmitted to them by an elder, usually one of their grandparents and/or parents. The basis of the elder's choice with regard to whom stories are transmitted rests on kinship connections, the age of the person to whom the right is being conferred, and on position in the family, as well as on the interest displayed by the particular individual in learning from the elder. Such stories therefore come to be thought of as a form of intellectual property and anthropologists and other researchers asking for oral history are treated

with reserve, particularly if there is any suspicion that they might be gaining financially from such studies.

What is clear from the oral accounts of Aboriginal people, is that in comparison with non-Aboriginal residents of the Kuranda area, who see themselves as a community of autonomous individuals, Aboriginal people much more readily place their personal narratives and reminiscences within the wider historical context of their collective experience of the various instruments of government. Rather than experiencing power as 'strategic games between liberties', they experience it as a 'state of domination' (Foucault 1988b:19). I discuss this further in Chapter 8.

History and memory as recollection are different types of discursive practice and different ways of being in the world. History gives priority to mind, or the cognitive dimensions of being, while recollection leans towards body and place. Through a politics of memory people implace themselves and thus contest the relations of power and domination that they experience as already in place, and which determine the truth value of history.

**Identity and Difference**

Much recent writing in the social sciences, and particularly in the field of cultural studies, focuses, almost obsessively, and to the exclusion of everything else, on the topic of cultural identity. Identity is treated as if it

were simply a matter of free choice on the part of individuals or groups from a toy box of cultural traits, rather than a process embedded in historical processes.  In its contemporary use the term identity tends to be used to refer to characteristics that mark cultural boundaries so as to create categories of difference.  However, identity is not difference, but sameness, and sameness and difference produce one another.  As Moore (1994:2) writes, 'Identity and difference are not so much about categorical groupings as about processes of identification and differentiation.  These processes are engaged for all of us, in different ways, with the desire to belong, to be part of some community, however provisional.'  The processes are not boundary making processes, creating categories of sameness or of difference, extrinsic to each another.  Rather, identity (sameness) and difference produce one another intrinsically.

I see the basis of human sociality as an inescapable and continuous contestation, played out at every level and in all contexts, between the principles of sameness and difference: 'We are different', 'No, we are the same'; 'We are the same', 'No, we are different'.  Sameness continually works to encompass difference but in the very process of encompassment difference is regenerated.  An example of this process of differentiation and identification can be found in the social dramas and the theatrical performances staged in the Kuranda Amphitheatre which I discuss in Chapter 4 and in the performances of protest against the Kuranda Skyrail which I discuss in Chapter 8.

Although both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Kuranda perceive Kuranda as a town relatively free of racism, the racial division is, in fact, 'deeply imbedded' in its history, as it is for many other Australian towns (Cowlishaw 1997:179; see Cowlishaw 1988; Morris 1989). The process of identification and differentiation can only be understood as an historical process and not as something divorced from the social situation, or the political and economic circumstances and modes of power which generate it.

**Practice and Performance**

Anthropologists and other scholars have found it useful to investigate many different types of human activity in terms of performance and the intellectual roots of this are deep and intertwined. I use the term performance very generally to embrace events, or series of events, which are to various degrees planned, rehearsed, and presented, or in which there are elements that have been planned, rehearsed, and presented. I do not however distinguish performance as a separate mode of being in the world, somehow different from everyday being. The development of the interdisciplinary field of 'performance studies' assumes such a distinction, particularly in the way the concept of 'frame', introduced by Bateson (1972) in his essay "A Theory of Play and Fantasy", and adopted by Goffman (1974), has been applied to define performance as distinct from everyday practice. Practice and performance are not two essentially different types of human activity. Rather

than taking it as entirely framed off from everyday practice, I see performance as a type of practice. In Kuranda, performances have become for some people the very practice of everyday life. They include community meetings, protest demonstrations, touting to tourists, busking and street theatre, street marches, festivals, sports matches, as well as community theatre productions, dance and music concerts, and ritual performances.

It has been argued, that what distinguishes performance from practice is consciousness. In other words, unlike practice, performance is a self-conscious activity. As Blau (1990:250) writes, 'What is universal in performance...are the marks of punctuation which are inflections (or economic indices) of *consciousness* even in performance which, like autistic play, speaking in tongues, or Sufi whirling, seems to occur without it'. The consciousness of practice which leads to performance, however, need not take the form of a cognitive awareness of practice, or of a situation, which could be reflected upon and explained through the use of language. Consciousness is a particular orientation of the body in the world (Kapferer 1997:222), fed by body memory and place memory. Consciousness does not necessarily refer to a mere cognitive awareness of a particular practice one may be performing at any given moment, but rather a recognition of being *in connection* with place and *in relationship* with others in place. This raises issues to do with the concept of resistance which I discuss in my concluding chapter.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have introduced a number of conceptual issues which frame my analysis in the following chapters. The social dramas that are generated in Kuranda express tensions and contradictions which allow for the exploration of the nature of, and relationship between space and place, history and memory, identity and difference, and practice and performance.

Memory is a means by which we inject time into place, immerse time in place. The link between memory and place is realised through the agency of the *lived* body (Casey 1987). Places do not inherently hold memories. They are empowered to hold memory by the sociality which defines a body as *lived.* Places are constituted and animated by the social and political engagement of human beings with one another. However, people make place not out of some kind of neutral and inert substance, but out of a substance that has already been moulded by others. It is in this sense that place is already 'pregnant with the past' (Ingold 1993:153), pregnant with practices of power and domination.

To remove people from their home places can lead to a profound loss of being. However, just as we store our memories in places, so also our memories become, in turn, a storehouse of places (Casey 1987). Thus, to remove a people from place/s does not necessarily mean that the memory of the places themselves is lost for them, as is attested by the phenomenon of nostalgia or homesickness. Such memories can even be passed on to the next

generation. Lost places can be commemorated. What does happen however is that those bodily memories that are only triggered and built upon through social engagement in those places, through implacement, become mutilated. In the next chapter I trace the disciplinary practices by which the mutilation of memory, or forced forgetting, bodily and cognitively, was effected in the case of Aboriginal people sent to Mona Mona Mission near Kuranda.

[1] 'It was a matter of analyzing, not behaviours or ideas, nor societies and their "ideologies", but the *problematizations* through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought - and the *practices* on the basis of which these problematizations are formed' (Foucault 1985:11).

[2] My distinction between narrative and scientific knowledge is based on a reading of Lyotard (1984)

[3] I use the term 'hearing' here intentionally as a means of indirect reference to a social context in which Aboriginal people are forced to evidence their rights to land in tribunal hearings or courts of law.

[4] Collins (1981:50) includes a copy of a photograph of one of these camps on Mona Mona Mission, circa 1917 (ie. Plate 16). The photograph is from the personal collection of the late Mrs Lucy Levers.

[5] There were actually several Acts. These were: the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* s 1897 which provided for the official creation of, and removal of Aborigines to, reserves (sections 4(a), 4(b), and 9), its successor, the *Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act* 1939, and finally, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Act* 1965 which, although it repealed some of the earlier 'protection' provisions, still maintained the reserve system in Queensland.

[6] Where information included in this thesis is based on untaped discussions with Kuranda people I reference it using the abbreviation 'pers. comm.', whereas when I quote from transcriptions of taped interviews I use the abbreviation 'i/v'. I have tried to protect the privacy of individuals where possible by avoiding naming them.

[7] According to Roberts (1984) in the early days before the gaol had been built, offenders were simply chained up under the missionary's house. The gaol was introduced by Pastor Borgas. It had two rooms, about eight feet square with tins for a toilet and a small opening in the door big enough for a hand to pass through the rations of one slice of white bread and water at meal times

[8] There is still much shame attached to having been sent to Palm Island. People are reluctant to talk about the reasons they were sent there even though some of them appear trivial by today's standards.

[9] For example Syd Gray, son of Djabugay elder, Mrs Enid Boyle, recorded in 1981 his mother and her husband Mr Jimmy Boyle talking about a water fall where people would run to hide from the white man (See Tape Outline held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra).

[10] Accounts of the removal and institutionalisation of Aboriginal children, Australia wide, and first hand accounts of experiences of members of 'the stolen generation', have been documented by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. The report (Wilson 1997) has led to a renewed effort on the part of some settler Australians to take part in reconciliation measures, and has led to the circulation in Australia of 'sorry books' which settler Australians are encouraged to sign, and the emergence of what has been called 'National Sorry Day'.

# Chapter 2

# Colonizing Place, Mutilating Memory

It is with a Foucauldian approach to history in mind that I trace in this chapter the 'descent' of contemporary political practices of Kuranda as a place. I discuss the European colonisation of the area, and the practices of memory erasure through which Aboriginal place became empty space (*terra nullius*) and thus able to be reconstituted as European place.

**Colonization of Aboriginal Places**

Before European colonisation of North Queensland, Aboriginal people of the rainforest region around Kuranda made 'systematic and sustained' use of clearings in the rainforest connected by a network of tracks (Loos 1982:89). Loos (1982:89) cites as evidence for this, passages from the diary of the explorer and prospector Christie Palmerston who made an expedition from Herberton to the Barron Falls in December 1884 and January 1885[1], and also a passage from the journal of explorer, and discoverer of the Palmer River goldfield, James Venture Mulligan, who made an expedition through the area in 1875 . Both explorers commented on the network of paths in the area (Plate 1). The following passages from their journals establish the nature of the intensive occupation of the North Queensland rainforest[2] region by Aboriginal people prior to European settlement.

> Traversed this creek only one mile seeing a great number of native tracks, also a number of shields painted and laid along its banks to dry...we could hear the aborigines talking on both sides of the creek, and passed through several camps from which they had scampered away leaving everything on seeing us:- native blankets in dozens, bushels of red berries cooked and uncooked; I believe there was a hundredweight of newly crushed meal heaped up on their greasy looking blankets. Long ungainly swords and shields scattered about in all directions; scores of small fishing nets...(Palmerston in Woolston & Colliver 1968:28)

Similarly, Mulligan (1877:6) writes:

> ... at the end of the creek on which we are camped struck a blackfellows' track or road; we followed it for over two miles round to the west end of the scrub. The track is well beaten, and runs between the hills and the scrub, I believe all the way to forest country, as judging from what we can see from an eminence...A splendid track, the best native track I ever saw anywhere. There are roads off the main track to each of their townships, which consist of well thatched gunyahs, big enough to hold five or six darkies. We counted eleven such townships since we came to the edge of the scrub, and we have only travelled four miles along it. At certain seasons this must be a crowded place with blacks, which seem to live principally on nuts, for there are barrowfuls of nutshells at their camps...

A descendant of one of the early settler families (the late Maurie Veivers, pers. comm. 16 Jan. 1996), said that when they rode through 'the scrub' down to the coast before the range road was built, they would picnic and/or camp overnight in 'pockets' in the scrub. He said they would ride out through Myola and Wah Hae to McKenzie's Pocket. When I asked what these pockets were he said that he thought Aboriginal people had made them. He named other such pockets - Christmas Pocket, Cedar Pocket, Read's Pocket, Dinner Pocket, Welcome Pocket. That these pockets were extremely important in the European settlement of the rainforest area is indicated by their names. It is clear that the settlers recognised them as not only landmarks but also havens

in the broad expanse of endless and unwelcoming scrub. They were not only obvious places to camp but also sites from which to begin initial settlement of the area.

As Loos (1982:89) notes, all of the pockets in the rainforest discovered by explorers and made use of by early settlers 'were probably Aboriginal camp or ceremonial sites'. The following accounts by the explorer Christie Palmerston could be taken as evidence of this[3]:

> I continued my journey along this large path, making great progress...and also through many native camps, saw many paths leading from and junctioning with, this one. In two miles it led me to a small pocket or open space of about an acre or less...This corroboree ground presented a clean orderly appearance, the smallest shrub even having been plucked out by the roots, to all appearances the preceding day. Its shape was circular, with a few large trees in the centre, mi-mis built all around it, at the edge of the scrub, and equal distances apart, adorned inside with skulls, some painted...Large paths, similar to the one followed by me, branch from this pocket in all directions (Palmerston in Woolston & Colliver 1968:29).

> We reached a pocket - that is a piece of open country about a quarter of an acre in size, circular shaped, used by the Aborigines for war dances and fighting. They take particular care to keep the place free from jungle, which would creep over it in a few seasons if allowed. There were several gunyahs around its margin...(Palmerston 1885-86:232).

About thirty years later, another European travelling and studying in the area, Mjoberg (1918:168), wrote that the 'tribes of the dense rainforest area',

> ...prefer a site close to the rainforest margin, where the light conditions are better and where the constant dripping from the rainforest trees does not prevent them from drying out in the sun. They often cut out a large circle in the rainforest, before they put up their humpies, partly to get some sunshine and partly to avoid the old branches falling down on them.

The fact that Europeans did not simply move into the country in a general way but actually chose to occupy specific Aboriginal home sites is significant in terms of the immediate and traumatic impact that European settlement had on the Aboriginal population. This occupation of Aboriginal home sites is corroborated by my ethnographic interviews with older Djabugay people. Some of these pockets were associated with particular family groups, while others were places where different family groups met for socialising, for ceremonial activity and for exchange. The Djabugay name for these places is *bulmba*. The term can be qualified to refer to particular types of places such as corroboree grounds or fighting grounds and to refer to people (of the same place). In other words it refers not simply to a bounded place but also to the general concept of home, or homeland and may be extended to mean 'the world, land, sea, sky and even time itself' (Banning & Quinn 1989:73). Cassells (1977) as part of her linguistic study of Djabugay for example recorded the following (my emphasis):

gulu   *bulmba*     ngandji   binangunday   yaluguli
      camp, home   1pl.      listen         Today
Today we listen to the people at home

bamulu     *bulmba*   djurawala   ngundaying
person-ERG  home      wrong now   see
and we see people doing wrong now
...
gulu    ngandjin   *bulmba*   nyiwul   yiringan
       1p.         home     one     belong
This is our only home here, this land

*bulmba*          ngandji   binangundalum
camp, home, land   1pl.     listen- PURP
Let's listen to the old people

gadjagadjar                 ngandjinda         *bulmba*   djanang   burmu
wala
spirits -REDUP-WITH     1pl. DAT        home        stand        still
now
Everything is standing still now
...
gulay   *bulmba*          guragura                          wala
        home, people    great grandfathers, ancestors    now
All the old people are gone now
...
gulaywu       *bulmbawu*       bibunbaywu
these -ALL    camp -ALL        child, young - ALL
For all these young ones

*bulmba*   ngandji   yiringanu   wanggaruwanggaru   nguru
home        1pl.       belong        east -ALL
This is our home, stretching all the way east, right up

ngunbaywu      ngunbaywu   wanggaru   nguru   guwulu   wuru
Kuranda -ALL  -REDUP                            Speewah
To Kuranda, and right back to Speewah,

yalngiri              wuru       guyangga       wuruwu    wubulu
wuru
Crystal Cascades              PLACE NAME              PLACE
NAME
and Crystal Cascades; up to guyangga and down to wubulu,

djulanuwu       wuru     gulu     guludu     wuru     djulanu
PLACE -ALL                        Dove Creek         PLACE
NAME
and right on to djulanu and Dove Creek,

marandjaru      wuru   garadjuruwu   wuru   gudjay   *bulmba*
Bebo Mountain         PLACE -ALL           those    places
Bebo Mountain, and garadjuru
...
*bulmba*:     guragurawu     wala   mayngalawu   wala
old people   last of the line   now    nothing -ALL   now
We, the old people, are the last ones left, we are going soon.
...

This text, of which I have only selected a part, describes not just the extent of the land that the informant considered home, but also 'home' in a fuller sense as being in relationship with others through place.

It was into the very heart of Aboriginal land in the rainforest that European settlers first moved. In other words it was not simply a case of settlement of their general territory, but of occupation of their dwelling places, their homes, their hearths. Thus began the erasure of place memory.

It can be inferred that townships like Kuranda and other smaller settlements in the area, such as Kowrowa and Mantaka (see Appendix) began and grew from these pockets, that is, the *hearth* lands of Aboriginal country[4]. Mantaka and Kowrowa were known to the early settlers as 'Welcome Pocket' and 'Dinner Pocket' respectively. Djabugay elders remember that there were camps at many places like these along the banks of the Barron River and its tributaries. Particularly well remembered are camps behind the Kuranda Railway Station, at Kuranda Heights and at Oak Forest)[5] (pers. comm. E, 17 Jan. 1996; F, 20 Feb. 1997). Some of these places are associated with particular families while others are meeting places for wider social activity. The concentration of population along the river and its importance in terms of identity is evidenced by the name given to the people in the literature, and the name which they themselves sometimes used after European settlement and

before the name 'Djabugay' took contemporary political precedence, that is, the 'Barron River Tribe'.

Although Aboriginal people on the coast had begun to experience the devastating effects of the *beche de mer* fishing industry as early as the 1860's[6], the first Europeans to actually move into the rainforest region were timber-getters during the 1870's. Prospectors, miners and selectors soon followed the timber-getters, so that there was impact upon the rainforest peoples from all directions[7]. As Loos (1982:93) writes,

> While timber-getters and selectors were encroaching upon the rainforest Aborigines from the east, denying them the rivers and river flats of the Daintree, Barron, Mulgrave, and the Johnstone, miners and newly-established small cattle stations on the west were restricting their access to hunting grounds and freshwater fishing.

The first of the cattle stations to be established close to Kuranda was 'Emerald End' on the Barron River, owned by John Atherton. It was halfway along the road from Port Douglas to Herberton, and provided a convenient resting place for miners and prospectors on their way to the gold and tin fields. At this stage there was no direct route from Cairns through the range. John Atherton thus encouraged the building of a rest house near his station, the Granite Creek Coach Stage, at what is now the township of Mareeba (Borland 1946:6). The Granite Creek Receiving Office was opened in 1884, closed in 1886 and reopened in 1891, being elevated to the Mareeba Post Office in 1893 (Frew 1981:339). The Receiving Office at Middle Crossing, at a crossing point

on the Barron River near what was to become Kuranda, was opened in 1888 (Frew 1981:322).

It was in the main construction phase of the railway line and the roads through the range that direct contact between Aborigines and the settlers intensified. Settler communities of railway workers and farmers sprang up along the railway sidings. More and more land was made available for selection[8]. In the mean time timber-getters, prospectors and miners continued to move into the region. Many of the selectors found it difficult to make a living out of farming and supplemented their income by working in the timber industry or on the railways. Prospecting and mining also drew people but they had to move further west. Between Kuranda and Mareeba, there was the Clohesey River Goldfield but it was in operation only for a couple of years in the early 1890s.

According to Loos(1982:3) the European encroachment on Aboriginal country meant that rainforest Aborigines had reduced access to traditional food sources to the point that they were actually starving. This is supported by Roth who in his Annual Report (1900:2) as Northern Protector of Aborigines wrote:

> As each new block of country becomes taken up, the blacks are forcibly hunted off their water supplies and hunting grounds both in it and in its immediate neighbourhood. *According to their own laws of trespass they are prevented from seeking fresh pastures*, except at the cost of fighting...[my emphasis][9]

However, the rainforest was enough of a formidable barrier to the settlers, so that it provided for some Aborigines a relatively safe haven from which to mount a campaign of resistance and supplement their diet with the settlers' cattle. According to Bolton (1963:94):

> The dense forests between the Atherton Tableland and the coast hid the comings and goings of cattle-killers only too well. John Atherton estimated his average loss as a bullock a day for five years, and once or twice a spear was aimed at him.

There is no mention by Bolton of any guns Atherton aimed in retaliation, although according to Aboriginal oral history, now documented on the film shown in the history theatre of the Tjapukai Cultural Centre, he ordered, and was himself involved in, a massacre of Aboriginal people who had stolen one of his horses in lieu of payment of a bullock promised them for showing him a way across the range and down to the coast[10].

Loos (1982:93) argues that resistance to European settlement from rainforest Aborigines 'was so effective that it led to the evolution of a completely new government policy', that is, rationing. Loos describes the development of Queensland's frontier policy to control resistance and 'pacify the Aborigines' by providing food rations. This policy, which was initiated and supported by some of the settlers themselves, contrasts with the earlier policy of allowing retaliation in the form of violent 'dispersal' of Aboriginal groups with the use of the Native Police. According to Loos, the Native Police force had anyway proved to be ineffective in the face of the large-scale resistance of rainforest people.

The new policy of rationing meant that Aboriginal people who had previously been repelled from areas of white settlement were now 'let in'. Writing at that time, Eden (1872:211) defined 'letting in' as allowing, and indeed encouraging, the Aborigines:

> ...to come and make themselves useful, shepherding a few sheep, chopping wood, stripping bark, and a thousand odd jobs to which they are adapted, receiving in return protection as long as they behaved well, and little presents of blankets, tomahawks etc...

In other words, not only Aboriginal land, but also their labour was now to be appropriated. The new meant the rapid development of fringe camps. This included at least one, but possibly more, camps near Kuranda. There was a ration station at Kuranda in 1896 (Meston 1896:9). Meston (1897:8) also lists a depot at Myola as distributing food and tobacco to Aborigines camped in that area. The Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals for the year 1913 contains two photographs bearing the captions, 'Native Camp - Near Barron Falls' and 'Camp Natives - Kuranda'. Copies of these photographs, and another photograph taken in 1904 of a Kuranda Camp, are held in the photographic collection of the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, and one of which is reproduced in this thesis with the permission of the Library Board of Queensland (Plates 2). Whether these are all of the same camp, or of different camps, is unclear. There were also camps on a number of settler properties in the area. Some Aboriginal families continued to occupy the same camping places that they had before the settlers

arrived, but since these camps were now located on farms and stations, they came to be (re)classified as 'fringe camps'.

Since their Aboriginal names went officially unrecognised Aboriginal people were given, and themselves adopted, the practice of taking the names of the particular European settlers of their country for whom they worked. For example the Djabugay family named Matthisen adopted their name from Thron and Elizabeth Matthisen who settled beside the railway line at Dinner Pocket (now Kowrowa) in about 1907. Charlie and Rosie Matthisen lived on the Matthisen property and worked for the family. Even after they were moved to Mona Mona Mission, Charlie and Rosie continued to work for different members of this particular settler family for many years (Hughes 1982:3)[11]. Similarly, the Aboriginal family Street took their name from the settler Alfred Street who began to grow coffee on their country in 1896. His property was called 'Fernhill Plantation'. In 1950 the property was bought by two Englishmen who planted it as a citrus orchard and renamed it Mountain Grove. The current owners bought the property in 1974 and gradually transformed it into a cultural tourism and wildlife park called the Kuranda Rainforestation, featuring the Pamagirri Aboriginal Dance Troupe[12]. Members of the Street family today still assert their connection to this country. In particular, in 1995 the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation made an application under s.10 of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act* 1984 (Cwlth) for a declaration to protect sites in the

Street's Creek area threatened by construction of the Skyrail Development[13]. Other Aboriginal family names which can be traced to settlers include Hobson, Hobbler, and Newbury. George Hobson, who had a selection at Myola, was 'gashed to death with scrub knives' there on 20 July 1890. An Aboriginal, referred to in the *Cairns Post* as 'Darkie', was sentenced to death for his murder. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and he was sent to Fraser Island. He escaped and was eventually recaptured in Kuranda in 1902 (Jones 1976:314). On his list of pioneer families of the Kuranda district, Crothers (n.d.) lists Hobler as a railway engineer[14] and the Newbury family is listed as having lived in the first house on the Cairns side of Collins Bridge, over the Barron River. A Newbury worked on the construction of the range railway and was killed with six others in a cave-in at No.15 tunnel in April 1889 (Broughton 1991:32).

Other Aboriginal families took their names from explorers and government officers posted to their areas. Connolly (1984:44), in his family history, writes of an Aboriginal leader called Dick Palmerston who took his name from the explorer Christie Palmerston.

> The Mowbray Valley was the hunting grounds of the Chabbuki [Djabugay] Tribe of Aborigines, and about 40 of the old tribe continued to move through the Valley on their hunting trips on walk-about, between the Port Douglas camp, and the camp at Mona Mona, near Kuranda. Their King was called Dick Palmerston, who claimed to be one of Christie Palmerston's guides[15].

Similarly, the well known Aboriginal family name of Donoghue was taken from the local policeman stationed in Kuranda during 1915/1916.

The practice of taking, or being given, the names of European settlers, meant that, where families were separated, or where individuals worked for different settlers, it sometimes happened that members of the same Aboriginal family found themselves having different surnames.  According to Marita Hobbler (i/v 4 Jan. 1995) this happened in her family.  Her father Cecil Brim and his brothers were separated during the police 'round-up' at Speewah.  They never saw each other again.  Her father had worked for a Brim and went by that name while one of his brothers, who had escaped the round-up, adopted a different surname.  His descendants therefore have that name.  According to Marita, she met this side of her family for the first time recently.  Her cousin had seen a funeral notice in the paper for a Brim and had come to meet his relatives.  Knowledge of the existence of the Brims had been passed down to him.  As Marita put it, 'They usually pass on, you know. They pass on that knowledge.  [He's got the name ... ] but yet he still know he's a Brim'.  Similarly, according to Esther Snider (i/v 18 June, 1996), her father, Willie Thompson, was actually a Hobbler.  He just happened to be working for a man named Thompson and took that name.  She said that recently she was asked why she had not changed her name to Hobbler, but she had replied that she could not be bothered since she had already been registered as Thompson[16].

The re*place*ment of Aboriginal names, of both people and places, with the names of the European settlers operated to erase the priority of Aboriginal connection with these places from settler memory.  However, it did not result in the erasure of Aboriginal peoples' memory of the tie between people and place.  It was the eventual total removal of Aboriginal people from their home places and their internment in institutions which more strategically operated to secure the erasure of their prior identity in place.  Hot on the heels of *terra-nullius* came '*homo-nullius*' [17], a horrific re-creation of Aborigines as less than fully human, through a process of mutilation of place memory.

**Fringe-Camps and Missionization**

After Meston (1896:10) visited Kuranda during his 1896 inquiry into the 'conditions of the Northern Aboriginals' he estimated that about 50 or 60 Aborigines were receiving regular supplies, distributed under the supervision of the police, from the ration station at Kuranda.  In support of the policy of rationing, he notes that 'they have regarded the food as an act of friendship from the Government, and responded by being peaceable and friendly with all the settlers in the neighbourhood, giving no trouble whatever'.  Meston noted however that at Mareeba food was scarce for the Aborigines and that he himself '*mustered* about 100 blacks and gave them flour, beef, and some tobacco'(1896:11; my emphasis)[18].

The policy of providing Aboriginal people with rations and blankets heralded what is known as 'the protection era' in Australian government relations with Aborigines. By the end of the nineteenth century, the different Australian states had begun to introduce more comprehensive legislation to 'protect' Aboriginal people. Queensland's *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* 1897 was the first of such 'protection' legislation. The Bill was put before parliament on the recommendations, and information in the reports, of Sir Archibald Meston, and Mr W. E Parry-Okeden, who were appointed as Special Commissioners by the Queensland Government to inquire into the conditions of the Aborigines. One of Meston's (1896:14) recommendations reads as follows:

> 7. That "Aboriginal Reserves" be created in South, Central and North Queensland, where certain of the aboriginals can be collected to form a permanent home, and marry and beget children, and live happily, free from all contact with the white race, except those placed in charge to see that order is established, their allotted food supplies distributed , and teach them gardening and farming so as to make reserves as far as possible, if not altogether, self-supporting.
>
> This principle of isolation on reserves, and total exclusion of whites, has long been adopted by the Canadian and American Governments towards the Indians of both nations.
>
> To keep our aboriginals away from contact with the whites, or that section with which they unfortunately mingle, is the most beneficial act of friendship within our power to bestow. It is also the only possible method of saving any part of the race from extinction[19].

Although Meston was obviously sympathetic with regard to the plight of Aborigines, and his recommendations were well-intentioned, they heralded a

most heinous regime of disciplinary control over Aboriginal people, the impact of which is still being experienced today. An examination of this disciplinary regime makes intelligible the contemporary bureaucratic practices of power which continue to operate to control Aboriginal people.

The 1897 'Protection' Act provided for the extensive regulation of the lives of Aboriginal people in Queensland[20]. A key feature of the legislation was that it enabled the creation of special reserves for Aborigines and their segregation from non-Aboriginal society. The Act provided for the appointment of Protectors of Aborigines, Superintendents for the reserves, and other officers; the removal of Aborigines to reserves; the control of Aborigines on such reserves, including their discipline and punishment, and the suppression of their languages, rituals and beliefs; the supervision of their property and money; the control of their employment and conditions of employment; the supervision, custody, and care of their children; the exclusion of unauthorised persons from reserves; the control of marriages with non-Aboriginal people; the issue of blankets and rations; and the restriction of the sale of liquor or

opium to Aborigines. In other words, the legislation allowed for the complete official control of Aboriginal people from birth to death.

In 1898 two Protectors, Archibald Meston and Walter Edmund Roth, were appointed, one each of southern and northern Queensland respectively. The

Commissioner of Police, William Edward Parry-Okeden, was also appointed as a protector for both districts and Police Officers and Clerks of Petty Sessions acted under the direction of the Protectors. There were no avenues of appeal for Aborigines from the administrative decisions of these officials.

Besides setting up its own government-run reserves, the State of Queensland actively encouraged Christian churches, eager to undertake missionary work, to operate their missions as officially recognised reserves. In exchange for reserve land and government contribution to mission costs, the various Christian Churches were thus harnessed into the service of the State to help implement its protectionist policy. Missionaries became direct agents of the government in that the Superintendents of missions were appointed as local Protectors of Aborigines under the Act. By 1905, the Northern Protector of Aboriginals, W.E. Roth, was able to note that 'the mission stations are year by year becoming of greater assistance to the State in dealing with the pauper aboriginal waifs and strays, adults and children, on the most economic lines'(Annual Report 1905: 13).

### 'The Carceral System'[21]

In the Kuranda region it was not until 1914 that Aboriginal people began to be systematically relocated to missions and reserves. Until Mona Mona Mission was established about twenty kilometres northwest of Kuranda by the Seventh Day Adventist Church in 1913[22], the closest reserve was at Yarrabah, near Cairns. Some Aborigines from Kuranda area were taken there. Their

camps were visited by missionaries from Yarrabah. In his Report for 1899

(1900:6) the Northern Protector of Aboriginals, W.E. Roth wrote:

> The missionaries continue to visit the aboriginal camps in the surrounding districts, and have thus come into personal touch with some 282 blacks distributed along the Barron River, the Mulgrave River, and at Kuranda. In addition to the spiritual advantages accruing from this peripatetic method of holding religious service, Mr. Gribble does a great deal of good in relieving sickness and disease with his case of medicines...and loses no opportunity of proclaiming the benefits of the Mission station. By those means he picks up many a little waif and stray, and, with the consent of the parent, brings them into Yarrabah. Similarly, some of the older Mission boys have been trained for this particular kind of work, and parties of these young men, independently of Mr Gribble, have brought several little children into the station.

Aborigines from the Kuranda area were also removed to other Reserves.

Charlie and Katey Lawrence for example were removed in 1915 from Myola

to the Hull River Mission[23]. Most people from the Kuranda region however

continued to live in their own camps along the Barron River until 1916. After

visiting Kuranda in 1912, the Chief Protector of Aboriginals, R.B. Howard,

noted in his Annual Report (1913:8):

> On reaching Kuranda, I found between 50 and 60 natives camped on the river; they were all in good health, and several are working under agreement. These people are a very quiet and contented lot; no opium, drink, or disease is found amongst them, and they are spoken of as excellent workers.

According to Collins (1981: 19) the first Aborigines to be brought in to Mona

Mona were a party of seven from Barambah in South East Queensland (now

Cherbourg). Taking his figures from the original Aboriginal rolls in the

Seventh Day Adventist Archives, he notes that other early arrivals were brought from Cairns (24), Yarrabah (12), Redlynch (2) and Mt Carbine (12)[24].

In 1914 a further two people were removed from Cairns, three people were transferred from Yarrabah, and thirty eight people were brought in from Mareeba. Among this group from Mareeba there were fourteen unnamed children[25]. According to the Chief Protector's *Annual Report* for the year 1914 (1915:19) there were by the end of that year, ninety three Aborigines at Mona Mona. The ranks however soon swelled as more groups of Aborigines were brought in by police during 1915 from the Mareeba area. Removal Order correspondence names a total of fifty five men, women and children removed by police that year from Mareeba to Mona Mona[26]. The Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals for the year 1915 lists a total of one hundred and twenty eight people removed to Mona Mona (59 men, 59 women, and 10 children) by the end of 1915.

News of the establishment of Mona Mona mission did not go down well with some of the Kuranda settlers, and according to one of them, not with the Kuranda Aborigines either. A local publican, E. Hunter, of Hunter's Barron Falls Hotel, wrote to the Protector of Aborigines on 8 September 1913 as follows,

> News has been received to the effect that a Mission Station is to be established a few miles from Kuranda. The blacks are very much upset over the matter as they do not favour the Mission. Will you kindly

> advise me what authority these seven days missioners have - if any - <u>to take these blacks against their wishes</u> [27].

The missionaries were not able to persuade Aborigines in the Kuranda camps to join the mission voluntarily.  However the Chief Protector of Aborigines considered that they must be removed to the mission regardless.  In his report of 7 September 1915 he wrote:

> About sixty natives are yet camped around the town of Kuranda and it would be greatly to their benefit to transfer them all to this Mission. They are a poor destitute lot, half-starved and half-naked and are really an eyesore to the numerous visitors to this beauty spot in the North.

It is interesting to compare his report on the condition of the Kuranda Aborigines with the 1913 report of his predecessor cited above.  Could there have been such a dramatic decline in a mere three years?  The reference to visitors and to the identity of Kuranda as a tourist destination is also significant.  The Kuranda publican's letter quoted below and the Protector's comments reveal conflicting sentiments regarding the value of Aborigines to the tourism in the area.


Ironically, a drought during 1914/1915 meant that the Mission could anyway not immediately accept sixty extra mouths to feed so the removal order was delayed until March 1916.  Under the heading 'Offence, and Cause for Removal' the removal order records 'poor destitute Aboriginals, to be removed for their own good'[28].  That they were neither poor nor destitute, but in fact were probably doing better on their own than they would on the Mission, is attested to by the local Protector of Aboriginals who wrote on 27

October 1915 in reply to an inquiry from the Chief Protector regarding their condition in the time of drought as follows:

> ...re circumstances of the Kuranda tribe of Aboriginals, I have the honour to inform you that inquiries have been made which disclose that the drought is not affecting them in any way. It is reported that they can obtain plenty of native food and owing to the Creeks drying up they can also get plenty of fish. There is no necessity for their immediate removal[29].

A number of the Kuranda Aborigines were under work agreements. They also earned some money from the tourists visiting their camps and, much like they are today, were even then considered a good tourist attraction for the town. E. Hunter from Hunter's Barron Falls Hotel was again inspired to write on the matter of their removal, this time to the Hon. E. Theodore:

> I have just heard that the Kuranda blacks are very shortly to be removed to the Mission Station. I must ask you to enquire into this for us as they are very interesting to tourists in their natural homes. They are a pure and the only increasing tribe known in the north. They are of great service to the inhabitants and give no trouble to the police[30],.

After the removal order came through, a total of 64 people from the Kuranda camps were eventually forcibly removed to the Mission, including, without warning to their employers, Aborigines under work agreements. This was in spite of the fact that the Chief Protector had issued an instruction that they could be left to be removed at a later date 'at the discretion of the Protector'.[31] The removal was not, however, effected in one go as many of the people escaped police capture. In a memo/letter dated 14 June 1916, to the Commissioner of Police, Senior Sergeant Kenny reported:

> ...the removal of the tribe has not been effected. Up to the present 36 of them have been removed. The others are scattered about the district

and always evade capture as they do not care to go to the mission. The remainder will be rounded up as soon as possible[32].

According to Collins (1981:20), Aboriginal people he interviewed told him that some of the people eventually picked up by police at Kuranda had earlier fled the round-ups at Mareeba and elsewhere in the Tablelands and were sheltering in the Kuranda camps. In general, camps connected with ration stations tended to be 'filled with Aboriginal people from different districts all suffering the destitution and impoverishment accompanying European economic development' (Finlayson 1991:48). According to Finlayson (1991:48) as well as people from the Kuranda area, the Barron Falls depot attracted people from Speewah and Redlynch who camped together. She notes, on the basis of discussions with Mrs Lucy Levers, who had been about 16 when she was brought in to Mona Mona from the Granite Creek Camp at Mareeba, that Tableland's camps had greater regional diversity than those at Kuranda, with the three camps at Mareeba having people 'from territories ranging from the southern reaches of the Atherton Tablelands, including Ravenshoe, west to Mt Surprise and Chillagoe'.

People from the Mareeba and Kuranda areas comprised the majority of 'inmates' of the Mission. However as noted above people from further afield were also removed to Mona Mona. According to Removal records, people were brought to Mona Mona from Mt Garnet, Herberton, Mt Molloy, Mt Carbine, Meadowbank Station, Almaden, Ashmore Station, Malanda, Cairns, Redlynch, Port Douglas, Mowbray Vale, and as far afield a Georgetown

(Appendix). However, in comparison to other reserves, like Palm Island and Yarrabah, to which people were removed from all over Queensland, Mona Mona's Aboriginal population, was relatively homogenous. After the intake of the large groups of camp Aborigines from Mareeba and Kuranda between 1914 and 1916 people tended to be removed to Mona Mona only as individuals or as small family groups. Some of these were transfers from other reserves for various alleged transgressions. Others were removals of 'neglected' children, young women, and so on. On the basis of reconstruction from place of removal, and the linguistic affiliation remembered by people today, three main language groups were represented on Mona Mona (Djabugay, Muluridji, and Kuku Yalandji), recognising of course that political and linguistic affiliation did/do not necessarily coincide. The anthropologist, Norman Tindale, who visited Mona Mona in 1938 (26 August - 5 September) lists many more (approximately twenty one) different tribes as being represented on the mission[33]. However, of these, the dominant ones in terms of numbers of people interviewed by Tindale were Djabugay, Muluridji, Kuku Yalandji, Kuku Imudji, Djirbal, and Yidiny [34]. This indicates that Mona Mona pooled a relatively locally based population of neighbouring tribes. Tindale also recorded a number of his informants as identifying as Buluwandji (Bulway speakers). Bulway is linguistically classified as having been a dialect of Djabugay spoken in the Kuranda area on the south side of the Barron River. People descended from Tindale's Buluwandji informants today identify as being Djabugay.

The confinement of Aboriginal people to reserves and mission stations meant that they could no longer regularly return to their *bulmba* (home places). It was in this way that place memory came to be slowly erased for some and mutilated for others. It is only when people were free to move along the network of paths though their country and reoccupy their camping places that they were also as part of this 'dwelling' able to rekindle their own memories and 'build' the memories of the next generation. Memories are not cognitively confined, but reveal themselves through being-in-the-world. The sight of a particular tree (today, usually the introduced mango tree) might trigger the memory of the mother who gave birth there and the telling of this memory to the next generation. Waterholes, rocks, and mountains unfold memory of the Dreamtime stories. The sounds of corroboree, of clapsticks and the pounding of the earth, recall the old people. The cracking of nuts, recall a grandmother preparing meal to cook for the children and a story she might have told them while she worked. The smell of damper cooking in the hot ashes, the warmth of the campfire, the touch of long grass brushing against one's legs, the cool water of the Barrron River on a hot day, the taste of a freshly cooked fish or wild bees' honey - this is the substance of place memory. It is from this that Aboriginal people were removed in order to be 'protected'.

The following extracts from various Police Station Charge Books[35] are an expression of the discourse of discipline and punishment which defined the Protectionist regime in Queensland:

> 'a *sentence of detention* for seven years in the Barambah Industrial School passed upon..., *convicted of a charge* of being a neglected child'

> '...Aged 7 years. *Arrested* on removal order at Ashmore Station to be sent to Mona Mona'

> ' It is believed ... is chasing after an Aboriginal named ... who is working at Tinaroo. He is known to have VD. This mating would not be desirable. Recommend ... and her child be removed to a Mission'

> '...*arrested* for absconding'

> '...*arrested* for unlawfully leaving Mona Mona'

> '..., half-caste Aboriginal. Order for removal to Mona Mona... Sent to Cairns *under escort*...'

The emphasis is my own. I wish to highlight the disciplinary practices that served to control Aboriginal people by keeping them in confinement on reserves and separate from the general population. The use of the phrase 'removal from' rather than 'bringing in' is very telling here also. Although the stated rationale behind the reserve system was to protect Aborigines, as practised the protectionist regime actually served the interests of the European settlers with respect to land, although not with regard to cheap labour, by 'removing' the possibility of any contested rights in such land.

Once removed to the Mission, the Aborigines effectively became prisoners. By law they could not leave unless special permission was given by the Mission Superintendent or they were granted Certificates of Exemption from

being 'under the Act'.  People who chose to leave Mona Mona, and other such Reserves, without permission were arrested or 'captured' as 'absconders', 'deserters', or 'escapees'[36].  Punishment for escaping was to be sent to a Mission or Government Reserve even further removed from one's home country and away from family and friends.

In their camps along the Barron, people had lived in dwellings constructed in the traditional manner (see Plate 2).  After they were removed to the Mission, they rebuilt their camp on the Mission constructing this same type of dwelling, as the mission was only just being established and at that stage not enough mission houses had been built[37].

According to what a number of older ex-Mona Mona residents remember, there were for many years two 'fringe' camps on Mona Mona - one of Djabugay speakers, the core of which came from the old camps on the Barron River at Kuranda, and one camp of Muluridji speaking people, mainly from the Granite Creek Camp at Mareeba (see also Finlayson 1991:51, and Collins 1984).  Only the older people lived in the camps as the children were removed to segregated dormitories (Plate 3).  A number of one and two bedroom houses were built each year on the Mission and allocated to couples/families on the basis of their compliance with Christian doctrines and the disciplinary program of the mission.  According to Finlayson (1991:52) some of the older Aborigines 'clung tenaciously' to their independence and lived out their lives

in the camps having refused mission housing even when it became available to them. The system of allocation of mission housing, however, served to promote a hierarchy among Aboriginal families which was reinforced by the privileges attached to particular employment opportunities. According to Finlayson (1991:48) 'much status accrued to those individuals selected to perform special roles in church services', such as singing in the choir and reading the Scripture[38]. Other favoured positions included jobs in the Mona Mona community police, supervising in the dormitories, working in the store, and teaching in the school and playing in the brass band.

There have been a number of anthropological studies done on the changing relations of Aboriginal peoples with the State. For example, Morris (1989) in his study of the Dhan-Gadi of northern New South Wales, and Trigger (1992) in his study of the Doomadgee Aboriginal community, northern Queensland, have both considered Aboriginal experiences of State power in the context of its deployment by various agents. Both authors are concerned with the nature of the everyday practices of coercive power by which the missionaries and police, as agents of the State, kept Aboriginal people oppressed. Both authors also consider the nature of Aboriginal resistance to such colonial domination. Many of the experiences of Kuranda Aborigines of life on Mona Mona parallel the experiences of other Aboriginal peoples in Australia who were similarly institutionalised under this 'protectionist' regime. Finlayson (1991), as part of her doctoral thesis, includes a history of Mona Mona mission

and a detailed account of the disciplinary practices 'by which the mission imposed its own cultural and religious perspectives on the Aboriginal inhabitants' (1991:287). These included the kinds of practices which Foucault (1977) discusses in *Discipline and Punish* - spatial segregation ('the art of distributions'), temporal control of activity, and the constant and hierarchical observation of behaviour, and provide an example in practice of a 'total institution' (Goffman 1968).

The mission was deliberately laid out so as to keep Aborigines separate from non-Aborigines and this was reinforced by rules making the missionaries' houses out of bounds to Aborigines except if they worked there as domestic workers, or on certain other special occasions. Children were kept segregated from their elders and from each other in dormitories and a strict visiting code was enforced[39]. Christian couples were segregated in neat rows of wooden box houses (Plate 4) from their 'wild' Aboriginal relatives living in the camps on the periphery. According to Finlayson (1991) even in the seating arrangements in the refectory, residents were deliberately kept segregated. Not just dormitory children, but even Aboriginal adults who had been allocated houses were forced to eat in the communal dining room until eventually they actually went on strike about it[40]. As Finlayson (1991:116) argues, being forced to eat in the refectory symbolised to the Mona Mona inmates their 'lack of status and their position as dependents'. All mission residents, except those in the camps, had to adhere to a strict timetable

organised around supervised activities - sleeping, eating, working, schooling, and church attendance. Even leisure time was strictly organised.

The most profoundly colonising practice of all was the removal of children from their parents and their segregation in dormitories. It was this practice, more than any direct prohibition, which resulted in the muting of Aboriginal orality and the erasure of Aboriginal ritual practices. Isolation in dormitories meant that the younger generation no longer had access to the sources of power which lay in the use of language, and in the performance of ritual. The Missionaries were most concerned about Aboriginal ritual practices but it was their impact on the use of Aboriginal languages which is today represented as the most profoundly disempowering result of institutionalisation. People who grew up on Mona Mona say they were forbidden to speak their languages. According to some accounts, older people, who spent time as children in the camps of their parents, managed to learn some vocabulary, but many of the old people say they were afraid of speaking language in front of their children. The missionaries were teaching them to read and write in English. Literacy in English was seen, by Missionaries and Aborigines alike, as a new form of power, one that would help Aborigines deal with the non-Aboriginal world that they were now confronting. However, although the missionaries saw themselves as 'doing good', as Levi-Strauss (1992:299) was led to observe in *Tristes Tropiques,* 'the fight against illiteracy is...connected with an increase in governmental authority over citizens. Everyone must be

able to read, so that the government can say: Ignorance of the law is no excuse'.

The point I wish to make however about the muting of Aboriginal orality on the mission was that it denied Aborigines the power that they themselves recognise as being inherent in 'language'[41].  With the muting of everyday language went also the special powerful words and phrases, songs that through their very utterance, allowed people to act upon their world - language in its performative mode, where orality is practice and saying things means doing things[42].  In other words, language and ritual practices are inseparable.  It is the actual words, or combination of words as sounded in the particular Aboriginal language, and as ritually applied, which contain the power to bring the world into being.  Taussig  (1993:105) discusses the nature of this 'mimetic magic' with respect to Cuna medical chants.  He writes,

> ...the simulacrum here is created with words, not objects! In fact two mimetic movements are involved.  One is the duplication in song of the spirits...The other mimetic movement depends upon this invocation of the spirits because, since they duplicate the physical world, then to bring them forth by means of song is to mimetically gain control over the mirror-image of physical reality that they represent.

Since it is not just the act of uttering but the utterance itself, that is, 'language', which is thought of as powerful, there is no possibility of translation.  Loss of language thus means loss of power.  This loss is felt by Aboriginal people in Kuranda today who in the context of native title claims are called upon to demonstrate the continuity of their connection with their country.  They themselves value knowledge of language as demonstrating connection with

place but they also know that this sort of knowledge is accepted within the discursive field of native title and heritage as a 'cultural fact'. It is such cultural facts which will be taken into account when the legal basis of their claims to land are assessed.

Younger people bemoan the fact that their elders did not pass on the language to them. They put this down to the fact the missionaries forbade them to speak their own languages. However, it was not simply that the older people were silenced but that the young people were made no longer able to *listen*. In fact a number of elders have complained to me that until recently, the younger people did not come to them to listen and learn. Cassells (1977) also noted the frustration and despair of older people at what is perceived and experienced as a profound loss of being. The following text is selected from her transcription and translation of a recording of Mr Gilpin Banning speaking in Djabugay, and also demonstrates his concept of the oneness of language, place memory and being-in-the-world:

> Those children make our mouth tired (from talking and not being listened to).
> They won't follow our words, what we say.
> ...
> Let's listen to the old people
> Everything is standing still now
> There is no goodwill now
> Many people have passed away
> The rules are not adhered to
> All the old people are gone now
> I am old now, I nearly cry
> for all these young ones.
> ...
> All these place names we don't listen to now

Come and get the words that come
from those far-away, old people who are long gone.
Come and get the words/language for all those places
Come and ask us the names
We must give it out now
We, the old people, are the last ones left, we are going soon.
The young ones do not listen now
The young ones take other paths now
Not the one path
The people are listening to bad things,
No more do they listen or perform corroborees, or practice *burayi*[43]
They break our law
After us (after we are gone) the young ones will see
Then they will get a fright, and they will be alone.
I say to you, the words are gone, past.  That's all now.

**From Incarceration to Assimilation**

In spite of some movement toward changes in government policy from 'protectionist' to 'assimilationist' during the 1930s[44], the Queensland Government further extended the powers of the Aboriginal Protectors with the introduction of new legislation, the *Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act 1939* .  As Wearne (1980:15) describes the situation, on missions like Mona Mona and other reserves:

> ...enormous power to control and direct was given by the Act to the superintendent.  Aboriginal courts on reserves could consist of the superintendent sitting alone - and he need not have legal training.  So broad and ill-defined were his powers that he could hear as an offence almost any matter of which he disapproved...The newly established Aboriginal police force, also under the superintendent's control, was wide open to manipulation by him through police 'trustees', and, hence, to abuse of individuals at his direction.  His responsibility also extended to the reserve gaol.  So not only did the superintendent represent the authority of the Protector/Director; under the Act, he was appointed policeman, judge and gaoler - a situation which completely negates the normal process and principles of justice.

The gaze of the state on Aborigines during this period was legitimised medically by the appointment of health practitioners who regularly examined the health of Aborigines on the reserves. Sections 12 and 13 of the Act empowered the Protector of Aboriginals to order Aborigines suspected of being infected with a contagious disease, to submit themselves to medical examination and to undergo medical attention. In 1937 Aboriginal people on Mona Mona were subjected to examination by Sir Raphael Cilento, Director General of Health and Medical Services, in response to a fear by missionaries of an outbreak of Hanson's Disease (leprosy). Sir Raphael found three cases of the disease and ordered that these people be removed to the leprosarium at Peel Island[45]. In April 1939, 247 Mona Mona residents were again examined by a medical officer. One 'positive case' of leprosy , one 'doubtful case' and nine 'suspect' cases were found[46]. By September 1940 however there were thirty five suspect cases noted[47] and the Woothakata Shire Council (now Mareeba Shire) wrote to the Director General of Health and Medical Services expressing concern over the lepers at Mona Mona and requesting that adequate action be taken to prevent "possible spread of the disease"[48]. Could it be perhaps that this 'outbreak' of leprosy was an expression of a public fear of the disease of the social body brought about by the new assimilation policy? It certainly resulted in the imposition of further disciplinary practices on Aboriginal people. In August 1938 the Chief Protector of Aboriginals wrote to the Superintendent of Mona Mona regarding the prevalence of leprosy on the mission and reminded him of the provisions in the Act which

gave him the power to prevent entirely the admission of visitors to the mission and Aborigines from leaving the mission[49]. In 1939, a separate leprosarium was established for Aboriginal people near Palm Island, at Fantome Island, and it was also intended that a camp for people 'suspected' of having leprosy eventually be established on the southern end of Orpheus Island.[50] A number of people were subsequently removed from Mona Mona into confinement at Fantome Island. In *Madness and Civilization* Foucault (1961:6) argued that long after leprosy had virtually disappeared in Europe during the Middle Ages, 'the values and images attached to the figure of the leper as well as the meaning of his exclusion...' remained. Foucault showed how the leprosariums of the Middle Ages, and earlier, were used centuries later to confine 'poor vagabonds, criminals, and "deranged minds"' (1961:7). Not leprosy itself, but the outbreak of *fear* of the disease and the consequent establishment of Fantome Island represents, I suggest, the last gasp, and grasp, of the 'great confinement' (Foucault 1961:38) of Aborigines in Queensland.

It was not until the 1950s that the assimilationist policy began to have some practical effect on the lives of Aborigines in Queensland. However, the government was still able to justify maintaining its reserve system. The Director of Native Affairs in his Annual Report (1960:2) noted:

> Mindful of the difficulties associated with the ultimate assimilation of the aboriginal race into the white community, the Queensland Government's policy of preparing native personnel toward such assimilation by education, trade, and domestic training, proceeds.

It became easier however for Aboriginal people to be granted exemptions and during the 1950s more and more Aboriginal people sought employment outside the mission. The Mona Mona mission administration itself began to pay a cash wage for work on the mission during this period[51]. However the administration still maintained control over wages because residents were forced to spend their cash at the mission store. Moreover, under section 12(10) of the *Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Acts* 1939-1946 which provided for the establishment of trust funds for 'the control of the savings of aboriginals, estates of deceased and missing aboriginals and unclaimed moneys', Aborigines had amounts deducted from their pay and 'saved' for them. For example out of a total weekly pay of eight pounds, a worker might only get in the hand three pounds 'pocket money' from his or her employer, with the rest being sent directly to the Protector for banking[52]. Often employers deducted from the 'pocket money' payment for such items as clothing and tobacco and rations supplied to their workers so that some people under agreement actually saw little or no cash.

In 1930/31 it became the practice to use money from the various Aboriginal trust funds for the purpose of 'supplementing the Vote'. This included interest from the savings accounts of Aborigines not living on reserves, 50% of the collections payable to the Aboriginal Protection Property Account (from the unclaimed estates of deceased and missing Aborigines), the total balance of the Aboriginal Provident Fund (created as a welfare fund for the relief of

sick and indigent Aborigines outside the reserves, by the deduction of 5% from the wages of single men and 2.5% from married men not resident on a reserve), and the Standing Account (revenue from reserve stores and proceeds of sale of produce from the reserves)[53]. The money was used to provide 'relief for sick and indigent natives' and to provide maintenance for relatives on reserves as well as to defray costs of removals. In 1941 the Public Service Inspectors wrote a report on the then Sub-Department of Native Affairs questioning the practice and recommending that it be discontinued (which was not in fact done until 1943)[54].

In 1955, Mona Mona was taken over by the state government and the Director of Native Affairs was appointed trustee of the reserve (Government Gazette, 26 November 1955, page 1426). The Seventh Day Adventist missionaries however continued to manage the reserve. There was a particular urgency in the case of Mona Mona to fast track the assimilation process because of plans to build a dam in that area. In his report to the Director of Native Affairs (see Annual Report 1962:12) the superintendent of Mona Mona Mission, Mr C.C. Litster wrote:

> A big proportion of our men are working out as stockmen, with the Forestry Department and on cane farms. As they assume responsibility for caring for their families, their self-confidence is growing. While more are employed off the Mission, our activities about the Station are diminishing, because less labour is available.
> Forty-three exemptions have been granted since March, 1962, in keeping with Departmental policy, and nine more are pending. Natives are becoming more willing to leave the protection of the Mission and take responsible places in society.

The Mission was finally closed as from 1st January 1963[55] and the Seventh Day Adventist Church appointed a Missionary/Welfare Officer, not only for 'spiritual guidance', but to assist Aborigines practically with finding suitable accommodation and employment[56].

**Australian Egalitarianism in Practice**

The push for people to move off the Mission leading up to its closure meant a period of turmoil and uncertainty for those people who had not yet established themselves on the outside. In 1962 the remaining population of Mona Mona was 338. According to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, when asked where they would like to live after the Mission closed the majority of these people said that they would prefer to remain in the Kuranda area. They however feared that their families would be split up and that they would be removed to government reserves like Yarrabah and Palm Island[57].

Actually, most people were encouraged by the missionaries to find accommodation in the Kuranda area. The Church authorities, Trans-Tasman Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, proposed a 'unique home ownership plan' to the Director of Native Affairs[58]. Aboriginal families were to be given the houses they had already been living in on the mission. These were to be transported to blocks of land made available for lease by the Lands Department. Aborigines would be given the opportunity to lease these blocks in their own name. This plan was seen to be in accordance with the

government's assimilation policy. However it catered only for married couples. It was agreed that any people 'not competent to come within the foregoing scheme' such as aged, orphans, widows with children, and single mothers, be sent to Palm Island[59].

Eventually some of the Mona Mona residents were indeed transferred to Palm Island. This was met with some resistance. In particular, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Advancement League protested against the proposed removal of nine young single women. The secretary of the League, Joe McGuiness, wrote to Mr O'Leary of the Department of Native Affairs in a letter dated 16 July 1962[60], that:

> Much resentment has been expressed by the parents and relatives that these girls were to be sent away suddenly, at night time and by truck, without opportunity for their people outside the Mission to say good bye to them. They are asking - Why were the girls to be sent away in this manner? And why to Palm Island which is regarded as a place of punishment?

Initially the Land Commissioner made available for lease twelve building allotments[61]. These were at railway sidings along the Barron River at Koah, Mantaka and Kowrowa (Appendix). The Seventh Day Adventist Church also leased a larger block of land at Top Kowrowa from the Lands Department for the use of Mona Mona people[62]. The government policy was that the people should be split up as much as possible to avoid the formation of Aboriginal 'ghettos' and that they should not be located 'on the outskirts of any small town, thus avoiding the danger of creating a "fringe" area'[63]. When additional application was made for four building sites in the centre of

Kuranda township itself, this met with opposition from residents who approached their local member of parliament over the issue. The local member, Mr T.V. Gilmore, in turn wrote to Minister of Education that 'the town people do not want four coloured families living in the immediate town surroundings'[64]. The Deputy Director of Native Affairs visited Kuranda and a special meeting was held over the issue. As a result only one housing allotment was made available within the town centre and the Church authorities gave an assurance to the Shire Council that 'an outstanding family would be selected to reside on this block'[65]. It was also eventually agreed that further housing blocks would be made available, but scattered around the town. A freehold housing allotment for sale on Meroo Street (Figure 6) was purchased and set aside as a 'Reserve' under the control of the Director of Native Affairs as Trustee, for subsequent lease to an Aboriginal person, and other blocks were made available in this way on land that had been 'reserved for electrical purposes' but was transferred to the trusteeship of the Director of Native Affairs[66].

In spite of the efforts of the Welfare Officer appointed by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which continued its pastoral care of the Mona Mona people after the closure of the mission and took on the responsibility of assisting families to relocate, there was never enough housing to accommodate all the Mona Mona people adequately. In fact, the legacy of this period of displacement is still evident in Kuranda today. There continues

to be a shortage of housing in the area and much of the time and energy of Aboriginal people is spent securing adequate accommodation. Moreover, because the Church authorities were called upon to nominate suitable families to be allocated the designated housing allotments, it was inevitable that the hierarchy that had developed among families on the mission has been perpetuated. Church attendance, and compliance with the rules and regulations of mission life were of course rewarded in the allocation of house and land packages. Over time therefore particular Aboriginal families in Kuranda have been advantaged and have managed to secure for themselves a situation of relative independence from the state welfare system.

While they awaited housing allocation, some people moved in temporarily with relatives who had received exemptions earlier. Others built shelter and camped on the Barron River at Oak Forest[67]. This was on land that had been used as a holiday camping place by Mona Mona people during the life of the mission and was known to be a meeting and camping place prior to European settlement. Since 1926 however the land has been a Camping and Water Reserve under the trusteeship of the Mareeba Shire Council[68]. In 1962 officers of the Department made an investigation into what was considered illegal occupation of the reserve by Aboriginal people from Mona Mona. There were at that time 'three clusters of some thirteen huts' on the reserve of which three were toilets, and a couple still under construction. The total population of fifty comprised eight nuclear families. All the adult men, except for old age

pensioners, were employed[69]. Since they were refused all applications to lease any part of the reserve, and even a proposal that the newly formed Ngoonbi Co-operative Housing Society[70] should be granted leasehold was rejected[71], the people remained officially defined as 'illegal occupiers' until they were eventually 'dispersed' to various centres. At least one of these families was offered an allotment and an ex-mission house at Mantaka.

Families were given the houses that they had occupied on the Mission for free but they were expected to take out loans to pay for the transport of the houses from the mission to their leases[72]. A number of people were granted loans of fifty and sixty pounds each to pay for such relocation[73]. The Church authorities also proposed that a small weekly rental be paid by each householder into an account in their name, withdrawals from which were to be countersigned by the Church Welfare Officer, and be used only for house repair and maintenance[74].

Mona Mona people at the time, and even today, are not well informed about what happened in official terms behind the scenes with regard to the closure of the mission and their relocation. They were simply pawns in a bureaucratic game. One woman (pers. comm. F, 20 Feb. 1997) remembers the situation as being that people had no real choice with regard to which particular leases they took up. She remembers that she simply went where her house was 'put down'. A male householder (i/v S3, 10 Nov. 1995)

however, remembers having pulled a straw out of a hat to see where his house would go, and therefore which of the allocated blocks of land he would be leasing. This was confirmed by a woman who said that she had not been happy with the lot they drew out at Koah and had requested a lot closer to town (pers. comm. E, 17 Jan. 1996). She was granted a lot at Mantaka.

Some people therefore do appear to have been able to exercise more choice with regard to where they were relocated than others. The woman who was granted the lease at Mantaka instead of Koah, subsequently complained about the poor facilities there to the Church Welfare Officer and was provided with housing in Cairns instead. On the mission they had had electricity and running water. She said that she was not used to living in the conditions that existed at Mantaka and the other settlements where there were no such conveniences (pers. comm. E, 17 Jan. 1996).

Another family found living out on one of the settlements too inconvenient with regard to transport and employment opportunities and gave up their house. It was promptly allocated to a different Mona Mona family who have lived on that block ever since. A new house has now replaced the old mission cottage which this family rents from the Department. However, the original leaseholder, and owner of the old mission cottage, felt that he still had a claim on the land. He felt cheated because he had, after all, paid for his mission house and had never been justly recompensed. He is under the misapprehension that the money he paid for the transport of his house from the mission was payment for the house itself. There continues to be some tension between the original owner, who identifies as Djabugay, and the current Aboriginal tenant, who does not. Both men have appealed to the Queensland Department of Lands for a resolution in their favour[75]. In particular, the current tenant is nervous about what his status would be

following any recognition of native title and fears that he and his family could be evicted.

Throughout the sixties and seventies Aboriginal people in the Kuranda area continued to lobby the relevant government authorities for housing, mainly through their Church Welfare Officer. Even those families who were lucky enough to have been given their houses from the Mission were inadequately accommodated as the mission houses were mostly only one bedroom cottages originally built for married couples. Houses for Aborigines on the mission were not required to be larger because of children being removed from their parent's homes to the dormitories.

It is difficult to distinguish the battle for housing in the Kuranda area from a push for land rights. I suggest that during this period land rights issues were actually phrased in terms of a discourse of home ownership. Aboriginal people in the Kuranda area have made repeated attempts over the years to independently 'own' land in the Kuranda area within the system, by applying for leases[76]. The Queensland state government however was determined to 'assimilate' Aboriginal people by scattering them physically into different towns and cities. The fear was that Kuranda would become 'a "coloured" town'[77]. The Director of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs wrote to the Lands Department noting that leases were not required for Aborigines in Kuranda because the Department's policy was to 'acquire land and erect homes for Aborigines in areas where employment is assured, and this does not apply

to the Kuranda area'[78].  However, a survey submitted by the Church Welfare

Officer showed that the majority of Aboriginal men in the Kuranda area were

either in regular employment with the forestry or the railways, or else in

seasonal employment with local cane and tobacco farmers.  The Church

Welfare Officer appealed to the Commissioner for Lands as follows:

> Employment is not the main burden.  Opportunities do exist.  Many of
> our men are in consistent employment.  They desire to live in the
> Kuranda District...The essential factor is surely the preferences of the
> native folks themselves.  Almost to a man they say that they do not
> want to be forced by circumstances to live in the larger towns and
> cities.

The Department responded by writing a letter to the Church authorities

expressing concern about the Welfare Officer's activities in Kuranda and his

'attitudes to his work'.  In particular the Church authorities were threatened

with not being allocated their Government subsidy for the current financial

year if the Welfare Worker did not conform to Departmental policies of

assimilation by encouraging Aboriginal residents of the Kuranda area to

move on to other centres 'where work opportunity presents'[79].

It was not that there was no land available in the Kuranda area.  In fact in a

number of cases Aboriginal people were disappointed to find that blocks of

land for which they had specifically applied, were subsequently put up for

public auction by the Lands Department[80].  This was in accordance with the

government's policy of assimilation.  It was considered that Aboriginal people

should have to bid competitively for land just like any other Australian.

The assimilation policy which replaced the earlier protectionist policy towards Australian Aborigines can be linked to the post war period of consolidation of egalitarian individualism in Australia as described by Kapferer (1988). Aboriginal people were encouraged to dream the great Australian home ownership dream. The scheme for resettlement of Mona Mona people was generated by the egalitarian ideology which lies at the basis of this dream. The idea was that, like other Australians, they would, as individuals, have the opportunity to own their own houses on their own quarter acre blocks, albeit leasehold and not freehold. The individual entailed in this egalitarian dream is one which is not historically or socially grounded in any way. What was not taken into account was the fact that having spent their lives under the 'protection' of the mission, they were now effectively refugees in their own country, without the financial resources and the knowledge base required to compete within 'mainstream Australia'. Any failure of Aborigines to be competitive was explained as being their own fault, as a group of individuals sharing innate qualities, and was not recognised as being founded in a social situation which in the very process of making them the same actually constituted them as different.

Assimilation policy was about 'granting' access to the body politic and the public sphere, only to those Aborigines whose 'difference' could be erased, or to those Aborigines who as individuals were willing and able to emulate such

capacities as, in a situation of European privilege, were deemed valuable by that sphere. The legislative regime provided a process whereby Aborigines could escape the provisions of the special legislation regulating every aspect of their lives if they were able to demonstrate those qualities that marked their difference from the primitive (other Aborigines) and their identity with the civilized (Europeans). Aborigines who qualified were issued with exemption cards as proof of their new status. The process of 'letting in' through the issue of exemption cards, however, insidiously operated to confirm the facticity of the system in to which they were let. It is for this reason that Aboriginal people today produce their old exemption cards with ambivalence and mixed feelings of pride (that they were among the chosen few that qualified), shame (about their apparent complicity) and anger (that they were subject at all to such legislative and bureaucratic violence).

Assimilation policy, although today not considered politically correct, was in fact supported by many Aboriginal people at the time. This can be explained, I submit, by the fact that they actually shared, the egalitarian 'logic of inclusion', as Kapferer (1988) puts it, out of which assimilation policy was born. The political platforms of many of the early Aboriginal political associations in Australia were openly assimilationist. In New South Wales for example, the President of the Aborigines Progressive Association urged 'all Aborigines in Australia who want the privileges and benefits of civilisation...to get behind this movement. We want to be absorbed into the

Nation of Australia, and thus to survive in the land of our forefathers, on equal terms' (as cited in McGregor 1997:251). That assimilation policy was in practice insidiously inequitable many Aboriginal people were eventually to learn from bitter experience.

There are indeed, as Kapferer (1988:180) argues, 'possibilities in egalitarianism that can cause great suffering when harnessed to the machinery of state'. The Kuranda case is just one example of this. Assimilation policy was here used in effect to deny Aboriginal people rights in land. A better known case, simply because it was taken to the courts, is that of *Koowarta v Bjelke-Petersen* (1982) 153 CLR 168. In 1976 the Aboriginal Development Commission had contracted with the lessees of Crown land, a pastoral station in Queensland, to purchase the leasehold on behalf of a group of Aboriginal people - the Winychinam people. The Queensland Minister for Lands refused to approve the transfer of the lease explaining that his refusal was based on 'declared government policy' which was opposed to 'proposals to acquire large areas of additional freehold or leasehold land for development by Aborigines or Aboriginal groups in isolation'. Koowarta, a member of the Winychinam people, therefore began proceedings in the Supreme Court of Queensland against the Premier of Queensland, Bjelke-Petersen, and others under s 24 of the *Racial Discrimination Act* 1975 (Cwlth), claiming a declaration that the defendants had acted contrary to the Act, damages, and an injunction restraining them from continuing to breach that

Act. In its defence the Queensland government alleged that the *Racial*

*Discrimination Act* was

invalid, and that Koowarta had no standing.  At the same time Queensland began proceedings in the High Court against the Commonwealth challenging the validity of the Act.  Parts of the proceedings in *Koowarta v Bjelke-Petersen* were then removed into the High Court which upheld the validity of the Act, overruled the demurrer to Koowarta's action, and remitted the case to the Supreme Court of Queensland for trial.  Queensland's action was dismissed.

In 1972, the election of a Federal Labour government had heralded in a new government policy of 'self-determination' for Aboriginal people.  However in practice, State governments, through their welfare apparatuses, still maintained a firm control of Aboriginal affairs.  In Kuranda, the tentacles of welfare bureaucracy, in particular with regard to the issue of housing, continue to keep Aboriginal people administratively controlled.  The establishment and proliferation of Aboriginal housing cooperatives during the 1970s and 1980s appeared to allow for the possibility of breaking free of this control.  However, the current policy of self-determination, which ostensibly underlies the *incorporation*  of such organisations, actually serves to mask a more insidious process of 'bureaucratic erasure' (Kapferer 1995)[81] which I discuss further in Chapter 8.  Self-determination as a policy stems from the same ideological foundation as multiculturalism and, as Kapferer (1988:205-6) has argued, although the multiculturalist ostensibly values difference, while the assimilationist values sameness, they are both 'grounded in the one egalitarian individualist logic'.

Whether under the guise of assimilation or of self-determination, issues of Aboriginal land rights were thoroughly masked by, or rather swallowed into, a welfare discourse focused on the government provision of adequate housing. This is an example of what Collmann (1988:16) has described as the 'predatory and expansive' nature of the Aboriginal welfare apparatus in Australia. It is also an expression of the destructive possibilities of egalitarianism in practice.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have highlighted the processes which operated to erase in settler memory the Aboriginality of the places they colonized. These processes also resulted in a mutilation of Aboriginal memory, which left wounds from which people are today still struggling to recover. Removal from their home places, from their hearth lands, and into reserves, also meant removal from the mnemonic experiences[82] which operated as a means of transmission to the next generation of a way of being in the world, a lifeworld. Moreover, because places are only empowered for memory by the lived bodies that occupy them, the removal of people, meant that many of these places themselves lost the agency that they would otherwise have accrued as sources of the experience of being-in-place, and thus, of *re-implacement* (Casey 1997:201). I explore the contemporary struggle of Aboriginal people to re-implace themselves in the face of this history of

colonization, and mutilation of memory by institutionalisation and then by

bureaucratisation, particularly in Chapters 6, 7, and 8.

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[1]Although Woolston & Colliver (1967:30) note that he did not actually reach the Barron Falls.

[2]The explorers and early settlers did not use the term 'rainforest'. What people call 'rainforest' today they referred to as 'scrub'. Many of the oldtimers in Kuranda, and other locals in the region, still use this term and in fact some deride the use of the term 'rainforest' as outsider romanticism.

[3]Tindale (1976:21) also corroborates this. He notes, 'In 1938 Tjapukai men told me that they had created some areas of grassland in their time, as was also done in their father's time. They took advantage of very dry days at the end of the dry season, to set fire to the margins of the rainforest, thereby making for better camping and hunting opportunities. It was also their custom to fire glades [pockets] before rain time...'

[4]Tindale (1976:22) was told by the son of one of the original settlers of Atherton that 'Atherton was a natural open wet forested glade...this being the reason it came into being as the first settlement'. What the early settlers thought of as 'natural' clearings were more likely made and maintained by Aboriginal people as camp sites to which they returned regularly.

[5] During the Mission days some of the Mona Mona residents were allowed to camp on the River at Oak Forest for the holidays. The Bannings, a Djabugay family who had escaped missionisation and lived at Redlynch would sometimes join them. After the Mission closed down in 1962 a number of families camped at this place until they were provided with blocks of land to lease at Mantaka and their houses were moved to these blocks from the mission. Oak Forest continues today to be a favourite holiday camping place for many Aboriginal people who remember having camped there regularly since childhood. There was much resentment recently when the Mareeba Shire Council erected 'No Camping' signs in response to complaints from some of the new settlers in the area who have been rapidly buying up allotments of subdivided land along the Barron River - a new wave of settler occupation.

[6]According to Bottoms (1992:10) 'the first relatively detailed report of a private beche-de-mer expedition occurred in mid-December 1857', on Green Island off Cairns.

[7] See Anderson (1984) who includes an account of this contact era in his PhD thesis, *The Political and Economic Basis of Kuku-Yalanji Social History*, and also Anderson (1979).

[8]Walter Hill Veivers (1848-1912) and Georgina Veivers, whose many descendants still live in the Kuranda area, were among those who took up selections in 1893. They purchased 407 acres in the Speewah area apparently wrongly anticipating that the continuation of the railway line would take that direction (Veivers 1988:63).

[9] I emphasise this passage because it is an early recognition of the existence Aboriginal customary law with regard to land.

[10] The script for the history film was written by Timothy Bottoms. This story of a massacre in the Davies Creek- Speewah area was also told to Cassells (1977) and Patz (1978) during their linguistic studies among the Banning family at Redlynch. The story was passed on to her descendants by Granny Buttercup who had witnessed and escaped the shooting.

[11]Hughes (1982:3) also notes that 'All the descendants of Thron and Elizabeth Matthisen who remember these two adopted members of the family speak highly of their integrity and loyalty and the influence they had on them as young children. They taught them Aboriginal words and their meanings, the tribal corroboree, how to spear fish...'. This is a familiar theme. Children of other settler families also have fond memories of learning to fish and hunt from Aboriginal people who worked off the Mission. For example, Andy Gilmore (pers. comm. 18 Jan. 1995) whose family lived at Myola, mentioned expeditions during the 1950s with Willie Shephard and his sons where he learned some Aboriginal hunting and fishing methods.

[12]Further reference to this dance troupe is made in Chapters 6 and 7 in the context of an analysis of the performance of identity.

[13]See Chapter 7 for a detailed analysis of the Skyrail issue.

[14]The Aboriginal family name of Hobbler was originally spelt Hobler, but an extra 'b' was added by the Missionaries (Lyn Hobbler, pers. comm. 4 Jan. 1995).

[15]The people living in this camp at Port Douglas were removed by the police to Mona Mona Mission in the late 1930s. According to oral accounts recorded by Wood (1990:6) they were removed 'some say because of their assertiveness, others because it was feared that they might be recruited by the Japanese military (the luggers on which many of them had worked were largely owned and/or skippered by Japanese).'

[16]Finlayson (1991:49) has recorded similar experiences with regard to the problem of names and the difficulty of finding relatives.

[17] See Pannell (1996).

[18] I emphasise the use of the term 'mustered' since it unwittingly expresses the common view of Aborigines as somehow less than fully human, and resonates with contemporary terminology used by Aborigines claiming that they were 'herded just like cattle'.

[19] For an full exploration of the 'doomed race' theory which was dominant in nineteenth century European thinking and remained so in Australia until the 1930s, see McGregor (1997).

[20]Section 4 of the Act read as follows:

'4. Every person who is-

(a) An aboriginal inhabitant of Queensland; or

(b) A half-caste who, at the commencement of this Act, is living with an aboriginal as wife, husband, or child; or

(c) A half-caste who, otherwise than as wife, husband, or child, habitually lives or associates with aboriginals;

shall be deemed to be an aboriginal within the meaning of this Act'.

[21] I am influenced by Foucault (1977) in my choice of title for this section.

[22] The Mona Mona land was proclaimed a 'Reserve For the Use of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the State, Kuranda' on 29 Aug 1913. Govt. Gazette 30 Aug, 1913.

[23]Home Office - Register of Letters Received, 1915 HOM/B46 QSA. Removal Order Correspondence. As extracted by P.J. Mackett (1989), Volume 4, p.25.

[24] It is clear from correspondence at the time that the Mt Carbine people at any rate, were not removed without some resistance. In a letter dated 20 November 1914, to J. Bleakey, Protector of Aboriginals, Pastor P. Rudge, Superintendent of Mona Mona reported: 'Re the balance of the Mt Carbine contingent, one of the six came to hand this week, and the policeman in charge informed me that the other five had been captured (I believe they ran away), and would be sent to the mission at an early date' (Correspondence files, 1901-1944 Mona Mona - outstanding correspondence, 1940. QSA A/58784 (2701/40).

[25]Removals - 1914. As extracted by P.J. Mackett (1989), Volume 20, p.6. Only the European Christian names of the people removed are listed in the removal records. Some people are not even granted a first name. One entry, for example, reads 'two old gins from Brewery Camp', their individual identity as human beings denied. Only two surnames appear on the 1914 list from Mareeba.

[26]Home Office - Register of Letters Received, 1915, HOM/46 QSA, Removal Order Correspondence. As extracted by P.J. Mackett (1989), Volume 4, pp.26-27. Again, many of the people are listed with only their European Christian names.

[27] Correspondence files, 1901-1944. Mona Mona, 1913-1933. SA A/58784.

[28]Correspondence Files, 1901-1944. Removals - removal of Kuranda Tribe to Mona, 1916. QSA A/69429 (16/3998/16). Also extracted by P.J. Mackett (1989), Volume 22. The few surnames recorded are: Hobler, King, Barson, Vievers, Hobson, Gray, and Newburn [Newbury?].

[29] Correspondence files, 1901-1944. Mona Mona - removal of Kuranda Tribe to Mona Mona, 1916. QSA A/69429 (16/3998/16).

[30] Letter from E. Hunter of Hunter's Barron Falls Hotel, to Hon. E. Theodore, 6 March 1916. In Correspondence Files, 1901-1944. Removals - removal of Kuranda Tribe to Mona Mona, 1916.

QSA A/69429 (16/3998/16). The same file includes a telegram from an M. Fitzpatrick, another local publican, to Hon. McCormack voicing similar concerns. He complained that two of the Aborigines had been taken in handcuffs and that no notice was given to employers under agreement of the intention to remove the Aborigines.

[31] Memo from Chief Protector of Aboriginals to Protector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, 18 February, 1916. Correspondence Files, 1901-1944. Removals -removal of Kuranda Tribe to Mona Mona, 1916. QSA A/69429 (16/3998/16).

[32] Memo/Letter from Senior Sergeant Henry Butler Kenny, District Inspector's Office, Cairns to Commissioner of Police, Brisbane, 14 June 1916. In Correspondence Files, 1901-1944. Removals -removal of Kuranda Tribe to Mona Mona, 1916. QSA A/69429 (16/3998/16).

[33] See Tindale (1938-1939) *Harvard and Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition, Australia. 1938-1939*. Contents of Vol. II. Unpublished notes on contents for cards N.332-N.945 of the Expedition series. Photocopy held at the Australian Institutes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

[34] Names are spelt according to their currently recognised spelling and not necessarily the way Tindale spelt them.

[35] As extracted by P.J. Mackett (1989).

[36] The Watchhouse Charge Book from the Police Station at Mt Molloy records four people as 'unlawfully leaving Mona Mona' in 1915. Among these were a couple named Carr (which is also the name of a European family who had been stationed at a police camp near Mareeba during the 1880s and who are mentioned in the letters of the Atherton family of Emerald End Station held in the John Oxley Library, Queensland State Library, OM 88-3). The Aboriginal couple had only just been removed to Mona Mona from Mareeba when they escaped. They were therefore taken, as punishment, to the Hull River Mission (at a place which is today therefore known as Mission Beach).

[37] See Finlayson (1991:50-52) for an account of the economic hardships of the mission. Aborigines on the mission were expected to work to feed themselves. The mission was run essentially as a mixed subsistence farm to feed its population, and it was not always able to provide enough. In the history film which is today shown in the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Centre, the Aborigines are represented as having virtually been slave labour for the mission. However the missionaries saw the Aborigines as working not just to feed their souls but to actually feed their bodies. The mission was not a profit making venture. Aboriginal people were expected to work to feed themselves. Their oppression therefore cannot be explained as being founded upon the exploitation of their labour. Its source lies elsewhere.

[38] According to Roberts (1986:147) the first baptisms at Mona Mona took place on 23 July 1916 and were conducted by H.E. Piper. The first person to be submerged was Molly Noble. With her were Lucy Baker (later Mrs Lucy Levers), Mary Assan (nee Douglas), Minnie Sheppherd (nee Smith), and Dinah Brim (nee Fullerton).

[39] This code changed over the years and depended also on the leniency of the current Supervisor. At one stage parents were only allowed contact with their children across a wire fence barrier. They used to be able to talk to them and pass them morsels of food but could not hug or cuddle them. Policy eventually changed and children and parents were allowed to go on day excursions together on the weekends as well as have closer contact during the annual holiday camp times at Oakforest. It was during these times that people remember being taught about bush foods and how to fish and hunt by their parents and grandparents. Some people also remember having visited and/or having been told of places (*bulmba*) from which their people had been removed.

[40] Finlayson (1991:116) records the following account from an ex-Mona Mona resident. There is no date given as to when the strike occurred but I suggest it would have been during the late 1950s:

'Everybody used to have their meal all in one, in a dining room until all the men had a strike. They wanted everybody to have their own meal. You know, cook at home. The men used to have one slice and a half [of bread] in the dining room, and a cup of coffee and the ladies only had one slice. We used to get hungry and then the men had a strike. The superintendent said, "If you want your own meals like that then you have to do away with

all the dogs". Poor dogs, they had to shoot all the dogs. They think that you are going to waste your food on the dogs. We felt sorry for all our dogs that got shot you know, poor things, and then we started to have our own meals then'.

[41]The term 'language' in the singular is not only used among Kuranda Aboriginal people, but tends to be used widely among other Australian Aboriginal peoples today to refer to special words, phrases, chants, songs and so on which are spiritually powerful. Kuranda people say for example that they are afraid to visit a particular place because they do not have, or know the right 'language' to make themselves safe in that place. Although few people actually know any 'language', it is still a generally held belief that to be safe in certain places one really should be able to call out in 'language' before approaching.

[42]This belief in the power of words is widespread among Australian Aboriginal peoples. In his autobiography, the Yolngu leader Wandjuk Marika (1995) wrote that what he and his people most objected to in the work of anthropologists who had written about them was the publishing in written form, not of the detailed description of the ritual practices themselves but of 'language', the actual secret and powerful words associated with the rituals.

[43] The practice of standing over a fire as repentance.

[44]In 1937 a conference of state and federal authorities was held in Canberra at which issues concerning the assimilation of Aborigines was discussed (Rowley 1972:319-21).

[45] Visit of Inspection to Palm Island, Yarrabah and Mona Mona: Report by Sir Raphael Cilento, Director General of Health and Medical Services, Feb-Mar 1937. QSA A/58861 (37/5698).

[46] Report by P. Graham Croll, 28 April 1939 in QSA QS501/1 (6J/9).

[47] Memo form Medical Officer to the Deputy Director General of Health and Medical Services, 2 Sep. 1940. QSA QS 505/1 (6J/9).

[48] Letter form A.W. Waddell, Clerk, Woothakata Shire Council, to the Director General of Health and Medical Services, Mareeba, 30 Sep. 1940. QSA QS505/1 (6J/9).

[49] Memo from Chief Protector of Aboriginals to the Superintendent of Mona Mona Mission, Brisbane, 31 Aug. 1938. QSA QS505/1 (SJ/9)

[50] Letter from R.S. Mackay for the Under-Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, to the Secretary, Land Administration Board, Brisbane, 16 May 1939. QSA A/58861 (41/1748).

[51] Memo/Letter from the Deputy Director of Native Affairs to the director of Native Affairs. 30 May 1955. In General Correspondence (Torres Strait Region), 1936-1985. Missions - Mona Mona reserve, 1953-1955. QSA A/59487 (6H/2)

[52] In 1963 in a submission presented to the Select Committee Appointed to Examine the *Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Acts* 1939 to 1946, the Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Islanders discusses the many limitations of the trust fund system of forced saving and lists first hand accounts of abuses of the system. Aborigines were not issued with passbooks. They were not free to withdraw their money at will and were often forced to have to go through the unpleasant situation of having to justify to the Department their need for their own money. Some people claim never to have had access to their accounts and are not sure what happened to their money.

[53] A practice also in operation for many years during this period was for 10% of the wages of married men and 5% of the wages of single men who were inmates of reserves, but employed outside on work agreements, to be deducted for the purpose of the maintenance of their dependants living on the reserves. In practice between 1931 and 1943 the money obtained this way was credited to the Standing Account.

[54] Memos to the Minister, to the Under Secretary and the Sub-Department of Native Affairs, from Public Service Inspector(22 September 1941, 8 October, 1941, 28 August 1942).. In Health and Home Affairs Department Batch files. Welfare fund 1941-1947. QSA A/69634

[55] On the 12 July 1963 the tenure of Mona Mona Reserve was transferred and it became an Electrical Works Reserve under the trusteeship of the Co-ordinator General of Public Works to provide land for the proposed dam. The dam has to this day not been built. Ex-Mona Mona residents began a protracted bureaucratic battle for access to the land and for eventual title of some kind which is still going on today. When the reserve was advertised in 1968 for

public auction as a five year lease, an ex-Mona Mona resident Mr. Clarrie Grogan wrote a letter (dated 16 October 1968) on behalf of Mona Mona people to Mr Pat Killoran, Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, protesting the public auction of the lease as Aboriginal people had already applied to lease the land and been refused (QSA QS505/1, SJ/38). At least thirty ex-Mona Mona residents then held a meeting at Mantaka and resolved to form a co-operative to collect the money to enable them to bid for the lease(*Cairns Post,* 22 October 1968). The lease was successfully bought on behalf of the Mona Mona Co-operative by Clarrie Grogan, Enoch Tranby and Joe McGuiness, with money collected from the Mona Mona people, for $350 annual rent (*Cairns Post* 30 and 31 October 1968). The lease was then transferred to the Mona Mona Co-operative Society Ltd. which was incorporated on 13 January 1969 under the *Co-operative and Other Societies Act* 1967.

[56] In its 1963 submission the Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Islanders wrote of the close of Mona Mona:

This Seventh Day Adventist mission (4000+ acres with farming, timber, cattle) was closed down in late 1962 for an irrigation scheme. One might have expected compensation similar to that provided for the township of Adaminaby (moved for the Snowy Mountains Project). A "unique home ownership scheme" was officially announced, but reports from the North only mention - so far - 3 groups of 4 huts each, in 3 different localities, housing in all 60-70 of the 280+ population. The rest? - Mr Adair, Member for Cook, referred in debate (1/11/62) to people from Mona Mona "camped on the banks of the Barron..." in gunyahs and shacks.

[57] Submission to Cabinet on closure of Mona Mona Mission and disposal of Native Cottages, by H.W. Noble, Minister for Health and Home Affairs, Brisbane, 8 March, 1962. QSA A/58934 (6J/35).

[58] The responsible government agency at this stage was the Sub-Department of Native Affairs, Department of Health and Home Affairs.

[59] Memo from the Director of Native Affairs to the Under-Secretary, Department of Health and Home Affairs, Brisbane, 6 September 1962. QSA A/58934 (6J/35).

[60] QSA A/58933 (6J/35).

[61] Letter from the Director of Native Affairs to the Secretary, Land Administration Commission, Brisbane, 2 May 1963. QSA A/59487 (6H/4)

[62] Three of the old Mona Mona houses were relocated to this block. Because the lease was held by the Church, unlike the housing allotments at Mantaka and Koah and elsewhere, people whose houses were located on this block were not as individuals able to have legal title to the allotments on which their houses were located. The church later requested that the lease be converted to freehold to be held by Ngoonbi Aboriginal Corporation.

[63] Submission to Cabinet on closure of Mona Mona Mission and disposal of Native Cottages, by H.W. Noble, Minister for Health and Home Affairs, Brisbane, 8 March, 1962. QSA A/58934 (6J/35).

[64] Letter from Mr T.V. Gilmore to Hon. J.C.A. Pizzey, Mareeba, 4 March 1963. QSA A/59487 (6H/4)

[65] Memo from the Deputy Director of Native Affairs to the Director of Native Affairs, Brisbane, 26 April 1963. QSA A/59487 (6H/4)

[66] On 25 October 1965 Cabinet decided (Decision No. 8289) that particular building sites could be set aside as Reserves. Such areas would then be leased by the Director of Native Affairs who would remain in control over the area. QSA TRI 1855 (1A/698)

[67]Some of the people had lived there since the 1930s after receiving their exemptions, and even more during the 1950s. However, prior to the establishment of the Mission in 1912, Aboriginal people had already had camps in the Oak Forest area. They became inmates of Mona Mona and now shared during the holidays the places they had camped at prior to Mission days, with Mona Mona residents brought from other places. According to Robertson (1992) in a report she wrote for one of the Aboriginal claimants of the reserve, Tindale recorded a number of people as having 'come from' the Oak Forest area. She writes (1992:1), 'The Oak Forest area was a holiday area for Mona Mona Mission. Traditional campsites that were used then include Naan.gali (mod.pron. Nun.gali), Wright's Crossing and Flat Rock and Mama Camp all on Flaggy Creek but it is important to remember Tindale's record of people

at Oak Forest, since the Shire Council is now insisting this was not a traditional area'.

[68]Queensland. Department of Lands. Regional Director, Far North Region. *Memorandum to the Cabinet Legislation and Liaison Unit, Brisbane on R 158 Reserve for Camping and Water, Parish of Mona Mona*, 30 October 1992 .  File: CNS/009735

[69] Queensland. Department of Lands. *Report to the Lands Commissioner Regarding Camping and Water Reserve , R158, Parish of Mona Mona*. (HO. Ref: 10/298; DO. Ref: R149 CNS/009735); see also QSA A/69475.  This reserve has recently been the subject of a number of attempted land claims under the *Aboriginal Land Act* 1991, by ex-Mona Mona residents who had lived there in the late fifties and sixties and who argue that it is a place where their parents and grandparents had traditionally camped even prior to Mission days. At present however, the Reserve has not been gazetted as available for claim under the Act.

[70] An Aboriginal Housing Cooperative incorporated under the *Co-operatives and Other Societies Act,* 1967 (QLD) to meet the accommodation needs of all ex-Mona Mona people in the Kuranda area.

[71] See letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Community Services and Ethnic Affairs to the Secretary, Land Administration Commission, 2 March 1988.  Department of Natural Resources (Res 22144). Department of Natural Resources File: CNS/009735.

[72] There was also a large auction held at which people were allowed to place bids for other buildings and chattels from the Mission.  However, these were mostly bought up by local European farmers and station owners[72], with Aboriginal people bidding only for small items.

[73] Memo Re: Re-erection of Homes for Coloured People ex Mona Mona, from Director of Native Affairs to Deputy Director of Native Affairs, 11 April 1963.  QSA A/59487 (6H/4).

[74] Letter from Deputy Director of Native Affairs to Pastor Townsend, North Queensland Conference of Seventh Day Adventists, Brisbane, 26 April 1963.  QSA A/59487 (6H/4).

[75] In 1988 the current tenant in fact applied to the District Lands Office, Cairns, to lease the allotment in his own name but his application was not approved.  The allotment had been by this time gazetted a Departmental and Official Purposes Reserve and, as its trustees, the Department of Community Services and Ethnic Affairs wished to retain the block as part of its housing construction programme.  See Application in Department of Lands File CNS/009363.

[76] See various documents in Department of Lands Files CNS/005035, CNS/005248, and CNS/005030

[77] Letter from the Director of Aboriginal  and Island Affairs to Pastor W.A. Townsend, North Queensland Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, Brisbane 19 December, 1969.  QSA TRI 1855 (1A/698).

[78] Letter from the Director of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs to the Secretary, Land Administration Commission, Department of Lands, Brisbane, 15 October 1970.  QSA TRI 1855 (1A/698).

[79] Letter from the Director of Aboriginal  and Island Affairs to Pastor W.A. Townsend, North Queensland Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, Brisbane 19 December, 1969.  QSA TR 1855 (1A/698).  See also Confidential Cabinet Minute, Brisbane, 1 December 1969. Decision No. 13818.  QSA TRI 1855 (1A/698).

[80] In one case an ex-mission house had already been relocated to the site on the understanding that the lease would be given to that particular Aboriginal householder.  The householder was dismayed to find that the land on which his house was located was now up for public auction.

[81] I discuss this process further in Chapter 8.

[82] An example  of such a mnemonic experience from my own family history is the memory of an event, associated with a mountain south of Cairns known as the Pyramid.  Almost 30 years ago, as a child, my brother  entered a race up this mountain, came down the wrong way and became lost and disoriented in the cane field below.  My parents found him hours later distraught and in shock  walking down the highway in completely the opposite direction to home.   Several times a year I drive with my children past the Pyramid and each time it triggers in me the memory of this story and I retell it  each time to them amidst groans

of, 'Not again, Mum, we've heard this before!'. I have since discovered that one of my sisters does the very same to her children. Places indeed hold and preserve memories.

# Chapter 3

# New Settlers: The Emplacement of
# Hippies and Hairies

*There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilisation, real places - places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.  Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.  Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about,  I shall call them by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias  (Foucault 1986:24)*

In this chapter I move on to a discussion of more recent settlement in the Kuranda area and the search by these new settlers of an alternative place.  That is, I examine the sudden influx into the Kuranda area of so-called 'hippies' and 'alternative lifestylers' during the 1970s and on through the 1980s, and their practices of place making which worked to create a heterotopian identity for Kuranda.  I refer to Foucault's concept of heterotopia not simply because it captures the image of Kuranda as a polysemous place of contested identities, an image held by Kuranda people themselves, but also because it recognises the dialectical relationship between resistance and power which informs their activities of implacement.

Foucault's notion of 'heterotopia'/ 'heterotopology' is, among his body of writing, a relatively minor theoretical construct. However, it has recently been seized upon as revelatory, by a number of place and space writers, who see it as a means of theorising the geographies of the postmodern world and the possibility of sites of resistance (eg Soja 1989, 1995; Ruddick 1990). However, as Genocchio (1995) warns, there is a danger in 'heterotopia' becoming overused as a mere 'theoretical *deus ex machina'*. The use of Foucault's concept of heterotopia is indeed problematic if uncritically adopted as simply a handy label for particular real places of resistance, because, in the concept of heterotopia, Foucault acknowledges not just the possibility of resistance, but also its impossibility. Thus, the real power of heterotopia lies in, as Foucault acknowledges, 'the impossibility of the move to absolutely differentiated and contestory space' (Genocchio 1995:42). Heterotopia is, therefore, a useful metaphorical reference to the inescapable bond between power and resistance. In other words, it highlights my point that practices of resistance can operate to reproduce structures of power and that, whether they recognised it or not, the attempt by the new Kuranda settlers to escape the system, to create another order, or a counter-culture, was actually an extension of their participation in that system.

Much of what follows is a history of settlement of Kuranda as told from the perspective of the new settlers. They came to Kuranda to 'escape the system', and to live an alternative lifestyle. I quote extensively in order to convey the

flavour of their telling. The time appears to be ripe for such narratives. Many members of this group have lived in the Kuranda area for less than twenty five years but much time is spent in one of the village coffee shops, nostalgically reminiscing about the past. For these people Kuranda 'began' in the early nineteen seventies when they started to make it their place. I analyse their practices of implacement in detail in the following chapters. In this chapter I simply set the scene for my analysis by examining some of the origin stories of these new settlers, and their communitarian settlement activities. I discuss the rise and decline of communes and 'tenancies in common' in the Kuranda area during the nineteen seventies and eighties, and the impact of the new settlers upon Aborigines and established settlers. I conclude the chapter with an examination of the significance, in terms of identity politics, of land and home ownership to both the old and the new settlers.

**First Stop - Holloways Beach**

The destination of many of the people who came 'travelling north', mainly from the southern states of Australia, but also from other countries such as USA, Germany, Great Britain, was not at first Kuranda, but Holloways Beach in Cairns. The first wave of new settlers to Kuranda were people who had either lived at Holloways Beach, or had some association with people from Holloways. The following arrival accounts establish the connection between Holloways Beach and the first wave of new settlers to Kuranda:

I arrived and there were about three or four camps on the beach, people that had arrived and had just decided to set up camp because they thought it was a good place just to camp and they found they had a lot in common.  And as time went by other people just kept arriving and that's what I mean, it must have been a response to something far greater than individually we could recognise at the time and the camaraderie that built because we were all in similar circumstances, and the beautiful freedoms that were available here in those days were just unparalleled, like to be able to just live on a beach and go fishing for your food and go eat seasonal foods.  Primarily we were all city people...You know, we were brought up, well I was anyway, western suburbs Sydney. (i/v B, 5 July, 1994)

Well I was a sixteen year old working girl in Perth...and I met four guys who spent time on Holloways Beach and they told me tales of beaches and palm trees which from a Perth city-scape that sounded good and I kinda got drawn here from that story. (i/v D, 12 Apr. 1995)

Yeah, well I was escaping from the stigma of a war [Vietnam], hurt, very hurt...I mean I didn't like where I'd been but to come home and to be ostracised and absolutely dumped on for having done it!...I was looking for an environment that I could survive in because I could not have survived in the other one.  I'd have gone mad and shot myself, you know...So I ended up on the beach at Holloways Beach, which was every kid's fantasy, to go to a tropical beach somewhere, with palm trees and you know.  Anyway this is what I was looking for.  I was looking for a total escape...out of Melbourne...out of the whole movie... (i/v B2, 10 Jan. 1996)

During the late 1950s and though most of the 1960s, Holloways Beach was a relatively undeveloped beach, just a camping ground and a few old houses mainly occupied by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people and others working in seasonal jobs in the fishing industry or as crocodile shooters.

The first people to arrive from 'down south'[1] were an older group, already in their twenties and older.  Some of these people were artists, others were

professionals, people who had worked in the cities, knew how to support themselves, and were really looking for an alternative. They did not call themselves hippies, rather they saw themselves as the 'cultural heirs' of the bohemians of the beat generation, part of that expressive social movement 'derived from post-World War II French existentialism and from various *avant garde* artists and performers of the early post war period' (Munro-Clark 1986:59). As Munro-Clark (1986:60) describes them, 'the beats stressed the "existentialist" goals of self-definition, spontaneity, creativity and innovativeness in lifestyle as in art. Their antagonism to the work ethic was expressed in voluntary poverty, disaffiliation from family and future "prospects", and effective withdrawal (in bohemian ghettos) from the mainstream society'.

Before the so called 'hippie invasion', Holloways Beach was in the process of becoming a bohemian ghetto of this type. As a now nationally recognised artist and writer notes:

> Oh, I was driven here [to Kuranda] simply because we had lived at Holloways Beach. We came up originally in fifty nine from Melbourne, mainly because I was teaching and the weather was rotten in Melbourne and I couldn't see great future for that, we wanted a bit of lifestyle...Holloways Beach...only had sixty people living there at the time and it was a lifestyle we rather liked...They were mainly Torres Strait Island people and it was very casual. (i/v R, 9 Jan. 1994)

> I was more of a beachcomber/bohemian I guess...all these sort of bohemian type writers and artists and things, they were all on Holloways beach, and that was my first experience of meeting people like that. The people I'd grown up with in Sydney were very sort of

down to earth, sort of...some of them became tradesmen, some of them became office workers and all that sort of stuff; pretty boring bunch really; but when I came to Holloways Beach I was very impressed. (i/v R4, 8 Jan. 1997)

Many of these bohemians joined their Torres Strait Island neighbours in making a living on the side through seasonal labour associated with boats - diving for coral and trochus shell, fishing, and crocodile shooting. This form of labour allowed them the freedom to pursue their various artistic endeavours. However, their idyllic beach lifestyle was soon swamped by a new wave of people attempting to escape the system:

As the population of Holloways increased we were starting to get travellers coming in from various parts of the world that was eventually known as the 'Hash Trail' which started in Europe, made its way through Pakistan, Afghanistan, across country India, down through Thailand, down through Malaysia, through to Bali. Bali, there was a cheap flight to Darwin, sixty dollar flight to Darwin, and then overland from Darwin to Cairns on the milk trucks. The drivers would carry passengers because it was a long drive for them and they were carrying fresh milk from Malanda through to Darwin...So it was part of a global overland trekking network and it became known for that and so over those couple of years I was at Holloway's Beach, it went from being a matter of like eight or ten people to being up to about two to three hundred people...[We lived in] tents, caravans, kombi vans, under the stars. There were some houses there that were being rented so they were multiply occupied. There was some real crash pads amongst the couple of houses that worked like that. (i/v B, 5 July, 1994)

People say they heard of Holloways Beach through the networks, through word of mouth and through the increasing media reports on the 'hippies of Holloways'. They heard tales of beautiful northern beaches fringed by rainforest, with palm trees and balmy tropical weather, where they could live freely off the sea and the abundance of coconuts and mangoes[2] growing wild along the beach, where all kinds of mind-altering substances were readily

available, and where you could meet and socialise with like-minded people

looking to escape the system. By 1968 people began to arrive in such droves

that the bohemians there before them began to feel utterly invaded in their

little piece of paradise:

> Ah, I'd been living on the beach for a few years with a lot of friends
> and we actually were legally camping there at one stage...But what
> happened was all these people turned up and there was just hundreds
> of people camping there eventually, and they sort of closed it as a
> camping area...(i/v R4, 8 Jan. 1997)

> ...we had a really charmed lifestyle there, we were paying no rent or
> anything you know, so people were turning up. Eventually the hippie
> thing really happened in the cities and suddenly we were inundated by
> kids you know who had run away from home and who couldn't wipe
> their bums basically, and they were all trying to sort of live off us in a
> sense, I mean we had them sort of living under our tent ropes, they
> wanted to be that close, because they were basically insecure. We were
> alternate but they were more alternate, and there was some tension
> between us `cos we were regarded as not straight by that time so that
> we didn't belong to society, but we also didn't feel like they and us
> were totally an homogeneous group, particularly in terms of their
> youth and their lack of skills. I mean, basically, we all had some kind of
> professional background, or we had all worked for a living and knew
> how to feed and clothe ourselves and manage ourselves. (i/v E1, 4 Jan.
> 1994)

The influx of so many newcomers to the scene, created tension, and

threatened the peaceful existence of the bohemians. In an article[3] that

appeared in *Pix* magazine, entitled 'Get Out, Hippies! - You're Not Wanted in

the North', Wheatley (1969:2-3) wrote:

> For years, genuine artists have been living a carefree existence on the
> beaches. They have developed their talents and made new industries
> for the tourist trade. But the hippies, with their drugs and naked
> parties, have threatened the bohemian life. Local authorities,
> unfortunately, too often see the artists and the hippies in the same

shade of black. Forgotten by-laws are suddenly remembered. Everyone is asked to "move on" and resentment has built up.

As the hippie population of Holloways Beach expanded, so also did the pressure increase, from rate-payers, the real-estate industry, Cairns City Council, and the police, for people to move on. A letter to the editor published in the *Cairns Post* (21 July 1967) gives expression to the attitudes of the time and the pressure from the real-estate development lobby:

> Something must be done about the situation at Holloways Beach; no water, land values stagnating (I haven't been able to sell my property) and the nauseating stigma attached to residents by townspeople.
>
> **The reason?  Yes, it's the good-for-nothing, Bohemian element of "paint daubers", "guitar twangers" and do-it-yourself craftsmen and layabouts.** [original emphasis in bold type].

Increasing pressure from police was eventually to drive people from Holloways to Kuranda. Upon eviction, however, some of these people first went to a caravan park at Kamerunga (see Appendix). Kuranda residents who had lived at Holloways Beach describe the situation as follows:

> We started to be targeted as a group of people that came under a lot of social pressures from the police force, from the conservative red neck type attitudes that were very prevalent in these parochial, more regional areas. We were seen as invading the space... I just wanted to live my life, but unfortunately we were not allowed to do that under the social order of the day and, therefore, we were isolated as a radical fringe group of undesirables worthy of write ups in not only our *Cairns Post*, but in the *Pix* and *Post* magazines of the day, where photographers would come and drive along the beach in cars with their windows wound up taking photographs through the glass. It was like a damned game park. We were being victimised by the police, everyday... violating basic human rights. There was needless violence involved. It was a peaceful resistance, in that no one was really resisting the police, but they were wanting to be resisted so that they could then take you into court for resisting or whatever they could get... (i/v B, 5 July, 1994)

> I didn't like this, you know, running down the beach with the coppers for fun having shots at you, with a spotlight, trying to pick you up...as soon as I became a marked person, I moved [from Holloways]. (i/v B2, 10 Jan. 1996)

> What they wanted to do was establish that real estate...and we were an eyesore. I mean we used to have some people drive out from Cairns in their cars with their windows wound up because they had read about hippies and that we eat our babies!...And so they wanted to sell the real estate so they sent the police out to harass us ... (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994)

The media reports in the *Cairns Post* of the time testify that people were indeed regularly being arrested and convicted of a range of offences, from vagrancy to possession of drugs. The police would attempt to 'get them' on any charge they could. In one case a man had to appear in court on a complaint that he had 'affixed an indecent picture so that it was visible to a person in a public place' (*Cairns Post*, 21 May 1970:7). The police had gone to the beach 'on another matter' and had glanced inside a boat used as a dwelling by the defendant and had seen a painting of 'two naked female bodies'. Witnesses called however said it was simply a 'nude study', and that they thought of it as 'art'.

Eventually the Cairns City Council directed a special committee to compile a report on the camping situation at Holloways Beach. On the basis of this report the council decided 'that persons camping illegally on the Esplanade and private property at Holloways Beach will be required to move immediately' (*Cairns Post*, 17 July 1970) and the health inspector was

authorised to inform all campers of the Council decision. Some people moved voluntarily while others were forcibly evicted.

...basically we got to the stage when we knew it was untenable, when we realised that the Council...you know they wanted to sell real estate, so we went to Kamerunga caravan park. We said, 'Don't tell anyone we're here'. (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994)

I got turfed off Holloways Beach just after they all got moved...too late. (i/v P/J, 16 Jan. 1996)

We hitched up to North Queensland [from Sydney]...as we were coming up, all these people were telling us stories that there's a commune on the beach at Holloways Beach. 'There's about four hundred people living on the beach and you can go and live there'... so we get up to Holloways Beach and...decide to stay on the beach. There's nobody else on the beach... We're on this beach and there's nobody there, and we set up our tent you know and about three days later the Council came out and said, 'What do you think you're doing camped on this beach? We just threw everybody off it'... (i/v S, 10 Jan. 1994)

The next stop for many of the Holloways Beach campers was the caravan park at Kamerunga.

So I went out there [the caravan park at Kamerunga] and it was really idyllic because there's the river and you could swim in it and there were all these really nice people out there. (i/v S, 10 Jan. 1994)

We actually moved to the caravan park at Kamerunga, and there was quite a sort of group of people, like half hippies, half beatniks, bohemians, all sorts of people. It was sort of a halfway house between the beach...[and the] mountains {Kuranda}. (i/v R4, 8 Jan. 1997)

So we went to the caravan park and there was straights down one side and there was all of us down this side and everyone who went to Cairns then said, 'Where's the scene man?'...and we ended up with about 200 people out there and it was only four months, it only lasted four months;...and everyone was going down daily to the mushroom fields you know, it was a scene...(i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994)

Participating in practices related to the use of drugs was one of the key forces creating community identity among the group of people that chose to live together at Holloways Beach, at Kamerunga, and later in Kuranda. Such practices operated as a boundary marker, creating the sense of an in-group versus an out-group.

**The Psychedelic Movement**

The Holloways Beach campers saw themselves as part of a global movement which found its expression in music, art and literature, and in the use of particular mind-altering substances which could enhance one's experiences of these expressions of human creativity, and therefore, of life itself - 'the psychedelic era'.

> We were starting to identify ourselves with this global movement. We were starting to hear it in the music. We were starting to see it in the magazines. We were part of it, and we could clearly identify ourselves with that global movement, so we didn't feel as if we were on our own and this was significant. (i/v B, 5 July, 1994)

People began to experiment with different varieties of fungi that they found growing in cow paddocks in the Kamerunga/Redlynch area, and collecting and consuming psychedelic mushrooms became the focal activity of the group.

> It was about that time that somebody read about these funny mushrooms in the US, and there was all that stuff was coming in the press, although we weren't very connected to the press. So they went out as human experiments and tried a few things in the fields and

came back with the goods and so we all got into the mushrooms, but we never regarded it as drugs in those days. It never occurred to us that we were taking drugs, it was just like something we did, and we did that for six months before the thought occurred to us that we were taking drugs. (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994)

...we were the first group of people to discover that there were psychedelic mushrooms growing in this area...we picked everything, every fungi that we came across was collected and brought back with us, and they were divided into what people knew as being edible or toxic types. Volunteers offered themselves and a couple of people were violently ill, others thought they were quite tasty, and some people obviously experienced the psychedelic effects of that variety. So it was just through trial and error that it got down to this one variety...(i/v B, 5 July, 1994)

The discovery of these mushrooms enabled the Holloways Beach people to become full members of the global psychedelic movement which they had heard and read about, but to which they had felt they were not really able to relate, because they did not have ready access to the necessary mind-altering substances, like LSD.

...once this discovery [of psychedelic mushrooms] was made, that was quite significant, because.... all of a sudden we could understand some aspects of this other influence that we identified with...this whole era which we now know as this psychedelic era. And the people went through that process with *organic* psychedelic substances rather than *chemical*, manufactured substances, which gave it a completely different point of focus... (i/v B, 5 July, 1994, original emphasis)

In terms of identity and difference, the group felt that in eating these mushrooms they had become part of what they thought of as a global movement. At the same time they celebrated their difference, their local identity, by emphasising the fact that, as opposed to LSD and other drugs, the mind-altering substances they consumed were totally organic, naturally

produced. Consumption of mushrooms, and shared practices associated with drug use in general, provided a common bond. These practices, however, also brought increased conflict with police which in turn reinforced their counter-cultural identity. The continual harassment by police drew them into an even more tightly knit group.

**Moving 'Out of It'**

Eventually 'the scene' became too much for some of them, particularly the older members.

> We got sick of the harassment of the authorities on the one hand and the kids on the other who were basically stealing everything, stealing our firewood, I mean we couldn't leave anything. We didn't own anything any more suddenly, so we decided to buy land. (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994)

They had realised that in order to stop being hounded by police and local government, in order to achieve the freedom as individuals that they desired, they had to become part of 'the system' to the extent of at least becoming land-owners.

> But just through pressures over a period of time we realised that if we wanted to stay and be part of, and to pursue things we had come to appreciate and enjoy, that we would have to become, we had to get some rights as individuals, we'd have to eventually become land-owners. (i/v B, 5 July, 1994)

A number of people started to look for suitable land. Prices along the northern coast were already prohibitive. Eventually word got around that land was much cheaper inland, and up the range, in Kuranda.

...so we started looking along the coast initially; looking into places like Cape Tribulation, the Daintree; something that was similar to what we had already experienced, this beach culture, which is all barefoot and sand and out in the sun, printing and making your own clothes and very simplistic; lots of boats, lots of orientation towards the sea. So looking for land along the coast, even in those days land prices were relatively expensive; and then it was Roger Quinn that came to Kuranda and found land was quite cheap here. (i/v B, 5 Jan. 1994)

A lot of us had been living on the beaches, Holloways Beach, and a chap called Roger Quinn brought us all up. He'd got to know a farmer up here...a cattle farmer...he owned all of this...but for him that was just regarded as rubbish land and he sold this land for...This was four hundred dollars an acre...I bought it with three people as tenants-in-common. (i/v M, 15 Apr. 1995)

So then we sort of, a few of us had got together and we were looking for some place to move to, and we made a few forays around looking at where you could get some cheap land and somebody, I think Roger Quinn, had a bit of a hand in it. He found some land up here and we all pitched in and bought this block between us and we've been here ever since. (i/v R4, 8 Jan. 1997)

What attracted people to the Kuranda area was not only the price of land but also that, unlike at the beaches, it was mushroom country. Psychedelic mushrooms grew prolifically in the country cleared for cattle by the local station owners and farmers.

Yeah, there was a group of people that moved up here. Basically what it was, was down there was sugar cane and up here was mushrooms. ... brought me to Kuranda because everyone went wow! I was experimenting with lots of drugs...Yeah but the gig was tripping on mushrooms which I found were the most amazing things...(i/v B2, 10 Jan. 1996)

The settling of these people, who had originally been at Holloways Beach, in Kuranda opened up the area in people's imagination and triggered the influx

of new people into the Kuranda area throughout the nineteen seventies and eighties.

> I'd met people at Holloways that had connections with Kuranda and the land was cheaper up here, and I just started making contact with people from Holloways Beach crowd that were making preparations to move up here, and I basically followed really, cheaper block of land...(i/v P/J, 16 Jan. 1996)

Established Kuranda residents began to experience an invasion of people searching for a haven from the complexities of urban industrialised society. *Hippies Invade Kuranda* is the title of a contribution by resident, Joan Dods, to a history commemorating the 1988 centenary of the town (Humston 1988:118).

**Settlement Practices**

The new arrivals in Kuranda were not an homogenous group. The Holloways Beach people came to Kuranda with the intention of buying land and burrowing in. Those that could not afford to purchase individual title to land, pooled their resources and bought land in common. They had already developed a common identity through their shared experiences at Holloways Beach. As one Holloways woman put it:

> ...we were a community already, that was already the basis of the Kuranda community, was that we all stuck together. As soon as a policeman arrived [at Holloways Beach and at the caravan park at Kamerunga] we would all stand around like that. We had our own legal fighting fund, you know to deal with them. When they put a charge on someone we all went to court to fight it and we sort of did it like that. (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994)

Shared experiences of police harassment, and the creation of an in-group identity through practices associated with the psychedelic movement, created the communal bonds necessary for successful shared tenancy in land.

This group of new settlers should not be confused with the wave of young hippies that arrived after them. Most of these were young people who had neither the wherewithal, nor the intention, to purchase land. They simply built themselves temporary shelters and squatted in the rainforest, or rented old farmhouses and sheds from the locals. A number of communes were established during this period but they did no t last long. Many of the hippies stayed for less than a year in Kuranda. They soon realised that what seemed like a tropical paradise in the dry season, was actually 'hell on earth' in the wet.

I use the term commune very loosely here to refer to 'a group of people who are not all from the one family or kinship group and who have come together voluntarily in order to share a deliberately chosen pattern of living' (Munro-Clark 1986:11). Such a group organisation may or may not involve the pooling of income and may range in size from hundreds of people to smaller households. Whatever their size and composition, in the Kuranda area, communes were all built on a rationale which demanded rejection of, or withdrawal from, those features of urban industrialised society considered destructive to both nature and culture. Communes are thus heterotopias *par*

*excellence*, the sort of sites that contradict all others. According to Foucault, unlike utopias, which are 'sites with no real place' representing 'society in its perfected form', heterotopias are real places, 'counter-sites...in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within a culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' (1986:24). It has been argued that the hippies were attempting to create utopia in their communes - society in its perfected form. However, rather than utopia, what they constructed was heterotopia, a continuous contestation of place, not just in their communes but, eventually, in Kuranda as a whole.

The sorts of places that Foucault classes as heterotopias include prisons, hospitals, retirement homes, cemeteries, museums, libraries, fair-grounds, theatres, gardens, brothels and colonies. What these places have in common is firstly, that they are 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (1986:25). Secondly, they are 'linked to slices in time', whether 'oriented towards the eternal' such as museums, and cemeteries, or time 'in its most fleeting, transitory, precarious aspect', like fairgrounds and vacation villages (1986:26). Thirdly, they have boundaries, and systems of 'opening and closing' which means they are not freely accessible. Entry may be compulsory as in the case of a prison, or it may require a rite of passage or some other qualification. In some cases entry may appear to be completely free and open to all but this openness actually hides exclusions. As Foucault puts it, 'Everyone can enter

into these heterotopic sites, but in fact that is only an illusion; we think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter excluded'(1986:26).

The most well known commune in the Kuranda area, on Weir Road, was such a place, a place that in its very openness, operated to exclude. It was simply called 'the Commune' or 'the Kuranda Commune'. It only lasted a year. It was on land owned by an Englishman, one of the people who had been at Holloways Beach. He had bought the four acre block for $400 an acre with three people as tenants-in-common and simply opened it up for anyone who wanted to come and live there. As one of the women who originally came to Kuranda to participate in the Commune relates:

> There were a few people there with babies and young children, but not very many. It was mostly everything from about fourteen, fifteen up to about twenty one...[When I arrived there were] I would think about forty or fifty [people]. We used to make up big huge pots of rice and vegetables and that sort of stuff...At that point in time I used to get up every morning and...and I would walk over to what's now Mason Road and pick mushrooms and start off every day by eating mushrooms...yeah and then sort of trip...it was very much like *Alice in Wonderland*...sometimes it was scary, you know, I went through a lot of hallucinations, not all of them were all that fantastic. (i/v G1, 16 Apr. 1995)

The Kuranda Commune was known as an 'open commune'. In other words, the landowner placed no restrictions on who, or how many people, could come and live there. In order to live there you had to be willing to live in the existing conditions or create your own living space (a platform, a treehouse, or just a hammock) and if you were going to share in it, contribute

occasionally to the communal meal. Although it was defined as open, nevertheless the Kuranda Commune was exclusive. People were excluded, not by force or regulation, but by their own inability to fit into that particular 'scene'. As one woman who set up camp with her friend on land next door, but avoided the commune itself, put it:

> ...no no no no, there were too many people. I mean, there must have been seventy people living on it then, and for one thing I didn't know any of them, and for another thing, I've always been very independent...I don't know, they were a bit wild and woolly as far as I was concerned. I don't know why, but it didn't really interest me. Crowds have always worried me...(i/v S, 10 Jan. 1994)

She used to, however, sit and listen with fascination to the variety of sounds coming from the commune:

> ...it was fascinating really that...all these people could be living down there and you'd hear pots sometimes crashing but you'd never hear people yelling at each other or...It was all very quiet unless they were singing you know and sometimes they'd all just sit around and play drums so it was quite wild, it sounded very, kind of, tribal...I never went down there 'cos it was all too much for me, all those people, but I would sit and listen to them...(i/v S, 10 Jan. 1994)

Gender also played a significant role in the membership of, and acceptance into, the various communes.

> ...being a girl, being a woman, I was quite quickly absorbed into the commune and I found that the two guys were not really accepted you know...because I could cook and sew and do all those sorts of things, I was quickly taken in as being, I guess, another woman to help, because it was exactly that way, and the women did all that stuff you know...(i/v G1, 16 Apr. 1995)

Some people that did enter the commune had communitarian visions of it as 'somewhere where you could go and work for the common union'[4]. For most

of the city kids who hitchhiked North, however, it was simply a 'crash pad'.

Some only stayed for a night, others for longer. Once a week someone would

go round and collect a dollar, from those who could afford it, to buy

foodstuffs for the commune - mainly cereals, rice and vegetables. This was

supplemented with surplus and/or damaged produce which farmers were

willing to give for no charge, and discarded bread collected from the bakeries.

Many people would supplement this diet with takeaway from the cafe

attached to the local petrol station. Some had allowances from their parents

while others managed to get occasional work, such as stringing tobacco and

picking fruit, on nearby farms.

Eventually the owner of the land was forced to close the commune because it

was attracting too many people and raising the ire of, not only the established

settlers in the area, but also some of the new settlers. They did not like the

attention that was being drawn to them by the activities of those resident on

the commune. As one new landowner recollects:

> The young hippies were...wild...I mean they used to go up...they were
> tripping on mushrooms in town and going into the pubs on
> mushrooms and driving around...and one time they drove through
> town, about ten or twelve of them in one car, on the bonnet and on the
> roof. They were pretty wild times...[The Holloways Beach people]
> they'd bought land up here and they'd got into their houses and they
> wanted to fit into town...they were going to live here for twenty
> years...and most of them have, so they didn't want young yahoos
> creating a bad name or partying all the time...they just became
> conservative landholders...these young people were like pretty high
> profile you know, sitting around outside the post-office in their
> raggedy clothes playing guitars. (i/v M, 15 Apr. 1995)

The commune changed in character over the year as more and more people arrived and its composition altered.

> It was really getting very bad, in terms of hygiene and all that kind of stuff you know. It was becoming a real sort of drop-out centre you know...there were people starting to turn up, like ex-bikers and their wives with kids, with guns and knives and all that kind of thing. The whole picture started to change and also up until then there hadn't been a lot of alcohol and then all of a sudden there was a lot of alcohol, and it became a very different sort of scene then...and those people who came, people called them the scrub ticks, 'cos basically they clung on and sucked everything out you know...(i/v G1, 16 Apr. 1995)

The land on which the Commune was located is very steep and rainforested with a creek running through the middle. There was one large long house at the top of the block but most people just lived under tarps on little platforms they had built for themselves between the trees on the slopes, or simply in hammocks strung between the trees (Plate 5). It was idyllic in the dry but miserable in the wet season. Once the rains started many of the people who had come to Kuranda to 'drop out' were quite happy to move on.

> These were real transients. They came up and would be here until the weather got bad and then they'd go back down south and they lived in squats in Melbourne and that sort of thing . (i/v G1, 16 Apr. 1995)

Those people who decided to stay on longer in Kuranda, or who wished to settle permanently, found it was necessary to buy land and/or build more substantial shelter. This need for shelter was eventually to draw them into conflict with the Shire Council over building regulations and the like, an issue I discuss in more detail below.

There were other smaller communes that people remember having existed in the seventies in the Kuranda region. One of these was FUJIAC ('Fuck You Jack I'm Alright Commune'). Perhaps one of the most notorious communal households, however, was 'the Titanic'. This was a wooden platform covered by a tarp on which lived a group of men, mostly university graduates and/or dropouts from Sydney. The platform had originally been started by a couple of women who had been given permission by the absentee owner of the land to live there. The men had offered to help them build a house. They got as far as the floor and when the rains started the men moved on to the platform, much to the chagrin of the women.

> We got the floor in and it started raining. The boys went down and bought a tarp and put the tarp over the top of this platform and moved into it! We kept saying we were supposed to move in there and they said, 'But you have the kombi van'…So the boys got the platform and that turned into the Titanic which you probably have heard about. Anyway so the Titanic was infamous in its own right 'cos it was this group of guys and all they did all day, I think, was play cards and drink and take drugs and mushrooms…and it was a big wet season, and that wet season actually started on Christmas day of 1971. (i/v S, 10 Jan. 1994)

One of the women left Kuranda but the other continued to sleep in her Kombi van. She managed, however, to secure a position 'cooking for two guys and doing all their house stuff' and so she had the use of part of their house during the day (i/v S, 10 Jan. 1994). In comparing the Kuranda Commune with the Titanic an ex-member of the Kuranda Commune notes:

> …well they were a little bit older, that was the main thing…just a few years older…but it made a difference, yeah. You'd go there and they'd be reading James Joyce or something like that and everyone over here was reading Hermann Hesse you know, this was all the hippy trippy

sort of stuff and that kind of thing.  These guys were much more into, a bit more intellectual I suppose.  (i/v G1, 16 Apr. 1995)

This woman and a friend eventually moved from the Kuranda Commune into small shack on a block of land next door to the Titanic.  In contradistinction to the Titanic, the two women called their place 'the Good Ship Lollipop'.  Nearby was a place called 'the Lighthouse'.

There were also many other, less notorious, communally organised households and 'crash pads' which either had no particular names, or else the names have disappeared from memory.  However, it appears that the people who came as refugees from the 'urban jungles' in which they grew up to the rainforests of Kuranda, in naming their communes, made a symbolic connection between their living spaces and ships, or boats.  What possible connection, one might ask, could there be between mountain top communes and boats?  One explanation might be that many of the commune dwellers had come to Kuranda via Holloways Beach and boats had been part of their beachcomber existence.  My interpretation however is inspired by the following rather romantic quotation from Foucault (1986:27):

> ...if we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and is at the same time given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilisation, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development..., but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination.  The ship is the heterotopia *par*

> *excellence..* In civilisations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates.[5]

That boats and communes come together in the imagination is not only evidenced by the names that communards gave to their communes, but also by the fact that the members of one commune in Kuranda, which I discuss in detail below, spent many years actually building a large boat. I am not suggesting that making a connection between communes and boats is distinctive of Kuranda communards. Rather, it is a more generally made association. A Kuranda communard notes, for example:

> There was a houseful of people in Cairns that I met, I think they lived in Freshwater, and they had this kind of philosophy idea that they were going to take off into the ocean and leave this kind of world and start their own life somewhere. What they were doing was, they were starting off from scratch and they were building a boat, entirely themselves, out of wood...(i/v W3, 13 Jan. 1995)

Boats and the sea represented a means of escape from the system for both the bohemians of Holloways and the wave of hippies that followed them north. However, apart from a rather vague notion that they were somehow all escaping the system, members of the various communal households that were established in Kuranda in the 1970s and 1980s do not remember having any generally shared, or consistent, political philosophy. The various communes tended to differ markedly from one another in structure and composition. Even in retrospect, people do not articulate any coherent system of beliefs that drew them together at that time. Because of this, some researchers may dispute my use of the cover term 'commune' to refer to the diversity of

groups which set themselves up in Kuranda during the seventies. As Munro-Clark (1986:11-12) points out, in the sociological literature such groups are variously referred to as 'intentional communities', 'alternative lifestyle groups', 'rural co-operatives', 'multiple-occupancy settlements', 'land-sharing communities', and 'sustainable communities'. Some researchers wish to restrict the use of the term commune to groups who actually form and maintain a single collective or common household in the economic sense (eg. Zablocki 1980:7). I prefer a more inclusive and holistic definition which takes into account the insider view and the fact that Kuranda communards think of themselves as having come together communally, whether intentionally or otherwise. What is significant with respect to their communitarian discourse, is that it was grounded in liberal individualism. The attraction of people to Holloways Beach was not just palm trees and golden sands, but the idea of the freedom from social constraint that a life connected with the sea and boats conjured up for them. They brought this idea of the freedom of the individual with them to Kuranda when they came in search of cheap land and mushrooms. They, and the hippies that followed them, may or may not have shared household income and other resources. They certainly, however, shared an ideology, an ideology of individualism that, ironically, drew them into communal living arrangements. They also shared the practice of consuming mind-altering substances, the music, literature, and art, or 'cultural capital', that went with it, and the experience of a growing

marginality as they became the targets of state agencies - police and then shire council.

Some communes in the Kuranda area, if not initially, at least later on in their lifespan, developed a more consciously articulated ideological foundation and perhaps could be more legitimately referred to as 'intentional communities' of the type that Munro-Clark (1986) surveyed as part of her research into 'rural communitarianism' in Australia. One of these is Arona, also known locally as 'the Indonesian Commune', which still operates today. It was established as a Christian community by a religious leader and his followers. The commune is known as the Indonesian commune because the leader and the core of the community are originally from the same Pentecostal church community in Indonesia. Arona is comprised of a number of families who live in separate houses or apartments, but who share a communal kitchen and common spaces for socialising and entertaining. The land is itself owned by the leader and his immediate family, but each resident member family has paid for the construction of its own apartment. There are other members of the community who do not actually live on the commune land, but simply attend religious services and social functions there. The commune is not run as a farm. Rather, members go out to work wherever they wish. The community was initially well respected in North Queensland but gained notoriety some years ago when it fissioned as a result of internal conflict. Dissenting members broke away and jointly purchased another property. At the same

time some of the ritual practices of the leader were questioned by the break away group. The remaining members of the commune however remained loyal to him, and some say that he was unfairly victimised. Unlike most of the intentional communities established in Kuranda during the 1970s and 1980s, which eventually folded, Arona continues today as a commune founded on the Indonesian common past of its core members, and shared religious values[6].

Other communes, more short lived than Arona, also could be considered intentional communities. For example, there was a commune of fruitarians on the Clohesey River. A woman who visited it in 1973 describes it as follows:

> I was greeted by a naked woman who was a real streak, like she was very every thin, very very thin, and she explained to me that they were all fruitarians and they always liked having new recruits...and she took me on a tour of their farm and there was lovely fruit growing everywhere, organic fruit, and she invited me to have a meal with them...There was nothing very earthy about it actually [the farmhouse]...It was actually a great big aluminium shed with bunks all around it, built around the sides of it, that all the recruitees lived in. And the guy who owned the farm had a double bed in the middle of it with a huge mosquito net hanging down from the ceiling, and I don't know who shared the double bed with him but...There weren't many men there, there were mostly women. But everybody was very very skinny. It didn't have a real wholesome feel about it, although it was a beautiful place...I must say I'm wary of these, you know, leader type people that seem to have this little group of followers who almost worship them...(i/v W3, 13 Jan. 1995)

Other intentional communities in the Kuranda area included a number of Buddhist ashrams, one of which was 'Fruitful Farm' at Koah. The farm was

eventually bought by members of the Ananda Marga, and is today privately owned by two ex-members of this group.

**Rosebud Farm**

One of the best known, and most long lived, of the communes was 'Rosebud Farm', also known as 'the American commune' because it was founded by a group of American men in their early twenties who had dropped out of University and had left their country because of disenchantment with the policies of their government during the Vietnam war. It began with two friends, Richard Trapnell, who dropped out of Harvard, and Kim Haskell, who dropped out of the University of Denver. They flew to Australia in 1970, bought a utility truck and camping gear and started touring the country in search of a place to settle. In their travels through country Victoria they met up and became friendly with a young Australian. According to his own account, the young man was completely taken with the Americans. He was a working-class country boy who had never seen as much ready cash as they appeared to have nor the generosity of spirit with which they spent it. They opened his eyes to new possibilities of being and he spontaneously decided at the age of seventeen to leave home and to join them in their travels. On their way they also met and became friends with some other young Australians and were eventually also joined by two more Americans[7]. The group of Americans had grown up together and were like brothers to one another. About six months later they all arrived in Cairns and camped on a beach

before meeting up with a real-estate agent who took them to see a farm that was for sale in the Kuranda area. The Americans immediately fell in love with the farm and one of them decided to buy it then and there with money that he had inherited. They did not initially intend it to be a commune. They simply saw it as a beautiful place where they could live for a while. They were not thinking of the future but thought it would be fun to build up the farm enough to feed themselves. It was their idea of a 'boys own adventure'. They invited six of their Australian male friends to join them and thus began their communal experiment. They called the farm 'Rosebud' and themselves 'the Rosebuddies'. They took this name from the movie 'Citizen Kane'[8]. As one of the Americans explained:

> The movie actually deals with that one word. Right before he died he wrote down the word 'Rosebud', and this reporter is going back to find out why in the whole movie and it's not till the end of the movie when they're cleaning out the cellar,...they come across...a child's snow-sled with the word 'Rosebud' printed on top. So obviously in his dying moments he's remembering his youth and innocence and joy and all that. And we used to have a good friend, ...[who] said, 'This place is a real "Rosebud", let's call it "Rosebud Farm" '. (i/v T, 13 Oct. 1993)

Thus there were four Americans and six Australian men who started the commune together, but it was the Americans who had the money and one of them who actually bought and therefore owned the land. According to one of the Americans:

> Rosebud was actually 160 acres and it cost $16,000 which for us, coming from the States, was like you know, too good to be true...in 1971, $16,000 was a lot of money but relative to the prices in the States it was, you know, nothing, because land over there, where we grew up, was about $10,000 an acre; so Kim actually bought the land...People would go out and get jobs and come back and donate the money and people would have day jobs in Kuranda and come back and bring food

> or whatever, beer and flagons of wine, and it was a real chip in type of atmosphere; and people who came from overseas would chip in and it was quite good.  The major expenditures on the farm, like building sheds and buying tractors and all that, was pretty much dealt with by Kim and Jeb and myself.  You know Kim and Jeb had some money from the States, whereas I didn't have a lot of money, but I had a little bit, and I worked as well [picking tobacco and in plant nurseries] and the Australian guys worked and chipped in.  It was good. (i/v T, 13 Oct. 1993)

After the first six months they began to receive a constant stream of young friends, mainly women, visiting from the States to have their hippie commune experience.  A number of Australian women also made the commune their home.  One of them had lived in the Kuranda Commune before it was closed down and was later invited to join the Rosebuddies.  Another simply turned up one day.  She had travelled up on her own from Melbourne and had hitchhiked around the Kuranda area in search of a farming commune where she could learn organic farming.

> I was on this search.  I knew that I wanted to find a farm.  I knew that I wanted to have a communal type of lifestyle and be with lots of people...I didn't really find a lot [of communes] around but one day this guy stopped on the highway at Speewah Road and said, 'See that boat down there, there's a whole farm full of people who live up that road there, building that boat, and they sound like the kind of people you'd like to meet.  So off I trotted down this winding walk down all the way to the farm...And a little man with a red beard and fluffy hair popped out of the corn field and said, 'Hello'...I said, 'I'm looking for somewhere like this to live and learn more about organic gardening...', and he said, 'Well you're quite welcome to stay here for a few days and just feel the place out'.  So the next time I arrived I had my rucksack on my back and found myself a bunk in the bunk room and more or less made myself at home. (i/v W3 13 Jan. 1995)

At its peak approximately twenty five people were living on Rosebud, but of these only about twelve ever considered it their permanent home.  They were

all young, mostly in their early twenties. One of the original Australian members notes that they 'worked very hard but partied every night', that there was always plenty to eat and drink and smoke, and that one or other of the Americans would go home each year and bring back Levis for them all, so they were always 'well fed and clothed' (pers. comm. 1997). No one was visibly in charge, but according to one of the Australians there was an unspoken awareness of the existence of a hierarchy based on the fact of land ownership, and that if a situation arose the American landowner would have the last say (pers. comm. 1997). Day to day, however, people worked according to their own interests and abilities. Some focused on planting, watering and weeding the vegetable patch, or looked after the farm animals: the cow, some goats, chickens and ducks. Others worked in the fields planting and tending the corn and the soy beans, or fixing the tractor and other machinery. Almost everyone took a turn at one time or another helping one of the Americans, the owner of the land, build a large ferrous cement boat. He had a dream of building a boat that could sail anywhere, so during almost the whole life of the commune this huge concrete boat was also being built. Everyone living on the commune was encouraged to pitch in. The boat was called 'Big Mama' and was parked on a block of land along the highway. It became a popular tourist attraction. According to one of the members of Rosebud, tour bus operators used to stop and say, 'Well there they are the hippies building the Ark, just waiting for the flood so they can take it down the mountain' (i/v T, 13 Oct. 1993). The boat was started in June 1972 and

was taken on the back of a semi-trailer down the range and launched in Cairns harbour in August 1978.

## Entering Excluded: Communes, Gender and Work

There were many more men than women among the hippies and others who came to Kuranda during the early 1970s. Women found that they were more readily accepted than men into already established communes, and that, although they were supposed to be challenging the system, gender hierarchy was actually reinforced on most of the communes, and women were expected to adopt traditional gender roles:

> ...so as the sun went down...the truck would load up and all the boys would climb on and go to the pub and drink and carry on and then they'd sort of head home and the women would be keeping the..., stopping the meal from burning, all the things my mother used to do. (i/v G1, 16 Apr. 1995)

The impression of some of the women who lived on Rosebud, looking back, is that the farm was just a 'boy's club' with the women being there simply to do the traditional chores of cooking and cleaning. As one woman put it, 'there was always a lot of male bonding going on'[9]. A comment by one of the men testifies to the veracity of her assessment of the situation:

> [The arrival of women] ah well it definitely broke up the group of males and then...and also in the kitchen, I mean, it's you know, night after night after night. It's easy for one woman or even two women but as soon as you get three or four women you get so many conflicting ideas about how to run a kitchen. (i/v T, 13 Oct. 1993)

There appears to have been very little conflict in the early years among the group of men who established Rosebud. However, as more people joined, some tension developed among the men over their relative workloads, and there was also some gender conflict as women began to object to the gendered division of labour on the farm. As one woman recollects:

> ...corn, you know we used to grow huge amounts. That was our cow feed, our goat feed. We used to have a big corn mulling thing, you know, and you'd have to feed the corn cobs through it for the chooks, to get the corn off the cobs, and we used to do that. Things like that we used to do manually every day; heaps of manual work. Sometimes it was disheartening because you'd be criticised by someone who hadn't seen what you'd done and you'd feel really hurt because you'd been working so hard and you were tired and yet they didn't realise it. That did happen a bit with the genders. A lot of the men didn't realise that we women spent so much time looking after the kitchen, the pantry, you know, all those type of things, you know, and we really did work hard, especially when we had babies and had to carry them up the hill. (i/v W2, 28 Nov. 1994)

One woman in particular refused to be, as she put it, 'pigeonholed' by the men on the commune but she was told by one of the other women that in challenging the system she only made it harder for the rest of them (i/v G1, 16 Apr. 1995). Not many of the women associated with the Kuranda communes pursued feminist ideals. An absence of feminist ideology has, in fact, been noted as being typical of communes generally in Australia during this period. 'The struggle against gender discrimination was not pursued or advanced by the counter-culture of the 1960s and 1970s...' (Munro-Clark 1986:106).

Apart from disputes over work on the commune, women remember the difficulties they experienced in having to conform to the expectations of other commune members, men and women, with regard to such issues as nudity, sexual freedom, and personal hygiene:

> ...all the things that were sort of taboo, like shaving your legs, or make-up, or deodorant, or being on the pill...that was like modern medicine. I mean, you know, you were supposed to really be drawing on the wisdom of ages...same with birth really.  I mean...it was, 'Well this is the way it should be because peasant women have been doing it squatting in the fields'...and things like period pain...I mean it was like, 'Forget it, it doesn't exist, peasant women don't have problems like that you know'....I know there was one woman there who, she had a real B.O. problem, ...and she used to have her deodorant hidden because she didn't want anyone to know she used a deodorant, and anything that you did that...brought the modern world in was considered bad news...I was just thinking how difficult it must have been for them [the other women] to be, to feel, loose sexually without being worried about it.  I'm sure they were all on the pill...I mean I was very lucky.  I never took any contraception at all...I had this whole theory that it was all in the mind.  I didn't want to be pregnant, therefore I wasn't pregnant...(i/v G1, 16 Apr. 1995)

Such defining features of communal ideology as: an opposition to technocracy, the celebration of the idea of sexual freedom, emphasis on naturalness with regard to bodily practices, and withdrawal from products associated with modernity, meant that certain people, and in particular many of the women, did indeed enter the heterotopic site of the commune already excluded.  However, the key factor determining membership of Rosebud was a demonstrated willingness and ability to contribute to the labour pool.  'Hangers on' were not welcome.  Class issues, also played a part in who was welcome on the commune and who was not.  As one member put it,

> ...there was...the Titanic, that was full of people living in the forest...There were little patches of people living in treehouses and things in the National Park and the surrounding areas...I never really associated with them much. To me they actually, they were more feral than what I felt that I was, and we did have a lot of visits from those kind of people, and of course they were always in for the parties and all that...Like I say, we socialised in those scenes but they weren't part of what we were doing as a whole... (i/v W2, 28 Nov. 1994)

Because the word had spread that the original Kuranda Commune was open to anyone, people thought that the same applied to Rosebud Farm. The Rosebuddies, therefore, constantly had to deal with people who would turn up and expect to be allowed to stay and live off the products of their labour. Eventually the Rosebuddies posted a sign in Kuranda announcing that Rosebud was not an open commune and that only invited people were welcome. The situation had come to a head as more and more communes in the Kuranda area folded and Rosebud experienced an influx of refugees from these, and from the remote settlement at Cedar Bay, after it was raided and destroyed by heavily armed police in helicopters and four-wheel drive vehicles.

> ...you know, the whole Cedar Bay thing, well a lot of people from Cedar Bay had moved to Cape Tribulation and the people who owned Cape Tribulation property had thrown everybody out and they had moved *en mass* to the commune [Rosebud]...there were probably twenty five, something like that. Yeah, they just sort of arrived...It was becoming outrageous because people who had been going to the Kuranda Commune were [also] now coming to Rosebud and we had, you'd wake up in the morning and you'd get up and there'd be like people in sleeping bags on the kitchen floor who'd arrived in the night and just squatted...just couldn't handle it. (i/v G1, 16 Apr. 1995)

In a sense history was repeating itself and the Kuranda scene became the Holloways Beach situation all over again. An established group of people, who, were largely of middle class origin, found themselves challenged by an influx of mainly homeless urban runnaways expecting to be welcomed into their communitarian fold. That they did not receive such a welcome was due to the same problems of social class that denied them a place in the system from which they were attempting to escape - 'lack of skills, inarticulateness and no capital' (Munro-Clark 1996:63).

**At the Interface: Hippies, Settlers, and Aborigines.**

People who had the capital to buy land were initially welcomed with open arms by the old settler families of the Kuranda area. There were only a handful of such families and they owned a lot of what they thought of then as unproductive land which they were keen to sell. A woman who bought eighty acres in Kuranda in 1964 notes:

> [There was] lots of land for sale. Yes we were inundated with people saying, 'Wouldn't you like to buy our land?'...Everyone was very interested in what new people were doing here because there were very few new people moving into the area. Everybody was related. You had to be very careful about what you said because you were bound to be talking to someone's aunty, or something like that...We were probably the first people who were not locals move into the area...and then about five years down the track from then, '64 you know, just before 1970, alternative lifestylers started to move in...(i/v J, 8 July, 1994)

Responses to the arrival of these newcomers were varied among the Kuranda residents. However, newspaper reports of the time tended to feature the

negative. ' "Hippies" paradise is locals' hell' reads one headline (*Sunday Mail* 19 September, 1971).   Another article, headed 'Hippie "families" invade north', reports on the concerns of local farmers about the activities of the newcomers, in particular the fears of a Myola grazier who 'found clusters of toadstools had been disturbed in a paddock that "hippies" had been through'. The newspaper went on to report that a young girl was found 'in a distressed condition on a local road.  She told authorities she had eaten "mushrooms" from a Myola paddock' (*Sunday Mail* 5 July 1970).

However, the arrival of the hippies appears to have been accepted quite readily by Aboriginal people.  As one woman put it:

> We saw all these people coming with long hair and long beards and all that.  They dressed differently, all raggedy clothes, and we'd never seen things like that before...but we made friends with them...some of them come to our place here and we made them welcome. (i/v M, 4 Jan. 1995)

A couple who had gone to one of the communes in order to find the son of a friend of theirs who had gone missing, had this to say about their experience:

> They had a house, but not properly a house, walls, roof, just like a big dormitory, commune...all the beds in a row.  They make home made beds with logs and things.  It was clean and all those girls sit down and do patchwork.  Patchwork quilts on all the beds, and yet they dress anyhow.  They offer us coffee and ricebread...they welcomed us, they wanted to give us coffee.  We frightened to take it 'cos we thought they might put drug in it.  'You want drugs?', they asked us.  We said, 'No' [laughingly]. (i/v L/M, 4 Jan. 1995)

Some Aboriginal people were, however, shocked by the lifestyle of the hippies:

> We used to see these hippies you know, but we were like that, but coming into town see, we used to have clothes, but their children...It was shocking. We didn't like it. So did the elders from in town there, the Veivers and that, because they said, 'Dark people don't strip their children off like that'. But police probably talked to some of them. They dressed properly then...It was shocking to see them...we knew we used to strip off when we were small, but not in town eh, in public. (i/v E 4 18 June, 1995)

In general, Aboriginal women avoided the communes, although some did attend parties at Rosebud with their partners and friends. A number of Aboriginal men, however, remember spending time at Kuranda Commune, trying out mushrooms and marijuana for the first time. However, most socializing between hippies and Aborigines went on in public places such as outside the post office, the grocery store, the service station, or at the pub.

There was a good relationship between the people who came to Kuranda during the seventies, both as itinerants and settlers, and the Aboriginal population of Kuranda. The conflict that the new settlers had with the police was one of the key uniting factors. The hippies were regularly subjected to police harassment of the kind with which Aboriginal people are very familiar. Moreover, the living conditions of the newcomers were more like those of Aborigines than other white people. As one woman put it, 'They were just like us, like Aboriginal', and her husband added:

> They were living just like us. The way they lived, they were living just like us in the bush, and they were one of us. A lot of them were chased from here by the police and went up to Cedar Bay. (i/v L/M, 4 Jan. 1995)

Within Kuranda itself the arrival of the people from Holloways Beach and the hippies that followed them, meant that Aboriginal people were able to mix

with non-Aboriginal people in a way that they had never been able to before, and led to the present image of Kuranda as a relatively non-racist place compared to other rural towns in Australia. Relationships with non-Aboriginal people had previously been confined to the 'white boss'

variety where Aboriginal people, 'attempt to set up dependency relationships with a European who can channel goods and services to them, as their boss' (Finlayson 1991:291). The relationships between Aborigines and hippies were, however, often the reverse, with some of the young hippies in fact becoming dependent on Aboriginal people. After the Kuranda Commune folded a number of Aboriginal households took in the homeless. In one case an Aboriginal couple used connections among local Europeans, and appealed to the Kuranda caravan park owner on behalf of two young women who had been living with them for a few weeks. The women were given an old house at the caravan park to rent, and the Aboriginal couple bought them some groceries (i/v L/M 1995). Over the years, off and on, other Aboriginal families in Kuranda have provided food and shelter for many a young person in need.

With regard to the issue of race relations in Kuranda, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people particularly mention the 'pub scene' on Friday nights at the Bottom Pub. People remember fondly the atmosphere of camaraderie and a breakdown of social barriers. These, however, did not necessarily translate into deeper friendships. People freely use the expression 'we were all in the

same boat' to account for the bonding they experienced at that time with one another, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.  Being 'in the same boat' meant that they held in common the experience of a shared marginality. On one occasion the arrest of a member of the Kuranda Commune for drunkenness resulted in a demonstration outside the police station by other Commune members. Aborigines are reported to have kept the peace by helping the police to disperse the crowd, and afterwards Aboriginal youths roamed together around the streets with hippie youths, yelling 'peace brother' and 'black is beautiful'.

The comments of a Mareeba Shire Councillor attest to the shared marginal position granted to hippies and Aborigines in relation to the established non-Aboriginal population of the area.  The Councillor is reported in the *Sunday Mail* (19 September 1971, p.3) as saying that people in the town had applied for 'police protection' because there was only one policeman assigned to Kuranda and 'he couldn't be expected to cope with 200 hippies and 500 aboriginals as well as look after the permanent population of 300'[10].

The Councillor claimed that the hippies were causing 'a terrific lot of trouble', the most recent being that six of them had been found lying on the garden beds at the Kuranda railway station, for which he 'ran them in'.  Since the town had not been allocated more police the Councillor was reported to have said, 'I think the only solution to our problem is the old-fashioned one of running them out of town'.

Many of the locals, however, in particular the shopkeepers and publicans, were sympathetic to the mostly young people who flocked to the town. One local publican is reported in the *Australian* (21 September 1971) as saying:

> I suppose I am talking through my pocket but they seem to be well connected and well educated although the odd one or two admit to being mixed up with drugs. They're easygoing and clean, they're always in the river, but their clothes look a bit worse for wear. And they're very honest. I mean apart from nabbing the occasional paw paw and who didn't pinch a few pieces of fruit when they were young? About the only trouble I have is trying to pick which ones are the females.

Many of these young people eventually left Kuranda. However, those who stayed on and bought land confronted escalating conflict with the local shire council, which I discuss in more detail in the following chapters. The conflict was partly generated by the nature of land ownership and the alternative forms of land tenure adopted by the new settlers. I therefore conclude this chapter with a discussion of land ownership and social status.

**Land Ownership and Social Status**

It is clear that the group of people who came, apparently as part of a global counter-culture movement, to Kuranda was not homogenous. One of the key criteria that people came to use as a marker of their difference from each other was ownership of land. Ownership of land legitimised people's status as permanent Kuranda residents, as opposed to the itinerants who just came up for the season. As the new settler who owned, and still owns, the land on which the Kuranda Commune was located, suggests:

> I guess there was a class thing as much as there was the landed people who had bought land up here, people who owned land, and what would now be called ferals, who were just up for the season, as the ferals are now. I mean there's hardly any ferals in town now, because its supposed to be the wet season so they're down at Nimbin or wherever they go, and come winter they'll come back, and the season used to be like that back then. (i/v M, 15 Apr. 1995)

The next step, therefore, for people who wanted to stay on in Kuranda was to follow the example of the Holloways Beach people and purchase land. As one of the members of the Kuranda Commune told a reporter who had visited the commune for an article published in *The Bulletin* (Wynhausen 1971:39):

> Quite a lot of the people from the commune leave to get land,...They're starting to see that of all material things land is the most important - the only one you can do something with.

A commonly recognised distinction that was made in Kuranda at the time was between 'hairies' and 'hippies'. According to one source these names were first used by one of the shopkeepers in town to distinguish those who actually could afford to spend money in her shop from the 'down and outs':

> ...there were hippies and hairies. We were hairies...Hippies were dead-shit, nowhere, useless bums, and hairies were people that paid their own bills, very polite, shopped, had long hair but didn't dress in op-shop leftovers, which none of us did. We wore exactly the same almost as everyone else was wearing. We just happened to have hair down to our arse. So we were hairies...The other ones were getting their six dollars a week dole. See none of us did any of that...We were not hippies. We were hairies and hairies actually owned land up the road. (i/v B2, 10 Jan. 1996)

Some of these so-called 'hairies' were indeed extremely wealthy, in particular the Americans from Rosebud. They were known to hail from old moneyed

stock in the USA, and a local mythology soon developed about the actual

extent of their wealth:

> [They called us]...all hippies...[but] they didn't understand that the
> collective value of those people was probably thirty million dollars at
> the time...the coppers would turn up and shopkeepers would say,
> 'Don't hassle them', because you'd be spending forty grand a year
> there.  Big money these guys were... (i/v B2, 10 Jan. 1996)
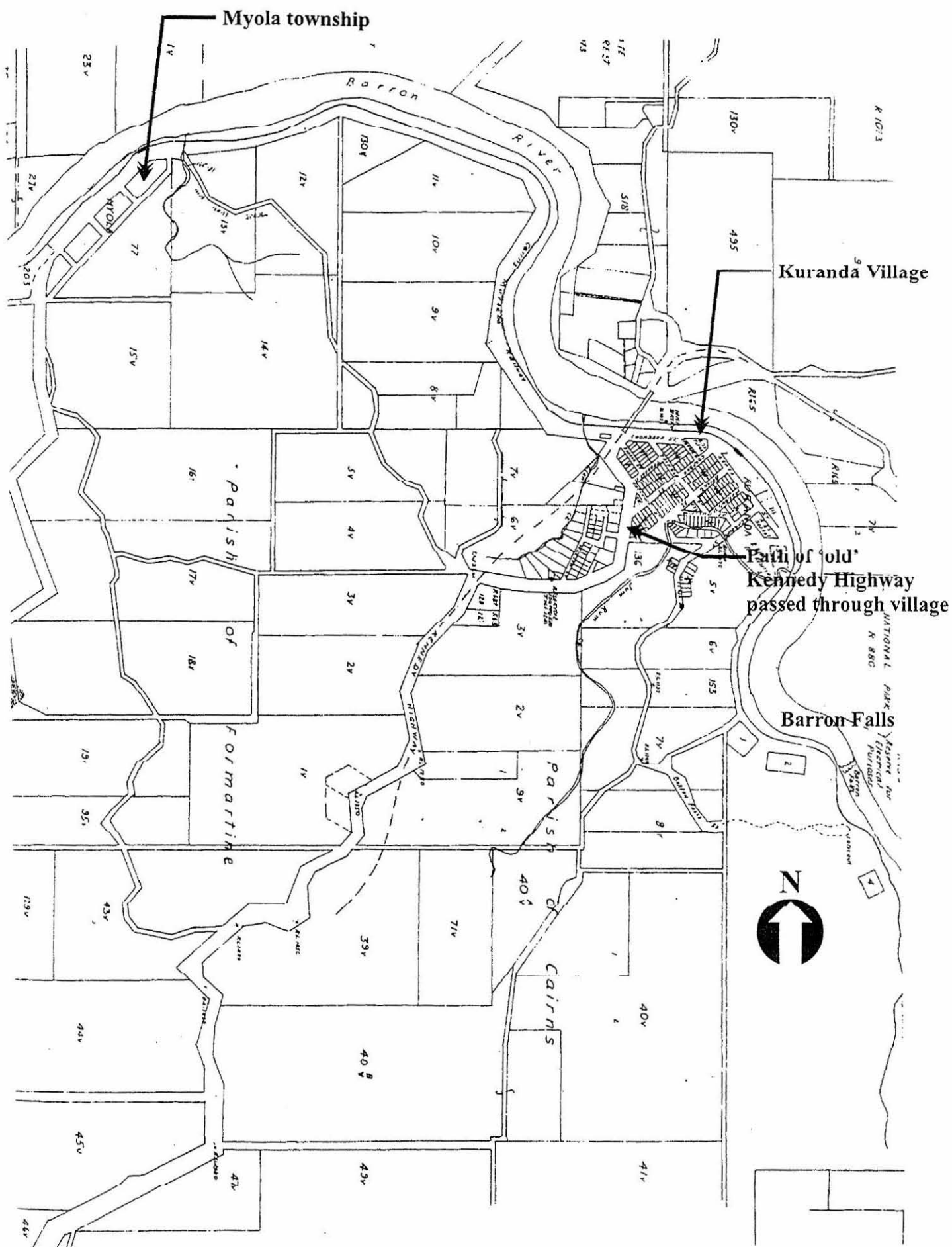
A person who owned one of the cafes in Kuranda during the seventies

remembers:

> Rosebud, all the boys from Rosebud used to come to Sunshine's then.  I
> don't know whose father or mother it was, ...they were extremely well
> off.  They came and gave me, I think it was five hundred, or a thousand
> [dollars], at the time it was a hell of a lot of money, because they didn't
> want to accept any money from the parents.  So they said, 'John, here is
> so much', you know, 'and whenever they come in for takeaways and
> everything else, it's paid for'.  (i/v J2, 14 Jan. 1994)

According to several of the Australians who lived and worked at Rosebud, it

was the idea of landownership which was in fact eventually to tear the

commune apart.  After the partying was over and the initial *communitas* had

started to wane, they began to realise that there was a pecking order on the

farm based on the fact of landownership.  They realised that in return for the

labour they put into the commune they would never get any more than their

food and lodging.  A few of them, therefore, started to look around for their

own blocks of land.  Unfortunately, by that time land prices in the Kuranda

area has escalated dramatically due to the demand of other newcomers drawn

by the reputation Kuranda of as a haven for alternative lifestylers.  Like the

settlers from Holloways Beach, therefore, many people seeking land only

could afford it if they joined forces with others and bought it in common. A comparison of Figures 4 and 5 indicate the extent of the subdivision of land and housing development in Kuranda between 1973 and 1997.
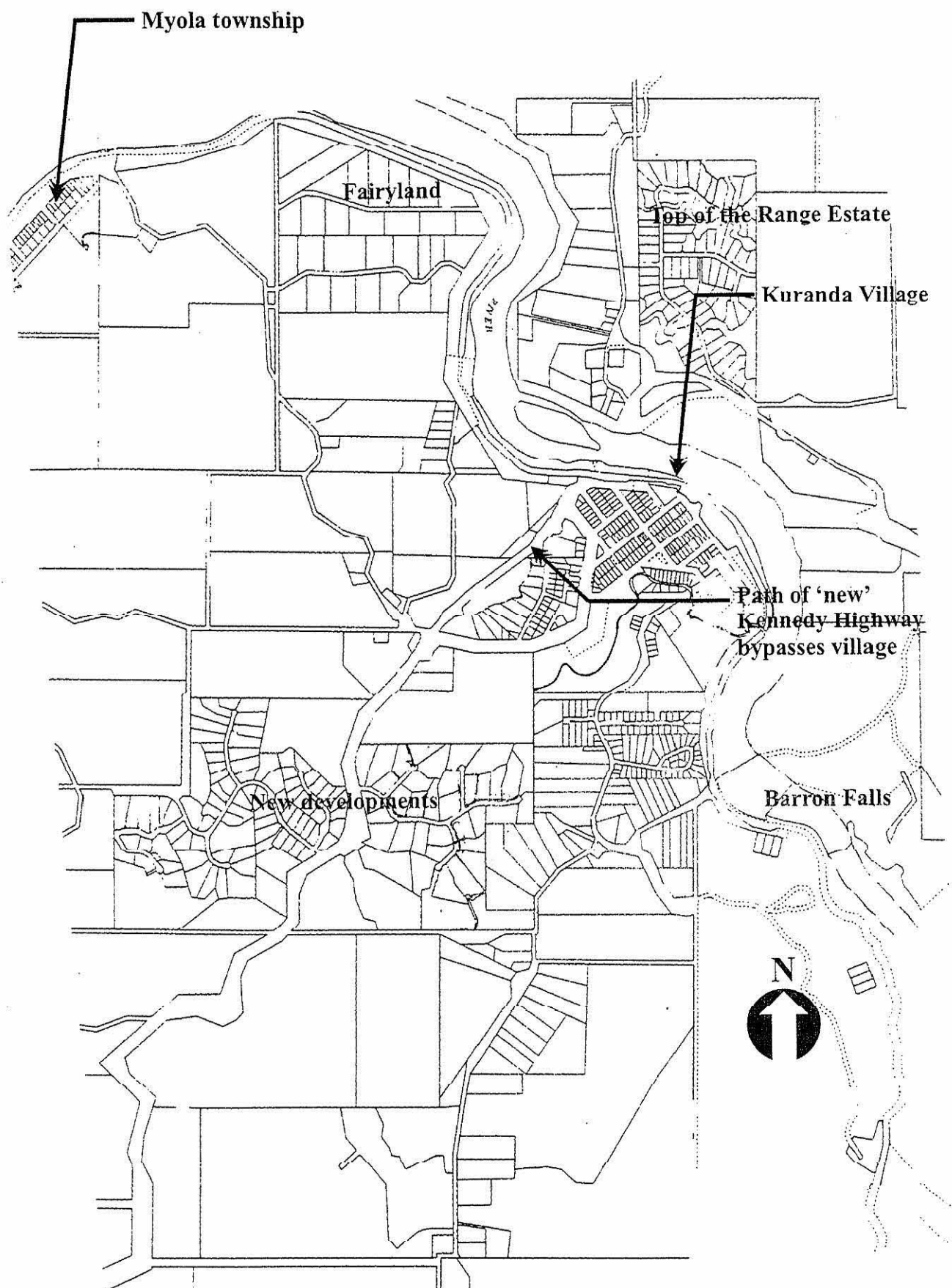
Figure 4: Kuranda circa 1973

Myola township

Kuranda Village

Path of 'old'
Kennedy Highway
passed through village

Barron Falls

N

Kuranda circa 1973

Figure 4

Figure 5: Kuranda circa 1997

Myola township

Fairyland

Top of the Range Estate

Kuranda Village

Path of 'new'
Kennedy Highway
bypasses village

New developments

Barron Falls

N

Kuranda circa 1997

Figure 5

The response of the Shire Council to the purchase of land in common by the new settlers was to subject them to a high level of surveillance and policing by enforcing its by-laws and building regulations[11]. The comments of Kuranda's only representative on the Mareeba Shire Council at the time testifies to the shire council attitudes to the new land owners:

> Unfortunately, some have bought land here...A few have built their own homes, but they are not fit habitations and we have served notices on them to bring the places up to standard (*The Sunday Mail*, 19 September 1971:3).

Even if people were able to realise their dreams and purchase land, many did not have the finances needed to build houses of the standard required under the Shire building regulations.

> ...and you had to submit building plans. So I mean in the long run that's what I did...it's a bit tricky because I still live below the poverty line. I haven't borrowed money from the bank. I can't because it's tenants-in-common and because I've always worked for myself so...it's not like a bank will approve a loan to you. So I can't build...like you're supposed to have it done in a year, but I could never do that. So if they [the building inspectors] come out now, I have done a lot and I have followed the building plans but its not done...Personally I think we're over governed. I think I should have the right to build the house as I so desire. I mean it is strong. I'm not going to build it so it's going to blow away! (i/v S, 10 Jan. 1994)

There was much resistance amongst the new settlers against government regulation which they considered stifled individual creativity. As one of the settlers today reflects:

> ...we can see now even in our architecture, the places that we live in, some of these places were allowed to evolve, and because of that mechanism, they are very individual. They have a lot of character, something that is devoid from processes that aren't allowed to evolve. They have to be set on a plan prior to the starting point, which really is

> stifling individual talents, stifling creativity. And we suffer greatly from a bureaucratic regime which has a tendency to over regulate...this burgeoning bureaucracy which seems to want to keep swelling its ranks to the detriment of individuals who are outside of itself. (i/v B, 5 July 1994)

Some people simply ignored the building regulations and constructed whatever they could afford. Others tried to comply with regulations as best they could by registering their house plans and living, for as long as they were permitted under the regulations, in caravans or sheds or other shelters classified as 'temporary dwellings'. For many people it was not just a matter of finance but a matter of freedom from a regulatory system. As a woman, who chooses to live as close to nature as possible in her hand built shelter in the rainforest rather than the type of house required under council regulations admits:

> Yeah, well you learn a few tricks too, you learn the way they think. You get a bit clever. So I knew that by building this [pointing to her new council approved house] I could continue to live like this [hidden in the rainforest in the shelter of her choice]. (i/v U, 22 Apr. 1994)

The houses that people created, whether council approved or not, came to be celebrated as an art form. Although in most cases it was economic constraint that spawned these constructions, there was, in fact, also much social pressure among the new landowners, not to build the suburban style of concrete block house which was the most economical to construct under the building code, as this meant selling out to conformity. The unique houses of the new settlers thus became a celebration of individual creativity. One new settler describes how he built his house as follows:

> ...the house cost about a hundred and fifty dollars to build, this original house, this part...Most of the timber was new. It all come from up at Tolga Mill. I think Roger Quinn found all that, this cheap timber up there, and we all went up and got truck load after truck load of it, borrowed trucks, everything was borrowed. And I had the frame of the house up, and I had the floor out of a second hand house, really good floor...I had a couple of friends help me. I did a lot of it myself, most of it...I didn't have money for the roof but a friend of mine I hadn't seen from years ago in Sydney arrived and he'd just won some money in the lottery you know and he gave me a hundred and fifty dollars or something to buy the iron for the roof...(i/v R4, 8 Jan. 1997)

Some of the members of tenancy-in-common were women. It was the only chance they had of becoming independent landowners.

> I came up with a partner and we split and then I decided I'd go and buy some land [tenancy-in-common]...it's for poor people, you know, women especially, ...you don't want a mortgage. You can't *get* a mortgage with tenants-in-common. You can't borrow money, although you can get personal loan, which I did at one stage. (i/v J4, 25 Aug. 1997)

Some tenancies-in-common worked very well, others became horrendously complicated, conflict causing monstrosities, with deep enmities and feuds developing among the co-owners. Such situations proved particularly difficult for women who, on top of everything else, had to struggle against entrenched gender oppression. The following account reveals the situation faced by one women with regard to her membership of a tenancy-in-common:

> ... because...I ended up being the one that was actually on my own, like a lone girl, everybody else got their first choice [of land on the common block] and I kept going along with everybody because I didn't want to cause any trouble...and I ended up with nine acres here and nine acres up the back. And then, when it came down to it, there were two people that weren't going to give me access to my back block...and so one of them wanted me to sell it to them, and I said, 'Ok, this is my price'. Well, for six months they tried to break my price...I'm pretty tough and I just stuck to my guns and it was really hard 'cos I can

> remember one of the fellows leaving one day [after pressuring her to sell] and the kids were sitting there...and they said, 'What does tenants-in-common mean anyway?' and I burst into tears...and then I went to the pub and I'm sitting there having a beer and...sat down next to me and he said, 'Oh, the hippy bitch'... 'They're going to break you; they're going to get you to give them the land for a cheaper price because they know that you're just going to give up because you are, you know, the soft little hippie girl that lives out there'...(i/v S, 10 Jan. 1994)

Gender also became an issue when women wanted to build their own houses.

> I went through a court case with them [the shire council] 'cos I built a shed.  Luckily I knew the law, and I was taken to court and won the case against them, because they didn't know their own laws...And they were just out to get me because I was the first woman to put in a building permit, and they refused me...they told me because I am a woman...(i/v J4, 25 Aug. 1997)

> Yeah, I mean I went to get my building permit.  They weren't going to give it to me...They said, 'Oh, and what's your husband's name?', and I said, 'No, it's just for me.  I want it in *my* name.  *I'm* going to do the building'.  They said, 'I'm sorry but we can't give you that', and I said, 'What do you mean you can't give it to me?', and they said, 'No. no, no, we've only ever issued building permits to men and we can't give you one'...Luckily there was a solicitor standing behind me and he said, 'I think you'd better give it to her.  You can't discriminate against her according to the law'...(i/v S, 10 Jan. 1994, original emphasis)

Some of the people who bought into tenancies-in-common were indeed inspired by a communitarian ideals.  Contradicting these, however, was a strong ideology of egalitarian individualism.  Many of the tenancies-in-common were on rainforest blocks of land, where members lived quite separately and privately as individual land owners on the sections they had surveyed out according to goodwill agreement among themselves.  What they had in common was a commitment to maintaining the rainforest in as

undisturbed as possible. People mostly avoided fences except to keep in animals.

> No, we haven't put fences up, but people have, like in the front there, people have put fences up because they have horses, to keep them in...otherwise not. There are only fences built to keep animals in or out, but not at boundaries. (i/v U, 22 Apr. 1994)

They wanted the best of both worlds, individual freedom within a communal situation. Today people talk with a certain nostalgia about the naivety of their communal ideals.

> ..it was still the era of this hippie movement, all sharing and love and peace and nature ideas, and I was just riding on that wave and never mistrusted anyone because I had no experience either, Rosita, I never owned any land, or anything, so just the idea to have my own piece of dirt, you know, really lifted me on cloud nine. So, of course, in the next fifteen years, that means up until now, we all learnt. (i/v U, 22 Apr. 1994)

> But we have not much in common with anyone at all, funny that, common huh, nothing in common. Very few people have anything in common. Trees, trees...yes, yes. That is actually, you would say, the binding of all of us...interest in keeping nature. (i/v U/S, 22 Apr. 1994)

The idea of buying land in common was soon taken up by land speculators, people who were not really purchasing land in order to live on it, but in order to 'make a fortune' when the land prices went up. In one case, two of the members of a tenancy-in-common wanted to force all the other members to sell the property by auction and then planned to buy it back so as to subdivide it. Another member describes the situation as follows:

> The law is you can force sale if the others won't sell, and it only takes one...but you must have a majority of shares to force it through the court...so they've dropped that one, but they've been very intent on

> sub-dividing. They've never let go about that and you don't know what they're up to until it hits you through the courts...well if I'm going to lose, I'm going to lose very badly, because to get my equity back for what I've put into my property is very difficult, and I've got to take that through the courts separately after it's sold. You lose your title the day it goes to court. It's taken off you, and so you have nowhere to live...(i/v J4, 25 Aug. 1997)

The different visions of people who bought into tenancies-in-common, particularly some of the larger ones, meant that almost inevitably there would be tension and conflict among the co-owners. Moreover, the changing life circumstances of many of the co-owners, even of those who had intended to live on their land forever, meant that many found their ambitions and visions for their future had changed. Those who wanted to leave often found it difficult to sell their share of land. Others, particularly those with children, decided that they needed more certainty about the inheritance of their children according to law. To own a share of a tenancy-in-common does not guarantee ownership of any particular portion of land on the block. People who have bought into tenancies-in-common are thus dependent on the agreement of the other members as to their boundaries.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have documented the arrival and impact of a wave of new settlers in the Kuranda area during the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, I discussed their communal settlement practices and the conflict that these generated. I have argued that it was the contradiction between the egalitarian individualism of the settlers and the communitarian ideology underlying

their communal living arrangements which eventually led to the demise many of the communes and tenancies-in-common in Kuranda. As I show in the following chapters, tension between the concept of the individual and the concept of society, between individualism and communalism, is generative of much social conflict and underlies many of the social dramas that erupt within the village.

1  In North Queensland, people talk of the rest of Australia as being 'down south'.

2  I too remember huge old Mango trees growing along the beaches.  As children, my brothers and sisters and I used to go and raid these trees so my grandmother could make dried green mango for pickles and chutneys.  We were among those locals who used to observe with a sense of wonder and excitement the arrival of the hippies from all over the world.

3 A number of people who are now residents of Kuranda are featured in the article.

4 To put this in its full context, in her interview this ex-member of the commune actually said:

> ...when I turned seventeen and I was just starting to get into the Paddington scene which was very much a drug scene and I kept seeing people wasting their life away and it didn't seem to have any purpose to me.  And foolishly enough, the idea of a commune, I thought that must be somewhere where you go and you work for the common union and that sort of stuff.  So anyway, when I got up here, I found that it was just Paddington in the rainforest.

5 On the other hand, ships and communes may also be linked in the imagination through 'the ship of fools' which was described by Foucault (1961) as the method of expulsion of mad people from the great cities of Europe.  As Foucault (1961:11) writes, 'Confined on the ship, from which there is no escape, the madman is delivered to the river with its thousand arms, the sea with its thousand roads, to that uncertainty external to everything.  He is a prisoner in the midst of what is the freest, the openest of routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads.  He is the Passenger *par excellence*: that is, the prisoner of the passage.  And the land he will come to is unknown - as is, once he disembarks, the land from which he comes.  He has his truth and his homeland only in the fruitless expanse between two countries that cannot belong to him'.  Is this perhaps also the fate  of the new settlers of Kuranda, or has Kuranda, rather, proved to be an escape from the ship of fools, from the 'SS Babylon' (the name of a community production staged at the Kuranda Amphitheatre by these new settlers; see Chapter 4).  The newly built Ark in the main street of the town (see Chapter 8 ) it could be argued, gives lie to this suggestion!

6 My brother has married a woman from this community which has presented me with a sensitive fieldwork  situation, and is one of the difficulties I faced in doing anthropology at home.

7They were John C. (Jeb) Buck, and Christopher Patterson.  An American  newspaper article (*The Sunday Bulletin*, 9 February, 1975) represents the communes four 'founding fathers' as follows:

'There is Kim Haskell, whose grandfather was a DuPont Co. vice president and director and whose father, a former Delaware congressman, is now chairman and controlling stockholder of Abercrombie & Fitch, the New York-based chain for sporty outdoorsmen.

There is John C. (Jeb) Buck, whose mother was formerly secretary of the Rebublican National Committee and whose father, an architect, once headed the New Castle County, Delaware, Council.

There also are Christopher Patterson, a 1974 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and bearded Richard Trapnell, both members of prominent Wilmington families'.

8 'Citizen Kane' was made in 1941 by Orson Welles who himself played the role of Kane, a character based on the newspaper tycoon, William Randolf Hearst.  Hearst campaigned against the release of the movie and it was buried for almost two decades until it came back with a vengeance into public consciousness in the 1960's.  The movie comprises a series of flashbacks with a reporter investigating the bizarre circumstances of the death of Kane and trying to piece together his life on the basis of the last word he uttered - 'rosebud'.  It has been suggested that 'rosebud' was really the pet name that Hearst used to refer to his mistress Marion Davies 'private parts'! (*The Battle Over Citizen Kane*,  Documentary Film).

9 This particular woman also reflected more deeply on the nature of gender relations on the communes and especially how actual practice related to espoused belief.

10Apparently the Councillor did not consider the Aborigines part of the 'permanent

population'!

11  People who had built before 1975, when  new building regulations  were passed,  were not subject to the same level of surveillance as those who built later..

# Chapter 4

# Performing Place, Staging Identity: The Kuranda Amphitheatre

*What began as a community building a stage, became a stage moulding the very life of a community* (Stafford 1984:4).

In this chapter I focus on a particular ethnographic situation - the construction of an amphitheatre in Kuranda, and the performances staged therein. This is the first of four situational analyses through which I uncover the politics of the relationship between place and identity in Kuranda. The Kuranda Amphitheatre, from its initial conception to its ongoing construction and use, can be best understood, I suggest, as not merely a venue for performances, but as a social situation of place making. In this space of performance, identity is actively constituted through *experience*. Through performances *on* the amphitheatre stage, Kuranda people generate 'experiential situations' (Kapferer 1986:191), which work to contain 'the difference within' (Chauduri 1991:192) and produce the sameness entailed in their concept of community. However, the amphitheatre project also generates experiential situations *off* the stage. Following Turner (1974: 1996) these may be called 'social dramas'. Turner explicitly compares the 'temporal structure of certain types of social processes with that of dramas on the stage...'(1974:43). He defines 'social dramas' as, '... units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations' (1974:33). Disputes connected with the amphitheatre are

performances that operate so as to allow people to interrogate sameness. They throw difference into the limelight of people's experience, demanding of them an active role 'in the fashioning and refashioning of their own existential realities' (Kapferer 1996:xiii).

In my analysis of this social situation I draw upon the ideas of Bachelard (1969) and Heidegger (1971), both of whom have broadly considered the human dynamics of location. For Bachelard, to be emplaced means to inhabit space in the fullest sense of the word – to *belong*. He illuminates the link between habitat and identity through the study of poetic 'images of intimacy' and what he calls 'felicitous space' (1969: ix). He begins with the intimate poetics of the house and moves on to such images as the nest and the shell, noting, for example, that to live in a shell is associated with the ability to 'curl up comfortably'. 'To curl up', he suggests, 'belongs to the phenomenology of the verb to inhabit and only those who have learned to do so can inhabit with intensity' (1969:xxxiv). These remarks are particularly relevant to my theme, because the Kuranda amphitheatre was originally known as the 'sound shell', or 'music shell', and although this is recognised as a reference to the acoustic dimensions of the space, the image of the shell generates other meanings which allow its association with images of a protective place of belonging. In building their 'shell', the people of Kuranda saw themselves as marking their identity in place as local inhabitants.

For Heidegger, emplacement is enabled through 'dwelling', which he regards as '*the basic character* of Being' (1971:160, original emphasis). Dwelling is inescapably linked to 'building', which, for Heidegger (1971:147), encompasses both building as cultivation (Latin *colere, cultura* – from which comes the term 'culture') and building as the raising up of edifices (Latin *aedificare*). The essence of dwelling is in the care one takes in the practical creation of an environment. It is the building and cultivation[1] of space into familiar scapes (landscapes, soundscapes, smellscapes) which give us implacement - a sense of belonging. As Casey (1993:175) writes: 'We get back into place - dwelling place - by the cultivation of built places. Such cultivation *localizes caring*' (original emphasis).

However, my analysis of conflicts associated with the Kuranda Amphitheatre reveals that dwelling is not simply a sheltering process. Emphases on cultivation, nurture and care obscure the fact that implacement often occurs within, and indeed is generative of, situations of conflict and violence. 'Being in place' often occurs in tense situations of contested space and surveillance. I contend that, in building the Kuranda Amphitheatre, people were not just 'localizing caring', or, to play on Bachelard's formulation, 'curling up comfortably' to protect themselves from the raging storm outside. They were at the same time opening up, as indeed some shells do, and actually bringing the storm into the shelter. Dwelling, as I reveal it through the Kuranda example, is also, in its very practice, constitutive of *discomfort*.

Subsequent to these concerns is a certain view of symbolism which I adopt in preference to an overly cognitive formulation of human communication. Here I follow Schieffelin (1985:707), who writes:

> ...symbols are effective less because they communicate meaning (though this is also important) than because, through performance, meanings are formulated in social rather than cognitive space, and the participants are engaged with the symbols in the interactional creation of a performance reality, rather than merely being informed by them as knowers.

It is my contention that in the context of the Kuranda amphitheatre, people have experienced and participated in symbolic performances which both actualise community and contain difference. These performances are generative practices. They are not merely a reflection, nor even a representation, of structurally given and/or cognitively encoded identities. Rather they are generative phenomena, experientially constitutive of identity.

**Making a Performance Place**

On the 8th of July 1979 a group of twenty-one Kuranda residents met on a piece of Shire Council land within the town of Kuranda. This was to be the site of a community performing arts venue - the Kuranda amphitheatre (Figure 2). The 1979 date for the establishment of the amphitheatre is significant in view of the influx of new settlers to Kuranda during the 1970s. The amphitheatre concept was born in the situation of a contested social space that arose in Kuranda with the arrival of these new settlers.

Before the influx of the new settlers, Kuranda had a population less than three-hundred and fifty [2]. Along the main street there were two hotels, a newsagency, a post-office, a grocery store, the RSL Hall (Returned Serviceman's League), and a bakery. Although it had not been thought of as such before their arrival, to the newcomers Kuranda was a village, and they were determined to project and preserve this image. The village concept in Kuranda is a hybrid one, expressing both the cosmopolitanism of the new settlers, who dreamt of recreating Kuranda as a Bohemian enclave in the style of an inner-city neighbourhood, and the general 'rural nostalgia' which has been a strong feature of the counterculture movement (Newton 1988:55). However, this profile was also wedded to an economic *rationale*. Calling Kuranda a village became a strategic move on the part of the Kuranda Chamber of Commerce, which sought to promote business in the community by capturing the tourist dollar. As cosy and collective as the term 'village' sounds, it marked, from the very beginning, divergent interests in the community[3].

The first edition of the Kuranda local paper, *Kuranda Village News* (April 1979) was introduced as follows:

> WHAT'S IN A NAME?
> To us Kuranda is a village.
> It has the heart, the charm and the personality that the word implies.
> And now it has a voice. A tiny one, but watch it.
> To the west of here they refer to us as a division, not quite whole, just part of something else. That of course is rubbish, and highly insulting.

At times we feel like 'Ma Reeba's' illegitimate child. (Poor little bastard, no doubt, 'Pa Reeba' shot through long ago, skipping maintenance!).

This statement of identity points to the history of conflict between the new settlers and the Mareeba Shire Council.  There was a feeling among some of the settlers that Kuranda was 'out of place' in its country/outback shire.  Mareeba Shire lies west of Cairns and was, until recently, divided for purposes of political representation into a number of sections.  Kuranda lies in the rain-forested north-eastern section which was known as 'division four'.  The economy of the Shire is predominantly based on primary industry.  Since the turn of the century there has also been a tourist industry focused specifically on Kuranda, which was a popular destination due to its scenic railway, its cooler 'hill-country' climate, and its rainforest location beside the splendour of the Barron Falls.  However, until the 1960s Kuranda was 'in place' in its Shire, and its identity as a rural town was relatively unproblematic.  Apart from the handful of people who had settled in the town specifically to run tourist related businesses, Kuranda was mainly populated by descendants of early settler families who worked in the timber industry and/or owned cattle or small farming properties.  As discussed in Chapter Two, the Aboriginal population had, until 1962, mostly been confined at Mona Mona Mission, and when the mission closed down, only a few families were resettled in Kuranda itself.

However, with the influx of settlers from urban areas into the Kuranda region in the 1970s and, particularly more recently, entrepreneurs eager to take advantage of the tourist boom, the Mareeba Shire Council was forced to deal with groups of newcomers that posed a threat to its conservative rural identity[4]. Many of the new settlers were artists, crafts people, musicians, and performers, and thought of themselves as being the enlightened ones in an area of rednecks and bigots. As one of the new settlers recollects:

> At that time...it was pretty obvious the town sort of broke up into 3 very obvious blocs. So there were the old timber getters, the old settlers who were all aging and very fixed in their ways - far more fixed than Cairns people, and Cairns people were very fixed way back then, you know '69/'70. These people were the same as Ravenshoe[5] kind of people. I mean, they were very red-necky some of them. And then there were the hippies from all over the world who were pretty wild and alternative, and then there were the murris[6] ... There really actually wasn't a lot of social contact. (i/v M, 15 Apr. 1995)

The new settlers, thought of themselves as bringing an alternative way of life to a rigidly conservative rural community, as well as to a state (Queensland) which was still in the hands of the highly conservative National (or Country) Party government of Joh Bjelke-Petersen, which dealt with sectors of its political opposition through the stringent enforcement of drug laws and shire by-laws. This political opposition is captured in the following anonymous poem printed in the *Kuranda Village News* (October 1981:4) about the then local Member of Parliament.

> *The Barron River Bigot*
> He's the Barron River Bigot with a store of oral tripe,
> And a fair amount of offal which is mostly over-ripe.
> He's a hostile hippie hater, and he hates the natives too;
> He's the mouth-almighty member, and his term is overdue.

> He's a cowboy from the country, sworn to set the jungle free
> Of hippie men and women - folk wherever they may be.
> He will take his dog and stockwhip, and his good old .45,
> And one by one he'll bring them in, if any's left alive.
>
> They will learn to fear his Yodel, and his mighty cowboy yell,
> And he'll burn their ammunition, and their forts and guns as well,
> And if someone should escape him, they will never long be free,
> For he'll fall upon the jungle and destroy it tree by tree.
>
> So gather round you outlaws of the jungles of the north
> And make a deep obeisance when your member travels forth.
> Now let us charge our glasses for a toast if you're inclined -
> 'To mouth-almighty Marty and his microscopic mind!'

The drug issue was one that united many of the new settlers. It was not so much a common ideology as the actual experience of constant police raids and the intense legal gaze of the state which provided a unifying force. The situation came to a head in 1980 when police shot and killed a fleeing man during a dawn drug raid, with the excuse that foggy conditions had made for poor visibility. Numerous items in the local newspapers of the day attest to the strength of the feeling among residents against this violent expression of state power. These include letters of outrage at the actions of the police as well as such humorous items as:

> **Kuranda Foggerick**
> When it's foggy up here in Kuranda
> You better hide under the verandah
> For some boys in blue
> Will without much ado
> make you look like some kind of colanda.
> (*Kuranda Village News*, July/Aug. 1980:5)

T-shirts printed with a target and the words 'Don't Jog in the Fog' on the back were a popular item for sale in the Kuranda market that year.

As discussed in Chapter three, the antipathy between the Mareeba Shire Council and the new settlers expressed itself particularly in terms of the enforcement of building regulations. After they arrived in the area the new settlers began to recreate Kuranda in their own image. Many of the houses they built were illegal because of the Council zoning laws, and some of these were rated as substandard according to the building regulations. People remember themselves, or others, experiencing extreme harassment from the shire council inspectors and police. The following account is illustrative of the extremity of the antagonism of the council towards the new settlers, particularly those on tenancies-in-common:

> ...they [the engineer and the building inspector] came in on me with police, armed police, and they tried to force entry into my house...And I knew they were there illegally...Well it ended up the policeman told them to enter and I was blocking the way like this...and the policeman grabbed me and pulled my arms up my back and dragged me back, split my shirt open and my boobs all hung out in front of them...he grabbed me round here and strung me up in the air and he just, all the way to the paddy wagon, kneed me in the back...fifty metres to the paddy wagon he belted me forward like that, he propelled me, and threw me head first into the paddy wagon, and I lost my glasses and a thong...and when he dragged my arms up like that his watch caught in my hair clips and broke the strap and it fell to the ground. Well, he charged me with assault for that. He charged me with assault for struggling, I guess, I don't know, because I was in agony, because I've got terrible arthritis and he was treating me like a dead duck...And so I had five assault charges against me...that was a three day trial. I was put in gaol...I had never been in gaol, and nor did I ever think I would, because I'm a law abiding citizen, you know...Anyway I won the case. (i/v J4, 25 Aug. 1997)

However, the new settlers took great pride in the creative individuality of their houses and, in defiance of the shire council, the *Kuranda Village News* featured a different house each month under the title 'Stately Estates'. No

addresses were given as many of these houses were not council approved. The homes were constructed mostly out of recycled timber and natural rock, to make them blend in with the rainforest environment or 'float on a green sea of fronds' (*Kuranda Village News* April 1979:11). As mentioned in Chapter Three, the newcomers saw themselves as escaping the 'blight of the concrete shoe box' (*Kuranda Village News* January 1980:11) which had hit the cities and larger towns in Queensland. Concrete blocks, known locally as 'Besser Blocks' had become an increasingly popular building material. For the new settlers they symbolised conformity, conservatism and control, and had to be avoided at all cost.

The new settlers did not however confine themselves to moulding domestic space. They also set about transfiguring public space in Kuranda. They wanted a town hall and their own stage. The only suitable performance venue was at one of the two pubs, known as 'the top pub' and 'the bottom pub'. Otherwise, there was the Returned Serviceman's League (RSL) Hall or the Country Women's Association (CWA) Hall, both strongholds of the old settlers. One of the new settlers recalls the tension between the town establishment and the newcomers during a ratepayer's association meeting:

> I remember one, not that I was involved at all, but I was asked to come along, and there was this thing called a progress association in Kuranda, and all the hippies went along one night and voted to close it, which was a crazy thing to do really in retrospect Ö But that was the power they had, the voting power. They suddenly found out they had the power by number of votes ... So this ratepayers' group, or the progress association, which was always run by the town folk, the old

> timber getter type people, was closed down for them ...(i/v M, 15 Apr. 1995)

Another new settler, who had actually voted at this meeting, explained, after having read a draft of this chapter, that it was in fact egalitarian principles which had inspired his attendance and his vote (pers. comm. 1998). He, and the others who voted with him, were among the few new settlers who qualified, as land owners and, therefore ratepayers, for membership of the association. They wanted to replace the association with one open to all residents, and not with membership confined to land owners.

It was in this situation of democratic displacement of the establishment that the amphitheatre concept was born. By creating their own performance venue, the new settlers could also satisfy their desire as newcomers for a connection to, and control of, place – a desire couched in terms of 'community'. The newcomers saw themselves as building a new community by creating the space for the possibility of shared experiences through performance. They would place themselves by placing themselves on stage.

Joan Dods, a woman who had been living in Kuranda longer that most of the other new settlers, having moved to Kuranda in 1964, was approached to investigate the possibility of making a 'community performance space' in Kuranda. She promptly wrote to the Mareeba Shire Council, and received a positive response, securing a ten year lease on six acres of land, part of a forty

acre site that had been gazetted for recreational purposes.[7]  A group of four trustees was then appointed to manage the project and liaise with the Council.

It was decided to call for community volunteers to create the democratic structure of an open-air amphitheatre (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Plan of amphitheatre

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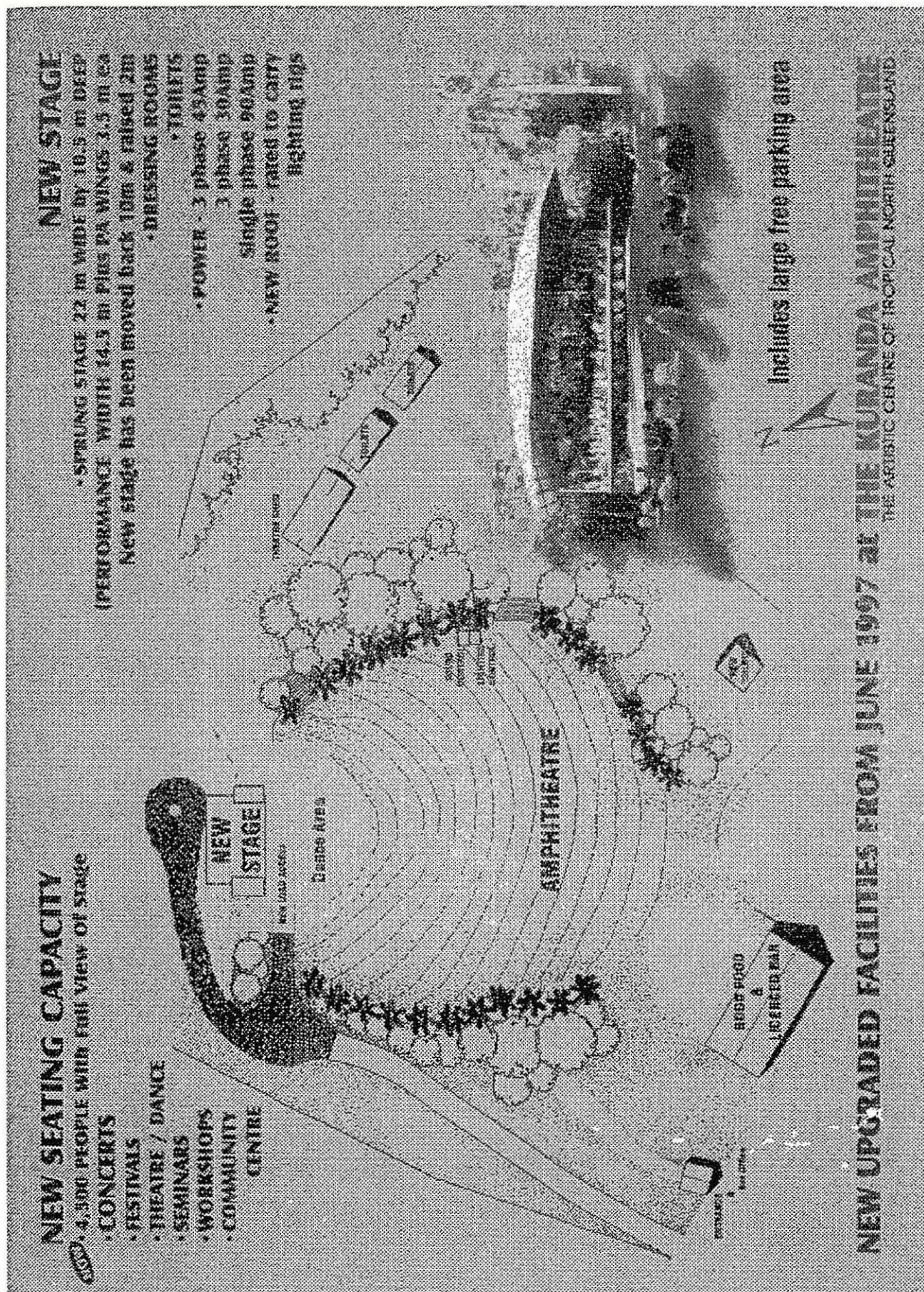
There were also grand plans for the eventual construction of a much bigger community complex, with funds to be raised from performances in the sound-shell. These called for a town hall, a library and a botanical garden. Large, well-supported working bees were held. The Shire Council assisted with the connection of water and contributed some funds toward the fencing, but the creation of the amphitheatre was mostly due to enthusiastic volunteer labour. A local architect drew up the plans and the land was cleared and terraced with the aid of a bulldozer. Some volunteers then worked these terraces, weeding, raking and planting grass seed, while others focused on enhancing the surrounding rainforest belt. A local nursery owner donated 2000 palms and volunteers raided their own gardens for cuttings.

The following accounts by volunteers testify as to the nature of the work they put in:

> I should think the whole community over the years has had some input. In the early days of course it was clearing the land and burning it and doing all that...we just called for volunteers... every Saturday we worked, and I provided cooked chicken legs and beer out of my pocket, and that was lunch. And we just worked all day doing whatever it was, sowing the grass seeds, and then planting all the trees around, making the road...the construction was all voluntary...At that time it was called the music shell (i/v J1, 11 Jan. 1996).

People saw the project as a labour of love. Through the moulding and planting of the earth into a shell, or an enclosed womb-like space, the newcomers saw themselves as creating a place of birthing and nurturing of

'community' and sensually experiencing, through the touch, smell and taste, the very earth they were making their own.

> It's a *community* venue. We built it *for* the community...It was built by locals. It was built by local performers. That's who built it, and their groupies, like me... Because there was nowhere in Kuranda...and we wanted somewhere for us as a *community*...I was there the day the bulldozer was there making the terraces, and taking the trees out and walking around. I've got a sixpence I found that day, and a plant in my garden that had to be moved...from that site...and a lot of stuff in the gardens there, all that green and white pandanus came from my garden, *babies* from my plants, you know like. So it's been in all areas I've worked, digging holes, and killing my lawn mowers there...(i/v Y, 24 Jan. 1996, original emphasis)

That the amphitheatre was not only seen as a place built by, and for, the community, but was also seen as a place which actually *made* community, was expressed very insightfully by Eve Stafford, a woman who was involved in the amphitheatre as a volunteer for many years, serving on various committees and doing the promotions for many of the stage productions and festivals. She wrote for a community arts publication, 'What began as a community building a stage, became a stage moulding the very life of a community' (1984:4).

In their creation of a 'mimetic organ'[8] - this womb-like pocket in the rainforest - the new settlers saw themselves as giving birth to community. They saw themselves as 'localizing caring', as nurturing their environment and, in the process, becoming implaced. They express this in the pleasure they take in pointing out the particular trees they lovingly planted[9], the rock wall they constructed, the pathway they cleared, or the particular terrace on which they

laboured. Some people link themselves to the amphitheatre directly through the plants they brought from their own gardens. Others make claim to having had a role in the construction of one or more of the several stages, or of giving a hand building the 'top shed' and kitchen, the gate-house (Plate 6), or the children's playground. Many Kuranda residents can claim to have served at one time or another on the amphitheatre committee, or in the kitchen, on the bar, at the gate. Others have performed in productions, worked as stage hands, or on costumes, or on lighting.

> I think the thing about the amphitheatre is that you'll hardly meet a person in Kuranda who hasn't at some stage been involved with something, or with the management, or with the grounds, or you know *something*. Everybody has done something... (i/v J1, 11 Jan. 1996, original emphasis)

Being able to claim involvement at some time or another, in the creation and ongoing operation of the amphitheatre, has become a marker of belonging, of being a real Kurandan, and one of the ways that new residents today attempt to find some way of becoming implaced is by volunteering their skills and labour in the amphitheatre, or by participating in one way or another in a staged performance there.

**Constructing 'Community'**

The amphitheatre was envisaged and built as a 'community place'. As evidenced above, the word 'community' arises again and again in connection with the amphitheatre and is interesting to explore. Community is not given out there, fully constituted, but only exists as 'an attempt to dominate the

field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre'
(Laclau & Mouffe 1985:112).

What vision/s of community does the Kuranda amphitheatre represent for
Kuranda people? One local has likened it to a 'village green'. She was quoted
anonymously in an article in a community arts publication as saying, 'this
people's place, akin to the village green, is as egalitarian as the beach'
(Kuranda amphitheatre 1989:28). She noted in her more recent interview with
me:

> I did see it as the village green because there was a stage there in the
> mid-eighties where it was in daily use. It had kids kindie in the
> morning and it had classes in the afternoon and it had rehearsals at
> night...(i/v E2, 24 Jan. 1996)

and continued:

> When you came to this town...you used to go to the pictures when we
> first came here in the seventies. You had Europeans on one side and
> Murris on the other...and hippies down the back...like hippies weren't
> either European or Aboriginal! They were the three categories of
> person in the town at that time. And so there were defined areas that
> we went, defined areas where others went...I felt that one of the
> reasons that Aboriginal people were welcomed into the amphitheatre
> was that we were alternatives and we were outside of the mainstream
> ourselves...so when the amphitheatre was built....we opened it up and
> they were welcome. That's why I said it was like the village green,
> they had a green light. (i/v E2, 24 Jan. 1996)

The creators of the amphitheatre saw themselves as constructing a
community founded on solid egalitarian and democratic ideals. Their notion
of community was, and still is, grounded in a tradition of liberal
individualism.

> I see it as a place which has kept our community together as a
> *community*...I think if we didn't have the amphitheatre as a focus, I

mean we might have a hall somewhere, or a theatre building somewhere, it would never be such a good focus as that type of an outdoor situation that we have, which allows an enormously broad spectrum of people to be catered to...and also the fact that *anybody* can use it. It's not restricted in *any way* at all. (i/v J1, 11 Jan. 1996, original emphasis)

Although the new settlers in this emphasis on community were apparently espousing communitarian ideals and a commitment to collective values, their notion of community was actually founded on a classical liberal conception of the individual and of individual freedom. Freedom for them meant absence of constraint from the old guard in Kuranda and from the state. This explains the great pride people took, and still take, in the amphitheatre as a place belonging to the people rather than a place conceived and imposed from outside or above (that is, by the Shire Council), and their attempt to avoid having to rely on any kind of government support for its construction and maintenance.

We didn't apply for grants, we rather had the feeling we wanted to do things on our own, that we didn't want to be beholden to the government. And so we tended to have local things to raise money...it was started by the community and completely built by the community. (i/v J1, 11 Jan. 1996)

Although the amphitheatre was compared to a village green, Kuranda was certainly not a peaceful pastoral scene. As stated above, the amphitheatre was created in a situation of conflict in which there was a challenge to the establishment in terms of village politics. The key political organisations within the town were the various service clubs (the Lions Club, the Returned Soldiers League and the Country Women's Association). The *Kuranda Village News* (June 1980:6) recorded the tension that developed because of a proposal

by the Lions Club to build a community hall in competition with the amphitheatre project as follows:

> While Kuranda needs a community hall, it certainly does not require two similar facilities. While all of a sudden the Lions Club thinks it a good idea to hit the Dept. of Education for a grant and loan to erect a concrete block hall...Saddling a community with high interest payments on a hall which nobody wants in that form is hardly a community project...The original hall concept is well underway...what is more important , the hall will be built by the people of Kuranda, for the people of Kuranda, giving everybody involved a personal stake in the venture.

A letter in reply (*Kuranda Village News*, July 1980:14) referred to the contest in terms of competing soundscapes, calling for Kuranda to 'remain a quiet village' [10].

> For heaven's sake, a Sound Shell! More musical delights to be inflicted on the unfortunate residents. By the way the Service Clubs go about their business *quietly* doing good for the community. (original emphasis)

From the time of its conception the amphitheatre served to focus the politics of identity in Kuranda, with the amphitheatre project very quickly being associated with 'dole bludgers' and 'druggies'. During the initial construction period the local representative on the Shire Council, Jay Grievson, wrote in his column (*Kuranda Village News*, June 1980:4): 'The Sound Shell-Town Hall project seems to be more in the boiling pot of late as certain disruptive elements...are complaining about the future town hall being only a hangout [for drug] smoking hippies'. A local recollects of that time:

> A lot of people said very rude things about, 'Oh yes we all know what people at the amphitheatre are doing. They're growing and smoking dope all day long. That's all they ever do. All the hippies gather there. That's all they're doing. It's a hippie place. Don't go near it'. There

was a terrible lot of that stuff around, you know.  It was very ugly. (i/v
J1, 11 Jan. 1996)

Much of the actual volunteer labour was indeed able to be carried out because
there was an unemployed population ready, willing and able to provide such
support to the project, and a small number of Kurandans did, in fact, serve
out their community service orders for drug related and other offences in the
amphitheatre.

> I think that was probably the only time that I've ever been on the dole,
> that time of my life, and I actually had some philosophy that, 'Ok, well
> if I was on the dole, I was happy to be around there pushing a mower,
> and mulching and planting and, you know.  At one stage there we
> actually had people there do community service hours.  God, I did
> [supervised] a lot of those people down there at the amphitheatre...I
> was happy to do that because I felt it was a public service. (i/v P/J, 16
> Jan. 1996)

One person's community service consisted of sewing the costumes for a
particular play that happened to be under production at the time.  Another
spent his time painting the top shed.  Others did work maintaining the lawns
and building retaining walls.  A man describes his volunteer involvement in
the amphitheatre as follows:

> Oh hell, shit yeah, God Almighty, thousands of hours.  When I had to
> go and do community service I went, 'Excuse me your Worship, can I
> just knock off a few of the hours from the thousands of hours I've
> *already* done in Kuranda community-wise'.  You're kidding me.
> Everything from acting, theatre, security, to being on stage, rock `n roll,
> the whole movie - oh yeah, cool you know, everything, yes. (i/v B2, 10
> Jan. 1996)

In spite of the tension between the new settlers and the Kuranda
establishment, the amphitheatre volunteers saw themselves as building the
amphitheatre not just for themselves, but for everybody.  For them the

amphitheatre was not a matter of defining boundaries of exclusion, but of creating the conditions of encompassment. This idea of community thus provides a challenge to Cohen's argument that a people's 'consciousness of community is...encapsulated in perception of its boundaries, boundaries which are themselves largely constituted by people in interaction' (1985:13). The new Kuranda settlers did not, and still do not, see

themselves as invaders displacing the older way of life, but rather as liberators creating the democratic space to *contain* that way of life. In making the amphitheatre they were attempting to build the sameness of community by providing a space for the encompassment of difference. Moulding community here is not about constructing symbolic boundaries, but about the drawing in, and enveloping, of difference in similarity.

**A Place on Stage**

The amphitheatre provides opportunities for emplacement through participation in performances of place, performances in which the idea of community gets played out, tested and contested, and in which the difference within is experienced. Such performances articulate the universalising sameness of community with the particularising differences within.[11]

Like a park, the amphitheatre is public space. Non-profit community groups use the venue free of charge. Activities that take place in the amphitheatre today, for example, include aerobics sessions, *a capella* singing, children's gymnastics, group play for children, yoga, *tai chi* and self-awareness classes.

Other uses of the amphitheatre have included charity fund-raising concerts,[12] pantomimes,[13] plays,[14] full moon dances, and a number of large community theatre productions.  The amphitheatre volunteers instituted the yearly Kuranda Spring Festival, including a street parade, garden competitions and the like, in an attempt to extend the boundaries of what it represents for them into the main street, and to encompass the village as a whole.[15]  In 1990 the amphitheatre volunteers hosted the twenty-fourth Australian National Folk Festival.[16]

The amphitheatre has also provided an outlet for much local Aboriginal talent.  The first rock band to play in the venue (on 30 May 1982) was the local Aboriginal reggae group called Mantaka.  Mantaka came to be seen by some people as *the* amphitheatre band and there was an expectation that the group should become the support band for any visiting performers.  There was, and remains, much home town loyalty evident in the responses of the audience to Mantaka, who often get a better reception than nationally better known visiting bands.  I was present at a Yothu Yindi concert in 1995 where people were calling for Mantaka when they were not even billed for the night.

During the past fifteen years the amphitheatre has featured a variety of bands and singers - including bush, folk, rock and, most popular among Aboriginal people, reggae.[17]  Such bands generally simply hire the venue for a fee from the Amphitheatre Society with the Society getting a percentage of the gate

and takings from the bar and kitchen. Popular bands generally attract a large audience from Cairns and the surrounding region. There have also been performances from most of Australia's well-known Aboriginal bands[18] and the amphitheatre is one of the places in Kuranda where Aboriginal people say they feel comfortably able to mix with non-Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people take the term community, when it is used in connection with the amphitheatre, to include themselves and have taken part in many of the community theatrical performances staged at the venue. Indeed it was a community theatre production, produced and directed by Don Freeman, called 'The Odyssey You'll Ever See', based on the history of the Palmer River gold rush, and featuring well-known Aboriginal performer David Hudson, which spawned the now world famous Tjapukai Dance Theatre. After the success of 'The Odyssey', the producers joined forces with David Hudson to open an Aboriginal dance theatre in the main street of Kuranda, where performances by local Aborigines could be staged daily for tourists. The exposure of Kuranda Aboriginal people to performances like 'The Odyssey', and the fact that the amphitheatre had brought other dance groups to Kuranda, may well have influenced the ready acceptance among Kuranda Aborigines of the dance theatre concept.[19] The amphitheatre was certainly significant in creating in Kuranda a heightened awareness of the political potential of dance and music as self-conscious practices of identity.[20]

The way experiences of identity are produced, can best be illustrated with a more detailed look at two of the larger theatre productions performed at the amphitheatre - 'Babble on Babylon' and 'Timewarp'. 'Babble on Babylon', showpiece of the 1984 Spring Festival, was the first big theatre production to be staged in the amphitheatre. 'Babble on Babylon', which was played three times (7, 8 and 9 September 1984), was advertised at the time as an example of 'improvisational community theatre'[21]. The idea behind such community productions was that the participants had the freedom to create their own parts and dialogue within broad parameters and a central theme. Over sixty Kuranda people contributed to the production, either as performers or behind the scenes. Except for one young rap dancer, no Aboriginal people performed in this 'musical extravaganza'. The production consisted of three main acts followed by a series of brief sketches. The initial act featured the prince and princess of a primitive tribe untouched by modern civilisation on the eve of their sacrifice to the idol of the tribe. In answer to the question why the prince and princess should be sacrificed, the primitive tribe chants the following to the beat of drums:

| | |
|---|---|
| Idol moves me | That's the way it's always been |
| Crazy Idol | That's the way it's meant to be |
| Idol rules me | That's the way it's always been |

The prince and princess escape and are rescued in the second act by the passengers and crew of the cruise ship S.S. Babylon, who represent all the corrupting evils of modern civilisation. After facing this threat, the prince and princess eventually find themselves abandoned at the Captain's table,

where they turn back to their tribal chant. The chant is quickly taken up by the other passengers and turned into a new dance sensation - the Idol Motion. However, the ship sinks and, in the third act, the prince and princess find themselves in Kuranda in the year 1970. There they meet other people trying to escape from Babylon.

The play concludes with a number of sketches, attached in the manner of a postscript. One of them features a group of new Kuranda settlers complaining about their dope going mouldy in the wet season and deciding to build a house which subsequently gets condemned by the building inspector. Another skit features a couple of hill-billy hippies farming a crop against the backdrop of a billboard advertising 'Sunshine Marijuana', while a third alludes to the 1980 police shooting with the presentation of a huge target warning people not to 'jog in the fog'. Finally, everyone sings:

> I see you on the street
> But you're so out of reach
>
> Let's start relations
> Open up communications
>
> Don't put up resistance
> We all need assistance
>
> We have something to say
> You are all in this playÖin Kuranda
>
> Of one mind and one heart
> We all play a partÖin Kuranda
>
> We have something to say
> We are all in this play
> You are all in this play

We are all in this playÖin Kuranda

'Babble on Babylon' is an example of the kind of practice through which experiences of identity are produced. People define their social space by performing Kuranda as a particular kind of place, a place from which one can escape the corruption of 'Babylon' and the wreck of civilisation. Such performances enable a fusion of place and community into one entity, one construct. Kuranda is presented as a place in which alterity finds a haven, and the primitive a home. Although one might be tempted to interpret this play as an expression of the primitivist discourse which, it has been argued, informs the production of a certain kind of Australian identity (Lattas 1990), the play is not in fact a celebration of primitive otherness, or of the redemptive unity of a primordial world. It is not a communitarian fantasy of *Gemeinshaft.* The narrative structure of the play is threefold. The first act actually presents the original primitive environment as an evil that must be escaped. It is an environment of regulation and control and submission of the individual to the will of the group. The first act thus calls for a rejection of social constraint on the freedom of the individual. The second act comments on corruptive forces of modern civilisation, and in highlighting the development of the new dance sensation - the Idol Motion - in fact recognises primitivism itself as one of these corruptive forces. Kuranda is celebrated in the third act as the place of escape from *both* these worlds. I suggest that the tribal culture of the primitive in this play is thus simply a metaphor for social constraint on individual autonomy, and Kuranda becomes the

place/community of 'live and let live' in which such constraint can be transcended.

The second show I wish to discuss is the 1988 bicentennial production 'Timewarp', which was staged on the 8, 9 and 10 September 1988 at the amphitheatre by Kuranda's Junction Theatre Company, with a cast and crew of about one hundred. This production was one of many celebratory events that occurred all over Australia during its bicentenary year. Understandably, most of these events were boycotted by Aboriginal people because they marked two hundred years of their colonial oppression. It is, therefore, remarkable that 'Timewarp' had the support and active participation of Kuranda Aboriginal people. The story, written by the director Dave Harris with assistance from others,[22] centres around a teenager named Tim, who lives with his mother in a rented house in Kuranda. Tim escapes the tensions of his mother's ambiguous relationship with their landlord and her pressure on him to 'make something of himself' by hanging out with his Aboriginal mate Baz and working for a local mad scientist who has invented a time machine. Tim's carelessness with the time machine eventually lands him and Baz in Port Jackson at the time of the arrival of the first fleet in 1788, where they witness the tragic confrontation between colonisers and Aborigines. The Aboriginal people in this scene and others are played by Kuranda Aborigines, speaking their parts in the Aboriginal language of the Kuranda area - Djabugay.

Sent by Tim's mother and the scientist to rescue the boys and bring them back, the landlord eventually gets trapped with them in a series of travels through space and time. One of these trips lands them in Kuranda in 1888, the date of the first survey of the town, where they meet a group of early settlers and Aborigines. Here the boys witness the first Kuranda 'real-estate land grab' and have to prevent the greedy speculation of the landlord who, with his fore-knowledge of the inflation of land prices, attempts to buy up as much land as he can. Baz also tries to warn his Djabugay ancestors that the settlers are going to 'take away' their land. They respond with incredulity, 'Where are they going to take it?', and are told that 'guns are nothing - these white people's weapons are them bits of paper', after which they all sing in Djabugay.

The time-travellers then move on through time and space and encounter two alternative futures. The first is an underwater world free of technology in which evolved humans with gills and fins move as one, in perfect harmony with one another and with their environment. The time travellers are told by the inhabitants of this world that humans returned to the sea to 'hide from poisonous rain' after ruining their planet by building 'machines of hate'. With the help of the dolphins they adapted until their 'brains and souls became as one'. The Aboriginal boy Baz is tempted to stay but is dragged away by his fellow travellers. Their time machine then takes them to a world

populated only by robots and androids who are continuously at war. They had been programmed long ago by now extinct humans. The time-travellers help end the war using Tim's computer programming skills. This time it is Tim who is tempted to stay on as 'the most important person on the planet - the *only* person'. He is eventually persuaded that 'people and love mean more than all this'. Their time machine, is fixed by a robot, played by an Aboriginal man. The robot installs 'a self-guiding return device', a boomerang, in their time machine, enabling them to return home to 1988 Kuranda once and for all. The play ends with the stage filled with all the performers dancing to a reggae beat until a group of about twenty five children in different national costumes enter in the foreground. The children sing that 'it's no good looking to the past to find your fate' or 'to worry for the future' but that 'we just want to be happy and be free'.

It is clear that 'Timewarp' plays with different possibilities of being as well as making a political statement about race relations in contemporary Australia, in particular the issue of Aboriginal land rights. In fact, the Djabugay parts are translated and printed in the program for the audience to take home as follows:

> This is our land. Our land lies wide, northwards, southwards, eastwards, westwards. The good God gave us this country, the trees of the mountains, game in the waters.
> DO NOT FORGET OUR WAY.

> We followed one track (one Law, one Spirit). Today the young follow other paths, carrying English in their heads.
> DO NOT FORGET OUR WAY.

> That's our waters, our Storywaters. That's Djabugay. I belong to the land. I am Djabugay. We are telling you. Give us our home-land. Give us Mona Mona. You do not listen today. Maybe tomorrow. THIS COUNTRY IS DJABUGAY.

Aboriginal difference is, however, represented as something that can be accommodated only through encompassment within community, because, as Kapferer has pointed out the 'multiculturalist valuation of difference', actually asserts a 'logic of similarity' (1988:205). Unlike 'Babble on Babylon', which I have argued was actually an expression of liberal individualism, 'Timewarp' apparently places a stronger emphasis on communitarian ideals. However, there is still an ambivalence about these ideals, because of their threat to individual autonomy and because, taken to their extreme, they require the negation of the cultural difference which the show intended to celebrate. 'Timewarp' resolves the contradiction by presenting its audience with a multi-cultural Kuranda community, living 'happy and free'. As in 'Babble-on Babylon', different possibilities are rejected in favour of a home in Kuranda. In the under-sea world communitarianism is represented in the extreme, individual identity is no longer possible, while in the outer-space world we find the complete negation of human community. Here individualism taken to its limit leaves the possibility of a single human being, 'prince of the planet', living by himself in a world full of machines. Kuranda is presented as transcending these two extremes because its vision of community entails an embrace not just of individual difference, but also of cultural difference.

Such performances as 'Timewarp' and 'Babble on Babylon' are not just about making statements; they are not simply about communicating meaning. Rather, they are practices of identity which in playing with possibilities of being actually involve the exercise of power and thus become constitutive of identity. They provide experiences of a particular vision of community, one that can encompass otherness and embrace difference. 'Timewarp' and 'Babble on Babylon' were comedic musical extravaganzas, each requiring massive performative commitment and each in turn attracting large local audiences[23]. Family groups and groups of friends filled the banked lawns of the amphitheatre, laughing and clapping and thoroughly enjoying themselves, as is invariably the case at amphitheatre productions. For the participants, cast and audience alike, such productions are remembered as 'performance realities' (Schieffelin 1985:707) producing palpable experiences of a difference-encompassing sameness - the experience of community. Difference however resists such containment, and the amphitheatre project inevitably generated a continuing situation of conflict off the stage.

**Performances Off Stage**

As stated above, the amphitheatre project began under the trusteeship of four 'upstanding members of the community'. Within two years, however, conflict was brewing between the trustees, as 'the management' and the ordinary volunteers, as 'the workers'. There was much acrimony and mud-

slinging over the control of the amphitheatre.  As one of the trustees recollects:

> ...there was an ugly faction in the community who wanted confrontation and to kill people...yeah they saw us as being straight and not really representing them...they felt it was some sort of elitist group who were running them, you know, telling them what to do,  so maybe we were.  We didn't see ourselves as that...He [the leader of the faction opposing the trustees] was a very angry difficult man...he had a meeting at the amphitheatre, a real rabble rousing thing.  He said, 'Kill the trustees!'. (i/v J1, 11 Jan. 1996)

Workers pushed for abolition of the trustee system and for the establishment of a properly constituted body with a democratically elected committee.  It was believed that this committee would be more representative of the local community and give 'more people more say in the development and operation of the amphitheatre' (*Tablelands Advertiser*, 23 December 1982).  One of the people involved remembers:

> I mean there was some ugly stuff down there like hanging nooses on the stage, yeah there was a noose on the stage at one stage.  I mean it got pretty bitter.  It was like the market wars[24]...that's when we said we'll make a new association like to overcome this trustee business, to make a democratic society and have a constitution and do all that. (i/v E2, 24 Jan. 1996)

A new 'democratic society' was duly formed and the trustees were replaced by the Kuranda Recreation Society.  The Society's inaugural meeting was held on 15 December 1982.  It was renamed the Kuranda Amphitheatre Society in 1984 and incorporated in 1986.

Much of the dispute with the trustees actually focused on the construction of a stage for the 1982 Kuranda Spring Festival.  According to one of the

volunteer workers, the trustees were planning 'a concrete block monstrosity' for a stage 'with a bloody moat to keep the audience at bay' (i/v V, 22 Jan. 1996). This conflicted with his vision and the vision of other volunteers. One day, after arriving at a working bee, only to find nobody there, this particular volunteer started building, of his own accord, a simple stage out of recycled railway sleepers and timber off-cuts 'of the scale that people could relate to, it did not separate audience from performers' (i/v V, 22 Jan. 1996). Other volunteers soon joined him and the stage was finished ten days ahead of schedule. A bamboo and canvas roof was constructed over the stage. This roof, which operated according to an ingenious pulley system, was later replaced by a large canvas sail. The stage served for some years with various repairs, but it was seen as a temporary measure and there continued to be conflict over what should eventually replace it.

The dispute over the stage can be linked to the issue of appropriate use of the amphitheatre. Through hiring out the venue for large rock concerts the Amphitheatre Society has managed to finance the upkeep and improvement of the venue and it is this that has caused the most conflict amongst Society members, and most of the disputes with other residents in Kuranda. The stage was not seen as suitable for large rock concerts. The large, high stage required for such concerts represented an opening up to, and bringing in of, the outside world which was in tension with the vision of the amphitheatre as a place in which to 'curl up comfortably', to use Bachelard's (1969) phrase again. Moreover, a permanent stage structure within the body

of the amphitheatre challenged the image of it as an egalitarian place of freedom 'where magical transformations can occur' and, like a garden – 'cultivated but not fully constructed' (Casey 1993:162).

The minutes of Amphitheatre Society committee meetings evidence years of conflict over the stage. Should the Amphitheatre bow to the demands of big touring bands or should the focus be on a smaller stage and clubhouse for locals? Numerous stage designs were submitted and discarded. One design was commissioned from the architect J. Hockings of the University of Queensland, with a $20,000 Bicentennial grant. A Kuranda resident and Amphitheatre Society member, in an article published in the *Cairns Post* (Stafford 1987), stated that Hocking, on seeing the Amphitheatre site, had said: 'I felt I had encountered a special place, some kind of sanctuary, a magic circle in the rainforest'. Hocking decided to design a stage that was in keeping with the magical quality of the amphitheatre space, 'a fairy castle, or temple, or even a doll's house, where the spectator could be provided with the insights into the other worlds of theatre'. But consensus could not be reached even over this stage. While it was true that not everyone thought the design in keeping with their vision, it was the prohibitive cost of building Hocking's stage which delivered the telling blow. The size of the debt that would have been incurred was seen as a threat to community control and the plans were accordingly shelved.

Pressure for a larger, more permanent stage structure continued until the Amphitheatre Society eventually became caught up in the bureaucratic process of an apparently endless round of grant applications to replace the stage. Realising it was in crisis, the Amphitheatre Society held, in January 1994, what was called a 'future search' workshop. In her keynote address to the workshop, Eve Stafford said: 'We kept changing the Constitution to fit funding guidelines. This was the beginning of blurred vision, as to who we were and what was our purpose... As we tried to fit in with different funding opportunities, we lost some clarity in our idea of who we were' (1994:2). In spite of the attempt by amphitheatre volunteers to avoid the tentacles of state power by refusing to become dependent on government funding, they eventually became insidiously entrapped. State power, now expressed in the form of the bureaucratic order, rather than as the direct force of the police, appeared to have won out after all as one successful grant led to the part-construction of a concrete block stage that many people abhorred. This new stage remained unfinished behind the old stage for some years as various Amphitheatre Society committees looked for further grants to complete it. Morale was at an all-time low during the early nineties. However, some success in this area was eventually achieved and, under the auspices of the 1997 committee, the old stage was finally dismantled. Large working bees were held and ingenious ways to disguise the concrete block structure of the new stage were plotted. This included building up a dance area at the base of the stage and bringing it closer to the level of the audience in an attempt to

recapture the egalitarian unity that had been experienced with the old stage (Plates 7 & 8). There now seems to be renewed hope among the more than two hundred, signed-up, Amphitheatre Society members in the future of their project.

It is clear that these social dramas, or 'public episodes of tensional irruption' (Turner 1974:33), whether in connection with the stage, or about the soundscape, or the trustees, tend to spotlight difference, in contrast to performances on the stage which attempt to envelop difference. However, like performances on the stage, performances off the stage eventually are resolved in the name of community. Both on and off the stage, performances are productive practices of identity in which people become active participants in the making of their own social realities.

**Conclusion**

As a performance venue, the amphitheatre was born out of a particular social situation, a situation in which there was resistance to the felt power of state agencies, including the Shire Council. The amphitheatre represented for the new settlers what they thought of as their rejection of society's control of individual freedom and expression.

The amphitheatre paralleled, at the public level, the new settlers' private creation of 'felicitous space' through which they sought to implace

themselves. As Feld, in his inquiry into Kaluli poetics of place, puts it 'as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place' (1996:1). To be implaced means to inhabit space in the fullest sense of the word, that is, with belonging. Bachelard (1969), illuminates this sense of inhabiting in his study of poetic 'images of intimacy'. The amphitheatre, or sound-shell, I have suggested presents just such an image. In the building of the sound-shell the settlers were locating themselves as inhabitants of Kuranda. This is indeed 'dwelling', in its Heideggerian sense. However, as I have shown, dwelling occurs not merely through the sensual nurturing of place. The essence of dwelling is in its practice, and thus involves the exercise of power. As the amphitheatre situation demonstrates, dwelling is not simply a sheltering process, a 'curling up' in place, but expresses itself in social conflict.

The amphitheatre, for Kuranda people, is more than a mere venue for the performing arts. It is itself a 'performance reality'. What makes it such is the focus it provides for performances of place in Kuranda, performances through which people implace themselves and in which the idea of community gets played out, tested and contested. Such performances include theatrical productions for the stage, like 'Babble on Babylon' and 'Timewarp', as well as social dramas generated by the very processes of dwelling. However, while *on*-stage performances provide the experience of communitas, of a difference-encompassing sameness, *off*-stage performances

generate an experience of difference that refuses to be so readily contained. Together performances on and off stage in Kuranda allow people to resolve tensions between unity and diversity, between their experience of the universal as fellow human beings sharing a common place, and their experience of the particular in the socio-political and cultural differences that confront them.  Kuranda amphitheatre performances are generative practices that provide 'experiential situations' of implacement, allowing people to explore relationships between sameness and difference, place and identity.

Plate 1. Aborigines - Cairns District, ca. 1890 [a rainforest track]
Collection: John Oxley Library, Brisbane



Plate 2. Aborigines - Kuranda Camp, 1904
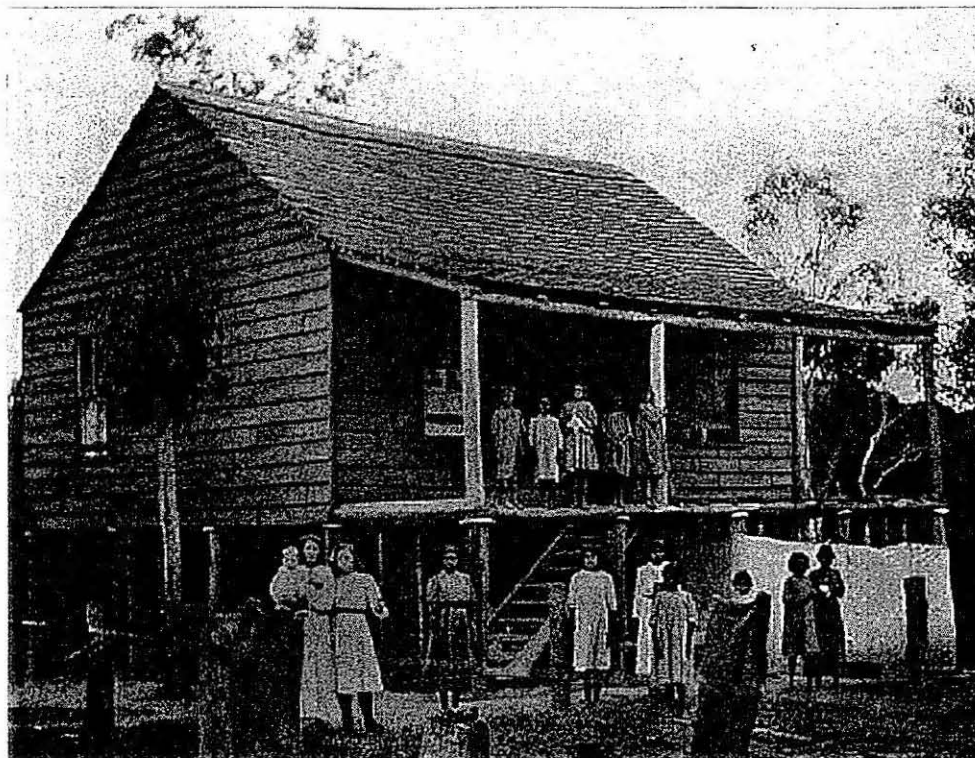Collection: John Oxley Library, Brisbane

Plate 3. Aborigines - Mona Mona, 1914 [girl's dormitory]
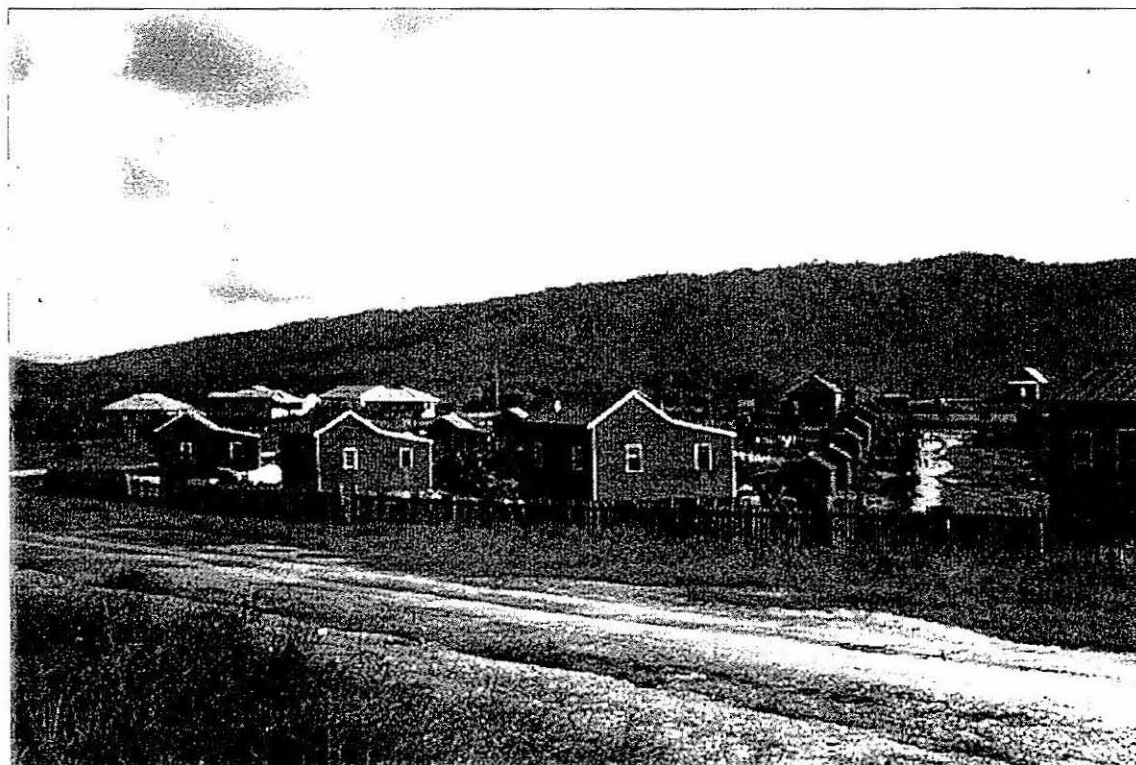Collection: John Oxley Library, Brisbane



Plate 4. Aborigines - Portion of Mona Mona Mission Village
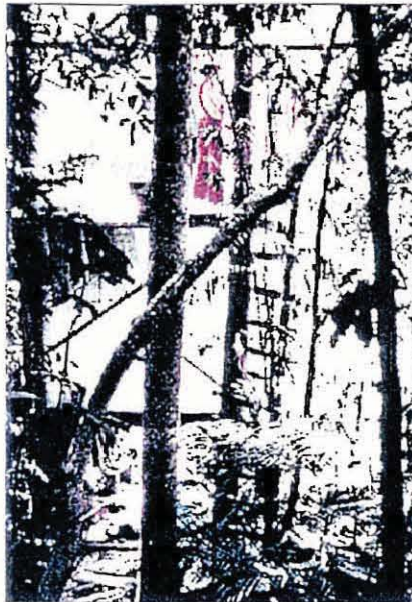Collection: John Oxley Library, Brisbane

Plate 5. Hippie Shelter, Kuranda Commune, c. 1971
Collection: Mark Weaver



Plate 6. Kuranda Amphitheatre Gatehouse, 1996



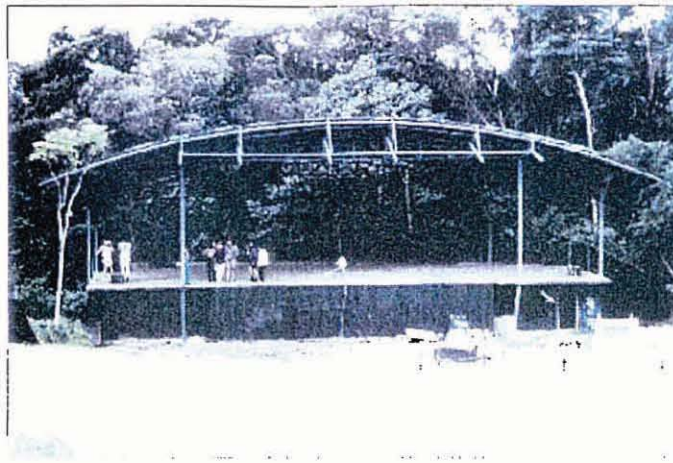Plate 7. Old Stage and New Stage, Kuranda Amphitheatre, 1996

Plate 8. New Stage Under Construction, 1997



Plate 9. Kuranda Markets Sign, c. 1995



Plate 10. Kuranda Markets Banner, c. 1995

Plate 11. Kuranda Market Arcade and Market Sign, 1997



Plate 12. Market Sign, 1995
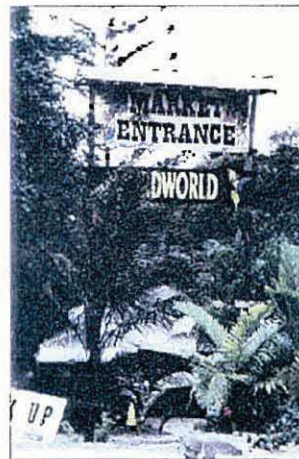


Plate 13. Shops in Main Street, Kuranda, 1995

Plate 14. Kuranda Bungy, Heritage Markets, Kuranda, 1995



Plate 15. Final Resting Place: War Memorial, Kuranda, 1995
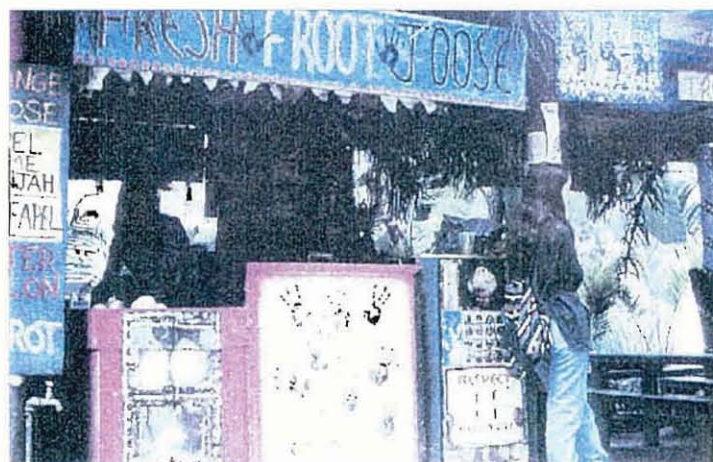


Plate 16. Market Stall, Kuranda, 1995

Plate 17. Mona Mona Dancers, Laura Festival, 1997



Plate 18. Mona Mona Dancers Performing, Laura Festival, 1997



Plate 19. Mona Mona Dancers Performing, Laura Festival, 1997

Plate 20. Buskers, Main Street, Kuranda, 1997



Plate 21. Learning Language Through Dance, Kuranda Primary School, 1997



Plate 22. Aborigines - Mona Mona, 1914
Collection: John Oxley Library, Brisbane

Plate 23. Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, Caravonica, Cairns, 1996



Plate 24. Tjapukai Dancers at the Cultural Park, 1996



Plate 25. Tjapukai Women Dancers, 1996

Plate 26. Cairns-Kuranda Skyrail, 1997



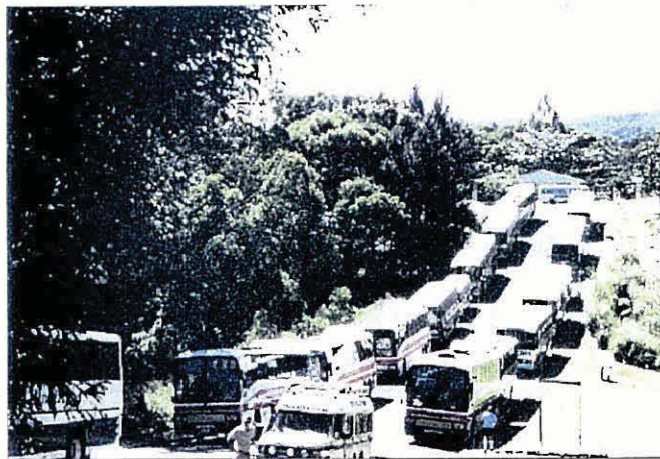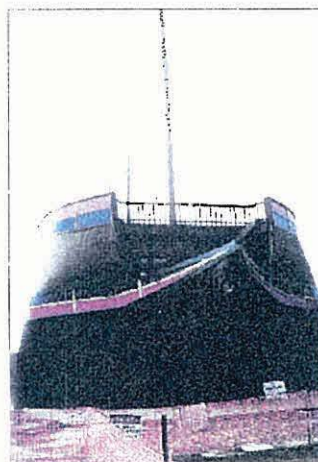Plate 27. Buses in Kuranda, 1995



Plate 28. 'The Ark', Main Street, Kuranda, 1998

[1] I see cultivation as encompassing the cosmological tending of place. Australian Aboriginal dreaming stories may, for example, be thought of as a form of cultivation.

[2] According to the 1966 Australian census the population of Kuranda was 329. This figure does not include Aborigines. Aborigines were first included in the Australian census in 1971 in conformity with the 1967 repeal of section 127 of the Constitution.

[3] I discuss the villagization of Kuranda further in Chapter 8.

[4] In 1971 the population of Kuranda was only 345. By the census of 1976 however the population had jumped to 481, an intercensal variation of 39.42%. The rapid growth continued through the eighties and is reflected in a population of 661 in 1981, an intercensal variation of 37.42%. In comparison, the 1976-1981 intercensal variation for Mareeba urban area was only 9.23%.

[5] A small country town further west in the Mareeba Shire.

[6] 'Murris' refers to Aborigines and is a term used predominantly by Aboriginal people throughout large parts of Queensland and northern News South Wales to refer to themselves. It is used by some non-Aboriginal people to indicate respect and by others just to claim familiarity with the Aboriginal scene.

[7] Allotment 2, section 11 (R860) and portion 531 (R1467). The lease has since been extended.

[8] Taussig (1993:35) suggests that the womb can be seen as 'the mimetic organ par excellence, mysteriously underscoring in the submerged and constant body of the mother the dual meaning of reproduction as birthing and reproduction as replication'.

[9] In 1984, when the Electricity Board threatened to lop four advanced palms outside Frogs Restaurant in the main street of Kuranda, a band of eight women volunteers dug around the roots by hand and then arranged for a backhoe to move the trees so that they could replant them in the amphitheatre.

[10] 'Noise pollution' generated by the amphitheatre is an ongoing issue of dispute in the town, evidenced by numerous letters of complaint to the editor of the Kuranda paper and to the Mareeba Shire Council. This can be linked to broader conflicts in the town associated with the concepts of landscape, soundscape and environmental protection which I discuss in other chapters.

[11] See Kapferer (1986: 191), who states that, in performance 'the Particular and the Universal are brought together and are transformed in the process. The particular is universalised beyond the existential immediacy of the individual's situation so that it is transcended, even while its groundedness and specificity are maintained, to include others in what is essentially the same experiential situation. Concurrently, the Universal "is given a focus, an experiential content, in the immediacy of the individual's situation" (Natanson 1970:126)'.

[12] Such as the Kuranda Community Vic. & SA Bushfire Appeal on 27 Feb. 1983 (with over $8,678 raised); the 'NQ Bandaid for Africa' famine relief concert organised by members of the Ananda Marga sect; and the 'Give Your Heart to Africa' appeal for African famine victims in 1986 - as well as fundraising events for local accident victims and community groups such as the Kuranda Community Kindergarten.

[13] Such as Junction Theatre's 'Peter Pan' (21-22 December 1985); 'Sleeping Beauty' (13 December 1986); 'Alice in Wonderland' (11-13 December 1987); and 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' (10 December 1988).

[14] For example: Shed Theatre's 'Can't Pay? Won't Pay' by Dario Fo (1991); 'A Stretch of the Imagination', by Jack Hibberd (1991); 'Who?' by Jack Hibberd (1991); 'The Taming of the Shrew' (1992); 'The Glass Menagerie', by Tennessee Williams (1993); 'The Proposal', by Anton Chekov (1993); and Junction Theatre's 'Weatherwise', by Noel Coward (1985); 'What If You Died Tomorrow', by David Williamson (1987); and 'The Three Marketeers', by Ric Ephraims (1992).

[15] However, in 1996 the Spring Festival became a Shire Council event, with the Amphitheatre Society simply involved like any other volunteer community organisation.

[16] See Judith Kapferer (1996) for a good description of this event, which she includes as a case study in her analysis of Australian cultural practice and the 'dream of community'.

[17] Such performers include Red Gum, the Bushwackers, Bullamakanka, Tansey's Fancy, Galapagos Duck, The Fureys, Slim Dusty, Charlie Pride, Kev Carmody (born in Kuranda), Lee Kernaghan, Eddie Quansah (leader of afro reggae group Osibisa), Goanna, Eurogliders, Midnight Oil, John Mayall, Eric Bogle, The Band, Kate Ceberano , The Black Sorrows, INXS, Jenny Morris, The Wailers, Paul Kelly, James Morrison, Hunters and Collectors, Tommy Emanuel, Joe Cocker, Margaret Urlich, George Thorogood, Tooth Faeries, UB40, Divinyls, Cruel Sea, and Wendy Matthews.

[18] Such as No Fixed Address, Warumpi Band, Coloured Stone, and Yothu Yindi.

[19] The Saibai Island Dancers performed at the Amphitheatre in 1981, the Yarrabah Dancers in 1982, and in 1985 the Lockhart River Aboriginal Dance Group, winners of that year's Cape York Dance Festival, were staged. Pacific Island dancers, Papua Niugini dancers and the Yarrabah Dancers featured during a cultural day on 7 August 1983, and the Air Niugini Dance Troup, together with the Saibai Island Dancers and Mantaka, performed on 6 October 1985.

[20] However, it should also be noted that the regional biennial Aboriginal dance festival at Laura has also been of significance in this respect. Kuranda was first represented at this Festival in 1986. Since then, a large group of dancers, under the tutelage of Lance Riley, has performed as the 'Mona Mona Dancers' and has won numerous prizes.

[21] This concept was introduced in Kuranda by Don Freeman and Judy Halperin. Don Freeman had trained in theatre in the USA and founded a touring company there. He then collaborated with Judy Halperin to write, produce and direct plays and head an experimental theatre project in India for four years before coming to Kuranda.

[22] Catherine Morris, Janice Starck, Rob Crapper, Carl Neil and Gawain Barker.

[23] Unfortunately I have not been able to locate any records of attendance. A writer/performer in 'Timewarp' estimates for that show a total attendance at the three repeat performances of 'at least 1000'. These included 'just about everybody in Kuranda' as well as visitors from Cairns and as far afield as the Daintree. Because at least one third of the performers in 'Timewarp' were Aboriginal, Aboriginal people were also well represented in the audience.

[24] This is a reference to conflict associated with the Kuranda markets which I discuss in the next chapter and which I have also analysed in a published paper (see Henry 1994).

# Chapter 5

# Commodifying Place: The Metamorphosis of the Kuranda Markets

The marketplace is another heterotopia, or hot spot of contested identity, in Kuranda.  In this chapter I trace the metamorphosis of what began as periodic community markets for locals, into a permanent tourist attraction in the town[1].  To understand this commodification of place, one needs to first consider the history of Kuranda as a tourist destination.  Although, many people, including some locals, think that the tourist invasion of Kuranda is a recent one, the town has been a popular tourist destination since the turn of the century.  It was, of course, not the shopping for which people came, but the exotic natural beauty of the surrounding countryside, the mystery of the virgin rainforest, the drama of the Barron Falls in flood, and the rugged cliffs of the Barron Gorge.  A tourist brochure from that period waxes lyrically:

> KURANDA THE BEAUTIFUL.  That is the name that thousands of tourists to North Queensland have given to the little suburb of Cairns, situated on the Barron River two miles above the world-famous falls...No township in the world has such splendour within its environs...Come to Kuranda for a tonic, for a rest, to enjoy the best mountain air, the most golden sunshine and the richest sight of tropical jungle in the Commonwealth. (*The Glory of Kuranda* n.d.)

During the 1930s Kuranda was popular with honeymooners who would stay at one of the hotels and visit tourist attractions with romantic names like 'Fairyland Tea Gardens' or 'Paradise', which was originally named 'The Maze'.  Both of these places were on the other side of the Barron River from

Kuranda. Tourists would take boat rides there for morning and afternoon tea and to join guided walks in the rainforest along especially tended pathways enhanced with strategically placed feature plants. A tourist brochure on 'The Maze' calls it 'nature's wonderland' and notes:

> Gold type or camera cannot convey or adequately express the beauty and wonders of "The Maze" - a jungle of exquisite Tropical scrub, babbling brooks and miniature waterfalls; wonderful ferns, palms and tree-ferns; beautiful orchids, aspleniums, elkhorns, staghorns, and other epiphatic growths - all glorious aids to the beauty and inviting coolness of the forest bowers....(*"The Maze": Nature's Wonderland*, c. 1923)

Before 1916, when they were removed to nearby Mona Mona Mission, Aborigines living in camps in Kuranda also provided a tourist attraction. Mjoberg (1918:26) noted that the Aborigines around Kuranda 'had put up a few pitiful shelters from leaves and grass, where they attempt to copy the white man's lifestyle' (see Plate 2). According to Mjoberg they were a curiosity to tourists who would 'visit their camps in order to buy for just a few coins, a boomerang, a woven basket or some similar object'.

Thus Kuranda already had a well established identity as a tourist attraction when the new wave of settlers arrived during the 1970s. It was perhaps inevitable, therefore, that their practices of 'curling up', or burrowing into place, would eventually become overdetermined by economic forces already in operation in Kuranda. The social dramas associated with the development of the Kuranda tourist markets reveal the tensions that arose between the new settlers, in their attempts to make Kuranda their place, and economic forces of commodification which they had thought they were escaping. Prior to their

arrival, there had been no markets in Kuranda and it was these new settlers who introduced the concept of the periodic market to Kuranda. They did not envisage a tourist market, however, but a means by which they could barter and exchange goods among themselves, outside of a monetary economy.

Plattner (1989:171) defines the term 'market' to mean 'the social institution of exchanges where prices or exchange equivalencies exist', and the term 'marketplace' to refer to the localisation of the market 'in a customary time and place'. In Kuranda people use the word 'market' to refer to the happening of it as an event, rather than to the market as a social institution, and they tend to use the plural 'markets' to mean more than one event, as well as more than one marketplace. This usage reflects, I suggest, the origin of the Kuranda Markets in the periodic community events which the new settlers took turns to host.

**From Community to Commodity**

Between 1971 and 1978 a number of markets, as events, were held in different people's 'backyards'[2]. There was no particular designated marketplace. The markets were mainly based on a bartering system. One person would bake the bread, another provide organically grown fruit and vegetables, and another handcrafted leather goods, and so on. As two new settlers explain:

> ...this group of people which were sort of bohemians and hippies and drop-outs and beachcombers, and just people who were sort of like wandering around, and the ones that owned a bit of land started trying to get a community thing together because we had a bit of community at Holloways Beach...so we started having these markets at people's

places, and we had one up in front of the A frame here. I can't remember who started it, it was a general idea, and it moved somewhere else...So it was a big, big forest clearing, and we had the first market there. (i/v R4, 8 Jan. 1997)

I think it was a very good time in Kuranda then because...it didn't cost a cent to live here and you didn't have to work five days a week, and of course the market movement started then...they were markets where it was a bartering system...we used to go to these markets and we'd take what we had...and it was a sort of all day affair, and everybody jumped into the river and threw their clothes off with gay abandon and smoked lots of dope. It was a very happy sort of, I mean, there wasn't the heavy drug scene. It was really just marijuana which was relatively harmless in a sort of way. And I think that's how the market thing started and went on for a couple of years...(i/v J, 8 July 1994)

The markets were introduced by new settlers to assist them in maintaining relative independence from shop bought goods. There was talk about a more permanent market site but no one did anything until the mid-nineteen seventies when the leaseholder of a restaurant and coffee shop within the Kuranda Honey House complex, a business which sold honey and related products to tourists and was located at the entrance to the town on the main highway, decided, with a number of others, to run markets regularly in the courtyard behind his restaurant and coffee shop. The restaurant was called 'The Cactus Flower', and the Coffee Shop 'Mr Sunshine's'. 'Mr Sunshine' advertised the markets with a large banner which he tied above the road. It read, 'Market here every Sunday'.

When he sold the leases of his restaurant and coffee shop, 'Mr Sunshine' also sold this banner to the owners of the Honey House complex. The Sunday markets temporarily folded but the banner itself assumed important symbolic

value in terms of the history of the market concept in Kuranda. The sale of the banner came to represent the saleability of a community event, that is, the commodification of community. The same banner, in effect, a bill of sale, was used by the Honey House owners after the markets were resurrected on the 6 August 1978. This particular Sunday market was sponsored by the Kuranda Tourist Association, an unregistered association of local business people, and held on the Honey House land. It had about fifteen stalls and was so successful that it was decided to run markets on a permanent basis in this location (Figure 2). The Kuranda Tourist Association continued to operate the markets for a number of years until a special markets' association was formed by community members including the owner of the Honey House. This association, which was called the Kuranda Markets Association, operated the markets as a community venture until 1986 when the venture became privately owned.

The act of tying the markets to a particular place was the first step in their becoming a focus for identity politics in Kuranda. This may be conceptualised as a movement from utopia towards heterotopia. While they were unfixed in time and space markets were 'no place' and therefore difficult to politicise. In becoming localized however, the markets became subject to state apparatuses that began to reconstruct the marketplace as 'disciplinary space' (Foucault 1991). In other words both stallholders and the marketplace owners had to comply with Shire Council By-Laws and Regulations. Building

standards were imposed on stall construction, and the sale of food and beverages was subject to health regulations. That the land on which the markets were located was privately owned was also a significant factor in the experience of the marketplace as disciplinary space. The rights that adhere to private ownership by business people meant that, as in the case of landowners and ordinary members on Rosebud Farm and other communal ventures discussed in Chapter Three, the eventual development of a hierarchy between owners and traders (or stallholders) was inevitable.

Initially the owners of the Honey House land, and other business people, saw the markets as a way to attract visitors to the town. It was not meant to be a profit making venture in itself. It was the 'spin-off' for the Honey House and other businesses that was the initial impetus for the markets. The business people of the town had begun to see the positive economic potential of the image that Kuranda had gained during the seventies as a haven for 'drug smoking hippies' and 'weirdo alternative lifestylers'. They realised that this apparently negative image actually attracted many a visitor to the place who would inevitably spend money in the town.

The owners of the Honey House also saw the markets as a means of providing employment for the 'the considerable number of unemployed people about the place, hippies and craft people' who had converged on the area (i/v J3, 5 Jan. 1994). Of course, as craftspeople (potters, leatherworkers,

leadlighters, artisans of all description) and as horticulturalists, many of these people did not actually think of themselves as unemployed. They saw themselves, as living, if not always successfully, a subsistence lifestyle independent of state welfare and the categorical distinction made between the employed and the unemployed. In fact, however, not many people managed to maintain themselves completely independently; most people at one time or another have had to rely on some form of social security (unemployment benefits, single-parent pensions), or if they came from more privileged backgrounds, on trust funds or intermittent cheques from their families.

In the early stages of the Honey House markets, the land was provided free by the landowner to the Kuranda Tourist Association. Money made from the hire of stall space was used to employ management staff and to advertise the markets and promote the town. Any profits were donated to local charities and community organisations. The owners of the marketplace land did not at that stage see the markets as a business venture in and of itself.

During the first few years of operation of the Honey House markets, stallholders were mainly residents of Kuranda and the surrounding district, and the patrons of the markets were also locals and people who drove up the range from Cairns. However, the markets proved to be so successful that by 1986 they had grown to approximately 150 stalls every Sunday and were drawing large numbers of both domestic and international tourists.

Stallholders were no longer confined to Kuranda residents. The popularity of the markets attracted regular traders from Cairns and the Atherton tablelands as well as itinerant traders from elsewhere in Australia and overseas who took up stalls during the tourist season. This change in the type of stallholder brought with it a change in the nature of the products sold. The markets were flooded with goods from Asia brought in by itinerant traders (mainly English and American travellers) and the Kuranda made products faded into the background.

Whereas in the early years the markets served as a meeting place for locals, today they are no longer imagined as community markets. Rather, they are thought of as being just for tourists. Locals who shop at the markets tend to do a 'hit and run' (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994). They come and go before ten o'clock in the morning when the first tourist train arrives. As one Kuranda stallholder notes:

> I don't know what will become of the markets. As a focal point for this community this one has probably ceased to have any particular importance to the community, whereas it was a very important part of the community. It was a meeting place...I mean, I saw a lady just now walk through who I hadn't seen for six months, but in the old days I would have seen her once a week here. You know, it was a genuine place where people would come as a social thing. Something must replace it, I would imagine. I don't know what is going to replace the markets. (i/v R, 9 Jan. 1994)

Although the Kuranda markets may no longer provide a meeting place for locals, the markets are still symbolically important in terms of community identity. They provide the social space to contest identity and to define

Kuranda as a place. This is evidenced by two recent community disputes which Kuranda people call 'the Market War' and the 'War Memorial War'. These social dramas, I argue, express contradictions between the implacement practices of the new settlers and forces of commodification which they were attempting to resist.

**The Market War**

The Market War occurred over a period of about 18 months during 1986-87. I recount here the story told by stallholders, marketplace owners, managers and others involved in 'the war'. Of course there are as many versions of the story as people willing to tell it, and the account I give here is what I have pieced together from interviews and village gossip, as well as from newspaper reports, minutes of stallholders meetings, and the minutes of meetings of the Mareeba Shire Council.

By 1986 the Kuranda markets were thriving so much that stall space was at a premium and there was great competition for it. In June of that year, the middle of the tourist season, the stallholders were told by the Kuranda Markets Association that they were to be issued with occupancy agreements which required them to pay a premium of $1,500 in order to secure the right to operate their stalls for a five year term. This was on top of their normal rental per market day, at that time $7 for a Sunday. This caused a huge outcry. The stallholders called a meeting, which approximately 120

stallholders attended, and unanimously decided to reject the $1500 proposal.

As one stallholder put it:

> ...a gentleman from Perth turned up with all these great ra ra ideas and he came up with this idea, 'Well look there's a demand for these stalls. Let's flog them off for $1,500 each', which was all a bit rough. The idea of a market I feel and the original concept goes that anyone can pop down, get a stall, sell a few little goodies...(i/v S1, 18 Jan. 1994)

I suggest that this 'gentleman from Perth', who was not an owner of the Honey House but simply a spokesperson for the owner, was used by the owners because he was an outsider and, since he did not have to live in the town, could bear the local resentment which would inevitably result from the tenancy proposal. However, this man also became the focus for much resentment because he represented the threat from the outside generally being experienced in Kuranda. Ironically, people who had 'invaded' Kuranda during the 1970s and 1980s in search of an alternative lifestyle, were now reacting, as occupants of settled space, to a new invasion, this time of business entrepreneurs. In the marketplace this invasion took the form of a competitive price war among t-shirt sellers. Permanent stallholders who had been among the first wave of alternative settlers to Kuranda and who had specialised in handpainted and screen printed t-shirts were resentful that market management was allowing the sale of cheap mass produced t-shirts by newcomers and that these newcomers were apparently being allocated premium stall space. The attempt by management to introduce a lease agreement for stalls at the height of the t-shirt price war was seen as the final straw.

The introduction of the lease agreement can also be linked to Honey House ownership changes that were taking place at that time which signalled the final stages of the metamorphosis of the markets from a series of community orchestrated events to a single privately owned profit-making business venture. This metamorphosis was completed through the sale and repurchase of the Honey House and market place. The owners of the Honey House sold their business, and the associated land on which the markets were held, and formed a new company in order to buy it all back. This repurchase took place in July 1986, at the height of the market war. The owners then were able to take over from the Kuranda Markets Association (KMA) and operate the markets as a private business. However, since the owners had also been the key members of the KMA, this final stage of metamorphosis of the markets was not as perceptible as it might have been if new personalities had been involved. Although officially the markets had been operated by the KMA, for most stallholders, and for Kuranda residents in general, the original owner of the marketplace (the Honey House land) was also the owner of the markets themselves as a business, irrespective of ownership of the land.

The intense negative reaction of the stallholders to the $1,500 lease agreement led to its almost immediate abandonment. However this was not the end of the matter. The stallholders formed an association of stallholders - The Kuranda Rainforest Stall-holders Association (KRSA), their inclusion of the

term 'Rainforest' in their title advertising the unique location of the markets as a tourist attraction, rather than their alignment with 'green' politics.

The Kuranda Rainforest Stallholder's Association could not, at this time, be readily associated with any particular social or political group. The Association's Constitution lists as one of its objectives 'to be non-profit making; non-political; non-sectarian and non-racial'. Under its umbrella sheltered not only stallholders who could be classed among the new settler, alternative lifestylers of the area, but also non-resident stallholders and itinerant traders. In general terms however, I categorise all stallholders as 'seekers of alternatives' within the context of a dominant capitalist economy. Marketing has been characterised as one of the most prevalent forms of informal sector work because it 'allows the urban poor to survive in highly stratified cities offering little permanent wage work in industry or elsewhere in the formal sector' (Lessinger 1985:309). The 'seekers of alternatives' who came to Kuranda however cannot be characterised as an 'urban poor'. Rather, I suggest that what characterised them was in fact their self-conscious rejection of formal sector work and their search for economic alternatives. Marketing is particularly attractive to 'seekers of alternatives' because it offers the opportunity for self-employment and an associated autonomy of action which formal sector work does not provide.

In the early days, the Kuranda Rainforest Stallholder's Association (KRSA) mainly served an investigative function on behalf of the stallholders and one very significant finding of the Association was that part of the land on which the markets were being held was actually not Honey House land but a closed road reserve, named 'Booroo Street' on the original town plan (Figure 6). The area in question was leased from the Queensland Lands Department by the Kuranda Markets Association (KMA) under Permit to Occupy No. 3533 for the purpose of using the land as markets. It was discovered that under that permit, the KMA had no legal right to collect money, allocate stalls or remove stallholders from Booroo Street.

Figure 6: Street Map of Kuranda
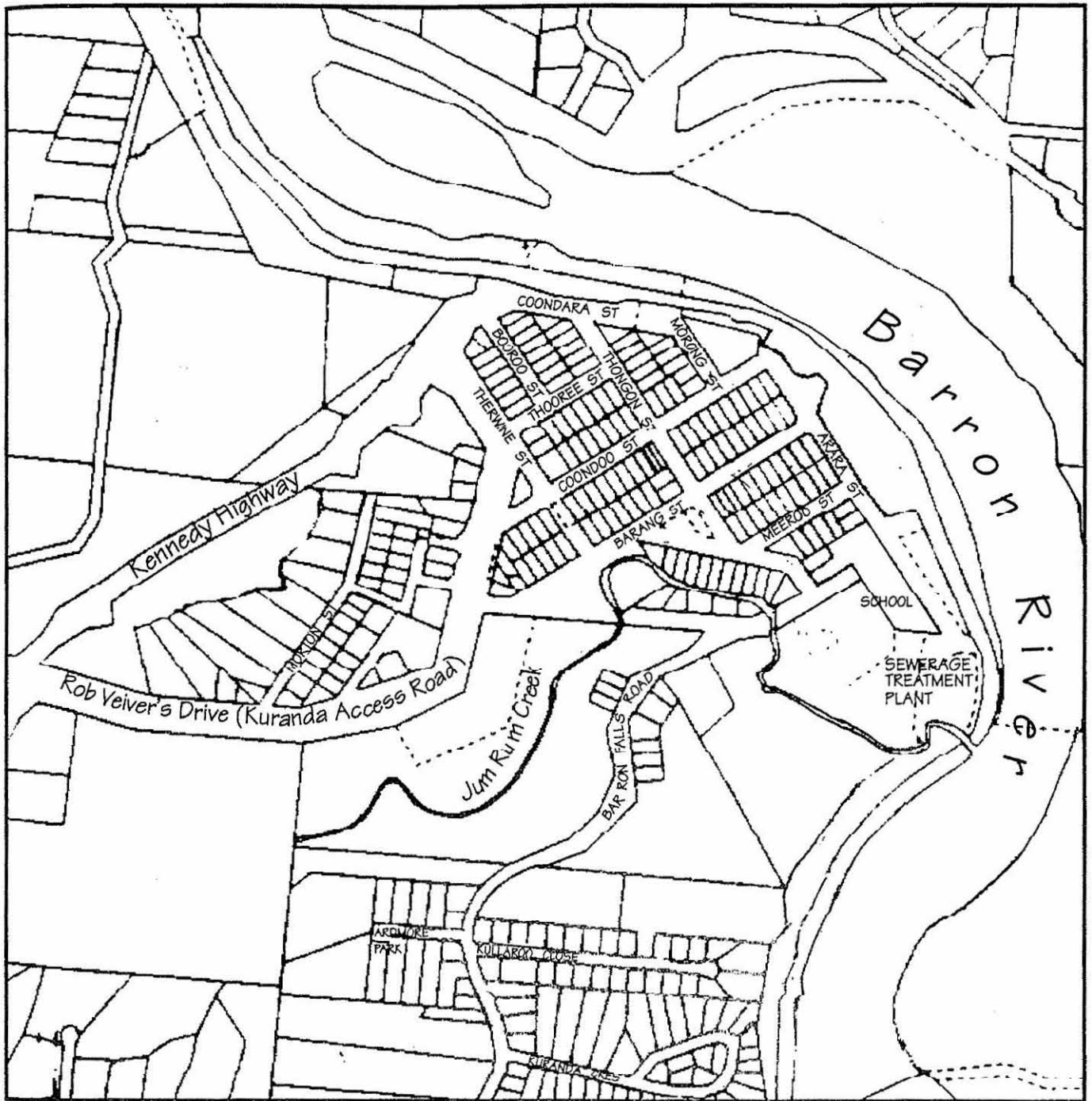
Kuranda Township Street Names

Figure 6

Members of the KRSA who already had stalls on Booroo Street, and others who subsequently moved into that section of the market, therefore refused to pay for their stalls, and the KRSA, arguing that it was a more representative body, itself applied to the Lands Department for the permit to occupy the road reserve.

Booroo Street was gazetted as a public road with the official birth of the town on 23 October, 1888, when Thomas Behan lodged his plans with the survey office. Although planned and mapped as a street it had never actually been made and lived as such. The transformation of this spatial point on a map into lived place came almost a hundred years later, when, during the market war, this semi-cleared area of secondary rainforest was publicly contested and became a place of resistance for market stallholders.

The resistance represented by the occupation of Booroo Street was not merely a case of stallholders united against management. The stallholders themselves were split into two camps, those who supported the owners (KMA) and those who supported the KRSA. Booroo Street became the space of the KRSA, separated from the rest of the marketplace by a barbed wire fence which was erected, according to KRSA members, by the KMA. Rumour and gossip proliferated. Stallholders on the KRSA side assumed that many of those who were on the KMA side were there because of blackmail and fear that they would be 'dobbed in' to the Taxation Department or the

Commonwealth Employment Service for continuing to claim unemployment

benefits while making more than their allowance operating a market stall.

The following extracts from interviews with stallholders in both camps

indicate the extent to which the conflict escalated:

> And we had situations where, because these people were told if they
> didn't pay they'd be kicked out, there were actual fist fights in there
> between different people. This is in the middle of the damn market,
> with people going past. One gentleman started bringing a shotgun with
> him in his car because he felt so threatened...and there were people
> bringing steel pipes and all sorts of things along. It was incredible the
> tension that happened. (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994)

> Oh yeah they had meetings after all the things and people would shout
> and there were fights and you know they formed into sort of
> factions...(i/v R, 9 Jan. 1994)

> ...people were very fearful about their stalls and their security and their
> income and some of them just wanted to come and sell goods and go
> home, and when they got there they were having to take sides and there
> was all this kind of authoritarianism...you know this fascism was
> around and there was a kind of feeling that you either are with us or
> must be against us...are you with us, if you're not you must be against
> us; and there were people who were actually being forced into making
> commitments, on very little information, about where their allegiances
> lay...(i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994)

> Oh they used to put barbed wire up in the market. Sunday morning
> early before the stallholders came, put barbed wire all over the market.
> When the stallholders came they couldn't get in because barbed wire all
> over the markets. (i/v L/H, 19 Jan. 1994)

> At one stage they tried everything they could to stop me going in there
> and to stop other people going in [to Booroo Street]...They'd actually
> come down during the night with a big ditch digger and dug this big
> trench about 3 foot deep and 2 foot wide right across the front so we
> couldn't drive in there...someone went home and got a spade. So we
> started filling this ditch in and the policeman was there trying to stop
> us. It was really heavy, people punching us and carrying on and
> everything and so we managed to fill it in a little bit and then someone
> in a four wheel drive started to drive over the ditch and one of these
> guys stood in front of his car and wouldn't move and almost got run
> over. I mean its almost unbelievable, the extent that these people went

to, and the audacity and arrogance that they felt comfortable that whatever they did they could get away with...(i/v S1, 18 Jan. 1994)

The KRSA members were determined to find a site for their own markets. They were waiting on a decision from the Lands Department, about the use of Booroo Street. They also had several proposals in with the Mareeba Shire Council for alternative sites but did not have much confidence in the Council because the owner of the Honey House Markets was also a Shire Councillor. One night members of both factions drove to Mareeba for the Shire Council Meeting. This is how one of the stallholders described it,

> It was a real cauldron...when we drove back we actually feared for our lives on the road....because we came out of that meeting and [X's KRSA] mob hadn't done terribly well and we represented...we were not part of [X's KRSA] mob. We were still trying to keep the middle ground so therefore we were [Y's, the owner's] side and as we came out of that meeting there was incredible abuse hurled at us and I was fearful. I thought, 'Where's our car?' ' How do we get to the highway?' and all this sort of stuff, because there had been talk of guns, you know at that stage. (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994)

A stallholder from the KRSA faction admitted that he had filled the back of his four wheel drive with sticks and iron bars, in case there was a fight after the meeting. He added, 'I used to go out at night, guerilla war, and all that sort of thing. I put on wigs and all sorts of things' (i/v L/H, 19 Jan. 1994).

Needless to say it was getting untenable for the stallholders to remain on Booroo Street. One of the proposals that the KRSA put to Council was that an area of land across the road, on which there was at that time a tourist attraction with a settler museum called the 'Heritage Homestead', should be rezoned as another marketplace (Figure 2). The proposal was eventually

approved and the KRSA stallholders moved from Booroo Street. They built new stalls, put in the required drainage and paved the paths. Conflict between the two factions continued, however, and one Sunday stallholders arrived to find that someone had slashed the canvas roofs of their new stalls. As one of the stallholders explains:

> Then we just had the thing up and running and about 75% of the people from the Honey House Markets all moved across the road, and the other thing almost died, and then they came across threatening and bribing them, and they were supplying stalls free for a time to try to get people back. And then we had these big, really expensive, canvas tops, you know, not just old blue plastic...and then we came along one morning and someone had gone around with a knife on the end of a stick or something and slashed these things to pieces, thousands of dollars worth of stuff. All sorts of horrible things like that were happening. (i/v S1, 18 Jan. 1994)

There are therefore two marketplaces in Kuranda today, one for the 'Honey House Markets' and the other for the 'Heritage Markets', and there are numerous and confusing signs and banners directing tourists to one or the other. On the median strip between the two marketplaces is a sign with arrows pointing in each direction (Plate 9). Until recently, in front of the Honey House marketplace a huge banner was stretched across part of the road. It read 'Original Kuranda Markets', the emphasis on 'original' a permanent reminder to locals of the market war and signifying an ongoing contestation of place (Plate 10). This banner has been replaced by a fixed sign with the words 'Original Kuranda Markets Here!' painted in red on a blue background (Plate 11). The many signs and banners fly high over the village 'like a foggy geography of "meanings" held in suspension, directing the physical deambulations below' (de Certeau 1984:104; see Plate 12).

**Transcendence of Market Limits.**

Although there are now two official marketplaces in Kuranda, with legally recognised boundaries, when one walks through the main street of Kuranda, as a tourist, it is difficult to know where the marketplaces start and end. In spite of all the signs, or perhaps because of the signs, I suggest that to tourists Kuranda itself would appear to be nothing but one large marketplace. Retail shops along the main street have mostly roller doors in the front which give the shops the effect of market stalls and many of the new shops built in the last few years have been deliberately designed to be evocative of market stalls (Plate 13). A significant difference however is that shopkeepers are locked into tenancy agreements and the rents on these range between $100 and $400 per week, compared with the $12 a day for a stall. It is clear that the original market concept has been commodified in Kuranda. The market as a periodic event identified with, and belonging to, community, was transformed into two privately owned businesses. The Heritage Markets have been bought and sold as a business several times and the owner of the Honey House Markets 'put it on the market' and built adjoining it, a complex of permanent market stalls for which it is necessary to enter into tenancy agreements (Plate 11). Therefore, although the stallholders in the market war of 1986-1987 won the battle it could be argued that they did not win the war. This was expressed by one informant who said,

> I had sort of a freedom kick. I thought we could do things right in Kuranda, but now it's all too late. Kuranda is gone, finished. Kuranda has lost. It's no freedom. You can't ever win against the baddies on top. (i/v L/H, 19 Jan. 1994)

**State Elections and Local Politics: The Global in the Local.**

As a number of stallholders and the owner of the markets himself recognised, the market war was complicated by the timing of the State Government elections. The National Party, with Joe Bjelke Petersen as Premier, was still in power in 1986. The owner of the 'Original Kuranda Markets', was standing for election to state parliament as the Labor Party representative. From my interviews, it appears that the two factions in the Market War came to be associated with the major Parties to the state elections. Those stallholders who supported the owner in the market war, were thought to be strong Labor Party supporters and the other faction, members of the KRSA, became associated with the National Party. This may seem surprising given the stereotype of the alternative lifestyler as an anti-conservative Labor or Green Party supporter. However the factional alignments had more to do with parochial strategies of power rather than support of party policies, or identification with an overarching political ideology. As a KRSA stallholder admitted:

> And you know I joined the National Party because of the Markets. I went to [the National Party Representative] and said, 'Look what these people are doing to us'. He said, 'Oh yeah you are a bunch of commos. You all belong to the Labor party. We can't help you'. I said, 'I'm not. I belong to your party'...And next minute [X] came and said, 'Look, we make you a member of the National Party and we do things for you', and then things went ahead and we got that second market. Things really went ahead. (i/v L/H 19 Jan. 1994)

The Market War was raised in State Parliament (10 Sep. 1986) by National Party member for Mulgrave, Mr Menzel. Under the protection of parliamentary privilege, the member was free to assassinate the character of the Honey House market owner. The KRSA stallholder, however, read his speech after it was published in Hansard and photocopied it. He pinned it up on the notice board outside the Post Office in Kuranda every day during the election period, having to replace it each morning because by nightfall someone had removed it.

This dramatisation of state politics in the local Kuranda marketplace demonstrates the way local places and local identities are made in articulation with economic and political forces which know no boundaries. An interpretation which is founded on a distinction between the local and the global as given objects, and which then confines itself to the local as a unique part of a global whole is thus, I submit, clearly inadequate. I find the distinction between local and global analytically limiting. The market war was not a local expression of state party politics generated from outside. Rather, the state elections were harnessed to existing factional interests in the market war. Local communities are not encompassed within national or state politics. Rather, state politics is itself a local phenomenon. It is a means of expression and polarisation of locally significant issues, and of parochial identities. In other words, global forces do not exist except in how they are articulated and experienced in local situations.

Kuranda people call the market conflict a 'war' and indeed many recognisable symbols of war were present - barbed wire, trenches, weapons. The question is how to understand and interpret this war. It could perhaps be interpreted in Geertzian terms like the Balinese cockfight, that is, as an enacted 'text' of the social order, the sort of analysis Gell (1982) undertook in his paper '*The Market Wheel: Symbolic Aspects of an Indian Tribal Market'*. However, I prefer to see the Kuranda market war as a social situation in which, through particular spatial practices, people make place and contest categorical identities.

Stallholders themselves culturally construct their explanation of the market war in terms of economic or material factors. For example it was argued that because the market had grown so much, stall space had become a premium and therefore 'a supply and demand situation' developed where shortage forced prices to 'go through the roof' (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994). It was also argued that the marketplace was extremely run down and 'third world conditions' prevailed (i/v E1, 4 Jan. 1994). All the paths were dirt (and mud during the wet season), stalls were roughly constructed, and there were poor toilet facilities. In general, the stallholders felt that the owners should be putting some of the money they charged for stall space into upgrading the market.

However, such explanations of the social drama do not account for the intensity of the dispute nor the interest that the wider Kuranda population

took in it.  The market war was not confined to people actually involved in the business of the markets as stallholders and owners.  It attracted the participation of a keen audience of local residents.  In order to understand the focus in Kuranda on the markets as a hot spot of conflict one needs to consider the nature of the relationship between people and place, how people constitute themselves in the making of place, and through an articulation of identity and difference.

The market war was fostered by the metamorphosis of the markets into a private business, and the tension between the concepts of community and commodity this generated.  There was resistance among Kuranda people against those who would commodify their place for sale to tourists.  These were not just outsiders, but business entrepreneurs from within their own ranks.  The market tenancy agreement symbolised the invasion of 'big business' into Kuranda and a consequent loss of power of locals to maintain the identity of Kuranda as their home place.  The commodification of place generated by tourism is keenly felt by many Kuranda residents.

**'The Three Marketeers': A Performance of Place**

The significance of the market war to the wider Kuranda community was given expression in a theatre production staged by a local amateur theatre group, Junction Theatre, in the Kuranda Amphitheatre.  The play is called 'The Three Marketeers' and was written by Ric Ephraims, who is a Kuranda

resident but not a stallholder. The play presents Kuranda as being threatened by contamination of economic greed infiltrating from outside the community. Outside business people corrupt local business entrepreneurs who are then tempted to sell out their fellow Kurandans by commodifying Kuranda.

In the play, the owner of the marketplace is represented as taking over the markets. In the first scene he says:

> There's those three silly guys running that juice stall[3]. Take a look at them - long hair, way out clothes, bare feet...and that music they play. they're freaks, I tell you freaks' They don't fit in with the way **I** want things to be...I will monopolise these markets - THE BIG TAKEOVER - first this puntsy little scene...next, this puntsy little town...

The market owner captures Goldie, the hippy heroine, and holds her for ransom by threatening to push her off a bungy jump located in the marketplace. The play thus comments on the absurdity the bungy jump which was until recently part of the Heritage Markets and provided tourists with the 'unique opportunity' of bungy jumping from a crane into an artificial rock pool in the centre of the marketplace! (Plate 14).

The stallholders, as marketeers, rescue Goldie after a sword fight on a cable car (a reference to then still to be constructed Kuranda Skyrail which I discuss in Chapter 7) and win the battle for the markets. The marketplace owner sees the error of his ways and is 'born again'. The play ends however with two new characters arriving on the scene, in business suits and ties, discussing their 'big plans' for the markets, and so the threat remains.

The theatrical production provides a comedic commentary on the social drama of the market war. It is a performative mode of insider situational analysis, which does not just allow people to reflect on their own social situation, but is itself a generative practice by which people make place. Like the Kuranda amphitheatre performances I discussed in the last chapter, 'The Three Marketeers' is an exploration of the relationship between sameness and difference, place and identity, which provides a means of resistance to a situation in which their implacement is rendered uneasy.

Although the market war was a particular social drama that occurred over a period of 18 months in 1986/1987, the markets continue to provide a focus for contested identity in Kuranda. This is evidenced by a more recent social drama concerning the siting of the RSL (Returned Serviceman's League) War Memorial.

**The War Memorial**

In January 1993, the Kuranda RSL Sub-Branch was given Council permission to erect the proposed new War Memorial 'opposite the Honey House shops'. To the RSL this meant directly in front of the entrance to the Heritage Markets. A fairly unobtrusive rock with plaque attached was placed at the site. However, the bigger RSL plan was to relocate the honour boards currently located at the Railway Station to the new memorial. This involved constructing a substantial structure, a concrete block wall, which would

partially block from view the entrance to the Heritage Markets and led to protracted and bitter conflict among some Kuranda residents.

This dispute was seen by many to be an extension of the Market War because the president of the RSL is also the owner of the Original Kuranda Markets and, whether it was the case or not, some people saw the siting of the memorial directly in front of the Heritage Markets as a deliberate move to obstruct entry to these markets and cause embarrassment to the owner of the Heritage Markets (particularly given the number of Japanese and German tourists visiting the markets who would be unavoidably confronted with the cenotaph). Not just the owner of the Heritage Markets, but also other residents of Kuranda, objected strongly to the location of the cenotaph considering it to be a 'sacrilegious' act to site it in front of the markets:

> So coming to the bloody monument...Now right in front of there [the market entrance] was the RSL thing. It looked dreadful, sacrilegious. I said [to a member of the RSL], '...I cannot believe it. What made you put it there?' Because I think a memorial should be between trees and gardens and it should have an open thing [space] in front of it so that if you've got a service...I said, 'This is the most ridiculous place ever'. I said, 'Let's go to the park over there and have a look where it should be'. So we picked out a spot. We measured it up and everything else...[and then went to see the owners of both the markets]...[The Heritage Markets owner] said it was sacrilegious. It should never have been put there in the first place. (i/v J2, 14 Jan. 1994)

After letters of complaint from the owner of the Heritage Markets and others, the Mareeba Shire Council resolved to advise the Kuranda RSL that the memorial had to be relocated in a nearby park (Figure 2; Plate 15). The besser

block wall, however, had already been constructed around the memorial so the rock could not be moved without damaging the wall.

The conflict eventually made front page news in the *Cairns Post* (10 November, 1993) which reported:

> Factions warring over placement of the memorial verbally agreed to a truce to end the bitter debate which began 18 months ago when Kuranda RSL branch sought Mareeba Shire Council approval for a site. Since then there have been accusations of commercial blackmail, secret deals, vandalism and misrepresentation of RSL members, culminating in a dawn 'raid' by some RSL members yesterday to move the 9 tonne memorial back to their preferred site. It was the third time in less than a week that the memorial had been moved.

It is clear that the problem of the siting of the memorial was seen by many Kuranda residents as being part of the continuing conflict between the two marketplace owners as businessmen and that it was simply a matter of one businessman trying to put a spoke in another's economic wheel. This not only reflects the dominance that is culturally granted to economic factors, but also the determining effect that is attributed to the personalities of the actual people involved. However, I suggest that more was at stake than the economic interests of the market owners as businessmen. The War Memorial War is another expression of spatial practice by Kuranda people contesting the right to define their home place. The RSL War memorial is a powerful symbol of Australian identity occupying a central place in most Australian towns. For the RSL to put it in front of a marketplace frequented by Japanese and German tourists is telling indeed. The dispute over the location of the cenotaph is, I suggest, essentially an example of spatial practice marking the

right to define Kuranda as more than just a tourist town, but as a place with a local population who identify as Australians. That is, it was an assertion of Kuranda's identity as an Australian place, albeit periodically invaded by foreign tourists. Placing the cenotaph at the entrance to the markets was a strong statement of the Australian identity of Kuranda. So also, however, was the demand by residents, including dissenting members of the RSL, that it be removed from that location, as sacrilegious. Because the marketplace is seen as the community's contact with the outside and therefore represents its borderlands or frontier, it provides a fertile arena for social conflict generative of identity in, and of, place.

**Conclusion**

What happened in the Kuranda marketplace was not simply a contest between stallholders and market owners. The market war stirred the imaginings of the wider Kuranda community. It became a contestation regarding the definition of Kuranda as place, a conflict between the 'seekers of alternatives', whose imagined place is the small village, a context in which local people can stage their own events relatively autonomously of national and trans-national economic and political forces, and business people, who cannot imagine their place except in terms of such forces and demands. As I discussed in Chapter Three, many of the 'seekers of alternatives' who had settled in Kuranda during the seventies and eighties, saw Kuranda as a place of escape from the outside world, a haven in the rainforest. Some were

simply searching for the communal bonds associated with such a village situation as Kuranda, but which they found missing from city life. Others came to create their own alternative communities based on religious and other philosophies. Many wanted freedom for all from what they considered oppressive legal and political constraints imposed by the State, but most simply sought the relative autonomy to grow their own food, to express their creativity, to produce their own art and craft work and to be able to savour the products of their own labour. The Kuranda markets enabled them to participate in the economy relatively free from constraints. They did not have to sign leases or contracts. They could spend the week doing their craft work at home and sell it at their market stalls once a week without having to pay any overheads. The introduction of the $1,500 tenancy agreement posed a threat to the autonomy of action which the market represented.

The battle for Kuranda however is not over. The marketplace remains a heterotopia, a site of contestation. It is in the marketplace that other sites, other identities, continue to be 'simultaneously represented and contested and inverted' (Foucault 1986:24), in the goods that are displayed, in the signs that are placed, in the buskers' music, in the fortunes that are told, in the fantasy that is sold. The marketplace is a site which ostensibly welcomes the other - the tourist, the itinerant trader, the entrepreneur, but which also contests, constrains and defines them as 'other'.

Digging trenches, defining boundaries with barbed wire, breaking out of the disciplinary space of the marketplace by erecting stalls outside its boundaries, manipulating the disciplinary space in the very act of placing one's stall, in simply walking through the marketplace creating one's own 'spatial trajectories' (de Certeau 1984:115), erecting signs, removing signs, damaging signs, constructing boundaries, naming and locating alternative market sites, even gossip/stories about the war, and stage plays performing it - these are all examples of spatial practices. It is through such practices and performances that people make place. They construct and transform meaning, contest the identity of places and thus become implaced. Kuranda is made as a place through spatial practices. It's identity is contested in an ongoing political struggle to determine the power to define place and therefore to define self.

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¹ A version of this analysis has been previously published. See Henry (1994).

² The word 'backyard' used in Australia generally images the expanse of lawn behind a house situated on what used to be the standard rectangular suburban block (a quarter of an acre). In Kuranda however, the new settlers, particularly those on tenancies-in-common, spurned this type of backyard. They avoided definite fenced boundaries. Houses were hidden away in little pockets surrounded by encroaching forested areas. The idea was to clear as little growth from the land as possible.

³ Locals with insider knowledge recognise the juice stall referred to in the play as the one pictured in Plate 16.

# Chapter 6

# Performing Memory: The Tjapukai Dance Theatre and Aboriginal Cultural Park

In this chapter I focus on the connection between performance and identity politics in the context of the social situation of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre in Kuranda, and the more recent development of the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, which has been hailed by Finlayson (1995:4) as 'an instructive best-practice example' of a private sector employment and enterprise development for Aboriginal people. I argue, however, that the Tjapukai Dance Theatre, needs to be understood as more than an economic venture into the tourist industry. It is a performance place in, and through, which identity is practised in a situation where peoples lives are utterly determined by the (ir) 'rationalities' of the bureaucratic post-colonial state . Kapferer (1995a) emphasises this in his application of Mitchell's arguments in *The Kalela Dance* to the performance of categories in Kuranda.

I refer to a bureaucratic order in which categorical identities are constituted through a tearing apart of mind and body and a privileging of abstract categories of thought over concrete practices of lived bodies. Aboriginal people thus constantly face a challenge to demonstrate their cultural authenticity by being able to trace the *continuity* of their contemporary

practices with past or traditional practices, via a process of direct cultural transmission of intellectual knowledge.

Aboriginal people in Kuranda however actually experience their concrete everyday bureaucratised lives as a *discontinuity* with the past. They consider colonization and missionization to have created a cultural void which they now must work hard to fill. They attempt to do this through public performances of dance and language. This move into performance, although apparently mere theatricalized presentation, is I suggest actually a challenge to the hegemony of a discourse which denies the significance of the contemporary reality of their lived experiences.

The Tjapukai Dance Theatre and Cultural Park are thus sites which lend themselves to an exploration of the connection between practice and performance. Performance, I suggest, is born out of practice. Performance is generated out of the strategies and relationships of power entailed in practice, and in turn itself becomes practice. Performance is born out of a recognition of being *in connection* with place and *in relationship* with others in place. In Kuranda, place is practiced in terms of performance.

**Being Djabugay**

As discussed in the introductory chapter to this thesis, Aboriginal people today in Kuranda use the term Djabugay or Djabuganydji to refer to the 'traditionals' or 'traditional owners' of the area. Djabugay is the name given to

the language that was/is spoken by the people of the area around Cairns through to the other side of Kuranda and along the coast to Port Douglas[1]. Early anthropological and linguistic research in the area however indicates that the Aboriginal people living in this area prior to European contact, although speaking the same language, appeared to have belonged to different political units, 'tribal groups' or peoples (McConnel 1939-40; Tindale, 1938).

A number of linguists and anthropologists (Sharp 1938-39, McConnel 1939-40, Seaton 1957, Tindale 1974, Dixon 1977, and Patz 1991) have documented the general territory within which this language was spoken· The differences in the maps provided in these various accounts testify as to how difficult and, arguably, inappropriate it is to ascribe unambiguous linear boundaries in the context of Australian Aboriginal societies. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to debate in detail the problematic issue of language/tribal boundaries in Australia[2]. Suffice to say that, as Dixon (1976:231) notes in his account of such boundaries in northeast Queensland, in this area a 'tribe' cannot be defined solely on linguistic criteria. It is a political unit comprised of various local groups who maintain language unity 'predominantly through endogamous marriage, and through tribal gatherings for food-procurement and recreation'.

According to Dixon (1977:5-6) there may have been a number of 'groups speaking the Dya:bugay language: Dya:bugay, Guluy, Yirgay, Bulway and Nyagali'[3]. He is uncertain as to the political identity of these 'groups', although he notes that 'nowadays the name Dya:bugay (which is said to have

been originally the name of the dialect spoken on the coast, towards Port Douglas) appears to be used by speakers to refer to the whole language, and Dyabuganydji to refer to the whole speech community' (1977:6)[4]. This however is not the case today. There are people who know that their ancestors were Djabugay speakers but who identify themselves as Yirrganydji rather than Djabuganydji. Moreover, although Djabugay people are aware that it is linguistically correct to refer to the language as Djabugay and to themselves as Djabuganydji, the latter term is rarely used today in Kuranda. Rather, people tend to use the phrase 'Djabugay people' and an individual may simply state 'I am Djabugay'. This includes people who are aware, because of their reading of early anthropological sources, such as Tindale's genealogical charts produced in 1938, that at that time their ascendants identified themselves as 'Buluway' (Bulway). Unlike Yirrganydji, the categories Nyagalindji, Gulunydji, and Bulwanydji do not appear, at the time of writing, to have contemporary political significance. Djabugay itself has taken on significance in the public arena only in the last fifteen years or so for reasons which will be discussed below.

The earliest recording of the name[5] Djabugay appears in Meston (1896:10) as 'Chabbuki'. Meston lists the 'Chabbuki' at Port Douglas on his list of 'Tribes Interviewed' and he notes in his report:

> ...the old Port Douglas tribe and a few of the Mowbray River blacks are camped a short distance along the beach from Port Douglas. Some of the men and women come daily into town and work for people who treat them fairly and feed them well. Their old hunting and fishing sources of food are also available, being very little affected by the small and scattered suburban settlement. On my return from the Daintree overland

> I met two of the Port Douglas tribe ("Chabbuki"), took two of the men to town, and gave them a bag of flour to take back to the camp.

This camp remained in existence until the late 1930s when the community was removed by the police to Mona Mona mission. According to oral accounts recorded by Wood (1990) the population comprised predominantly Djabugay speaking peoples (Yirrganydji and Djabuganydji) and was located on the dunes of Four Mile Beach 'probably now covered by the golf course of the Sheraton Mirage resort' (1990:8).

Walter E. Roth, Northern Protector of Aborigines, 1897-1905, recorded much ethnographic and linguistic material on the Aborigines of this area. Although he includes material on 'the Barron River natives', noting that they 'wander up the coast as far as Port Douglas and inland up to Kuranda and Mareeba' (1984 [1910:18]), he appears not to have recorded any variation of the actual name Djabugay. However, he produced a sketch map of the Cairns area showing the distribution of 'the three main tribes as they were in August, 1898' (1910:91). One of these tribes is recorded as 'Yirkanji', and located by Roth (1984 [1910:Plate xxvii]) in the coastal area between the Barron and Mulgrave Rivers. The name Djabugay was however in later years documented by Sharp (1938-39), McConnel (1930; 1939-40), Tindale (1938; 1940) and Seaton (1951-52; 1957).

Sharp (1938-40: 256-57) produced a map roughly locating 'Tjabokai', 'Niakali' and 'Yirkandji' as three separate tribal groups. He based his data primarily

on information that he had gathered in the course of 'field surveys' that he conducted during 1933, 1934, and 1935. He does not indicate whether his surveys involved actual mapping. McConnel (1939-40:59), on the other hand, notes that in order to record the tribal names and territories as accurately as possible, she did detailed fieldwork, actually travelling through the country with her informants, rather than relying on interviews carried out at mission stations and reserves. She writes:

> I have accepted the distinctions recognised by the natives themselves, choosing as my informants in each case members of the tribe under consideration, not members of neighbouring tribes, travelling as often as possible in their company to the grounds they claimed as their own, and locating them simultaneously on a surveyor's four-mile map (1939-40: 60).

McConnel, however, recognised the problematic nature of her project and she notes:

> ...one is not dealing with a static situation, but with the shifting sands of culture change...Local groups, bound together by a homogeneous culture, and only slightly differentiated from each other in dialect, are in the process of splitting off into distinct tribal entities (1939-40: 59-60).

With respect to her recording of Djabugay and neighbouring peoples, McConnel refers to 'Tya.bogai-tyandyi' as a tribal name and 'Nyakali' as the name of a 'branch' or sub-group of the tribe. 'Bulwandyi', and 'Yirkandyi' are recorded as different tribes, 'on the south side' and 'low down' on the Barron River respectively (1939-40:67). Tindale (1940; 1974; 1976), based on visits to Mona Mona Mission in 1927 and 1938-39, documented the name variously as 'Tja:pukai', 'Tjapukai', 'Tjapukandji', 'Tja:pukanja', 'Tjabogai-tjandji', and 'Tjabogaijanji'. He also recorded 'Njakali' or 'Nyakali', as an alternative name

for the Djabugay, and 'Buluwai' and 'Irukandji' as a different tribes[6]. A local historian, Douglas Seaton (1951-52, 1957, 1957) variously refers to 'Tjapukai', 'Tyapukai' and 'Tchupaki' as the tribal name. In 1961, the linguist Hale (1976) recorded 'Tya:pukay' as the name of the language. He thought that there were then approximately fifty fluent speakers remaining. However Cassells (1977:1) was only able to identify three 'fully fluent' speakers: Gilbert Banning, his mother Buttercup Banning, and Gilbert Martin. In 1978 Patz (1991:248-9) was able to reliably identify two other competent speakers, Keatie Street and Roy Banning, who spoke Djabugay as their first language. The Banning family is known to have evaded the 'round-ups' and therefore to have not been subject to missionization and the disciplinary power that had suppressed the use of language among other Djabugay speakers. During the nineteen eighties Roy Banning began to work with Sue Robertson, a Kuranda resident trained as a social anthropologist, on the compilation of a Djabugay dictionary and in 1987 Michael Quinn, also an anthropologist and resident of Kuranda, began to work with him on developing material on Djabugay suitable for instructional purposes (see, for example, Banning & Quinn 1989; Quinn & Banning 1991; 1992). These initiatives have had a significant impact on contemporary Aboriginal identity politics.

The 'official' recording by anthropologists, linguists, and other researchers of Djabugay as the encompassing name for the language of the area assures not just its recognition today by State authorities, but also its 'memory' by

Aboriginal people, and its contemporary political significance as an identity category. According to Djabugay people, Djabugay encompasses today any people who trace their descent from Djabugay speaking ancestors[7], whether they were Djabuganydji, Bulwanydji, or Yirrkanydji, Nyagalindji, or Gulunydji. In the current political context only people who identify as Yirrkanydji resist such encompassment. Although they recognise that their ancestors spoke the same language as Djabugay people, Yirrkanydji prefer to distinguish themselves from Djabuganydji. They locate themselves as coastal people in contrast to the Djabugay (or Djabuganydji) who they see as inland or hill people and have lodged a native title claim to this effect. Their position is currently much disputed by Djabugay people.

As a name Djabugay had disappeared from *public* use during the Mission days when people came to call themselves simply Mona Mona people. As one non-Djabugay woman said:

> We only heard this Djabugay in the last recent years now, really since the theatre you know, and that was the only time that I knew Djabugay and I think a lot of people, that was the only time they were aware of Djabugay. I myself think, because I can remember on the mission nobody spoke of Djabugay. Nobody spoke of Djabugay when I was in Oak Forest. We were just Mona Mona people. That was our name, no language. That is a fact. (i/v F/M/J, 11 June 1995)

Similarly one of the Tjapukai Dancers responded to a question about how the Dance theatre was named, as follows:

> Well one of the elders decided on that [name]. See, I hadn't heard of the Djabugay, the name Djabugay until I was in my twenties. Now my grandfather didn't even tell me that. My Dad speaks about it a lot now, but even he was mouth shut about the whole situation. That

> explains a lot of my radicalness you know when I was younger, we was just a big, big, big piss off'...we were being forced to believe absolute crap, that Cook discovered Australia, and at the same time your tongue is slowly being snipped away out, you know, while your elders are passing away behind your backs, there's this language that's dying and going out the back door while you don't even know about it...(i/v W1, 13 Aug. 1997)

Aboriginal people today experience themselves as having a lack of traditional knowledge. They think of themselves as having had their culture taken from them by the missionaries. They see themselves as working hard now to fill this gap caused by the fact that knowledge was not allowed to be transmitted to them by their elders. Being Djabugay is therefore founded upon an absence, an absence which has become the condition of their presence. Being Djabugay is itself the very practice of filling the gap. It is not a simple filling of an imposed identity category, however. Being Djabugay is also a counter-hegemonic challenge to discursive practices which would deny them acccess to the means, and the freedom, of their *becoming-in-the-world*,

The tribal category, Djabugay, as it operates today, is a construction that has arisen in the contemporary context of the post-colonial state in Australia and the policies of multiculturalism and Aboriginal self-determination which assured government funding to community cultural projects. It is also a response to the demand for 'tribal' culture in the booming tourist industry. However, just because some younger people were not familiar with Djabugay as a language and as an identity category prior to the birth of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre does not mean that Djabugay did not exist as an identity

category in the past. It was after all a name suggested as appropriate for the Dance Theatre after consultation with Aboriginal elders. However, whatever it meant to be Djabugay (or Djabugandji)

before European settlement, and what it might have meant on Mona Mona among the old people, it means something else altogether in the contemporary context. In other words, I am not saying that there was no such category as Djabugay historically. What I am saying is that although it is framed within a discourse of continuity, being Djabugay today is not the same as what being Djabugay meant in the past. Contemporary tribalism in Australia is a product of the civilizing, rationalizing and categorizing techniques by which the State controls Aborigines and maintains their state of domination.

**Performing Identity: The 'Cultural Revival' Movement**

The wave of new settlers who moved into the Kuranda area during the 1970s and 1980s had a big impact on Aboriginal people. In their self-conscious interaction with 'the system' these representatives of the counter-culture movement, opened up for Aboriginal people a recognition of the potential of dance and music performances as not merely expressions of a given identity but as practices of freedom, songs of freedom, and of defiance.

Young Aboriginal people were particularly influenced by the success of a band formed by some of the new settlers to Kuranda called 'The Rainbow

Country House Band'. The band developed a wide following in North Queensland. Their popularity gave impetus to some young Aboriginal people to form a reggae band which they called, Mantaka, after the settlement along the Barron River in which they had grown up and to which their families had been removed after the closure of the Mission. As Willie Brim, one of the band members put it to me:

> That's another band I must say that inspired us to continue because they were winning the 'Battle of the Bands' and all that stuff at the time and they were Kuranda and we supported them well, because we used to go to their gigs and looking at what they've done, who were actually mates of ours, even though we were a lot younger than them guys, but we were taking on what they were doing. Because we had no employment in Kuranda. We had nothing in Kuranda...so music was the escape, you know, just to get rid of the boredom...So we used to sit down and start writing songs, and the songs that we wrote, we started feeling good about them songs because we were delivering a message as well, and it make us feel good to play that, to sing it for other people to enjoy what they're listening to so they go away singing this rhyme...like:
>> Living in Kuranda is fine,
>> Living in Kuranda is mine,
>> Look all around, what do you see,
>> No concrete jungle, but green trees.
>> Everybody is feeling fine, because the feeling of Kuranda is in
> our mind.
> (i/v 13 Aug. 1997)

Mantaka adopted reggae as its trademark. According to Willie Brim:

> We didn't get much chance [before] to hear this music, reggae music, and Peter Tosh, but mainly Bob Marley, had a big influence on the style of music because of his lyrics and he was singing about REAL things, you know, not just love love love and all that stuff, he was singing about human pain and suffering which we could really relate to so we sort of adopted that, and we said well this brand of music you know is meaningful, so easy to play and it's a FEEL music, you know, not every band can play reggae music...' (i/v 13 Aug. 1997)

Their efforts were rewarded when they were given the opportunity to perform first at the 'Bottom Pub' and at the official opening of the Kuranda Amphitheatre. As Willie Brim (pers. comm. 13 Aug. 1997) admits, 'The Amphitheatre did a lot for us as a band and being a local band we were starting to get a big following'. Mantaka became a regular performer at the Amphitheatre because they could be relied upon to draw in the locals, and particularly Aboriginal people of the area. The Amphitheatre was home ground for them. The band tried to make it bigger by doing a couple of tours, organised with the assistance of the entrepreneurial skills of one of the new settlers with connections down south. They stayed in Sydney for a while, but they felt more comfortable playing for a home audience. According to Willie Brim (pers. comm. 13 Aug. 1997), 'Even at Townsville...we've been offered work all around Townsville with the band but we refused it because Townsville's *not our place'* (my emphasis).

Mantaka was about place and connection to place. Performances of the band were an assertion of belonging and of identity in place. Another less well known Aboriginal band formed in Kuranda not long after Mantaka was Koah Konnections. Some of the band members were resident in Koah at the time. The band's theme song was entitled 'Koah' and they also sang about their home places to a reggae beat:

> Chorus:    Koah,
> Mona Mona Mission is another place
> Kuranda too

Repeat Chorus

Verse:  We play our music
     No one can compete
     We do our music
     Stompin' dancin' feet

     Koah
     Mona Mona Mission is another place
     Kuranda too
     Koah
     We can do it too.

It is only since the mid- 1980's that many of the younger people in Kuranda have become assertive of a specifically Djabugay identity and 'cultural revival' became the catch-cry of the day.  People began to be involved in programs sponsored by various state authorities and, in particular, various adult educational programs targeting Aboriginal people.  In early 1982, for example, two members of the Kuranda Aboriginal community trained as museum technicians and became part of a project to establish an Aboriginal museum in Kuranda.  The museum was established in a building in the main street and named Jilli Binna (see Figure 2).  Then, in 1990, a number of Aboriginal people attending a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) museum study program identified the potential of transforming the museum from a static display 'into a cultural resource centre focussing on the revitalisation of Djabugay cultural heritage' (Duffin 1992:1).

As part of their study program students were given the opportunity, in July/August 1992, to visit the Australian Museum in Sydney, the South Australian Museum, the Queensland Museum, and the John Oxley Library in

Brisbane, to access and collect family history records, photographs and material culture. An important result of this revitalisation project was the access to, and return of, copies from the South Australian Museum of many of the genealogies originally collected by the anthropologist Norman Tindale during his field trip to Mona Mona Mission in 1938.

A significant factor in the 'cultural revival' that needs to be considered, was the availability and involvement of particular non-Aboriginal members of the Kuranda community, sympathetic to the plight of Aboriginal people. As seasoned applicants of grants, they were able to secure money towards various Aboriginal 'cultural projects'. One of these for example was a dance, or 'corroboree', re-construction project (1990-1992). This project was coordinated by a former member of the Australian Dance Theatre who had settled in Kuranda during the late 1970s. With the support of a Djabugay elder she was able to secure funding from a variety of state funding bodies. The *Queensland Community Arts Network Newsletter* records the aim of the project as being 'to locate aging tribal members dispersed from the original Tjapukai tribal area around Kuranda who could remember the traditional corroborees not performed for more than 50 years: to record this knowledge to give to young Tjapukai their heritage, before the elders die' (Stafford 1992:6-7). A series of workshops followed in which young people, particularly women, were taught dances remembered by some of the older women.

A key factor in this 'revival' has been the work of local social anthropologist, Michael Quinn, who, as mentioned above, began to collate the work of a number of linguists and with the help of the few remaining fluent speakers and various government grants, made it accessible to others by producing an extensive range of Djabugay language teaching materials. With the help of funding from the Department of Employment, Education and Training, Djabugay language classes began in 1987 at the local primary and high school. Language is taught principally through song and Michael has composed, and has encouraged Djabugay people themselves to compose, songs in Djabugay to teach to children in the school. Over the years there has developed a repertoire of songs which Djabugay consider belong to them and which mark their vibrant presence and continuity as a people. Some of these are now also danced. These performances enable them to turn images of their absence into ones of presence, not just with respect to their relations with non-Aboriginal people, but also in relation to other Aboriginal peoples.

This *presencing* of themselves in relation to other Aboriginal peoples was particularly facilitated by the establishment in 1983 of a Cape York Aboriginal Dance Festival, sponsored by the Queensland State Government. This dance festival, now known as the Laura Festival brought into competition dance groups from different Aboriginal communities in Cape York. Although sponsored by government, the festival was eagerly embraced by Aboriginal

people as representing for them cultural continuity. The festival is thought of as a continuation of the traditional practice of 'the gathering of the clans' for ceremonial purposes. But at the same time it is a self-conscious representation of Aboriginal culture for tourists and an opportunity for various government agencies to represent themselves in a side show of stalls around the main dance arena.

Kuranda Aboriginal people have been dancing at the festival since 1986 as the Mona Mona dancers. The dancers were trained by Lance Riley, an elder who grew up in the dormitory at Mona Mona Mission. It is from the Mona Mona dancers that the Tjapukai Dance theatre today draws its supply of dancers. As Lance Riley puts it:

> My little boy was two, two year old, that was the youngest [in 1986]...He's about 13 now. I talked all about the importance of keeping our culture alive to them as they were growing up. This team I'm talking about was the backbone of Tjapukai [Dance Theatre]. (i/v L1 17 Feb 1997)

The Laura Dance Festival has become a public statement of the continuity of cultural transmission. All Aboriginal kids in Kuranda get the opportunity to dance with the Mona Mona troupe at the Festival. In fact, in 1997 there was some complaint from supporters of other community dance groups about the dominance in terms of sheer size of the Kuranda contingent (Plates 17-19).

Kuranda Aboriginal people trace the continuity of their dances and songs from the 'old people' who lived in the camps attached to the mission and

continued to perform rituals, particularly mourning rites, while their children were confined in the mission dormitories. Some elders today say they remember certain songs and dances taught to them by their parents and grandparents, before they were removed to the dormitory. They claim authenticity of their knowledge on the basis of direct transmission through physical presence and first hand observation, that is, in being there. Others, although they spent all their childhood in the Mission dormitory separated from their parents and grandparents, still strongly identify with the soundscape, having often heard the rhythms and the sound of the clapsticks coming from the direction of the camps, all night long, particularly after someone had died[8]. One young man, Ashley Coleman (1993:1) has, with, Roy Banning, Frank Mcleod and Michael Quinn, written a children's book based on memories of a corroboree that his father had witnessed at Mona Mona and passed on to him. He notes:

> Knowledge of this *warrma* (corroboree) was passed on to me by my *nyumbu* (father), Dan Coleman who saw it when he was eight or nine years old at Mona Mona S.D.A. Mission. He remembered that George Carroll was singing and some of those performing were Toby Brim, Tommy Hobbler, and Paddy Newbury.
> Dad and a mate had sneaked out of the dormitory one night to watch the old Djabuganydji people do this *warrma* in the *dulgu* (scrub). Boys in the dormitory were flogged with lawyer cane for speaking their own *ngirrma* (language) and were not allowed to attend corroborees...My *nyumbu* remembered some of the lines and worked with Michael Quinn and Roy Banning to compose the remainder.

Similarly, one of the elders remembers, in a written statement she gave for the purpose of Native Title Mediation (Claffey 1995):

> When I was a child I used to go to the...camp, and to see them dance at night time, the tramping of their feet pounding down the earth, and the shuffling of the elderly woman feet also. I used to dance with my grandmother and auntie when I was small. When the dance was over, they'll sit around the camp fire and tell story of dream time, how they'll kill kangaroo, and the go[anna?], bring some tu[rtle] and cook it on their back'. (The following sentence is inserted and emphasised by being encircled: 'This has been the most thrilling experience of my life').

Another Djabugay elder, Mrs Enid Boyle (at a Cultural Awareness Workshop organised by environmentalists during the anti-Skyrail protests, 3 July 1994) noted:

> We used to have our corroborees when we were small growing up in the camps [the Djabugay camp on the Mission periphery]...Yeah at night, evening times when the old people like to get together you know, have their dancing ad singing. Well in the day they'll go out and get a heap of wood you know out in the bush, make two big fires and the dancing and singing would be done in the middle of the fires...Well I was brought up that way with knowing my traditions, my lifestyle, but as I say when they put me in the dormitories that all changed. They picked us up, put us away in the dormitories. We stayed there until we had to get married or until superintendent shipped us out to different white people who wanted worker, domestic labour they wanted, and that's how I went...As a child, the Kuranda tribe, people from Kuranda and Redlynch, we weren't really in the compound. We were just out of the compound, because my tribe were you know, still in their wild state.

During the early days of the mission, any kind of Aboriginal ritual or ceremonial activity was forbidden as being 'of the devil'. As a Djabugay elder gently puts it:

> When I was growing up we had it on the mission [in the Djabugay camp] most of our corroborees...but the missionaries when they heard the clapstick, you know, they didn't like to hear that, you know. They sort of cut it out and it gradually died out then until now this generation is trying to revive it...(i/v F, 6 July 1994)

In fact during the 1950s, after having banned such practices for at least thirty years, the mission did allow some dancing to be performed.  As Lance Riley puts it:

> The old people teach us [to dance].  It used to be something like the Laura Festival out at Mona Mona.  Dancers came from Malanda, Tolga, Kairi...This is going back to the early 50s...They find their own way there...Mareeba used to come in there.  Mossman used to come up. Molloy people, they used to come across there too.   One big weekend...But then the Superintendent stopped that and it sort of died out for a while till round about 1984 [when Kuranda boys were invited to join the dance group from Mossman at the Laura Festival to help swell their ranks. These were mostly Lance Riley's sons][9].

The Mission opened its gates during this period to bus loads of tourists who would arrive on organised trips each Sunday and Wednesday afternoon for tours of the mission and to observe displays of boomerang and spear throwing and to purchase artefacts made on the Mission (Annual Report of Director of Native Affairs, 1952: 37).  During the late 1940s the missionaries had begun to encourage the teaching of what they called 'native crafts' to the children removed from their parents into the dormitories.   As the Superintendent, Pastor G. Peacock reported to the Director of Native Affairs (Annual Report, 1951:38), 'We are keeping before them many of their native crafts for, not only are they useful to them, but they are also of great interest to people who visit these areas'.  Therefore, although practices of discipline and punishment on the mission in general worked towards erasing memory, there were other forces which worked against this erasure.  The attraction of the tourist dollar meant that particular skills were 'kept before them'.

During the first Cape York Dance Festival of 1983, the presence of the State and the fact of State sponsorship of the festival was publicly declared by the fact that the then Premier of Queensland, the Honourable J. Bjelke-Petersen, announced the dance competition winners, and that the main trophy shield was donated by the Director of the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement, Mr Pat Killoran[10]. This state presence is now less obvious (muted) with the organisation of the Laura event in Aboriginal hands and with the local Aboriginal people, in the public eye as hosts, compere's and presenters of the awards. [11]

Of influence in the 'cultural revival' was the introduction of a TAFE Aboriginal Ranger training program and the establishment in 1991 of the Djabugay Community Ranger Program. Rangers are paid under the CDEP (Community Development Employment Project, popularly known as 'work for the dole') supplemented, while working on designated projects, by wages from the Department of Environment and Heritage. Djabugay Rangers have become a significant force in the assertion of a Djabugay identity. They see themselves, and are generally accepted in the Aboriginal community, as being directed by the elders and as therefore having the authority to be the official community keepers and representatives of traditional knowledge marking Djabugay identity. They have become the Djabugay front to the outside world, as exemplified in the Native Title mediation process, and negotiations with the Department of Environment in the area of cultural heritage

management, cultural tourism, and archaeological site surveys associated with developments.

The 1980s were thus a period of state-sponsored 'cultural revival' for Aboriginal people in Kuranda. However, although it was/is essentially state funded it is important to note that Aboriginal people in Kuranda see the revival as being generated from within their community. Similarly, non-Aboriginal people who secure grants and organise cultural workshops for instance, tend not to be recognised as having any *generative* role. They are considered simply facilitators of a process of transmission and continuity that comes from within the Aboriginal community. A comment about Michael Quinn made by one of the Tjapukai dancers exemplifies this. He said:

> Well Michael came here as an Anthropologist and as a Linguist and all he wanted to do at first was study the language and, you go back six years ago, we was renting a place down here in Oak Forest and I used to just go and check on him because I knew he was working with Uncle Lalfie and a few of the elders around here...he was actually writing the language down, recording and actually putting it down so it won't be gone, and it had to take a little guy from Wales to come over here to do that, you know.....to me I honestly felt that he's been *possessed* by my Uncle, by Uncle Lalfie who died, you know like, and because Michael is a strong believer in a lot of spiritual things that he's been taught. (i/v W1, 13 Aug. 1997)

Such skills as weaving, bush food recognition and preparation, as well as particular dances and songs, and the Djabugay language itself are thought of as having been directly passed down from the elders. That non-Aboriginal people were responsible for actually organising the workshops and that the workshops were government funded, is not granted any significance. This

apparent muting of government sponsorship and the work and influence of non-Aboriginal people in the cultural revival has been noted by Michael Quinn (pers. comm. June 1997) who observed, that sometimes he felt like 'the ghost in the machine'.

**Memory, Continuity, and Performance.**

In Australian multiculturalism people and peoples are said to 'possess' cultures, and therefore identities, as if they were given objects. Like cultures, identities are thought of as the essential, objective property of persons and groups within the nation. Although such identities may be recognised as contemporary constructions, the constructions are seen as being traceable to fixed attributes or sedimented practices that come from a given past and continue on into the present through some form of cultural transmission and acquisition.

It is in terms of the notion of cultural continuity that identity categories acquire legitimacy and recognition within the state bureaucratic order in Australia. Identity politics thus becomes about establishing ones categorical legitimacy, or authenticity, in terms of cultural continuity. Cultural continuity is seen as being dependent upon the transmission of particular practices through time. But what is meant by transmission through time? In considering this question I refer to the analytical distinction that has been made by a number of writers between history, and memory. Roach (1995:46),

for example, contrasts history, with collective memory defined as the transmission of cultural practices through performance or what Schechner calls 'restored behaviour' - 'behaviour that can be repeated, rehearsed and above all *recreated*'. Similarly, Connerton (1989:13) distinguishes what he calls 'social memory' from 'historical reconstruction', in which knowledge of all human activities in the past is considered possible only through a knowledge of their traces. These traces are given the status of *evidence* - of the giveness of that phenomenon and therefore proof of its authenticity.

In the context of the native title process, and the operations of state bureaucracy in general, history is privileged. In order to establish categorical legitimacy as native title holders, claimants must demonstrate the continuity of their attachment to country in terms of the intellectual transmission and acquisition culture as a set of rules. Aboriginal people therefore stress the significance of historical transmission, historical *evidence*, as proof of identity, so that for example in order to claim Djabugay identity one should have proof of descent from a Djabugay ancestor, based on reference to either Tindale's genealogies or the oral testimony of a respected elder.

On the other hand, Aboriginal people challenge the requirement for such historical evidence with performances of memory based on an idea of 'their culture as grounded in their bodies' (Lattas 1992:160). In other words, they lay claim to the possibility of body memory, or embodied acquisition as opposed to intellectual acquisition of culture. An example of this view is

expressed in this comment by one of the first group of Tjapukai dancers, about not having ever learned dancing until after the Tjapukai Dance Theatre was established, 'No none of us guys [had danced before], but we knew, we knew. It was there, but it was a matter of just bringing it out of ourselves...' (i/v W1, 13 Aug. 1997).

Such responses have been criticised by a number of anthropologists as essentialist and have given rise to impassioned debates between essentialists and anti-essentialists (see Hollingsworth 1992; Lattas 1993). I will not go into the complexities of the debate here, but simply align myself with Lattas (1992:162) who argues that essentialism needs to be historicised and contextualised and understood as 'a language for embodying cultural continuity and for internalising notions of struggle, solidarity and resilience'.

I am wary of romanticising the Aboriginal situation in Kuranda by overemphasising the idea of resistance. Anthropologists have lately tended to see resistance expressed everywhere[12], and in all kinds of practices, for instance, alcoholism, swearing, and public brawling. Some such practices are I suggest better interpreted as expressions of accommodation to inescapable relations of power and states of domination. I use the term 'accommodate' here not necessarily in a negative sense but in the sense of making something commodious, being able to be lived with, or rendering it comfortable. Aboriginal cultural performances in the Tjapukai Dance Theatre and in other contexts are, I suggest, practices of 'self-cultivation' or 'techniques of

management of self' which ensure that games of power 'are played with a minimum of domination' (Foucault 1988:18) - in other words a resistance within, rather than against, domination.

**The Tjapukai Dance Theatre**

As mentioned in Chapter 4, it was a community theatre production produced and directed by Don Freeman, and staged at the Kuranda Amphitheatre in 1986, called 'The Odyssey You'll Ever See' which spawned the Tjapukai Dance Theatre in Kuranda. 'The Odyssey' featured the now well known Aboriginal musician David Hudson. Following the success of 'The Odyssey, Don and Judy Freeman, in cooperation with David Hudson, decided to form an Aboriginal Dance Company which would perform regularly in Kuranda for tourists.

The Tjapukai Dance Company started to perform in 1987 in some rented space under a small shopping complex in the main street of Kuranda, before moving to its own theatre, also in the main street (see figure 2). By 1995, aside from the CDEP (Community Development Employment Project, colloquially called 'work for the dole'), the Tjapukai Dance Theatre had become 'the single largest employer of Aboriginal people in Kuranda' and had 'grown from a business with a capital base of $45,000 to a theatre complex employing 37 Aboriginal people and turning over $1 million (gross) annually' (Finlayson 1995:5).

The show they performed was co-written by Don and Judy Freeman and David Hudson with the assistance of a number of Djabugay people. It told the Dreamtime story of Woonun, a young hero who challenges an evil spirit being. The show began, however, with a self-conscious introduction of the performers as being Djabugay, rainforest people and an announcement of Djabugay tribal boundaries. During the performance the seven male actors/dancers explained the uses of various items of material culture: how to throw a boomerangs, play the didjeridoo, use the spear and throwing stick (woomera), and the meaning of their body painting, relating it to their individual totemic affiliation. Various dances, such as the cassowary dance, the brolga dance and kangaroo dance, were then showcased. The finale of the show was a dramatic demonstration of firemaking followed by more dancing (what Aboriginal people call *shake-a-leg* ) and the finale song, 'Proud to be Aborigine', excerpts from which were distributed on a flyer to the audience on entry to the theatre, as follows:

> Proud to be Aborigine
> We'll never die, Tjapukai
> Always be our identity
> Proud to be Aborigine.

Finally an invitation was issued to the tourists to come down from the audience to take posed photographs.


The show was so successful that the troupe was invited to Brisbane to perform at the World Expo in 1988 and in 1989 Tjapukai won the first of many

cultural tourism awards - the Pacific Asia Travel Association's Gold Award for 'cultural development'[13]. This led to a whirlwind world tour with the Australian Tourist Commission, Qantas and Ansett Airlines to promote the Australian tourist industry. The show was performed 58 times in 60 days across four continents. Further overseas tours were made in 1991 to the United States, 1992 to Korea, Japan, and Singapore, 1993 to the United States, Austria, Canada, and World Expo in Korea, 1994 to perform at the Commonwealth Games in Canada, 1995 to Japan, and in 1996 to Canada and United States.

**What's in a Name?**

The name chosen for the Dance theatre was to have unforeseen repercussions. It automatically linked the theatre very firmly with Djabugay as a particular people or tribal group, unlike other Aboriginal dance troupes formed specifically for tourism, which tend to adopt a pan-Aboriginal, or at least a regional identity such as the Pamagirri Dancers and the Juanna Dance theatre. As one of the owners of the theatre, Don Freeman put it to me, 'Knowing what I know now, I probably would not have chosen that name, because there were tremendous political implications...'(i/v D/J, 8 April, 1996). Although the theatre was, as a private business venture, originally merely an employer of Djabugay people, Djabugay came to see the theatre as rightfully theirs. Resentment built up with some Djabugay people arguing that they were being exploited as the theatre was 'making money' from their 'culture'.

Moreover, the use of their name meant that they were answerable to other Aboriginal groups for what was presented in the theatre. As Finlayson (1995:15-16) notes, there has been some hostility 'from Aboriginal quarters complaining that the dances 'borrow' too heavily from other Queensland Aboriginal groups'.

The representation of the songs and dances as being Djabugay culture, left the theatre company, and therefore Djabugay people, open to criticism and charges of unauthenticity. In particular there were complaints about the use of the didjeridoo which was traditionally not played in this area. The Dance Theatre management responded to such charges by claiming theatrical licence. However its theatrical licence is limited by the fact that the company's good will is dependent upon how convincingly it is able to represent itself as presenting to tourists not just authentic Aboriginal culture but authentic Djabugay culture.

The adoption of the Tjapukai name eventually meant that the company came to be so closely identified with Djabugay as a people, that even they sometimes appeared not to think of themselves as having an identity apart from the Theatre. The popularity of Tjapukai Dance Theatre t-shirts and bomber jackets among young people attests to this ambiguity, as they are worn to advertise themselves as Djabugay people as well as the Tjapukai Dance theatre as a business. Given this situation it was politic for the theatre

owner/manager to allow local Aboriginal people to watch the performance for free whenever they wished. During many of the shows therefore there would be a group of children watching their fathers or uncles or brothers dance, and there were regular excursions from the local school arranged by the teachers. Not all the Tjapukai Dancers are actually Djabugay by descent. They are accepted by the other dancers as dancers because they have historical connections through Mona Mona mission and/or marriage alliances. Yet some of the kids had thought that because their fathers were Tjapukai dancers, they were therefore Djabugay. There came a point in time when almost all Aboriginal children in Kuranda thought of themselves as Djabugay, and this caused some dissent among their elders. One woman complained to me that although she was not Djabugay, she grew up at Mona Mona, and her kids had grown up in Kuranda and thought they were Djabugay, but now she had to tell them they were not. She felt that since they were born in Kuranda, this was their place and they should therefore be given a chance in the Tjapukai Dance Theatre (pers. comm. L, 25 Jan. 1996).

Tjapukai Dancers see themselves as ambassadors of their people. They do not see their dancing for the Tjapukai Theatre as being just a job like any other. Rather, they see themselves as being representatives of Djabugay people in the wider political context of their dealings with agencies of the state. Thus when the National Native Title Tribunal mediations were held in Kuranda, the government representatives and officers of the Tribunal were taken to see

performances of the Tjapukai Dancers. In a different context, and against the wishes of the Theatre owner/manager, the Tjapukai Dancers painted up in full costume, joined their people in protest demonstrations against the Skyrail development (see Chapter 7).

Performance has spilled out of the frame of the theatre and into the world at large so that dance has become for Aboriginal people, a practice of continuity. Small groups of kids, mainly from the Mona Mona dance troupe, roam around Kuranda busking (Plate 20). The performances are for tourists but they inscribe Aboriginal people in a very public way upon the streetscape and soundscape of the village and are a means of clearly marking Kuranda as an Aboriginal place.

Being a dancer, whether it be with the Tjapukai Dance Theatre, or busking in the street, is the modern equivalent of the traditional young warrior fronting up for his people. To become a dancer is sought after by young men, not only because it brings economic security in a context in which there would otherwise be almost full unemployment, but because it is now recognised within the Aboriginal community as being not just a job but a status. Kuranda Aboriginal people can often be heard to talk with possessive pride about 'our dancers', or 'our boys'.

The first dancers were the members of the reggae band 'Mantaka'. They were suggested as appropriate by one of the elders because they were used to performing and would therefore not be shy. Because they had not danced before, they did a special intensive dance course arranged through the Cairns Technical and Further Education College (TAFE). Only two members of this original troupe of dancers remain employees of the theatre today. More recent recruits have not had to do special courses in dancing because today all Aboriginal children in Kuranda have the opportunity to learn to dance as part of the Mona Mona Dance Troupe, or at school as part of the Djabugay Language Program (Plate 21). Although it might appear that because the original dancers attended a TAFE course in order to learn to dance there was no cultural continuity here, there was, in fact, continuity in terms of body memory. Cultural transmission does not only occur cognitively, through conscious learning events, but in the unconscious practice of everyday life. The dancers might have had to be taught the particular routines, but they already carried with them the potentiality to dance in the style required, in body memory, in their bodily demeanour, in the manner and style with which they carried themselves. In other words, cultural continuity expresses itself in 'bodily hexis' (Bourdieu 1977: 93).

The dancers chose particular totemic names for themselves for the purpose of the show. These were not arbitrarily chosen but were based on anthropological records of a grandparent's totemic affiliation. One of the two

dancers from the original troupe who still dances with the company today, explained to me that he got his name by finding out from Tindale's records what his grandfather was and then adopting that. Similarly he said the dancers adopted the designs painted on their bodies from old photos collected by the Museum Studies students during their trip to the State Museums and archives (see for example Plate 22). As he put it:

> ...we looked back into the old Mona Mona photos, back into the archives, and actually there's records of like my grandfather, his totem, his clan and his tribe, his father and the same with all the other families who were rounded up. They were taken in and their totems were recorded...and not only that, there were early photographs of the guys how they were painted up...so then we could pick out which family was which and say that's your design and don't stray away from it and stay as close as you can to that design because *that's you*. (i/v W1, 13 Aug. 1997)

It is the fact that the names and designs come from particular named ancestors that here provides the authenticity of the contemporary performance. The actual medium of transmission and the fact that the totems and designs were rediscovered through historical traces or anthropological records left by non-Aboriginal people appears to be of little note to Aboriginal people in terms of authenticity.

Many Djabugay people today now give their children Djabugay names at birth, so there is a younger generation of dancers growing up who will already have totemic names. Older children, youths, who were not given names at birth tend to choose their own. Testimony to this adoption of names

can be found in the graffiti on various public buildings around Kuranda, particularly the corner store.

Djabugay people consider that the use of language is an important marker of their identity. Thus, over the years more and more Djabugay words and phrases were introduced into the Tjapukai show and also as songs in their performances at the Laura Dance Festival. Language and dance are closely linked as performative activities. It is through the performance of language and the formalised movement of dance that recognition of cultural continuity is sought.

## A Move Out of Place

The Tjapukai Dance Theatre closed its doors in mid 1996 and was replaced by the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park down in Cairns. By the time it closed, the Theatre, located as it was in the main street of the town, had become a focal place for Kuranda Aboriginal people. The show was performed every day, in total 17 times a week, using several teams of dancers working on shifts. Other Aboriginal employees staffed the theatre's reception area and local Djabugay men did backstage work such a sound and lighting. Workers would come outside and sit on the steps during their morning tea or coffee breaks, and one or two dancers would advertise the next show by sitting or standing at the door, painted up and in full costume. The front of the theatre therefore became a gathering place for Aboriginal people, relations and

friends of the dancers and other employees. There was a sense of ownership of place that did not correspond to any actual ownership of title of the theatre property. There was pride among people and also a sense of belonging, a greater legitimacy of the right to be in that part of town, so that even during their days off many of the workers would come by and generally 'hang out' outside the theatre. Given this situation, it is understandable that the closure of the theatre in Kuranda caused a sense of loss among Aboriginal people and that the move down the range to the Cultural Park was a traumatic one. As one Djabugay man put it, 'I feel the heart has been torn out of Kuranda' (pers. comm. A, Sep. 1996).

The Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park as a development of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre, was born during a period of political unrest in Kuranda over the construction of the Kuranda Skyrail, a cableway built from the foothills of the range, through World Heritage listed rainforest and the Barron Falls National Park, terminating at Kuranda. There was much protest from environmentalists and from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents of Cairns and Kuranda against the construction of the Skyrail (see Chapter 7). Identifying themselves as rainforest people, Djabugay joined forces with environmentalists over the issue of damage to rainforest and the granting of leases by the government in the National Park. They lodged a Native Title application over the park and engaged in direct action against Skyrail, joining the protest marches and blockade.

Ironically, in the mean time, negotiations were taking place between the owners of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre and Skyrail Pty Ltd to go into partnership in an Aboriginal Cultural Park to be built near the Skyrail terminal at Caravonica in Cairns at the foot of the range (see Plate 23). This drew the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation into protracted negotiations with the owners of the Theatre and with Skyrail Pty Ltd in order to achieve some equity in the venture. They argued that Tjapukai Dance Theatre had been operating as a commercial business for eight years with their name, their land, and their culture as the product. They wished for equity in the business to the value of their name and the international reputation (goodwill) their performances had built up over the eight years of operation of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre in Kuranda. Although they opposed the construction of the Skyrail, Djabugay people knew it as an inevitability. Since their priorities also included jobs and a secure economic future for themselves and their children, they made an agreement under which the Djabugay were to be gifted some shares (a 4% shareholding) and the opportunity to purchase further shares in the Cultural Park. The long term staff of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre, including dancers and others, were offered a small separate shareholding. Full details of the negotiations and the agreement are discussed by Holden and Duffin (1998).

The move of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre from Kuranda and the creation of the Tjapukai Cultural Park at the bottom of the range however embroiled Djabugay people in a whole new set of contestations. The Yirrkanydji Tribal Corporation had lodged a claim in the Native Title Tribunal for a swathe of country along the coast from Cairns to Port Douglas, which encompassed the site on which the new Cultural Park was to be established. Since they had an interest in the land on which the Park was to be located, the Yirrkanydji asserted an entitlement to be part of the project. Tension filled, protracted negotiations between the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation and the Yirrkanydji Tribal Aboriginal Corporation eventually led to a working agreement. Although the Djabugay preferred that the Yirrkanydji, as historically Djabugay speakers, should acknowledge their identity as Djabugay and come under the general Djabugay umbrella, they were forced to recognise the Yirrkanydji wish to remain a separate identity. Because of the particular interest that the Yirrkanydji claimed to have in the land, the Djabugay agreed to the Yirrkanydji taking up 40% of the opportunity to purchase shares that Djabugay had negotiated with original owners of the Dance Theatre. The Djabugay stressed however, that the land on which the Park was to be built was actually common ground and that, significantly, it had been a meeting place where people from Kuranda had come together with people from the coast for ceremonial purposes.

The Djabugay and Yirrkanydji formed separate corporations to hold their respective partnership shares in the Tjapukai Cultural Theme Park partnership: the Djabugay chose the name Buda:dji (carpet snake) for their organisation and the Yirrkanyddji chose Irukandji. It was agreed that Buda:dji would at all times own a greater partnership share than Irukandji. At present Buda:dji owns 15.8% and Irukandji 10%. In addition the Djabugay are supposed to be paid an annual fee ($20,000) 'to ensure the cultural authenticity of operations' (*Tjapukai Aboriginal Partners' Newsletter*, June 1997). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Development Corporation (CDC) has also invested in the company (15.5%) to eventually be bought out by Buda:dji and Irukandji. The CDC provided a loan so that the Djabugay and Yirrkanydji could buy as equal partners the freehold title to the land on which the Park is located. They have leased this back to the Tjapukai Cultural Theme Park partnership for a 50 year term with a 50 year option.

The incorporation of Buda:dji means that there are currently 7 Aboriginal corporations in the Kuranda area to serve a population of only 300 or so people. The provisions of the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act* 1976 (Cwlth) requiring regular meetings, AGM's, keeping minutes, having a quorum, means that people are utterly constrained, by bureaucratic process, even in their attempt to escape it though private enterprise.

**The Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park**

In the foyer of the park is a museum display of material culture used traditionally by rainforest Aboriginal peoples of North Queensland. On either side of this space which is called 'the magic space' are two theatres, the Creation Theatre and the History theatre. In the Creation theatre a number of Djabugay enact a creation story supported by high tech laser display of the totemic world born out of a cassowary egg and holographic images of the ancestor figures. The History Theatre, screens a film documenting Djabugay history as part of a wider context of the imperialism of the West over the world's tribal populations. The film includes old photos and film clips from the Mona Mona Mission days and re-enacted scenes by Kuranda Aboriginal people of first contact, resistance and violent confrontation with the white settlers. For Aboriginal people watching the film it is like opening a family album. Almost all Djabugay and some historical people, men women and children, took part in the filming and particularly for the last scene which is a snapshot of the community gathered together as at a family reunion.

The film is a history of invasion and colonisation, ending however in a positive note of Djabugay survival despite all, and hope for the future. Many people come out of the theatre extremely disturbed by the images of violence portrayed in the film - stories of massacres, and even more insidious, the violence of removal and institutionalization, of Christian missionization, and I have on a number of occasion observed people in tears. Massacre stories, as a genre, are part of a discourse of identity which celebrates Aboriginality on the

basis of a common or shared experience of violence. The Djabugay have their own particular massacre stories. One of these, based on the memories of Granny Buttercup, is re -enacted in the film. It will be interesting to see the future sedimentary impact of the capturing of this story in film. Will this particular story eventually become the *key* narrative of Djabugay identity in a shared history of violence?

The two theatres represent what are considered to be two defining features of Aboriginal identity - a shared history of violence and oppression and continuity of connection to country. In the Creation Theatre, the show begins with the following statement:

> You have come from far away to see us, to listen to the Djabugay language...to listen to the storywaters. Be joyful! My name is messenger...the one with the word. Listen!

The creation story was scripted for the show by Michael Quinn on the request of Willie Brim and Neville Hobbler, two of the dancers who are now also shareholders in the Cultural Centre. It is performed, as one example of a universal human expression of being. It is placed in the context of other creation stories, particularly the Upanishads of the Hindu, and the Bible of the Jewish and Christian faiths. Cultural specificity is then emphasised and the narrative is very clearly brought back and anchored to place in the concluding words of the messenger:

> Very near to here is Bida the pool on the Barron River where Damarri lost his leg. Yirrganydji elders were invited to ceremonies here and travelled up the river by canoe. Djabuganydji young men were given their initiation cuts and learned their responsibilities as men. Here

> they left their boyhood behind them and learned to follow the law and listen to the Storywaters.

The Creation story is not a single Djabugay myth. It is Quinn's own paraphrase of a number of different myths collated from several different sources, during over twenty years work with Djabugay people on their language. These sources included oral accounts by Djabugay people as well as the written records of amateur historians and others. Among his sources for example was 'The Legend of Durren Dae (Dream Time)' by Douglas Seaton published in 1952. According to Seaton this 'legend' was told to him by a Djabugay woman. Quinn translated Seaton's account into Djabugay with Roy Banning's help and then read it to Djabugay elder, Lalfie Thomson. According to Quinn (pers. comm. Dec. 1997), Lalfie Thompson already knew the myth and was astounded that Michael had got it from an independent source. For Lalfie it was knowledge he had got from his grandfather and had heard as a child around the camp fire. He had remembered it as a very important creation story.

Behind the building housing the History Theatre and the Creation Theatres, and on the other side of a lake across a bridge, is the open air Dance Theatre. Visitors to the Park are directed by the timetable issued with their ticket to proceed from one theatre to the next and then outside across the bridge to the Dance Theatre, for a 20 minute live dance performance, and then on to the boomerang and spear throwing demonstration spaces and smaller stages where educational bush tucker and medicine talks, and didgeridoo playing

are performed.  These various live performance spaces are interspersed with static displays of traditional camp life.  Along the bridge is painted Buda:dji, the rainbow serpent (a carpet snake) to guide the visitors.

While the History Theatre and the museum present Djabugay cultural continuity in terms of historical evidence of past practices, like the Creation Theatre, the Dance Theatre celebrates Djabugay continuity as the collective memory of embodied relationship to ancestors and to country.  At the Dance Theatre one of the dancers announces to the audience that both dances 'passed on from our ancestors and dances created in their memory' are performed in that space (Plate 24).  The performances are thus not just for tourists but are potentially commemorative ceremonies.  I say potentially because their commemorative aspect lies dormant during the ordinary day to day performances for tourists.  It is when there are Djabugay people in the audience, that the commemorative aspect of the performances spring to life. This was particuarly evident on the first day of operation of the Park when it was especially opened for the Aboriginal community, before it was opened to the public.  For them this became not only a day of celebration among themselves of their identity as Djabugay, but a day of rememberance, of commemoration, in which the past was brought forth into the present to be bourne forward into the future (Casey 1987:256).

**The Double-Headed Snake**

Djabugay have ambivalent feelings towards the Park. On the one hand they are proud of the Park. It is a vehicle for being Djabugay. It is not simply a representation of Djabugay but itself *generates* Djabugay as a very positive public identity category. Being Djabugay is better than being simply Aboriginal. As one Djabugay man said to me, 'I used to think I was nothing, just a piece of dirt, but now I have pride. I am Djabugay' (pers. comm. A, 16 Jan. 1996). On the other hand Djabugay people know that they have been swept along into a commercial venture over which, although they are shareholders, they have little control. Their experience is one of powerlessness. They fight a constant battle to maintain some kind of integrity of being.

For example, it was planned that the dance troupe would, unlike at the Tjapukai Theatre in Kuranda, include a team of 'woman dancers' (Plate 25). However, at practice sessions women complained that the director was trying to make them change the 'traditional dances' taught to them by their elders (initially during the corroboree workshops) to make them more theatrically pleasing to a Western audience. One of the strategies that Aboriginal people use in relation to their dealings with dominating powers is to assert and insist on their right to authenticate their cultural performances. The women's issue with the director was an example of this strategy. This use of concept of 'tradition' as a discursive weapon of resistance however actually serves to draw them further into a complicity with dominating strategies of power

because it reinforces the notion of a given and factually discoverable past, which serves, in effect, to undermine contemporary Aboriginal claims.

There has been rising tension among the dancers and other Djabugay workers at the Park and a lot of 'angry talk', including threats by the dancers that they will go on strike. Djabugay feel that the agreement they had with management to give priority to the employment of Djabugay people in the park is not being honoured. The fear is that other Aboriginal people, more ready and able to perform in the style of speech, and bodily demeanour envisaged by the management as being attractive to tourists, will slowly and insidiously replace Djabugay people.

The fact that the theatre is no longer located in Kuranda where Djabugay people feel secure in terms of their rights to place, has created a situation of fear and uncertainty. There are now stories circulating that the land on which the Cultural Park is built was really a burial ground not a corroboree ground. Further signs of disquiet are expressed in stories of black snakes having been encountered at the Park by a number of different people.

When one of the woman dancers became ill, it was said that her sickness was caused by her dancing at the Park. She explained her experiences to me as follows. From the first time she began to work in the Creation Theatre she was extremely frightened. It was dark in the theatre and she could always feel a presence standing behind her when she was in there. She thought it was probably a spirit being or one of the ancestor beings. She would always

try to swap her shift with another woman when her turn came to work in the Creation Theatre. One day she noticed a group of Aboriginal men sitting under a tree on the edge of the rainforest. She said that she thought they were 'the old people', Aborigines who had evaded the round-up and removal to missions and reserves and continued to live 'in their wild state' in the rainforest[14]. She thought they had been attracted by the music and dancing and had come to watch. She said she was not the only one of the dancers who had seen these people. She had also seen black snakes on numerous occasions during the middle of the day. This was unusual and she said she, and the others, considered this to be a warning sign about the dangers of the place. Eventually this woman became sick. The sickness would not go away. She knew it was not the kind of sickness a doctor could cure so she consulted an Aboriginal healer. She regularly consults Aboriginal healers. Her usual healer was not available so she was driven all the way to Cooktown to see another healer, who cured her. He took 'a stone' from her chest. It was 'the head of a double headed snake with terrible eyes'. The healer told her that her sickness was caused by working at the Tjapukai Park. He told her it was a 'story place' (Dreamtime creation place) and that the dancing was causing the ancestors to wake up. He told her that this was also why the dancers were fighting among themselves and that she should warn the others. She stopped working and warned the other dancers (i/v N, 16 July 1998).

Perhaps the layout of the Park and the double headed theatre complex has some explanatory value with regard to understanding the particular healing experience of this woman (see Figure 7). However, I shall not attempt a symbolic analysis of space here. My purpose is simply to emphasise the negative impact on Kuranda Aboriginal people of the move of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre to Cairns.

Figure 7: Plan of Tjapukai Cultural Park

Figure 7: Plan of Tjapukai Cultural Park
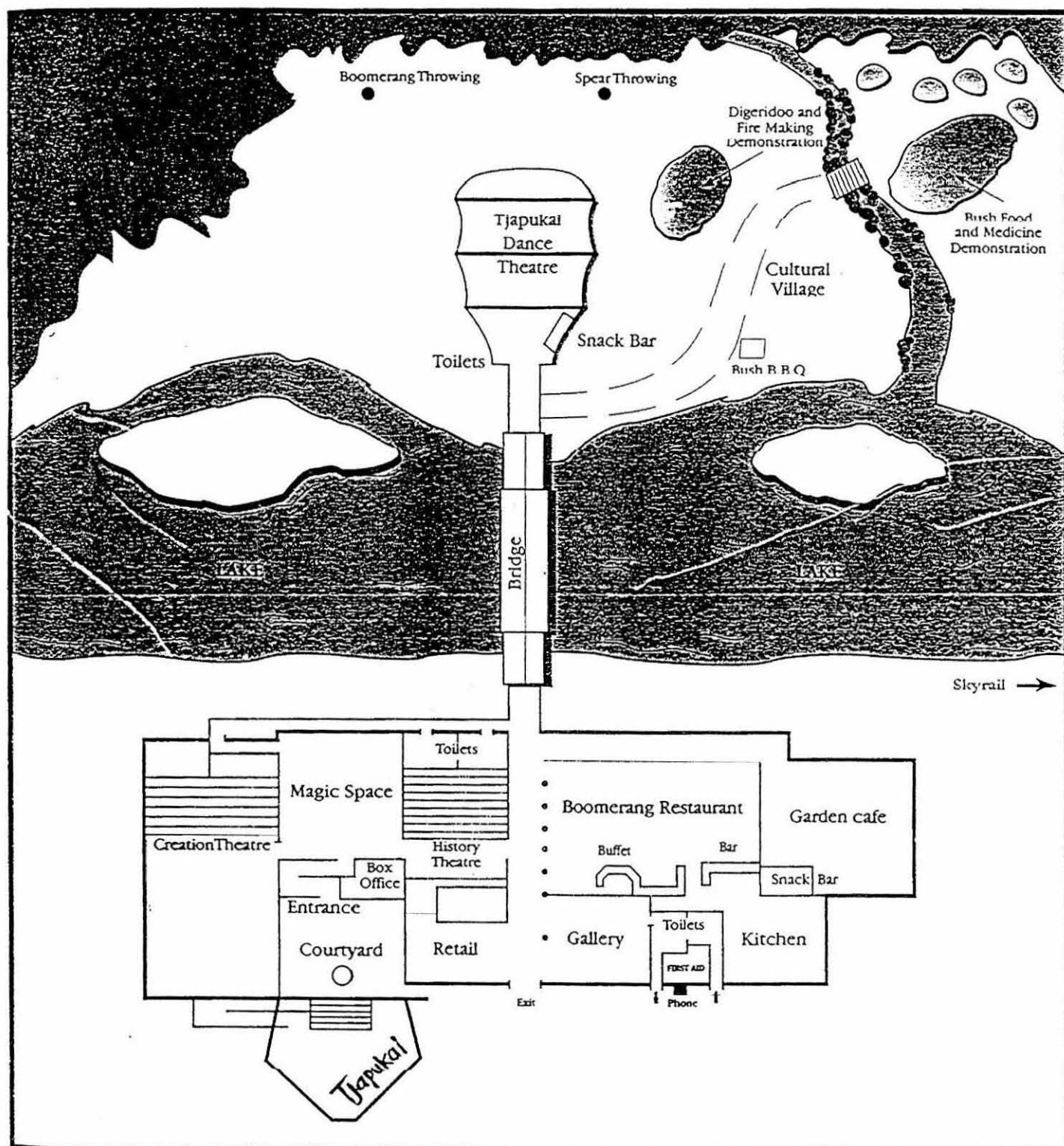
Experiences such as the woman's described above, and the stories that circulate about them, express in culturally specific terms, what it means for Aboriginal people to be in place and the serious discomfort that is felt at being forced to move out of place. The woman's illness is an example of the way social conflict becomes embodied. In the context of the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park there is continuing conflict between Djabugay people and the Park management[15], and also a wider dispute between Djabugay and Yirrganydji, and a conflict of both of these groups with the State, concerning native title rights. Sightings of the 'old people' who still live free in the rainforest mark the Aboriginal identity of places in a social situation where such an identity continues to be disputed. In her illness, and through her healing, the dancer became as one with place. Her experiences are an expression of the corporeal basis of connection to place. Through her lived body she animates and empowers the place with memories of the ancestors and of a lifeworld still lived by the 'old people' who evaded capture.

**Conclusion**

Opportunities for public performance, such as at the Laura Dance Festival, and at the Tjapukai Theatre opened up for Aboriginal people in Kuranda a means for exploring different possibilities of being , in a context where their everyday lives are oppressively overdetermined by bureaucratic process and the categorical relations arising out of this process. Kapferer (1995a:78) has noted that, 'It is in the play space of tourist practices that Aborigines are able to engage with dominating ideologies and to work new

definitions of their situation'.  Yet, these very opportunities are ones that themselves arise out of, and are structured and limited by, the political and economic context of the post-colonial state.

Djabugay performances of dance, music and language are born out of a bureaucratic order which constitutes identities through a discourse of cultural continuity and authenticity privileging a particular form of transmission. Djabugay people are constantly challenged to demonstrate their cultural authenticity by being able to trace *continuity* via a process of direct transmission of intellectual knowledge through their elders.

Such a concept of transmission, however, raises the spectre of discontinuity due to colonization and missionization.  Aboriginal people are thus forced to face a cultural lacuna which they have to fill in order to achieve recognition. They do this in apparent complicity with the dominant discourse by adopting essentializing concepts of culture and heritage and notions of a fixed tradition passed down via documentary evidence or narrative knowledge direct from the elders.  However, public performances also challenge the dominant notion of cultural transmission by positing the possibility of a mode of transmission through body memory, 'an unmediated access to the remembered past' where 'no mediation by mind and its machinations is called for' (Casey 1987: 178).

Thus the Tjapukai Dance Theatre/Cultural Park is a site which allows Aboriginal people, through performance, to play a part in redefining

themselves. Performance here is a tantalizing opportunity to challenge a paradigm which assumes that remembering is merely the recollection of intellectual knowledge. Body memory, or the possibility of embodied acquisition of culture, allows for continuity where there might otherwise be discontinuity. Through their lived bodies Aboriginal people animate place. By moving into performance Djabugay burrow into place and thus allow the past into the present and the dead to remain among the living.

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[1] For maps locating tribal and linguistic boundaries see Dixon 1977, 1991; Duffin and Brim n.d.; McConnel 1939; Patz 1991; and Tindale 1974. Because of the problematic nature of such maps, particularly in the contemporary politics of native title, I have deliberately chosen not to reproduce one in my thesis.

[2] The debate by ethnographers of Aboriginal Australia on this topic is detailed and complex. A review of the substantial literature the debate has generated is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, for the most recent contribution see Sutton (1995).

[3] Hale (1976:236) notes Njakali /nyakali/ as an alternative name for Djabugay.

[4] Dixon's use of the colon in 'Dja:bugay' accords with the principles of the International Phonetic Association and indicates that the sound represented by the preceding letter is long. However, according to Patz (1991:246) the 'a' in the first syllable is in fact short when compared with other vowels with phonologically contrastive length in the language.

[5] The voicing of consonants is not significant in most Australian languages (ie there is no distinction between /d/ and /t/, /b/ and /p/, /g/ and /k/, and /dj/ and /tj/. The name Djabugay thus appears variously in the literature as Tjapukai, Tya:pukay, Chabbuki, Tjabogai, Tchupaki and so on. Aboriginal people in Kuranda have consciously adopted the spelling 'Djabugay', partly to distinguish themselves, as a people, from the commercial venture of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre.

[6] See Tindale (1976:21) for a detailed account of his location of the boundaries of these 'tribes' . Focusing on the ecological factors affecting tribal boundaries, he writes,

'The northeastern boundary of the Tjapukai is clearly evident from the coast as lying at the top of the steep coast-facing scarp of the Macalister Range...The narrow coastal strip from Mowbray River south is Irukandji territory...At Red Cliff the Irukandji territory was reduced to a lowland of little more than a kilometre in width, although to the north and to the south it was much wider. Southward it extended to the estuary of the Barron River at Cairns, but only in the coastal strip.

Inland the Barron River with its once dense rainforests was the coastal limit of the Buluwai, whose territory extended up on to the rough parts of the range in a south westerly direction, to Tinaroo on the Atherton Plateau. West of the area of Kuranda it was the change from rainforest to wet sclerophyll with some open patches of savanna and rainforest, sometimes much altered by burning, which marked the changeover to Tjapukai territory...The western boundary of the Tjapukai lay along the Barron river on the Atherton Plateau, the territory narrowing southward as the more rugged rainforested mountainous parts expanded towards Tolga. The Buluwai southern boundary lay at upland plateau from there south to beyond Malanda'.

[7] Under the Rules of the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation (incorporated under the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976), membership of the corporation is only restricted geographically, ie to Aboriginal persons permanently resident in a defined local area (see clause 8(1)(a)). Some attempt was made initially to restrict committee membership to people of 'Djabugay descent and able to provide proof of such descendancy', but this clause was deleted on the advice of the Registrar's office in order to allow for incorporation (Letter to Mr Lance Riley from B. Anning , Solicitor with Njiku Jowan Legal Service (NQ) Ltd, Cairns, 21 July 1992, Ref: Ms Anning/vb/S825).

[8] People today talk about still being able to hear on Mona Mona at night the sound of the singing and clapsticks of their 'old people'.

[9] The Mossman dancers were Kuku Yalandji people. Lance Riley is Kuku Yalandji married to a Djabugay woman. Lance explained to me that it was considered appropriate for his sons to dance with the Mossman dancers even though they were from Kuranda because of their Kuku Yalandji side.

[10] It is of significance in terms of the state presence that the first festival was held just prior to the 1983 State elections and that Mr Killoran stood in the area.

[11] The protocols that will be followed at the next, in 1999, remain to be decided as the land

surrounding and including the dance ground was handed back under the *Aboriginal Land Act* 1992 (Qld) to the traditional owners, the Western Kuku-Yalandji, some of whom are also Mona Mona people.

[12] For discussions of this problem see Comaroff & Comaroff (1991) and Abu-Lughod (1986; 1990).

[13] Other awards include: 1990 -  Queensland Small Business Award, and Queensland Tourism Award for Heritage and Cultural Tourism; 1991 - Tjapukai documentary film award for creative excellence at the 24th Annual US Film and Video Show; 1992 - Australian Tourism Award, Queensland Tourism Award, and Outstanding Contribution Award from Inbound Tourism Operators Association;

1993 - Australian Tourism Award (Minister' Award), and Queensland Tourism Award; 1995 - Australian Tourism Award (Minister's Award for  Outstanding Overall Contribution).

[14] That there are Aboriginal people who hid in the rainforest and continue to live there according to the old ways is a widespread belief among Kuranda Aboriginal people, and there are many such stories of sightings of these people.  A woman told me that she had decided to attend Djabugay language classes because she wanted to be able to communicate with these 'wild' Aborigines if she ever came across any of them them (pers. comm. 9 Jan. 1996).

[15]  This was expressed most recently in a dispute about wages taken to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.  The Commission ruled that the 30 to 35 shows for which each performer was rostered weekly, was "excessive" and that they should be paid 'about $30 extra a show for more than half of those' (*Cairns Post*  2 June 1998, p.1).

# Chapter 7

# Contesting Place, Articulating Difference:
# The Kuranda Skyrail

During 1993 and 1994 the Cairns to Kuranda Skyrail became a hot political
issue in North Queensland.  The responses of the local community to the
construction of this passenger cable car through the Barron Falls National
Park and the newly listed Wet Tropics World Heritage Area to Kuranda (see
Figure 2 and Plate 26), were varied but quickly became polarised as being
either for or against the project.  The Skyrail became a heated topic of debate
in both the private and public domains, in the homes of local people, in the
cafes and bars and other meeting places, eventually spilling out into the
streets in the form of demonstrations, and into the rainforest itself in the form
of the blockade and direct action by some of the protesters.

In this chapter I explore the articulation of different Aboriginal and non-
Aboriginal responses to the Skyrail.  Although the responses were polarised
as pro- or anti- the development, I do not interpret the Skyrail dispute as a
simple binary contestation, either of values, world views, ideologies, or
primordial loyalties.  Nor do I see it as a mere struggle of two opposing social
groups, the powerful against the powerless, Aboriginal against non-
Aboriginal, greenie against developer, and so on.  Rather, I attempt an escape
from the categorical imperatives that otherwise constrain interpretation, by
focusing my discussion on the discursive fields and practices which *produce*

them. I develop my argument by highlighting a particular moment of protest within the Skyrail dispute. Such moments, I suggest, are the key to a better understanding of how political identities are made. Identities are not given, but are produced situationally. They are not something composed out of the inherent properties of individuals, but are the result of practice. The relationship between sameness and difference is produced and articulated performatively, and it is as such a productive enunciation that the Kuranda Skyrail dispute can best be understood.

I see the Skyrail dispute as a place making situation which is also a public performance of identity. Political identities are made through the 'articulatory practice' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:96) of a discourse of sameness and difference. I am influenced in my perspective by the recent fascination among theorists with exploring the significance of the interplay between self and other in identity formation (see Bahbha 1994; Fuary 1992, 1997; Gunew 1993; Kapferer 1995; Moore 1994; Taussig 1993). Taussig for example, argues that identity 'has to be seen not as a thing-in-itself but as a relationship woven from mimesis and alterity within colonial fields of representation' (1993:133).

My focus is on the performative dimension of this interplay between self and other, sameness and difference. I do take identity to be merely a matter of self-representation, a game people play by freely picking and choosing from a pool of cultural substance and then moulding masks to suit themselves. Rather, I see identity as a performance of contestation and negotiation of structurally and historically produced categories, a type of situated social practice. As Homi Bhabha (1994:2) writes:

> Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from

the minority perspective, is a complex ongoing negotiation that seeks to authorise cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation.

Let me hasten to qualify my use of Bhabha here. Firstly, whereas Bhabha uses them synonymously, I make a distinction between 'cultural engagement' and 'social articulation'. My focus is on social articulation, that is, on the articulation of situated discursive practices through which place is made and identity constituted. My aim is to offer an analysis of how issues of conflict might be understood *other* than in terms which take racial and cultural differences as given.

Secondly, I also prefer to avoid the use of the term 'hybridity'. It has the potential to lead one to simply replace an interpretation in terms of binary opposites with one based on a holy trinity. In other words, the 'hybrid' becomes fixed as a third category which merely reinscribes the other two categories (colonizer/colonized) and the privileging of one over the other. As Young (1995:27) writes:

> Hybridity in particular shows the connections between racial categories of the past and contemporary cultural discourse: it may be used in different ways, given different inflections and apparently discrete references, but it always reiterates and reinforces the dynamics of the same conflictual economy whose tensions and divisions it re-enacts in its own anti-thetical structure[1].

Hybridization however, is often presented as a politically radical means of liberation from past colonial dichotomies. Jagose (1993) highlights this in her analysis of the border *mestiza* figure in Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands*/ La Frontera: *The New Mestiza* . According to Jagose, Anzaldua promotes the *mestiza* as the 'harbinger of a global miscegenation and hybridization which eliminates forever the possibility of difference and separation'(1993:213). Bhabha himself however would not agree. For Bhabha hybridization is not an

escape from colonial power.  Rather it is the *product* of colonial power and as Jagose (1993:224) points out in harmony with Bhabha:

> ...any prioritization of the *mestiza* must not be on account of her alleged ability to secure a space beyond the border's adjudication of cultural difference but on account of her foregrounding of the ambivalence which enables even as it destabilises the colonial relationship.

On another front, Thomas (1994) takes Bhabha to task for not adequately theorising heterogeneity in colonial discourse.  Thomas questions Bhabha's view of colonial discourse as a 'singular and definable entity' (1994:45).  Thus, hybridization, as constituting an active moment of resistance, may not be universal but may be specifically a product of British colonial discourse, in itself not a 'unitary construction (1994:45).

Hybridization, for Bhabha, is colonialism's construct but it is a construct which resists its maker.  Because it unravels as much as it knits dominant cultural power, it becomes an active moment of resistance.  However, it is precisely this notion, that hybridity is a *product*  of colonial power, that Thomas finds problematic.  Thomas (1994:58-9) would grant to the colonized greater autonomy in their 'enunciations and strategies', an 'empowered practice' for which, he argues, Bhabha's approach does not allow.  However, Thomas's perspective is itself limited.  His culturalist focus makes for a tendency to underestimate the oppressive nature of colonial regimes.

With these reservations about the concept of hybridity in mind, I find Bhabha's notion of 'active moments of resistance' enlightening, particularly

his understanding that such moments are ambivalent ones in which sameness and difference are articulated, and political identities are made. The Kuranda Skyrail protest scene I describe below is, I argue, such an 'active moment'. I do not see it as productive of some new hybrid identity category. Rather, it is a productive moment of strategic action and resistance. Here I am in sympathy with Thomas (1994:8) who, following Bourdieu, advocates 'an understanding of a pluralized field of colonial narratives, which are seen...as signifying practices rather than elements of a code'. I stress however that these signifying practices are *situated* practices and not simply cultural representations somehow remote from the colonial political regimes that have spawned them. As Peters (1997:91) points out:

> The improvisation of identity is wonderful if you have the cultural and finance capital to cushion you against the traumas of post-modernity, but most of the human species still lives out its days in localized spaces, dependent in various ways on the people they have known for years. The means of making one's identity a poetic work are inequitably distributed...We should neither drain the concept of culture of its ties to place and matter nor freeze it into absolute identity.

My focus on a particular localized moment of protest answers Thomas's (1994:8) call for a 'historicized, ethnographic approach' to colonial discourse/s. I attempt to offer a means by which social conflict might be understood other than in terms of given racial and cultural differences. It is in particular in the study of human environmental relationships that the complex interface between indigenous peoples and others tend to be reduced to a matter of cultural difference, or of contrasting environmental values [2].

**Protesting the Skyrail**

Skyrail runs from the bottom of the range near Cairns, through the Barron Falls National Park and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, to Kuranda. Final state government approval for the construction of Skyrail was given in November 1993 and it was officially opened on 1 September 1995.

However, the concept of a Cairns-Kuranda cableway had been around since 1987 when a company called Global Research Pty Ltd. (the forerunner to Skyrail Pty Ltd) began investigating its feasibility. In June 1988 the Queensland Bjelke-Petersen government gave approval in principle for a cableway. Local residents against the development had only just begun to gather forces when in December 1988 the designated 'Wet Tropics' area, through which the proposed cableway was to be constructed, was successfully listed as a World Heritage Area. The Queensland Government took out a High Court action against the listing but in December 1989 the newly elected Labor Government withdrew this action and deferred the cableway issue until a Wet Tropics World Heritage management regime could be established[3]. Once the World Heritage area was declared, the urgency for people to protest against the cableway was apparently removed and it was not until 1993 that the issue resurfaced in the public consciousness (Henry 1995; Greer and Henry 1996).

In anticipation of the government go-ahead, a group of concerned people, from both Cairns and Kuranda, met and formed an anti-Skyrail action group

which they named PAKS (People Against Kuranda Skyrail). This group included not just environmentalists but also other residents of the Kuranda area worried about the effects of the Skyrail on their lifestyles. It included representatives from the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation, The Wilderness Society, and the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC). The group began to distribute a newsletter to keep people informed about the progress of its campaign. In response, some anonymous pro-Skyrailers put out their own newsletter - a form of 'seditious laughter' (Butwin 1978), to undermine the PAKS cause. They called themselves PAPAKS (People against People against Kuranda Skyrail). Their first newsletter began in the following vein:

> Our mandate is to oppose the Greenie, Leftie, Pinko, Dole-bludger, Hippie, Feral, Artie Fartie, Mabo Do-gooder minority factions that will stop anything just for the sake of stopping it...PAPAKS are real world people who don't scoot around the rainforest lustfully hugging trees, but in fact hate and detest trees - just look at what the rotten, stinking trees did to Sydney recently - trees are killers!

The PAKS meetings throughout 1994 were regularly attended by a significant number of Kuranda Aboriginal people. I say significant because it is extremely rare to find Aboriginal people in Kuranda attending meetings which are driven by members of the wider non-Aboriginal community. Of a total of seventy six people listed individually by name on the mailing and work group list of PAKS, eleven are Aboriginal and further newsletters were sent out on request to the Aboriginal settlements at Mantaka, Kowrowa, and Mona Mona. The formation of PAKS meant that Aboriginal people who were against the Skyrail could access allies in the non-Aboriginal community.

PAKS organisers were just as keen to harness the support of Djabugay people against the Skyrail as Djabugay people were to use PAKS. As one woman put it to me:

> They [PAKS] needed our support as well, so I think it worked both ways. They came in asking for our support you know really, and we helped them. So we helped each other...(i/v R1, 10 Nov. 1995)

A cultural awareness workshop was arranged in Kuranda to promote goodwill and understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal protesters, which I attended as an observer. A trained facilitator from one of the environmentalist groups organised the workshop at which a Djabugay elder talked about the removal of her family from the Kuranda area to Mona Mona Mission in 1916, of her life growing up on the Mission, and the meaning of the rainforest to her people. The workshop facilitator also arranged a visit by women protesters to the old Mona Mona Mission site and a partnership system was formed there, in which non-Aboriginal women and Aboriginal women were encouraged to form pairs so that they could support each other in their combined campaign against Skyrail.

**Direct Action: Spatial Enunciations of Protest**

PAKS members were not united on what form their protest against Skyrail should take. Many thought that PAKS should confine itself to attempts at raising public awareness through media coverage, public displays, peaceful marches, and letters, petitions, and submissions to State and Federal Government. Others thought that this was not enough and that direct action,

such as blockades at the various Skyrail tower construction sites, was required.  To this end 'non-violent direct action' training was undertaken by some of the members and a separate group was formed, the Barron Gorge Wildlife Action Group.  Members of this group remained part of PAKS but engaged in independent actions to physically obstruct the construction of the cableway.   Direct action included sitting within the boundaries of construction sites, erecting a bamboo platform at one of the tower sites to stop Skyrail's helicopter from moving equipment from the site, dressing up as endangered rainforest species, building a set and performing a skit inside the office of the Department of Environment and Heritage, and above all, 'tree sitting'.  What the protesters called 'tree sits' involved volunteers climbing particular trees to prevent loggers from continuing to clear the tower sites. The tree sitters were supported by a ground crew which provided them with food and other requirements.  One protester lasted 208 days in a tree before he was tricked into allowing police, posing as a television crew, onto his platform.  He was removed by police using a block and pulley system and the tree was then felled (*Cairns Post* 11 Jan. 1995:1).

Aboriginal people of Kuranda also engaged in direct action against the Skyrail.   Dancers from the Tjapukai Dance Theatre joined the protest demonstrations and performed their connection to the country with music and dance.  Others painted placards and joined the street marches organised

by PAKS. One of the environmentalists in PAKS had this to say about their involvement:

> I remember that first big Cairns protest that we had where we were hoping we'd just get 20 people and, I think, we ended up with about 150. It just happened that way. What was absolutely beautiful was the Djabugay. They wanted to march in front, and that was brilliant. And they brought some signs that, you know, ours were white with red printing and writing, whereas the Djabugay had these ones that were just, artistically it was beautiful. They had Aboriginal paintings on them, and Aboriginal colours. For some strange reason, even their slogans were spot on. They were absolutely perfect...(i/v J5, 14 Apr. 1995)

Djabugay people demonstrated at the tower sites, and supported the tree-sitters by bringing them food. Some Aboriginal youths even took their turn sitting in trees, although they tended not stay in the forest overnight since for them the forest is populated by beings other than the rainforest animal and plant species that the environmentalists were trying to protect.

Aboriginal views on the Skyrail however were as divided as the views of the general population. Some Aboriginal people in Kuranda saw it as an avenue for employment and in May 1992 the Chairperson of the Mona Mona Aboriginal Corporation wrote to the developer asking for a meeting to discuss how a proposed new agency - the Djabugay Ranger Land Management, Conservation and Protection Agency could assist Skyrail Pty Ltd (White 1995:22-3). These differences in response to the Skyrail *appear* to correspond to already entrenched patterns of conflict among various factions in the Kuranda Aboriginal community, represented partly by the various incorporated bodies and the divide between the so called 'historicals', that is,

people brought into Mona Mona mission from other country, and 'traditionals', the Djabugay, but it is not quite as simple as that. The responses to the Skyrail are not adequately explained in such categorical terms. What is revealed in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal responses to the Skyrail is an interrogation and undermining of the authority of categorical identities. Political manoeuvring with regard to the Skyrail, I argue, provided a forum for dismantling their hegemony.

To illustrate this more clearly I will describe a three minute scene from an anti-Skyrail protest at one of the Skyrail tower sites captured on video by one of the protesters. There were no media personnel at the site, only protesters, police and Skyrail logging contractors. In the video clip one of the Aboriginal protesters points out that this is not a performance for the media and therefore that they are not just putting on a show. 'We don't need no media. There's no media here. Our protest is from our heart and our heart is here'.

**A Moment in the Performance of Protest**

The protesters mainly comprise women and children, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. They have seated themselves within the boundaries of a site to be cleared in the rainforest for one of the Skyrail towers. A number of the non-Aboriginal women and children are attached together around trees on the site with 'super-glue'. The police walk the Aboriginal protesters off the site which is cordoned off with yellow tape. The Aboriginal protesters then

stand outside the tape barrier protesting verbally as the police physically remove, in some cases carry and drag, the non-Aboriginal protesters from the site. Some of the young girls are crying. It is apparent that at least one of them is in pain. They indicate that their super-glued hands had been torn apart by police.

The protesters then stand outside the barrier, with the police and the loggers within, watching the loggers start to cut the trees. The sound of chainsaws almost drowns out their voices as the protesters shout out to the police and the loggers.

I suggest that this scene represents a performative moment in which social inclusion and exclusion, sameness and difference, are articulated. It is in such moments that identity is constituted, place is made, and community defined. In this scene we see and hear Aboriginal women establishing their difference by calling on the historical specificity of their experiences to be recognised by the police and the loggers:

> The Government wants us to shut up. We're like a herd of cattle. They herd us here and there on missions...Learn your history. We're the ones that suffered, not you. You don't even know our history.

However, we also hear them asserting their sameness -'We're Australians. We're all Australians here'. We see and hear them defining the idea of community, in the face of the state hegemonic power represented by the police and the loggers. A woman calls out to a distressed young non-

Aboriginal protester by name and puts her arm around her to comfort her, while claiming to her audience of police, loggers and other protesters:

> That's how much we know our locals in Kuranda. We're on first name basis. We mix. This is what you call caring. I'm loving up a white girl. We care for one another. We're here for one another. We're not here for ourselves.

This protest scene is indeed an articulatory moment - a moment in which place and identity are constituted. This performative engagement of the ideas of sameness and difference challenges and resists the entrenched binary oppositions of dominant 'games of truth' (Foucault 1988:16).

## A 'Game of Truth'

The initial task that PAKS set itself was a 'fact-finding' one. As noted in the PAKS Newsletter (3 Oct. 1993), 'most members of our group were assigned fact-finding tasks on which they will report at our next meeting'. In February 1994 volunteers were called on to survey the Skyrail tower sites and count trees within 30 metres from each tower site. This is an indication of the form of discourse in which the debate was expressed. Much of the debate was waged in terms of disputed 'facts'. How much Rainforest would actually be destroyed? Was it a fact that the total area to be cleared during the construction of the Skyrail would only be about half a hectare, as was claimed by members of the pro-Skyrail lobby group, or would the construction, in fact, necessarily entail swathe clearing? What, in fact, were the rainforest plant and animal species that would be adversely affected by the Skyrail?

Was it a fact that the rainforest was safe from further destruction due to possible accidents during the construction phase? Was it a fact that the Skyrail would lead to fewer buses travelling up and down the range, thus relieving Kuranda of some of the pollution and congestion caused by their parking in the village? Was it a fact that the Skyrail would actually result in greater protection of the rainforest by replacing more damaging walking tracks, or would it, in fact, simply supplement the already existing tracks and spawn the creation of new ones? Were there, in fact, Aboriginal sites of significance in the path of the Skyrail? In sum, the debate was waged in positivist terms, that is, people debated about what was true or false according to what were perceived as objectively provable facts and they called for environmental and social impact studies to be done to establish the truth or otherwise of the factual claims being made.

Again and again the pro-Skyrail lobby attempted to make the anti-Skyrail protesters look foolish by demonstrating that they had got their facts wrong. The article by freelance journalist Michael Sourial (1994:8) entitled 'Protesters, credible or farcical?' in the *Cairns Post* is a good expression of this discourse of the literal-minded. Sourial argues that the actions of the protesters are farcical and he uses a particular action by an individual protester to support his case. This action involved one of the protesters super-gluing her hands together around a tree at one of the tower sites. Sourial (1994: 8) writes:

> The "super-glue" incident was one of the true low points for this protest which has been marked by embarrassment. The protesters

now, incidentally, deny that the young lady in question glued herself to the wrong tree, so let me clear up the doubt once and for all. I was there that day at Tower Site 5 and that protester definitely glued her arms around a tree which was neither slated to be cut, nor in the way of any of the work being done. She may as well have glued herself around a tree in Botswana for all the trouble she caused.

However, the authenticity of human action is not simply a matter factual accuracy. What Keith and Pile (1993:10) wrote about the declaration of 'nuclear-free zones' applies, I argue, equally to the anti-Skyrail case:

> Assessed in the spirit of literalism, such designations were always manifestly absurd - given the failure of the contemporary nuclear device to respect borders...So how should a nuclear-free zone be judged? As true or false? As real or metaphorical? As authentic or unauthentic? As true as a burning breast or as false as a bleeding heart?

By her act the protester admits she did indeed intend to prevent that particular tree from being destroyed (i/v B3, 24 Jan. 1996). Both the pro-Skyrailers and the anti-Skyrailers were enmeshed in a game of truth which required them to legitimise their positions by resorting to what Lyotard (1984:28), following Wittgenstein, calls 'the language game of science'.

The Djabugay protesters too were swept into this game in order to legitimate their native title claims. They had responded independently of PAKS and, on another front by lodging a claim for the Barron Falls National Park with the National Native Title Tribunal (see Appendix for map of the claimed area). The Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Council[4] (DTAC) had written already in October 1991 to the State Minister for Environment and Heritage, and the Regional Director of the Department of Environment and Heritage, among

others, asserting that the Djabugay are 'traditional owners' of the area and that the 'Barron Gorge is part of Djabugay spiritual heritage which should not be desecrated and spoiled' (White 1995:15). However, the developers were considered, by the Department, to have discharged their responsibilities and obligations under the relevant cultural heritage legislation, the *Cultural Record (Landscapes Queensland and Queensland Estate) Act* 1987 (the Cultural Records Act), and the Skyrail was permitted to go ahead.

A cultural heritage survey prepared for Skyrail under the legislation had concluded that there were no sites of cultural significance along the Skyrail route. Many Djabugay people were outraged by this report. They considered that it effectively 'denied them recognition of the continuity of their relationship with the country which the Skyrail traversed, and therefore their contemporary identity as traditional owners of this area' (Greer and Henry 1996:20). However, the response of DTAC expresses the hegemony of the scientific paradigm. The Chairperson of DTAC sent a letter to various government ministers and department directors questioning the 'professionalism and qualifications' of the consultant and noting that he was not a qualified archaeologist (White 1995:53).

In particular, the dispute focused on a number of scarred trees and stone arrangements. Although younger Djabugay people had been previously unaware of their existence, they did not doubt that these were their sites and

that if they had to produce tangible evidence of their heritage, particularly for the purpose of establishing native title, then here it was. As one young Djabugay woman put it:

> Then came the time to go and visit the sites...I had only studied these things. The actual experience now to see it first hand...that was what gave me the drive. We had to protect that. Just the feeling, and I still get that feeling that has more or less kept me going all this time...It [the sites] was just another thing to reinforce it, that it is really true. I could actually say it was true, it was real. (i/v R1, 10 Nov. 1995)

However, four separate archaeological opinions were requested by Djabugay people in the hope that the archaeologists would provide the scientific proof required to establish the significance of the sites and therefore the overall significance of the Barron Falls National Park.

The debate was a positivist one waged in terms of scientifically provable fact. Were the scarred trees in fact Aboriginal shield or burial trees ? Were the rings of stones in fact Aboriginal sites, or were they made by more recent visits by 'whitefellas' to the area, perhaps bushwalkers or timber cutters, or were they just old 'hippy' camps, as was one suggestion from the pro-Skyrail lobby group? Since the Aboriginal identity of the sites could not be established archaeologically, and Djabugay people could not make their voices heard within the dominant language game of science, they decided to enlist the help of the Federal Government by turning to the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act* 1984. A reporter, Mr George Menham, was appointed in accordance with section 10(4) of the Act to prepare a report to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Affairs for his consideration. Djabugay attempted to resist site based definitions of heritage by articulating their claims to the reporter in terms of a concept of 'cultural landscape'. The following quotation is an example of the kind of knowledge of a wider living landscape used by Djabugay to try to escape demands of the discourse of science, and to thus evidence the Aboriginal significance of the National Park and places along the Skyrail route. A Djabugay Ranger explains what he told the reporter:

> Yeah, ... I told him also of how Damarri is now sleeping. I told him if he goes back in to the Cairns area, from Machans Beach turn off, Holloways, all of them, Yorkeys Knob, and you're looking backwards and forwards and you look at the skyline, just of the mountains, you can see Damarri lying down. I told of Bununda, how the water fairy came about, and how they used to climb up one side of the mountain of Red Peak and go down the other side where now they are building Skyrail - where the Yirrigandyi could be, and the Djabugandji all camped below, once, when the Barron used to run that way. I told him of the camp there. Also the one in Woompera farm (Warrama) there, the camp there. Go back from Warrama, around the lookout; come into Mount Saddleback; from there along McAlaister Range (my area); walk back into Mona Mona; all that run. My grandma, being associated with that Red Peak and that place - travel along that ridge back into Mona Mona, and then back to Oak Forest. That's Guraminya side, you know. There's two sides. One Guruminya and one Gurubana[5].

By phrasing their claims in terms of this kind of narrative knowledge and asserting a landscape based cosmology, as opposed to a site based one, Djabugay were asserting that the 'particular significance'[6] to them of places along the Skyrail route was based not just on those places as fixed and objectifiable markers of given past events, but on a continuing process of being in relationship with those places.

Kuchler (1993:104) makes a distinction between landscapes *of* memory, and landscapes *for* memory. A landscape is a landscape *of* memory when it is taken to be an *aide memoire*, a given surface for the inscription and capture of memories, whereas to take landscape *as* memory means that it is seen as a product of the *process* of remembering 'which is forever being transformed'. I suggest that by their use of the concept of cultural landscape in connection with the Skyrail report Djabugay meant landscape *as* memory, landscape as a lived memory producing experience.

Barbara Bender (1993:1) notes that landscapes are not given but 'are created by people -through their experience and engagement with the world around them'. According to Howard Morphy (1995:204) in Arnhem Land people learn about their landscape through the 'experiences and associations of their lives', by travelling through the land and by events such as birth, marriage and death. It is the lived experience of these events which creates the particular moments in which the landscape of the Yolngu is made visible. Djabugay landscapes can also be understood in such terms. Places are absent unless events give them a presence. In the contemporary context, such events include political moments like the Skyrail dispute. The authenticity of Djabugay claims to country was questioned within a language game of science which required the archaeological identity of particular sites to be established. However, cultural authenticity cannot be proved scientifically. Authenticity, I argue, can only be established outside of this game of truth, by

the contemporary practices of remembering which make present the Aboriginal continuity of the landscape to Aboriginal people themselves. As one woman put it:

> And actually, when we went further into the rainforest we came across other things. Elders started releasing what they knew about it. It started a whole awakening. (i/v R1 10 Nov. 1995)

It is their own sensory experiences of, and engagement with the country, and that of their forebears, upon which Djabugay base their claims. Landscape is a living memory domain for an ideology of a timeless continuity of *becoming* in place. Djabugay people express their connection with land in terms of their feelings for, and experience of, a generalised domain alive with spiritual forces and beings, and having an agency of its own. For example, when the Cairns/Kuranda train narrowly escaped a rock slide on the track, a Djabugay elders, whispered to me that the rock slide was actually Damarri's[7] response to the Skyrail (i/v E4, 18 June 1995).


However many of the non-Aboriginal protesters think of the environment similarly. They either anthropomorphise nature itself, usually as female, or think of it as alive with spiritual beings. One protester said that she firmly believed that that forest was alive with Aboriginal ancestral spirits. On one occasion while she was in the rainforest during the night or in the very early hours of the morning, she saw a tall Aboriginal warrior. She had heard stories from Aboriginal people of the existence of beings they call 'small men', so she had wondered why he was so tall but 'one of the Murris' told her later

that there were also 'tall men'. This protester also related how she saw a giant cassowary appear behind her and on another occasion a cassowary head and then the face of an Aboriginal man emerging from a tree trunk. She said she was later told by Aboriginal people that their ancestors sometimes manifest themselves as cassowaries. She then said that the forest comforted her by telling her that it would look after itself against the Skyrail. Nature would have 'her' own revenge. As proof she, and another protester, recounted the number of times, since beginning operations, that the Skyrail has been 'out of action' due to storms and lightning strikes (pers. comm. 24 Jan. 1996).

## Environmentalists and Aborigines

In general, environmentalists think of themselves as being part of a political and moral crusade for a better world. Environmentalism has been characterised by Rubin (1994) as being the heir to the anti-slavery and temperance movements and as therefore part of an ongoing saga of evangelical reform. He writes:

> Indeed it is not far off the mark to say that environmentalism is the temperance movement of our time. We know that it wants to save the earth. But we forget just how much it wants to save us from ourselves. (1994:10)

Environmentalism is thus based on a universalistic view of the world. Although environmentalists might 'act locally'[8] , they assume a common humanity and common, unilinear human destiny. What are thought of as 'traditional' Aboriginal ways of relating to the environment are celebrated as a contemporary expression of the way all humans must have once lived.

Environmentalists have turned to indigenous beliefs around the world, for inspiration and guidance on how to formulate an alternative human environmental relationship. The following comment by one of the environmentalists against the Skyrail exemplifies the attitude:

> And for me, I don't know why, but I was really inspired by the fact that, I couldn't believe it, but here we are, we've really decimated the wet tropics...This is the oldest rainforest in the world. It's the only rainforest that closely resembles what the planet looked like back then...and when the Djabugay, when I realised, all of a sudden, that the rainforest people had no reason whatsoever to cut down a tree, they may take a section out of it for a canoe, which didn't kill it, or they may have taken out a section for food storage, or they may have taken a buttress out of one of the trees for a shield...that didn't kill the tree...And here we are cutting down trees like there's no tomorrow...That just, sort of, blew me away. It was a real inspiring sort of thing, that we could really learn something from these people...(i/v J5, 14. Apr. 1995)

Thus, indigenous people are seen as a source of guidance for alternative ways of being in nature, and have been romanticised as the 'first true conservationists' (Sackett 1991). In other words, as Trigger (1996:55) puts it, environmentalists have 'co-opted alleged indigenous ethics regarding land use to their own cause'.

A number of writers have discussed the political relationship between environmentalists and Aborigines in Australia (see Anderson 1989; Burnam Burnam 1987; Cuthbert and Grossman 1996; Jacobs 1994; Marcus 1996, 1997; Sackett 1991). According to Marcus (1997) the celebration of the traditional ways of life of Aboriginal peoples by environmentalists and new age mystics

actually operates to further dispossess them. She argues that new age mysticism regarding Uluru is driven by universalising sentiments that deny the unique identity of Aboriginal beliefs. As Marcus (1997:46) puts it:

> Öattempts to tap into the power of the Rock are seen by local Aboriginal people as simply more of what has gone before - now settlers are mining Aboriginal culture rather than the land itself.

Marcus and others view this as 'cultural appropriation' (Marcus 1997; Jacobs 1994; Lattas 1997). Environmentalists are seen as having appropriated Aboriginal culture and environmental values to further their own political cause. The celebration of indigenous environmental ethics is thus seen to be part of a primitivist discourse operating to the disadvantage of Aboriginal people.

However, these new age values can also be turned around to serve indigenous interests. The concept of traditional culture, or notions of indigenous environmental values and knowledge, have become tools by which indigenous people all over the world can assert their rights in the contemporary context of nation state and international politics. For example, according to Turner (1991), when he first started field work among the Kayapo in 1962, they were living in a village under the 'protection' of the Brazilian government's equivalent of Australia's Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and were dependent on this department and the missionaries. According to Turner, at this time the Kayapo were not self-consciously aware of the particular differences of their cultural practices in

relation to other peoples in Brazil. To them their ceremonies and social institutions were simply the way they had always done things. As Turner (1991:294) notes:

> They had, in short, no notion that their assemblage of received customs, ritual practices, social values, and institutions constituted a "culture" in the anthropological sense, nor any idea of the reflexive role of that culture in the reproduction of their society and personal identities.

However, a quarter of a century later when Turner returned to do further research and ethnographic filming in the area it was another story altogether. Turner (1991:301) found 'a new level of cultural awareness and self-consciousness'. Many Kayapo had begun to use the Portuguese word "cultura" as well as the language term that comes closest in meaning, *kukradja*, as meaning 'a particular body of customary practices and lore which require self-conscious effort to preserve and reproduce' and 'concerted political action'.

The Skyrail dispute provides an example of the process of development of such a 'new level of cultural awareness and self-consciousness' in the Australian context. It is a case of Aboriginal people actively and very strategically allying themselves with environmentalists in order to resist the powers of oppression[9]. Celebrating the idea of culture thus becomes a means for indigenous people to negotiate benefits for themselves within the context of contemporary political and economic relations which would otherwise leave them powerless. It is not simply a matter of environmentalists

appropriating Aboriginal culture. Far from being helpless victims, Aboriginal people are active political agents. In the Skyrail dispute, Djabugay people forged an alliance with other protesters as a useful political strategy. Environmentalist discourse, and the valuing of traditional culture and of their status as the original environmentalists became a means for Djabugay to assert native title and heritage rights in the contemporary context of nation state politics. The Skyrail dispute also provided Djabugay with a means of asserting a unique identity as rainforest people in a context of an homogenizing stereotype of Aboriginality which contributes to their oppression. Andy Duffin, the chairperson of the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation is quoted in the *Courier Mail* (28 May 1995:1) as saying that 'it is the rainforest which keeps the Djabugay people going', and that 'their existence would fall apart without those forests'. A Djabugay woman explained her involvement in the anti-Skyrail protest similarly :

> This rainforest, that's where our foods are; that's where our people lived. They protected the area; they took care of it; and we have the same responsibility. But it sort of goes deeper than that again, that feeling that we got that we had to protect what rainforest is left; because you go into the future, you know. We tell our children that we are the rainforest people. If there is no rainforest, you know, how are they going to believe that we are the rainforest people? They'll be asking what is a rainforest?...We are the rainforest people. I mean that was our survival, that rainforest, you know. That will continue to be our survival. (i/v R1, 10 Nov. 1995)

However, the fact that they had their own political agenda does not mean that Djabugay were not genuine in their dealings with the other protesters. Arguments which suggest that people are using culture as a political tool, sometimes have undertones of cynicism. It is assumed that if something is

political, it must therefore be unauthentic. However, I see political practice as part of the fullness of human being in the world. It is not unauthentic practice, and neither is the way indigenous people come to use the concept of culture. Similarly, I do not wish to appear cynical about the intentions of the non-Aboriginal protesters. An environmentalist discourse, which sought to establish the moral legitimacy of the protesters by romanticizing indigenous cultural practices and relations with the environment, was indeed evident in the Skyrail case. However, many of the environmentalists were also very sympathetically aware of the historical oppression and contemporary social and economic plight of Djabugay people. They hoped for the success of the Djabugay native title claim, not just because they believed that this would somehow put a halt to the construction of the Skyrail, but also out of a genuine sense of fair play. As an environmentalist put it:

> So I got involved with the Skyrail campaign, but really what was far more fascinating for me was the cultural aspects. I mean, for me it's still people. the vast majority of Australians want reconciliation. I think the vast majority of Australians think of reconciliation as being something that's happened and it's ok now, but it's not. Native title is not working. (i/v J5, 14 Apr. 1995)

When Djabugay people eventually came to an agreement with Skyrail Pty Ltd, there was disappointment among the environmentalists but few recriminations. The Skyrail was being built in spite of their protests and they respected Djabugay people's realization that they could not fight this 'big monster' and therefore should focus on securing the best economic deal they could 'for the future' of their children [10].

This is not to say that there were no tensions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal protesters. After the Cultural Awareness Workshop, an agreement was made that in order to have the Aboriginal voice heard, the non-Aboriginal protesters would refuse to speak to the media unless they first interviewed Aboriginal spokespersons. Although made with good intention, the agreement did not last long, however, because Aboriginal spokespersons were not always available when the media arrived, and environmentalists became frustrated at missing good opportunities for press coverage.

Although one of the elders reflected that he was suspicious about the true motives of the environmentalists and whether or not they were in genuine support of the native title claim (i/v L1, 17 Feb. 1997), most Aboriginal people saw the non-Aboriginal protesters as primarily working to help their fight for land rights. In fact, one woman referred to the protester who sat up a tree for 208 days, as 'a hero for Aboriginal people' (pers. comm. 3 Jan. 1997).

However, the universalist tendencies of environmentalism were well articulated in a speech delivered by one of the key participants in the anti-Skyrail campaign during a rally and repeated for me during an interview:

> As a member of the local community, this is *our* forest, as a citizen of Australia, this is *our* National Park, and as a member of the international community this is *our* World Heritage, *not* the exclusive property of Sky-Rail Limited. (i/v S2, 12 Apr. 1995; original emphasis)

These sentiments are also expressed in the slogans carried by the protesters: 'Economy poisons Ecology', 'Parks and People First Molly, Not Developer's

Fees', 'No Development in World Heritage'. They voice not only the perceived incompatibility between environmental values and economic development, but also the conflict between individualism and communalism, private ownership and the commons. The protesters' placards, I suggest, can be seen as statements of communal title. They voice the protesters' reaction against what was seen as private appropriation of the commons. In contrast, through the native title claim and their direct protest action, the Djabugay were claiming the national park, not as common land, but as *their* land. The placards of the Djabugay protesters could be read as symbolic title deeds - "Skyrail Garri, Bulurru" - a claim legitimised by Bulurru, '...the source of life...the Good Spirit that protects life and Law' (Duffin and Brim n.d.).

However, although Djabugay were claiming the Skyrail land as their land, and non-Aboriginal protesters were claiming it as belonging to all the world, the inconsistency does not appear to have been clearly recognised by either group. Perhaps this was because Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal protest against the Skyrail was expressed in terms of environmental values with which both groups readily identified, values which require the preservation of the rainforest. As an Aboriginal elder tearfully said in the Cultural Awareness Workshop (3 July 1994):

> ...what I mean by the trees, those trees are our culture too...we don't like to see those trees being cut down and the ground, the bulldozers running over it. That's what I call desecration to the land you know.

Moreover they held in common other objections against the Skyrail. Although there were some anti-Skyrail protesters who were not locals, and the blockaders were joined by environmentalists from the south of Australia and even from overseas, most of the protesters were, in fact, residents of the area. For them, Skyrail did not simply pose a threat to the rainforest, whatever the cultural basis on which it might be valued. It also stood for an increased tourist threat to this embattled local community. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents of Kuranda were already feeling that the 'village in the rainforest' was no longer theirs. It had been slowly appropriated by developers for the use of tourists. As an Aboriginal woman said in the moment of protest examined above,

> We used to roam those bloody streets in Kuranda. And where now? ...Kuranda's polluted with tourists.

Loss of control over definition of place means loss of ability to define self. Skyrail provided the site for the spatialized politics that might enable people to reclaim their home place.

**'Out of His Tree': A Performance of a Performance**

Like the Kuranda Market war which generated the production of the stage play 'The Three Marketeers', the Skyrail dispute, inspired dramatisation by local performers, but this time in the form of a film. The film entitled 'Out of His Tree' was written and directed by Ricardo Rusch. It features thirty three local actors, including three Aboriginal actors, and involved a local production team of fifteen people. A number of these had been actual

protesters during the anti-Skyrail demonstrations.  The film was entered in the 1998 Short and Curly Film Festival, which is part of the Adelaide Festival, and was also screened at the Fremantle Film and Television Institute on 8 April 1998.  The film is introduced as follows:

> All the sites to the east had fallen to yet another development aimed at the tourist dollar, but on the western flank a group of eco-warriors never gave up fighting to protect this sacred site...

While obviously siding with the protesters, the film parodies the actions of all parties to the dispute, the protesters as well as the developer, police and the loggers.  It opens with the developer, referred to as the 'evil developer' in the credits, rolling out his plans, and a number of women, referred to as 'forest nymphs', walking through the rainforest lovingly stroking the trees.  An oversized tube of super-glue is used by one of the nymphs to glue her hands together around a tree.  With the help of a ground crew of other protesters, a tree sitter is then hoisted into a tree where he then sits playing his piano accordion.  Big fat police with pink curly tails and faces made up as snouts arrive on the scene.  While the eco-warriors pelt the police with fruit, the police punch and kick the protesters with their heavy boots until one of them lies senseless on the rainforest floor.  They then pose as a television crew to trick the tree sitter out of his tree and carry him off slung from a pole like a wild game animal.

This film is yet another example of how social dramas in Kuranda are often, in a sense, twice performed.  I have referred, above, to the direct actions of the

protesters as 'performances of protest'. The film is also a performance of protest, although after the fact, and at a level once removed. The distinction between the two types of performance is not that one involves consciousness while the other does not, but rather that different modes of consciousness come to fore in each. Theatricalized performances produced for the stage or for film are an expression of human consciousness in its reflective mentalistic mode. However, as Kapferer (1997:222) writes, '...*consciousness* is a dimension of all human action and is not limited to that which is established reflectively or contemplatively. Human beings are conscious beings by virtue of their embodied existence in the world'. The passions involved at the height of a social drama do not allow for much reflection or contemplation but they are nonetheless expressions of people's consciousness of their social situation.

**Conclusion**

I have attempted here to avoid a culturalist approach which reduces contemporary political relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to given cultural differences, or contrasting environmental values. Although the protesters used 'rhetorical strategies which drew upon categorical and/or stereotypical identities' (Moore 1994:5), rather than simply taking these categorical identities as given, I have focused my discussion on the discursive fields and practices which operate to *produce* them. One such discursive field is the 'language game of science' (Lyotard 1984).

I have argued that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal protesters were caught up in the same game of truth, a game which constrained them to wage their dispute with government agencies and Skyrail developers according to the universalising claims of science. Within the terms of this game their assertions about identity in place, and connection to country, were inevitably made to look foolish.

Although Skyrail may have been debated in terms of scientific fact, the underlying force driving the dispute really had nothing to do with fact. It was not about right and wrong trees, or authentic or unauthentic Aboriginal sites. Rather, it was about 'burning breasts' and 'bleeding hearts' (Keith and Pile 1993:10). It was an assertion that there are different experiences of being in this world, ones which refuse to be muted.

The Skyrail dispute was an expression of a particular mobilisation of place and identity. At issue was the way in which people, constitute identity and difference in terms of place, that is, the tie between people and place, symbolically expressed, I have suggested, by the protester's physical attachment of herself to the tree (see Henry 1995). Such performances/spatial enunciations make their own statements, ones which attempt to escape the domination of the 'language game of science', and thus to give voice to other ways of being.

Although Skyrail protesters received some support from national and international environmentalist groups, and they drew upon what they thought of as a global environmental ethic to legitimate their claims, the campaign was essentially locally based and locally driven. The protesters' spatialized enunciations of their protest, their direct actions, were in fact statements of local resistance to what were perceived as globalizing structures of power, in particular the structures of power that support private development at the expense of communal values, and allow local heterogeneity to be stifled by the homogenizing forces of economic rationalism.

Although actual cultural differences may indeed be apparent in the responses of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to the Skyrail, my point is that to see political practices as the expression of cultural differences alone, is not only interpretively inadequate, but also operates to disenfranchise Aboriginal people by permitting them only to be cultural beings, and not political agents. It allows for strategic protest action on the part of Aboriginal people to be labelled unauthentic, thus effectively undermining any political force such action might have. Disputes such as the Skyrail are not expressions of given cultural differences. Rather they are situations in which discourses about such differences are contested and negotiated.

I developed my argument by highlighting a particular moment of protest within the Skyrail dispute. I argued that the Kuranda Skyrail dispute can best be understood as a performative production and articulation of sameness and difference, a play of identities. The Skyrail dispute produced moments of protest which allowed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents of the Kuranda area to resist categorical identities and attempt to resolve the contradictions that such identities pose in the context of relationships to place that are contestable only because they are in fact shared.

As evidenced by the protest scene described above, in the performance of protest, actors not only challenge sameness by asserting their differences, but also, by engaging their differences, they refashion sameness, that is, their idea of 'community'. Such spatial enunciations of protest are about the negotiation and articulation of difference in the context of a collective articulation and situated practice of the social. The links I have described between the Skyrail dispute and the Djabugay native title claim reveal that this articulation of sameness and difference is not merely a matter of cultural values. In their political engagement with one another, people contest and negotiate categorical identities that are structurally and historically produced.

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[1] See also Chow 1994:131 who argues that what 'Bhabha's word "hybridity" revives, in the masquerade of deconstruction, anti-imperialism, and " difficult" theory, is an old functionalist notion of what a dominant culture permits in the interest of maintaining its own equilibrium...'

[2] See for example Strang 1997.

[3] I am indebted to Bruce White for his *A chronology of  documents, letters, media, and events telling the story of how  it is that a Cairns-Kuranda cableway got to be constructed in a Djabugay cultural landscape*. Unpublished manuscript submitted to Mr George Menham, s10 Heritage Protection Reporter (General Manager, ATSIC) 1995.

[4] The Council was incorporated on 7 July 1992 and became the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation.

[5] In White 1995; transcribed by White from an interview he conducted, immediately following a visit to Kuranda by Mr George Menham, 17 May 1995. Damarri is an ancestral being. Guraminya and Gurabana are moiety names.

[6] The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Herutage Protection Act* 1984 requires that a report under section 10(4) deal with the 'particular significance of the area to Aboriginals'.

[7] Damarri is also called Bulurru.  Bulurru is how Djabugay refer to the Dreaming. Storywaters, or locations associated with the Dreaming as well as the ancestral beings associated with them are known as Bulurru.  Bulurru is considered to be 'the source and condition of all life and is ever-present in the land and people' (Quinn 1992:16). Some Djabugay people today think of Bulurru as 'our God', as distinct from the Christian God they were taught to worship in the mission.  Others think of Bulurru as simply the Djabugay name for the one and only God, also the Christian God, which they have anyway always worshipped.

[8] 'Act locally, think globally' is a slogan popularised by Rene Dubos.

[9] Another example is the Todd River Dam case in Central Australia; see Jacobs 1994.

[10] These comments were made during a workshop for Aboriginal people on development in Kuranda which I organised and facilitated with the aid of a grant from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1995.

# Chapter 8

# Planning Place: Resisting Bureaucratic Bondage

In this chapter I discuss the concepts of strategic planning and management of place and critically analyse the process as it operates in Kuranda, in order to further reveal place as an ongoing and dynamic ingredient in the politics of memory and of identity. Kuranda is today literally in the agonising throes of a 'modernist project' of urban and regional planning defined as 'the formulation, content and implementation of spatial policies' (Yiftachel 1995:216). I say 'agonising' because the planning project is the cause of much conflict among Kuranda residents and business people. The concept of strategic planning, which developed within corporations and bureaucratic organisations as a management tool, has infiltrated the daily lives of ordinary people in Kuranda. Planning is accepted as a joint problem-solving project between government and the public, a 'rational, professional activity, aimed at producing a "public good" of one kind or another' (Yiftachel 1995:216). There is little recognition that planning is also about creating dominant realities which operate to block out other realities. Planning is a process by which particular visions of place identity become concretized as factual and objective, as 'the only scientific logical solution towards attaining a reasonable allocation of scarce urban resources for the good of society' (Greed 1994:53).

As Greed (1994:53) comments, 'Computers, statistics and plans are useful tools in the process of legitimating one's world view'.

The planning process as it operates in Kuranda is an example of the contemporary phenomenon in Australia, and elsewhere, of governmental decentralisation and the devolution of administrative and decision-making processes. There has been within the bureaucratic order 'an apparent decline of hierarchical and corporatist forms of organisation and the emergence of new groupings and coalitions that deligitimise centralised political control and authority...' (Long 1996:39). This phenomenon finds its most obvious expression in Queensland in the education system where school budgets for example are now handed over to be administered by volunteers from the 'school community', that is, School Councils comprised of revamped Parents and Friends Associations. In the case of urban and regional planning, the idea is to involve members of the community in the planning process. This apparent devolution of power is very much compatible with an egalitarian ideology distinctive of Australian society and thus is able to mask inherent strategies of power. As Long (1996:39-40) notes we must not forget that so-called 'decentralized' patterns of government 'may often mask "top-down" measures aimed at reducing the administrative and financial burdens of central government'. I would go even further to suggest that such bureaucratic processes do not simply ease the financial burden of central government, but are actually a new form of disciplinary practice at work.

After all as Long (1996:40) himself points out, '... the very implementation of liberalization policies requires a framework of state regulation, resources and legitimacy, and the use of persuasive political rhetoric aimed at mobilizing people and enrolling them into this new type of strategic thinking' (Long 1996:40). This concern with disciplining the populace in general and of Aborigines in particular, is expressed in the recent national concern with the issue of 'accountability' in Aboriginal organisations. Martin & Finlayson (1996:1) list some of the instances of the prominence given to this issue as the 'ongoing debate about the accountability of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the investigations into various Aboriginal Legal Services, the appointment by the Federal Minister of a Special Auditor to oversee ATSIC grants to Indigenous organisations, and the review of the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act* 1976'.

There are people in Kuranda who, in spite of the rhetoric of community consultation and participation in planning, remain marginalized from the process, and there are others who have become increasingly disillusioned, although they initially participated very enthusiastically. Community planning is, I argue, another expression of a network of bureaucratic power which dominates the place-making activities of people and therefore acts to control and steer place memory in particular directions. Bureaucracy is revealed, not as something imposed from above by some sort of reified faceless 'big brother' state, but as being a taken for granted way that ordinary

people in Kuranda, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have begun to act in relation to place. My analysis of the planning process as it operates in Kuranda thus reveals the complicity of people in the bureaucratic order. However, community planning is also unveiled as a spatial practice which actually works to unravel the idea of sameness entailed in the notion of community. I argue that planning and, in particular, planning disputes, build relationship between memory and place. It is through their politically engaged *lived* bodies that people make place the container of memory. Edward Casey (1987:197) posed the question: 'How are we to account for the power of place-as-remembered?'. His answer is that places are empowered by both the inherent features of place itself in its landscape character: its variegation, its sustaining character, and its expressiveness, and by the *lived* bodies that occupy and animate them. He does not however adequately discuss the particular occupying and animating practices that define bodies as *lived.* My aim in this chapter, as in the thesis over all, is to expose those practices. The intimate relationship between memory and place is not given, but is made by the activities of social actors. It is made through such social practices as planning, and the political engagement of people with each other in the disputes that are 'gathered' by the process of planning.

**The Kuranda Village Planning Study.**

In 1992, after over a decade of rapid change due to the influx of new settlers into the area and the impact of a booming tourist industry (Kuranda has in

the order of 700,000 visitors per annum) the Mareeba Shire Council and the Queensland Government made an agreement in principle that additional funds could be raised through a rail and transport levy to deal with the problems of 'wear and tear and overloading of infrastructure caused by visitors to Kuranda' (Mareeba Shire Council, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 1). At the same time there was much concern among people who called Kuranda home about their apparent powerlessness in the face of development in the area and the dramatic changes effecting the natural environment and existing built fabric of the town (compare Figures 4 and 5). As I have revealed in previous chapters, there was a continuing state of conflict with the Mareeba Shire Council. As one Kuranda resident put it:

> ...the community was unified within itself against the enemy - the Council...because they were sort of the ruling body. But they live in Mareeba and Mareeba's whole *modus operandi*, whole style, is different to the Kuranda style, and just what should have been happening in this different environment wasn't being addressed from that different environment in Mareeba...They were talking about development, just encouraging as intense development as they could, and breaking the rules, I mean actually acting unlawfully. (i/v J6, 9 Nov. 1995)

A another resident explained:

> ...you had people like developers, land speculators, real estate agents [on the Shire Council]...and if you look around you will find that quite a lot of very good land historically was bought up by Councillors because they knew what was going on...So there was all that kind of stuff going on but it was also that Mareeba was so different to Kuranda...that was the cringe factor, you know. Like, Mareeba was the bad taste capital of North Queensland, and everything that they did just looked awful, and of course there was the whole thing with, you know, the hippies. It was just ideologically the two communities were just *so* different. (i/v G2, 7 Jan. 1997)

In response to this situation a residents and ratepayers organisation - the Kuranda Consultative Committee, later renamed Association for Regional Kuranda, or ARK[1], applied for and secured a grant from the Commonwealth Office of Local Government to carry out a 'visioning exercise' to agree upon an identity for Kuranda which all future developments there could take into account. It was with the bargaining power of this grant behind them, and the knowledge that there would soon be public money available through the levy, that the community organisation was able to negotiate extra funds from the Shire Council to employ a planning consultant, C&B Consultants Pty Ltd[2], to carry out a full planning study which would result in a Strategic Management Plan for Kuranda. There was a general distrust of the Shire Council with regard to how it would otherwise choose to spend the levy money. There had been various draft action plans and strategic plans formulated by the Shire Council for Kuranda in the past, but it was felt that there had not been adequate community consultation in the planning process. In fact, on 13 February 1990 the Kuranda Chamber of Commerce had passed a vote of no confidence in the Council. In a letter commenting on the second draft of the Council Action Plan for Kuranda (10 May 1990) the Chamber of Commerce referred to a landscaping project that had recently been completed in the town as follows:

> Obviously the meaning of the word "landscaping" is interpreted differently by the Council than by the Chamber and Kuranda residents. We refer to the recent unsuitable "landscaping" of the lower end of Therwine Street. It is understood this was designed by the MSC Engineer...The MSC refused to let COC or affected business view the plan. It commenced without warning 12 Feb. 1990...The COC vote of

> no confidence has been vindicated by this example since. ...The Chamber implores Council to abandon its covert stance on such plans, as this is the root cause of the difficulties that Council continues to experience both with this Chamber and the Kuranda community at large. ...It means we all have to try to live with inappropriate developments imposed by the MSC and unrepresentative of our needs. The MSC will continue to invite justified criticism if it continues on this course.

Kuranda people thus saw planning as a way of challenging the power of the Mareeba Shire Council. The agreement between the Shire Council and the State government regarding the tourist levy and the successful grant application by residents through the Kuranda Consultative Committee provided leverage to Kuranda people in their demands for greater involvement in the planning process. As a member of the Kuranda Consultative Committee put it:

> Well what we said, and we actually went to the Chamber [Kuranda Chamber of Commerce] on this and we found common ground, was that we totally distrusted Council. And so what we said to the Minister, and we actually had a meeting with him, we said, 'We don't want you to give the Council any [levy] money until there is a management plan in place. We want to see how that money is going to be spent and it has to be agreed to by both the business community and the general community as to how the money's to be spent. (i/v G2, 7 Jan. 1997)

A steering committee was thus formed in late 1992 to oversee the production of the 'Strategic Management Plan'. Initially the membership of this committee included: the Mareeba Shire Council, which contractually represented the Committee, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning, which chaired the Committee, the Department of Transport, the Department of Business Industry and Regional Development, the

Premiers Department, later named the Office of the Coordinator General, the Far North Queensland Promotion Bureau, the Kuranda Chamber of Commerce, representing business interests, and the Kuranda Consultative Committee, representing the general community of residents and ratepayers. Later the Department of Tourism Sport and Racing and the Queensland Treasury joined the Committee.

As can be seen from its membership, the Committee was very much dominated by government representation. The idea was, however, to accommodate community interest in the planning process as much as possible, and indeed it could not be otherwise, as there was a very active interest taken by residents in the project. The degree of community awareness and input into the study process was noted by the consultants as being 'extremely significant' (Mareeba Shire Council, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 2).

Two 'Vision Workshops' were held during 1993 in order to gauge the main concerns of Kuranda people or, as they are called in planning parlance, 'the major local stakeholders,'[3] about their place and their vision for its future. The first workshop was held at the local primary school (Saturday 29 May) and was attended by approximately 139 people, with however only two of these being Aboriginal. At the end of the day 86 of these people had committed themselves to joining eight different 'Working Groups'[4] to help the

consultants develop the Strategic Plan. This is a high level of public commitment given the relatively small overall population of the area.

The second 'Vision Workshop' was held specifically in order to cater for Aboriginal people. It was understood that Aboriginal people were too 'shy' to come to the large general community workshop even though they were invited and that a separate one should be held in a *place* in which they felt more comfortable and less threatened. The second workshop was therefore held at what is recognised in Kuranda as an Aboriginal place, Ngoonbi Farm owned by the Ngoonbi Aboriginal Corporation[5]. Seventy two people, mostly Aboriginal, attended.

The 'Kuranda Strategic Management Plan' study took seven months to complete and won the Queensland 1994 Royal Australian Institute of Planners Award for Excellence. It's broad aim was to 'provide an integrated strategy for the development and management of Kuranda' (Mareeba Shire Council 1995, Vol. 4, p. 2). Part of the planning consultant's brief was to prepare and document the principles upon which a new statutory development control plan (DCP) would be based[6]. C&B Consultants were then engaged to produce the actual *Development Control Plan 2 - Kuranda Village*, which was finally adopted by Council on 15 April 1997. The principle aim for this new DCP, was 'to manage the use and development of land within and adjacent to Village of Kuranda, such that its character and function

as a Village in the Rainforest is preserved and enhanced' (Mareeba Shire Council 1995b:5). This identity of their place as a 'Village in the Rainforest' had been emphasized by Kuranda people in the two vision workshops. As I mentioned in my Introduction, it is an identity that developed with the influx of new settlers to the area. Prior to their arrival, and their place making activities, Kuranda had never actually been called a 'village'. Their ongoing making of Kuranda into a cosmopolitan bohemian enclave, ironically involved a celebration of the notion of community and the valorization of the idea of the local, the small-scale, and the neighbourliness and homeliness inherent in the concept of the village. I say ironically because a cosmopolitan is thought to be a person of the world, a global identity. However just as the global is often defined in opposition to the local, but actually only finds its expression in the local, so also is a cosmopolitan identity dependant on the existence of home places and can itself only be found *in place*.

To complement the new Village DCP, a group of residents also began to meet voluntarily in December 1994 to formulate a DCP for the Kuranda environs. Some of the members of this group had already been involved in the Kuranda Vision Workshops in early 1993. The group which at each meeting averaged some twenty members, including developers, conservationists, land holders with potential to subdivide, and other interested residents, met every fortnight for over a year. All the hard work was recognized when the four people[7] who produced the final proposal document for a DCP for the

Kuranda Environs won an Award for Excellence from the Queensland division of the Royal Australian Planning Institute in 1995 in the category of 'Community Planning'.

Because of the extensive and intensive involvement of Kuranda residents in the planning process both the DCP's have been hailed as 'community owned' rather than imposed from the top down. However at a recent meeting, on the 20 August 1997, of the Association for Regional Kuranda it became apparent that disillusionment had set in among residents. When the Mayor for the Mareeba Shire announced his Council's plans to purchase land currently owned by the Queensland Railways at the Railway Station end of town, in order to construct a bus parking facility, there was intense negative reaction among the ARK membership. It was argued that Council decision to build the parking facility at that place went against the Kuranda Strategic Management Plan which had 'come out of this community'. The President of ARK argued that it was his understanding that the Council was supposed to work for the community, implementing the community's decisions, that the Council itself was 'not the decision maker'. The Mayor set him straight by countering that it was Council that made the decisions, 'following consultation' of course! This announcement came like a slap in the face to those people who had so actively contributed to the planning process, thinking that such involvement actually gave them some decision-making power. At that meeting were sown the seeds of suspicion that strategic

management planning might be a meaningless form of public consultation which insidiously operated to mask the actual powerlessness of local residents in the process.

**Planning Disputes, Village Promotion, and the Main Street**

The planning process continues in Kuranda today under the auspices of the Kuranda Village Promotion Program which is sponsored by the State Department of Tourism, Small Business & Industry through its 'Queensland Main Street Program'. This Program was a government initiative to enhance business performance within town centres by bringing together local government, business people and community representatives to formulate management plans comparable to the kinds of integrated management strategies under which large shopping centres operate. The Kuranda Village Promotion Program is funded by the Department to the tune of $20,000 per year for three years and is supplemented by the Mareeba Shire Council and the Benefited Area Rate contributed by Kuranda businesses. A community 'future vision' workshop was held in Kuranda under this Program. This resulted in the formation of new committees and working groups specifically focusing on Coondoo Street, the main street of Kuranda (Figures 2 & 6). Under this Program, and following the standard structure of any strategic plan, a vision statement, mission statement, goals and objectives, were formulated. Although the rationale of the state government's Main Street Program is to revitalise economically languishing town centres, the Program,

as it has taken shape in Kuranda, has become another means for local people to engage with each other in place making activities. The vision statement reads as follows:

> Kuranda the Village in the Rainforest
> Providing the world with a unique experience of environmental, artistic and cultural integrity to inspire and delight all. Environmental sustainability and goodwill focus our pursuit of a life in harmony with the environment whilst fostering personal integrity and creativity.

The statement clearly presents the local to the global, Kuranda to the outside world as an authentically *lived* place, not just a tourist product. Much of the tension and dispute over planning and development in Kuranda arises out of this tension between place and product. The many disputes in the community regarding various tourist development proposals and whether they were in conflict with the identity of Kuranda as also a home place for a local population, led to a recognition by Kuranda business people and residents that a united approach was needed to the formulation of a tourism policy. In order to address this, the Kuranda Village Promotions Program advertised for a consultant to formulate a tourism promotion plan. The consultancy was awarded to Le Page and Company and resulted in the Kuranda Village Promotion Plan. However it is apparent from a reading of the Plan that the concept of Kuranda as a commodity is dominant. Its identity as a home place is muted. In fact there is no distinction made between product and place. Kuranda is represented as a place-product that has to be not only 're-made', but also 'made real' for marketing. As a product it is perceived by the consultants, and also by some Kuranda people, to lack

authenticity. However, it is only products, that can lack authenticity, not places. It is I suggest as impossible for *lived* places, to be unauthentic, as it is for *lived* bodies.

Planning is yet another expression of the way identity is self-consciously practiced in Kuranda. Involvement in the planning process is a statement of intentionality. The practice of planning requires the ability to detach one's consciousness from one's own life activity. It entails the objectification of place and its rethinking as mere space. However, this process is generative of conflict. The process of mapping places into strategic management plans results in their transformation into portions of disembodied space (sites), which in turn, through their contestation, become places again. In philosophical terms what we find being played out in Kuranda is a war between space and place, mind and body. Place is constantly being translated into space; space in turn is forever being re-claimed as place.

**Reclaiming the Village: 'On the Buses'**

Kuranda residents had called for and had responded positively to the idea of planning because they saw it as a means of having some control over the impact of tourism and the too rapid transformation of their town. Some residents would have preferred that tourists stay away altogether! Others however were ambivalent towards the issue because they depended on the industry for their livelihood. They wanted, through the planning process, to be able to cater for the tourists while maintaining the integrity of the village as

their home place. This vision, of a village in the rainforest, entailed a commitment to protect that rainforest environment.

The concern over the negative impact of tourism, therefore, came to be centred not on the tourists themselves as visitors, but on the environmental impact of the large buses, or coaches, which had in increasing numbers been bringing them to the town (see Plate 27). The villain in the story was seen to be the transport industry in general, but particularly the private bus operators. However, the bus issue is not only a matter of local Kuranda residents against outsider bus companies, but has also over the past ten years or so been a focus for flaring conflict among various interest groups within the town. These protagonists are categorised broadly by locals as residents versus business people, although many of the business people are also residents and vice versa. Moreover, the buses have also been an issue of dispute among business people themselves, as I will show below.

In order to describe the dispute, or rather the series of disputes, focusing on the transport industry, I quote from a number of my interviews and from letters to the editor of various local newspapers. Many incidents were sparked by the fact that, in order to keep their buses cool, the drivers would keep their motors running while they were waiting for their passengers. As a resident, who was also a small business person, describes the situation:

> [There were a] huge amount [of incidents of conflict with bus drivers].
> I mean uncountable. If you got everybody in town together and

started, you take this [tape recorder] and recorded you'd record for two, three days as people told you stories where they pulled the keys out of the bus ignition or where they were insulted by a driver...*wars were going on.* (i/v G, 17 Feb. 1997; original emphasis)

The following are two incidents with the buses as recounted by the same Kuranda resident who was involved in each of them. The detail and narrative style of his accounts reflect the fact that he was called upon to represent himself in Court as a result of both incidents.

So I'm walking down the street one day and there's this bus running out in front of the markets...and as I walked up I saw the motor running, the driver sitting in the vehicle in the air conditioning reading his newspaper and having a cup of tea. So I knocked on the door. He opened the door and I asked if he would turn the motor off. And he refused and told me to fuck off and, you know...So then I walked away, and went up to the Post Office. Did what I had to do. I came back, it was like twenty minutes later...and he's *still* there; his motor's *still* running and he's *still* reading the paper. And I went, 'Well fuck this', you know, and I knocked on the door and said, '*Would you turn this damn thing off! You've been twenty minutes here. What, to cool your butt?...You've got another hour and a half before these people are going to be back!'*. You know. Anyway he just shut the door in my face. So I walked back up to town, where I got myself a good marker pen with a real thick nib, and I walked back again and on the back of the bus I wrote, 'This is an unreasonable bus driver. He will not listen to logic. He will keep this motor running to cool his butt, at the same time polluting the atmosphere of the rainforest'. So that was the arse end of the bus, and then I went and did the side of the bus and then I did the front of the bus...And he couldn't see me...And so I went down to Court and I pleaded not guilty. It was 'Wilful Damage'. Ok, so I pleaded not guilty and defended myself. I'm real good on the floor. I'm not real good at the law. So I looked it all up and I figured I had this beat and my defence was provocation. I was provoked. I'd been provoked for years and this was like *it*, you know. So I started my defence that way and the prosecutor said... 'Provocation is not a defence under the law for Wilful Damage', and I went, 'You're kidding me!'...So he [the magistrate] found me guilty and instead of the $2,860 worth of damages, as I demonstrated that with eucalyptus oil we could take this stuff off, they didn't really have to repaint the whole bus,...he said, 'Yeah, you're right $100 damages, three months to pay, no recording of a conviction'...But I was put at the same time on a one year's good behaviour bond. (i/v G, 17 Feb. 1997; original emphasis)

The second incident, I was walking along the sidewalk by the butterfly farm and there was a small coaster bus, like twenty one, twenty four passenger. Looked around for the bus driver; could not see him anywhere. There were old people there who were obviously the group...as I walked by the bus, by the back sliding door I just flicked the handle in and it wasn't locked and I went 'Aw beauty!'. So I slid the door open. I walked in up to the front, reached over the seat, turned the key off. Walked out of the bus, closed the door, and because that same group of people were like there, like sort of walking the sidewalk, I just went around the bus then out on the street to continue to the market...I got about halfway down the bus...I turn around, and here comes the bus driver charging down, a big guy...and so he came like this at me you know. I just went *boomp*, just pushed him against the side of the bus, you know, not hard, just enough for his force to move him against the side of the bus...So then he opens the door, the driver's door, as if to like bang me with the door, you know, gets into the bus, turns the motor on *again!* And I said, put my hand on his arm and said, *'Eh! At least wait until they get into the bus!'* and he turned like this and went *boompf* and kicked me away...I had a hold of his arm and as I pulled like that, he had a hold of the key and the key was in the ignition and so it ripped the, that little wire thing off the key. I ended up with the tag, he ended up with the wire, and the key was still in the bus running. I tossed the tag back in the bus and just walked away. So he went down and filed charges of 'Assault' and 'Tampering with a Vehicle', and so we went to Court and I lost [laughs]...But I got the minimum fine too so that was all right, something like eighty bucks for tampering with the vehicle, three hundred for assault, and then one hundred and ten in court costs, so four hundred and ninety all up. (i/v G, 17 Feb 1997; original emphasis)

That this Kuranda resident was not alone in his battle against the buses is evidenced by the fact that he received about twenty donations of between five and fifty dollars each, from sympathetic people who had read of his fine in the *Cairns Post* and/or had heard of it through the Kuranda grapevine. Other residents of the Kuranda area have taken less direct action and have confined their protest measures to verbal complaints, and letters to the Council and/or

to the local newspapers.  For example, R.F. Taylor in a letter to the *Cairns Post* (22 July 1996, p. 9) wrote:

> I'm "outing" a bus for flouting the law, and I have witnesses.  The full-sized bus arrived outside Kuranda Markets at 11:25am on 11-7-96, disgorging its cargo of Japanese tourists.  Leaving the engine running, the bus driver struck up a conversation with another eating an icecream further along the pavement.  It is illegal to keep the motor going while the driver is not in attendance.  Copious diesel fumes pumped out for the next half-hour over hundreds of tourists walking in both directions.  Apart from the noise, we were gasping for clean air and feeling sick to the stomach 50m away. The driver was approached, but he said he was keeping it going for the air-conditioned comfort of his passengers.  Pedestrians were not is concern.

It is clear from an examination of the minutes of meetings of the Kuranda Chamber of Commerce[8] that the issue of the buses, and traffic management in general, has dominated debate in Kuranda with regard to the planning of the village for at least the past seventeen years.  Policy motions passed at the meetings of the Chamber include several against the buses having their motors running while empty (see Minutes of Meetings, 1 October, 1990; 7 January 1991) as well as motions against the buses using the main street (4 November 1991).

The Kuranda Strategic Management Plan process included the formulation of a Transport Management Plan to deal with the regulation of traffic, but specifically with the issue of tourist coach circulation in the village[9].  It is not within the scope of my thesis to go into an analysis of the details of all the various options for traffic flow considered during the planning process. Suffice to say that a staged approach was eventually adopted that would lead

to limiting the access of buses to the main street and provide a parking facility

for them outside the village centre. This plan, which was linked to the vision

of enhancing the village atmosphere of Kuranda through the

pedestrianisation of the main street, led to intense conflict among villagers

and between villagers and representatives of the transport industry. A

number of village business people feared that their businesses would suffer if

buses were prohibited from driving up the main street. In particular, those

businesses at the top end of the town, felt that tourists who arrived by train

and Skyrail at the bottom end of town, required bus transport from the station

up the hill to the top end where their businesses are located. The following

extracts from letters to the editor of the *Cairns Post* express the terms of the

debate:

> ...the proposed cessation in 1998 of buses picking up customers from the train and Skyrail to transport them up the hill. This decision was made by a committee which partly consisted of ARK and the Chamber. Who gives these two or three people the right to make such a fundamentally fatally flawed economic decision on behalf of the 1000 or so people who are directly or indirectly employed through Kuranda businesses? Do they realise that the bus and

associated tour companies put 60-80 per cent of the tourists on the train and Skyrail? If the buses stop coming to Kuranda: More than $1 million of Kuranda promotion annually will cease (this is the amount currently spent by the bus operators); It is predicted that the amount of people venturing to the top end of town will plummet by 60-70 per cent...(20 June 1996, p. 20)

As an elderly resident and former business proprietor of Kuranda I am amazed at the damaging misinformation being circulated by business operators and bus companies. The supposed steep hill from the station precinct is in fact a moderate incline taking you past the interesting Bottom Pub with views of the Barron River, then along a lush and well treed walkway with a sighting of the quaint old wooden lock-up, and immediate arrival at the first of the Kuranda shops, with seats and refreshments. This is a leisurely four-minute stroll. Here is another fact - people in buses do not spend money, people walking do. One of the aims of the strategic management plan is to improve walking access, and shade and seat the visitors. We already have an unusually compact village with the majority of attractions no further than a 10 minute walk in any direction...I wonder how many of the pro-bus business operators will spend their next holidays in a noxious, fume-laden, bus-choked village similar to the one they would continue to foist on us - yes Kuranda. (20 June 1996, p.20)

People with businesses located at the top end of the town wanted the traffic plan changed so as to allow for some bus movement directly from the Railway and Skyrail stations to the top end. One of their concerns was that if people walked from the stations they would spend all their money at the bottom end of town, before they even reached the top end. Business people thus became polarized, top-enders against the bottom-enders.

The rejection of a development proposal for an 'edu-tainment' centre, also referred to as the 'Kuranda Heritage Park', at the top end of the town sparked renewed conflict in the village over the buses. It also brought the Strategic Management Plan and its resulting Development Control Plan directly into

dispute.  People with businesses at the top end of the town formed a new association, the Kuranda Tourist Association.  As well as the owners of both markets, united for once, membership of the new association included owners and some employees of Birdworld, the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary, Kuranda Inn Crafts, some market stall holders and MIEPP Pty Ltd, the company formed to build the educational entertainment centre.  The dispute reached such intensity that even the Mayor of the Mareeba Shire was driven to respond to the press that 'opportunists are waging a fear campaign in Kuranda to undermine the town's strategic management plan for their own ends'.  He named the Kuranda Tourism Association as being involved[10].

The developers of the edu-tainment centre argued that the initiative was a response to the move of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre to Cairns and the increasing number of theme park attractions in the Cairns area which were now competing with Kuranda as a tourist destination.  They argued that a competitive theme park destination was therefore required in Kuranda.  The proposal was objected to by both the Association for Regional Kuranda and the Kuranda Chamber of Commerce.  Most members were against the development because they objected to a large area of the town being fenced off and given over to tourists as a theme park.  The president of ARK addressed a Mareeba Shire Council meeting on 4 April 1996.  Significantly, the Strategic Management Plan and Development Control Plan were used throughout his address to legitimate ARK's objection to the project.  Quoting

directly from the DCP, the President detailed how the project conflicted with the Plan. In other words

here was a testing ground for the effectiveness of the Plan. That the company subsequently withdrew its application to build the Park was in fact hailed by many village people as a victory for the Plan and a vindication of all the time and effort they had put into the planning process.

The traffic plan part of the Kuranda Strategic Management Plan however continued to be a hot topic of dispute in the village. People argued that the situation had changed in Kuranda in the two years since the community strategic planning exercise had been undertaken and that a plan had to be flexible enough to allow for such change. The Mareeba Shire Council had commissioned a consulting firm, Connell Wagner, in October 1996 to do an updated traffic study, taking into account the impact of the Skyrail which had now been operating for two years. The report concluded that 'bus and coach use of the upgraded Coondoo Street would not be desirable' (1997:31). However, the Far North Queensland Tour Operators Association and local business people continued to lobby for changes to the plan. The President of the Kuranda Tourist Association in denying that the Association was running a fear campaign on the bus issue argued that the Kuranda Strategic Management Plan had a 'fundamental and fatal flaw' in its restrictive ban on buses through the main street (*Cairns Post* 29 June 1996, p. 3; *Tablelands Advertiser* 3 July 1996, p. 9). Similarly, tourist operators addressing a Mareeba

Shire Council meeting warned that the Plan was 'suicidal'(*Cairns Post* 6 July 1996, p. 5). It was not planning as an exercise that was criticised but the Plan itself.

The following extract from an address of the President for the Association of Regional Kuranda to the Council about the edu-tainment park project however reveals that objection to development in the village is not solely based on the technicalities of town planning and traffic control but on a deeper vision of the village as a home place, as *lived* rather than simply performed for tourists:

> ...locals find this concept of a 'Kuranda' theme park (inside a fence inside their town) demeaning and insulting. It undermines the integrity of the village, ...The scale is inappropriate and will 'swamp' the town, it does not complement the 'village in the rainforest' - being more like a 'Dreamworld' GOLD COAST type development...The project also seeks to create an 'imitation' Kuranda inside a fence with admission price around $25. This means that the residents will be cut off from the project - can't enter without paying.

The argument was that an artificial tourist destination should not be created as Kuranda itself, as a 'real' lived place, was the destination. The debate was phrased in terms of authenticity, the value of the real over the simulacrum, as well as nature over a culture of rank commercial greed, as the following extracts from various letter to the editor of the local papers indicate:

> Putting a fence around a large portion of our town and charging $25 admission reeks of greed and shows a non-caring attitude in regard to Kuranda...Greed has obviously replaced green, and thought is only good if it is bought (*Cairns Post* 16 April 1996, p. 9).

> Somewhere along the line tourists will realise that butterflies exist outside of sanctuaries, rainforest may be experienced without a cover charge and T-shirts may be bought anywhere in Australia (*Cairns Post* 16 April 1996, p. 9)

> The "edu-tainment centre" is in reality a real estate deal.  And that's the greatest failing of the tourism industry in Kuranda -increasingly it has nothing to do with tourism.  It's all about real estate speculation and property development.   As far as locals like me are concerned, Kuranda does not have an image problem.  It has an integrity problem.  And we're sick of being tainted by greedy "conpeople" who treat tourists as wallets on legs (*Cairns Post*  22 April 1996, p. 9)

> Let's forget greed and go back to nature.  After all that's what visitors come up here to see (*Cairns Post*  20 June 1996, p. 9)

> We need no new attraction to replace the Tjapukai Theatre, ...People now have more time to explore the village which is the attraction...But our village will suffocate from rampant commercialism if we are not able to work collaboratively to develop it and promote it as a whole (*Cairns Post* 22 July 1996, p. 9)

As the above comments reveal, there is an increasing tension in the village as to whose place it really is.  Villagers are reacting against the town being taken and made over solely as a commodity for tourists.  Involvement in the town planning process became one way of reclaiming the village as their home place.   I suggest that underlying all the various disputes in the village regarding planning and development can be found this need for identity in place.  Disputes over planning and development are in themselves place making phenomena.  Place is made in and through place conflict.

As well as the transport issues, place conflict in Kuranda has erupted many times over the particular design and materials used in buildings, and also over the siting of public buildings.  Cases in point are the library and what is known by locals as 'The Ark'.  Kuranda residents have been lobbying the Shire Council for a library for many years.  Various committees have worked

on different plans regarding where in the village the library building should be located.  In April 1994, in anticipation of funding being available at last through the Council, another library working party was formed at a public meeting called by the Association for Regional Kuranda.  This working group, with the voluntary assistance of a local architect produced a concept plan based on a site next to the Kuranda Amphitheatre (Figure 2).  The idea was to encompass the library within a larger complex which would include a community centre with a stage, meeting rooms, and the Kuranda branch office of the Shire Council.  The architectural design was released for public perusal and consultation.  People appeared to be quite happy with the building design itself.  What generated intense public debate was the site of the complex.  Some residents considered that the library should be located in the village centre rather than near the amphitheatre.  They called a public meeting on 28 January 1995 to discuss the issue.  I was present at this meeting at which yet another working party was formed to consider possible alternative sites for the library.  As they left the meeting a group of people chanted in unison, 'Reclaim the village! Reclaim the village!'  As a means of presenting the two sides of the dispute, I quote from a letter[11]  written by a Kuranda resident in reply to observations delivered at the meeting by a member of the Library Working Party:

> The work done by your group is very impressive and I would be in full support for it except for your assertion that: "Although the aim to reclaim the village may be desirable it is not very practical.  The town has sold out to commercialism and bears almost no resemblance to the Kuranda village we all loved".

> Even though the village has been over commercialised, we have just invested an incredible amount of time to find a vision for it! The village still functions with it's Post Office, Bank, News Agency, Chemist, etc. and remains the main focus of the community at large. If we want the future library to be used by everyone, and to become an integral part of community life, it should be built as close as possible to the other services which are grouped in the village, and which make the village a village, even though one which is over commercialised.

It is clear that the dispute regarding the library site, was another expression of the resentment that had been building up among Kuranda residents against what they saw as the invasion and transformation of their place by the tourist industry. Although it was phrased in those terms, I suggest, however, that the argument to have the library in the village centre was not really an attempt to reclaim the past, but to build a future. The village concept in Kuranda today is a cosmopolitan product. 'Reclaim the village' thus is a call not to reclaim the past, but for Kuranda to be recognised as a lived place, owned by a local community, and not simply as a tourist product.

The village concept itself has, in fact, given rise to some debate in Kuranda and this is reflected in the built fabric of the place. The main street for example sports an odd mixture of what people refer to as 'heritage style' buildings, if not entirely built of wood, at least with wooden facades and verandahs painted in what are classed as 'heritage' colours, and arty new buildings painted in bright 'modern' colours. Clearly, for some people the idea of a village evokes the past and they equate the enhancement of the village atmosphere of Kuranda with the preservation and reconstruction of what they call 'heritage' style buildings. There has of course been much

concern about the demolition over the past twenty years of old buildings to give way to new shopping complexes, and the replacement of timber and corrugated iron with concrete block. However, for many other people it is not this heritage aspect of Kuranda that is evoked when they talk about Kuranda as a village. Nor is their image necessarily one of an intimate little country town. Rather, the kind of village they envisage comes closer in style to such inner city villages as Greenwich village in New York with art galleries, coffee shops, and the like. Their image is one of a compact place, intimate in structure and scale and distinctive in terms of the artistic creativity of its built fabric, its local identity marked by its separation from the outside world by a surrounding rainforest.

The Kuranda Strategic Management Plan emphasises the importance of maintaining and enhancing the 'green belt' around the village and the 'green tunnel' of overarching trees through which one must travel in order to arrive in the village heart. Historically however, Kuranda and the countryside surrounding it had been cleared extensively. The town was mainly residential with a few services. The town was not particularly compact, nor did it have a dramatically identifiable centre. Over the years secondary growth, mainly what is commonly called 'black wattle', established itself on the cleared country, and the sale of much of the surrounding farm land to new settlers meant that such regrowth was valued and encouraged.

The village concept, as it finds its expression in Kuranda, is revealed in the response of some residents to a proposal to construct a tourist shopping complex on the main street, in the shape of a ship. There was much opposition to the proposal, dubbed 'the Ark' (Plate 28). However, the building was given approval by Council and this was supported by a local resident who came to Kuranda as a new settler during the seventies, and is key player in village politics[12]. The reason she gave for her support is telling. In a letter to the Mareeba Shire Council (7 Nov. 1996) she wrote:

> I am convinced that the project should be supported. It deserves to have it's spirit of innovation recognised...Our desire was that Council recognise that Kuranda is not a 'Heritage village' as such where conformity is the norm...Our recommendation was that Council recognise Kuranda as a village not of the past but rather of the future. We wish not to be fusty but rather vibrant and creative. I believe this project is that hard-to-define thing - a real 'Kuranda' development, it is quirky but makes sense in its own way[13].

After the Ark itself as a building was approved, however, an application was put to Council for it to house an indoor pistol and rifle range. The Council received eleven written objections to the application and there was a public demonstration against it, but the application was approved anyway. The eleven objectors appealed to the Planning and Environment Court[14] and a petition against the rifle range attracted over 500 signatures. Again it was the Village Development Control Plan which was being tested. A circular distributed to residents requesting support for the legal battle states:

> The truth is we simply cannot afford to lose. This appalling decision...if allowed to proceed will open the floodgates once and for all. We must defend our town Development Control Plan as it is our only defence in what will undoubtedly be a long fight to retain our rights as residents. If we win this fight it will send a strong and lasting message to Council

and unscrupulous speculators that we haven't given up our rights and won't!

However, the Development Control Plan and other plans, including the Mareeba Shire Strategic Plan, in fact, worked against the interests of the objectors to the development. The appeal relied upon contentions that the

Shire Council's approval of the Ark was contrary to the objectives of these Plans, and as Mr Justice Daly said in his judgement, 'it is, of course, the maps, plans, and words of the planning documents themselves upon which this court and, indeed, the local government and public must concentrate...' (1998:5). The judge found that there was 'no conflict with the planning documents as framed'.

I cite this case not to point out the inadequacies of the plans themselves, as documents, but in order to demonstrate how the fact of planning, as a process, operates as a disciplinary measure which directs the expression of resistance into a form that can be bureaucratically controlled.

Court cases such as this, and the ones concerning the individual against the buses, demonstrate that people in Kuranda are extremely self-conscious about their practices of identity. There is recognition by Kuranda people that they

are indeed making place. Such self-consciousness is evidenced for example by a set of ceramic tiles laid at the entrance to a walk through a patch of rainforest in the village. The walk was built as a tourist attraction under a government work program by a group of young Kuranda people, mainly Aboriginal. A local potter, one of the new settlers, supervised the project. The tiles are inscribed with graffiti-style signatures of the path builders. One tile orders visitors not to litter and then tells them to 'piss off' if they did not appreciate 'a custodial attitude to this place'. However, although such resistances are self-consciously practiced, there is little awareness of the bureaucratic strategies of power by which they are contained.

**Strategic Planning and Aboriginal Associations**

The discourse of strategic planning and management has also penetrated Aboriginal organisations in Kuranda. Aboriginal people are increasingly drawn into planning as a means of achieving bureaucratic recognition and access to government grants and other resources. For example, as a strategy for achieving government recognition of their Native Title to the Barron Falls National Park, the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation, engaged consultants to help them prepare a land use and management strategy for the Park (see Johnston & Claffey 1997). The production of the strategy was dependent upon the active participation, input and direction of many Djabugay people, including the Djabugay Community Rangers, Djabugay Elders, and the Djabugay Native Title Reference Group. As well as a number

of preliminary meetings, the consultation process included five separate family group meetings culminating in a large two day community workshop.

The first Aboriginal organizations in the Kuranda area were formed as housing associations in response to the extremely poor and overcrowded living conditions of ex-Mona Mona mission people. Later their interests expanded to encompass other issues such as general welfare issues, such as employment, health, alcoholism, youth suicide, and land rights issues.

The dynamics of membership of these organizations and their relationship with one another says much about the tensions among various Aboriginal identities in the area, Djabugay as opposed to non-Djabugay, and various long term intra-family disputes. The positions on the executive committee of Mona Mona Aboriginal Corporation for example was restricted to members who are residents of Mona Mona, an issue of much contention among the wider membership who, although they do not reside at Mona Mona, maintain strong links with, and interest in, the ex-mission site[15]. Similarly, as mentioned in Chapter 7, the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Association was only incorporated under the condition that clause 9(1)(b) which restricted membership of the executive committee to those of Djabugay descent, and able to prove such descendency, was deleted. DTAC unofficially however continues to operate according to this restriction. The right of Djabugay people to have their own tribal corporation is widely recognised, including among historical people, as a legitimate one, whatever the rules say.

Ngoonbi Cooperative Housing Society Ltd, on the other hand, is recognised as encompassing and representing the interests of all Aboriginal people resident in the Kuranda area, that is both Djabugay and non-Djabugay. In fact, during my fieldwork, I was advised by an executive member of DTAC to write to Ngoonbi, as the most far reaching organisation, with regard to consultation over issues that encompassed the wider Aboriginal population.

Ngoonbi Housing Society was formed and incorporated in the mid-1970s under the *Co-operatives and Other Societies Act* 1967 (Qld), in response to the terrible housing circumstances of Aboriginal people in the Kuranda area. Most people lived in very poor and overcrowded conditions. Their houses were the old mission houses which had been trucked to their new positions along the Barron River and into Kuranda.[16] There was no electricity or running water. People who had these facilities on the mission were now forced to carry water from, and bathe in, the river. Most households relied on candles and kerosene lamps for lighting and wood fuel for cooking and keeping warm on the cold foggy nights that are typical of the Kuranda area during the winter months.

Ngoonbi was formed to address this situation. However, it soon became the focal organisation for contact by outsiders, both government and non-government agencies, with Aboriginal people in Kuranda. Access to social

security benefits were handled through the organisation as well as various recreational, educational and employment programs. The Corporation owns a building on the main street of Kuranda which houses its office and the Jilli Binna museum which in its hey day served as a focus for the cultural revival movement. The museum has suffered through lack of maintenance funds and the museum shop was forced to close due to competition from other businesses in the town, including the Tjapukai Dance Theatre, and the flooding of the market with Aboriginal artefacts made elsewhere especially for the tourist industry. Apart from the office building, and a number of houses for which it collects rents from Aboriginal people, and recently also from a number of local non-Aboriginal business people who have transformed one of the original Ngoonbi residential properties in the main street into shops, Ngoonbi owns a farm on the edge of the town with a manager's residence and a large shed which is used for recreational purposes and also for workshops and meetings and CDEP programs such as screen printing, artefact making and painting, as well as occupational therapy programs for the elderly.

Ngoonbi however was never able to keep abreast of the housing requirements in Kuranda and two other housing corporations were formed to service the more localised needs of people who lived in the settlements along the Barron River, the Mantaka Shanty Association and the Kowrowa Community Association. The following is a detailed account of the origin of the Mantaka

Shanty Association. I include it here, not just as a case study example of the history of an Aboriginal organisation, but also as an analysis of the social situation which spawns such associations and engenders their proliferation. Such proliferation, I argue, is not only a reflection of the inability of these organisations to be representative in the context of the 'Aboriginal domain' (see Martin & Finlayson 1996:4-8)[17]. The proliferation of Aboriginal organisations is, I suggest, also related to the wider phenomenon of governmental devolution and thus to general strategies of disciplinary power, as well as to the particular material conditions of Aboriginal people's lives.

**Aboriginal Resistance: A Protest Against State Housing Plans**

The Mantaka Shanty Association was conceived in poverty and dispossession and born out of resistance. As discussed in Chapter 2, after the close of the mission in 1962, Aboriginal people were given housing lots to lease along the Barron river at Kowrowa, Koah and Mantaka, either as independent leaseholders or as sublessees of the Seventh Day Adventist Church which had leased a large block at Top Kowrowa for the purpose of Aboriginal re-settlement.

However, today none of the original blocks allocated to Mona Mona people are still leased by them on an individual or family basis. All the old mission houses in the Kuranda area, have been replaced with new houses built by the Department which people now rent. It is a mystery to many of the original

leaseholders as to how they lost their leases and became dependents of the Department. How was it that, within twenty years of the closure of the mission, their status as independent leaseholders was erased, and they had become, once again, clients of the State welfare bureaucracy?

In 1975, the Seventh Day Adventist Church applied to the government to have their leasehold block at top Kowrowa[18] converted to freehold and transferred to the Ngoonbi Cooperative Housing Society. The Application was denied and the Church informed that 'it would not be in the best public interest to allow conversion of the lease to freehold tenure in view of the developments proposed by the Department of Aboriginal and

Islanders Advancement (DAIA)[19]. The Church thereupon surrendered the lease to the Lands Department. This incident marks the beginning of what was to be an eventual government takeover of all the original Aboriginal leases.

In 1979, people were asked to surrender their individual leases to the Lands Department, and the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs was made trustee of the land. People were convinced to give up their leases by the promise that their rates arrears would be paid by the DAIA and they would not have to pay rates any more. The actual signing over of the leases occurred at a meeting in the Church Hall. Some people today remember it as having been the Pastor who had 'got everyone to sign back their leases' (pers.

comm. R, 9 Jan. 1996). There is bitterness about this as people believe that they were 'tricked' and that the Pastor did not properly explain what it meant to sign 'that piece of paper'. Some people claim they were reluctant to sign and were unaware exactly of the implications of their signature. Whether this is the case or not, and whether they were aware of it or not, with the surrender of their leases they had become once again landless and total dependents of the State welfare bureaucracy. Forfeiture of the leases was gazetted in January and April 1980 (Qld Govt. Gazette, No. 5, 19 Jan. 1980, p. 119; Qld Govt. Gazette, No. 66, 5 April 1980, p. 1173) and the leases were declared Aboriginal reserves under the control of the DAIA[20].

The DAIA was responsible for providing adequate housing for Aboriginal people. According to Andrews (1982:1), 'it was not until 1981, when rumours started to the effect that housing would be built and people moved to it from their ex-leasehold blocks, that people discovered that they no longer legally owned their land and houses'. In response to these rumours, the Department called a meeting in January 1982 at the Seventh Day Adventist Hall in which people were promised that they would not be moved and that they would be consulted regarding the plans of any new houses that the Department planned to build for them. It was not however until after an article was published in the *Cairns Post* (8 July 1982) and the builder was already contracted, that they became aware of what proved to already be a *fait accompli*. The DAIA had decided to begin its building program by

constructing several blocks of single story units at Top Kowrowa. This further fuelled people's fears that they would be removed from their blocks at Mantaka and Koah and Bottom Kowrowa and herded in together with the people at Top Kowrowa. Aboriginal people therefore mobilised to protest against their treatment by the DAIA. They were assisted in their struggle by a number of non-Aboriginal people genuinely sympathetic to their cause for humanitarian reasons, as well as by self-interested settlers who were fearful that the construction program would result in an Aboriginal 'ghetto' on their doorstep and/or who were against the clearing of the land that went with the development. I have selected the following quotations from recordings of the protest meetings held on 19 and 21 July 1982, as representative of the different views of the non-Aboriginal protesters:

> They invested a lot of money levelling out this beautiful countryside...so we have to get somebody responsible up here to stop all this destruction what's going on...As a resident of Kuranda I hope to live here for many years and I hope to live here peacefully and happily in this community and I'd like to say that for the last two years that...I *have* been living here happily and peacefully. It seems to me that black people, white people have lived together with one another happily and peacefully...Now things can continue to be peaceful if the Abos are allowed to live like they are living... They are spaced out in other words. They are not concentrated like rats...If we do get concentration camps going on here...well what I anticipate is simply this: there will be more incidents like we see down in Cairns and Yarrabah. People will be consuming more liquor. There will be more stabbings. There will be more murders. Kuranda is not going to be what it used to be. So for the sake of the black people, and for the sake of the white people, I hope this bloody nonsense over here will be taken care of swiftly.

> ...these people were promised homes, not units...No one was notified, no one heard any more from the DAIA until we saw it in the paper the other day, and that's what these people are extremely angry about.

> Not only are they not getting homes, they're not getting homes that are suitable for their style of living. They're just bloody units! That's a slum of the 1990s. That's a ghetto. That's Soweto in South Africa...They talk about refugees from oversees, and we got genuine Australian refugees in our own country, being refugeed from here, and refugeed from there and they're put in not much better than an encampment, another settlement, and I think, I agree with these people. It's just not on. They've been cheated and lied to and they can't take much more of it. It's just ridiculous.

The builder contracted to build the units was sympathetic with Aboriginal people's concerns and attended the meeting on 21 July 1982 to explain the plans to them. After seeing the plans one of the main concerns of some people was that they would be moved from the places in which they had been settled since the mission closed. Particular families had, after twenty years, developed close attachments and identifications with the separate settlements at Mantaka, Top Kowrowa, Bottom Kowrowa, Koah and Kuranda and each of the settlements had developed its own identity. The residents of Mantaka for example are adamant that they are a 'dry community' and distinguish themselves as a community from the others in that they do not welcome alcohol consumption there. Here are some of the responses of Aboriginal people to the plans as recorded at the meeting of 21 July 1982[21]:

> Woman: ...it could be a catch for Mantaka and Bottom Kowrowa and Koah to be moved. As far as I'm concerned I don't trust DAIA one bit...They can move us, put all the damn houses up here, like a mob of cattle...but they got another thing comin'...As far as I'm concerned, I think they trying to get us all away from Mantaka so they can sell Mantaka off because that's good land there.

> Man: I left Mona Mona mission when I was five years old, and I was sad to leave it, most of you knew that. I think all of youse probably be sad, you loved it. But I'm talking for Bottom Kowrowa. I think most

of youse like where you stayin' now. See the government about buildin' houses right there where you stand, new houses. I mean most of you don't wanna leave there. Like Rhonda was saying, she don't wanna move from Mantaka, because the government probably want it for real estate or something like that. But I'd like to say something on behalf of my people here.

A key concern of people was the architectural plans themselves. As the comments quoted below evidence, people were angry that DAIA was building units and not separate houses. Their dream, which I stress is in fact well accepted as 'the great *Australian* dream', and not peculiar to them, was to own their own house on a quarter of an acre block. Not only that, they wanted the traditional Queenslander style wooden house on high stumps.

Woman: We don't like that...We want this to be separate, quarter of an acre...It's all shut in!

Woman: If they cannot allow black people to live in places like Cairns and Mareeba in home units, then why put them put here. They should be having decent homes, a decent fence, not homes built by walls.

Man: They too close. That fella there he gonna know all these fella's business eh?

Man: This like a bullock yard, living in a yard. They must think we bullocks.

Woman: Or like a prison camp.

Man: They more [suitable] homes for people that come and go, but these people here they're not coming and going. They're coming and staying!

Woman: They can't put us on high block house?...It's all muddy when it's wet, mucky.

Man: ...They told us they gonna build high blocks, but it's not. And the families who going to live in there will be squabbling all around. Let's say drunks come home, waking up the children from their sleep,

maybe one of you. If someone get sick over there in one house, it'll spread like wildfire.

Woman: ...You don't like to hear the next door neighbours having their own row. And coming from my heart, I'm sure a lot of you people don't want to live near our people who drink. There's a lot of our people who like to live on their own without any disturbance of drunkards. Now isn't that true? We love our people, but we like to live peaceably.

There was much resentment against the treatment that Aboriginal people had suffered and continued to suffer. People focused on the government, and in particular the DAIA, as the villains in the piece. Some people also tentatively wondered how big a part the missionaries had played in their oppression. They spoke about their lives at Mona Mona, partly with nostalgic fondness, partly with anger at their unjust treatment on the mission. In particular the issue was raised regarding what happened to their savings which were kept in trust accounts for them. This is a concern that has been mentioned independently to me on a number of occasions in the course of my research. As discussed in Chapter 2, under the *Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act* 1939-1946, the Department of Native Affairs was empowered to deduct a percentage of the wages earned by Aboriginal people to be held in trust in Commonwealth Savings Bank accounts. As the Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (n.d.:24-25) in a damning submission presented to the Select Committee appointed to examine the Act, noted:

The whole concept of the Trust Fund as normal savings account is quite obviously misleading...how would the average citizen react to the bank's holding an account for him without allowing him a pass-book,

without issuing him with regular statements, without even providing him with any record that he's ever paid anything at all into the account? ...At no time have they been issued with pass-books...

There are Aboriginal elders today in Kuranda who still wonder what happened to their savings. As one man who had worked all his adult life in the mission sawmill and received wages said at the protest meeting:

> ...I always think this when we come out of the mission, we come out with nothing. The only receipt we get out when we working there was only a tithe receipt, and where the receipt that we got from bankin' in, we get nothin'. Now that's under cover...I came out mission just only with the house that we bought, no receipt from the house, no receipt from the bank that we put in. We came out penniless, only just with the house. So where that money go?

After someone at the meeting called for people to forget about the past and concentrate on the current housing issue and on fighting for the future a woman responded that they needed to remember the past in order to be able to fight now. As she put it:

> We all gotta stand for the same thing, and that thing is: Don't let a white person put it over us. Don't say yes and say no. Don't forget about the past, because the past is right just stickin' up again! It's gonna be here again! It's gonna be like another reserve, another mission! Now we wanna wipe that right out. We wanna be free!...Don't listen to what white people say...I never like a white person telling me what to do and I want youse to be like that too, because you gonna be living the same life like at Mona Mona, and nobody's gonna tell me you won't because that's gonna be another reserve...So stand up and fight for your rights...Fight for free home because the government owe us that. They owe us a free home, I don't care what anyone say, because our men worked for government...

The continual reference to the past and fears that a new system of imprisonment, or confinement, was being produced is significant. It reveals an awareness of the disciplinary practices which kept them under domination

in the past, and a recognition that such practices continue today, albeit in a newly disguised form.

Needless to say, the unit development went ahead as planned at Top Kowrowa.  However the people's struggle was not in vain as no further units were built.  People were not moved from Mantaka, Koah or Bottom Kowrowa as they had feared.  Further protest meetings and a sit in at the office of the then local member, Bob Katter, secured more appropriate houses for people at Mantaka.  Of course, their own houses that they had bought from the mission were demolished and now everybody pays rent to the Department.

The Mantaka Shanty Association was formed during that period of struggle to fight for better housing conditions.  It continues today as a body corporate under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act* 1976 (Cwlth).  Aboriginal people simply wanted to be consulted with regard to how their houses were to be built and how their home places, or settlements were planned.  Yiftachel (1995), shows in his case study of Majd el Krum, an Arab village in Israel, how planning can 'facilitate domination and control of three key societal resources: space, power and wealth...' (1995:221).  He notes that the 'very same planning tools usually introduced to assist social reform and improvement in people's quality of life can be used as a means of controlling and repressing minority groups' (1995:219).  This is what Aboriginal people were suspicious of, and what fuelled their struggle against the DAIA housing

plans. However, their direct action against DAIA resulted in the founding of an association which was eventually to come under state control through incorporation. Incorporation, and the accompanying formulaic strategic planning process that has been adopted by such bodies in order to secure funding and justify their existence, means that people, in apparent compliance, have become utterly over-determined by the 'disciplinary mechanisms' of bureaucracy.

**Bureaucratic Bondage**

Aboriginal 'community-based' associations in Kuranda, as are many elsewhere in Australia, are incorporated under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act* 1976 (Cwlth). The provisions of this Act set the constraints, or bureaucratic process, according to which the lives of many Aboriginal people in Kuranda are organised and, I suggest, operates as one of the strategies through which they are maintained as 'docile bodies' (Foucault 1977:135). However, it is in this area that practices of resistance are also apparent. Often the requirements of the Act are simply not followed. It could be argued that this is not so much an expression of resistance as simply the response to an impossibility. That is, that fulfilling the provisions of the Act is simply too onerous a task. This objection however is based on the assumption that resistance depends on the existence of a given subject who self-consciously *intends* to resist. I am however referring here to Foucault's notion of

resistance which, like power, is not based on the concept of the subject as given, but is a strategic relation. As Foucault (1979: 55) said in an interview:

> ...there are no relations of power without resistances; ...the latter are all the more real and effective to the extent that they are formed there where the relations of power are exercised; resistance to power doesn't have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it trapped because it is the compatriot of power. It exists all the more insofar as it is there where power is; it is therefore, like power, multiple and integrable into global strategies.

In Kuranda there are at present seven different incorporated bodies servicing an Aboriginal population of less than 420. These are the: 1) Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Organisation; 2) Buda:dji Aboriginal Development Association Aboriginal Corporation; 3) Ngoonbi Cooperative Housing Society Ltd; 4) Mona Mona Aboriginal Corporation; 5) Mantaka Shanty Association Aboriginal Corporation; 6) Kowrowa Aboriginal Corporation; 7) KMKM Aboriginal Corporation. Under the requirements of the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act* 1976 (Cwlth), these incorporated bodies are obliged to keep current registers of members (s.58) which must be given each year after 30 June, or any time upon request within fourteen days, to the government appointed Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations (s.4). Associations are contractually obliged under section 58B to call and conduct annual general meetings and special general meetings as provided in the Rules of each association (s.47). Except when exempted under section 59A, incorporated associations are required to keep 'proper accounts and records' (s.59), and the governing committee of the Association must cause a report to be prepared each financial year including a statement of income and expenditure.

The existence of so many incorporated bodies presents an onerous amount of work for the few Aboriginal people who have the skills, and the energy and dedication, to ensure the legislative requirements are met. People often complain about the number of meetings they are required to attend, as they are expected to attend not only meetings of these Associations, but also meetings called by the Native Title Representative Body in relation to their Native Title claim and meetings regarding their claims under the *Aboriginal Land Act* 1991 (Qld), as well as endless other special working group meetings, such as the community taskforce meetings set up by ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission) in connection with the development planning of the old Mona Mona Mission land. No wonder then that it is rare to find Aboriginal people attending general community meetings such as those of the Association for Regional Kuranda, or joining the various community working groups, such as the Strategic Management Planning groups or the Library Working Group, that have operated in Kuranda over the years.

In 1997 some Aboriginal people in desperation decided to consider how they could amalgamate all their associations 'under one umbrella'. First however, yet another committee had to be formed. This was called the Dagil Nyiya Nyiya[22] Regional Steering Committee. The initiative managed to secure some funds to hire a consultant to 'develop a new operational system and structure

that will bring all the organisations together, as one organisation, under the one community owned and operated structure'[23]. I was unfortunately not able to access this report. However, to date there has been no amalgamation of the associations and people remain divided about whether this should happen.

**Conclusion**

As can be seen from the various planning disputes and the ongoing issue of the buses, there is much disquiet among residents of the Kuranda area about the dominating impact of tourism on the identity of the town. After all it is a home to them, not a mere tourist destination. The Kuranda Strategic Management Plan was initiated by residents as an attempt to gain some control over the way their place was being developed, and to 'reclaim the village' from tourism. However many of these residents also run businesses in the village and it is in their interests to promote their place as a product. This tension between place and product has given rise to much conflict in the practice and making of Kuranda as a village. The tension was recognised by Mr Justice Daly who wrote in his judgement on the Ark Case: 'As far as the Strategic plan of the Shire is concerned the land is designated both as "Tourist Facility" and "Village". This case, indeed, would appear initially to focus on the difficulty, on occasions, of reconciling these two designations' (1988:3).

Planning, as I have described its operation in Kuranda, is not simply a cognitive process in which people consciously and objectively organise space.

Rather, planning is a type of 'articulatory practice' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). It is through such practice that Kuranda is made as a village and as a community. It is through such practice that place memory is constituted. Place memory is not only located in cognition but is created through people's politically engaged making of place. Place making involves such apparently mundane activities as engaging in vision workshops, attending official meetings of community organisations, regular social meetings at the local coffee shop at which the fate of the village is a never-ending hot topic of debate, writing letters to the editor, appealing to the Planning and Environment Court, engaging in direct protest by defacing a bus, or demonstrating at a construction site.

Planning is also, however, a disciplinary practice. The planning process in Kuranda is an expression of the use of an ideology of individual freedom and consensus as an apparatus of state control. Demonstrated engagement in strategic planning is presented to people as a means by which they can achieve bureaucratic recognition of their claims. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Kuranda are thus increasingly swept into the planning process as strategy of achieving some control over their places and their categorical identities.

As discussed in particular Chapters 2, 6, and 7, and as my discussion in this chapter of the history of the formation of the Mantaka Shanty Association demonstrates, time and again, Aboriginal people have come up against the

State's power to organise space. Increasingly they are also coming up against private developers encroaching on their places. As Harvey (1985:23) notes:

> Control of spatial organization and authority over the use of space become crucial means for the reproduction of social power relations. The state, or some other social grouping such as financiers, developers, or landlords, can thus often hide their power to shape social reproduction behind the seeming neutrality of their power to organise space.

The fact that Aboriginal people protested against the housing plans of the DAIA, however, indicates that they are aware of the significance of this power to organise space.

As I have shown by my account of the resistance activities of a particular non-Aboriginal individual against the buses, and the protest demonstrations of Aboriginal people against DAIA housing plans, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Kuranda resist bureaucratic bondage. However, there is a distinction between the two examples of resistance which must be recognized. The bus resister manifests a certain kind of autonomy and control in his dealings with the bus drivers and in relation to the courts, which the Aboriginal protesters lacked. This, I argue, reflects their different experiences of power. In one of his final interviews, Foucault (1988b:19) identifies two types of power relationship: 'strategic games', and 'states of domination'. The bus protester's actions are typical of resistances where power is experienced as 'strategic games among liberties', whereas the Aboriginal protester's responses reflect their experiences of power in terms of a 'state of domination'. Between the two types of power relationship are

'government technologies' (Foucault 1988b:19).  In Kuranda, these include the strategic planning processes through which bureaucratic bondage is effected.

In their search for empowerment, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Kuranda have turned to strategic planning.  However, the process actually operates to contain resistance.  It has now become part of peoples lives, as a disciplinary practice.  The apparent devolution of governmental power to community organisations, and the bureaucratic responsibilities that this entails, is an example of what Foucault (1977:211) describes as the tendency of disciplinary mechanisms to become 'de-institutionalized', or 'to emerge from the closed fortress in which they once functioned and to circulate in a "free" state...'.  This, I have argued, is particularly evident with regard to Aboriginal organisations.  The 'discipline-blockade', the enclosed institution, Mona Mona Mission, may today no longer be operative, but it has been replaced by the 'disciplinary-mechanisms' of bureaucracy.[24].

1 The name 'Association for Regional Kuranda' was in fact deliberately chosen for its acronym ARK in reference to Noah's Ark and the meaning it carries.

2 In the production of the 'Kuranda Strategic Management Plan', its successor the 'Kuranda Village Masterplan' and the 'Kuranda Village Development Control Plan', C&B Consultants Pty Ltd sub-contracted a number of other architectural firms and planning consultants. These included Clouston Pawsey Prouse, Guy Architecture and Interior Design, Burchill Bate Parker & Partners Pty Ltd, and the Centre for Applied Economic Research and Analysis, James Cook University of North Queensland.

3 The 'major local stakeholders' were categorized as follows: i) local residents, ii) Aboriginal people, iii) larger businesses, iv) smaller businesses, v) market operators, vi) market stallholders, vii) tour operators, viii) Mareeba Shire Council, ix) Queensland Rail, x) Skyrail.

4 These working groups were called: Development Control (Environs), Development Control (Village), Waste Control, Landcare (Forest), Transportation, Landscape and Streetscape (Village), Community Facilities, and Arts/Culture/Heritage.

5 However, it should be noted that Aboriginal people are rarely to be found at general community meetings, not so much because they feel uncomfortable with the venues but for a number of other reasons. Firstly they are so oppressed by the requirements to attend meetings of their own Aboriginal corporations, that they have little time to involve themselves in general community issues. Secondly, they feel that even if they attend such meetings and speak up, although their voices may be heard, they are not listened to anyway.

6 The existing DCP entitled 'Development Control Plan 1 -Kuranda and Environs', was gazetted on 27 July 1985. The new DCP was to apply only to the village itself as shown in DCP 2 - Kuranda Village Map. DCP 1 was to continue to have effect over those areas outside the boundaries of DCP 2.

7 Named on the Award are Jax Bergersen, John Beasley, Paul Fisk , and Oliver Gilkersen.

8 The inaugural meeting of the Kuranda chamber of Commerce was held at the Bottom Pub on 23 November 1983

9 A Department of Transport survey during the height of the tourist season, on Wednesday 11 August 1993 over a twelve hour period, counted 120 coach movements entering the village via Rob Veivers Drive, the main entrance to the village from the highway. These movements comprised 62 large coaches (49 seater) and 58 small coaches (22 seater).

10 As reported in the *Cairns Post* 28 June 1996, p. 5 under the headline 'Town plan "under siege"'.

11 This letter dated 29 Jan. 1995, was written by Mr Henri Hunsinger to Ms Lynne Provan and distributed among residents interested in the library issue.

12 In fact this woman has been referred to by a more recent arrival as one of 'the three battle tanks of Kuranda'. She is one of three community minded women who are seen to be very active in village politics and are given credit for being powerfully influential. For example, whether her letter had any effect at all, there are Kuranda people who lay the responsibility for the Council approval of the ARK at her door.

13 See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the significance of ships and boats to the new settlers.

14 See *Jean Anderson and Ors v. Mareeba Shire Council and Maytrend Pty Ltd* (Kuranda Shooting Gallery Appeal), Appeal No. 48 of 1997, held before His Honour Judge Daly, 13 Feb. 1998. The objectors were Gayle Hannah, Jean Anderson, Donald Lennox Brigginshaw, Gillian and Michael Cox, Joan Dods, Brian and Sandra Edwards, Sharon Greenwood, Bob Madden, and Keila Waksvik.

15 Many people maintain campsites and some even keep caravans and/or have built other more permanent  houses there.

16 Taylor (1988: 105-125) includes excellent photographs of the old houses; see also Collins (1981:84)

17 According to Martin & Finlayson (1996:5), 'The Aboriginal domain is typically highly factionalised, and characterised by the complex and often cross-cutting allegiances which

people have to groupings based on families, clans, ancestral lands and so forth, as well as to contemporary forms such as Aboriginal organisations. A defining characteristic of this domain lies in its localism, in which the political, economic, and social imperatives lie, pre-eminently in more restricted forms and institutions rather than in broader and more encompassing ones...Localism is characterised by such features as a strong emphasis on individual autonomy, and priority being accorded to values and issues which are grounded in the particular and local, rather than in the general and regional or national. It is related to the tendency of Aboriginal societies and groups towards "fission" and disaggregation rather than aggregation and corporateness...'.

[18] Special Lease No 28128 over portion 360 (11 acres), Parish of Formantine (Kowrowa).

[19] Letter from the Acting Secretary, Department of Lands to Mr R.E. Eager, Secretary-Treasurer, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Brisbane, 14 Sep 1976. Department of Natural Resources File: CNS/006353.

[20] In total seven special leases in the name of Aboriginal people were forfeited at Mantaka, four at Koah, two at Kowrowa and two at Kuranda. In 1994 the Aboriginal Land Amendment Regulation (No 1) declared the Reserves at Mantaka and Kowrowa to be Aboriginal reserve land under section 2.08 of the *Aboriginal Land Act* 1991. Since then, in accordance with the Act, these reserves have been transferred to the Aboriginal community, to be held in trust.

[21] I have taken some literary licence here as these selections are not necessarily in the exact order in which they were said at the meeting. I have left all individuals unidentified except for gender.

[22] Dagil Nyiya means 'All Together Strong'.

[23] This is taken from an advertisement for the consultancy in the *Cairns Post*, 25 June 1997, p.64

[24] Foucault (1977:209) distinguishes between two images of discipline, 'At one extreme, the discipline-blockade, the enclosed institution, established on the edges of society, turned inwards towards negative functions: arresting evil, breaking communications, suspending time. At the other extreme, with panopticism, is the discipline-mechanism: a functional mechanism that must improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, a design of double coercion for a society to come.'

# Conclusions

This study of a small Australian town provides a challenge to concepts of culture and of society as given entities, and grounds contemporary discussions among social theorists about local and global processes and of the fragmentary nature of a post-modern world, in the actualities of human experience of structures of power and dominance. My fieldwork observations have led me into the exploration of a number of theoretical and philosophical problems in contemporary social thought. These include the nature of place, and the relationship between place, performance and the politics of identity. I link such issues to questions concerning memory, tradition, and the transmission of culture. In its focus on the interface between indigenous and settler Australians and their relationships with the bureaucratic order, the study assumes particular significance in the context of the anthropology of Fourth World peoples. My analysis in terms of social dramas and my focus on place provide insight into the actualities of people's lived experiences of globalizing trends. The thesis thus illustrates the value of fine-grained ethnography for the interrogation of the nature of the post-modern world.

I have focused on the way people make place and through the making of place make themselves in terms of identity and difference. This is not a study

of 'the other', or of cultural difference as given, but a study of the way difference is generated. Difference is an historical process, a process of identification and differentiation, which is grounded in the political economy of place and of the body.

I have shown how both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people implace themselves via a politics of identity which expresses itself in social dramas that irrupt regularly in the town. Kuranda people themselves think of Kuranda as a place riddled with social conflict. In fact, people often shake their heads and shrug with acceptance at whatever the latest eruption, as if conflict were an inevitable part of what defines Kuranda as a place. The conflict appears to be mostly over the definition, image and representation of the town. It is more that, however. It has to do with the actual making of place, not just its representation. In making place people also make themselves. They do this through performances in which they negotiate relationships of identity and difference. Through performance people implace themselves and resist the categorical identities of bureaucratic power. Bureaucratic power, however, restricts and contains resistance by conditioning the form it takes. People are, therefore, in the very act of resistance, 'reimprisoned in the tyranny of the category' (Kapferer 1995b:88).

The strategic planning process in Kuranda provides a good case study of the insidious operation of the disciplinary mechanisms of bureaucracy at work. In their search for empowerment, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people

turned to strategic planning only to realize that it was just another means of bureaucratic bondage. However, planning, as I have described its operation in Kuranda leads to performances of conflict through which Kuranda is made as a village and as a community and constituted as place in body memory. Through their politically engaged making of place, people imbue place with memory and thus make it theirs.

The various social conflicts I discussed in this thesis in connection with the market place, the amphitheatre, the Skyrail, and the planning of the village are social situations of implacement. In these social dramas performative experiences allow people to interrogate sameness and difference. They bring the process of differentiation and identification into the limelight, and thus allow people to claim a role in creating and transforming their own lifeworlds.

I have discussed how in a number of cases, Kuranda people have taken their experiences of the social dramas that irrupt in the town and in turn have theatricalized them for the amphitheatre stage and elsewhere. By thus performing their performances they thematize and explicate the particular conditions of their existence and translate consciousness of their situation into a more critically reflective mode. At the same time, however, they celebrate the embodiment of memory and of place and challenge purely mentalistic

modes of being in the world which would deny the authenticity of their identity claims.

**Imbuing Place with Memory and the Continuity of Connection to Country**

Colonizing practices which accompanied the early settlement of the Kuranda area were strategically aimed at erasing the memory of Aboriginal priority in place. The country was cleared for the implacement of European settlers by the physical removal of Aboriginal people and by the memorial erasure of their presence in the landscape for Europeans. However, although removal of Aboriginal people from their home places denied them access to mnemonic experiences and led to the mutilation of memory, particularly of the generation of people born on the mission, it did not result in complete erasure of their connection to place. Although the disciplinary practices of institutionalization worked towards wiping out the memory of a lifeworld, there were forces which countered such practices. Among these forces were the economic demands of the Mission establishment itself. Throughout its early years Mona Mona Mission struggled to feed its population and Aboriginal people had to supplement their rations by pursuing traditional subsistence activities. This allowed for a continuity of subsistence practices and thus of experiential knowledge of place. The forestry and timber industry also worked against practices of erasure. The requirement for Aboriginal labour provided access to country which they would otherwise have been denied. The tourist industry similarly worked against erasure

because of the demands for Aboriginal cultural performances. This is not a recent phenomenon but something that began before the mission was established and continued on and off during the mission period, with a heyday during the 1950s when bus loads of tourists visited the Mission. Cultural performances therefore were a practice of continuity and of resistance for Aboriginal people long before the more recent tourist boom of the past twenty years, and the birth of the native title process.

As a form of resistance, performance involves an awareness, or consciousness, of the tentacles of power in operation. Such awareness is not necessarily articulated cognitively. It is articulated through bodily implacement and in terms of bodily awareness of being in relationship with others in a lifeworld. Thus, contemporary performances in the Tjapukai dance theatre/cultural park, although ostensibly for tourists, allow Aboriginal people to play a part in redefining themselves. Performances for tourists become an opportunity to challenge a paradigm which assumes that remembering is merely the recollection of intellectual knowledge. Through such performances Djabugay celebrate body memory, and the possibility of embodied acquisition of culture, not as given, but as born out of lived experience, in a political context where the idea of memory as a product of the mind, is privileged. By moving into performance Djabugay burrow into place and allow the past into the present via body memory. A celebration of the embodied acquisition of

culture is not an essentialising of culture, as given in the body, but is a claim for recognition of the embodiment of historically produced lived experiences.

Another factor which operated in favour of continuity was the fact that for most of its life, there were two 'fringe camps' on Mona Mona Mission. Here the old people managed to maintain a certain independence of lifestyle and continue practices which were denied their children in the dormitories. The camps themselves became symbols of resistance to missionization and, for children in the dormitories, a reminder of a lifeworld which remained accessible as a potentiality. Although the removal of Aboriginal people to reserves was an extremely violent act of dispossession, Aboriginal people did not necessarily see this as a discontinuity. The potentiality of the old lifeworld remained imminent for them. This is expressed today in the Aboriginal narratives about sightings of 'old people' or 'wild Aborigines' hidden in the rainforest and still living according to the old ways. To have been removed from country was not for Mona Mona people a discontinuity of connection to place. Place is animated, and continuity of connection is maintained, by its being imbued with memory. Connection is expressed in place memory and in the imminence in body memory of the past in the present, as particularly demonstrated in the example I gave in Chapter 6 of the Djabugay woman dancer's embodiment of conflict connected with the Tjapukai Cultural Park, and her healing experience.

**Into Performance: A Means of Implacement**

The essence of implacement, or of dwelling, can be found in social practices, which includes performance. As my analysis of social dramas in Kuranda demonstrates, implacement is not simply a matter of finding oneself in harmony with the world. Implacement is achieved in a process of social conflict.

During the 1970s and throughout the 1980s a new wave of settlers arrived in Kuranda. In their attempt to escape 'the system' by remaking Kuranda in their own image, they came into conflict with the establishment. I have examined the performances by which they attempted to burrow into Kuranda and make it theirs, and which brought them into conflict with the Shire Council and police, as agents of state bureaucracy.

Social dramas involving the new settlers express a tension between the concept of the individual and the concept of society. Contradictions between individualism and communitarian principles resulted in the failure of communes and many tenancies-in-common, and generated much conflict in projects such as the Kuranda Amphitheatre. These contradictions are explored by the new settlers in theatrical performances on the Amphitheatre stage which allow them to play with notions of sameness and difference, so as to encompass difference within the sameness by which they define community. This concept of 'community', rests on a liberal humanist view of the human subject and a notion of equality which assumes, indeed requires,

sameness. It is part of a liberal, apparently anti-racist, discourse which is actually based on an underlying racist logic which assumes a level playing field. It does not admit the possibility of difference as an historical product and of the impact of structural domination and violence. The idea of community celebrated by the new settlers in Kuranda is compatible with the principles of, what Kapferer (1988) has termed, 'egalitarian individualism'. Here individual difference is hailed, but only if it is grounded in nature. Australian egalitarianism thus valorizes the existence of difference as an essence founded in nature, but denies the existence of difference as the embodiment of historical process.

This denial of historical process underlies the contemporary valorization of culture and the bureaucratic sponsorship of multiculturalism as exemplified in the government support which spawned the Djabugay 'cultural revival' discussed in Chapter 6. The fact that categorical identities are historically constituted is masked by reducing difference to cultural difference. By emphasizing cultural particularity, the discourse thus subtly denies the reality of colonizing practices of erasure and bureaucratic bondage and the hierarchy and domination which Australian egalitarianism generates, but which it cannot admit.

**Power, Resistance and Difference**

I have used the term performance to refer not only to theatrical productions but also to refer to aspects of the social dramas that irrupt regularly in Kuranda and the demonstrations of protest by which people resist bureaucratic bondage. Both types of performance are forms of resistance because through them people transcend their social situation. In performance they experience the particular constellations and operations of power in their existence. Social dramas generate performances of protest which are an expression of people's consciousness of the fact that, as subjects, they are constrained by power-relations. This is not only a matter of critical reflection, but also a matter of embodied recognition. By writing up their social dramas as plays or film scripts and re-performing them Kuranda people attempt to translate this embodied form of recognition into a more critically reflective and mentalistic mode, by taking it into the realm of play. At the same time they challenge a rigid dichotomy between body and mind and celebrate the 'corporeal intentionality...binding us to the life-world we inhabit' (Casey 1997:229).

In this thesis, I have considered the resistance performances of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. My analysis has not been a culturalist one contrasting Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural values. Rather than simply taking categorical identities as given, I have focused my discussion on the discursive fields and practices, such as the 'language game of science' (Lyotard 1984) in Chapter 7, which operate to *produce* them.

Although actual cultural differences may indeed be apparent in the values and practices of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, to reduce interpretation to a matter of cultural comparison operates to deny Aboriginal people any recognition as political agents, and the significance of the social field constituting the terms of their existence . Social dramas that irrupt in Kuranda, are not expressions of given cultural differences, but are situations in which discourses about such differences are contested and negotiated.

Significant differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Kuranda is not a matter of culture, but a matter of social process. What makes difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is their different experiences of structures and strategies of power. For Aboriginal people, contemporary performances of dance and music, and performances of protest, such as against the Skyrail or the DAIA housing plans, are a recognition of, and response to, being in a state of domination. Non-Aboriginal people's performances, on the other hand, reflect their experience of power as a matter of strategic manoeuvres among free and equal individuals who sometimes band together as a community or as a nation in opposition to a state which continually threatens to impinge on their individual freedom.

The resistance activities of one of the new settlers against the buses described in Chapter 8, contrast with the protest demonstrations of Aboriginal people against DAIA housing plans. Both cases are examples of resistance to bureaucratic bondage. However, the bus resister manifested an autonomy and control in his dealings with the bus drivers and in relation to the courts, which the Aboriginal protesters lacked. The bus protester's actions are typical of resistances where power is experienced as 'strategic games' among agents in equal positions but with conflicting interests, while the Aboriginal protesters' responses reflect their experiences of power as a 'state of domination' (Foucault 1988:19).

Opportunities for public performance, such as at the Laura Dance Festival, and at the Tjapukai Theatre have opened up for Aboriginal people in Kuranda a means of confronting and challenging the discursive practices which keep them in a state of domination. Yet, these very opportunities to perform are ones that themselves arise out of, and are structured and limited by, the bureaucratic order that reproduces these discursive practices. It is dominant discursive practices based on the notion of tradition, and underlying assumptions about cultural continuity and transmission, which in fact operate to *create* the idea of cultural discontinuity and, thus, allow for legalized dispossession via the native title process. However, 'discontinuity...is a dubious phenomenon' (Turner 1994:84). Within the terms of the dominant discourse about culture and tradition Aboriginal people are made to experience themselves as having a lack of knowledge. Discontinuity

is thus *made* possible and, in the contemporary context of Aboriginal land rights and the native title process, operates as a powerful means of undermining Aboriginal claims.

In an inversion of the denigration of earlier periods, contemporary bureaucratic practices valorize traditional Aboriginal culture. Given the context of a history of colonially induced mutilation of memory it is not surprising that this official celebration of traditional culture has spawned a desire among Aboriginal people to rediscover and preserve forgotten knowledge. It is understandable that Aboriginal people might, in apparent acquiescence, adopt essentializing concepts of culture and heritage and notions of a fixed tradition. However Aboriginal performances exhibit more than a simple complicity with essentialist discourses. Performances actually challenge the dominant notion of cultural transmission, as an intellectual learning process, by positing the possibility of a mode of transmission through body memory. In spite of being constrained by existing discourses of power Aboriginal people resist essentialism by calling for the recognition of a history of oppression. This was verbally expressed, for example, in the appeal of the woman anti-Skyrail protester to the police and loggers quoted in Chapter 7, 'Learn your history. We're the ones that suffered, not you. You don't even know our history'.

In this study I have argued that Aboriginal identity politics is no more the rediscovery of an already existing identity than is the identity politics of the

new settlers. Pre-given, essential identities do not define and determine politics in either domain. Identity and difference are a matter of performance. The emphasis in performance on body memory, and the embuing of place with memory through the experiences of the lived body, is a move away from essentialism. By means of performance identity politics becomes a way of resisting and undermining dominant discursive practices which mask colonialist interactions and which serve to sustain historically produced systems of power relations. Through performances of identity actors not only challenge sameness by asserting their differences, but also, by engaging their differences, they refashion sameness. This articulation of sameness and difference is not merely a matter of different cultural values, but is a matter of differential access to, and experiences of, power.

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