

Portals in a watery realm: cultural landscapes in northern Cape York

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Abstract

In the last decade or so there has been an explosion of interest in the cultural landscapes concept in academic archaeology and as a conceptual vehicle within cultural heritage management. In spite of this (or perhaps as a result) there is a plethora of understandings of the concept itself. This paper provides further elaboration on the application of cultural landscapes in northern Cape York Peninsula, particularly in relation to connections between cultural constructions of indigenous people and nature of the physical landscape. It suggests refinements on previous ways of 'seeing' archaeological sites through indigenous eyes and alternative approaches to conceptualizing cultural heritage.

The explosion of interest in the cultural landscapes concept suggests the degree to which it is theoretically useful and appropriate. In spite of this (or perhaps as a result) there appear to be a plethora of understandings of the concept itself. It appears that there may be many different 'cultural landscapes' and while the lack of definition may be problematic for pundits of orderly academic disciplines it may, in fact, represent the reality of cultural diversity. This paper provides a case study for a particular cultural landscape that lies at the very tip of the Australian mainland in northern Cape York (see Figure 1). This has been a work in progress, begun more than two decades ago as part of my doctoral project (Greer 1996a, 1996b, 1999; Greer et al. 2002). I first described this cultural landscape by drawing on contemporary indigenous cosmologies of northern Cape York peoples, suggesting that they are (as the name implies) entirely cultural constructs mapping beliefs, stories and practices 'on the ground'. This explanation was proposed in opposition to (then) widespread understandings of the concept as the 'combined works of nature and man'. In the intervening years there have been many case studies that have exploded and expanded this limited definition. This paper represents a further refinement of earlier work that may shed light on at least one approach to indigenous cultural landscapes in Australia.

Introduction

In addition to archaeological work undertaken in the area, the ethnographic record for the region is rich, beginning with the work of Brierly and others who were on the exploratory vessel, the 'Rattlesnake' in the late 1840s (Moore 1979). Although the focus of Haddon and the Cambridge expedition of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were largely further north, the work that emerged from this provides a wealth of relevant comparative material (Haddon 1901-35). In the 1920s and '30s, areas south of the study area received detailed attention from McConnel (e.g. 1935-36; 1936; 1937; 1957) and Thompson (e.g. 1933; 1934; 1939). While McConnel's interest was primarily in the Wik, she usefully and authoritatively refers to their northern neighbours (McConnel 1935-36). Ethnographic work was continued in the 1980s (Fuery and Greer 1993; Greer and Fuery 2008; Greer 1996 a & b).

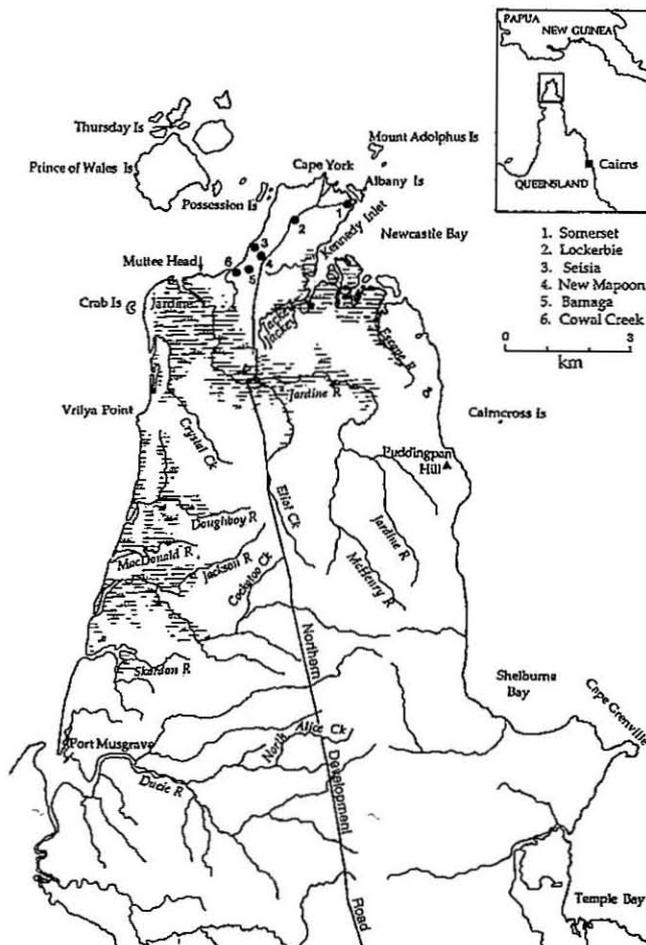


Figure 1: Location of the study area (from Greer 1996).

The 'extreme' heritage of Cape York

Cape York Peninsula has iconic status in the minds of many Australians (most of who have never been there). Today, it is seen by many as an extremely isolated environment – a destination on the list of adventure trips. But in the 19th Century, when much of the Australian landscape was seen as 'isolated', the waters around the Cape were extremely busy, teeming with vessels engaged in general shipping as well as the pearling and beche-de-mer industries. The settlement of Somerset (located just east of the tip) was established in part to provide a safety net for the many shipwrecks that occurred in the region. Ironically, for indigenous people of the region, this was an extremely dangerous time due to the introduction of diseases and abuses associated with the maritime industries, the expansion of the cattle industry and the activities of settlers such as Frank Jardine at Somerset (Greer 1996a; McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002; Greer et al. 2002).

Northern Cape York is also one of those parts of Australia that witnessed dramatic change during the last marine transgression occurring between 8,000 and 6,000 years ago, that resulted in the flooding of the land bridge between Papua

New Guinea and Cape York. At this time, hilltops became islands and the Torres Strait was formed. While other parts of Australia experienced changes in climate and/or to their immediate coastline, the scale of such changes must have been exaggerated in places (including the neighbouring Gulf of Carpentaria and Bass Strait) where the seas flooded large tracts of land. One can currently only speculate on the implications of this. It most certainly led to the loss of land that was intimately tied to cosmology and essential for a gatherer-hunter existence.

The Cape is located well within the tropics and experiences the extreme weather regimes of cyclonic activity and high rainfall during the annual monsoon (the Wet season) followed by the Dry which is dominated by a lack of rain and unrelenting southeasterly trade winds on the east coast. As outlined above, the study area can be seen as an 'extreme environment' from the distant to the recent past through to the present. However threats associated with current projections on climate change add a new dimension revolving around the urgency to identify and record this unique, long-term coastal cultural heritage in the face of rising seas.

The watery realm: the physical landscape

In this paper I am focusing on a strip of land that runs along the east coast of northern Cape York from Fly Point (a few kilometers from the tip of Cape York) down to Jacky Jacky Creek just north of the Escape River (see Figure 2). Along the coast, this strip is characterized by sandy beaches nestled between rocky points. Large dunes of fine white sand run north-east to south-west, often forming the boundary with dry dune thickets which in turn border the red soil country of the interior. The landscape is finely veined by watercourses of all sizes (most of which are ephemeral). A ribbon of brackish lakes and dry lake beds, swamps and waterholes are interspersed between the sand ridges that follow a north-south trend and freshwater springs can be found bubbling up through the sand along the beaches as well as in the interior. During the monsoon, overland travel is all but impossible, even where tracks exist. The southern part of the strip is dominated by the extensive estuarine system of Jacky Jacky Creek and includes tidal flats with mangroves, saline flats, open swamps and monsoonal woodlands with patches of rainforest and swamp forest. Mangroves are a significant feature today but they may not have been as extensive in the past. Parallel beach ridges, now stabilized by vegetation, found inland from present mangrove forests and now stabilized by vegetation, suggest an ancient shoreline.

Rhodes (1980) identifies factors associated with Holocene coastal progradation in the Gulf of Carpentaria. His detailed study documents and dates Holocene sea level change and progradation in relation to specific features such as beach ridge plains. While detailed work of this nature has not been carried out in the study area, the location and nature of beach ridges (suggestive of fluctuations in sea level over time) and other features suggest that a similar record of late Holocene sea level rise and progradation may have been at work here. So, the natural history of the east coast strip, the rising and falling of the sea and the effects of this on other elements, may be written in the very features of this watery realm.

People in the past in the watery realm

While archaeological investigation of this area has been limited, we know that people were living in the northern part of the strip

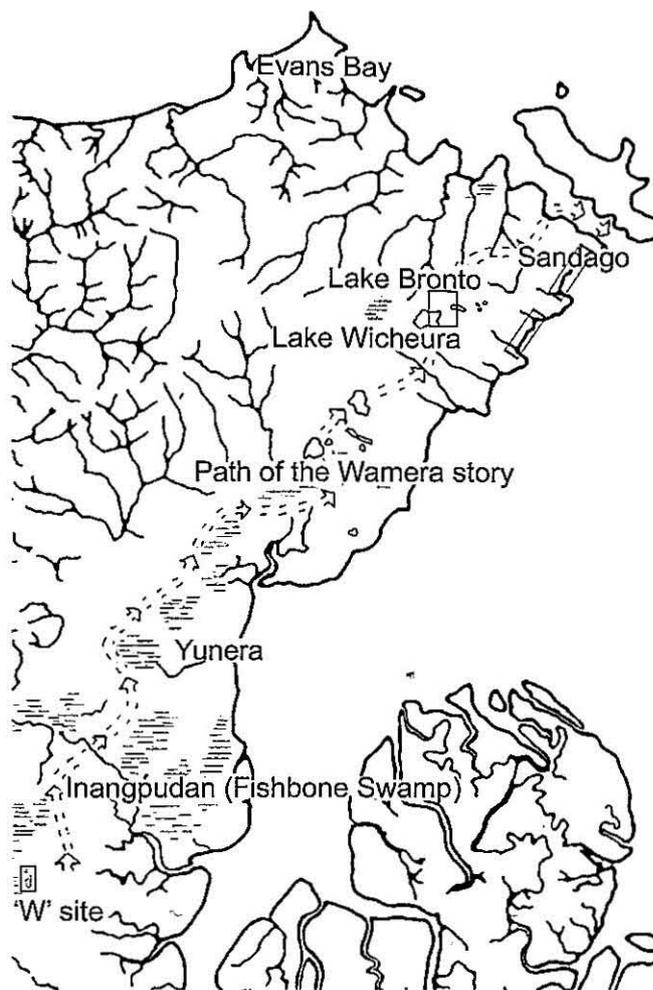


Figure 2: The Cultural Landscape of the East Coast strip (after Greer 1996).

in the past by the presence of large middens located on the dunes behind the beaches (known locally as Sandago) and a scatter of artefacts found on the shores of Lake Wicheura. In the south, only one site (known as the 'W' site because of its appearance from the air) on the shores of an ephemeral lake has thus far been located. The surface evidence at the 'W' site is meagre at this site – some fragments of shell, a couple of pieces of stone that must have been carried into the site and the remains of what appears to be a hearth. However the site tells us that people were here in the past and its location on the shores of the lake feature, in close proximity to what appear to be ancient shorelines suggests that, at the time of occupation, these people resided, for at least part of their time, on the coast.

The early ethnographic information provided by Brierly does not directly refer to the east coast strip, but to the nearby areas of the Gudang of Cape York and the Kaurareg of Prince of Wales Island, their neighbours and marriage partners (Moore 1979). Perhaps of most interest are the references to the cooking of yams, mangrove pods, turtle and dugong in earth ovens or 'ami':

...an area of stones made red hot with a big fire, over which the pieces of turtle flesh were placed, with smaller hot stones on top, then a covering of pandanus leaves, on which the entrails and fat were spread, then more leaves and small hot stones, and over the top the shell of the turtle. The whole was surrounded and covered with tea-tree bark, and finally sand was piled over, making a mound

about two metres in diameter and one metre high. (Moore 1979: 268)

The middens in the northern part of the east coast strip are littered with small stone features that were interpreted as earth ovens by Greer (1996a & b) on the basis of their location, size and shape and the presence of charcoal. Given that the dune features on which they are located are relatively recent features, always associated with the present coast, these sites tell us that the occupiers were (at least part of the time) coastal dwellers. The remains of earth ovens (*ami*) found on the site perhaps suggest some of the *kinds* of events that took place on (or in close proximity to) these sites. Today in northern Cape York, earth ovens are associated with large gatherings rather than a cooking style for small family groups. While the contemporary ovens are larger and many elements of social life have changed, foods such as turtle (then and now) required collective effort and resources to obtain and therefore may have been associated with ceremonial gatherings. Some support for this proposition lies in the fact that Greer (1996a & b; 1999) identified that in addition to the relict hearths found on these sites, there was also evidence for stockpiles of stone – apparently ready for re-use.

The artefact scatter along the shores of Lake Wicheura offers a counterpoint to the other archaeological sites. An obvious difference between the Wicheura site and the coastal middens at Sandago is the presence of comparatively large quantities of stone artefacts. Stone was not used extensively in coastal contexts in north Queensland, the functional aspects being served in many cases by modified shell. Although the sites are in close proximity (less than 4km apart), it is currently not known if the sites were occupied at similar points in time. However, whenever they were occupied these somewhat gross differences suggest (most obviously) that different microenvironments were being exploited, which may relate to differential seasonal occupation. Ethnographic evidence suggests occupation of the coasts during the northwest (Monsoon) season and the interior during the Dry when the unrelenting southeasterly winds render the coasts unbearable. But this seasonal difference may be also related to the nature of activities that were being undertaken there which may be revealed by further investigation. The location of the Wicheura site around a freshwater lake resonates with the 'W' site, reflecting a time when the southern site was perhaps closer to a more active coast.

Contemporary cosmology and the watery realm

The east coast strip has cosmological significance for contemporary northern Cape York people on a number of levels. At the broadest level, this strip is thought to be dangerous country to traverse because it is easy to 'get lost' there. The physical environment presents many challenges including confusing patterns of vegetation, mosquitoes and crocodiles which are undoubtedly factors woven into its perceived 'danger'. It is currently unsettled ('wild' country) but in the 19th Century, the area around Somerset in the north and Lockerbie in the interior were part of the domain of Frank Jardine and are cloaked in stories of atrocities (including massacres) that contemporary people associate with him (McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002; Greer et al. 2002). These factors are embedded within a belief system in which the landscape is populated with supernatural beings, some of which are

dangerous to humans (Greer 1996a; McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002; Greer et al. 2002). The east coast strip is thought to be particularly dangerous in this regard, and there is currently little or no permanent human presence there. One is warned by traditional owners not to 'swear' the bush if irritated when walking through it – to do so would be 'bad fashion'. These beings include the spirits of deceased people as well as 'devils' that can be either mischievous or malevolent (McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002; Greer et al. 2002). Anyone travelling in this country should be formally 'introduced' by traditional owners which affords some protection from dangerous encounters that range from irritating to the downright abominable. People from the communities whose behaviour is consistent with disability (in particular mental illness) are sometimes said to have 'looked' these devils. There are contemporary practices that involve giving these supernatural beings 'gifts' such as releasing the first catch back into the sea when fishing or leaving a cigarette when walking in the bush. This is considered to be 'good fashion' or perhaps in western terms, 'best practice' in local resource management.

In relation to the archaeological sites known along the strip, the middens at Sandago are thought to be dangerous places because the 'old people' (deceased people) lived there. For this reason, a small ceremony of introduction was necessary before we could work there. Illnesses experienced by members of the archaeological team prior to this were attributed to being in this country without such introduction. Community members were not surprised when told of the 'W' site and the site at Lake Wicheura (previously unknown to them) as this confirmed their own beliefs surrounding the presence of 'old people' and other spirit beings in this area. In one case, a connection was made between the coastal Sandago sites and the Lake site saying that the 'old people' went to the lake by day and returned to the coastal sites at night. If these sites prove to be occupied at similar points in time, this interpretation may be an allegory for this differential seasonal occupation (Fuery and Greer 1993; Greer 1996a). Circumstances surrounding the 'discovery' of the Wicheura site also proffered some interesting insights into local cosmology. As the shores of the lakes seemed a likely place for sites, we had visited this area on a number of occasions with no result. We were surprised on locating the artefacts and set about trying to find 'logical' explanations (such as lowered lake levels exposing the shoreline etc) for this. However, the local people travelling with us were in no doubt that the artefacts were revealed by the spirit guardians of this country only after we had been formally introduced to them.

Three versions of an important narrative that attributes the creation of this landscape to the travels of the carpet snake were recorded between 1985 and 1987. The more elaborated version revolves around a mother and her son who lived in the swampy area around the 'W' site. The mother collected yarns for herself and the boy hunted for white (Torres Strait) pigeons. When the boy discovered that the mother was keeping back the best yarns for herself ('bad fashion' or bad behaviour) he became enraged. He dug up a big water vine, hollowed it out with fire and climbing inside, he tunneled down into the earth like a 'snake tail' or an auger. In another version, pools of water were left behind when he came to the surface as he headed north up the east coast strip. He finally emerged at Payra (a small bay between Cape York and Somerset) and as he turned to continue, the passage between the mainland and Albany Island was created. He then headed down to a place near Shelburne Bay called 'Number 7', more than 100km south and

then finished up in the Great Barrier Reef (Fuary and Greer 1993: 73, 76; Greer 1996a). Different versions emphasized different places and different 'resources': in one it was noted that carpet snakes and springs proliferate on Albany Island while in another, Number 7' (apparently an island) was also thought to be a good place for carpet snakes.

It is tempting here to see the creation of Albany Passage and the boy's journey down the coast as an allegory of the rising seas. This was one of the first 'stories' that was related to me during fieldwork in the mid-1980s. It was not solicited, but rather proffered as an important 'stori' (Cape York story) that I should know about. The story begins with 'bad fashion' or bad behaviour on the part of the mother that unleashes uncontrollable forces (the boy's unmitigated anger) that can have unpredictable consequences (perhaps the rising of the seas). Thus the narrative reflects what might be seen as the two entwined themes for the east coast strip: the awareness of 'bad fashion' and the creation of the watery realm.

The survival of this story and the emphasis placed on it in the present suggests that it may have been part of a ritual complex. However, while the story is well-known (at least amongst older people) in northern Cape York, current knowledge suggests that it is no longer possible to place it within its ritual context. Fortunately, the work of two ethnographers in Cape York in the early part of the 20th Century may shed some light on this.

Totemic cults, increase ritual and sea level rise

In the late 1920s, McConnel (1935-36, 1936, 1937, 1957) worked with the Wikmunkan located some 2-300 km south of the study area on the west coast of the Peninsula. The people who worked with Thomson (1933, 1934) in 1928-29 were located a similar distance away at Lloyd and Princess Charlotte Bays on the east coast, but there appears to have been more contact and more cultural affiliation with people from the study area. Both McConnel and Thomson provide rich descriptions of the religious life on west and east coasts respectively, but while McConnel describes a 'totemic culture', Thomson was somewhat preoccupied with identifying 'Papuan influences'. While McConnel spent most of her time with the inland Wikmunkan, she also worked with the 'northern tribes (groups north of the Archer River) and states that while she had previously contrasted the phonetic, linguistic and kinship systems of these, she found similarities in relation to the presence of a totemic culture (McConnel 1935-36: 463):

...the totemic culture of these northern tribes seems similar to that of the Wikmunkan, though one may detect a somewhat different mood. The heroes of the northern tribes seem to 'wander' rather more restlessly, and to be more humanly active than the Wikmunkan heroes, as they walk about 'looking for a place to settle.

Although Thomson had briefly visited the west coast on his earlier trip, he spent some considerable time there during 1932-33, apparently overlapping with areas in which McConnel had worked earlier. Thomson found close similarities between expressions of ceremonial life in his two study areas on the east and west coasts. This suggests that it is appropriate to look to the west coast evidence to illuminate the present story. McConnel's focus on 'myths' or stories (1930-31, 1931-32, 1935-36, 1936, 1937, and 1957) and her detailed descriptions

of these provide an excellent comparison with the 'east coast story' described above.

McConnel focused on totemic cults, centred on totemic ancestors or heroes whose activities are commemorated in myths or narratives that describe their transformation into totemic objects:

The chief characteristics of this culture are the existence of totemic centres (*auwa*) at which 'increase' ceremonies of the 'Intichiuma' type are performed, and the belief in totemic ancestors (*pulwaiya*), whose supposed original activities, namely, the founding of the 'auwa' and the 'increase' ritual, are revealed in myth and drama, and are re-enacted at initiation ceremonies. (McConnel 1935-36: 456)

McConnel recounts the myth associated with the 'bonefish cult' which she says is 'typical'. It describes the 'last days' of the bonefish (the 'boss' totemic ancestor) and his sisters (other totemic ancestors within the cult), including '...their quarrel; their final "looking for a place to settle"; and their "going-down" (*tu.tya*) in appropriate spots' (McConnel 1935-36: 458). The rituals that take place at specific *auwa* or story-places were established at this time. The enactment of increase rituals that include the distribution of totemic objects in which the totemic ancestors were 'incarnated' was undertaken at specific story-places where the totemic ancestor 'went down'. These acts (associated with initiation) included '...a series of dramas, dances and chants' and were the means by which the physical and spiritual necessities of life were propagated and therefore ensured (McConnel 1935-36: 458). Individual cults were controlled or owned by individual clans ('clan totems') but were also what McConnel called 'extra-clan'; that is, the benefits accrued from the enactment of the ritual (the 'increase' of a particular species) were enjoyed beyond the clan (McConnel 1935-36: 457). The broader reciprocity of this approach lends itself to the development of a regional model in which the benefits (through totemic objects) were presumably attained through the mechanism of the regional exchange of ritual performances.

McConnel's description strongly resonates with the narrative recorded for the present study area. The story of the boy and his mother contains many of the elements that McConnel cites as 'typical', including a central 'quarrel' (often about appropriate behaviour) amongst close members of a totemic 'family'. The family members are usually plants, animals or landscape features and one is usually the 'boss' for the cult and following the quarrel, the totemic ancestor wanders about looking for a place to settle or 'go down'. Today, it is only possible to see reflections of this in the east coast story rather than a one-on-one correspondence. There is a quarrel amongst close family members, a wandering about in which the boy 'goes down' into the earth re-emerging at several points until the final eruption near the tip of Cape York. These actions are thought to be responsible for the creation of springs and other watery features of the landscape. They are also associated with the proliferation of resources such as carpet snakes, yams, Torres Strait pigeons and other species, which is highly suggestive of increase magic. The structural similarities between the east coast story and those recorded by McConnel suggest that the former was once part of a ritual complex associated with 'increase'. Carpet snakes, Torres Strait pigeons and yams may all be implicated in a single story or may be different stories that have been melded together. The Torres Strait pigeon migrates between Papua and the mainland

on an annual basis and is still hunted in Cape York and, like other traditional 'resources' it is more than just 'food'. If the scenario presented here is accepted, then ritual performances associated with the increase of carpet snakes, Torres Strait pigeons and yams may have been performed at specific places along this east coast strip. Following McConnel, such story places (*auwa* for the Wik) would be located close to areas associated with the breeding cycles of specific species. The mention of plenty of carpet snakes on Albany Island and a reference in Fuary and Greer (1993: 71) that lakes area (Wicheura and Bronto) was '...a really good place for collecting wild yam' is tantalizing in this regard. It does not seem unreasonable to suppose, given the resonances outlined earlier between stories from the west coast and the present study area that contemporary beliefs and practices emerged from an earlier ritual complex that has endured, certainly since just before contact and perhaps much longer.

The narrative of the boy and his mother describes the creation of a watery landscape that resonates with visible landscape features - the lakes, pools, springs and watercourses that characterise this area. As outlined above, the story and associated cosmology may represent the surviving elements of a totemic, ritual complex. The focus on the creation of the Albany passage raises further possibilities. It is difficult not to interpret this as a memory of some period or event associated with sea level rise which, given the shallowness of the Torres Strait must have been dramatic in this area. It is not a huge leap of faith to suggest that this must have significantly affected local cosmologies. Chippendale, Smith and Tacon (2000) interpret major changes in the rock art of western Arnhem Land as illustrating the effects of sea level rise on cosmology:

We see the establishment of that entity [the Simple/Yam Figure complex] as related to the rising sea-level, which brought the salt water to about its present level some 6000 years ago, and the establishing of the present shore-line rather later. The form of the Rainbow Serpent - which first appears in the rock-paintings then - has now been shown to derive as much from a sea-water pipefish, a maritime subject, as from python snakes (Tacon et al. 1996). Rising water would have moved fast across the flat Arafura Plain, now submerged as the southern Arafura Sea, and it is reasonable to suppose substantial social change and disruption was a consequence of this flooding of so much land. (Chippendale, Smith and Tacon 2000: 68-69)

People were certainly present on what David et al. (2004) have termed 'Ancestral Cape York' around 8,000 years ago. Like their contemporaries on the Arafura Plain, the effects of sea level rise must have been similarly dramatic. While archaeological sites along the east coast strip (and elsewhere) in northern Cape York confirm occupation on what is now the mainland, an understanding of settlement patterns over time has been inhibited by a lack of chronological evidence. This is being addressed in an ongoing project that is aimed at obtaining dates for a number of northern Cape York sites.

'Sites', 'Mnemonics' and 'Portals'

Twenty years ago, I thought of archaeological sites as 'repositories' - that is, places where selective information about the past was stored, waiting for a practitioner such as myself to release it. In the past, I have referred to the Sandago sites as 'mnemonic devices' or theatre props that prompted cosmological 'memory' and the creative impetus of northern

Cape York peoples. However, ideas presented here encourage me to take another conceptual step in the desire to understand indigenous perspectives on 'cultural heritage'. In order to do this, the threads of this heritage need first to be woven together.

A story of environmental change (perhaps a major environmental event) is writ in the landscape along the east coast strip. In the north, the pattern of beaches, lakes and dunes resonates with beach ridge systems (stabilised by vegetation) set amongst swamps and saline flats and now marooned, several kilometres from huge mangrove forests on the coast. The bush has an eerie quality engendered by confusing patterns of vegetation that bamboozle even the locals, by the supernatural beings believed to inhabit the area and by the totemic narrative that has survived the vicissitudes of European contact. The practices that are adhered to (essential for continued well-being) add yet another texture to this rich cultural landscape of features/places, people, stories and beliefs.

This concept of a cultural landscape constitutes the indigenous 'cultural heritage' for this area. The survival of this cultural heritage is therefore linked to the general survival of the physical landscape, although this does not imply that pristine conditions pertain. In the north, sand dunes (and the middens contained within them) have suffered significant erosion. This may have been initiated by the hooved animals associated with Somerset and exacerbated by high seas. Otherwise there are only a few tracks that are difficult to navigate, limiting access by tourists who visit the 'Tip' in droves during the Dry season. For locals, these tracks are used by hunting, fishing and gathering parties who frequent particular areas (such as Yanyera and Sandago) that are favoured for particular resources (Greer 1996a; McIntyre-Tamwoy and Harrison 2004).

The endurance of the totemic narrative and other aspects of contemporary practice are perhaps intimately related to local access to this landscape, as if the collision of people, beliefs and places had the effect of playing and replaying this story. Some landscape features and archaeological sites seem particularly potent in this regard. For example on first hearing the story of the boy and his mother, a young man working with us remarked that the pool we had seen the previous day at Yanyera must have been one of the places 'that boy' emerged. Similarly, the sudden appearance of artefacts on the shores of Lake Wicheura and the ill health experienced by the team prior to 'introduction' at Sandago were not surprising but rather predictable.

'Irruptions', portals and webs of connection

Sansom's (2001) description of 'irruptions' - when Dreamings erupt into everyday life - may be useful here. He says that irruptions are initiated in response to cosmological challenge:

To undo uncertainties, Dreamings reassert themselves and, by irruption, show forth their continuing relevance and truth and sway. With irruption, that which is numinous - the holy - confronts and amazes the human witness to create new facts. Agency switches as the unsolicited Dreaming volunteers its acts, snatching the initiative away from human subjects. (Sansom 2001: 27)

Sansom sees 'the irruptive holy' (e.g. the interpretation of the pool observed at Yanyera) as unemplaced, 'secondary elaborations' of Dreamings that '...serve a purpose in their brief

time and have no great capacity to survive in social memory' (Sansom 2001: 30). This purpose revolves around confirming or reconfirming the 'eternal sacred' (in this case, the story of the boy and his mother). The appearance of artefacts on the shores of Lake Wicheura could also be described as an irruption; similarly the ill health experienced by the team while at Sandago. Archaeological sites by their very nature incorporate the subsurface and so may connect with the subsurface travels of the boy as he makes his way towards Payra. In this scenario, archaeological sites are liminal places: borderlands, where 'normal' human limitations are suspended.

The concept of heritage places as 'portals' may be useful here. A portal is a gate or entrance way, providing access to what is beyond. In the internet era, it is a website that provides links to information and other (related) websites. In the human body, the portal system which is fundamental in relation to one's life force is an opening in the liver through which the portal vein passes. A portal then is a gateway that provides access to other information that is embedded within a web of connections. They are the spaces in which confirming 'irruptions' can occur. It is the way of science to categorize and compartmentalize information and this has influenced the way that we conceptualize and manage heritage places. But the heritage story for places like the East Coast strip lies in this web of interconnections – a sea of practices connected in time and space.

Acknowledgements

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