

The Production of Political, Cultural, and Economic Well-Being at the Belyuen Aboriginal
Community, Northern Territory of Australia.

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ABSTRACT

The Production of Political, Cultural, and Economic Well-Being at the Belyuen Aboriginal Community, Northern Territory of Australia.

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This dissertation describes an Australian Aboriginal group's confrontation with and contestation of Anglo-Australian political and economic rhetoric and structures as they attempt to produce the local countryside, their own economic well-being, and their historical and cultural identity. I present this confrontation through the lens of the Belyuen Aboriginal community on the Cox Peninsula, NT, Australia and through Western philosophical, ethnographic, exploration, and popular texts. Central questions are, how do Belyuen Aborigines understand labor and speech to affect a sentient, agentive countryside? What do they understand themselves to be accomplishing when they act and speak at various sites and how does this understanding affect how they organize their activity? How do Anglo political-economic notions of what are 'hunters-and-gatherers' confront and influence local Aborigines' attempts to produce and to control the countryside, their history, and their identity? I claim that Belyuen Aborigines primarily assess the productive power of a social group by how country and human bodies reflect the character of the other during everyday settlement and food collection activities.

In three sections I examine how Belyuen people and Western theorists interrelate three types of productivity: the production of people and the countryside, the production of economic well-being, and the production of history and cultural identity. My thesis and results are based on eleven month's fieldwork in 1984-85, one month's fieldwork in 1987, and fourteen month's fieldwork in 1989-1990 during which time I collected quantitative, social, and conversational data from 634 hunting and gathering trips. This dissertation includes transcripts of people's discussion of their historical and cultural uses of the Cox Peninsula and Daly River regions.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I first went to Belyuen in the fall of 1984 I was twenty-two, I had just graduated from the "Great Books Program" at St. John's College in Santa Fe and, in spite of or because of its curriculum, I was interested in the links between women's political power and authority and their roles in local and national economies. I thought Aboriginal Australia would be a good place to look at this topic (Hamilton 1975; Bell 1982, 1987; Sansom 1978) and so I applied for and received a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to undertake a project on Australian Aboriginal women's changing political life. The circumstances by which I ended up at Belyuen were not as well-planned as the project itself. After arriving in Darwin in September 1984, I bought a small motorbike and traveled around the Darwin region, eventually winding up on the northern coast of the Cox Peninsula where I decided to camp. Although my small tent was suitably "camp-like," the beach where I decided to spend a few weeks was within a small white residential development, at the time some dozen small houses: this was not a remote area across the Darwin harbour I could see the downtown skyline and continental planes landing and taking off.

Unknown to me, the Belyuen Community Council and the school principal were looking for someone to write a government grant for funds to start a child-care program at the Belyuen Women's Centre. Belyuen is located some fifteen miles inland from where I was camped (see Map 1). The entire area is typical of the Top End coastal environment which I describe in due course. Camping next to me on the beach was the sister of another of the Belyuen school teachers. I described to her what I was supposed to be doing in Australia and she told her sister. In short time, I had met with the principal of

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the school and had agreed to write the grant, thinking it would be a good way of meeting people at Belyuen.

The purpose for and way in which I first traveled to Belyuen set many of the conditions of how I was perceived and incorporated into the community and so set many of the conditions for later trips I made to the community "as an anthropologist." Probably of greatest significance was the fact that I was *not* perceived as an anthropologist or government official when I first arrived at Belyuen. I was a young white American woman who had traveled from overseas in order to write a grant for a local child care program: an activity that was interpreted as working to trick the government into providing women with needed funds to start a food bank. During the first few weeks of my stay I dug trenches that were to be sandpits for children, mowed down towering grass in the front of the "Women's Centre," and chopped through a thick undergrowth that had reclaimed the area behind the building in order to make a "playground." All the time women and men watched me, commented on the efficiency and quality of my work, or simply laughed to see me whacking away in the back of the building. When the trench for the sandpit was finally done we faced the questions of who should get the sand and from where. Marjorie Bilbil, an Aboriginal woman who was the Adult Education Assistant in charge of the day-to-day operation of the Women's Centre, noted that, no matter where we went, we should bring some kids so that they could have a snack of sea snails and fish: "the sea breeze and salt water food will make them strong." And "we should get away from this Delissaville (Belyuen) and look around for something; make us feel good." The 'something' we would find, I would soon learn, included foods and materials as well as one's own cultural identity and history. At the time, Marjorie's daughter replied that maybe the kids and we should just stay, go fishing in the sandpit, and look around for something in the backyard. Everyone started laughing and I began to understand that the

pit I was digging was not for the kids at Belyuen and that there was a difference between the signs and symbols one produced to convince "government," or Anglos in general, and the signs and activities that produced meaning for Belyuen families. I learned this latter point most completely during the time I spent with older women "looking around for something" in the bush.

My learning about Belyuen men and women and their learning about me did not usually occur in the kind of epiphany I just suggested, rather it has been a slow process. People watched and observed my behaviour and slowly began to explain to me what I should and should not do and the ways I was and was not like other Anglos they had kept notes on, so to speak. Women now tell me stories of how they first perceived me and how my personality has changed since then. According to a good friend and classificatory aunt, Betty Bilawag, I came to their community as a "lost person" -- someone who was wandering without a home, an orphan (mangenta). I did not have much money or a job, was without "nice" clothes, and covered with sores. The older women took me in, gave me a place in their families, and slowly trained me, until now before them stands a "doctor." People living at Belyuen had seen and worked with many other "real doctors": while mainly older people remember fondly Professor A. P. Elkin with his bottle glasses and slim build, almost everyone on the community knows Maria Brandl, Michael Walsh, and other anthropologists and linguistics who have studied in the community or helped it with the Kenbi Land Claim which I will discuss in a moment. But women point out that I was not like them. I lacked their stature: I was young, worked for Marjorie Bilbil, the Aboriginal Adult Educator who quickly became my "mother," and Bill Turner, the former principal of the Belyuen school, and walked around the bush looking for foods rather than asking about them.

Perhaps because I was not an anthropologist, during this first trip I was more

interested in "experiencing" the political power and economic practices of Belyuen women than in keeping a detailed record of them. I did keep journals and notebooks, but now I look back on them as an "anthropologist" and often wish I had speculated less on the causes and meanings of the activities in which I was participating and had written more about the events themselves: what exactly happened, where, to whom, what were earlier events in the day that precipitated later ones. But, unintentionally, because I did not ask many directed, data-oriented questions I got a funny reputation: I was there to learn about "Aboriginal culture," as they put it, but I did not "askimbet question-question all a time." I did, in fact, ask many questions and was chastised at times for asking the wrong question. But their fiction of the young woman who came to Belyuen as a wandering person, stayed, worked for them, and found a sense of self and purpose is as much a constant reminder to me of what I should do as it is a memory of what I did (Myers 1986).

The story they tell is not a complete fiction, of course, and that is why it is a powerful fiction. I did, in fact, work on the grant and in the bush for older women and men which has deeply affected the way I perceive myself and "community." During the first year, I spent on average three days a week "hunting" with a group of mainly women and children but often including one or more of the women's husbands or sons. Having traded my motorbike for a "bitsidup" (beat-up) Toyota landcruiser, I went with them to where they said foods were coming in and going out of season. During the end of my stay I camped with two senior women, the cousins Maudie Bennett and Betty Bilawag and Maudie's husband Stephen, and an assortment of other relatives who would come to "our camp" during the weekends or the Dry season school holidays. In the bush; as in the community, I was the youngest and so was considered the worker: I chopped the wood, hauled the water, and drove people around the bush and community.

If they enjoyed having and seeing a white woman hauling water and wood, I enjoyed the country around Belyuen. It reminded me of the Louisiana woods and bayous in which I had spent a large part of my young adult life. During trips to various hunting grounds, women and I began to talk about "my country": what the landscape was like, what foods you could get from it. I described to them how the woods in which I had collected blackberries and yabbies (crawdads) and had caught snapping turtles had been cleared to build a suburb and they began to tell me about their fight to wrest the Cox Peninsula away from the "government" who wanted to "swallow the land." They said that if the government won, they would be stuck inside the Belyuen community, a place to which they had strong sentimental and cultural ties and strong ambivalences because of the social and economic stresses that, I know now, are all too common to sedentary Australian Aboriginal communities. Women often compared the "war" between "the government" and the "community" over the use and control of the Cox Peninsula as an choice between a way of life filled with social and economic stress and one filled with the sounds and signs of "bush-life"; that is, an opposition between the quality of life within and without the small Belyuen community. Indeed, motivations for "going bush" can be attributed both to the joy of hunting and to the joy of leaving community tensions for a day or for the Dry season: "let's leave this Belyuen trouble for a bit, go bush where it's quiet."

No matter the motivations for "going bush" once there, few people have not been impressed by both the skill of Aborigines' hunting and gathering practices and the attention they pay to the meaning of their actions. In a discussion of religion, totemism and symbolism, W.E.H. Stanner, who worked for many years on the northwest coast of the Northern Territory, wrote that Aborigines were preoccupied "one could almost say" obsessed "with the signs symbols, means, portents, tokens, and evidences of vitality" of

the spiritual world within the material world (1965a: 217). And indeed during the common, everyday trips we went on, women and men were always both collecting foods and collecting meanings emanating from the effect of their activity in and on the surrounding countryside. People constantly commented on the meaningful import of what they had collected or what events had happened while they were hunting. What, for example, was the meaning of a dove's cry just after an older women had found a particularly large yam?

Along with learning about the *habitus* of the bush, during this first year I also learned a little of what it was like to live in the legal environment created by the passage of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. For someone who had gone to Australia to learn about Aboriginal women's changing political and economic life, I was woefully ignorant of the legal conditions within which they lived. I was to receive a lesson about what it is like to live with your identity and subsequent economic rights to resources constantly on the line. It is useful here to summarize the background to the Kenbi Land Claim because Belyuen families have been involved with it for over more than twelve years.

The Kenbi Land Claim was lodged in 1979 by Maria Brandl, Adrienne Haritos, and Michael Brandl on behalf of the danggalaba clan, a patrilineally defined Laragiya group for lands roughly corresponding to the Cox Peninsula, Bynoe Harbour, and Port Patterson regions (cf. Brandl, Haritos, and Walsh 1979). The claim was the culmination of earlier work conducted by Maria Brandl in the 1970s. The Land Rights Act established a legal mechanism whereby Aboriginal groups could sue for the return of their traditional lands. The Act provided a legal mechanism for "a local descent group of Aboriginal who - (a) have common spiritual affiliation to a site on the land, being affiliation that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and

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for the land; and (b) are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage as of right over that land" to sue for the return of their "traditional country." The legislation also created Land Councils to administer the Act and to work on behalf of the Aboriginal constituency in their area. I discuss the history behind this piece of legislation later.

While the Kenbi Land Claim submitted in 1979 was on behalf of the danggalaba clan, a prior claim for just a few of the Port Patterson islands had been lodged on behalf of a "mixed" group of claimants. This earlier claim, written in main by Maria Brandl, included people and families representing the wide variety of 'totemic' and language groups living at Belyuen, including the Laragiya and the Daly River groups (Kiyuk, Wadjigiyn, Emi, Mentha, and Mariammu people). This mixed claimant group reflected the social conditions that Maria Brandl originally encountered in the Cox Peninsula region; that is, while most Aboriginal people living in Darwin and at Belyuen recognized the land under claim as "belonging to the Laragiya," knowledge of the historical and mythic events that occurred in this land was "held" and known by the people who lived at Belyuen, in main, people whose paternal and maternal totemic connections were to the Daly River. Members of the Wagaitj and coastal Beringgen were and would remain the primary informants for the Kenbi Land Claim lodged in 1979 on behalf of the Laragiya danggalaba clan. Although the 1979 claim was lodged on behalf of a smaller, more narrowly defined patrilineal group, the authors of the claim book continued to emphasize the mixed nature of Aboriginal social, ceremonial, economic, and political life on the Cox Peninsula, a point they would continue to make into the 1990s (cf. Brandl, Haritos, Walsh 1979; Brandl and Walsh 1983; Walsh 1989).

The Kenbi Claim was challenged by the Northern Territory Government on a number of grounds which delayed the hearing of the claim for ten years. These are reviewed in Ten Years On, a "third claim" submitted in 1989. In Ten Years On, using a

new "language group model," the claimant group was expanded from the danggalaba clan to include all people who recognized themselves and were recognized by others within the group to have a filial connection to a Laragiya foreparent. The expansion of the claimant group reflected the growing awareness of the wider Laragiya community of their rights under the Aboriginal land claim legislation and the growing knowledge and expertise of the anthropologists and lawyers who represented the claimants (Walsh 1989a).

Moreover, in 1989, Olga Singh, the last person living at Belyuen who had a patrilineal link to the danggalaba clan and extensive knowledge of the claim area, died tragically. As in the previous claim books, in this third one, the critical role that the "Wagaitj" (a loose confederation of coastal Daly River families living at Belyuen) played in maintaining the life and transmitting knowledge of the mythic countryside was once again emphasized. But they were not listed as claimants.

The claim was finally heard over several months of 1989 and 1990. In the course of the hearing, however, the claimant group shifted one more time. Because of the dominant role that the Belyuen Wagaitj played in the hearing they were added as claimants along with the Laragiya (Walsh 1989b). The claim had, in some sense, come full circle: all the Aboriginal groups with a historical, economic, and religious interest in the country were presented as possible "landowners"; a position that was challenged by some Laragiya. But in 1990, the Aboriginal Lands Commission, Maurice Olney, ruled that no group presented by the Northern Land Council could be considered a traditional owner in the sense of Land Rights Act.

Although I would begin working with Belyuen and Laragiya families on the Kenbi Land Claim in 1989, my first knowledge of it was filtered through Belyuen Aborigines' experience of being identified as either an "owner" as was the case for the Laragiya on the community or as a migrant group as was the case for the Wagaitj and coastal

Beringgen. Although the Act provides safeguards for Aborigines "who are not living at a place on the traditional country of the tribe or linguistic group to which they belong but desire to live at such place" (Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976: 50[4]) people within the community perceived themselves as being split into separate groups based on one part of their "law": the descent of country affiliation through one's father. This split was especially distressing since families from all the "language groups" at Belyuen had lived and intermarried for as long as people could remember. Not only, said men and women, did the land claim ignore the marriage ties that people had forged between themselves, it also ignored the effect of their historical interaction with the mythic countryside. Women, in particular, continually called to my attention the effect their day-to-day economic activities had on the life of the country: it responded to their presence and their words in a positive way, providing foods and their mythic identity. Over and over women claimed that the country "sabis" (both hears and knows) them and that their camping, hunting, and traveling through the country "grows up these places." They constantly demanded that I use my own experience as verification of their claim. They said that I had been on trips with older women and had seen dreamings rise from the edge of the sea, heard the voices of nyoitj (devildevils) in the mangroves, watched how yams appeared large and sweet when people with the "right sweat" went digging for them. To the complex relationship between themselves and the country, they compared the singular emphasis of the land claim on a timeless, mainly patrilineal connection between people and stretch of land.

In 1985 I returned to the States and entered Yale graduate school in anthropology. In 1987, I returned to Belyuen for two months in June and July with money from Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society and the Williams Fund. My change of status and return to the community, according to what Belyuen men and women tell me, continued

to reflect their own status and identity: I was a foreigner who came back to the Cox Peninsula to learn "more and more" in part because of my sentiment for them and the country and in part because the country had "gotten inside" me: it claimed me as much as I claimed it. This clearly reflected, in part, how they perceived their own attachment to the region.

In 1989-1990 I returned once again for fourteen months with a full-fledged anthropological project funded by the National Science Foundation, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and the Yale International and Areas Studies Center. I was to study a variation of my initial interest in women's political power and authority and their role in local and national economies. Women now described my research as collecting "proof" that Belyuen people did what they said they did. "Maybe," they said, "that government will believe you," with the obvious implication that the government would not believe them. I also began to see my research as such, not as a recording of facts, but as a representation of one group's practice to another group ("government") who had the power to restrict that practice. In particular, I wanted to understand, and this ethnography attempts to show, how Belyuen perceive their economic practices to produce the signs and symbols normally associated with Australian Aboriginal religious life and how the rights and ties that arise from the historical, economic, and practical relationship between a group of people and a stretch of country can be seen as a "primary" way by which Aborigines and the country come to own one another.

This dissertation is a meager representation of the depth of thought, the skill of living, and the verbal imagination of the Aboriginal women and men who live at Belyuen. I cannot thank them enough not only "for this dissertation" but also for deeply influencing how I think about myself and my community and for the delight of their company. In particular I wish to thank Betty Bilawag, Marjorie Bilbil, Alice Djarug,

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Other people have helped in the research and writing of this ethnography in a variety of ways. In Australia Ian Grey, David Parsons, Adrienne Haritos, Patrick McConvell, Francesca Merlan, Frank McKeown and the Northern Land Council, Bill and Djidjilia Turner, Maria Brandl, Ros Fraser, and especially Michael Walsh have acted as sponsors, provided shoes or places to stay during my trips to Darwin and Sydney, offered critical perspectives on the intersection of anthropology and law, and, in one instance, extended me a "husband" and two sons.

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INTRODUCTION.

This dissertation describes an Australian Aboriginal group's confrontation with and contestation of Anglo-Australian political and economic rhetoric and structures as they attempt to produce the local countryside, and their own economic well-being and historical and cultural identity. I present this confrontation through the lens of the Belyuen Aboriginal community on the Cox Peninsula, NT, Australia and through Western philosophical, ethnographic, exploration, and popular texts. Central questions are, how do Aborigines understand 'labor and speech' to affect a sentient, agentive countryside? What do they understand themselves to be accomplishing when they act and speak at various sites and how does this understanding affect how they organize their activity? How do Anglo political-economic notions of what are 'hunters-and-gatherers' confront and influence local Aborigines' attempts to produce and to control the countryside, their history, and their identity? How do theories of hunter-gathering culture and economy shape what an ethnographer has conventionally portrayed Aborigines as "really doing" in the past and in the present? How does each group, and competing interests within each group, represent and evaluate their own and the other's culture and economy? These are not disinterested questions. Belyuen and Darwin Aborigines have been engaged in a land claim for the last twelve years. Recently, the Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Commissioner rejected the claim. Western models of productivity, traditionality (and history), and cultural identity played a significant role in the way the claim was evaluated. Because Belyuen Aborigines and Anglo-Australians produce in the same region, often in the same place, I highlight the conflicts and connections between groups using the Cox Peninsula as they have entwined, adapted, and unravelled over time.

This dissertation broadly reflects and addresses recent trends in the study of culture and political economy (Appadurai 1986; Donham 1990; Roseberry 1989). I examine how people speak about and symbolize activity (or productivity), the countryside, and human bodies. Aboriginal culture is both a lived symbolic world and a "thing" (a commodity) that can be weak or strong, theirs or ours, live or dead, put on display or held out of sight. The 'market' for traditional Aboriginal culture is located within the Belyuen community and within multicultural Australia. In both, groups compete over status and set a high price on cultural coherence and difference. These two locales dwell in and permeate one another, and so I examine how Aboriginal culture is contested and constructed in conversations and texts as I describe lived aspects of it. Recently, Donald Donham has attempted to reformulate the relationship between power, ideology, and history in *Marxist Anthropology* (1990). He argues, "concepts [that] may strike us as strangely noneconomic" powerfully organize and maintain "material inequalities" (196).¹ Aboriginal notions of the effect of human sweat and speech on the productivity of the countryside are certainly concepts that seem noneconomic, but I emphasize them in my description of Belyuen productive activity and oppose them to a Western economic model of work and leisure. I do so because the power, ideology, and history of Western theories of non-capitalist social formations impede and influence how Aborigines represent and understand their social, cultural, and economic productivity.

While some scholars present a focus on the material basis of power as opposed to a focus on the politics of its representation or vice versa, I attempt to investigate and to portray the tension between the two, especially the ideology and politics of

¹ Karl Polanyi writes, "Neither the process of production nor that of distribution is linked to specific economic interests attached to the possession of goods; but every single step in that process is geared to a number of social interests which eventually ensure that the required step be taken. These interests will be very different in a small hunting or fishing community from those in a vast despotic society, but *in either case the economic system will be run on noneconomic motives*" (1944: 46, my emphasis).

19th century Humanism and of present land politics in north Australia. Here advances in feminist theory and the anthropology of gender are critical to my study. Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, and Cohen note that over the last forty years feminist theory has examined 'postmodernist' interests such as "that culture is composed of seriously contested codes of meaning, that language and politics are inseparable, and that constructing the 'other' entails relations of domination" (1989: 11). Micaela di Leonardo has more recently written that researchers must pay attention to "the existence of a real material world, of living beings, of humans living in varying social formations, [and] of political struggle in history over the contours of power" (1991: 27). So while in many ways, this dissertation reflects 'modern ethnography's' interest in conjunctures and the perpetual displacement of culture (Clifford 1988), I highlight the economic and power structures that mediate the perpetual motion machine. High and low culture may be a modernist mirage, but the politics of people's placement within one or the other category requires examination. The investigation of Aborigines' productive power and its representation forms the backbone and backdrop to all three sections of this dissertation.

A focus on representation is important not only because Westerners and Aborigines competitively portray one another's productive activities, but also because Belyuen people represent themselves to others, and I represent them and myself, as a 'community.' Belyuen peoples' perspective is rooted in their historical relationship to the Cox Peninsula and Daly River lands, and my perspective is rooted in theirs. Other Aboriginal groups have very different ideas about how people should relate to a stretch of country. And although I portray young and old, men's and women's economic and social practices and how they represent them, my understanding and portrait of community history and cosmology are most intimately though not exclusively grounded in my long-term relationship with senior Belyuen women. This concentration reflects my own interests, the distribution of knowledge at Belyuen, and my assigned and

assumed place within the community as an unmarried 'middle-aged' woman -- an apprentice to and worker for senior women. Guided by other female anthropologists' experiences, I can assume that senior women would always have been my teachers (Bell 1983; Merlan 1988; Reid 1983). At Belyuen these same women also happen to be those to whom the entire community turns for historical and cultural information; my reliance on their knowledge reflects the social organization of the Belyuen community at the time of my fieldwork, spanning 1984-1990. My place in the community and, therefore, the 'partiality' of my account is simply and most subtly the difference between being an anthropologist in a body and being an anthropologist on paper. Such a difference is most stark in societies such as Aboriginal Australia and the Islamic Middle East (cf. Abu-Lughod 1986), but something all anthropologists encounter and few report.

It is my claim that, for Belyuen Aborigines, the health of country and people depends upon the mutual, positive action and reaction of each to the other. Mythic vistas and ordinary jungle patches absorb and judge the physical sounds and smells and the ceremonial names and social identities of local Aborigines who walk by them. If offended, the country can inflict humans with ill-luck, or worse, mental and physical disease. Aborigines also judge the relative merits of and absorb the natural and ceremonial aspects of different places. Aborigines say, for a variety of historical and ceremonial reasons, that some places react safely and others dangerously to the presence of different ethnic, sexed, and age groups. When a party visits a place, it makes a certain claim about its rights to a stretch of country. The group claims that the country reacts positively to their presence, and, further, that their activity gives the country its productivity and health as water gives life to the soil. Acting in and speaking to a place "performs" and demonstrates the goodwill between people and place; the relationship exists most demonstrably in its enactment. The country performs its good will towards a human group by providing personal (so called

conception) dreamings which physically mark the human form through birth anomalies, foods that feed the group, and names by which people come to know themselves. Physical life may not be immediately threatened, but, without verbal and physical interaction between people and places, local Belyuen Aborigines say that the vitality of each is eaten away.

Local understandings of the relationship between human bodies, language, and the country are derived not only from the effect of Aboriginal activities, but also from the effects of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal historical interaction on the Cox Peninsula. So while, as David Biernoff has noted, places derive their safety and danger from mythic and historic events in a place, Aborigines and their ancestors need not have carried them out. Belyuen Aborigines compare how the country reacts to different Aboriginal social groups and to Anglo-Australians. They base their comparisons on their own and their parents' lifetime association with the horrors of colonial and postcolonial Australian policy. Anglo-Australians base their policy on Aborigines' economic and social status as a, so called, "hunter and gathering society"² and on Western notions of national types. How does Aborigines' identity as a "hunter-gatherer group" influence how Anglo-Australians, who control economic resources, perceive their land activities? What effect does Anglo-Australian distribution of economic resources have on Belyuen Aborigines' activity more generally? How do the various social groups within Belyuen differently experience and portray their productive practices? I use a variety of historical texts (exploration journals, classical political-economic tracts, colonial and postcolonial newspaper articles, and autobiography) to explore these questions and an analysis of present food collection and settlement practices.

² I use the phrase 'hunter-and-gatherer' or the word 'hunter' rather than the term 'forager' to describe the practice of food collection rather than the term foraging because of the latter's association with nonhuman activity.

Students of Australian Aborigines cannot be surprised to learn that Belyuen people believe the productivity or health of the country is shaped by language use and the human body's age, sex, and ceremonial status and that Belyuen Aborigines believe that country and people mutually constitute each other's form and identity. One thinks of A.P. Elkin's description of Aboriginal clevermen's reception and use of powers received from "the Sky-Culture Heroes and the eternal dream-time ancestors" (1980: 32). However, most research has focused on ritual or magical aspects of Aboriginal men's and women's relationship to country; little has examined how Aborigines conceptualize the effect of everyday human activity on the country or the relationship between local understandings of effective, productive activity and historical, Western-derived notions of hunter-gatherer culture and economy. The study of the interaction between the everyday and the historical is critical if we are to describe Belyuen Aborigines' land and settlement practices, the conflicts that arise between different visions of land development in north Australia, and the cultural and historical limits of the hunter-gathering model (cf. Myers 1988). Examining how various Aboriginal and Anglo groups understand the countryside, economic well-being, and historical and cultural identity to be produced allows me to comment upon the ethnographic division of Aboriginal society along cultural and economic lines.

At the height of the colonial period, Australian Aborigines caught the imagination of Western readers hot on the trail of the exotic, looking for new puzzles to find and to unravel in the world of culture and society. Australian Aboriginal groups provided a unique and startling set of socio-economic and cultural contradictions to the prevalent "four stages theory" in which a "society 'naturally' or 'normally' progressed over time through four more or less distinct and consecutive stages, each corresponding to a different mode of subsistence" (Meek 1976: 2). Throughout the antipodean continent, Aboriginal groups, while maintaining the "rudest" of economic practices, had complex social systems that supported a rich conceptual system

nowadays popularly known as "The Dreaming" or "The Dreamtime." Ethnographers and popular writers often presented a schizophrenic portrait of Australian people: by day, Pleistocene foragers scattered across the landscape grubbing out a living, by night, serious social scientists devising a social structure of "surprising complexity" and using it to 'sing' the world into being (Stanner 1979: 33). Popular movies have developed the earlier Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde portrait. In *The Last Wave*, for example, viewers discover that the innocuous fringe-dwellers they see roaming the byways of Sydney carry on complex and powerful stone-age rites in the night-like darkness of the sewers. Their "foraging" way of life may not be powerful enough to withstand civilization's onslaught, but Aborigines' social and ceremonial complexes survive intact alongside, or figuratively and formatively below, the apex of Western civilization: the modern metropolitan city.

Even W.E.H. Stanner, a powerful and incisive writer on the Aboriginal philosophy commonly known as "The Dreaming," argued that economy and culture differently influenced the shape and function of the social group. Although Aborigines' "metaphysical outlook" allowed them to see a oneness and "a unity" between "two persons, such as two siblings or a grandparent and grandchild; or a living man and something inanimate, as when he tells you that, say, the wollybutt tree, a totem, is his wife's brother" (25), their economic outlook was "direct" and unmediated, influenced as it was by the relentless, rhythmic, change of the seasons.³ Aborigines were led from hill to dale by "the seasonal food supply"; the creative side of Aboriginal life was "concentrated on the social rather than on the metaphysical or the materials side"

³ R.M.Berndt, another Australianist well-known for his portraits of the Australian "Dreaming," writes, "[a]ll Aborigines, whatever their socio-cultural perspective, were *directly* dependent on the land and what it produced -- or, if we want to put it more generally, on nature, with *land as the constant factor*, even though its outward manifestation changed from season to season. But this seasonal fluctuation, notwithstanding drought or flood, famine or plenty, was *on the whole constant and predictable*" (1970a: 1, my emphasis).

(Stanner 1979: 33). How could Westerners understand Australian Aboriginal society which was at once socio-culturally complex and economically simple?

It would be a historical misreading to claim that ethnographers did not attempt to bridge the gap they created between Aboriginal socio-cultural and material-economic practices.⁴ The literature describes the complex way that Australian Aborigines conceived of the human body: at once individual and social, and created and maintained by cosmological and environmental factors. In the early 1930s and 40s, such eminent Australianists as R. M. Berndt (1946-47), A. P. Elkin (1936-37), P. Kaberry (1935-36), and W.E.H. Stanner (1932-34, 1966) wrote articles about how northern Aboriginal groups understood humans and stretches of land to register social interaction, spiritual and magical penetration and manipulation, and appropriate and inappropriate activity in the countryside. If one can generalize from this rich and diverse literature, three common points are relevant here: (1) Northern Australian Aborigines attempt to activate the growth or power of humans, natural species, and mythic creatures by singing to or otherwise marking mythic sites and human bodies; (2) These groups see the transformation of healthy bodies into sick or unproductive bodies as a sign of ceremonial or magical interference; and (3) they are especially aware of the submergence and emergence ("swallowing and regurgitating," cf. Hiatt 1975) of mythic Dreamtime ancestors and magical objects into human bodies and stretches of country.

For all the interconnections they described existing between culture and economy, early ethnographers portrayed Aboriginal society as composed of two fairly

⁴ Stanner sometimes seems to view Australian Aboriginal metaphysics as complex as the social system and sometimes as simple as the economic system. But the gap between extreme complexity and extreme simplicity remains: "[t]he [social] complexity is in the most striking contrast with the comparative simplicity which rules in the two other departments of Aboriginal life -- the material culture, on the one hand, and the ideational or metaphysical culture on the other. We have, I think, to try to account for this contrast in some way" (Stanner 1979: 33).

distinct parts: a direct, empirical side consisting of social rules for regulating human activity and land-use, and a symbolic, non-empirical side which consisted of an "additional *quality* which the bare social relationship itself did not define" (R. Berndt 1970a: 1). Anthropologists state that this latter side of Aboriginal society was a spiritual, totemic relationship, expressed in myth and rite, between a human group and a stretch of land that was its "country."⁵ Practical, everyday interactions between a stretch of country and a group of people were treated as a side issue to the exegesis of the "deep meaning" and "spirit" of myth. Posited as direct and unmediated, the practicalities of economy paled in comparison to the elaborations of myth. Myth lay at the spiritual root of Australian Aborigines' relationship to a stretch of country. Events that occurred during the colonial and postcolonial upheaval were seen to sever this pure and unchanging root. Ethnographers theorized that the timelessness of myth and the constant and regular progression of seasons formed a people for whom history was meaningless.⁶ In this model, the historical changes that Anglo colonists brought to the world down under produced an irreconcilable rupture; no compromise exists between the ways Aborigines perceived country in the past and the ways they perceive and use it in the present. The idealizations and distortions contained in these

⁵ The definition I am using for "traditional country" is fairly simple, a region or tract of land from which a people come. I distinguish my use of "country" from "land." The latter is too closely associated with the Western legal sense of a portion of earth considered to belong to an individual or group. Many authors have noted that Aborigines do not conceive of themselves "owning" land any more than a child owns its parents, although the child's responsibility for its parents grows over time.

⁶ In his famous essay "The Dreaming," W.E.H. Stanner writes, "A central meaning of The Dreaming is that of a sacred, heroic time long ago when man and nature came to be as they are; but neither 'time' nor 'history' as we understand them is involved in this meaning. I have never been able to discover any Aboriginal word for *time* as an abstract concept. And the sense of 'history' is wholly alien here. We shall not understand The Dreaming fully except as a complex of meanings. A blackfellow may call his totem, or the place from which his spirit came, his Dreaming. He may also explain the existence of a custom, or law of life, as causally due to The Dreaming (1979: 23). Eric Wolf's text Europe and A People Without History (1982) should also be read in this context.

views would come back to haunt Aboriginal groups and their advocates in the land rights litigation of the 1970s and 80s.

To some extent, the portrayal of relations between persons, peoples, and countries as principally mythic, spiritual, ritual, and religious is attributable to the conditions of ethnographic fieldwork up until the 1960s. Much of the ethnography of Aboriginal Australia was of the "salvage" variety and had to be conducted among linguistically-mixed sets of people living on the fringes of small towns, on cattle stations, in mission or government settlements. With some notable but limited exceptions (cf. Thomson 1939), the ethnographer rarely lived with or encountered people while they themselves were living in places they regarded as their own countries. It is of course likely that most Aboriginal people living in the "outback" have continued to try to some extent to live off the lands all too seldom available to them for hunting and gathering; not many who have survived would have done so otherwise. Ethnographers, however, if we are to judge by what they publish, have paid little attention to those activities, apparently regarding them as little more than ancillary foraging with little meaningful import. Through those activities, however, some of these people have managed to maintain, or, as will be shown in due course, to create or to recreate deeply meaningful connections between persons, groups, and countries that certainly include but yet go far beyond the conceptual connections of the Dreaming. They include subtle social, conceptual, linguistic, and psychological relationships of kinds that, it seems safe to assume, were once and still are much more common in Aboriginal Australia than much ethnography would lead us to believe.

While early ethnographers were struck by the gulf between the complexity of Aboriginal sociocultural systems and the simplicity of their economic systems, over time this perceived gulf became an analytic divide that explained the Aboriginal social formations fieldworkers encountered. Theorists asked, what was the relationship between the patrilineal group who "owned" the rights to certain stretches of land and

the looser confederations of people who actually lived and traveled through these places? In order to answer this question, anthropologists juxtaposed the formal social rules for determining a group who had spiritual rights to a place to the practical requirements for constituting a viable foraging group. Many scholars have discussed this juxtaposition and it is useful here to summarise some of their work here so as to situate the argument of this dissertation in respect to it.

In the early 1960s a debate between W.E.H. Stanner (1965a) and Les Hiatt (1962) led to the clarification of the concepts of clan and estate, on the one hand, and of horde and range on the other. Hiatt criticised A. Radcliffe-Brown's proposition that while "there are many different forms of social organization in Australia . . . they can all be regarded as different varieties of a general type"; that is, a patrilineal and patrilocal horde "owning a certain area of territory, the boundaries of which are known, and possessing in common proprietary rights over the land and its products" (1930-31: 34-35; cf. Hiatt 1962). This model came under some considerable fire since these patrilineal and patrilocal groups were hard to find "on the ground."

In defense of Radcliffe-Brown, Stanner (1965a) proposed that patrilineal defined descent groups or "clans" had spiritual ties to specific places in the land which could be considered the clan's "property" because the clan controlled the use of this land although they did not necessarily live exclusively on it. These spiritual ties were elaborated in several "totemic" or dreaming systems: rights based on the paternal or maternal descent of "totems" or "dreamings," rights to a site gained by birth at or near a site, and, in the Daly River region, rights based on a system of name-sharing (Elkin 1950). These "totemic systems" have been discussed in great detail; the discussion, in general, moving from a focus on totemism's role in the formation of social groups to a focus on the role that dreamings play in the 'politics of locality.' For instance, emphasizing the role that totemism played in the creation of integrated, well-working social systems, Claude Levi-Strauss wrote, "Australian clans may be patrilineal

or matrilineal, or else 'conceptional,' i.e., grouping together all individuals supposedly conceived in the same place" (1963: 41) but rather than totemism's oppositional structures "being an obstacle to [social] integration, [they] serve to produce it" (1963: 89). Nicolas Peterson, on the other hand, moved the discussion of totemic affiliation away from an issue of social group integration and towards a discussion of the various rights Aborigines accrue to *places* though "clan/conception totemism . . . because . . . the attachment of totems to locality is fundamental to Australian totemism" (1972: 29). Annette Hamilton extended this discussion by examining the political uses certain groups make of various dreaming systems; for example, how, in certain areas of the Western Desert, Aboriginal men are now attempting to establish a "coherent theory of patrilineal inheritance to sites and to establish patrilineally organized local groups" whereas, in the past, rights were accrued by being born "from" a particular place (1982: 85). Hamilton argues that this shift from a "descent from country" to a "descent from father" favors men's political aspirations to the detriment of women's (see also Peterson 1974; Bell 1987).

Whereas clans were organized around principles of descent articulated through a common totemic identity to a well-defined stretch of land, Stanner proposed that "hordes" were organized around the logic of the hunt and articulated through sentimental ties between "relatives and friends." Because hordes included a family group and their relatives and friends "at any moment the membership of a local group might not be determinable by a single principle" (Stanner 1965: 8). Ronald and Catherine Berndt discussed the two "groups" that fieldworkers encountered in Aboriginal Australia in somewhat similar terms. They described a land-holding group or "clan" that was patrilineally or matrilineally defined and which had "special spiritual and ritual ties," the land representing "the most obvious, most enduring, and most consistently visible, tangible focus (1964: 42). The land that this group or "clan" holds is defined by "the actual sites it claims"; and, while it cannot deny other groups access

to hunting grounds, it can deny others access to sites "where sacred objects are store" (Berndt and Berndt 1964: 42). The Berndts contrasted this group to the land-occupying group or "horde" which was defined, in main, as a hunting and gathering group (1964: 45).

Hamilton writes, "Stanner's distinction between estate and range is apparently a distinction between the 'religious' and the 'economic' systems"; whereas the clan owns the estate, the horde "does not own anything, but merely utilizes the products of a number of estates" (1982: 86). She further notes that while a "concept analogous to 'property' may be applied to the religious sphere . . . there is no equivalent concept in the 'economic' sphere" (1982: 86). Fred Myers has most sharply critiqued this "prolonged debate about the kind of groups in which Aborigines live" by arguing that, at least for the Pintupi, "territorial organization diverges markedly from such models of group closure" (1986: 71-72).

Thus, at both levels of territorial organization, residence and landownership, groups are the outcome of processes of individual choice and negotiation, influenced by demography and environmental pressures (1986: 73).

In his model the landowning group, land ownership itself, is achieved through negotiation and is "a social accomplishment, and not simply taken for granted" (1986: 72).

Many Australianists are well aware how this analytic divide between the religious and economic realms (the property rights of clans and the use rights of hordes) informed the wording of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, 1976. According to Graeme Neate, a lawyer and former staff to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner Mr. Justice Toohey, the stated purpose of the Act was to "give recognition to traditional Aboriginal rights in land, to grant Aboriginal groups secure title to their land, to provide Aborigines control over activity on their land, and to

balance the "aspirations and the competing interests of the wider Australian community" (1989: 13). The Act did so by legislating the theoretical link between the ownership rights of so-called "local descent groups" (Berndt and Berndt 1964: 42) to certain stretches of land and their spiritual attachment to that stretch of land. It provided a legal mechanism for

a local descent group of Aboriginal who -

- (a) have common spiritual affiliation to a site on the land, being affiliation that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and for the land; and
 - (b) are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage as of right over that land
- (52)

to sue for the return of their "traditional country." While the economic side of Aboriginal life was certainly acknowledged, it became a minor litmus test: the descent group must be entitled to forage as of right over the land under claim, but they did not, in practice, have to forage on it at all. Although originally only patrilineally defined descent groups were presented as land claimants, according to David Parsons, counsel on behalf of many Aboriginal groups including claimants for the region of the Cox Peninsula, Bynoe Harbour, and Port Patterson Islands (cf. Brandl, Haritos, and Walsh 1979), by the present-day "the definition has been given an extremely wide interpretation by the various Land Commissioners" to allow for the various ways Aboriginal groups organize their rights to country" (1985: 83). But what neither lawyers nor Aboriginal claimants can do is turn the legislation around and base a claim on a "hordes's" (land-using groups) economic use and attachment to a site under claim. Rights and ties that arise from the historical, economic, and practical relationship between a group of people and a stretch of country are seen as secondary to the

supposedly "primary" way that Aborigines "own" country: as a clan organized by principles of descent articulated through a totemic system.

In one of his numerous articles on the effect of the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 on Northern Territory Aborigines, Nicolas Peterson notes that while "there can be no doubt that whatever the limitations of the Aboriginal Land Right (NT) Act 1976 or the problems posed by the Northern Territory governments attitudes [towards it], it is the most important advance in the status of Aborigines since European colonization" (1982: 452). But earlier in the same article he cautions,

It is important to emphasize that the agreements, which are seen as such a positive step by many whites are in reality a final acknowledgement of defeat for the indigenous people. For in every case they consolidate the loss of land to whites and grossly reduce the rights associated with the land they have managed to retain (441).

Nancy Williams (1986) examines the roots of this historical "defeat" of Australian Aborigines' proprietary rights, discussing how it relates to: the anthropological analytic divide between the religious and the economic practices of Australian Aborigines, Western political-economic notions of private property, and Aboriginal land rights legislation. In The Yolngu and their Land, she describes and analyzes Yolngu concepts of land-use and regulation and how "perceptual barriers . . . historically explicable were instrumental in preventing legal recognition of Yolngu proprietary interest in land" (1986: 152). Examining the three prominent dimensions of the Western theory of private property in the 18th century ("genuine proprietary interests are individual, they are archetypically expressed in relation to land and the practices of agriculture, and they entail the existence of government"; 1986: 115), she argues that Western scholars and government officials moved from acting on the

developing understanding that Aborigines had what could be considered "proprietary claims" to their land to "justifying the expediency of dispossessing Aborigines of their land" (1986: 152). Williams' study is particularly valuable in its attempt to articulate the similarities *and* differences between Western and Yolngu notions of "private property". For instance, Williams argues that, while having well-developed notions of the borders between group territories, Yolngu "do not conceptualize boundaries in terms of rights of exclusive enjoyment so much as rights to allocate use to other" (1982: 131).

Through a demonstration of how Aborigines apply jural rules to their economic practice by tying together the clan's ownership of an estate to the hordes' use of a range, Williams attempts to interrelate the above two analytic categories (clan and horde, estate and range). As Fred Myers put it, for the Pintupi "to 'own' something is to have the right to be asked for it" (1982: 173). Negotiation is critical to Williams' attempt to connect the economic and the socio-religious realms for "In negotiating [subsidiary rights in land and natural resources], people bring to bear claims based on a range of factors including such things as kin ties, myth links, shared ritual obligations, affinal duties, and outstanding debts" (1982: 151; see also Sutton and Rigsby 1982). But it is important to point out that in this model Aboriginal people are still negotiating for economic rights based on social and spiritual ties to places.

In this dissertation I attempt to displace the discussion between the socio-religious, on the one hand, and the economic, on the other, by examining the pragmatic effects of Belyuen people's and the countryside's activity on each other's social and economic well-being. I do so by foregrounding how the economic activities of people (their hunting-gathering, monetary, and cultural economies) produce the identity and health of persons and country. I examine how Belyuen people see themselves and the countryside as sentient beings: subjects of actions, and as objects produced by the actions of the other. Of critical importance to my discussion are the previous works of

Fred Myers, Basil Sansom, and Kenneth Liberman which have explored the construction of personhood in Aboriginal Australia. In particular, I move from Myers' "discomfort with the notion of property itself" (1988: 53) and from Sansom's view that "Aborigines own slices of action and also the signs and symbols that attest to a person's rightful capacity to initiate the staging of events" (1982: 131) to how Anglo, Aborigines, and the countryside produce or "objectify" each other's social, cultural, and economic well-being and the "historical" and "perceptual" frames in which they do so (Williams 1986).

Therefore, rather than emphasize the effects of historical events on Aboriginal political economy and society, I emphasize the cultural tools by which northwest Aborigines understand the effect of their activity in country and in settlement. I claim that the tendency of humans and country to 'seep' into and to shape fundamentally each other's health and shape occur during everyday activities and provide a dynamic model for dealing with historical contingencies and with the intersection of culture and economy. The difference that Aborigines observe between how a mythic site emerged, or, reacted, to a social group in the past and how it reacts to the group in the present, and between the world that the mythic creature submerged into and emerged from in the past and the one it does so in the present, allows for a dynamic model of historical contingency, no matter whether, before the colonial period, Aborigines perceived that difference or not. It is good to keep in mind that Aborigines have always had to grapple with historical contingencies; for example, what to do when a patrilineal group in charge of a certain rite ceased to have a male heir (Meggitt 1965)? Throughout this dissertation I show how Belyuen Aborigines use existing cultural mechanisms to grapple with colonial and postcolonial economic conditions.

Refusing to equate historical change with cultural loss and corruption, I decline also to describe the relationship between Belyuen Aborigines and local and regional lands as "spiritual." This dissertation examines the relationship between people and

country primarily as a practical one: how do the people assess the productive relationship between social groups and countries? Whereas many ethnographers have stressed the spiritual underpinnings of Australian Aboriginal social relationships, I stress Belyuen discussions in which spiritual associations are a practical matter. How do Belyuen Aborigines produce the countryside, their personal and cultural identity, and their history? How do they contend with Western theories of the same? How do divisions between, say, culture and economy, and between the human body and the countryside disappear when viewed from a local perspective? Is Aboriginal labor something that can be assessed by a Western model of productivity in which there is a clear divide between leisure and work time? I examine how Belyuen people get to know the personality of the country and, as they see it, how the country comments on the activities of different Aboriginal groups. While the ethnographic record is filled with descriptions of local Aboriginal ceremonial and economic practices (often the actual words and deeds accompanying the practices), most ethnographies only describe in passing how acting (hunting, camping, and traveling) in country and speaking about this activity relates to a group's cultural and economic rights and practices.

Belyuen Aborigines primarily assess the productive power of a social group by how country and human bodies reflect the character of the other during everyday activities. Do human bodies gain marks such as personal dreamings from the land? Do mythic sites respond in positive or negative ways to a group of people? How has this reaction changed over time? How much sickness occurs to whom in local communities, in Darwin? How productive are the various environments on and around the Cox Peninsula, and what groups have the best luck hunting and collecting in them? These questions probe the ceremonial, cultural, and pragmatic relationship and analogies between a stretch of country and a group of people. These questions also formulate contesting notions of what speaking and acting in country can accomplish and what various mythic sites and personalities are able to signify.

While many Western and Aboriginal notions of humans and the land are compatible with or even derivable from each's perception of the other, a limiting test between Western and Aboriginal notions of productivity is found by examining what economic merits each group sees in "just sitting" at a place. Belyuen Aborigines state that "just sitting" can keep a place fertile because sitting with a site, like visiting human relations, "reminds" the site of its responsibilities for its human kin. Moreover, just sitting around and talking makes country and people mentally and physically healthy. Some Western medical practitioners place great emphasis on the mental, spiritual, and emotional aspects of health. And the Green Movement certainly argues that any economic exploitation of the soil must renew what it has extracted. But, most Western economists would have a hard time modeling the "productivity" of rest and relaxation. Other studies in the field have examined the limits that the activity of one group sets on the activity of another. Some of these studies are defined widely: they might ask, in the case of my study, how do Anglo-Australian settlement and land development restrict local Aborigines' use of the Cox Peninsula? Other "limits studies" might ask a more narrow question, again with regard to my study: how does limited weekly income influence the balance between foods Aborigines buy at markets and foods they hunt and collect from the countryside? I examine both kinds of limits on ethnic activity in the Cox Peninsula region. However, rather than exclusively foregrounding the various cultural, economic, and political limits to Aboriginal activity, I foreground the competing views of Anglos and Aborigines about how human bodies and speech affect productive activity and how the notion of a "limit" works in land conflicts.

I need to qualify a few of the terms I am using: local, production, language.

By "local" I do not mean derived exclusively from a local environment or in opposition to regional and global understandings of human groups and natural landscapes. The locality of the Cox Peninsula and the history of the people who live, visit, and have investments there, would make such a Geertzian localness hopelessly

narrow. Simply referring to "Belyuen Aborigines" invokes a two hundred year history of wide interaction between various Aboriginal groups across the continent and between Aborigines and non-Aborigines (mainly from Western Europe and Asia) on the Cox Peninsula. This history is reflected in the various names by which the Cox Peninsula and Belyuen community have been known. The medium-sized Cox Peninsula was named after Dillen Cox, an agriculturalist who had a plantation there for a short time in the 1880s. Before Cox, the Peninsula was named after W. Douglas, a failed land speculator. In the middle of the Cox Peninsula is the Belyuen Aboriginal Community, composed primarily of six Daly River language groups who were forcibly settled there in the 1930s. It too had an older name, Delissaville, after Michael De Lissa, a southern businessman, who tried in 1886 to grow sugar cane at the site but was defeated by the long months of the Dry season.

The immense diversity in the backgrounds of the old and young, men and women brought together at Belyuen by colonial and postcolonial policies calls into question the cohesion of the local identity of "Belyuen Aborigines." The "Belyuen mob," as they are commonly known in the region, come from a variety of language groups whose "traditional" countries lie on the coast to the south some three hundred kilometers away. "Belyuen" is the name of a mythic male personality associated with a waterhole in the back of the Community. Belyuen is a Laragiya site; the Laragiya territory includes the Cox Peninsula and the Darwin region. Soon after Anglo-Australians established a settlement at Port Darwin, many Laragiya gradually migrated from the Cox Peninsula to the Darwin region. Other Laragiya stayed in the region and married into Daly River families living on and around the Cox Peninsula. Why then do I say that I am looking at "local Belyuen understandings"? There are several reasons. In my mind none is more important than the fact that people who live at Belyuen have to contend with and to defend the appellation: one of the "human groups" that local Belyuen Aborigines seek to understand in relationship to the natural landscape is the "Belyuen

mob." But perhaps more significantly, a local perspective, no matter how "perpetually displaced," is indispensable because Belyuen Aborigines as a group lodge their claims for cultural, economic, and social authority on the Cox Peninsula in their local landed activities.

I examine several aspects of "language" that are important to the way that Belyuen Aborigines' conceptualize the human-country relationship. Language is important in its function as a code: for example, the ways that local languages mark sex, age, and kinship and interrelate with cultural views of the human body and the body's relationship to the countryside. I move from linguistic features of spoken languages to look at those graphic signs on bodies and in the countryside that convey cultural meanings and affect the organization of social groups. I present language's role in the organization of social groups in two ways. I look at language as a communicative tool and at the social life of the sign: how body marks are interpreted socially. How do women use language to rank the rights of different social groups to a tract of land? What is the relationship between Aborigines' and Anglo-Australians' "ways of speaking" and their ways of negotiating historical changes in group and residential composition? Second, I look at "language" as an index for grouping various people into distinct land-minding groups. The country is posited as a sentient, willful agent who gives Aboriginal groups their languages, songs, and ceremonial material, and their knowledge of the country's topography. The group that "holds" (belongs to, manages, uses) the language the country hears has a strong claim for being the "right" group for that stretch of land. Language is therefore an important mediating device for a group's claim for residential rights. A migrant or visiting group can "take up" the previous language of a place and thereby become absorbed into the previous language group's cultural milieu. A migrant or visiting Aboriginal group can also gradually overlay the landscape with new names, transcribing old names into the new language or adapting names from an old to a new language's phonology. From a local perspective,

the evolution of linguistic forms is a demonstration that the country is gradually becoming familiar with the migrant group. A new human-country relationship develops, and, eventually, neither human group nor country remembers a time when other sounds and motions filled the countryside.

I use transcripts and my notes of local Belyuen Aborigines' speech throughout this dissertation in several ways and for several reasons. While spurning the authenticity of "voices" which are located in an alien medium and context as a written dissertation, I think that records of conversational exchanges, including stories and verbal routines, are necessary to demonstrate the work of speech in organizing social groups and the cultural and historical topography of the human body and the countryside.

Finally, "productivity" is used in this dissertation in three broad senses: that is, the coming into being of countryside, economic well-being, and personal, historical, and cultural identity. This broad definition allows me to examine how our sense of "production" changes when our categories of subject-object change. How does our sense of productivity change when the land is understood as a subject who marks human groups? While local Belyuen Aborigines at times stress the health-related meanings of productivity (the effect a group's presence has on the vitality of a place), Aborigines and Anglo-Australians are arguing at some level about economic prosperity. What is the best way to keep a place and a people economically well off? My interests in this dissertation lie in articulating some historical ideas of what are effective, productive activities, what are not, and in demonstrating how these ideas relate to a local struggle between groups for control of a medium-sized Northern Territory peninsula. What do western quantitative models of local Aboriginal activity suggest about them as a group? How do local Aborigines contest this perspective?

In the course of this investigation, I cross the path a number of anthropological debates including those in gender studies, hunter-gatherer studies, the ethnography

texts school, and the study of history, culture, and political economy. I address them as I go along.

Note on languages and transcription of conversations.

Belyuen speakers switch from a local variety of Aboriginal English to three major Daly River languages: Batjema, Emiyenggal, and Marriamu (cf. Tryon 1979). I present orthographic rules that I am using in Appendix One. Although creoles have been stigmatized over the years, the study of them has increased and shown their grammatical complexity. Particularly daunting to the casual reader is the creole use of third person singular and plural, possessive, demonstrative, and object pronoun 'im.' Also, continual markers (-bet) and aspect (na or naw) also confuse the reader in a way that the sound transcripts of American English would not. I provide, therefore, a sound transcription and a 'translation' of Aboriginal English and Daly River languages within the text. I have only put in the text those segments that are necessary to the immediate argument, placing the longer versions in Appendix One. Although reading through these transcripts might prove daunting at times, it provides one with a better sense of the politics of speaking and remaining quiet, a topic that weaves through this dissertation.

Finally, the ways researchers have spelled the names of Daly River and Cox Peninsula-Darwin Aboriginal groups are varied and, at times, humorous. I use the following spellings: Laragiya, Wagaitj, Beringgen, Wadjigiyn, Kiyuk, Emiyenggal, Menthayenggal, Marriamu, and Marritjaben.

Except for the people in the acknowledgements and quoted in the Kenbi Transcripts, I use pseudonyms for all the people named in this ethnography.

CHAPTER ONE: Clever People, Clever Country: The construction of human bodies
and the countryside.

In our modern understanding, we tend to see 'mind' and 'body', 'body' and 'spirit,' 'spirit' and 'personality', 'personality' and 'name' as in some sense separate, even opposed, entities though we manage to connect them up in some fashion into the unity or oneness of 'person' or 'individual'. The blackfellow does not seem to think this way. The distinctiveness we give to 'mind', 'spirit' and 'body', and our contrast of 'body' *versus* 'spirit' are not there, and the whole notion of 'the person' is enlarged. To a blackfellow, a man's name, spirit, and shadow are 'him' in a sense which to us may seem passing strange.

W.E.H. Stanner, "The Dreaming," 1979: 25.

Introduction.

Since Western Europeans began examining Australian Aboriginal culture and society, they have been struck by how levels of socio-culture and economy do not fit: the one seems far more developed than the other. Here were a people who, when you watched them "grubbing and chasing for foods," seemed to represent the lowest form of human development, but who, when you talked to them, elaborated a socio-cultural system of "surprising complexity." A. P. Elkin, who worked at the Delissaville (Belyuen) settlement in the 1930s, compared northwest Aboriginal culture to eastern philosophy; it was highly developed and compelling. This complex system, however, had a hitch. It only worked if the concept of history and change did not intrude. The Aboriginal cosmology was built upon the notion that people and things were always in the places that people now found them. When this belief went, so did the Dreaming itself.

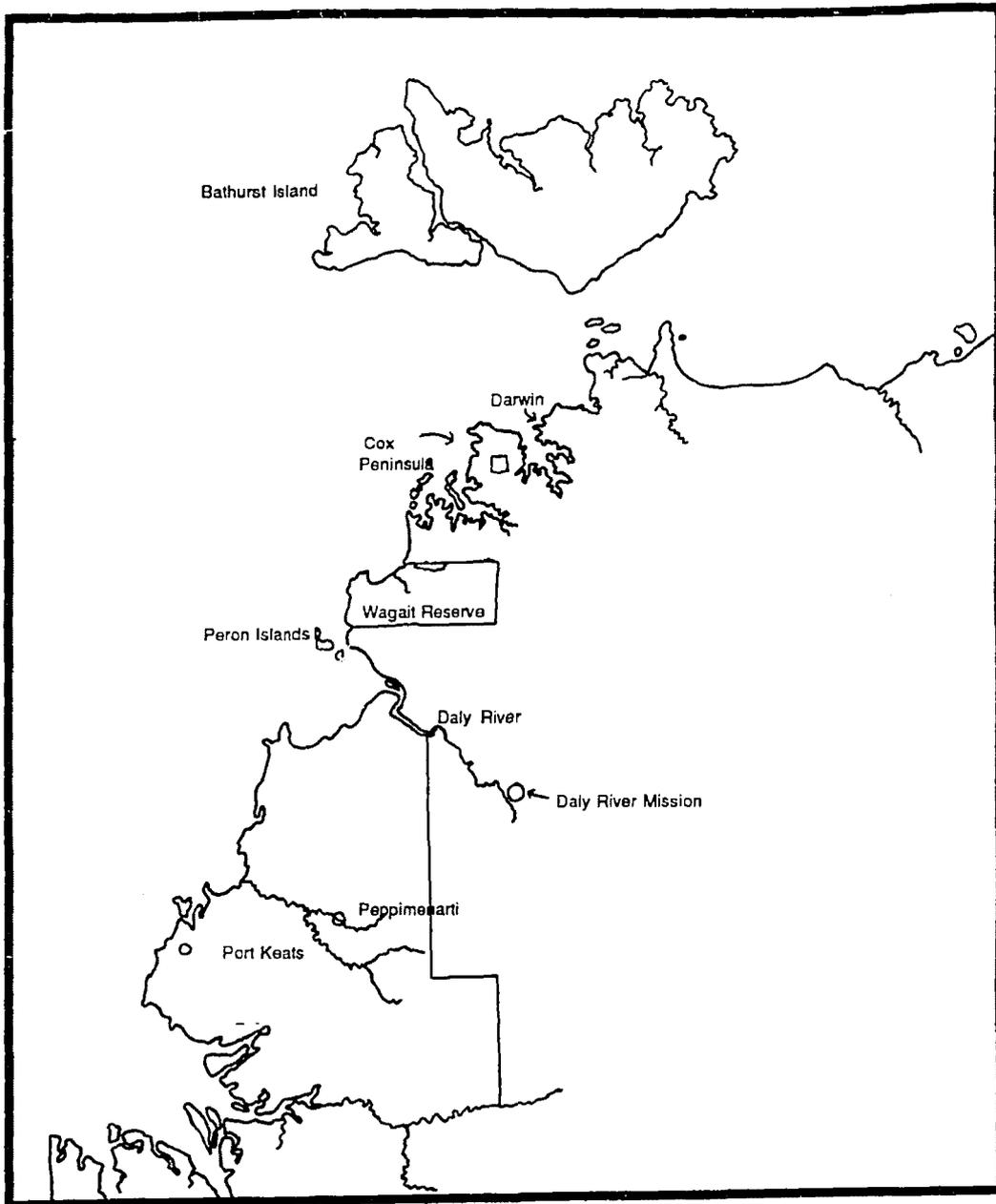
In this chapter I begin to explore the theoretical partition of Aboriginal socio-cultural and economic practices and the claim that 'traditional' Aborigines have a radical ahistorical outlook. I examine what are Belyuen peoples' understandings of the productive effects of local and foreign speech and bodies on country, and of the country on the shape and health of local and foreign peoples? Since the founding of the Port Darwin settlement in 1869, some Northern Territory Aborigines were forced out of the countryside to make way for Anglo settlement and industry, some Aboriginal groups were massacred, and some Aborigines migrated to Anglo settlements for food, water, and protection, all of which I discuss in due course. Belyuen Aborigines say that when an Aboriginal group migrates to another group's country conflicts are mediated by ceremonial initiation, marriage, or other culturally appropriate devices; or, conflicts are not mediated and "wars" break out among the groups. In the early years of the Port Darwin settlement, the Laragiya, whose traditional lands included Darwin and the

Cox Peninsula, fought continually with the Wulna, an Aboriginal group who migrated from the East Alligator River. Belyuen Aborigines say, also, that country "wars" with a foreign people. They say that when country is unable to recognize peoples' language and sweat (speech and activity), it sends out disease and other spiritual agents to kill the intruders.

Belyuen Aborigines speak from some experience. Most people living at the Belyuen Community are descendants of men and women who migrated from the Daly River to the Cox Peninsula. Belyuen Aborigines are from three major groups: the "Laragiya," a language appellation of Cox Peninsula and Darwin Aboriginal groups, and the "Wagaitj" and "Beringgen," two Daly River groups, which consist of, respectively, the Kiyuk, Wadjigiyn, Emiyenggal, and Menthayenggal language groups and the Marriamu and Marritjaben language groups. The number of Laragiya living at Belyuen has decreased dramatically over the last twenty years, to a handful of people in a population of two hundred and ten. Other Belyuen Aborigines have a language affiliation to Daly River lands along the Anson Bay coast. Two inland Daly River language groups, the Malak Malak and Maranunggu, were once an integral core of the Aboriginal groups living and camping in the Cox Peninsula region during the early 1900s. The number of Malak Malak and Maranunggu now living at Belyuen has also dropped significantly in the last twenty years. The Belyuen community is now predominantly composed of Aboriginal groups whose "traditional country" lies on the north and south coast of the Daly River mouth (Map 1).

Belyuen groups relate to Cox Peninsula, Port Patterson, and Bynoe Harbour lands differently than they do to Daly River lands. With regard to their "traditional" Daly River lands to the south, Belyuen Aborigines state that language group affiliation is the most relevant social affiliation. All Emi, for instance, come from the entire Emiyenggal territory. Patrilineal groups identify themselves as belonging to smaller

Map 1: Coast of the Northern Territory from Port Darwin to Fort Keats.



estates within the language group territory, but, because of mythic links between the estates, it is the country as a whole that "gives" life and meaning to a people. Belyuen Aborigines say that a looser social confederation (the Laragiya, the Wagaitj, with a few historically significant Beringgen sibling sets) belongs to country in the Cox Peninsula, Port Patterson, and Bynoe Harbour region. Briefly, the difference in country affiliation arises from a different cultural emphasis, namely, a different way of "coming from" and "belonging to" country.

It might be a surprise to a newcomer to the Belyuen community to learn that local Aborigines' traditional country lies elsewhere. Belyuen Aborigines seem not to fit their own description of foreigners: likely to be sick and under attack from the indigenous group and the country. Since I was first living on the Belyuen Community in 1984, Belyuen families have used the Peninsula and surrounding islands freely,¹ have chosen where to make their outstations, and have talked to sacred sites when they passed by them on the way to or from a hunt. Belyuen men and women left no doubt that the Cox Peninsula was Laragiya country in the sense that Laragiya mythic beings created and now maintain the shape of the countryside, but Belyuen Aborigines consulted themselves for economic and cultural information about the surrounding countryside. If problems arose, or unexpected incidents occurred (a site acting in an unusual way: being over or underproductive, being suddenly hit by a wind or rain storm), young people consulted older Wagaitj and Beringgen women and men, and older Wagaitj and Beringgen consulted their memories for an answer, why did the site act in that way? Then and now Wagaitj and Beringgen rely on their own knowledge, history, and practice to understand the signs of the country. If social, economic, and cultural questions and answers arise from and lie within the Belyuen group how can these people be "foreigners"?

¹ "Freely," that is, within the limits of socio-cultural and political-economic systems I discuss below.

At various points in history and in various cultures, a society makes a claim about how "truth" can be discovered, recovered, or uncovered; this includes some form of domination.² Aboriginal people and authors such as myself make claims about how to judge the authenticity of persons' knowledge and practices, which is true and which is false? This is not a claim of what 'human nature' is like -- everyone reifies and judges -- rather it is a reminder that power-laden social contexts coerce groups into presenting themselves as an authentic "other" or as an "everyman," which ever they think is to their advantage. In the following I examine the productive effect of human language and bodies on the country and of the country on the shape and health of human bodies, I first describe two types of mythic beings (durlg and maroi) and how they respond to human activity. After describing language shifts that have occurred in the region, I examine both local views of the effect that speech and sweat, forms of communication, have on the productivity of the country and local ways of deriving meaning from the country's reaction to human groups.

Rather than attempting to transcend local truths and battles between them, I highlight how Aboriginal and Anglo-Australian groups differently understand the power of language and sweat to mediate the relationship between a stretch of country and a social group. I am hesitant to broaden the Belyuen perspective even into a "Daly River" one. Other Daly River groups who live at Wadeye, an Aboriginal community south of the Daly River, have different opinions about how a group relates to country. For instance, the Wadeye (Port Keats) Murinpatha and Beringgen view the patrilineal group's

² "[W]hat appear to be new and exciting insights to these postmodernist anthropologists -- that culture is composed of seriously contested codes of meaning, that language and politics are inseparable, and that constructing the "other" entails relations of domination -- are insights that have received repeated and rich exploration in feminist theory for the last forty years" (Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, and Cohen 1989:11). Also cf. Micaela di Leonardo (1991). James Clifford argues that the power of post-crisis ethnography lies in its ability to formulate "complex concrete images of one another, as well as of the relationship of knowledge power that connect them," while acknowledging in more provocative terms how concrete complex images are created in "specific historical relations of dominance and dialogue" (1988: 23).

relationship to an "estate" (a small bounded tract of land within a language group's total territory) as superior to the joint rights and duties of all the people within a language group to that piece of land (Barber 1987). Some Laragiya living in Darwin also disagree with Belyuen ways of relating to country. Finally, Belyuen Aborigines themselves may disagree with how I understand their relationship to country. Because of these conflicting views, I highlight how knowledge is performed in specific social situations; that is, how truth is presented and contested, including my role in it.

Signs From the Country.

1. Durlg.

All mythic beings have a social identity that includes sex, age, and language affiliation. This social identity is infused into specific named sites and the identity extends, more generally, into the surrounding countryside. A mythic social identity that persons acquire from their father or mother and that has a physical manifestation at a site is known as a dirula in Laragiya, a durlg in Batjema, and a theRawin in Emi and Marriamu. In this sense durlg is both a thing and a means of transmission. But people describe sites that are not anyone's paternal or maternal dreaming as durlg; they say: "that place is durlg." So, for example, the Kookuburra durlg is a set of banyan trees found on the west coast of the Cox Peninsula. Its social identity includes its sex, age, and language affiliation, and its power extends into the surrounding bush. Durlg (and its synonyms) also refers to a sea water creature, The Rainbow Serpent, an aquatic equivalent to the Australian Aboriginal desert culture's Rainbow Snake. The Rainbow Serpent roams the deep blue sea lanes between the Daly River and Port Darwin, and beyond. Elkin states his Wagaitj informants told him in the 1930s that the cult hero

Wariyn made all durlq and that the Rainbow Serpent was second to Wariyn in being and power.

The "dreamings" or "dorkls" were brought or "made" by a cult hero, Waran. Second to him in Wagaitj thought is the Rainbow Serpent, which is the "shade" of all water "dreamings" (1950: 68).

Not all named sites are durlq sites, although Wariyn gave all sites their names in the mythic past. There are three types of place-names: place-names referring to a mythic creature or event, to a natural species, and to nothing other than the place itself (it is "just a name"). Belyuen Aborigines say of the latter that they do not refer to a mythic person or natural species. Examples of each type of place-name are found on the Cox Peninsula. Bulpulnyini, for instance, is a site on one of the Port Patterson islands named for the species bulpul, "passion fruit," (with the locative nyini). Another site on the Cox Peninsula named after a plant species is winganyini (red apple tree). This site is a mythic site of the Red Apple Dreaming and so is modified by durlq: winganyinidurlq. Buwambi names a site on the west coast of the Cox Peninsula and has no glossable meaning.

According to Belyuen Aborigines the gender, age, and kinship of mythic creatures contributed to the present topography of the land. Mythic creatures acted in ways that changed forever the shape and power of the countryside. Belyuen Aborigines learn how these mythic persons contributed to the land's topography and how this contribution affects Aborigines' present-day activities through their telling of mythic and everyday stories about a site which has a durlq. Mythic stories usually describe how a durlq came to be at a site in the land. R. M. Berndt put it nicely.

They ["mythic creators"] moved across the land in the Dreaming period, from place to place, or camp to camp, having adventures, performing various rites, and meeting others of their own kind; and they left behind them part of their own sacred essence, which is still present at certain sites. Some were metamorphosed, remaining spiritually indestructible. Some disappeared into the territory of another "tribe", or into the ground, the sky or the sea; but in doing so, they remained spiritually attached to the land across which they had travelled and the sites they had made or been associated with in some other way (1970a: 5-6).

At each of these sites, the mythic personality changed part of itself into a natural object which became the creature's instantiation. It is the mythic being's localized, naturalized persona: a tree, a rock, a waterhole, or a creek, all are durlq: they are the physical 'body' of the mythic being.

Aborigines encounter durlq physically and verbally. When Belyuen Aborigines walk or drive across Cox Peninsula and Daly River lands, they pass by sites where mythic creators 'sit' or 'sleep.' When they do so, a senior woman or man calls out to the site in one of a ranked series of languages to let it know who is passing and why. People also "chuck sweat" at the site; they figuratively throw their body smells toward the site so that they will not disturb the mythic being. Belyuen women and men 'approach' dreamings in their conversations with the same caution they approach them in the countryside. Good speakers avoid the names of a durlq during parts of the day and year, and they switch to an appropriate language to talk about the antics of a Dreaming. Moreover, speakers mark themselves as knowledgeable by these code-switches and by the canon of mythic and everyday stories they know.

But Aborigines do not just encounter durlq, they also carry durlq within themselves; viz., they are themselves instantiations of the mythic being. Individuals

acquire rights and duties to the sites of durlq through their parentage and assume responsibility for them as they mature and learn the appropriate stories and practices for sites. For example, if I have the long yam dreaming (merRumerRudurlq, E), then I am responsible for the long yam site in my group's country, and I am responsible for the regulation of people's everyday treatment of long yams. A person can have a number of durlq depending on how many their parents had. In some cases, a person has quite a few. Belyuen people say this is because of historical demographic pressures caused by the colonial and early postcolonial drop in population. As a patrifilial group lost its members, the surviving males or females transferred the rights and responsibilities for a durlq to another patrifilial group. In an opposite move, many different patrifilial and matrifilial estates associated with different durlq can merge and become associated with one "totemic" group when durlqs are forgotten because of forced relocations, or, for the same reason cease to be socio-politically significant.

"Tracks" that connect similar durlq (for instance, two sea turtle sites) on the Anson Bay and on the Cox Peninsula coasts seem to have played an important role in mediating social conflicts on the Cox Peninsula in the 19th and 20th centuries. Berndt noted that some mythic creators moved across a vast territory and remained spiritually attached to the sites they had made or were associated with as they traveled. Elkin (1955-56) describes the Delissaville settlement of the 1950s as spatially organized by social divisions loosely based on language group affiliation. In an aside to his description of a wangga (a type of Daly River trade dance) sound-recording, Elkin notes that the Delissaville Settlement was divided into a Laragiya-Wadjigiyn camp and "across the road" an Emiyenggal-Mentha camp. However, the language group affiliations Elkin described reflect contemporary underlying ceremonial connections between durlq and their human protectors. The Wagaitj Kiyuk and Wadjigiyn living with the Laragiya had existing affiliations to durlq sites on the Cox Peninsula. In the 1950s, Laragiya remaining on the Cox Peninsula were mainly from the

danggalaba (crocodile) and ingyarainy (sea turtle) durlq groups. The Kiyuk were from the ingyarainy (green sea turtle) and memoradjamul (sea cow) durlq groups. The Wadjigiyn were from the moiyn (wild dog) durlq and boiya (rays and sharks) durlq groups. Other than the shark groups, Wadjigiyn and Kiyuk groups had representative durlq sites in their own country and on the Cox Peninsula. A series of ingyarainy (sea turtle) and moiyn (dog) durlq sites, for example, extends from the Daly River to the Cox Peninsula-Darwin area.

According to oral and written histories, Emiyenggal and Menthayenggal, whose countries lie on the southern side of the Daly River, had fewer marriage and ceremonial connections to the Laragiya and Laragiya country, but they had many to Wadjigiyn people and country. Important paternal and maternal durlqs for the Emi and Mentha are kugon (sugarbag), kuRaguk (dove), meRumeRu (long yam), and ngaRon (plain goanna). None of these durlq traveled to or left a mark on the Cox Peninsula. The mythic connections are even more tenuous for the Marriamu and Marritjaben Beringgen. Elkin does not say where the Marriamu and the Marritjaben sibling set, who traveled with their Emi and Mentha classificatory brothers, camped on the Delissaville settlement, but one can assume from their kin ties and from oral historical narratives that they lived with the Southern Emi and Mentha Wagaitj.

Ironically, the hostile relations between southern Wagaitj-Beringgen and northern Wagaitj-Laragiya seem to have aided the affiliation of the former to Cox Peninsula lands. During the 1930s, the Northern Territory government created a series of concentrated Aboriginal camps at sites in the Darwin township and along the Cox Peninsula to the Daly River regions. The concentration of disparate groups onto small areas increased social distress which resulted in an increase in inter-group violence; these are the "wars" that Belyuen Aborigines describe. In oral histories, Belyuen women and men say that munggul (sorcerers) perpetuated the attacks and that they were in retaliation for the "mistakes" that young men and women made

during brawls. These brawls were said to be especially prevalent during the period in which southern Wagaitj and Beringgen were themselves relative newcomers to the Cox Peninsula area. During this time, many Laragiya men and women were still living on the Cox Peninsula, and many Wagaitj and Beringgen were still living south along the Daly River.³ Mistakes people might make anywhere along this chain could result in a munggul's punitive response. If Wagaitj-Beringgen Aborigines were unable to draw magical and spiritual power from the immediate countryside, they would suffer tremendously in these "wars." In the 1950s, Elkin recorded a wangga (a trade dance sung in the Daly River) during an initiation of a Wagaitj man into the Laragiya male higher ceremonies. Elkin states that one reason the ceremony was conducted was to discipline the man. Present day Wagaitj give other reasons why this and other ceremonies occurred. It provided the Wagaitj group as a whole through the young men with some share of the country's power and it ceremonially linked together the disparate Aboriginal groups who were living on the Cox Peninsula. From the stories that older men and women tell, the southern Wagaitj and coastal Beringgen were under "siege" in the sense that Basil Sansom has used this term (1980: 133-134).

Although Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen men and women in the past may not have planned it, the ceremonial links they made among themselves may have had less of an immediate effect on intergroup sentiment than the "wars" that each group waged against the other. At Belyuen people say that clevermen and women can "getimim" (which I here describe as attack) a person directly or indirectly. A cleverman, for instance, can sneak up on his victim, remove his kidney fat, and cause his eventual death all without the victim being awoken. This is a practice widely reported in the Daly River and beyond (cf. Elkin 1950). A cleverperson can also "tjukpiya" (throw spit) at

³ A.P. Elkin (1936-37) reports that Aborigines living at the Daly River Mission were so frightened of the increased number of sorcerer attacks during this time that they would not travel even a short distance into the bush at night.

one person causing them to kill unintentionally another person, the cleverman's real victim. Ironically, these direct and indirect attacks or wars have filled the countryside with historical markers that have become the magical and spiritual centers for a new Belyuen generation. For example, there is one spot on the road to and from the Belyuen community where one particularly horrific car collision occurred in the late sixties. When driving by it, people typically wave and "remember" the story of what happened there although everyone knows the incidents already: how a long-standing intergroup dispute prompted a sorcerer initiated car-wreck, who died, what relationship the deceased was to people in the car. Depending upon the speaker, people call out to the site in Batjema, Emi, and Belyuen English. One day in 1989, I was driving with five older and a few younger women and children down this road. As we passed the site, an older woman saw the young man who died in the accident sitting and then disappearing next to the tree where it had happened. We stopped and looked at the tracks that this nyoitj (spirit) made in the dirt and then returned to the community to see why this nyoitj had "come out." The appearance of spirits or animal intercessories signals that a troublesome event has or is about to happen.

Rather than focusing on the immediate purpose of these nyoitj appearances -- a warning or a welcoming -- Belyuen residents often look at what such appearances signify for group attachment to the country. Belyuen Aborigines state that appearances of nyoitj demonstrate that the country responds to local Aboriginal language and sweat. In southern Daly River country, an apparition signals the difference between local and foreign activity. If you are a foreigner with alien sweat, dwarf-like spirits with faces that look like your relatives "sing you" (mesmerize you) into the bush from which you never return. Although there are no such apparitions on the Cox Peninsula, the ancestors of present men and women serve a similar function. Belyuen men and women state that the appearance of ancestral spirits demonstrates that dead people's bodies and spirits are literally and metaphorically residing in the

land. Spirits act as migration officials, as it were, protecting residents and humbugging strangers. It does not seem to bother these nyoitj that they were once strangers themselves.

In the above example, the country responds to strangers or kin by sending out nyoitj (spirits) to bedevil or to protect people passing by them. Durlg also respond to the presence of different social groups. Perhaps no other aspect of the Belyuen description of the natural world is as startling as the way that mythic durlg creatures emerge from the seemingly impenetrable surface of the ground to reward or to punish people. The terrible aspect of this can only cautiously be compared to Western reactions to earthquakes, fault-lines, volcanoes, and -- perhaps more pertinent as of the late 20th century -- to the radioactive and chemical waste dumps that bubble up cancer-causing sludge. What we take to be stable and given, suddenly and quite uncomfortably gives way under our feet. However, the analogy between a sentient, mythic site's reaction to a social group and the, so called, chemical upset of the natural environment quickly breaks down. Because the country is sentient, the ground, for Belyuen Aborigines, is always potentially liable to act for its own reasons. They attribute catastrophes such as oil spills, skin cancer, the ozone hole, and pollution all to country acting as an agent and punishing Aborigines and non-Aborigines alike for their transgressions of mythic and ceremonial areas. Some people may plead ignorance -- they did not know that they had upset a site. But ignorance and arrogance are no excuse, Belyuen men and women say. The country exacts its revenge on "big-eyed" (arrogant) Anglos world-wide, though it is often the indigenous people who suffer first. Belyuen women speculate that the North American and African continents originally had spiritual centers that processes of colonization and industrialization disturbed or destroyed. The country comments on what is happening around it by emerging from or submerging into the sea or ground and by sending out disease or other natural objects.

Note the following description by a middle-aged Kiyuk woman who lives at Belyuen and camps at an outstation on the west coast of the Cox Peninsula.

LORNA TENNANT: Anyway, that day it was day like this and sunny, no cloud in the sky and that, and the boys came around - Rex came around to visit his sister - and after they left you could see clouds starting to form up in the sky and you could see where the clouds were forming; it was just forming around the Bakamanadjing area and it started raining them [sic]. It started raining out here just outside of Duwun out here and then it came back around it just circled around Bakamanadjing and Wutut area. That is the only area, but behind that it was just sunny.

.... Well, Rex did not know anything about it by coming past Wariyn. I think on Friday alot of the ladies got painted up and that to go and pay their respect to Wariyn, whereas these boys did not, because they did not know the country and they were from Kormilda or from other places, and Wariyn smelt their sweat - different sweat - it is not from, you know, he did not know them, and because of that they did not pay respect and got punished for it by putting that wind and rain there just around us (Kenbi Transcript: 593-4)

Durlg react to that part of an individual's and group's social identity which matches and reflects those identities of mythic sites. A mythic site which itself has an age, sex, and language affiliation responds to each of these qualities in a human. An Emi women's site, for instance, reacts differently to older, female, Emi women than to persons who differ by any one of these social identities. In mythic stories, social conflict results not from any simple social opposition embodied in two Dreamtime Beings, say, the timeless opposition of men and women signified in the mythic opposition between Old Man and Old Woman, but rather results from complex intersections and

contrasts of a number of social identities. Old Man and Old Woman are also related by age, kinship, and language affiliation. Everyday stories about mythic sites and, more generally the country, also comment upon the complex nature of social identity. In most everyday stories durlg react to a combination of men and women, young and old, Belyuen and non-Belyuen Aborigines, Aborigines and non-Aborigines. The following story, describing how a Kookaburra Dreaming site reacted to a party of women passing by it, provides a good example of how sex, age, and local status have a powerful effect on the mythic countryside.

The Kookaburra women are dangerous, cheeky (malaRiti) personalities. In order not to anger this Cox Peninsula site by their strong sweat when they pass by it, young Laragiya, Wagaitj and Beringgen men and women should walk in silence, have white clay smeared on their bodies, and surround themselves with smoke. Just to be sure, most men and women avoid going too near the Dreaming altogether. However, one day, on a mapping exercise, a group of Belyuen women, myself, and a young woman and her mother from another Aboriginal community walked to the Kookaburra site and then beyond it to another mythic site on the coast. The Daly River woman and her daughter broke off from the main party, because the mother had been drinking that morning and was too tired to walk all the way down the beach. Unknown to the rest of the party, they both went near one of the banyan trees as everyone else went on to the next site. Angered at the hung-over condition of the older woman, and the youth of the younger woman, the Dreaming "sent out" a devildevil (nyoiti). The devildevil attempted to "sing" (mesmerize) the older woman into the dense vine entangled bush. When the other women and I returned and found out what was going on, we helped, with much force and persuasion, the daughter drag her mother back to the truck. A plan to collect oysters was abandoned and we returned to the Belyuen Community. Several versions of the day's events unravelled as time went on; most, however, centered on

the Kookaburra tree's ability to "come out" in response to the foreign, strong sweat of the women.

In this instance, Belyuen men and women agreed that the Kookaburra reacted violently to the young and foreign women's sweat. In other instances, Belyuen men and women disagree over whether a mythic creature reacts simply to young women or to both young women and men. For local and historical reasons, which I discuss elsewhere, older Belyuen women are considered to have superior knowledge of the mythic countryside on the Cox Peninsula. Ronald Berndt has noted, "because people tacitly agree to differ and do not criticize divergent versions, this does not mean they have no views on 'correctness' in myth reporting" (1970: 16). He cites three major considerations that the Western Arnhem Land Gunwinggu bear in mind when assessing a report: the myth-tellers' affiliation to the land concerned, their age, and their sex. While Belyuen Aborigines also have these considerations in mind, the sexual and age politics of interpretation make each more of a starting point for a group's position than a simple index providing a method for accessing the truth. Men, who control most of the boats and vehicles on the community, argue that the presence of women of menstruating age endanger sea-hunting parties because the women's sweat provokes mythic deep sea creatures such as the Rainbow Serpent and the Cheeky Yam Dreaming. According to the men, women's sweat makes the sea a volatile place. Women emphasize the connections between age and gender and the effect that both have on the emotions of the country. They do not deny that young women imperil sea-trips, but argue that both young men and women are dangerous to sea-based or sea-side dreamings.

The Kookaburra Dreaming reacted not only to the age and sex of its visitors, but also to their foreign status. The Cox Peninsula's differing reactions to Belyuen and non-Belyuen Aborigines is a common theme of everyday stories about the countryside. Lorna Tennant described above the effect that the foreign sweat of young male

visitors had on Wariyn, the site Elkin described as the father of all Dreamings. In the next section of this chapter, I examine in more detail the influence that human language and sweat have on the countryside. Here, I should note that Belyuen Aborigines' portrayal of the different way in which local country reacts to them than to other Aboriginal groups, though not arising from, certainly intersects with Belyuen Aborigines' involvement in regional politics. Since 1979, Belyuen Wagaitj and Laragiya and Darwin Laragiya have been claimants under the Kenbi Land Claim for Cox Peninsula, Port Patterson and Bynoe Harbour lands. In 1991, the land commissioner found that no Aboriginal group, including various combinations of Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen, fit the legislative definition of a "traditional owner" for the country under claim. The vagaries of the legislative definition of a traditional owner and of what might be a worthwhile claimant strategy, and the evictions of migrant groups after successful claims in other cases (cf. Layton and Williams 1980) has certainly marked all conversations about the different ways the mythic countryside reacts to human groups.

Some of the most gruesome stories about how a Dreaming angrily reacts to persons are about non-Aborigines. I would suggest that these stories are about non-Aborigines because the violent details reflect the underside of non-Aborigines great disbelief in a mythic, sentient country; country must go to extreme lengths to prove its sentient nature to them. For example, a particularly horrific story is told about an Anglo-Australian man who transgressed a site in the Daly River area. During World War II, a group of Wagaitj Aborigines stayed in the Anson Bay area to make sure that the Australian Army stationed there did not inadvertently "rubbish" a particularly dangerous site. After the war, other Anglo-Australians moved back into the area. They would not listen to the advice of local Aborigines (as the Army is said to have done). One white man in particular continued to camp in a certain area after being told repeatedly not to camp there. One day an Aboriginal man walking down the beach

found the white man's body which had been eaten alive by white ants (E, pengainme). The ants are said both to have emerged from the ground (E, kamani) around the site in order to devour the transgressing whiteman and to have emerged from the man's body when he was found (E, yena yin yenavi nenthavena kanayi; "from nose, from neck, from him laying there").

This story is especially interesting because it touches on a major theme in this ethnography: Belyuen informants couple a person's inability to recognize the signs that the country sends to a person's refusal to listen to those people who can understand the meaning of the countryside. This is the "tragic flaw" of many women and men in mythic stories; a set of mythic women are described as too intent on a project (weaving a dillybag) to hear the rapes of their daughters. Yet, these women, and in other stories men, are also described as tjeingithut (E, or, thuttjeingi), as having blocked ears.⁴ They both cannot hear what is happening around them and will not listen to the advice of others. If humans suffer from tjeingithut, they are said to mimic the country; country and people are said to become "deaf" when they have experienced a traumatic event. Also, a cleverman or woman can produce a traumatic seizure of the ears in order to keep a person from remembering an attack. Cleverpeople, or "sorcerers" (Elkin 1980), can also make a person unable to hear the warnings of others. Tjeingithut is critical alienation; it is to be cut off from outside influence. You cannot be affected by another's words or actions. This is a very unhealthy state: speaking and acting with country and one's kin is, normally, a way of keeping both "loose," "sweet," and productive (cf. Myers 1979: 365).

⁴ Fred Myers has discussed the relationship between "hearing," "thinking," and "understanding" among the Pintupi. He writes, "In the Pintupi view, the concepts "thinking," "understanding," and "hearing" are expressed by a single term, *kulininpa*, which means literally "to hear." To be *patjarru* (or *ramarama*), they say, is to have one's "ears closed." The implication is that young children do not process the available information about who is present and what is happening" (1979: 349). The term *ramarama* is also applied "to those whom they consider insane or "mad": the person's ears are closed" (1979: 350; see also Myers 1986).

There are many stories of Anglo-Australian men's and women's tieingithut activities in the countryside. Anglo-Australians are commonly described as unwilling and unable to listen to words intended for their benefit. When the inevitable happens, so say Belyuen men and women, it is no fault of local Aborigines. The bankruptcy of grocery stores and the death of tourists from crocodiles are linked to white people's seized-up ears; they do not or cannot listen to good advice. Through such narrative associations, Belyuen women link insensitivity to a wider socio-economic practice of land use. Anglo-Australians should not be allowed to gain control of a rich and productive area such as the Cox Peninsula because they obviously are not able to hear and understand its needs or warnings.

2. Maroi.

On one hand, people describe durlq as a mythic creature independent of any human's relationship to it: 'that' might be a durlq no matter if anyone has it as a 'totem.' But, on the other hand, durlq signifies the mythic identity that a person has inherited from his or her parents, usually from one's father unless he is a non-Aborigine or is unknown. In this sense, durlq is a means of transmission, a paternal or maternal 'totem.' There are other ways of obtaining a mythic identity. Here I examine maroi or 'personal dreamings.' Durlq and maroi are not two species of dreamings: one a round and the other a square dreaming. Rather maroi are personal dreamings that people acquire by either traveling through a country near to a durlq -- in which case the maroi (personal dreaming) of a person would be the same as his or her durlq (paternal or maternal dreaming) -- or by "catching" a mythic spirit that appears independently of any durlq association. Like durlq, maroi link people to specific sites. Persons are responsible for "looking after" the place from which they receive their personal

dreamings (also known as "conception" dreamings) (cf. Peterson 1972). Mythic durlq creators established a spiritual connection among the countries through which they traveled. As the durlq creator traveled it sank or deposited some of its power into a site, then emerged and traveled on to another place, or stayed at the one site forever. Maroi move across the countryside and they move through a person's body. In a sense, the trail maroi leave is the history of a human group's travels through the country. The place where people "caught" their maroi often reflects the place where they were living and traveling.

Elkin (1950) notes the link between personal dreamings and country affiliation. He writes that maroi are "connected with the natural species in or through which the child to be born reveals itself to its father." He continues that this spirit is found in the "father's part of the tribal territory and so the child's 'dreaming' will be the same as the father's, unless there be more than one 'dreaming' in the latter's clan country which is sometimes the case." Elkin here assumes that Aborigines are living and hunting in their father's country a significant amount of their time. In order to understand how the maroi dreaming system interacts with historical fluctuations in group residence, one must first understand how maroi "catch" people. While ethnographic inquiries are different from juridical ones, note how Elkin's description matches modern accounts given by Belyuen women in court.

MR PARSONS: Yes. Well, before I ask any questions, can you explain to us - just you explain in your own way, what is the maruy? What does it mean? Is it important? Why is it important? You explain in your own way.

AGNES LIPPO: Say like you by, go hunting and mother and father say - father and mother and my father go and get a fish or crab or snake like that you know - water snake and bring that fish back home and then my mother cook

that fish or something like that. And when we say like we have dinner, or something like that, so we eat that fish. But there is another thing is that he probably maybe special fish like a baby fish. So my mother eat that fish and couple of days come and I vomit.⁵ So we knew what that was that fish he ate she ate and we know that was baby. Couple of weeks time come, you know, baby in every generation, baby come, you know. Everybody got to have baby here. (Kenbi Transcripts: 2009)

On another day, Agnes Lippo might have described how maroi leave marks on the fetus's body. A rock python, for instance, traveled through a Belyuen women's body and marked her son with a cleft lip. The marks that maroi creatures leave signify the relationship between the child and the species, and the relationship between the child and the place where the child received its maroi. This 'relationship,' moreover, is thought to be an essential, constitutive part of the person's and places' character. To cut off the 'deformity' or to sew it up (such as the rock python's maroi's cleft lip) is seen as a grotesque Western practice which severs people's identity as persons, species, and places, an identity represented by, and in some sense, mediated through the maroi's mark.

People find their maroi in the places through which they hunt, camp, and travel. Maroi visit places from a nearby durlg site or they can visit from somewhere else and become, over time, a durlg site proper for that place; in other words, a place can assume the maroi of a person as one of its durlg dreamings. For example, some twenty years ago, in the Daly River area, a wallaby "conception" dreaming disappeared into a nearby waterhole while an Emi man was hunting in the area (his Emiyenggal family had lived in the Wadjigiyn-Kiyuk country for many years). Soon after his wife became

⁵ The pregnant mother vomits, not Agnes.

pregnant. The wallaby was the child's maroi. But the Emi man also dreamed (discovered) that there was a wallaby durlq in the waterhole of special significance to his entire family. It was from this discovered durlq site that the maroi had come. This "dreaming for wallaby" is Emiyenggal within Wadjigiyn-Kiyuk country, and through it, this Emiyenggal family claims residential rights for the area. Here we can see that historical changes in residence influence spiritual affiliations which, in turn, affect the rights of residents. As a group lives in a place, their personal dreamings become increasingly clustered and revealed (or confused depending with whom one is talking) to be durlq. In this way, the land's symbolic self shifts to accommodate new human groups and their spiritual selves. Brandl, Haritos, and Walsh writing in the Kenbi claim book, make a similar observation.

As we collected information from informants on their durlq and maruy and associated natural species and features, we noticed that what was a maruy for a man, could become a durlq for that man's children. Thus among the durlq belonging to Olga Singh (nee Lyons) associated with the claim area, is djalawa, or, kingbrown snake. This was a maruy for her father. Similarly wilar, the cheeky yam dreaming near Rankin Point, was her father's father's maruy and is now one of her durlq (1979: 162).

Probably because of the cultural connections between personal dreamings and paternal and maternal durlq dreamings, it is easy to confuse one with the other. For example, Elkin sees the personal dreaming as sometimes the same as and sometimes different from one's patrilineal dreaming (durlq, B theRawin, E). However, nowadays older women state that durlq (rainbow serpent, sea monster, mythic site) are always represented by a physical object, whereas maroi need not be. Belyuen men and women say that although they can be physically destroyed durlq never change; they do not

suddenly become "just a rock," or, become a snake when before they had been a crab (although a snake dreaming can join a crab dreaming at a site). On the other hand, personal dreamings depend upon people's interaction in a place. In order for a maroi to pass through people into new life people must come into contact with the spirits who live within the animals and plants that men and women encounter when hunting, camping, and traveling in the country. Without the country left open for marois to congregate, without people free of work commitments to camp in the country, an integral part of the natural productive order itself is unravelled.

Because maroi do not discriminate between the language affiliations of groups traveling, hunting, and camping in country, they allow for a dynamic system of residency. Take for instance the following two stories that Marjorie Bilbil, a Marritjaben Belyuen woman, tells. In the early 1900s, her father, a Marritjaben man camped and traveled with an Emi group throughout the Daly River and Cox Peninsula region. As this group moved up and down the coast they learned the ceremonial and ecological landscape. Marjorie Bilbil's description of her maroi and her daughter's maroi demonstrate how, while these groups moved across the countryside, they collected mythic attachments to a different set of countries. During a period when Marjorie's father was camping on the Daly River with his Emi brothers she "caught" her maroi.

MARJORIE BILBIL: and they found this wild cat under the hollow log and they found this wild cat, and my father the other step-brother of his, they were poking that wild cat under the hollow log, and my father always get under that log. He could not touch that cat, but the other one usually say to him I can feel him right here on the end of the hole, so they decided to put fire and burn it to chase it away. So they burn that hollow log and the cat - the wild cat came out from that hollow log. So my father told me that was your maruy from Red Cliff, and he got - I got a little black mark around my ears, because the cat got

burns on his ears. That is why. My father told me the story (Kenbi Transcripts: 2074).

After the 1950s, Daly River groups moved or were moved onto camps at Wadeye (Port Keats), Delissaville (Belyuen), and other Aboriginal settlements in northwest Australia. Marjorie grew up at Belyuen and married an Emiyenggal man. They lived at Belyuen, and they camped, hunted, and traveled throughout the Cox Peninsula region. Her daughter, Kathleen, received a maroi from a site on the Cox Peninsula. Marjorie's husband is one of the "two brothers" described below.

MARJORIE BILBIL: Two brothers went out with that old man, and they went to look for turtle, and it was not far away deep water. They went around those reef and they found this turtle sitting on the reef and it was covered with sea weed [sic, weed] and they killed that turtle and it took them long way down near deep water to float up to pick that turtle up so that old man said, "Oh," he was a bit tired, "when this turtle going to float [so] we we can pick it up," and that old man said, it is probably one of your going to have a kid.

MR PARSONS: Yes.

MARJORIE BILBIL: So, he said to them, "You two blokes going to have one of the kids, I think." That was Kathleen maruy at Gamarrng-gamarrng (Kenbi Transcripts: 2076).

These "everyday stories" follow the form of mythic durlq story forms in their description of the activity of "two brothers" and "old man."

Although a score of Belyuen residents have maroi from sites around the Cox Peninsula, older Belyuen men and women state that most local Aboriginal children now "come from Belyuen" itself. Belyuen is the name of the mythic hero who sank into the ground at the water hole behind the main camp. It is also the site of the regionally important kenbidurlq (didjeridoo dreaming).

The Belyuen water hole is where the durlq (Rainbow Serpent) and other dangerous dreamings in the Bynoe Harbour first smell the sweat of young Belyuen people. By bathing in the Belyuen water hole, young men and women "give" their sweat to other sites around the Cox Peninsula through an elaborate, mythic underground tunnel. The kenbinyinidurlq (didjeridoo dreaming) is an underground hollow tunnel, like a didjeridoo, or "bamboo," that extends throughout the region. Women sometimes describe Belyuen acting like a "telephone"; it rings up other dreamings around the Cox Peninsula and tells them not to harm the Wagaitj-Beringgen people who are hunting nearby ("like im boss man for all of them"). "These my kids," Belyuen is said to say; all Belyuen residents call Belyuen tjemila (fa.'s mo.). Because the body is able to exude sweat, and the country able to absorb it through such 'pores' as the Belyuen water hole and because the country is able to penetrate bodies through maroi and disease and bodies able to absorb these, the Wagaitj-Beringgen on the Cox Peninsula see themselves as producing a coherent and rich cultural environment. Not only do maroi and durlq emerge from and sink into the countryside, Belyuen Aborigines, as they live and die, emerge from the country and sink back into it. They state that because of all the above Belyuen people are now "stuck" on the Cox Peninsula and that the relationship is "finished"⁶ (or completely developed). For, "We been born from that Belyuen, we gonna die here, this Belyuen; been like that long time now." But Belyuen residents make other, seemingly, contradictory statements about their relationship to

⁶ See Chapter 6 for an explanation of this term.

the Cox Peninsula. They say that it is not their country, that their real country is down south where their durlq (paternal or maternal dreamings) are, and that because of this they can leave the Cox Peninsula at any time. But they make such statements with a typical proviso that they would have left already if they were not so "stuck" to the Cox Peninsula. Speakers unpack the meaning of "stuck" by describing the births, deaths, burials, and ceremonial practices that tie them to the region. From analysis of the conversational aspect of such discussions and from the repositioning of the Belyuen waterhole as a central dreaming site on the Cox Peninsula, it is clear that Belyuen residents are attempting to articulate their legal connections to the Peninsula and to their southern lands through ritual body metaphors: there are several ways that country can claim a person, it can be literally in a person (maroi), and it can be in the heritage of a social group (durlq).

The links I have discussed so far between countries and social groups are always endowed with some kind of prefiguring will, an endowment consistent with Belyuen Aborigines view that country is a type of agent. And as mythic creators linked places across the countryside when they traveled, so clever men and women can link up various countries or social groups. On a dry season day after an afternoon of hunting in the mangroves, several older and younger women and children and I were sitting at a beach waiting for some sea snails (Nerita lineata) to cook. We were talking about a grey-haired crocodile dreaming (danggalaba, L; berlu, B, E) at Bagadjet and a grey-hair Dreaming at Djibung, an estuarine creek connected to an inland swamp. Betty Billawag, a senior Marriamu Belyuen woman explained, "the berlu, grey-hair Dreaming, links up the Bagadjet and Djibung sites;"⁷ Gracie Ziyesta emphasizes that the will of the berlu is the connection between the two sites by describing how it wanted to get from one place to the other; its desire created the track. When describing how their

⁷"Im join-im up now from that point now that berlu."

various paternal and maternal ancestors became associated with each other and the Cox Peninsula region, Belyuen women and men say that they likewise "joined up places" and "families." Belyuen men and women still see themselves as revealing the preexisting connection between countries when they "line up" and "join" sites by listing them during ceremonial and more modern legal performances. I show this topological order in the oral narratives below.

The sentient countryside, then, responds to human social groups. How do language and sweat productively manipulate a recalcitrant country?

Signs from the People.

Rhetoricians have long noted the effective power of speech on human emotions.⁸ Church and state considered early Elizabethan theatre a dangerous forum because of its ability to play upon and arouse emotions in an audience. Many anthropological studies have remarked on the connection between oratory and politics in other small scale societies (Bloch 1975; Myers and Brenneis 1984). The effects speech has on social relations vary from place to place and reflected in local "social discourse."⁹

⁸ Niko Besnier (1990) has recently reviewed the anthropological and sociolinguistic literature on language and affect.

⁹ "First, particularly for those whose concerns are linguistic, the term discourse marks an approach to language as spoken and used rather than as a static code analyzable apart from social practice. In Saussure's *langue/parole* distinction, discourse would fall on the side of *parole*. What those who invoke discourse in this context might want to add, however, is that *langue* either does not exist . . . or at least is always embodied in particular utterances by particular individuals. In privileging speech, those who use the term discourse generally also want to assert the importance of pragmatics versus semantics. The 'code,' whether it be grammar, structure, model, or, in this case, some purported underlying presocial emotional

At Belyuen language and sweat are used and are seen to affect the actions of country and people. Country and people listen to the sounds around them. Both are angered to hear "wrong words" (the wrong language or the wrong use of language) and to be around the "wrong sweat"; they are comforted to hear the sounds and to be in the physical presence of their relatives. Country that recognizes a people's language and sweat provides abundant foods, safety from mythic danger, and accepts deceased people's spirits. David Biernoff noted that places can become safe or dangerous by events that transpire in them; events sink into a place and affect the character of a site (1978). Francesca Merlan (1981) has noted that mythic sites "hear" the language of their people. A human group represents the ability of a site to understand their speech as a sign of their custodial rights and duties.

When the country around Belyuen is listening, it hears the stories that Belyuen Aborigines are always telling each other about their encounters with it. There are many stories of the influence of speech and sweat on the countryside. Few hunting and camping trips are without their share of mythic adventure. Most outstation members daily collect evidence of the pragmatic and mutually constitutive relationship between people and place, and make claims about the meaning of events. On yam-hunting trips, Belyuen Aborigines compare the number of people present with the yam (maRoiti, B; merRumerRu, E) durig to the productivity of the hunt. How many yams were collected? How big were they? Were there any oddly shaped or sized yams? Outstation members survey the surrounding grounds for oddly shaped tracks. What has just passed by them: turtle, kangaroo, or lethaRgun?¹⁰

Because the country is listening, it is also hears a different combination of languages today than it did in the past. We must be cautious in estimating the degree

matrix, is taken as emergent in a social context, even if it is not analyzed as a peculiar western cultural construct" (Lila Abu-Lughod and Catherine A. Lutz 1990: 7).

¹⁰ LethaRgun are mythic creatures, in shape, resembling a giraffe, but in temperament, resembling a hyena.

of difference. It is difficult to know whether, in the immediate precolonial period, Aborigines on the Cox Peninsula spoke Laragiya with its several dialect forms, or whether, because of existing ceremonial and economic ties, a number of Daly River languages were spoken there as well. The linguistic diversity of the Beringgen, Wagaitj and Laragiya camps around the Cox Peninsula region in the 1800s and 1900s was greater than that of the Belyuen community today. First, there were more speakers of each Aboriginal language. Second, there were a greater number of languages spoken, Kiyuk, other dialects of Batjema and Laragiya, and, presumably a Djerait language. While the sounds of many languages filled the Cox Peninsula countryside, the languages used to refer to the sites on the Cox Peninsula, Bynoe Harbour, and Port Patterson regions were more limited. The names of sites are restricted to the Laragiya and Wadjigiyn languages.¹¹ Today, as in most north Australian Aboriginal communities, Belyuen Aborigines speak and understand a number of languages. Aboriginal English is the lingua franca of the community; Belyuen Aborigines say this is a distinctly local form of English. They distinguish it from, say, Bamiyili Aboriginal English; the two varieties of English differ in lexicality (such as, bla for belonga) and prosody (high versus low pitch). Older women and men also speak several Daly River languages: Batjema, Emi, Mentha, Marriamu and Marritjaben.

In D. T. Tryon's (1974) taxonomy, all these Aboriginal languages, except Laragiya, fall within the "Brinken-Wogaitj" group.¹² Batjema is in the "Wodaitj" subgroup, Emi and Mentha in the "Maranunggu" subgroup, and Marriamu and

¹¹ Michael Walsh (1989) has provided a speculative history of how phonological and lexical changes occurred, and so, how Laragiya names were dropped or "Wadjigiynized." Over time, some Laragiya place-names were phonologically adapted to Batjema. Other place names were switched to the new Batjema language, reflecting, it seems, a new human majority on the Cox Peninsula.

¹² Daly River languages fall within what Barry Blake (1987) has described as part of the non-Pama-Nyungan, prefixing languages of the Kimberleys and Top End of Australia. He distinguishes these languages from the suffixing, Pama-Nyungan languages of the greater continent.

Marritjaben in the "Brinken" subgroup. Belyuen Aborigines cluster their languages and social identities somewhat differently. Michael Walsh (1989) writes that, in the past, Belyuen Aborigines used the term "Wagaitj" to refer exclusively to the Wadjigiyn and Kiyuk people; now it is used to refer to the Emi and Mentha as well. Belyuen people usually use the term "Beringgen" to refer to the Marriamu and Marritjaben language groups at Belyuen, although it can refer to wider group of southern coastal and inland Daly River groups. They distinguish the "easy" (familiar) sounds of Wagaitj and Beringgen languages from the "hard" (unfamiliar, foreign) sounds of the Laragiya language; the former group of languages is said to be easy to master, the latter quite hard. If Laragiya and Daly River groups experienced each other's languages as foreign, must not Laragiya mythic sites, at one point, have experienced the Daly River languages as foreign, strange, and annoying?

The effect of speech on the countryside is seen as a part of a larger communicative process that includes verbal and non-verbal activity. Human communication includes speech and sweat, or more broadly, language and activity, both of which can penetrate people and places, unless, as we saw above, places and people have been traumatized (thuttieingi) or humans have donned protective "garments" of smoke and clays. Because speech and sweat communicate to or penetrate the country, rites exist for formally introducing a young Belyuen member's sweat and sounds to the country. Lenny Singh is a senior Kiyuk man at Belyuen.

LENNY SINGH: Well, what you do is, when you go down Bakamanadjing, well, you got dreaming site there. You got Wutwut there and Wariyn. Now, the younger people that pass through initiation ceremony, they have got to be painted up and then sprayed with salt water or dip them in the water, you know, and they can go across, and whoever person that can talk Larrakia, you know, other people, they will be travelling along, you know, talking at the same time saying

that we are going hunting, you know, and otherwise the dreaming site will not give you anything, you know, fish or turtle, anything like that (Kenbi Transcripts: 2030).

Belyuen Aborigines state that their parents and parent's parents were dipped into briny sea-coast sites and inland, freshwater holes, and that, now, they dip their sons and daughters into these same mythic conduits. Through the historic mingling of human sweat and watery sites, Wagaitj's and Beringgen's language and sweat sank into country, allowing it to recognize Belyuen men and women. Lenny Singh states that Laragiya should be used to speak with mythic sites on the Cox Peninsula, but he and other senior Belyuen men and women say that if there is not a person in the group who knows the Laragiya language then other Daly River languages can be spoken.

People say that other than Laragiya, which all mythic sites can understand and which no one can speak fluently, Batjema is the best language in which to speak to the Cox Peninsula and its sites. Emiyenggal and Menthayenggal are next best and Marriamu and Marritjaben are understood "a little bit" depending upon who is speaking to which site: These preferences reflect the historic waves of Wagaitj and Beringgen migration, the varying degrees of mythic (durlq) and ceremonial relatedness of the various Wagaitj-Beringgen groups to the Laragiya, and real political divisions between competing Wagaitj and Beringgen groups for pre-eminence status on the Cox Peninsula. Yet, all three of these motivations for a preferred language rely on the notion that just as sweat is a sign of work, the reaction of a mythic site to one's language and sweat is a sign that one's work is having an effect on the country. Such work endures past death in that it ties the spirits of deceased people to the places in which they lived or with which they were ceremonially associated. These spirits "visit" and "play fun" with people, especially close relatives, who visit an area. These uses during hunting and camping trips and effects of everyday speech on the countryside are not attested in

the early ethnographies of the region and under-reported in general in studies about Australian Aboriginal hunting and gathering practices. Is this a gap in that historical record, or are these new ways with which local Aborigines affiliate themselves to a country? What does it matter if they are "new ways"?

Belyuen Aborigines can claim that that speech and sweat penetrate into and influence the emotions of countries and peoples, but Belyuen Aborigines must negotiate in conversations their interpretations of what the country's reaction means and why it reacts differently to various social groups. Not only does the country listen to people, people listen to the messages of the country. When the blue dove (*Geopelia humeralis*) interrupts a hunting trip with its lamenting cry, and hunters later learn of a sudden sickness, fight, or death in the community, they say that they are not surprised because the dove had told them something had happened. "This country," they say, "knows us, it always tells us things."¹³ But, Belyuen men and women are not just recounting observations of events, they are also making a claim about the meaning of events. Belyuen men and women, like many Westerners, use speech to manipulate their social conditions. People challenge the claims of individuals and groups to be from or "for" a country by stating how different groups act and how the country reacts to them.

The rank and rights of different Aboriginal social groups are rooted in their knowledge and use of country. Speakers describe how they saw a mythic site react to a social group and they assert a reason for the reaction, usually attributing the reaction to a groups' sweat and language upsetting or calming the site. Unless someone knows the site better than the speaker or can supply a different culturally appropriate interpretation of the events, there is no way to dispute his or her words. Conversations between Belyuen women and men constantly circle around to questions

¹³ "This country im sabi (knows) us, im always gona telimbet Belyuen people."

such as who has the mythic and everyday stories about the life of the country? Who knows the prestige languages? What are the effects of language use in a stretch of country? What powers do mythic creatures have to decide the matter? There is no simple agreement between Aboriginal groups on any of these questions. Aborigines do, however, agree generally that human social identity (sex, age, kin, and language affiliation) can upset or soothe mythic sites. Likewise, there is agreement that mythic sites can communicate pleasure or displeasure by emerging or submerging in the form of a natural creature or climatic change. Which reaction they are communicating, however, is negotiated in conversations and is based upon Aborigines' experience of the country. Belyuen speakers compare each other's knowledge of the names of sites, the practices associated with them, and the reactions of the sites to different groups of people.

The following is part of a conversation Belyuen women and I had on the north coast of the Cox Peninsula. The wave-hand of the kanggalong dreaming (blanket lizard dreaming at the Bridjibin site) is described as emerging (nunggukamanthenaiyi, E) and threatening to drown a boat-load of Anglo Land Claim researchers and Beringgen, Wagaitj, and Laragiya Aborigines from Belyuen and Darwin. Maria Brandl is one of the original researchers for the Kenbi Land Claim. The old Kiyuk woman, now deceased, was widely regarded as the expert on the Laragiya language and on the Laragiya sites in and around the Cox Peninsula; she learned this from her own experience and from her then deceased second husband, a senior danggalaba Laragiya. Notice that Jean Ziya, the story-teller, never says whether the old Kiyuk woman used the Laragiya language. Instead, Jean foregrounds the importance of local knowledge for settling down the local mythic landscape. Kabal is the name of one of the Port Patterson Islands. The people in this story were in a small boat off the shore of a northern Port Patterson island near the mythic kanggalang site.

'Bridjibin'

jz: Jean Ziya: Father Emi, mother Emi, born circa 1935

en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.

bm: Grace Ziyesta: Father Marriamu, mother Menthayenggal, born circa 1930.

jz: *yu tel ths bet wir wi went Kabal wi dldent gow nir thet pleis*
you tell this Beth, when we went to Kabal, we didn't go near that place

en: abana (E)
which place

jz: *b>t thei ben sldawn kwait ferst taim eh dei ben*
but they traveled undisturbed for the first part, eh they

gz: *mmm*
mmm

jz: *sldawn kwait dei ben sldawn na kwait dei ben sldaaawn kwaiait efa dat lm ben*
traveled quiet, they traveled undisturbed they traaveled quieeet, after that her
[Dreaming]

nung>k kamanthenaiyi (E) thaR>n im ben muv naw la aliya
finger emerged that dreaming's, she moved now toward all of them

gz: langa wik wik (B)
in the fresh water hole, fresh water hole

jz: *dæt da wan naw*
that's the one now

gz: wik (B) lm ben kam awt
the dreaming came out of the freshwater hole

jz: *en maria brandl lm ben lök*
and Maria Brandl, she saw it

gz: *maria lm now*
Maria, she knows

jz: kamantheni (E) lm ben wanlm naw bilanga drawnlm naw aliya lm ben fraiten
the dreaming emerged, it wanted them, it wanted to drown them, they were frightened,
alidja thæt wulgamen lm ben tak le lm naw hn lm ben gow dawn na dæt nunggu

(E) le lm
all of them, that old Kiyuk lady, she talked to the dreaming now, and it submerged now,
those fingers of it submerged.

Stories like Jean's have a pedagogical and political purpose. They are significant not only because the speaker and I can use them to demonstrate that human language and sweat have the capacity to upset a sentient countryside, but also, because speakers and listeners can use these everyday events to demonstrate who knows of this capacity and who can control its effects. What does the blanket lizard do, what is

likely to upset it, what is likely to calm it down? Jean answers these questions without foregrounding the competitive relationship between Aboriginal groups, here, between Belyuen and non-Belyuen Aborigines. Rather, she foregrounds the events of the trip and creates a rich visual scene of what happened. But the social conflicts are clear to listeners even slightly familiar with the politics of the region. Maria Brandl works for the Northern Land Council on the Kenbi Land claim; she, Darwin Laragiya, and Belyuen Wagaitj and Beringgen were on a mapping exercise near the Port Patterson islands. Jean, like the old Kiyuk woman before her, avoids stating who can or cannot manage the regional countryside, choosing instead to demonstrate this: the Kiyuk woman *ben tak le im* ("talked to the dreaming").

Others have discussed the relationship between a person's or group's knowledge of the mythic countryside and their "power" or "proprietary rights." For example, Ronald Berndt has pointed out the importance of Aborigines "knowing" the land when they make a claim of ownership for it: "Ownership, therefore, is not ratified simply by making a claim to land, even though substantiating genealogical information may be available. A major issue is knowing that particular land -- knowing about the sites, their songs and rituals. . . . The land is a living thing, the source of all life, and the mythic deities who symbolize that land and its inherent life-giving properties need to be nurtured" (1982: 7). Fred Myers has also discussed the relationship between "ideology and experience" in the political life of the Central Desert Pintupi. Building on Nancy Munn's work (1970), he notes that knowledge of the Dreaming or Law and the "ontological orientation to experience of the physical environment" is the source and basis of Pintupi men's authority (1982: 90; see also Hiatt 1982, 1984; von Sturmer 1978; Myers 1986).

The power of stories such as Jean's lie in three areas. First, they *suggest* who has the mythic knowledge of and therefore rights to own the surrounding countryside: if the old Kiyuk woman knew what to do when confronted by the upset Dreaming, she

must know the story about it. But Jean's story and others like it also shift the emphasis on knowledge from a mythic to an everyday canon of stories about the reciprocal and intensional affects of people's and country's activities. Referring to the modern mythic adventures that they or their relatives have had, Belyuen men and women claim that "we got that story now for this Delissaville area" (indicating the Cox Peninsula, Bynoe Harbour, and Port Patterson regions). Basil Sansom writes of a similar shift in the contents of mythic stories among Aboriginal families of south-western Australia.

In all this, the story-form for taking country into ownership is wholly traditional: on the other hand, the contents of the stories are distinctly 'modern' for legend has replaced myth and human identities walk the Dreaming tracks of collectively evoked adventure where men . . . have usurped the mythical figures of the Dreaming (1982: 121).

Finally stories such as Jean's map the historic association of Wagaitj and Beringgen to various stretches of the countryside. On the Cox Peninsula, dreamings that are located close to the hunting grounds and outstations of Belyuen families are said to understand Laragiya, Batjema, Emiyenggal, Menthayenggal, and a "little bit of Marriamu." As one moves to dreamings on the outer edge of where Belyuen families have historically used the country, dreaming sites are said to understand only Laragiya and, for some, a little Batjema. The country's linguistic competence becomes the index through which groups rank each other's competence to mind the country.

Not only are the meanings of a mythic site's reactions to human groups negotiated, but so in some sense is the topography itself. As I said before, Belyuen people compare each other's knowledge of site names, practices associated with places, and reactions of sites to different groups of people. They also daily challenge

each other's knowledge of the countryside in conversations. One way that a person's or group's knowledge of the cultural topography of the countryside becomes "the traditional story" can be seen in conversational negotiations. For example in the following conversation that occurred during a history lesson at the Belyuen grammar school, older Belyuen women were discussing the Cheeky Yam, a mythic old woman who travels up and down the Bynoe Harbour; when a boat crosses her path, the Cheeky Yam emerges from the water and tries to sink the vessel.¹⁴ In the segment of conversation below, women engage in a common conversational routine. While discussing the country, they challenge each other's knowledge of the correct names and locations of dreamings and the correct practices associated with them. Belyuen women say that this type of conversation is good because it allows them to "straighten up" the countryside and it allows the countryside to hear them talking about it. Discussing the correct topology is necessary if the memory of it and, through the memory, the well-being of the country are to pass to the next generation. If the cultural topography is scrambled people might accidentally walk near or over a dangerous mythic site. Unintentionality cannot save a person who disturbs a mythic site. In the conversation below, the women are discussing what dreamings are found in the Belyuen waterhole. Dreamings include, the kenbi (didjeridoo) and the koinme (mangrove stick).

¹⁴ Although I have mainly discussed mythic creatures who emerge from the water like the Cheeky Yam, Blanket Lizard, and Rainbow Serpent dreamings, creatures emerge from the ground as well. LethaRgun, or predatory giraffes, emerge from beneath towering antbeds or milkwood trees.

'Cheeky Yam'

- me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1927.
 dz: Deborah Zirita: father Emi, mother Marriamu, born circa 1950.
 je: Joan Ela: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born 1943.
 sm: School Master: Anglo-Australian, born circa 1950
 cb: Catherine Burga: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born circa 1920.
 en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.
 bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.

- me: *Yeh dæ̃t the kenbi (B/E) naw thæ̃R>n durlq (B) Im got kenbi durlq (B) hn ding*
 yeh that is the didjeridoo now in the waterhole. It has a didjeridoo dreaming and, thing,
koinme (B)
mangrove stick dreaming.
- dz: *thæt thæt mait bi thæt tjen>l-Im kam awt dfferent seikred saits*
 that that might be that channel, the tunnel comes out to different sacred sites
- me: *yeh Im gat a driming thæt mangow thæt mangrowv wan tri en thæt bambu naw*
lat
 yeh, it has several dreamings: mango, that mangrove tree and that didjeridoo now,
driming In dir. dei sei thæt leragiya pip>l naw fr>m dls water naw Im gow rait
 those dreamings are in there. Laragiya people say that from this water now, the
 dreaming goes right
thru naw kam >p le ailend evriwir, endiyen ailend, duw>n, mm kam awt dlsaid le,
 through and comes up at the Islands, everywhere, Indian Island, Duwun, the dreaming
 comes out this side of ...
wat lz mm neim
 what's it's name
- je: *bridjibln*
 Bridjibin
- me: *bridjibln wei streit, yuwei, streit ahed le Milik thæt ailend dir naw Im kam awt*
 Bridjibin way straight, going, straight ahead to Milik, and it comes out there at that
 island
dirye det water fr>m ir glv lt langa
 from here the waterhole goes to there
- sm: *yu kldz ar biying tu noizi bi kwaiyet pliz*
 you kids are being too noisy be quiet please
- me: *Im kam le thæt driming dlsaid la Bainow Harbar wei dæ̃t wat-Im dlswan*
 it extends from here to that dreaming this side of Bynoe Harbour way, what's its name.
- bobot awa yuwa (E)*
thing of the beef-class there?
- mb: [faint]
- me: *wila (B) awa (E) wila (E) yeda minthene (E)*
cheeky yam of the beef-class, cheeky yam, look, cheeky yam
- cb: *yu (E/Marr) [faint]*
yes
 [noise]
- je: *tak y>ng gerlz*
 talk to the young girls
- me: *wel laik sam kld dei gow dawn dir evritaim la*

- well like some kids they do down there everytime to
 en: [to children] *eh llsen stari dir abi tel-lm*
 hey, listen to the story Abi [me] is telling
- me: *aa dat pleis wat dls pleis aaa buwambi*
 aa that place what this place, aaa, Buwambi
- cb: *y>koi (E/Marr)*
 you're right
- dz: *bambi*
 Buwambi
- me: *yeh dei al taim gow dawn dir dæt kld ye now hn mait bi thei now mar sæbi dæt*
 yeh, they go down there often, those kids, you know, and maybe they don't know that
meiyidjem (B) awa ngaRawaka minthene (E) wel lm gow dawn
 the beef-class cheeky yam well it can sink down into the sea
- dz: *yeh yeh*
 yeh yeh
- me: *wel lm gow dawn*
 well the cheeky yam can sink
- dz: *lm laik a a waid laik a*
 it is like a a wild like a
- me: *waid yem yena (E) lm driming thaR>n tjiki yem naw*
 wild yam is there, it's a dreaming, the cheeky yam dreaming now
- en: *minthene (E) naw*
cheeky yam now
- ad: *wila (B)*
cheeky yam
- bp: *mimi ?(E)*
pumpkin yam?
- me: *wila (B)*
cheeky yam
- en: *now moar thæt n>therwan*
 no that other one
- ad: *minthene (E)*
cheeky yam
- cb: *yeh*
 yeh
- ad: *yu sei m minthene (E)*
 you say cheeky yam
- je: *dæt manster dæt wi ben show yu dæt dei, yeh theRawin (E)*
 that monster we showed you that day, yeh Rainbow Sea Serpent
- en: *nat theRawin (E)*
 not Sea Serpent
- dz: *hm gata aa laika leig thls mab wulgamen sæbi thei tel yu the wan naw callm*
minthene
 it has a, like a leg, this bunch of old ladies know they can tell you the one, you call it
minthene (E) ar wila (B)
cheeky yam or cheeky yam

It is important to remember that although these women are disputing one another's and my knowledge and thereby establishing power relationships among themselves, they are all part of the Belyuen group. So, whether they call the cheeky yam minthene (B) or wila (E), or even gulida (L), Belyuen Aborigines seek the name of and appropriate behavior for a site within their own group.

Such conversations are negotiations of power based upon a specific kind of knowledge. Belyuen women and men evaluate a person's knowledge with a fairly stable set of criteria: is a person able to say what they know in a "straight way"; that is, in a topological sense, is a person able to line up the country in the correct order. Above, women noted the direction that a mythic creature traveled: "it comes out," "it goes right through," "that area Bridjibin way straight yes straight ahead to Milik." Belyuen men and women emphasize content and order, and place and seriation in their discussions of the countryside. Stephen Muecke has argued, "[s]ong-cycles are also likely to work with memory in that they progress nomadically, going from place to place . . . [k]nowing the performance text thus means to also know the country" (1988: 48). Reciprocally, not knowing the order of site names and related stories is an indication that a speaker does not know the country and is, therefore, a dangerous entity in it.

Competing knowledge claims arise during formal legal hearings and during informal conversations (cf. Rosaldo 1973; Brenneis 1988). Whereas the productiveness of cultural knowledge for the ethnographer may lie in its ability to be interpreted and presented as an authentic encounter between the gaze of the Anglo and an exoticized other, or, as an example of the conjunctures between and perpetual displacement of cultures, the productiveness of cultural knowledge in Western legal contexts shifts away from an emphasis on exegesis and back to an emphasis on

individual and group performance.¹⁵ The recitation of a mythic text is placed above a person's *savoir-faire* in interpreting the text. With some notable exceptions (Mulvaney 1970), Western scholars do not collect myths in order to perform them, and through the performance to make claims about their own achieved status. They do use their ability to formulate engaging interpretations of society, culture, and economy to achieve status. But academic status is bounded. No Western lawyer is actually expected to believe the stories that Aborigines tell of the power of myth, language, and sweat to create and maintain the countryside. And all lawyers have a healthy distrust of anthropological interpretation. Lawyers find the performance of mythic texts useful as a diagnostic tool; the performance of a mythic text tells them that it exists and that so-and-so person or group has the right and is able to tell it. There is little point to what myth really means.¹⁶ In legal settings, performance has once again risen above exegesis. Court stories are mythic recitations that are told not to teach an initiate -- not for the purpose of memorization -- who has less power, but to prove to a listener who has more power that the speaker is who he or she claims to be. The rules which hold for conversations in courtrooms or, often, for the ethnographic record, do not hold at Belyuen for challenging and legitimating a person's knowledge of the mythic countryside. But the knowledge, or "information," collected for the ethnographic and court record impinges on local attempts to discriminate knowledge and authority.

¹⁵ Stephen Muecke has argued that in the process of moving away from the performance of a mythic text (which was simultaneously a performance of the person's knowledge of the countryside) to the production of an English translation of it as a cultural text, an important shift occurs (1988: 48). There is a shift from memorization to exegesis. Although I would disagree with Muecke's claim that Aborigines do not interpret their mythic texts -- insofar as Aborigines monitor how the country's actions reflect the mythic prescription -- certainly Western translation and reproduction emphasize interpretation and canon building to the virtual exclusion of performance.

¹⁶ From the courtroom has arisen a new kind of myth cycle. Aborigines have, for quite some time, told inside and outside forms of the same mythic stories depending upon the age, sex, and ethnicity of the audience, all of which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 6. Now they tell, at least, one extra genre, a "court story."

In local struggles for authority, Belyuen men and women compare what they know to what others in and around the community know, and, in the process, add to their own knowledge. Speakers challenge each other to say what they know, and speakers hold back part of this as a speaking strategy to maintain authority. These speaking strategies do not work in courtrooms or in other formal legal contexts: Westerners may interpret an Aborigine's holding back information as evidence that the person does not know it.

What modern Aborigines say is also constantly compared to the historical record. Belyuen Aborigines, and others, challenge, accept, and deny parts of the record, but the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act, 1976 makes continuity of knowledge a central issue. In formal courts and ethnographic sessions, an Aborigine's inability to duplicate past information is usually interpreted as a loss of knowledge, rather than as a speaking strategy, a legitimate difference between two authentic knowledges, or an extension of past knowledge. Early ethnography's emphasis on the abiding nature of the mythic dreamtime culture has unintentionally aided those who believe that present-day Aborigines who cannot duplicate past information have lost their cultural knowledge. Modern Australian ethnography presents a more complex picture of the negotiations of knowledge involved when Aborigines talk about country. In a number of articles, Basil Sansom has attempted to articulate Aborigines' understandings of "the basic relationship between the sign value of a word that names a person or place or thing and the signal value that inheres in the story of that person, that place, that thing" and their complex negotiations of these values (1988: 154; see also, N. Williams 1982, 1986; Sutton and Rigsby 1982; Myers 1986). This later ethnography portrays the choices and options that Aborigines have and the ways that Aborigines are, and might always have been, constantly updating and evaluating mythic culture as they hunt, camp, and travel across the country.

For conversations between Belyuen Aborigines, there are three principles that seem to account for how women interactively gain and relinquish rights to tell a narrative about a mythic site or historical event: *being straight for* a story or event, *being there* during the occurrence of a story or event, and *being part of* the story or of the social group which is the occasion for the story-telling. These are not the only items included in the organization of conversations, but they seem to be some of the most important ones. 'Being straight for' a story or event means that the person or a close relation is personally connected in it. Perhaps the person has a dreaming from the area that the story describes or the person's mother or father was the main protagonist. 'To be straight for' a story is to have the 'inside story' and to have the right to place it 'outside' or not. 'Having been there' gives a person the right to take a turn or to refuse it and to allow others to tell the story or to block its recitation. People who were not physically at an event or not closely related to the persons in the story must defer to others.

The right to put a story outside became the focus of a conversation during a Belyuen school history lesson (see Appendix One for a more complete version). Older women discussed how a theRawin (E; durlg, B, Rainbow Serpent Dreaming) drowned a young woman. The conversation began with several of the women stating that they could not tell the story (could not put the story outside). Emily Nela is a reknowned story-teller, but says that she cannot tell the story because she was not "there" (at the place it occurred); she only heard the story from someone else.

'You can run'

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1927.
 bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.
 en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.
 cm: Claire Mamaka: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born circa 1930
 je: Joan Ela: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born 1943.
 dz: Deborah Zirita: father Emi, mother Marriamu, born circa 1950.
 cb: Catherine Burga: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born circa 1920.

me: *dæt wan naw thæt llt>l gerl stari thei ben teling yu*
 that is the one now, that "little girl story" they were telling you
 bp: *thæt the wan*
 that's the one
 me: *yeh*
 yeh
 [noise]
 en: *now ai kent tel ai kent tel*
 no I can't tell it I can't tell it
 [noise]
 en: *bik>z ai never ben dir samb>di tel mi stari*
 because I was not there somebody told me the story
 cm: *bllawag sh>d bi hir end tel shi nowz*
 Bilawag [personal name] should be here and tell she knows
 [noise]
 je: *`nat eni mama now yuz howdImbet g>tz Im gana helpImbet kugali (Marr)*
 no momma, no use holding back, your cousin [en] will help tell the story
 en: *mal:thena mangqin (E)*
tell the story, cousin

Mary Eladi notes that the "little girl story" is the story that I have been asking for all morning: how a young girl drowned while she was running away from the Banagula camp near the Daly River. Throughout the morning no one has attempted to tell it: they say either that they have forgotten it or that they were not there when it happened. Claire Mamaka comments on Grace Ziyesta's absence -- she should be with this group of women because she knows the story. Joan Ela asks for her father's sister, Catherine Burga, to tell the story, assuring her that Emily Nela will help. Emily, in

turn, asks Catherine to "tell the story, cousin" and is refused. Finally we begin to hear the story as Emily tells Deborah Zirita, a young Emi woman, how, in the 1940s, two women ran away from the Banagula Daly River estate; Emily Nela starts by telling that part which she witnessed. (In the 1800-1900s, it was a common Anglo practice to give Aborigines Western names. "All the Maggies" notes a common situation in which many people ended up with the same Anglo name, often because Anglo-Australians could not tell two people apart.)

- en:* *aa ai ben dir wen lm ben r>nawei gat dat mai anti naw mait bi* [noise]
aa I was there when she ran away with my aunt, now, might be
- cm:* *yeehh*
yehh
- en:* *lm ben r>nawei gat thæt wulgamen hu mama K>nel ala Mægi*
she ran away with that old lady, who? momma-Kunnel [personal name], all the Maggies
- me:* *mægi lm neim*
Maggie was her name
- bp:* *dæt da wan?*
that's the one?
- en:* *lm k>zln bla yu*
she's your cousin [to Mary or Joan]
- me:* *yei*
yeh
- dz:* [to bp] *narthern lend kawsll gata mep æsk mab mep*
Northern Land Council has a map ask that mob for a map

It is in fact, Joan's father from whom the woman is running, and it is her classificatory cousin who drowns. Joan takes over and starts the action of the story. She effectively puts the story outside: the two women were cross-cousins (manggin, E), as they swam across the channel heading for a small island something "like a dreaming" came up from the water.

- cb: manggin naingdjei yow (E)
she was my cousin
samb>di ben r>n >p them tupela
 somebody ran up those two women
- en: mama dædi ngamu-ben-nye-weRa (E) *ble yer father*
 momma your and my father your father
- dz: *yeh dæd*
yeh dad
- en: *bli nylnmi father lm ben r>n awei fr>m lm father lm ben j>s gltllm f'banagula*
 mai
 from your and my father, she ran away from our father; he got her at Banagula my
kuntri aliya lm ben j>s Kleim lm. `yu mirrid' dæt mai father. nu wan n'yu mirid
 gat
 country, all of them, he just claimed her: 'you married' that's what my father said, "no
 one" [she said], then you are married to
mai father lm never ben laiklm mai father si
 my father. She never liked him my father see
- me: *dæts wai lm ben r>nawei*
 that's why she ran away
- en: *dasarwai hev tu wai lm ben r>nawei fr>m lm naw lm sei that mama ben y>ng dæt*
leidi
 that's why she had to, why she ran away from him, now, he said that 'momma' had
 been too young for him.
lm ben r>nawei mai father bla ylnmi father lm never ben laiklm lm mai father
tu y>ng
 she ran away from my father, from your and my father, she never liked him, my
 father, she was too young for him.
lm ben hev tu r>nawei lm ben hev tu r>n awei na
 she had to run away, she had to run away now
- je: *dæt pleis naw*
 that place now

Whereas before, only Ziyesta was said to be able to tell this story, suddenly everybody knows and can tell it. The young woman left the Banagula camp with her cross cousin and traveled north towards Darwin. When they reached the northern shore near the Port Patterson Islands, they decided to swim to the nearest island. The women swam and swam, says Mary, but one of the young women began to cry out for help while the other kept swimming towards the island. This is an incredibly moving and disturbing point in the story. Over and over Mary, in a slow monotone and with Emily echoing her, says the struggling girl cried out for help, for her mate to come back and help her.

Mary finishes her turn speaking by describing how the first woman never looked back. There are intimations here, and in other occurrences of this story, that a cleverman had "sung" the young woman and made her tjeingithu to the cries of her cousin. Emily changes this ending slightly: when she did look back her mate was gone. As if the listeners failed to hear this before, Mary repeats, they were mates: manggins, "wives" to each other, kinspeople who are supposed to have a close, playful and endearing relationship. Mary and Emily are adja nirRwat (same named sisters, E). Moreover, they are both Emiyenggal (although Mary's mother was Wadjigiyn), close in age (circa 1927 and 1925 respectively) and "looked the same" when they were young, and so, were always paired during ceremonies and corroborees. They are also recognized, along with Grace Ziyesta, as the most fluent story-tellers at Belyuen. The various relationships that exist among women are emphasized in a story ostensibly about the threat of certain mythic creatures to all women.

- en: wel lm-ben r>n awei fr>m lm naw*
well she ran away from him now
- je: lm ben teiklm adja (E) tupela mipela*
she took sister, my sisters thosetwo
- en: lm ben frait*
she was frightened
- je: ben trai r>nawei akras the pleis tu get tu lang ailend*
she tried to run away across the harbor to get to an island
- bp: lang lang wei*
long long way
- je: hmm thæt taid lm ben j>s laik k>m ln laik thæt*
hmm that tide it just, like, came in like that
- cb: mmm*
mmm
- je: m>sta ben samthing laik driming*
must of been something like a dreaming
- me: tupela ben swlm lm ben swlmswlm b>t dat gerl dldent wana gu bek ai dunow wai*
those two women swam, they swam and swam but that girl didn't want to go back I
don't know why
dæt gerl ben singing awt far help naw help mi meit help mi kam bek an' yu help
that girl was calling out for help "help me mate, help me, come back and you help me,
mi help mi meit nathing na
help me mate" nothing now
- en: help help help dia- (E)*

- "help help help" goodness
- me:* *dæt gerl never ben gu bek piklm >p lm*
that girl never went back to pick her up
- en:* *ben sei wel lm ben laikadjet laidjet mlsea rubininggi ningi krul gerl*
she said well she was like that Mrs. Rubininggi cruel girl
wel lm ben hev tu lök bek flnlsht naw lm flnlsht
well she had to look back, finished now, she was finished
- bp:* *lm ben laik dat theRawln (E) wi ben lök?*
it was like that Rainbow Serpent we saw?
- me:* *mmm hn dei ben meitz*
mmm and they were mates

Clearly the speakers above attempt to get the correct person to tell the story of the theRawln. For example, Claire Mamaka states that Grace Ziyesta "should be here" to tell the story. Joan and Emily also try to get Catherine Burga, Joan's father's sister, to tell the story, but she refuses. Significantly, Emily begins by telling only the part that she witnessed and outlining the various kin relations the actors had to each other and to her. It is Joan, related to a principal character in the story, who actually places the story 'outside.' Mary and Emily, good story-tellers, take over and finish the story.

This story demonstrates something beyond local "ways of speaking." It emphasizes the importance of people experiencing a countryside before they can talk and make claims about it. Experience of a place is critical to the everyday negotiation of knowledge, and through knowledge, power. People critically evaluate and rank people's knowledge based upon their different historical and social relationships to a stretch of country. At a minimum, they ask, who is the speaker, what relationship does she or he have to the context of the story, to the place where the story occurred, to the rest of the social group? Interpretation exists, but it is lodged within local notions of a kind of productive relationship between people and country.

Sitting in the Countryside.

In this chapter, I have foregrounded how social and cultural identity is produced when people interact with the country: people gain their social and physical well-being and their cultural identity from the country and the country expresses itself through human bodies. This reciprocal relationship works because human and landed bodies are sentient, porous, and present to each other. Without each acting on the other, people and country lose their health and well-being and in the process lose their social and cultural identity. It remains briefly to examine the productive merits that Belyuen Aborigines gain by "just sitting" at a site in the country.

In the above discussion I stated that mythic dreamings and personalities (durlq and nyoitj) around the Daly River and Cox Peninsula area are said to smell and react positively to the sweat of people who have lived for a long time in the vicinity and who treat them with the proper ceremonial respect. If the country, or a dreaming, does not recognize a person's or groups' sweat the country will withhold its products, or dreamings will disturb the health of the people. This is not a surprising strategy to attribute to dreaming creators, for if the country does not recognize a person's sweat, it is fair odds that the person has not been introduced to the country sufficiently well enough to avoid disrupting dreaming or ritual areas. Belyuen Aborigines claim that the health of the country and people depends upon the mutual, positive action and reaction of each to the other, and they negotiate the meaning of the country's reaction to them. When a dreaming "comes out," is that a positive or a negative sign?

In the local framework, country is a living, signifying subject. But several Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups make conflicting claims about what the

countryside is saying. There are enormous advantages then to "just sitting" in the countryside beyond the benefits Belyuen men and women gain by hunting, fishing, and collecting there. In a fairly strict ecological sense, Belyuen women and men argue that knowledge of a site gained by just sitting around the area is a productive strategy for maintaining the country's resources. Long observation of how local country reacts to human presence and absence allows local people to make better judgements about how to modify their behaviour to suit the form of the country. Here again, as many authors have noted, the importance of residing in a place is critical to knowing and thereby claiming proprietary rights over it. Residing in a place also allows people to know who their fellow countrymen and women are: "achieving" or "producing" a sense of community or "commonality" for a place (cf. Myers 1982, 1986; Sansom 1980, 1982). Residence and shared experience of the countryside answer questions Belyuen people pose in a form similar to those that Susan Tod Woenne saw as fundamental to Docker River people. Having come to the Docker River Settlement from a variety of places, people asked not who belonged there "*instead* of someone else . . . [but] who belonged there *more* than someone else" (1974: 54).

Whose Settlement -- whose 'country' -- is Docker River? By what rights?

Which people are Docker River People? In terms of which criteria? And relative to which social and territorial contexts? (1974: 56)

Because they view the countryside as a living thing, Belyuen Aborigines liken the country's reaction to their presence to how a kinsperson would respond. The country is made happier and healthier when visited. Belyuen Aborigines say that taking care of kin and of country is hard work that requires time and patience. A person learns by just sitting and watching the manner of a person and of a site in the countryside. Through long-term association people gain a deep understanding of another person's

seasonal and contextual moods; and, a person who has many kin and who is visited by them becomes healthy, productive, and happy. Reciprocally, taking a break from a person or a place is as important as visiting either one. This is important to stress: as productive and important as visiting and sitting with people and country is, it is equally as important to give people and places "a rest." At Belyuen, people stress continuity and change, coming and going, sitting and moving on to the next place. Belyuen Aborigines, then, claim two things, on the one hand, that the Cox Peninsula and surrounding islands are productive hunting and camping grounds with reactive, dynamic mythic sites, and on the other hand, that because country responds productively to kinspeople, and because Belyuen Aborigines are the kinspeople visiting it, the country is responding positively to them. Just by sitting and visiting the countryside, Belyuen men and women are able to increase its produce and to claim the responsibility for that increase.

Just sitting in a sentient countryside also gains Belyuen Aborigines the cultural marks of proper custodians. They gain personal (or 'conception') dreamings as they hunt, camp, and travel to and from the Belyuen community. When people die, their spirits infuse the countryside with a local perspective: the country has abiding spirits that are from Belyuen as much as Belyuen children are now said to be (gain their maroi) from the Belyuen waterhole, which in turn links them to the regionally important kenbidurlq (didjeridoo dreaming). Finally, they gain the everyday and historical stories that position people and country as characters in a local and regional drama. Having spent time in the surrounding country, Belyuen men and women can use in political engagements the cultural marks of custodians they gained as a rebuke: where were you when we were doing the hard work of maintaining the life of the country? What marks do you have to show for your work? What stories did you pick up as you traveled, or did not, across the country?

The effectiveness of just sitting in the countryside and basing negotiations of power on this works only unevenly within regional and national power structures. A politics rooted in discursive performances of local experiential knowledge benefits those people who spend a large amount of their time hunting, camping and traveling in the country. However, the emphasis on a mythic canon, on historical continuity, and on the timeless, spiritual links between one group of people and one stretch of country can work against this same group if they are migrants. And a different model of productive labor backed by a different discursive model would also compete with a local emphasis on experiential knowledge. In the next chapter, I examine some Western political-economic writings on how human labor produces property and people, and I discuss the effect of these writings on Anglo-Australian appropriation of Aboriginal lands.

CHAPTER TWO: 'Hunting Wild Cattle': Western constructions of acquisitive and productive labor meet the Northern Territory.

He that hawkes at larks and sparrows has no less sport, though a much less considerable quarry, than he that flies at nobler game: and he is little acquainted with the subject of this treatise, the UNDERSTANDING, who does not know that, as it is the most elevated faculty of the soul, so it is employed with a greater and more constant delight than any of the other. Its searches after truth are a sort of hawking and hunting, wherein the very pursuit makes a great part of the pleasure. Every step the mind takes in its progress towards Knowledge makes some discovery, which is not only new, but the best too, for the time at least.

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1969[1689]: 55.

1. Machines and 'Man.'

It would be hard to imagine a social outlook more at odds with the Wagaitj-Beringgen understanding of how humans and country mutually constitute the form of the other than that of the emerging industrialized nations of the 18th and 19th centuries. Rising theorists of these nations rejected any understanding of a "country that listens" or "an object that behaves willfully." Although the search for human understanding may be like "hawking and hunting," the people who 18th century Western European theorists classified as hunters, fishers, and gatherers were thought incapable of attaining any developed sense of human understanding. A society's mode of subsistence determined the society's intellectual abilities, and because modes of subsistence were thought to be progressive, the theorists' own agro-commercial society marked the high tide in human development. European Enlightenment theorists were moving way from the "occult" models of alchemists in which objects were said to behave willfully. Boyle, Locke, Hobbes, and others, though often disagreeing among themselves, attacked and opposed to the alchemists' occult explanations a mechanical understanding of nature and society (Alexander 1985; Shapin and Schaffer 1985; Adas 1989). In present Western terms, mechanical and chemical action were merged: chemical life being machine-like and machines having "an artificial [chemical] life."¹

¹Thomas Hobbes, in his seventeenth century work *Leviathan*, writes, "life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within, why may we not say that all *automata* (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as does a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the *heart* but a *spring*, and the *nerves* but so many *strings*, and the *joints* but so many *wheels* giving motion to the whole body such as was intended by the artificer? *Art* goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, *man*. For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH or STATE -- in Latin, CIVITAS -- which is but an artificial man, though of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defense it was intended (1958[1651]: 23). Ian Shapiro argues, "The major socioeconomic forces that influenced Hobbes's argument were intimately

In this chapter I describe how Western theories of political economy have influenced land politics in Australia. First I examine how 18th and 19th century theorists understood the human "faculty for self improvement" to fit with their developing notions of productive and unproductive labor, in particular, how these theorists distinguished the productive power of manufacturing and agricultural societies from the 'merely' acquisitive labor of hunters and gatherers. I focus on the writings of Locke, Rousseau, Smith, and Marx. How did so called radical liberal philosophy affect and inform the colonization process in Australia, and how does it continue to do so? There is little doubt that this quick and selective review of some political economists' writings on the pivotal nature of labor in the production process and, thereby, the rights of laborers to the means of production, skips over contradictory passages in each thinker's writings. However, it is not my primary interest to demonstrate whether or not any of the above models is true. Nor is it my claim that there is one dominant western view of the power of people's labor and of the creation of property; European political economists have studied people's labor is able to accomplish within the factory in some ways similar to how Belyuen men and women watch the country's and each other's labor in different settings? Further, notions of bourgeois, or bourgeois-sponsored, natural philosophers and political economists only unevenly reflect or contest what other classes understand their labor to accomplish. I do intend with this brief discussion to present the long-standing nature and quality of political-economic

bound up with the emergence of capitalism in England" and that, because of Hobbes' historical place he lacked "the concept of equilibrium" in which market forces reached a state of equilibrium without political intervention: "This made a vast difference to the social, economic, and political functions of the state in an emerging market economy -- for it entailed very different assumptions about how markets functioned in practice" (1986: 23).

interests in labor's role in the creation of objects and subjects,² in particular the differences that political economists draw between productive and acquisitive labor.

Two authors, Nancy Williams (1986, 1987) and Edwin Wilmsen (1989a, 1989c) have explored aspects of the issues that I discuss below. In her ground-breaking analysis of the Yolngu people's land-use and land-ownership system, Nancy Williams reviews the historical development of the Western theory of private property and how it worked in the appropriation of colonized people's lands. She describes a set of associations about private property that developed through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and that continue to occur into the present-day: "genuine proprietary interests are individual, they are archetypically expressed in relation to land and the practice of agriculture, and they entail the existence of 'government'" (1986: 115). Hunters and gatherers who lived in the Americas and Australian continent were seen as lacking each of the above associations and so "the eighteenth century nations could assume that many parts of the world -- including Australia -- were still *America* [places where lands were being 'wasted'] and could be appropriated by investing the labour of cultivation" (Williams 1986: 122). Edwin Wilmsen supports this assessment, "On every continent where Europeans encountered peoples whose economies were perceived to be exclusively -- or even substantially -- based on foraging, the same rationale was invoked to disenfranchise their land" (1989c; see also 1989a: 47-52; see also Hiatt 1984; Tatz 1982). All these authors note that understanding the political history of present-day land tenure legislation is critical to understanding the varying polemics of regional and national Australian politics with regard to the uses ethnic groups make of northern lands.

² Nancy Munn (1970) has written provocatively on the "dynamic subjectivity" of Australian Aboriginal mythical beings, the transformation of objects into subjects, and of the ritual transformation of subjects into objects. See also John Morton (1987).

Williams', Wilmsen's and Hiatt's discussions draw upon and fit within a wider literature that examines developing theories of property and human action in Western philosophy from the 18th to the 19th century. Nancy Williams, for instance, uses Ronald Meek's discussion of how "eighteenth century social science . . . started talking about the progress and perfectibility of society" based on "the idea of the *ignoble savage*" (1976: 2-3)³ to examine how such views influenced the colonization of 'ignoble Australia' and the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) act 1976. The political science scholar Ian Shapiro has attempted to locate Western philosophical "texts, as well as the traditions they constitute, in the broader processes of socioeconomic change that give rise to them *qua* ideological entities, and which they are instrumental in reproducing" (1986: 8, cf. also Shapiro 1982). Shapiro's framework is reflected in Richard Ashcraft's examination of the revolutionary politics of Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*. Ashcraft argues that political theory is understandable "in reference to a specified context, wherein the concepts, terminology, and even the internal structure of the theory itself are viewed in relation to a comprehensive ordering of the elements of social life"; social context "supplies the criteria according to which the social actions appropriate for changing that world are rendered meaningful" (1986: 5).

The following discussion, then, builds upon the work of these scholars. But whereas Williams emphasizes how Yolngu jural rights and duties to their country fit Western notions of private property and how "perceptual barriers . . . historically explicable were instrumental in preventing legal recognition of Yolngu proprietary interest in land" (1986: 152), my emphasis is less on property and more on "activity." I re-examine some political-economic texts asking how did the writers understand labor to mediate ownership rights to country and 'property'? What marks did they see

³ Although I do not focus on the "modes of production" debate, it is worth mentioning that Maurice Godelier, a well-known theorist in this discussion, points to the problem of defining labor when defining property, territory, and "forms of action on nature" (1986: 84).

various human groups' labor leaving on the form of the human physical and social body and on the countryside? How do Western political-economic and Belyuen Aboriginal notions of a theory of action and production compete and intertwine? What is the effect of this conflict and competition on how each perceives the other to produce or inhibit the health and well-being of the country and of their communities? In the second half of the chapter I look at the Anglo and Aboriginal economies in north Australia in light of this discussion. I examine how 19th and early 20th century Australian workers, administrators, and journalists drew upon political-economic understandings of "labor-power", and the consequences for Western perceptions and representations of Australian Aboriginal activity in the Northern Territory. My emphasis falls on activity rather than property because it allows me to better articulate Western political-economic texts with Belyuen notions of the power of speaking and acting (speaking as a form of acting) on the shape and identity of the countryside. By doing so I can better portray past and present Anglo polemics against 'southern' mismanagement of northern lands and against Aborigines' "waste of productive lands."

1. Cultivation and notions of productive and unproductive labor.

The New Science not only sought to overturn a previous alchemic understanding of the living world, but to establish a way of seeing the natural, mechanical order as liable to human manipulation. According to the New Science, because objects lack the distinguishing features of human life -- will and reason -- they are perfectly manipulatable, and the results of their manipulation perfectly calculable. Peter Alexander notes, "[i]t is well known that Locke was influenced by Descartes in a number of ways and that they, together with Boyle and other natural philosophers,

were rejecting many scholastic doctrines and replacing unanalysed scholastic concepts by concepts analysed in mechanical terms" (1985: 97-8). Ian Shapiro notes Lockian empiricism and Cartesian rationalism shared a common notion of the "individual will": the ghost in the human machine.⁴ Although Hobbes' and Bacon's 'natural science' was supplanted by Boyle's 'experimental science' the obsession of both with the new machines thrust forward the radical empiricism of the English Enlightenment and bracketed questions of ultimate sentient or motive forces.⁵ Nineteenth century factories, and machines within them, were glorified as the perfect human realization of the world's motive force (Adas 1989). They were

the idea of a vast automaton, composed of various mechanical and intellectual organs, acting in uninterrupted concert for the production of a common object, all of them being subordinated to a self-regulating moving force (E.P. Thompson 1966: 360).

While natural philosophers were extending the mechanical, or, geometrical, model to explain natural forces -- from the movement of the planets to the action of corpuscles -- they were uneasily holding the divide between natural objects and the

⁴ "There is an important respect in which the subject of rights, the idea of a person, embraced by these writers is a Cartesian idea" (Shapiro 1986: 144). The similarity, according to Shapiro, lies in the "subject of rights": "These writers' accounts are basically Cartesian in the commitment to the beliefs that the individual's will is the cause of his actions, and that every individual has decisive authority over his will because he has privileged access to the contents of his own mind. . . . The model of action became intellectual action and only the agent could be said to know his intentions with absolute certainty" (144-145)

⁵ Shapiro notes that Hobbes takes "the capacity for individual action as a given" and as "prior to and independent of man's social relations" (1986: 65): "We will see that this view of individual capacities was to become one of the central vulnerabilities of the liberal ideology of individual rights, for if the capacity to produce is potentially infinite because of the economies of scale inherent in the division of labor, it can hardly be seen as conferring rights that are independent of that division of labor" (65). Here, because noncommercial societies lacked the power and division of labor of commercial societies, their very rights as individuals were open to question.

human subject. Natural and enlightened philosophers differentiated humans from natural objects not in their biological, physical, or mechanical aspect, but in the former's capacity to reason, to speak, and to exchange (words and goods) willfully; all these were aspects of the human ability to improve the world around them.⁶

I see in all animals only an ingenious machine (*machine ingenieuse*) to which nature has given senses in order to keep itself in motion and protect itself, up to a certain point, against everything that is likely to destroy or disturb it. I see exactly the same things in the human machine (*machine humaine*), with this difference: that while nature alone activates everything in the operations of a beast, man participates in his own actions in his capacity as a free agent (*en qualite d'agent libre*) (Rousseau 1988[1755]: 87).

Thus it is not his understanding (*l'entendement*) which constitutes the specific distinction of man among all other animals, but his capacity as a free agent (*sa qualite d'agent libre*) (Rousseau 1988[1755]: 88).

Rousseau obviously speaks to Locke on this point. Locke posited, "it is the *understanding* that sets man above the rest of the sensible beings" (1969[1689]: 63). But their disagreement on this point is here less important than their shared view that humans had a unique capacity to make the world around them, a capacity that distinguished them from the dumb animals and insentient objects. The unique human capacity 'to make' became "the bedrock for the analysis of property."⁷ Through their

⁶ In light of recent anthropological concerns with "agency and structure," it is useful to remember that it is only after we have theorized the subject/object that we can talk about subjects who are agents and objective structures that impinge upon these subjects' choices.

⁷ There is some argument in the literature about the meaning of Locke's "workmanship model." Tully argues that it is the "bedrock for the analysis of property" (1980: 9) wherein God is the original maker, but man in his inheritance also makes. Shapiro, while agreeing that God is the

labor, humans added to what nature supplied and by this addition gained rights over the results of their labor. The original man, says Locke, is "He that is nourished by the Acorns he pickt up under an Oak, or the Apples he gathered from the Trees in the Wood." This original man owns these fruits because his labor has "added something to them more than Nature" (1988[1689]: 28). Labor "mixes" with natural objects, by which "something is annexed" to the object. In such reasoning, cultivating lands likewise mixes human labor into an object, giving people "*As much Land as a Man Tills, Plants, Improves, Cultivates, and can use the Product of*" (1988[1689]: 32). Because humans received the "faculty of self-improvement" (*perfectibilite*, Rousseau 1988[1755]: 88) from God, they had not only the capacity but the moral duty to improve upon nature and to add to the world around them.⁸ Human societies were ranked according to the way they used their labor: 'savage hunters' were less economically and morally developed than agricultural and manufacturing societies (cf. Meek 1976). Neither private property nor Christian morality could develop in such rugged socio-economic conditions.

Fixing property lines was critical to the advancement of civil society. For, according to Enlightenment theorists, private property arose from a particular form of labor and was dependent on this form of labor for its proper distribution. Throughout his major writings, Jean-Jacques Rousseau emphasized that fixing the borders of

original maker, argues that Locke distinguished between the creation of value through additive labor and the creation of the "ownership" of property (1986: 92). Shapiro argues that Locke thought, "what God has given us in common we have no more than a right to 'labor on'" (95). But Shapiro notes that the improvement of the condition of land or value of the object is the fulcrum to Locke (94) and that Locke did "not question the view that making confers ownership. . . . This view would become axiomatic to virtually all liberal rights talk in the future" (147).

⁸ In an essay on the *Discourse on Inequality*, Marc Plattner argues, "perfectibility" is a faculty that develops "reason, language, the social virtues, and similar attributes of civilized man that are not operative in the state of nature . . . the specific distinction of man . . . is . . . assigned to perfectibility" (1979: 46).

properties guaranteed the peace and freedom of individuals and nations and that the basis for these fixed plots and states was the productive labor of man.⁹

. . . it is impossible to conceive of the idea of property arising from anything other than manual labour (*main d'oeuvre*), for one cannot see what besides his own labour a man can *add* (*mettre*) to things he has not actually made in order to appropriate them (Rousseau 1988[1755]: 118, my emphasis).

Speaking in general terms, the following conditions must be fulfilled in order to make good the right of the first occupier to a given parcel of land: First, the land in question must not yet be inhabited by anybody. Secondly, one must occupy only that amount that one needs for one's subsistence. Thirdly, one must take possession of that amount not by going through some idle ritual, *but by working and cultivating* (*mais par le travail et la culture*) it -- this being the only evidence of ownership that, in the absence of positive title, ought to be respected by others (Rousseau 1954[1761]: 28-29, my emphasis).

Rousseau discusses two types of labor. The first, characteristic of man in his original state, does not *add* (*engendrer* and *mettre*), in any permanent way, to the land around him. This type of labor is best portrayed as acquisitive, which, according to Aristotle (from whom Rousseau borrowed heavily), is the art of warring and hunting societies (Aristotle 1943: 66). As opposed to man in his original state who simply wanders collecting the riches of the country, man in a civil state, propelled there by an accidental combination of need and desire, produces the country through which he moves. He calls forth additional produce and creates previously unseen instruments of

⁹ James Tully has argued that Locke, as Rousseau, was interested in showing how "[m]en might come to have *property* in several parts of that which God gave to Man in common" (1980: 95).

production. The creation of commodities through productive labor ran alongside the sectioning and privatization of landed property from which the rights of property owners emerged. However, Rousseau claimed that there were natural limits to the accumulation of property, following Aristotle (1943: 63-70), that, at least in the household, the "good life" was limited to what people needed. But at the same time natural philosophers were discussing how labor created property, they were proposing that land and objects were "things," removing both from their social and, supposedly, occult contexts.¹⁰ Landed property became an object that could be fenced, divided, and sold. Land became less of a material representative of social relations, less of a Western European version of the "cattle complex" (Herskovits 1926; Kuper 1982).

It is important to note that Rousseau's "state of nature" was not the state of non-western people who were being discovered by European colonists from the 15th century onwards. Whereas, for Locke, in the beginning all the world was like precolonial America (cf. Meek 1976), Rousseau carefully distinguished between natural 'man' and "savage man" in that the latter had already acquired language and a family, traits supposedly lacking in the original human state. As a check, therefore, Rousseau supplemented his examples from hunting societies with examples from the behavior of "beasts." But the distinction between natural and savage humans was blurred in many

¹⁰ E. P. Thompson notes in Whigs and Hunters that there was a "long decline in the effectiveness of old methods of class control and discipline and their replacement by one standard recourse of authority: the example of terror" (206). But what is more relevant to this discussion is how this new regime of terror related to the evolving notion of property and labor. "What was now to be punished was not an offence between men (a breach of fealty or deference, a 'waste' of agrarian use-values, an offence to one's own corporate community and its ethos, a violation of trust and function) but an offence against property. Since property was a thing, it became possible to define offences as crimes against things, rather than as injuries to men. This enabled the law to assume, with its robes, the postures of impartiality: it was neutral as between every degree of man, and defended only the inviolability of the ownership of things. In the seventeenth century labour had been only partly free, but the labourer still asserted large claims (sometimes as perquisites) to his own labour's product. As, in the eighteenth century, labour became more and more free, so labour's product came to be seen as something totally distinct, the property of landowner or employer, and to be defended by the threat of the gallows" (207).

passages of his writings. Even after making his proviso, Rousseau likened non-Western people with "natural man" claiming that the life of savages was superior to the life of civilized humans in the way that the natural is superior to the conventional. Here, he more closely followed Locke, and would himself be followed by the more outrageous claims made into the present by writers who liken many non-European people to Pleistocene hunters. Unlike many others, however, Rousseau was a master at foregrounding the contradictions Westerners perceived to exist in hunting societies: society, civilization, and crops had yet to emerge from the savage soil, but then again, neither had the necessity for productive labor. 'Needs,' 'desires,' and the satisfaction of them were keys to much of the enlightened philosophy.¹¹ Agriculture, and its concomitant social form, supposedly brought people new needs and desires as it brought forth new foods from the ground. The form of people's labor affected and, in some sense, constituted the form of their societal and physical body. Man cultivated the ground and up sprang civilization; women cultivated love and up sprang corrupting avarice -- perhaps we should remember that culture and cultivation emerge themselves from the same root meaning. The ability to labor increased the moral fiber of persons and provided for their needs; i.e., labor created the moral person as people were severing the social relation between persons and things (land, hand-crafts, and eventually their labor).¹² Savage, noble people simply roamed the waysides acquiring the fruits that the earth laid out before them. They had yet to be chained to the plow and to the mores of "civilization."¹³

¹¹ See Ian Shapiro's discussion of needs, wants, and desires in Hobbes writings (1986: 57-58) and Locke (119-22; cf. also Macpherson 1962).

¹² "To the argument of greed a new argument was added for general enclosure -- that of social discipline. The commons, "the poor man's heritage for ages past", on which . . . labourers still dwelling . . . had built their cottages with their own hands, were no seen as a dangerous centre of indiscipline . . . a breeding-ground for 'barbarians', 'nursing up a mischievously race of people'; of the Lincolnshire Fens, 'so wild a country nurses up a race of people as wild as the fen'" (E. P. Thompson 1966: 219).

¹³ I have yet to find any author remark on the interesting conjunctures between Rousseau and Foucault (1979).

It is not surprising that Rousseau and Locke's natural philosophy was adopted by radical democrats (cf. Cobban 1968; Keohane 1980; Hampson 1983; Ashcraft 1986). Based on the rights of a laborer to a sufficient amount of land and on the rightful limits of sovereign powers, their doctrines were revolutionary at the time that they wrote. During the 17th and 18th century, European rural laborers were being squeezed off their farms, wage laborers were being grossly mistreated in the emerging factories, and the aristocracy's needs, desires, and demands were exceeding any heretofore imagined natural limits of wealth. Outraged by the spectacle of the Louis XV court,¹⁴ the French proletariat would use Rousseau's writings as their founding intellectual doctrine for social revolution and land reform. Carol Blum writes, "From all . . . [his] . . . works emerges a single paradigm by which either a whole state or a single individual could be trained to virtue without any struggle for domination" (1986: 66). No such revolution hit England (or in such a form, France). Karl Polyani, E.P. Thompson, and Raymond Williams have shown that just thirty odd years after Rousseau wrote A Discourse on Inequality and almost one hundred years after Locke wrote Two Treatises of Human Government, English common land was being enclosed, compulsory work laws were being enacted and a spectacular rate of population growth was increasing the ranks of the poor. The privatization of the English countryside was not compelled by consideration of the "sufficient needs" of each man, but by the motivations for profit and a demand for a large supply of cheap, disciplined labor.

"Whosoever travels through the Midland Counties," wrote Lord Winchilsea in 1796, "and will take the trouble of enquiring, will generally receive for answer,

¹⁴ "No water so still as the/ dead fountains of the Versailles." No swan,/ with swart blind look askance/ and gondoliering legs, so fine/ as the chintz china one with fawn-/ brown eyes and toothed gold/ collar on to show whose bird it was.

Lodged in the Louis Fifteenth/ candelabrum-tree of cockscomb-/ tinted buttons, dahlias,/ sea-urchins, and everlastings,/ it perches on the branching foam/ of polished sculptured/ flowers -- at ease and tall. The king is dead." Marianne Moore, "No Swan So Fine."

that formerly there were a great many cottagers who kept cows, but that the land is now thrown to the farmers"; and this, not because the latter preferred to use the land but also because "they rather wish to have the labourers more dependent upon them" (E.P. Thompson 1966: 217).

Along with private property, national borders were also increasingly fixed from the 17th century onward.¹⁵ Benedict Anderson noted in Imagined Communities that prior to this period, "borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another" (1983: 26). The new science of cartography with its exact triangular measurements gave modern nation-states the ability to delimit their borders as the mood of national sentiment rose. As nation-states advanced into the American, African, and Australian Outback the science of cartography surveyed the landscape for rich speculators in England, France, Spain, and Holland and pushed the poor further into the frontier (cf. Carter 1987, 1990; Hughes 1986). The cartography of colonization puts a different border around Locke's and Rousseau's notions of productive labor and private property.

Whatever the revolutionary fit of Rousseau's, Locke's, and others' notions of labor and property was to the proletariat cause, they were highly detrimental to another group: the growing number of non-Western social groups being "discovered" by colonial agents. Michael Adas notes, "The influence of scientific thinking on the writers who shaped European attitudes toward non-Western cultures in the

¹⁵ Jennifer Nedelsky links the concepts of rights to property, the limits of governments, and individual and national boundaries. She writes that the symbolism of 'rights' to property as a 'limit' to the scope of governmental authority "involves a complex set of abstractions and metaphoric links that nevertheless is taken as common sense by most Americans. . . . The enduring power of this image reflects (among other things) the original importance of property in shaping the American conception of rights as limits to the legitimate scope of the state. This conception is, in turn, a part of a deeper phenomenon: the focus on boundaries as the means of comprehending and securing the basic values of freedom or autonomy" (1990a: 162; cf. also 1990b).

eighteenth century" was immense; "accounts of overseas travelers took on added importance as one form of the empirical evidence that eighteenth-century thinkers were convinced would enable them to undertake the 'scientific' study of human societies" (1989: 75). Liberal theory helped pave the way for the appropriation of their lands and their labor. Because natural philosophers stated that private property was dependent upon the mechanical effect of labor (labor affixed to an object) and because they rejected occult explanations such as 'action at a distance,' in their understanding humans owned only that to which their labor affixed. "Hunters and gatherers," for instance, owned only the grass and the acorns ("d'herb and de grand") not the ground upon which they collected them.¹⁶ Moreover, the most effective labor was seen to be "free wage labor." Hunters and gatherers had a 'merely' acquisitive form of labor. In order to 'introduce' the civilized form, colonists had to "destroy, and prevent from re-forming" traditional institutions that kept people from starving, thereby forcing them into mines or domestic services and onto plantations (Polanyi 1944: 163).¹⁷ Peoples on the American, African, and Australian continents would suffer twice as a consequence of the practical applications of Western liberal theory. First, their lands were taken from them during the colonization period because of the 'rudimentary' form of their labor. Second, in the 20th century, when many American and Australian groups sued for the return of some of these lands, Western-oriented

¹⁶ Even these common rights were lost over the course of the 19th century in England and the United States. Increasingly the rights of hunters and poor pastoralists to utilize unenclosed and undeveloped private lands was severely restricted. E.P. Thompson (1975) and Hahn (1982) discuss the social conflict that resulted in England and in the southern American states respectively. Shapiro notes that the sixth economic function Hobbes attributed to the state is to ensure "the 'procreation' of the commonwealth by licensing the founding of colonies abroad" (1986: 33).

¹⁷ This strategy was also used in the colonists' own countries. E.P. Thompson notes that for industrialists and bourgeois, "Godliness is great gain" and for protestants religion should lead to industry and frugality. While this was a profitable outlook for the upper classes, it was not for the working and lower classes who had to be compelled to be productive through work laws, enclosure laws, and wage laws. Thompson's discussion of "the outer and inner disciplines of industrialism" (1966: 357) is echoed later by Foucault's culture of surveillance.

land commissioners would reject many of the suits because of notions of labor and property developed in 17th and 18th century Europe.

Rousseau argued for his noble man against the current social, scientific, and nationalistic mood of progress, opposing his views to those of Hobbes and others who rendered original man as a war-weary savage forced into signing the social contract. Adam Smith, considered the founding father of modern economics and political economy, disagreed sharply with Rousseau's vision of the original beneficence of man's nature and instead saw "the savage nations of hunters and fishers" as so impoverished as to be driven "from mere want" into inhuman actions: they "think themselves reduced, to the necessity sometimes of directly destroying, and sometimes abandoning their infants, their old people, and those afflicted with lingering diseases, to perish with hunger, or to be devoured by wild beasts" (A. Smith 1976[1776]: 2).¹⁸

Although Adam Smith also wrote before the full-fledged emergence of the Industrial Revolution, his influential writings helped pave the way for its development by advocating a *laissez-faire* governmental approach to manufacturing. "According to the natural course of things," Smith wrote, "the greater part of the capital of every growing society is, first, directed to agriculture, afterwards to manufactures, and last of all to foreign commerce" (1976[1776]: 405). The legislators or princes should not interfere with this "natural course of things." Although he was relentlessly pro-manufacturing, unlike later writers such as David Ricardo, Adam Smith attempted to develop a theory of labor value consonant with his theories of the "natural" aspect of exchange and of the economic and civil evolution of man from hunter to industrialist.

The linchpins of Smith's theory of national wealth were the natural quality of both the division of labor and the propensity of man, as opposed to all other animals, to

¹⁸ This position continues to pop up over the decades, cf. Freud's *Totem and Taboo*.

enter into contracts of exchange.¹⁹ In two well-known examples, Smith demonstrates with hatpins and greyhounds how the forces of capitalism are as natural to man as are his "faculties for reason and speech" (1976[1776]: 8 and 17). However, like Locke and Rousseau, Adam Smith's interest is with that particular type of labor which adds value to commodities.²⁰ Opposed to this "civilized" form of labor is the labor of "rude societies." Again, like Rousseau and Aristotle before him, the "species of labour" hunters use is an acquisitive labor.

In that early and rude state of society which precedes both the accumulation of stock and the appropriation of land, the proportion between the quantities of labour necessary for acquiring different objects seems to be the only circumstance which can afford any rule for exchanging them for one another (1976[1776]: 53).

For Smith the improvement of the "productive powers of labor" occurred because of the natural propensity for people to engage in exchange and of the natural aspect of the division of labor. In an effort to determine and to fix wage labor, Smith also fixed more definitely the opposition between work and leisure. He developed these ideas in his writings on the difference between productive and unproductive labor. Productive labor fixes itself to a subject or a "vendible commodity."²¹

¹⁹ Karl Polanyi writes, "The tradition of the classical economists, who attempted to base the law of the market on the alleged propensities of man in the state of nature, was replaced by an abandonment of all interest in the cultures of 'uncivilized' man as irrelevant to the understanding of the problems of our age" (1944: 45).

²⁰ "As soon as stock has accumulated in the hands of particular persons, some of them will *naturally* employ it in setting to work industrious people, whom they will supply with materials and subsistence, in order to make a profit by sale of their work, or by *what their labour adds to the value of the materials*" (A. Smith 1976[1776]: 54, my emphasis)

²¹ Of course the labor of the manufacturer is the labor of his or her workers, a point Marx would develop. Note another political economist G. Poulett Scrope's description of the difference between productive and unproductive labor. "All saleable property, or wealth, therefore, is the produce of trouble or *labour*. And in order to avoid confusion, it is desirable

The labour of a menial servant . . . adds to the value of nothing. . . . [T]he labour of the manufacturer fixes and realizes itself in some particular subject or vendible commodity, which lasts for some time at least after that labour is past. It is, as it were, a certain quantity of labour stocked and stored up to be employed, if necessary, upon some other occasion (1976[1776]: 351).

In Smith's view, hunters and collectors add nothing to the objects that they collect -- create no value -- and they have a minimal division of labor, and so, the measure of a good's value depends upon such things as the time it takes for a person to hunt or to collect one object as opposed to another, the relative difficulty of obtaining the object, and the necessity for "an uncommon degree of dexterity and ingenuity" in its acquisition (53).²² In this raw state of nature, the laborer owned all of and only what he or she produced because the only difference between a common object and a private object was the direct effect a human had on them. We are back on familiar ground. The only thing that originally differentiated objects was the labor people affixed to them. And out of this natural ability of labor to affix to objects arose private property. Adam Smith firmly believed, "[t]he property which every man has in his own labour, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable;" indeed, labor came to be known as the "patrimony of the poor"

to confine this term labour, to such exertion as is productive of wealth. Men exert themselves for amusement, health, or recreation, and may fatigue themselves as much in so doing as a ploughman or a mason; but their exertion neither produces nor is intended to produce anything which can be exchanged or sold, and it will be desirable, therefore, not to call such exertion labour. The limitation of the term labour to such occupations as are productive of wealth, and exerted for the sake of gain, will serve to put an end to all the unprofitable and futile discussion, so common in works on political economy, as to what kinds of labor are productive and what unproductive" (1969[1883]: 46).

²² Manufacturers in Export Processing Zones now use the argument that women of certain social groups and ethnicities have a natural dexterity for certain tasks to justify the use of young nonunion women in manufacturing zones, cf. Elson and Pearson (1981) and Ong (1987).

(1976[1776]: 136).²³ However, because only some men (the merchants and capitalists) were able to turn raw labor into productive labor, later theorists such as David Ricardo and William Townsend argued that the scores of laborers divested of their rights to common land should be available to the growing commercial and manufacturing industries without the 'barbarous' ties of feudal servitude or any sovereign law controlling the free labor market.²⁴ Whereas all humans could transform objects into products by affixing their labor to them, only capitalists could transform acquisitive labor to productive labor and thereby create the wealth of nations.

However superior Smith's model of labor value is to the subsequent 'laborless' neo-classical model, this formulation of labor value turned attention away from the experiential effect of factory and manual labor on humans and the countryside. The shift away from a humanist perspective was the concern of social reformers such as Ruskin who lumped all political economists in the bin of "anti-humanist."²⁵

Writers such as Ruskin had no better luck convincing political economists to turn away from the "bastard science" and towards a symbiotic understanding of human action and objective 'life' than Belyuen women and men have convincing skeptical

²³ We see a similar position in Locke's earlier writings, "Though the Earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The *Labour* of his Body, and the *Work* of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*. It being by him removed from the common state Nature placed it in, it hath by this *labour* something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other Men. For this *Labour* being the unquestionable Property of the Labourer, no Man but he can have a right to what that is once joyned to, at least where there is enough, and as good left in common for others." (1988[1690]: 27).

²⁴ See footnote #20 above.

²⁵ Discussing the writings of mid-Victorian novelists and political economists, Catherine Gallagher writes that John Ruskin, the nineteenth-century art critic, "faults the political economists for calculating the values of commodities without regard either to their potential for sustaining and enhancing life or to the ability and willingness of their possessors to activate that potential" (see above perfectibility) (1989: 348). In his time, Ruskin was ridiculed for his "moral political economy" in which he argued, "The real science of political economy, which has yet to be distinguished from the bastard science, as medicine from witchcraft, and astronomy from astrology, is that which teaches nations to desire and labour for the things that lead to life" (1967[1860]: 69-70).

government officials that the country responds to their activity and that their bodies bear the sign of this response.²⁶ But even political-economic theories of labor value, belittled by Ruskin and others, gave way to an economic model which discarded labor altogether in order to focus on how individuals' pursuit of wealth created value. One reason for this shift from a theory which emphasized the value of labor to one which emphasized the abstract value of 'goods' was the revolutionary implication of the former model.

The more all natural objects were seen as operating by mechanical laws and once understood as subject to human manipulation, the more human nature itself came under inspection. Was it also, ultimately, of a mechanical nature? Could human nature be manipulated and modified? The human agent, as Foucault has observed, emerged from an increasingly de-humanized landscape where manufacturing and Jeremy Bentham ruled (1973, 1979). Foucault's point that the human agent appeared alongside the mechanical factory is important because it foregrounds the tension between workers who were a necessary but unpredictable element in the factory and capitalists who were attempting to control scientifically the manufacturing process. Although Marx, Engels, and later film-makers such as Fritz Lang (Metropolis) and Charlie Chaplin criticized the ways in which human workers were becoming, literally, a part of the industrial machinery, they too had an investment in the fine-tuning of the "automatic" form of the factory. Radical labor movements tried to prove the worth of human labor by scientific models as they were attempting to resist the additivistic rationalization of factory work.

The men who formulated the revolutionary quality of human labor are, of course, the political economists Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. From his days as a

²⁶ Polanyi writes, "it came to pass that economists presently relinquished Adam Smith's humanist foundations, and incorporated those of Townsend" which saw men, not like beasts as Hobbes had, but "actually beasts, and that, precisely for that reason, only a minimum of government was required" (1944: 115 & 114).

Young Hegelian, Marx retained a great respect for the so called historical progression of 'man' and society. As many others have noted, Marx's attempt to explain scientifically the mechanics of Capitalism -- its roots in the division of labor and the alienation of labor power from the worker -- offered only a rejection of capitalism as a final stage of human civil society, not a rejection of the progressive nature of capitalism itself.²⁷ Marx argued that because labor power was what created value, the "original foundation of all property," the working class should own it. Marx shifted philosophy's historical interests in matters of the metaphysical and spiritual to matters of the physical and actual. With this shift, Marx produced some of the most interesting writings on the human and capital significance of labor in this century. Throughout his writings, Marx continually returns to a discussion of the manner by which commodities "embody" (*verkörperung*) labor power or labor "congeals" (*getrieren*) in commodities.

Along with the useful qualities of the products themselves, we put out of sight both the useful character of the various kinds of labour *embodied* in them, and the concrete forms of that labour; there is nothing left but what is common to them all; all are reduced to one and the same sort of labour, human labour in the abstract (Marx 1987[1887]: 46).

A use-value, or useful article, therefore, has value only because human labour in the abstract has been embodied or materialized in it (Marx 1987[1887]): 46).

As values, all commodities are only definite masses of *congealed* labour-time (Marx 1987[1887]: 47).

²⁷ The Frankfurt school 'pessimism' focuses on this point (Jay 1973).

In what has become a classic text in Marxist literature, Harry Braverman's Labor and Monopoly Capital unintentionally reminds us that, although Marx may have been more interested in labor power per se than in the production process, he, like political economists before him, was interested in a particular type of labor: that which adds to the value of objects, not that which "simply" acquires the produce of the land.²⁸

Braverman writes that while "the human species shares with others the activity of acting upon nature in a manner which changes its forms to make them more suitable for its needs" there is a "crucial difference" between man and other species (45): a person not only effects "a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will" (46). Emmanuel Terray notes a similar view in Engels' writings: "the essential difference between human and animal societies is that animals at most collect objects, while men produce them. This single, but principal, difference is sufficient to invalidate the simple transposition to human societies of laws valid for those of animals" (1972: 23). As I noted above, this distinction between human and animal based on the former's capacity to make the world is used in a colonial context to distinguish between the activity of different human 'races.'

In Marx's attempt to analyze and to describe the effects of certain types of labor on the formation of a human's "life-force," we find some link between political-economic theory and Belyuen Aborigines' understanding of the healthy productive body and country. Belyuen Aborigines assess the productive power of a social group primarily by how countries and human bodies each reflect the character of the other during everyday activities. Human bodies gain marks such as personal dreamings from

²⁸ "All forms of life sustain themselves on their natural environment; thus all conduct activities for the purpose of appropriating natural products to their own use. Plants absorb moisture, minerals, and sunlight; animals feed on plant life or prey on other animals. But to seize upon the material of nature ready made is not work; work is an activity that alters these materials from their natural state to improve their usefulness" (Braverman 1974: 45).

the land. Nature is, in some sense, the congealed labor (activities) of human and mythic creatures. Mythic sites respond in positive or negative ways to the presence of a group of people because humans embody the land. Marx, however, adopts the classical political-economic belief in rationalism and scientific-technical progress; he distinguishes between reasoning humans, sensible animals, and nonsentient objects. He fails then to consider how labor or productive activity can be understood to be a reciprocal relationship between objects-that-act and subjects-which-are-manipulated by them. Marx's distance from the Belyuen perspective is in spite of the fact that he wrote brilliantly about how human labor is embodied in an object and how a form of productive activity, factory work, could mark the physical and spiritual body of the worker.²⁹ If for Ruskin, the spirit or soul of the artist and craftsman is embodied in his work, than for Marx, the commodity or worked object is nothing but the expression of a particular division of labor (and the alienation of labor power in capital system), the scientific-technical stage of a given society, and the control of the forces of production. According to Marx, the capitalist steals the "accumulated labour" or "capital" from the workers much as a body snatcher would pluck a person limb by limb. This emphasis gives works of Marx their particular revolutionary quality, for the forced alienation of the worker from his or her labor is effectively the theft of life.³⁰

Marx notes, however, that as individual commodities are assuming a social hieroglyphic or life, human life or human labor, is becoming homogenized and objectified. He writes, "[t]he equalisation of the most different kinds of labour can be the result

²⁹ Marx describes "the social life of commodities" in his analysis of commodity fetishism; commodities become the social relations between people embodied in the product: "[t]here it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things" (Marx 1987[1887]: 77).

³⁰ "But the exercise of labour power, labour, is the worker's own *life-activity*, the manifestation of his own life. And this life activity he sells to another person in order to secure the necessary *means of subsistence*. Thus his life-activity is for him only a means to enable him to exist. He works in order to live. He does not even reckon labour as part of his life, it is rather a sacrifice of his life" (Marx 1978[1849]: 204).

only of an abstraction from their inequalities, or of reducing them to their common denominator, viz., expenditure of human labour-power or human labour in the abstract" (Marx 1987[1887]: 78). This homogenization and devaluation of individual human labor is as disturbing to Marx as women's cultivation of love was to Rousseau: both are a perversion of the natural order of things. But Marx's lament for the devaluation of human labor was expressed alongside his own devaluation of pre-capitalist labor and women under capitalism.³¹

3. The Aboriginal Economy

Westerners' desire to understand the power of human labor, the origins of private property, and the "meaning" of the new peoples that explorers were encountering helped to create a negative portrait of the Aboriginal economy. As if intoning a mantra, historians have repeated a tale of contradiction and absence when they describe the Aboriginal economy. R. M. Crawford provides an example of the contradiction that precolonial Australian society posed for western Europeans.

The comparative primitiveness of their material culture does not necessarily imply a crude social organization; for study of the mainland tribes has shown that among them there is no regular correlation between varying levels of material culture and the complexity of social structure and behavior (1952: 21).

³¹ In a sympathetic review, Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen links the "male chauvinism" and "imperialism" of Marxist theory to its separation of women's and peasant (here I argue hunters and gatherers) subsistence production from advanced forms of social production. She argues that Marx "accepts the appearance of the separation of the so-called social production from subsistence production as something real, thereby accepting the basis for alienation" (1984: 48).

In the more recent The Fatal Shore, a work that won critical acclaim for its representation of Australia's convict history, Robert Hughes describes Aboriginal society as an example of "hard primitivism." Aboriginal society was so alien to the Western colonist, and to modern 'man,' that it was nothing more than a series of absences and contradictions. The Australian Aboriginal economy was only that which it was not.

No property, no money or any other visible medium of exchange; no surplus or means of storing it, hence not even the barest rudiments of the idea of capital; no outside trade, no farming, no domestic animals except half-wild camp dingoes; no houses, clothes, pottery or metal; no division between leisure and labor, only a ceaseless grubbing and chasing for subsistence foods (1986: 14).

The most puzzling question for the whites, however, was why these people should display such a marked sense of territory while having no apparent cult of private property (17).

Hughes book was written for an Anglo-Australian audience and in his own words was a tip of the hat to the neglected European people who developed Australia.³² Being a book in praise of Irish, British, and Scottish convict laborers who were "dropped" onto the antipodean shores, The Fatal Shore does not attempt to rewrite the record of Aboriginal culture and society: how Aborigines' understanding of the shore's fatality

³² See also Charles Wilson Australia 1788-1988 especially his chapter "The Dark People." He writes, "It has become fairly widely accepted that the aboriginal's lack of possessions of any kind (including clothes or tools) may have been an advantage rather than a burden to a nomadic people; that their innocence of technological knowledge of agriculture or trade may have been offset by their 'magic' and uncanny knowledge of bush lore, tracking ability and the like. Thus is constructed an argument that these primitive Stone-Age peoples really represented a culture naturally moulded to their environment" (1988[1988]: 75).

was forever changed by the arrival of the first boatload of "Bay Sailors." However, it is not clear how differently from Hughes and Crawford other historians, whose explicit purpose it is to rewrite the history of European and Aboriginal conflict during the colonial period, portray the Aboriginal economy. R. E. W. Reece in his ground-breaking work, Aborigines and Colonists, introduces his topic by characterizing the significance of the British settlement of New South Wales as, amongst other things, "one of the few instances of Europeans in contact with a hunting and food-gathering people possessing a Stone-age technology . . . the Aborigines did not have anything which was valued by the whites in trade, nor were they of any significance as a labour force as long as the convict system continued," and "there were no official treaties or agreements with the Aborigines and no recognition that they possessed any rights to the land which they regarded as theirs from time immemorial"(1974: 1-2).

It is not that old and new historians do not know enough about the Aboriginal economy, and that, if they knew or had known more they would portray the real properties of Aboriginal labor and the real ways by which Aboriginal labor transforms the environment. Aboriginal labor *is* productive, not merely acquisitive. It is clear from my discussion above that the theoretical framework from which historians draw provides them little with which to understand the (supposed) contradiction between Aboriginal culture and economy. Marshall Sahlins has made the facetious claim that the dismal view of hunter-gatherers goes back at least to Adam Smith, and "probably to a time before anyone was writing" to a "neolithic" prejudice in which "an ideological appreciation of the hunter's capacity to *exploit* the earth's resources" had to be made to fit "the historic task of depriving him of the same" (1972: 3, my emphasis). In supporting the hunter's affluence, Sahlins draws on the old contradiction Rousseau noted, here reinterpreted as a bitter, repressed jealousy. In order to deny that we lack the original grace of our Pleistocene past, we project onto that state of grace extreme and dire poverty.

The revolution in hunter-gatherer studies came in the 1960s when Richard Lee and others claimed that far from being a perilous life, hunting and collecting was fairly carefree. Hunters and collectors did not have to labor long hours to get the food they needed and the materials they desired. This new perspective measured affluence by comparing what a group needed and desired with the time and energy it took to get it. How many hours do hunters and collectors spend getting what they want and need? In such economic studies the main opposition lies between work and leisure. Remembering that wealth is an accumulation of things that are the result of labor and exchange, and productive labor is that which produces wealth, the opposition between work and leisure is just a transformation of the old opposition between productive and unproductive labor. Jon Altman, one of the leading scholars on the Aboriginal economy, maintains the opposition between work and leisure, but notes that the definition of labor must be "value-relative in a cross cultural context" (1987a: 72). He follows Marx in defining labor as "a process between men and nature" in which use-values and exchange-values are created (71). Altman notes that a value-relative definition of work is especially important "in examining work effort among Aboriginal hunter-gatherers where the ceremonial system is important and is regarded as socially necessary for production to occur" (72). However, Altman's quantitative project leads him into drawing clean lines around the "ceremonial system." Ceremony is not the pragmatic everyday relationship between a people and a stretch of country that I discussed in the last chapter. It is, rather, an event which the economist can time and weigh its relative labors and exchanges. Ceremonial exchanges that occur when Aborigines are just sitting at a site are a part of leisure activity; i.e., they are counted as unproductive labor.

Although the new school of hunter and gather studies argued that we should reinterpret the undeveloped state of the forager's society as a highly sophisticated fit between wants and needs, it does not get us past the opposition between foraging

and, say, agricultural societies. If the Aboriginal economy in the anthropological literature is "productive," it is only so within the limits of leisure. And, we still find in the literature hauntingly familiar distinctions between productive and acquisitive labors; for instance, Meillassoux's (1973) famous claim that for hunter-gatherers the land is the subject of labor while for agriculturalists the land is the object of labor. The distinction between Aboriginal work and leisure does not help indigenous people claim rights to property which continues to rest on productive labor.

Notions of labor developed in classical political economy are at the root of how government administrators have defined Aboriginal rights to their country. Since Captain Cook's landing, productive labor -- its congelation in commodities and role in increasing the value of land and goods -- has been said to be completely missing from the Aboriginal economy. This lack was a prima facie reason for the presumed right of colonial annexation. Although Australian Aborigines occupied the entire continent, the British claimed Australian as *terra nullius* (uninhabited land) because of the, as they saw it, grossly rudimentary nature of Aboriginal economic activity (cf. Neate 1989).

The description of Aboriginal laborers as hunters, fishers, and gatherers, and the description of hunting and gathering society's labor as acquisitive influenced how Aborigines were incorporated into the Australian economy. Although, Herbert Basedow and, later, A. P. Elkin argued before various early 20th century government plenaries that Aborigines could be an important economic resource in the Northern Territory and although the economic and sexual "usefulness of the lubra"³³ in the

³³ "Lubra" and "gin" were two slang words used to describe Aboriginal women. The importance of Aboriginal labor in the Northern Territory economy is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Note just the following two extracts from local papers. The first is from the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 1 May 1874 entitled "What the Blacks are Good For." describes the labor of Aboriginal men and women: "All improvements, however, are to a great extent prevented by the want of hands to execute them. Indeed were it not for the aid of the unfortunate blacks, male and female, I cannot understand how it would be possible to perform all the ordinary duties connected with station management." In the *Northern Territory Times*, 26 July 1929, we the article "Developing the North, Natives Indispensable" which quotes Mr. Bleakley, chief Protectorate of the Aborigines in Queensland, "the lubra is one of the greatest

settlement of the Territory was often acknowledged in explicitly sexist and racist terms, most Europeans considered Aborigines to be lazy, treacherous, and greedy, and so, unsuitable for plantation work (cf. Powell 1988: 188). Aborigines' refusal to work on plantations and in the mines was seen as symptomatic of their overall inability to develop the country and therefore their unsuitability to own any of it. The settlement pattern most planters and miners followed in the first half of the 1900s was to retain only a small Aboriginal family group for odd jobs and to 'disperse' the rest or to disperse all local Aborigines and to bring in Aboriginal groups from outside the area for short work stints. If planters were wounded by Aborigines, they were admonished for showing too much "encouragement . . . to the natives to locate around" a plantation.³⁴

The productivity of the different sexes in Aboriginal society has been the subject of significant revision over the last twenty years (Dahlberg 1981; Gale 1970, 1974), as has the "Man the Hunter" model in general.³⁵ It is useful here to touch on the complex intersection of racial and gender discourses during the colonial period and the effect these had on the incorporation of male and female Aboriginal labor in the Anglo economy. Many authors remarked on the usefulness of the "lubra" in the development of north Australia. They did so at a time when European political economists and philosophers were debating the merits of Western women's labor and

pioneers of the Territories, for without her it would have been impossible for the white man to have carried on, especially where conditions were practically impossible for the white women, and even where as in towns or places in touch with civilization the white woman has braved the climate and other discomforts, the lubra has still been indispensable to make life possible for her."

³⁴ *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* October 28, 1882, subsequent references to this publication are abbreviated as NTT&G.

³⁵ Francis Dahlberg has noted the uneven advances of the "Man the Hunter" model: "Their data showed that gathering was an important part of the foraging way of life. They reported that in the extant foraging societies of the tropics, women, but also men, gathered food regularly and this food was the main source of calories for the whole group. Women's important contributions as mothers, wives, and daughters were also discussed in papers on marriage arrangements, family forms, child spacing, and infanticide. But human needs for intelligence and complex social and physical skills were still phrased in terms of the demands of hunting" (1981: 2).

were discounting the economic importance of Aboriginal women's labor within their own economy.

Non-Western people were not the only ones to suffer from the 'individualist' philosophy developed in the seventeenth century onwards. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau exposed theoretical contradictions about the proper social role of European women.³⁶ In an important essay, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (1977) has examined how theories of property developed by Hobbes, Locke, and Adam Smith theoretically freed women's labor from the confines of a paternal and patriarchal state, but these men's "concern to free propertied individuals from externally imposed authority had led them to a more thorough questioning of authority than their practical victory would require or their psychological necessities tolerate" (:38).

The more generous of his [Locke's] arguments succumbed to the realities of historical process and class struggle, even as their ideological core continued to justify the aspirations of those to whom political and economic exigencies denied their full access. Property in one's own labor-power has proved a double-edged sword, as have the liberties of women within the marriage contract. The theoretical equality of women necessary to the liberty and to the hegemony of bourgeois male individuals rapidly foundered on the economic and psychological arrangements necessary to the survival and class dominance of those same bourgeois male individuals (Fox-Genovese 1977: 51).

The contradiction between women's theoretical inalienable rights to their labor-power and their practical actual ability to sell it freely and equally in the marketplace persisted throughout the 19th century. Organized socialist and marxist labor groups

³⁶I write "European women" because, as I show to be the case in the Australian outback, non-European women suffered differently due to their location in two discriminatory hierarchies.

often opposed women's entrance into the work force, or structurally segregated women's work into lower status and paying jobs, and capitalists used women's labor to dampen the wage scale. Many labor leaders and capitalists argued that while a woman may be free -- based upon her unalienable right to the ownership of her labor -- she was also physically and morally less potent and skilled. For Rousseau, women reflected the perverting aspect of civilization; women relied upon and "cultivated" love "an artificial sentiment born of usage in society" in order to "establish their empire over men, and so make dominant the sex that ought to obey" (1988[1755]: 103).

If, as Engels noted, the materialist conception of the determining factor in history is the twofold character of production (the production of things and the production of people), then, as Heidi Hartmann has noted,

Engels and later Marxists failed to follow through on this dual project. The concept of production ought to encompass both the production of "things," or material needs, and the "production" of people or, more accurately, the production of people who have particular attributes, such as gender (1981: 371).

Why then the sudden turnabout in colonial Australia? I look at two major reasons, the threat that male Aborigines posed and the racism and sexism underlying the "praise" of Aboriginal women's labor.

The importance of Reece's (1974, 1987), Reynolds' (1982, 1987), and others' writings on the conflict between European colonists and Australian Aboriginal groups during the settlement years cannot be underrated. Until their work, official history had downplayed the "wars" between Aborigines and colonists because, officially, Australia was settled as *terra nullius* not by conquest or cession. The picture of Aborigines fighting for their country undermined the official doctrine that Aborigines

did not own the country. Brutal massacres were part of this unacknowledged range war. Whole groups were savagely murdered, though sometimes a few women were separated out and given to the white men taking part or passively accompanying the 'dispersal' party. Aboriginal men posed a threat to colonists in their perceived capacity to wage war, but Aboriginal women, perceived within a Western gender framework, offered no such threat.

Aboriginal women, like non-European women throughout the colonial world, were seen as more malleable, perfect domestic animals. Aboriginal women "served" European men in two ways. First, they were the work-horses of outback stations and urban households. Second, they were sexual objects used for white men's immediate gratification and as the vehicle for "cleansing" the Aboriginal race: "[t]he Rev. David MacKenzie observed that 'by intermixture with Europeans some of the phrenologically bad points disappear in the Australian blacks' and it was even believed that an Aboriginal woman who had sexual intercourse with a white man was thereby 'improved' to the extent of no longer being able to have a child by an Aboriginal man" (Reece 1974: 90-91). Reece does not note, however, that while sex between European men and Aboriginal women was perceived as a purification, sex between Aboriginal men and European women was seen as a rape, or, an assault on the moral dignity of European women and men.

The intersection of Aboriginal women's economic and sexual exploitation resulted in a hostile confrontation between Aboriginal and European women. Alan Powell writes,

[t]here is evidence that in other colonial societies -- the United States, New Zealand, Brazil, South Africa -- the presence of white women on the frontier exacerbated racism because of *their* sexual fears and jealousies, cultural chauvinism, conservatism and the increased aggression of their men in the

cause of protecting them. Some recent work by Judith Murray-Prior suggests that the experience of Australian pioneer women followed the same pattern (1988: 122, my emphasis).

Powell does not press too forcefully the door that might open the question of who else feared and repressed women's sexuality. Ann Stoler (1991) has posed these questions. She has asked in what ways gender and ethnic inequalities were a necessary part of colonization, and she has followed other feminists in examining the ways in which European women experienced the cleavages of racial dominance and internal social distinctions differently than men, both as sexual and social subordinates in colonial hierarchies and as active agents of imperial culture in their own right. In north Australia, white women were god's police, but they paid the price of having their labor devalued. Aboriginal women were damned whores, but their labor was lauded as having laid the foundation of the colonial process; hardly an achievement Aboriginal woman would themselves have praised.³⁷

The legal status of Aboriginal rights to land and the political-economic basis of it is most easily apprehended by looking at recent Australian court decisions. One of the most controversial is Mr. Justice Blackburn's decision in the Gove Land Claim case. But first, perhaps it is apparent without saying that the rights of individuals and social groups within a nation are affected by the organization of that nation's government.

³⁷ The relationship between white and black women in Australia reflected, more generally, the class relations between white women, and further exacerbated the contradictions in the political-economic theory I discussed above. Anne Summers in her book Damned Whores and God's Police, writes, "[d]omestic work was now [in the 19th century] seen as a separate productive enterprise, rather than one integrated with other work, and religious and social sanctions gave it a relatively high status. . . . The new 'nuclear family' strongly enjoined that married women should not work outside the home, but while this family form was still a middle-class phenomenon it had no objection to using the labours of married women from other classes. . . . At the same time as the bourgeoisie was extolling the family of its creation as a moral imperative for all classes, its other creation -- the capitalist system -- made the idealized family institution an impossible attainment for the labouring class (1975: 168-169).

Graeme Neate (1989: 2) notes in a comprehensive volume, Aboriginal Land Rights Law in the Northern Territory, that "the new [Australian] Federal Parliament," formed upon independence from Britain, "was not given any specific legislative power in regard to Aboriginal people, in marked contrast to the constitutional position in the USA and in Canada. Indeed, the Federal Parliament was specifically denied any such power."³⁸ Whereas in the United States and Canada treaties were negotiated and signed (although later broken or found to have been arranged under dubious conditions), in Australia, the individual states worked out their own "arrangements" for the "black problem." When the then colony of Australia federated in the 1900s, the northern and western states of Queensland and Western Australia were hesitant to give a southern federal body power to legislate national policy for the treatment of "their Aborigines." After all, they argued, the southern states had settled their Aboriginal problem in the late 1700s and early 1800s by slaughter and *laissez-faire* assimilation; Queensland and Western Australia argued that it was hypocritical for the Canberra legislature to take, retrospectively, a pro-Aboriginal stance. Queensland and Western Australia won their battle.

But upon federation, the national parliament did gain the right to administer Aborigines in the Territories and in the mid 1970s, legislation was passed giving Aboriginal groups in the Northern Territory statutory rights to sue for their traditional lands. Labor leaders argued that this legislation was necessary after Mr. Justice Blackburn, serving on the Northern Territory High Court, ruled in the Gove land rights case that

the doctrine of communal native title did not form and never had formed part of the law of any part of Australia. Australia was considered at law to have been a

³⁸ See also R. Tomasic (1980) and P. Hanks and B. Keon-Cohen (1984).

settled, rather than conquered, colony. The land was considered 'no man's land', *terra nullius*. Aboriginal customary law was not recognised under the settlers' law and the introduced law filled a legal vacuum. However, the plaintiffs had established a subtle and elaborate system of social rules and customs highly adapted to the country in which the people led their lives, which provided a stable order of society remarkably free from the vagaries of personal whim or influence. It was a system of law concerning the conduct of people in respect of the use of land, yet Blackburn J felt unable to characterise the relationship of the clan to the land as proprietary; it was a spiritual or religious relationship under which Aboriginals have a cogent feeling of obligation to the land, rather than ownership of it. He concluded that the evidence showed a system of law which did not provide for any proprietary interest in the plaintiffs in any part of the land in issue (Neate 1989: 4).

The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 codified the customary title of Aborigines as a traditional, spiritual relationship between a group of people and a tract of land in which the local descent group forages by right. The legislation's emphasis on the distinctive spiritual aspect of Aboriginal land management reflected a view that proprietary rights did not adequately reflect the "custodial" or "managerial" role, so called, "traditional owners" play in Aboriginal society. Blackburn stated that the Aboriginal claimants did not see themselves as an exclusive group who could exercise, alienate or otherwise acquire or divest rights of title to the tract of land to which they belonged, all of which are basic to Western notions of private property. Moreover, Blackburn claimed that there was no set rule that clan members must reside in their clan territory or that they could exclude others from residing and making use of the area. Of course, many anthropologists have taken exception to this view. Nancy Williams, who worked with the Yolngu at Yirrkala -- the same group that

Blackburn addressed -- has argued that "Yolngu do not conceptualize boundaries in terms of rights of exclusive enjoyment so much as of rights to allocate use to others" (1982: 131).

Be that as it may, Kenneth Maddock notes that Blackburn's conclusion is based upon the dubious supposition that clans have "no internal political organization and little or no economic importance" which would allow them to *develop* the land; a *development* that might lead to proprietary rights (Maddock 1983: 40, my emphasis). He also notes that Blackburn referred to Blackstone's 1766 manuscript, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, that contains "an unambiguous account of the hunting-pasturage-agricultural progression which obviously owes a great deal to the work of the pioneers" of the four stage theory (Meek 1976: 177). Aborigines had not passed from an acquisitive to a productive labor in which the roots of property lie. What lawyers and some anthropologists call Aborigines' lack of "proprietary rights" (versus custodial, spiritual responsibilities) can be seen to be a Western evaluation that Aborigines do not cultivate the land or produce the objects they hunt and gather in it; rather they mind and care for a never-changing landscape. As I said before, the belief in a never-changing countryside and the belief that the labor of hunters-and-gatherers is merely acquisitive are linked on the grossest of levels: what does not change has not yet been touched by productive labor. No wealth has accumulated in the land. If Aborigines do not conceive themselves as accumulating anything within the land, then they cannot be proprietors in the capitalist sense; which is the only sense that makes a difference in most Australian legal contexts. The claim that Aborigines do not produce the objects they collect in the countryside is backed by the description of an Aboriginal population as, in the most positive descriptions, "thin" and, in the most negative, "wandering and negligible." Supposedly, there simply were not enough people to tip the scales into agriculture. Describing Aboriginal population and labor as "slight" discounts their importance to the history of the Australian continent.

Recognition of a *pragmatic* relationship between Aboriginal life and the life of the country was not the goal of the Federal legislation. Through the Land Rights Act, so those backing it claimed, Aborigines would finally regain fixed rights to designated lands, based on their particular *spiritual* attachment to the landscape I discussed in the Introduction. The Act would give legal recognition to traditional Aboriginal concepts of land (not property), grant secure title to the land, ensure Aboriginal control over activity in the land, and, through other provisions, balance the competing interests of the wider community to the same bit of country (Neate 1989: 349). Along with complementary legislation, Aboriginal Land Rights was to pave the way for a moral and economic closure to the historically violent and strained relationship between Anglo- and Aboriginal Australians.

Nicolas Peterson reviews the events leading up to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, 1976 in his article "Aboriginal Land Rights in the Northern Territory of Australia" (1982; see also Hiatt 1984). In particular he notes the importance of a worldwide "new phase of exploration" for oils and minerals in the 1960s which "quickly started to disrupt the life of many indigenous peoples who until then had been living in relative social, economic and political isolation" (1982: 441). As mining companies established larger operations in north and central Australia, Aboriginal people began demanding the recognition of their rights as land-owners. After a series of strikes and walkouts by Aboriginal stockmen and the establishment of an "Aboriginal Foreign Embassy" on the lawn of the Australian federal parliament, the then-governing, politically conservative Liberal-Country Party was "under strong moral and political pressure to act" which it did only hesitantly (445). The Labor Party, on the other hand, gave "high priority and prominence to granting land rights" and after its election in December 1972 set up a Royal Commission to "inquire into Aboriginal land rights" (446). But before the Royal Commission's recommendations could be drafted into legislation and

passed, the fortunes of the Labour Party shifted and the Liberal-Country Party came back into office. They significantly changed the first draft of the land rights legislation, ensuring that only the "traditional descent group" for a stretch of land could sue for its return. The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 that was passed and became law in January 1977 also made "some major concessions" to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly no matter "the open and racist hostility of senior Country-Liberal Party politicians to the Aborigines of the Northern Territory" (448).³⁹

The national legislations' emphasis on traditional spiritual relations between a group and a stretch of country prejudices the cases of urban Aborigines and of migrant groups. Although the Lands Act defines Aboriginal traditions as dynamic and it provides legal protection for Aborigines with longstanding residential ties to a place not theirs traditionally⁴⁰, it nevertheless creates an otherness to Aboriginal land tenure systems: they are different from Western European systems because they are not grounded in "the bedrock for the analysis of property" wherein humans have a unique capacity to make the world around them, distinguishing them from the dumb animals and insentient objects. Instead, Aborigines conceive of a woollybutt tree, for example, as their father's brother; viz., the world is a living place filled with agential objects. Urban Aborigines are popularly criticized as

³⁹ These concessions included, "allowing the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly to make complementary legislation on the day-to-day working of land rights. Specifically, the Northern Territory was enabled to make ordinances concerning the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites, the control by Aborigines of people entering their land, the closure of coastal waters adjoining Aboriginal land up to two kilometres from shore and the conservation of wildlife, by agreement, on Aboriginal land" (Peterson 1982: 448).

⁴⁰ See s. 50(4) of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) Act, 1976: "(a) Aborigines who by choice are living at a place on the traditional country of the tribe or linguistic group to which they belong but do not have a right or entitlement to live at that place ought, where practicable, to be able to acquire secure occupancy of that place; (b) Aborigines who are not living at a place on the traditional country of the tribe or linguistic group to which they belong but desire to live at such a place ought, where practicable, to be able to acquire secure occupancy of such a place."

lacking the 'supernatural relationship to country' which defines for many Anglos the Aboriginal ontology. Because of the perceived similarity between urban Aboriginal and Anglo-Australian understandings of productivity and property, urban Aborigines are labeled as political and economic opportunists. The image of the materially free Aborigine walking through the desert is compared to the urban and rural Aborigine in modern dress and with modern commodity needs. Dressed in this manner, the urban and settlement Aborigines fighting for country are portrayed as having sinister motives; they want to swallow empty, productive lands to keep them from whites. The exorbitant costs of land claims have forced some Anglos to re-examine the merits of protracted legal battles against Aboriginal claims, but they have not changed fundamental attitudes.

While we applaud the Territory Government's efforts to protect the interests of the wider community from the possibility of being shut out of this prime residential and recreational area, the emphasis now must be on finding a way out of this impasse.⁴¹

The regional and international implications of land rights laws have been discussed elsewhere (Nettheim 1974, 1984). If the Australian nation wishes to gain a leadership position in the Pacific and South East Asia -- a region often embroiled in violent ethnic conflict -- then its relationship to its own indigenous peoples becomes a focal issue. Accommodating indigenous legal forms within a Western legal system was seen as a broad liberal move that would give Australia a respected position vis-a-vis the

⁴¹ Editorial in the *Northern Territory News* (June 30 1989) concerning the stalled negotiations of the Kenbi Land Claim. See also *Cultural Survival Quarterly* Vol. 10, No. 2 1986 for the discursive frames that Land Rights have taken internationally.

repressive polities of Indonesia, China, and some of the Pacific Islands (cf. Burger 1988, especially Appendix 1).

While parliamentarians note these broader international implications, the core support for Aboriginal Land Rights came from middle Australia. This group felt that Aborigines deserved a better deal than they had received over the two hundred odd years of Anglo settlement. Related to this renaissance of limited public support for the economic and social plight of Aborigines was the recognition by some Anglo-Australians of the unique voice of Aboriginal artists and writers in Australia's culture and the increasing importance of tourism to the Australian economy. That is to say, the moral twinge of the public's cry for "a fair go" for the nation's indigenous people made a particular economic and cultural sense. The Aboriginal culture-industry is especially important to remote areas such as the Northern Territory where most other big industries have failed.

The tourism industry is one sector of the economy in which Aborigines, or at least the sign of Aboriginality, have been productively incorporated. Aborigines are important to the tourism industry because the value the industry mines, so to speak, is not rooted in the land, but in a particular exotic form of the landscape: a spectacular view, an adventurous river tour, an authentic indigenous presence. In Bananas, Beaches and Bases, Cynthia Enloe (1989: 19-41) has discussed the ways that the global tourism industry transforms economies and environmental contours so that local governments can produce a commercial, exotic scenery.

The tourism industry is extremely important to the Northern Territory economy. Jon Altman, in a short study of Aboriginal participation in the tourism industry at Uluru National Park, wrote

In the Northern Territory, tourism is regarded as a potentially leading, and extremely important, sector of the Territory's economy. For example the

latest NT Travel Monitor for the year 1984/85 shows that 594,000 visitor trips were made to the NT, with 6.584 million visitor nights; it is estimated that overall tourism spending totalled \$281 million in the last financial year. The aim of the NT Government and the NT Tourist Commission is to almost double this figure to one million visitor trips by the year 1990. The growth of the NT economy and the growth of tourism are regarded by policy-makers as being closely correlated (1987b: 4).

Because tourism depends on a particular form of the environment, Northern Territory administrators have proposed changes to the landscape of the Cox Peninsula to promote it as a "playground" for Darwin visitors. 'Traditional Aborigines' would fit nicely in this Disney-like playground, and there is, therefore, an unremarked suitability of the Land Claim Act for the tourism industry. The Act, in part in language and in part in practice, necessitates a traditional perspective on the part of Aboriginal claimants; that is, claimants must demonstrate a living knowledge and use, even if sporadic, of the land under claim. Several of the largest and most contested claims have been for lands in which spectacular natural features exist: Katherine Gorge, Uluru (Ayers Rock), and the Olgas. In negotiated agreements, the land was handed back to Aboriginal owners after they agreed to joint management of it as a National Park. Arguably, so owned the land is now more valuable to a tourist as an authentic frontier experience: "[f]or many Australians the Ayers Rock region is being associated in indefinable ways with 'The Outback Experience'. Tourists commonly said that not only is the area worthy of a visit because it is spectacular and different, but also because one somehow becomes more 'Australian' having seen Ayers Rock" (Altman 1987b: 6).

In a political-economic perspective the sentient landscape is a *non sequitur*. However, the starting point for the commoditization of the northern landscape and for the Northern Territory Land Rights Act is the spiritual relationship between Aborigines

and the "living landscape." With Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal guides to explain the contours of the living, sentient landscape to scores of national and international tourists, the very part of the country that is an unacknowledged creation of Aboriginal labor (through their speech and their sweat), becomes the starting place of a profitable tourism industry. Difference becomes the selling point, even as this difference is subsumed into a commodity system. By promoting difference as commodity value -- the startling difference between an objective and a spiritual view of the countryside -- the actual difference in perspective is subsumed into a common market economy. And Aborigines must themselves maintain a particular form (the traditional man and woman) in order for them to remain commodities in the economy of difference.

The sweetness of an Aboriginal-based tourism industry has not stopped the Northern Territory Government from opposing land rights. The 'Country Liberal Party,' a conservative Northern Territory political party in office since limited self-government in 1978, has steadfastly and polemically portrayed the "Canberra bill" (the Land Claim Act) as but another example of southern interference in northern matters. The Northern Territory Government's resistance to southern administration reflects an historical view that southern legislators are unable to administer the lands that white Northern Territorians develop. What has the Northern Territory Anglo-economy developed?

4. The Anglo Economy: hunting wild cattle.

While land on the British Isles and Continental mainland was becoming increasingly fixed and privatized through evictions of cottagers from the commons and foreclosures of small property owners, great forestlands were being opened in the

Americas.⁴² William Cronon writes that "theoreticians of colonialism" had devised a way of perceiving the colonial forestlands as storehouses of commodities.

Seeing landscapes in terms of commodities meant something else as well: it treated members of an ecosystem as isolated and extractable units. Explorers describing a new countryside with an eye to its merchantile possibilities all too easily fell into this way of looking at things, so that their descriptions often degenerated into little more than lists (Cronon 1983: 21).

The American landscape was valuable in that it had in abundance what was then scarce on the European continent. Also, because of the land's plenty, colonists argued that it had been scarcely used or developed, no matter how long native Americans had been resident. The colonization of the the north American east coast was well under way when, in 1770, Captain James Cook reached and named Botany Bay, Australia. By the time the first shipload of British convict-settlers rearrived there seventeen years later, England had lost the newly formed United States of America and Napoleon was a threatening presence across the English channel. Even with these national threats to its 'holdings' and trade routes, the British government seems to have been only half-heartedly interested in developing a prosperous South Australian colony.

Robert Hughes (1986) reviews the several reasons for Britain's slow development of its colonial rights in Australia, settled as *terra nullius* by the ceremonial *planting* of the flag near the Cape York Peninsula. First, Cook's assessment of Australian lands paled in comparison with his descriptions of the South Sea Islands of Hawaii and Tahiti. Investments and capital speculation turned toward the south seas to

⁴² See William Cronon's (1983) chapter "Bounding the Land" for the closing of the American countryside and Paul Carter's (1987) chapter "Triangles of Life" for the sectioning and "taming" of the Australian countryside.

the detriment of the southern continent. Second, the scientific crew of Cook's surveying vessel, the Endeavor, spoke hesitantly of the availability of good pastoral lands and harbors and of trading partners anywhere near south Australia. Even land Cook and Charles Banks, the Endeavor's naturalist, described as potentially excellent agricultural fields (which later proved to be a rainy season mirage) and as having large stands of birch pine needed for ship-masts did not inspire the commercial interests of the British. On the one hand, the indigenous population seemed too 'primitive' to be a useful labor pool for agriculture and industry, and, on the other hand, no rich trade routes lay anywhere near Botany Bay or Sydney Harbour. Finally, when the settlement was founded its primary use was as a dumping ground for England's growing convict population. The British government was no longer able to deport "Bay Sailors," a name developed for deported convicts after the first Botany Bay settlement, to the American continent. In the first few years of the Australian colony, convicts' aspirations for agricultural work and to develop land seem to have been minimal. However, once the Australian European population did increase, land development and manufacturing took hold and by the 1800s, South Australia had moved from a pastoral economy based on conscription convict labor to an industrialized capitalist economy based on free wage labor (O'Malley 1983).

Although no little effort has been expended to accomplish the same transformation in the Northern Territory of Australia, this region, historically, has had a vexed time developing its economy. This history and its relationship to Western political-economic notions of productive and acquisitive labor are critical to understanding the contested nature of Aboriginal claims to northern lands.

White interests in Northern Territory lands first became satisfiable with the annexation of the Territory by South Australia in the 1860s. Since the 1860s, local administrators have decried southern management of northern lands, but have been dependent on the southern states for economic support. In the New South Wales,

Victorian, and Tasmanian colonies, an elite resident group of Marine Corps officers owned and developed land in the area through the savage exploitation of convict labor. For better or worse, local administrators controlled and managed regional lands and resources. In the Northern Territory during the first half of the colonial period, absentee speculators controlled large swathes of prime land around the Port Darwin area. They acquired these lands in March 1864, when the sale of northern land opened simultaneously in London and Adelaide. There were 455 applicants for 118,880 acres of country land and 743 town allotments of half an acre for a rough total of 44,719 pounds. Proceeds of the sale went to the cost of surveying and settling the country (Hodder 1893: 377-8). As Alan Powell, an historian of the Northern Territory, writes, the private and company speculators had no intention of pioneering the north.

It was most unlikely that any of the eminent citizens who backed these companies had any intention of pioneering in the Northern Territory. Neither, it seems, had most of the smaller buyers whose background has been traced. They were far too comfortable in Adelaide (1988: 78).

Land speculators hired surveyors to delimit their respective properties. Surveyors gridded the boundaries of large properties in the Darwin and Daly River regions for South Australian investors who might never live in or visit the area but who hoped to capitalize on the materials produced from it (Map 2). As William Cronon noted of American exploration and survey journals, one could say of Australian travel journals: they listed the commodities found on parcels of land and, in some sense, turned a patchwork of ecological spaces into a regular grid of commodity value. Geographic space was given a number of productive ratings: good for fishing, ideal residential living, potential mining country.

Surveyors portrayed the north as a 'rugged' outback yet to be tamed by modern, civil society. Even the most sympathetic political-economic model of the time could not explain how Aboriginal labor might be 'congealed' or 'embodied' in such a landscape, although Alan Powell notes that the influence of Rousseau's theories on early southern administrators and on later philanthropic and religious societies was significant.

Rousseau came between Dampier and Cook [s portrayal of Aboriginal society]; and his 'noble savage' lingered long in the minds of educated Englishmen, as a diminishing part of the social conscience which the privileged members of society were supposed to possess -- and sometime actually did possess -- as their obligation to the poor. . . . Philanthropy towards native peoples found its main outlets through some religious bodies, the anti-slavery movement and, after 1836, the Aborigines Protection Society (1988: 39).

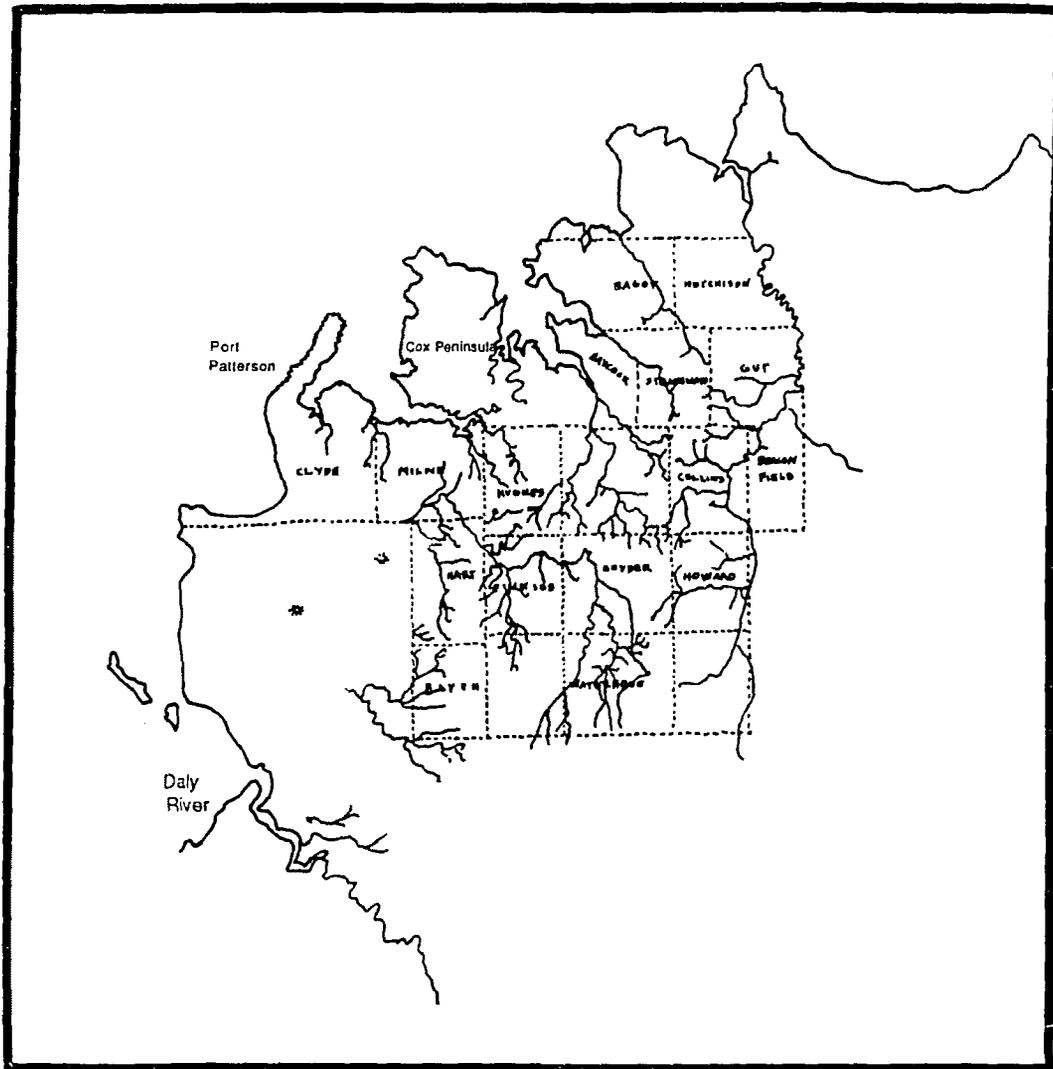
Administrators' and missionaries' views that Aborigines lived in Rousseau's state of nature fit the general perception that Aborigines had added nothing to the countryside. No discernible value had been added to the country, no commodities had been produced, and even if one counted the 'rude' weapons of war and hunting, no large-scale exchange networks were known to exist. By the 1930s and 1940s, ethnographers had developed models for understanding the ways northern Australian Aborigines affected the shape of the countryside (Birdsell 1970, 1973; Thomson 1939, 1949), but in the early years of the northern colony, settlers discounted the effect Aborigines had on the countryside. Although Arthur Phillips, the first Governor of Sydney, was greatly influenced by Rousseau's writings, neither he nor his successors could "ever instil their ideals into the majority of colonists who were of the poorer

classes" (Powell 1988: 40). Dismissing the effect of indigenous work on the productivity of the countryside, settlers turned their attention to arguing with south Australians about who had the right to administer the north. Settlers built their arguments against southern land speculators and administrators on the value of local, productive labor.

During the settlement period that followed Finnis's and Goyder's surveying expeditions of Top End lands, debates ensued about the right of southern 'missing' owners to preside over large tracts of valuable property (cf. Hodder 1893; Powell 1988). Arguments filled the northern newspapers and southern parliamentary sessions. The debate's roots predated both the speculators and surveyors. Edwin Hodder, the 19th century historian, for example, wrote that in the 1840s the Duke of Newcastle refused the South Australian request to annex the Northern Territory because "it was certain that, at no distant date, independent settlements, which could not be governed from a distance, would have to be established on the northern coast" (1893: 374-375). To say that government at a distance is irrational makes little sense in the colonial context: Britain, Portugal, Spain, and France were all governing their colonies at a great distance. However, it does make sense if one accepts Locke's claim that labor in the land (whether bureaucratic or manual) is an important basis for the ownership and administration of it.

South Australia did end up exploring, establishing, and governing the Northern Territory from 1850 to the early 1910s. And government from a distance did fuel varying degrees of resentment from northern settlers. *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, *The Northern Standard*, and, a Queensland paper, *The Northern Miner*, took different ideological positions but argued a similar point: settlers who produced goods from the countryside -- created value -- had a superior right to administer northern lands. *The Northern Territory Times*, a conservative paper, ran columns that reflected the double bind of the Top End settlement; it needed southern economic

Map 2: Ownership of Land in Darwin Region, 1887.



support, but it was hampered by southern laws dictating how the north should be developed. At different times the paper would take different stances: New South Wales and Queensland should invest capital for the building of a rail line so that "rich [northern] lands can be brought into profitable cultivation;"⁴³ legislation should be passed making it easier for settlers to buy land close to town;⁴⁴ private settlers and miners who came to the Northern Territory to live should be lauded, while speculators and owners who stayed away should be chastised.

[N]ow private settlers are bringing their wives and families to the country for the purpose of making it their home, and these, together with the miners attracted by the reputed richness of the gold reefs, must at length start the settlement of North Australia. . . . The officers of Government were sent round to reside here without any particular object in view, beyond giving some sort of protection to the persons who had bought land, and who might come to settle in the new country. But those purchasers of sections did not show any disposition to come here. They preferred waiting on Providence. It was never their intention to occupy the land which they had bought.⁴⁵

The Northern Miner, a Queensland paper, took a radical labor approach to southern administration. It lauded the productive work of miners with separatist slogans such as "Who form the voting power, the bones, muscles and sinews of the North, but the miners and working men of the towns?"⁴⁶ The *Miner* reflected two

⁴³ *NTT&G* March 2, 1878.

⁴⁴ In the editorial of the *NTT&G* January 2 1875 is found "complaints which were made in this place as to the difficulty of getting land were not confined to the question of 'Lands beyond Goyder's survey,' but included town and suburban lands."

⁴⁵ *NTT&G* November 14, 1873.

⁴⁶ *Northern Miner* December 29, 1885, subsequent references to this publication are abbreviated *NM*.

interests of the political economists and workers, first, the importance of labor in the colonial and industrial process, and, second, the increasing alienation of the laborer from control over land and commodities. *The Northern Miner's* anthropomorphic description of the northern economy highlighted the "common notion" that it was the worker's labor that fueled the economy and produced the value of the landscape. *The Northern Miner* was not Marxist or Socialist; instead, its self-professed democratic stand was based upon the labor theory of value developed in Smith's work. Miners added to the value of the land and to the economy whereas the southern gentlemen and legislators simply collected -- note again the hunter-gathering rhetoric -- the bounty of their labor. As a result of separatist agitation, Queensland did secede from South Australia in 1859, and was able to because its economy was grounded in lucrative canefields and copper mines which in turn were based upon the labor of kidnapped Pacific Islanders, local Aborigines, and immigrant Chinese workers.⁴⁷

The Northern Territory never achieved this economic independence. Gold mining was the primary industry of the early northern colony, although gold productivity dropped sharply after the first few years of settlement. Powell (1988: 94) reports that in 1880 the value of gold exported from the Northern Territory was close to 100,000 pounds sterling but rapidly fell to two-thirds this value. Other than gold mining, pastoral industries dominated the Northern Territory economy although there were several attempts to establish agricultural industries. Most agricultural pursuits in the Top End have failed. The history of the Cox Peninsula reads, in some ways, as a study of Northern Territory pastoral, agricultural, and industrial failure. Across the Darwin Harbour, the Cox Peninsula was named after Dillen Cox, an agriculturalist who had a plantation there in the 1880s. The plantation rapidly failed. Before Cox, the peninsula was named after W. Douglas, a failed land speculator. In the

⁴⁷ Blander's (1984) account of her childhood in *Welou. My brother* is an interesting portrait of the use of migrant and immigrant labor in Queensland.

middle of the Cox Peninsula is the Belyuen Aboriginal Community. Belyuen too had a prior name, Delissaville, after Michael De Lissa, a southern businessman who tried in 1886 to grow sugarcane at the site but was defeated by the long months of the Dry season.

The pastoral squatter is an interesting figure in the historical development of the northern economy. Whereas in the early period of Anglo settlement of south Australia, pastoralists and miners -- among whom was an important contingent of squatters -- opened up and established the colony, in the latter half of the century, the urban bourgeoisie were attempting to establish Australia as a "high wage, capitalist state" (O'Malley 1983, 12; cf. Hughes 1986). Crawford quotes Gideon Scott Lang's description of the colonial squatter in his 1845 volume Land and Labour in Australia.

To become a perfect specimen of the Australian squatter. . . an emigrant must be a pushing determined fellow, who can dispense with all the comforts of civilized life, from wine and windows to carpets and crockery, and will look to nothing but making the most of his Capital regardless of risk and hardship, so long as they lead to increased profit (1952: 90).

On the one hand, squatters exemplified the natural initiative of the maximizing individual who turns the savage wilderness into productive fields. On the other hand, the conservative nature of the squatter plantations during the mid 1800s -- their reliance on conscription convict labor -- restricted the establishment of a full-fledged liberal capitalist economy. By the early 1800s, squatters became a problem to a burgeoning south Australian urban bourgeoisie. The latter won the day and through increased police measures most squatting was eventually eliminated.

In North Australia, squatters played a critical role in the early development of the pastoral industry and helped shape the image of the North as a rugged, "labored"

environment. In the Northern Territory, pastoral squatting was encouraged as a way of increasing the Territory's meager European population. Dominic Daly, the daughter of the Government Resident of Darwin in the 1870s, wrote,

By degrees the well-watered lands of the Northern Territory attracted the attention of the Queensland squatters. Each Resident's report showed that a vast area of grass country, suitable for carrying stock, was lying idle near the magnificent rivers of which Arnheim's [sic] Land has such reason to boast (1887: 218)

She quotes her father as writing:

Nothing can exceed the inducements held out to squatters in this country. It is impossible to conceive a finer place for breeding and maturing cattle and horses. It needs no special report on the subject, as in most cases it is only necessary to make transient examination to prove the eligibility of the country for stock . . . In my opinion, the settlement of this country will mainly depend upon its pastoral settlers (1887: 218-9).

Nowadays, the pastoral industry remains a solid part of a tripartite economy (along with mining and tourism), but the squatters' identity and fate have changed. Pastoral squatters have given way to residential squatters who are now increasingly seen as a "blight on the landscape" and as a group standing in the way of government initiatives in the mining and tourism industries. Residential squatters are often said to be "bludgers": people who live off welfare and the land without increasing the worth of the world around them. In political-economic terms, theirs is an unproductive labor that adds nothing to the worth of the land upon which they live. A common attitude

towards rural squatters is captured in a report prepared for the Northern Territory Department of Environment, Housing, and Community Development on the impact of recreational activities on the natural environment (Foley 1978). Using squatting developments on the southwest corner of the Cox Peninsula as a primary example, the study focuses on the environmental destruction and social problems that arise with rural, residential squatting. The report advises that the government prevent new squatter-shack developments on beaches and other Crown lands and that it monitor existing shack areas for damage done to the environment.

In tune with colonial processes throughout the world, colonists in the Northern Territory were discussing the fitness of different (so called) races for different types of work and the federal legislature was devising immigration and employment policies based on these discussions. Chinese were seen as most suitable for the harsh subtropical climate, although some aspects of their 'character,' such as their imputed propensity for smuggling and larceny, were seen as major drawbacks as was, ironically, their willingness to engage in hard work for a profit -- a possible threat to Anglo-Australian hegemony in the region. In 1901, the new Australian federation legislature enacted a literacy test "with the tacit understanding that it would be so administered as to exclude black, brown, and yellow peoples as permanent settlers" (Gratten 1963: 7).

But the policy involved a decision on whether or not the Australian tropics could be developed and its industries carried on by white labor, a question even more open at that time than now. The legislators decided that white men could do both jobs, essentially an act of faith in defense of an ardently held ideal. But more or less recognizing that the economic argument in favor of colored labor ran strongly against them, the legislators covered their position by providing that sugar grown by white labor should be "assisted" . . . in one way or another.

The support for White Australia cut across party lines, with the Labor party especially convinced of the absolute rightness of the policy (Gratten 1963: 7-8)

In the north, however, where the Labor Party had made few inroads, early settlement newspapers argued that white Australians lacked the 'temperament' for the climate. Many northern settlers argued for the introduction of Asian immigrant labor. Various issues were raised for and against immigrant labor. Settlers advanced the social-Darwinian argument that different ethnic groups were better or worse evolved for certain activities and climates. It is not surprising that White advocates of this view nominated Asian peoples as candidates for hard manual labor and themselves for administrative positions in the subtropics.

As a result of the need for a large labor pool in the Northern Territory and the unwillingness of Anglo-Australians to migrate north, there was soon a large resident Chinese population in Palmerston (Port Darwin). The violent conflict that resulted between Chinese laborers and Aborigines was often described in the local newspapers. It presented a racial discourse in which Europeans could retain a magisterial aloofness and ponder the various characteristics of other races without having to subject their own to critical inquiry.

About ten days ago, as Mr. Dewdney was carting a load of hay into town, he noticed a black fellow carrying what he thought to be a dead pig. He slackened his pace, and so did the black fellow, who threw off his load and quietly said, "You given me tobacco?" "What are you doing with that dead Chinaman?" said Dewdney. "You killem?" "No, me no killem. Him die, all same whitefellow." Dewdney, who by this time began to realise the fact that something was wrong, said, just as the black laid the dead Chinaman's head over his shoulder, "Where you take him to?" "Me go along cemetery, shovem along hole, cover him up all

same Mander." Now, for all we know, the man was just as comfortably buried as he would have been in one of Mander's "five-pounders." But why has there been no inquest held? If this style of interment is to continue, the black fellow should surely carry a doctor's certificate.⁴⁸

The use of racist caricatures of Chinese and Aborigines -- especially when the two groups met -- diverted the blame for Aboriginal hostility and degradation away from Anglo-Australians. Other nationalities or classes were the cause of all colonial social maladies and inequalities. Even, Baldwin Spencer, the Chief Protectorate for and renowned ethnographer of Northern Territory Aborigines, would claim that it was the Chinese and "a certain class of Europeans" who were responsible for the horrendous conditions into which northern Aborigines had fallen (1928: 612, 1914; cf. Hamilton 1987; Powell 1988: 115).

Into the boiling pot of racial theory was thrown the potential role of Aborigines to the Australian economy: could they be the indigenous labor pool? It seems not. Aborigines were seen as lazy and untrustworthy laborers except in small numbers and on pastoral interests. Therefore, few people advocated the use of Aboriginal labor, though in government plenaries Basedow did argue,

Providence has given us a coloured man, the Australian aboriginal, but I regret to say that we have not availed ourselves too well of the opportunity. Originally the indigenous natives must have numbered round about 300,000; at present there are barely 50,000 left. I am not exaggerating when I assure you that most of the stations in the north, north-west, and north-east of Australia will become more or less impossible when the last of the Australian natives

⁴⁸ NTT&G, February 19 1881.

disappears. Of their usefulness as employees under correct management there can be no doubt. But unfortunately no provision is being made for the future; nothing serious is being done to protect him in order that his services might be available in generations to come. I doubt whether under the present conditions he will survive more than for fifteen to twenty years! (1932: 10).

The problem that these government plenaries and other advocates of Northern Territory expansion faced was the need for laborers, and more generally an increased population, to develop hypothetical northern resources. Proponents of increased immigration argued that Queensland had successfully transformed itself from a southern annexation to an independent state through the use of immigrant laborer. However, the Queensland economy was differently structured. Their holdings were based on large cane plantations and gold mines. And Queensland plantation owners used immigrants (often kidnapped Pacific islanders) as the Marine Corps officers had used convict labor in the earlier south Australian colonies. Without the large, Anglo-Australian owned plantations and mining interests, in the north, immigrants established their own small-scale mines, businesses, and pastoral industries. Or they attempted to do so. Advocates for a 'white Australia' argued that large scale immigration and the foreign ownership of land and businesses undermined the authority of Anglo-Australians by fracturing the group-who-ruled from the group-who-labored. So the argument went, this fracture line would have serious political consequences down the road. The large Asian laboring population might call for independence from the distant, southern Anglo-government and for unification with the closer southeast Asian community.

There was no new experiment in race relations in the area on and around the Cox Peninsula. Aborigines in the vicinity of the Finnis River and Bynoe Harbour were

dispersed before tin mines were established.⁴⁹ Cloppenburg and Erikson hired a "gang of Chinese" to cultivate the soil for a rice harvest.⁵⁰ Michael De Lissa employed "eighty Asiatics and ten Europeans" to clear the land and "entirely Chinese or native" people to cultivate the crop. The Aborigines were from Port Essington and were "somehow . . . persuaded to work systematically and well at the hoeing of the ground."⁵¹ In an article in the *Northern Territory Times & Gazette*, "black trouble" is reported at De Lissa's plantation and the police are sent over to investigate. It is the only time any punitive party is reported to have gone to the Peninsula, although there was often trouble just south on the Finniss River. When the police arrived, no Aborigines could be found. We do not know if there were Laragiya and Wagaitj Aborigines working at another cane plantation on the Daly River (Hodder 1893: 87). But, like De Lissa's enterprise, the Daly River cane fields failed shortly after a large capital investment had been made.

By the 1920s, the politics of a 'white Australia' and the economic depression of the north forced and encouraged northern industries to fire their Asian workers. Ithain MacKenzie notes, "[t]he decision to replace Asian labour with Europeans robbed the north of its one efficient workforce and the reputation of the AWU [Australian Workers Union] did little to encourage investment"(1980: 61). It would be misleading to think that Asian workers were evicted in order for Anglo workers to replace them. Rather, large numbers of Asian laborers challenged the white northern administration's claim to represent residents in the southern, federal government. And, from a political-

⁴⁹ *NTT&G*, October 13 1888. This article reports from the Finniss River Tin Mine that "the natives left here as they were ordered to by M. C. Brown, and have not put in an appearance or molested us since". This is supplemented only by the comment that the natives might have been usefully employed bringing in a supply of wildfowl.

⁵⁰ *NTT&G*, June 30, 1883.

⁵¹ *NTT&G*, January 21 1882. The sentence continues, "This is the only place where I have seen the natives doing any work more laborious than the occasional and perfunctory blacking of boots in Palmerston." He also notes that "as many Larakeeyahs as could be packed like sardines in the hold" went with him to the Cox Peninsula fleeing the "Woolners" with whom they had just fought in Darwin.

economic perspective, a large Asian work force would undermine Anglo claims that they were producing the wealth of the state.

Since the 1940s, the northern economy has remained grounded in a rural mining and pastoral economy, and plagued by an endemic low population. The Northern Territory government has depended upon a series of projects to keep the economy going, each ultimately failing. Ithain MacKenzie (1980) notes that in general most agricultural and pastoral industries have been "a series of failures." He provides a useful summary of the agricultural and pastoral activities in Tropical Northern Territory (Table One).

South Australia eventually lost millions in its northern investment and in 1910 negotiated a deal with the new Australian Federation that ceded responsibility for the Territory to the national government (Northern Territory Acceptance Act 1910). The Northern Territory was still dependent upon the Federal Government in Canberra for extensive financial assistance. Even upon limited self-government in 1978 (Northern Territory [Self Government] Act 1978), the Federal Government retained important rights and responsibilities for the Territory including heavy subsidies of its economy. Northern economists have blamed this continued cultural, political, and economic dependence on the south for the historical failure of the Northern Territory economy.⁵²

⁵² MacKenzie has attributed northern economic stagnancy to five cause: "The first has been the significant lack of political and economic control in the north. Both the South Australian and Commonwealth Governments maintained a centre-periphery relationship and would not relinquish authority despite this recommendation from several enquiries. Unlike north Queensland, no Territorians have been Cabinet Ministers able to dispense political largesse. The second hindrance was the poor mining and land acts legislated by the South Australian Government. These favoured absentee speculators rather than would-be small-holders as in Queensland, and the Northern Territory is still suffering from this poor land administration. Much of the landscape was permanently damaged from irresponsible use. Thirdly, from 1858 to the present, speculation for rapid profits has been prominent in almost every undertaking. The fourth reason lies in the colonial attitude of southern and local administrators. . . . Social orientation has always been to the south with little of the independence which arose in that other isolated region, south-west Western Australia. Finally, over the total period of European involvement in the Northern Territory, there has been the consistent belief in the ability of

TABLE ONE

Notable European Economic Activities in Tropical Northern Territory⁵³

<u>Year</u>	<u>Event</u>
1858	South Australia annexed the Northern Territory.
1863	Land Act allowing sale of 202,000 hectares of land prior to survey.
1867	North Australia Company compensated by S.A. Government for its inability to survey land.
1869	Goyder finally completes survey.
1871	Gold discovered at Pine Creek.
1872	Overland Telegraph completed. First gold rush begins.
1880	Speculators lease land for pastoral and plantation activity. Sugar-cane eventually fails as crop.
1885	Darwin to Pine Creek railway line completed.
1911	Commonwealth takes over the administration of the Territory.
1920	Meatworks closed. Private and government farms fail to develop agriculture.
1940	Army Farm Unit formed and begins farming at Adelaide River.
1942-45	Army Farm Unit expands and eventually supplies fresh food to 100,000 defence personnel. Killing works built near Katherine.
1954-59	Territory Rice Limited plans to cultivate 200,000 hectares of land at Humpty Doo. Rice cropping fails.
1967-70	Tipperary Land Corporation plans to cultivate 80,000 hectares under sorghum. Attempts fail.
1971-74	Northern Agricultural Development Corporation plans similar venture at Willeroo. Attempts fail.

capital and technical knowledge gained in other areas, to overwhelm the Territory environment" (1980: 63 and 65).

⁵³ Adapted from I. MacKenzie (1980: 57)

With such a poor economic performance, it may seem surprising that one party has stayed in office since self-government. The Australian Labor Party (ALP) has made limited political headway in the Territory in part because of the lack of local industry, the hallmark of trade unionism. Instead, the Country Liberal Party (CLP) uses the rhetorical value of 'individual [white] labor' to make a claim for government. However, the CLP's rhetorical juxtaposition of the brawn of the northern white laborer to southern administrative incompetence produces a fairly obvious contradiction. In its polemics, the CLP portrays the northern worker nobly fighting against the rugged wild outback and a bumbling southern bureaucracy. But as Bruce Davidson has argued, because of the specific demographics and environment of the north, "[i]t is not surprising that the only economically viable agricultural industry in the Northern Territory and the Kimberleys is grazing cattle on large unimproved holdings using a system of husbandry *which might well be described as hunting wild cattle*" (1980: 75; my emphasis).

The rhetorical soundness and persuasiveness of such an economy is questionable within the existing political-economic frameworks still haunting political pragmatists. Productive labor is that which increases the value of land or commodities (goods); labor which "might as well be described as hunting" is the basis of only the most primitive forms of economic development -- it was on the basis of this type of rudimentary Aboriginal economy that Australia was claimed as *terra nullius* in the first place. And it is upon this notion of economy that Justice Blackburn's Gove Land Claim decision seemed common sense to middle Australia. It is not surprising, therefore, that while no majority of residents advocates land rights for Aborigines within their own state boundaries, a majority of Australian residents support land rights in the Northern Territory. From a national perspective, Northern Territory lands are grossly underpopulated and underdeveloped; and therefore, they are expendable for socially liberal projects such as Aboriginal land rights. Mining industries have more recently

attempted to demonstrate that northern lands are, in fact, very valuable to the nation because of their minerals.

In the last chapter, I claimed that because of the imputed ability of Aboriginal language and bodies to affect the country and the country to affect human language and bodies, just sitting in the countryside could be a productive form of activity. In this chapter I have attempted to outline Western notions of labor in order to compare them to Belyuen notions of the same. Western political-economic theory distinguishes between two main types of labor, an acquisitive or unproductive and productive form, the former being typical of hunters and gatherers and the latter typical of agriculturalists and industrialists. Natural philosophers and political economists created this distinction to explain the rise of private property. These definitions and divisions of human activity were intended to answer important questions: why were some things common and some things private? While it is not my claim that Western theorists formulated their theories to disenfranchise indigenous non-Western groups (indeed, some of their theories were revolutionary for the democrats), this was one of the practical results of theories that posit labor as an additive quality, as something that can be fixed to an object.

These definitions and distinctions have come back to haunt the Anglo-Australian economy as it developed in the Northern Territory. Its own inability to develop the countryside has put it in a position disadvantageous to its desire to disenfranchise Aborigines. And because of classic western notions of the rise of private property and the affect of productive labor, northern Aborigines have also been put in a disadvantaged position in their attempt to win traditional country. Neither interest group has a clear rhetorical advantage within existing political-economic theory; the disagreement of what Aboriginal 'hunting and gathering' can accomplish, can mean, continues. I now turn and examine Belyuen landed activity and the various ways it is and can be interpreted.

CHAPTER THREE: "Today We Struggle": Hunting, Fishing, and Collecting.

At dusk we packed people and food into my car and drove to a new homeland centre on the coast a few kilometres from Nhulunbuy which I had never seen. The homeland centre consisted of a cluster of large two room tents in a hollow behind a long white beach and beside a large grove of casuarina trees. As the goanna was being carved up and partitioned onto paper-bark for the various family groups a new Range Rover drove in, dwarfing my car. The clan leader to whom it belonged and who had just finished the day's work at Yirrkala, welcomed me and then went to a small shelter and started a generator. The spotlights on top of the aerial belonging to the two-way radio came on, flooding the area in light. Hearing the generator the children rushed up from the beach and pulled the covers off a colour television set! . . . As we ate our goanna meat we watched the evening's ABC programmes, beamed since 1980 by satellite from Sydney. . . . I finally went to sleep to the shrieks of delight from the children at the antics of Jacques Tati in a replay of 'Mon Oncle'.

Janice Reid *Sorcerers and Healing Spirits*, 1983: 23-24.

Introduction.

What surprises many fieldworkers in Australia, not least myself, is not simply that culture and economy meet, but that they meet in ways that disturb both our senses of the boundedness of cultures and of the compatibility of different kinds of cultures and economies. The Australian literature gears us to expect socio-cultural and political phenomena to occur in a time separate from the day-to-day "grubbing and chasing for subsistence foods." If cultural and political phenomena do "intrude" when we are hunting, fishing, or collecting, we expect intrusions to be of a local sort. This is not the case. On fishing trips dreamings surge from beneath motor-powered dinghies and over a campfire meal heavy-metal music roars. On the dirt tracks that lead to isolated outstations, the Northern Territory Government stretches car-count meters to monitor "public access" on and around Aboriginal lands. The meaning of an event that occurs while Belyuen women and men are hunting, fishing, and collecting, though interpreted locally, seems at times to be incompatible with local economic forms and to be drawn from a bricolage of regional and national political-economic and symbolic systems.

Two generations ago, Donald Thomsons wrote, "perhaps the surest method of appreciating the nature of the food quest of these people [Wik Mongkan Aborigines] . . . is to follow in the steps of one of these food gathering groups . . ." (1939: 220). Anthropologists have taken up half of his suggestion. We have followed food gathering groups in Africa, Australia, North and South America, and elsewhere with our spring-weights and notepads; we have counted crabs and figured the caloric and nutritional value of honey ants. But we have yet to investigate, deeply, the other half of peoples' food collection practices: we have

yet to appreciate the nature of the food quest as a moment in history when economy and culture intersect in a regional and national framework (cf. Myers 1988; Asch 1982, 1989). What do Belyuen men and women hunt today? What are the caloric, temporal, and spatial patterns that arise over the course of a year's hunting, fishing and gathering activities; what local and regional socio-cultural and political-economic pressures help form these patterns? What do different groups understand the productive benefits of these food quests understood to be?

Most researchers of the Aboriginal economy have taken W. E. H. Stanner at his word. They have envisioned the material side of Aboriginal life as direct and unmediated and the Aboriginal economy as apprehensible by a model first developed in the 18th century which postulates and examines productive and nonproductive labor as it arose in the European factory; viz., capital wage labor. Research interest in Australian Aborigines' productive labor was stimulated when, in the 1970s, many Aborigines began returning to traditional country from large missionary or government settlements and began to rely increasingly on bush foods. *Their return was part of a large socio-cultural phenomenon called the 'Great Outstation Movement'* (Altman 1982: 1-42; Coombs, Dexter and Hiatt 1982; Gray 1977). Betty Meehan notes, "[t]here is no doubt that the establishment of the Woodward Land Rights Commission and the boost given to Aboriginal Rights by the election of the Labour Government in 1972 had some influence on these moves back to the bush" (1982: 20). The chair of the Joint Select Committee on Aboriginal Land Rights in the Northern Territory noted the same and stated further that the Act needed to be reviewed with regard to "the effect on Aboriginal communities of mining and tourism on Aboriginal land, the effectiveness of the operation of the Land Councils, communications with Aboriginals, problems

associated with the outstation movement and the operation of the reciprocal legislation" (1977: 67).

While many studies have noted the political background to Aborigines' move to outstations and their increased reliance on bush foods, ethnographers' motivation for working with small, traditionally placed Aboriginal groups is usually based on economic and ecological reasons rather than on political and cultural ones: a researcher is attempting to document, say, the economy of a hunter-gatherer group. Jon Altman writes, "outstation residents although citizens of modern Australia, are an encapsulated enclave of indigenous hunter-gatherers" (1987a: 1). He goes on to state that while the economies of outstations have "changed markedly with external contact, subsistence production continues to be organised in a manner that is informed by, and consistent with, many pre-contact practices" (1987a: 1). Richard Lee has argued that, while hunters are nowhere found in just a hunters' world, if the researcher concentrates on the foraging practices of isolated bands, then modern hunter-gatherer behavior can cast light upon ancient human behavior.¹ More recently, Solway and Lee have modified this claim writing, "[w]e challenge the notion that contact *automatically* undermines foragers and that contemporary foragers are to be understood only as degraded cultural residuals created through their marginality to more powerful systems" (1990: 110 my emphasis).

¹ In his original work, Winterhalder claimed that modern human "foraging behavior" could be predicted and explained by an optimization model and reflected Pleistocene behaviour. More recently he has moderated his position to the simple statement that "human foragers will adopt behaviors that allow them to achieve the highest possible net rate of energy capture *while foraging*" (1987: 313-4). Once this foraging moment has been found, comparisons can be made between group strategies based on environmental necessities and subsequent behavioural changes attributable to capital penetration. To date, Edwin Wilmsen has gone the furthest in dismantling the "economic determinism in ecological guise" inherent in forager theory (Wilmsen 1989a: 61). He argues for the insertion of "social dimensions more firmly into Marxian-evolutionary schemes," a task so far "hampered by both inadequate ethnography and underdeveloped theory" (1989b: 46).

In postcolonial north Australia, the form and meaning of the Aboriginal bush food economy must be studied in a more complex framework than offered by the choice between forager or class models. Belyuen Aborigines do not just live off the land, they live in and with a living country. Moreover, they live under a Western gaze: their food collecting activities are apprehended by Western political-economic theory and are assessed by a Western productive framework. In other words, Belyuen (and all Australian) Aborigines live in a regional and national ecological and political-economic environment: to think of them as encapsulated precolonial hunters and gatherers is simply anti-empirical.

In what follows, I discuss how Belyuen Aborigines produce economic well-being when they hunt, fish, and collect foods. In keeping with Belyuen custom, I often use "hunting" as a general term for men's and women's food collection practices. Economic well-being includes both the calories and nutrients people acquire and the political and cultural benefits they gain when they hunt, fish, and gather in the countryside. I examine Belyuen Aborigines' productive activity and how Western notions of the division between work and leisure (or productive and nonproductive activity) shape the ways Western researchers and readers understand the productivity of Aboriginal labor. Specific ways of representing these activities and their limits compete for our sympathies as much as do the theories that claim to interpret or simply to present the results of hunting and gathering activity. For ease of reference, I have placed all Tables at the end of the chapter.

1. A Note on Data.

The Belyuen community is composed roughly of two hundred and ten people. In an economic analysis, there are obvious advantages and disadvantages gained by focusing on a group over forty. On the one hand, there is little quantitative research on the food collection practices of small-scale settlements in Australia.² Most research on a communities of this size examines the economies of pastoralists or agriculturalists, groups in which the food and capital transactions are larger or more centralized.³ Few researchers have examined how residents of small communities allocate their time between the settlement and the bush or the relative input of market and bush foods into the local diet (but cf. C. Anderson 1982 for one such study). On the other hand, dealing with a large population, one cannot pretend to measure the intake of each and every person and thereby establish precise comparisons between levels of market and bush food consumption for individuals or households. Both the wide range of foods that are collected in often minute quantities and the social constitution of the Belyuen household permit far too many people to travel through far too many households for one to have any assurance that foods bought or gathered by one household are eaten by that household or a stable number of relatives. Further, one cannot hope to be present on every trip that originates from the community or on every trip a particular subset of persons makes. Social and foraging groups fracture and realign themselves throughout the year so that the group hunting together today

² E. Fisk (1975) looks at the subsistence component in the diets of several Aboriginal communities from a strict economic perspective and at the aboriginal economy 'in town and country' (1985). N. Peterson has examined Aboriginal involvement in the Australian economy in the Central Reserve during the winter of 1970 (1977). J.C. Taylor has described how the diet, health, and economy of one Aboriginal community changed after a series of planned social programs (1977). David Turner's still excellent study examined the continuities and discontinuities of an Aboriginal community's economy over time (1977). In their ground-breaking economic analyses of eastern Arnhem Land foraging practices, Betty Meehan (1977, 1982) and Jon Altman (1982, 1987a) focused on small Aboriginal outstations of around thirty to forty inhabitants. These were groups that had returned in the 1970s to their traditional country from the larger Maningrida Settlement .

³ Cf. J. Desmond Clark and Steven Brandt (1984) and A. M. Khazanov (1984).

(or going to the store together) will not be the group desiring to hunt together tomorrow.

In addition to social realignment, the community's central position in the day to day politics of the region realigns group composition because of political and economic imperatives: government officials arrive to discuss self-government proposals with some and ethnobotanical researchers arrive to work with others. Welfare workers travel from Darwin to discuss health issues with young and old people and land claim lawyers and anthropologists fly in from the south and siphon off the knowledgeable and the talkative. I have played all these intruder roles as well as that of the nominal white female insider. I have motivated, impeded, and tinkered with the timing of food gathering trips as have all the above people. Moreover, my own productive skills are included in the data I present, on par with other adult Belyuen women.

The point is that with or without my presence as an anthropologist, there are diverse 'intrusions' into the 'foraging moment.' All, however, are instances of the interpenetration of Aboriginal communities within the regional and global polity, of the "mixed" nature of identity (Belyuen, Aborigine, Australian), and of the fissures and fractures of communitas (Turner 1969). The ethnographic literature that focuses on precolonial Aboriginal regional trade-networks, ceremonial exchange, and inter- and intra-group land politics suggests that such non-foraging activities were always occurring and always affecting where and why people were hunting for specific foods.⁴

Because of the large size of the Belyuen Community, the high number of foraging trips conducted on the Cox Peninsula and Bynoe Harbour Islands per year, I limited the number of families for whom I recorded a comprehensive foraging diary,

⁴ See especially W. E. H. Stanner's work on the Daly River region (1932-34, 1979).

and amassed whatever other data I could from persons outside of these families. Two families are completely unaccounted for, another two families provided data in some areas (outstation composition, for example), but not in the day-to-day collection of foods. I also attempted to record a representative sample of data from each language group at Belyuen (Emiyenggal, Menthayenggal, Marritjaben, Marriamu, Wadjigiyn, and Kiyuk) in order to analyze differences between language group identity and land use. The data are based around a core group of thirty adults. An average food collecting group consisted of six women from the age range 45 - 70, three younger women from 18 - 45, and seven children from newborn to 18 (most of the children were 3 - 10). Often with these women were two or three men, either a husband of one of the younger women or the young adult sons of an older woman. As in other Australian Aboriginal communities, women and men, by and large, socialize and hunt in separate groups. On sea-hunting or on shooting trips, hunting groups typically consist of five men from the ages of 20-45. Data concerning offshore hunting are based on my observations of the catches of three harpoonists, on discussions with them, and on ten trips on which I accompanied them.

The data I present in this chapter were collected during fourteen months in 1989 and 1990, part of which time I spent on an outstation on the north coast and southwest coast of the Cox Peninsula. During part of the Dry season I stayed at a outstation on the north coast. In addition to this work, during my first stay at Belyuen in 1984 -1985, I went on 85 recorded foraging trips and spent the Dry Season at an outstation on the west coast of the Cox Peninsula. During a short visit to the community from 12 June 1987 to 13 July 1987, I went on another 17 recorded foraging trips and again spent the weekends at outstations on the west coast. In 1989-90, I recorded 532 foraging trips made by Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen to sites on the Cox Peninsula and in the Port Patterson area. I was

present on 282 of these trips which provide most of the data I present below. Measurements of gross food weights were made by hand springs or in the case of the larger sea and land mammals by measurement and comparison to previously recorded weights of the species. In figuring food composition tables, I have followed Betty Meehan's (1982) and Jon Altman's (1987a) use of in-field weight calculations, which gave very similar results to Thomas and Corden (1977), and their use of standard conversion tables for figuring the values of flesh and kilocaloric gains. In addition, The Human Nutrition Unit, Department of Biochemistry, University of Sydney, analyzed several species of shellfish, vegetable, and crustacea that Vic Cherkoff gathered with Belyuen women and me in 1985 and 1987.

2. A Human Ecology of the Area.

Many authors have stated that Aboriginal culture and economy have survived the colonial and postcolonial period in the northern outback because the natural environment was unsuitable for large scale pastoral and agricultural enterprises.⁵ Such descriptions evoke a positive image of the sturdiness and resilience of Aboriginal culture and society in the face of horrendous historical upheavals, but this description contains suppressed negative images as well. It entrenches the perception that Aborigines' past and future are linked to certain environments and ways of life and calls into question the "authenticity" of urban- and commodity-oriented Aboriginal practices and peoples (cf. Beckett 1988). This view sets a test for "real" Aborigines to pass: real Aborigines are able to live off the land and do without Western commodities. But the popular portrait of the

⁵ I discussed this more fully in the last chapter. Cf. Bruce Davidson (1980); Ihain MacKenzie (1980: 43-72).

outback Aborigine walking through the barren lands of the central desert or along a northern shoreline, a spear or a digging stick in hand, is actually a stark representation of how the national lands have been allocated. Lands suitable for agriculture, pastoralism, or other industrial and residential projects are appropriated. Only the ecologically stark landscapes remain, precariously, in Aboriginal hands.

The names of and the mythic stories and artifacts associated with places where Aborigines hunt and the quantity of foods they hunt there are also matters of knowledge, status, and secrecy, not only within an Aboriginal system of power and law, but within the larger political economy of the region. The Northern Territory Government takes an active role in encouraging tourist outfits and fisheries to take advantage of known and available scenic and productive hunting grounds. The Government is also constantly weighing who could more productively develop local and regional lands. If they built a manufacturing trade zone on a section of local lands would this help jump-start the northern economy?

Belyuen Aborigines say that, unlike the city of Darwin, they are not greedy for land. They constantly stress that they only want enough land for themselves, their growing number of children, and the life of the country. Development economists look at a related issue: for a certain population size based on a certain economy, what is the appropriate land area? Yet the rhetorics of need, sufficiency, and base limits is a scientific discourse that arose during the Enlightenment and upon which capitalism and privatization firmly rest. Appropriate size and land appropriation go hand in hand. The question, how much space do Aborigines of a certain population size need, is inadequate to the task. One might better ask how much space do Aborigines conceive the expression of the countryside to need? From the Territory government's position, development plans are most effective when they are able to appropriate and account for every section of space (cf. Map

4). Yet, for those like the Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen who derive rights of residence and assume duties of custodianship over country by permeating it with their language and sweat and being permeated by its mythic and more recent histories, their activity in and production of the countryside is undermined by development. The segmentation and privatization of the countryside narrows down the expression of the world to one dull limit and creates a space where nothing can happen because the sites and signs of old stories can no longer emerge as new people act in the countryside.

One of the reasons that developmental maps are appealing is that they suggest a countryside still waiting to be discovered in the modern era. One just strips away the overgrowth to reveal the archaeological treasure beneath it. What if, when stripped away, the government finds Aboriginal people busy using the land beneath the dense vine tangles? Surely this is one of the motivations of liberal anthropological ecologists: to make visible the productivity of indigenous people and to bring "into sharp focus the artificially created polar nodes -- rural and urban -- of what is and has always been, in its operation, an integrated system" (Wilmsen 1989a: xi-xii). But a focus on the economics and energetics of the "integrated system" also allows the government to weigh "equally and fairly" the needs of groups. Such a focus does not provide a way of assessing the competitive economic frames of different peoples. How do Belyuen Aborigines understand what measures can appropriately define and describe their productive activity in a sentient countryside?

Over the last hundred years, a number of ecological and technological changes have affected the hunting, fishing, and gathering practices of local Aborigines. Most Belyuen families use cars, trucks and dinghies⁶ to get to hunting

⁶ There are approximately two private landrovers, three community landrovers, three sedans, one barge, two private dinghies, and three community dinghies in the Belyuen community,

grounds, use nets, fishing lines, shotguns, and axes to hunt there, and use buckets, bags, ice chests, and cloth sacks to carry the products back. Past colonial and postcolonial attempts to develop the land commercially through mining, agricultural, and pastoral industries, and residential and commercial schemes have altered the countryside. Colonial planters cleared large sections of the northern and central open forests, drained wetlands, and introduced new species, the most significant ecologically and economically being cattle, pig, and various fruit trees like the mango. Since the 1960s, the multiplication of bores on the Belyuen Community and on the non-Aboriginal 'Wagait Residential Development' has resulted in a significantly lower water table (Whitling 1990) which in turn has caused freshwater swamps to dry more rapidly after the monsoonal rains. Today, Darwin's proximity and its reliance on port trade and commercial fishing has affected the migratory patterns of fish, sea turtles, and sea mammals. Commercial fisheries and pearl shell farms have decreased the amount of fish, crustacea, and shellfish available to Aboriginal hunters. While some of these changes have occurred over a long period of time, other changes have been noticeably abrupt. Belyuen women note that in their life-times creeks have dried up, swamps have turned into open forest plains or paperbark forests (or have simply disappeared because of gravel mining), and dense vine tangles, once the gathering grounds for long yams (Dioscorea transversa) and small mammals and reptiles, have given way to beach front houses. While local Aboriginal hunting grounds are being restricted, when Belyuen men go sea-hunting they see the ever-expanding nets and buoys of non-Aboriginal pearlshell gardens that stretch across the path of the mythic Cheeky Yam (gulida, L; wila, B; minthene, E) and in the way of their own hunting routes. Or when Belyuen women go long-neck turtle hunting, they see enormous earth-moving trucks gutting the turtle

although at any given time some of these vehicles are not running because of mechanical failures or social prohibitions.

plains in order to collect gravel for roads. Laragiya living in Darwin have witnessed a more radical transformation and appropriation of their traditional ceremonial and foraging grounds in and around the city.

We should not overemphasize the effect that colonial and postcolonial entrepreneurs have had on the Cox Peninsula's environment and thereby down-play the effects of Aboriginal labor on the environment, reinforcing the false image that before the colonial period the Australian countryside was "undeveloped." In 1914, Herbert Spencer wrote that the marks that Wagaitj and Laragiya Aborigines left on the environment were slight and short-lived and that within weeks of being abandoned, an Aboriginal camp showed no sign of past occupation; it was swept clean by the tide, rain, and wind.

Other ethnographers have distinguished between the accidental and deliberate effects of Aboriginal labor on the environment. Nicolas Peterson writes, "[m]any daily activities leave marks on the landscape which remind people of things that have happened in the past" (1972: 16). According to Peterson there are two kinds of marks: "sideproducts" of foraging activities and others that Aborigines make "deliberately as a reminder of particular events" (16). The latter marks are images of "other marks of a larger scale left on the landscape . . . the results of the activities of ancestral heroes" (16). While the lonely flapping of bright nylon strings tied to abandoned mosquito nets are the major remaining signs of an old Dry season camp, they evoke from Belyuen Aborigines sentimental stories and expressions of deep attachment. Belyuen men and women see history in a place's shape. Natural markers -- coastal pines, rock ledges, wetlands -- are markers of past Aboriginal occupations simply in their having been the sites of numerous human interactions. Or in a thing's shape, a person is recalled: a pandanus' bleached palm leaves provoke laughter from children driving by because it looks like the grey hair of one of their grandmothers who camps nearby: "look there's tjemila (mfz) Kwakow."

From a Belyuen perspective none of these ecological and historical marks are "sideproducts." Instead, Belyuen Aborigines say the ability of a place and a people to resemble each other is a sign of their productive well-being. Also they describe the ability of the climate and environment to "clean" a camping ground and for Aborigines to retain memories of having been in the area as proof of the well-working, productive relationship between persons and country.

Belyuen men and women consciously alter their environment. They clean a site by pulling up, for example, small mangrove trees that are threatening to overrun a beach fishing site and they build landings for fishing and goose blinds for hunting. Like the Nhumbulwar whom Peterson studied, Belyuen men and women hang cans, tie ropes, and stack rocks to commemorate an event in a place. They also alter their environment to protect their children from other persons' attacks. "It is hard to raise children today," say older men and women. Many economic and social factors conspire against Aborigines reaching their fiftieth birthday. Even the countryside can conspire against you because it provides objects that cleverpeople can use to sicken or to kill people. Take for instance the towering antbeds that dot the countryside of the north.

In the past, 'cheeky' old men and women are said to have "roasted alive" younger people from different language groups by placing personal articles of the victim in a large towering antbed. As the antbed grew around these items, the person's body was consumed by fever and he or she would eventually die. One story is told of how in the 1950s, an old cranky cleverman "roasted" two girls, now senior women at Belyuen. This man took the young girls' shirts, which were marked by their sweat, and put them in a large antbed. One of the girls' father, himself a reknowned Emi cleverman, looked at how skinny the two girls were becoming ("like one strand of woven string") and at how hot and thirsty they were all the time. He went out into the bush behind the Delissaville camp and found the antbed in which

their clothes had been put. After removing the clothes, the young girls gradually recovered. Nowadays, older women often redirect or stop a food collection trip to bust up an antbed they suspect of being used to sicken their children or relatives.

Belyuen Aborigines also see the "sideproducts" of foraging activities as a sign of their active, productive relationship to the countryside. For instance, the shell midden made from many trips to the same spot is an overwhelming sign of history, although its shape is a sideproduct of a foraging activity. Sitting on the beach by a fading fire, Belyuen women scratch in the sand and play with the shells. They say:

Just throw your shells here. The shell remains get bigger and bigger. In the past, all the old people sat here and ate. When they were finished they threw the shells here too. The pile started then and made this place. We continue this practice.⁷

Creeks dry, the contour of the sandy shore-line shifts, and blacksoil plains give way to paperbark forests; these ecological changes are evidence that the country responds to the presence of foreign (or absence of familiar) language and sweat. The country withdraws or changes itself from one to another form.

Many anthropologists have noted the importance that Australian Aborigines place on knowing the mythic signs and symbols in the countryside (cf. Munn 1964, 1970; Berndt 1982: 7; Hiatt 1982: 14). W.E.H. Stanner wrote, "The Aborigines

⁷ "Just tjukem tjel ere. Im go more and more. Ala old pipul frum bifor sidawn item finitd naw, tjukem, im gow naw finitd meik ala tjelz, dis pleis naw. Wi kip gowing naw."

thought the world full of signs to men; they transformed the signs into assurances of mystical providence; and they conceived life's design as fixed by a founding drama" (1965: 213). Basil Sansom notes that "Aborigines own slices of action and also own the signs and symbols that attest to a person's rightful capacity to initiate the staging of events of distinguished sorts and kinds" (1982: 131). But Stanner also warns the reader that not all materiality is influenced by the action of mythic life, the question remaining: how do people decide what marks carry meaning? I bring to this question an economic and cultural focus, examining both the "facts" of people's productive activity and, following Myers (1986), how people interpret and represent their and the countryside's activity as reflecting back, in a meaningful way, on their rights to continue to act within the countryside.

The country around the Cox Peninsula may be withdrawing in response to foreign sweat and language. From photographs taken in the late 1800s, there is some indication that prior to European contact the vegetation was more dense on the northern coast. Lighthouse keepers photographed in a small boat along one of the northern estuarine creeks are surrounded by thick vegetation that is no longer there. Today, the region is typical of the Top End monsoonal environment. There are three pronounced seasons: a humid, hot 'buildup,' a period of four to five months of heavy rain, and a cool, dry season. Pietsche and Simons (1986) report that the mean annual rainfall is 1600 mm with the lowest rainfall at 1025 mm. Temperatures have an average daily high of 34 C and an average daily low of 27 C from November to December; the coldest month is July when the average daily high is 30 C and the mean minimum is 19 C. Rhys Jones has noted for the northern tropical Top End that the "dominant climatic factor controlling vegetation is the seasonal variation in rainfall" (1980: 108; cf. Jones and Bowler 1980). David Harris takes a similar approach noting that the savanna zone "is best defined climatically in terms of the duration of the dry season, despite the fact that the traditional

connotation of 'savanna' implies a type of vegetation rather than a type of climate" (1980: 3). With the changing climatic conditions of the late twentieth century, many environmentalists predict that severe seasonal fluctuations will have a serious effect on coastal ecosystems such as the Cox Peninsula (Whitling 1990).

The Cox Peninsula and Port Patterson islands are typical of the Top End coastal region, consisting of small monsoon forests, coastal dense vine tangles, tropical savanna and eucalyptus open forests, and coastal and estuarine mangroves.⁸ There are also freshwater creeks that spill into large wetland swamps. While there are numerous surveys of the general ecology, fauna, and flora of northern Australia, and more specifically, surveys of mangrove formation and zonation, of floodplain dynamics, and of the interaction between introduced and indigenous fauna and flora, very little research has described or analyzed the ecology of the Cox Peninsula region. One map of Indian Island, prepared in the 1960s, distinguishes four dominant vegetative types on the island: MF (Monsoon Forest), DVT (Dense Vine Tangle), OF (Open Forest), and Man (Mangrove). Along with the classification of reef and swamp vegetation zones, these four categories can be usefully extended as vegetation-type classifications for the region, and a general ecological pattern emerges: a mangrove belt around the seaward coast, a sandy boundary between mangrove and dense vine tangle, a band of dense vine tangle, and an inland of varying open forests, monsoon forests, grasslands, blacksoil plains, and swamplands.

⁸ Recently, John Brock (1988) has written a comprehensive guide to Top End native plants.

3. Hunting, Fishing, and Collecting Today.

While many aspects of Belyuen hunting-gathering practices have changed -- many items dropped from the diet and many technological innovations incorporated into the practice -- what has not changed is the stated desire of all Belyuen family groups to visit and to live near the sea.⁹ For, not only are peoples' past and present subsistence economies centered around the exploitation of sea products, but their very identity inheres in this environment. How Belyuen identity "adheres" in the sea-shore can be seen by a number of indexes. Creation narratives center on the relationship between salt-water and fresh-water creatures. Durlg, as we noted above, is a semantically rich term meaning, among other things, sea serpent. All localized mythic personalities inherited through one's parents fall within the durlg category. Wariyn, himself a durlg, traveled up from the sea and left behind his energy in specific sites on the land. Important durlg tracks are marked by freshwater wells located inland, on the beach, and in sea reefs. Mythic fresh-water wells (meriwudadurlg, E) show their power by their ability to pass through salt water without losing their freshness. Most named and sacred

⁹ The exploitation of sea products by foraging groups has also concerned many researchers in economic archaeology. When did human populations turn to the sea and notice the productive forces that lay below its ebbs and tides? Is the evolution of a marine-economy a turn towards a Garden of Eden, or away from a ravaged environment reeling from the effects of 'big game hunting.' Indeed, are mythic Dreamtime creatures the imaginative remnants of earlier Paleolithic plants and animals? The answers to these and other questions, such as the energetic motives behind the turn to the sea, have been the focus of much of the Australian literature. Roger Lawrence provided a broad survey of the inland and sea hunting technologies that precolonial Aborigine groups used (1968; also Thomson 1939; Mulvaney and Golson 1971; Jones 1980). Using more recent quantitative data, Betty Meehan has suggested that shellfish were only a moderate contributor to an otherwise mixed marine and terrestrial diet (1977). Yesner has agreed, suggesting more broadly that "even in those temperate zones where aquatic resources were more prevalent in the diet . . . seafoods rarely appear to have formed the greater part of that diet" (1987: 297-8). There are many reasons why this might have been so. Others have discussed the relative energetic returns between sea foods and inland foods and the relative difficulty in changing subsistence technologies from land to sea hunting (Ames 1985; Aschamnn 1975; Yesner 1980).

sites are also located on the shoreline or in the sea (only ten of some hundred named sites are inland). Inland mythic durlq sites are often connected by underground tunnels to seaside sites: the kenbinyinidurlq at the Belyuen waterhole connects to, among other places, local seaside and island sites.¹⁰

History has also marked Belyuen Aborigines as a sea people. All the Wagaitj and the Marriamu and Marritjeban Beringgen are from the coastal Anson Bay region and are known as the "beach-dwelling" people -- wagaitj means "beach" -- while other groups who live inland are known through other environmental markers such as the "billabong" or "paperbark people." The paths Wagaitj and Beringgen follow when traveling to and from the Anson Bay and Cox Peninsula are marked by a series of well-ordered coastal place-names and by the winds that mark the seasonal flux of tides. In the past, when the wind picked up, so did the people. The earliest historical records describe Aborigines moving along the coast from the Daly River to the Cox Peninsula. People say that in the past the medawok (Dry season) winds brought relatives from the Anson Bay to the west, north, and east coast of the Cox Peninsula. Today, when the wind blows northwesterly, Belyuen families move off the community and onto outstations located on the beaches of the Cox Peninsula. (All but one outstation is located on the beach.) Finally, roughly 80 percent of the hunting and gathering trips stop at the sea shore, although inland sites may be utilized along the way.

Belyuen families are not the only ones who value the shoreline. Historically the sea-shore has been a highly contested region. In 1862, Palmerston was established on the Port Darwin beach. Almost immediately Anglo colonists and Laragiya were competing over beach sites for their camps and fishing grounds. To many people's surprise, there were few serious fights between the Laragiya and

¹⁰ Matching inland and coastal sites seems to be a common practice among north Australian groups (cf. Berndt and Berndt 1970; Williams 1986).

Port Darwin settlers, as there had been in the earlier Port Essington settlement.¹¹ Anglo colonists used the beach for port trade, fisheries, pearl shelling, and recreational activities: people often sailed to the Cox Peninsula and to the Port Patterson islands for picnics. As Port Darwin expanded, settlers increasingly called for the local government to remove, if necessary by force, Laragiya and Wagaitj camps from beaches near the center of town. By the early 1900s, most Aboriginal groups had been moved away from the center of Port Darwin. In the 1930s and 40s, local government made a concerted effort to remove all Aborigines in the Darwin, Cox Peninsula, and Daly River region from the beaches and onto inland settlements. In the 1930s, the Wagaitj and Beringgen on the Cox Peninsula were centralized on the old site of Michael De Lissa's sugar plantation because the Australian Army and government were afraid that Aborigines would aid and abet Japanese invaders.¹² In 1977, the Delissaville reserve (later the Belyuen township) was established on sixteen square miles in the center of the Cox Peninsula.

As local Aborigines were being forced off the beaches, Anglo settlers were slowly moving into the area. Legal leasees and illegal squatters created a patchwork of small Anglo residential clusters, tourist outfits, and commercial fisheries and mines on and around the Cox Peninsula and Bynoe Harbour region. This short history provides some explanation of why, today, Belyuen Aborigines talk of two economic spaces, one that lies inside and another that lies outside the Belyuen reserve, an opposition that Belyuen men and women often described as existing between the inland and seashore. However, Belyuen Aborigines use much more of the Cox Peninsula, Port Patterson, and Bynoe Harbour region than just the

¹¹ Cf. Spillet's (1972) history of the Port Essington settlement.

¹² There was a little chagrin, therefore, when Delissaville scouts were able to find downed Japanese pilots when large squadrons of Anglo-Australian soldiers could not. I discuss this further in the next chapter.

beach, even though they emphasize in their conversations their attachment to and use of this region.

Calories: The bush and grocery stores.

Belyuen men and women and Western economists look to similar phenomena when assessing the importance of bush foods to the health of the Belyuen community: how much food (or calories) is gotten from the surrounding bush, how much time is spent getting it, and what places are used most frequently to what profit? While drawing on similar phenomena, Belyuen Aborigines and Western economists reach different conclusions about the significance of bush food collection practices because they differently weigh the importance of productive and, so called, nonproductive labor. From a local perspective, Aborigines' ability to collect foods at will demonstrates that persons and groups know the country well and that the country productively responds to them. People, however, have this productive relationship to the country because of the leisure time that they spend in it.

Belyuen Aborigines have two main sources of foods and goods: the grocery store and the bush.¹³ People draw out the similarities between the two "stores" in their ordinary conversations. People say that young men go "hunting for green cans" (Victoria Bitters beer) when they walk single file through the bush to the local grocery store some fifteen kilometers away. As they walk, men collect what foods they find along the way and when they get to the store they "hunt around"

¹³ A food bank runs periodically at the Belyuen Women's Centre -- these days more off than on (cf. Povinelli 1991).

for credit and cash. Deciding who to ask for money to buy food, tobacco, and alcohol is seen as a form of hunting and fishing: what should be the bait and who is likely to take the hook today. Alternatively, when women walk down the beach looking for turtle eggs or returning from a hunt in the mangrove they "shop" for items that the tide brings or that Anglo-Australian campers have left behind after a weekend camping trip: large fishing nets, utensils, waterbottles. The two "shopping markets" are very different in some respects. Whereas in a grocery store, money intervenes between a person's examination of an item and their ability to obtain the item, on common land sight itself intervenes between a bush "shopper's" sighting of a desirable object and his or her ability to get it. Seeing the object first is the hunter's capital: sight is what purchases, so to speak, the article for the hunter because the person who sees the food first, no matter who actually digs or catches its, is the 'owner.'

Most of the foods Belyuen Aborigines obtain from the bush come from the sea or seashore (8.2 million kilocalories verses 6 million kilocalories derived from inland sites).¹⁴ I summarize the contribution of various bush foods to the Belyuen diet in Table Two. If one uses Betty Meehan's estimate that the regular caloric intake of Aboriginal women is on average 2000 kilocalories per day and men a bit higher,¹⁵ then the contribution of these high protein bush foods to the diet of this study's core hunting group (some thirty adults) would be 62 percent of their yearly caloric intake. If one divided these bush foods' caloric value by the total number of people living at Belyuen, these calories represent 10 percent of the intake of all Belyuen persons. A more moderate view indicates that these foods are distributed along a network of about one third to one half of the Belyuen

¹⁴ "Inland 'meats'" include honey, reptiles, mammals and fowl as the local ethnoclassification system stipulates (Povinelli 1990).

¹⁵ The real expenditure of calories might be lower or higher than this average depending upon a persons' activity, a highly variable component in the Belyuen community.

Community. Again, these results represent a large segment of the total bush food contribution to the community diet; they do not represent it entirely and another one-fourth of the total number of calories probably could easily be added. Extra calories come mainly from fishing and offshore hunting. In this new total, the contribution of bush foods to the Belyuen community's diet would be, roughly, 12 percent.

Grocery stores provide the majority of foods that most Belyuen persons consume, approximately 80 percent of their total caloric needs. Table Three outlines what foods Belyuen Aborigines purchase from local stores and their caloric contribution to the diet. A significant proportion of the calories that Belyuen Aborigines get from groceries are in the form of refined sugars, alcohol, fats, and refined wheats. From a nutritional perspective, the poor quality and periodic scarcity¹⁶ of Western foods are augmented by a steady collection of bush foods. However, it is not altogether clear whether Belyuen Aborigines are collecting nutrients per se. Janette Brand and Vic Chirikoff write that Australian native plants are richer sources of some nutrients than one might expect on the basis of comparison with similar cultivated plants (1985; also see Brand, Rae, McDonnell, Lee, Chirikoff, and Truswell 1983). But Belyuen men and women do not collect a large amount of plant food products; they collect three and a half times more kilocalories from animal products than from plant products (see Table Two). While they do not get a large number of minerals and vitamins from plant sources, Belyuen women and men gain important fresh salt-water proteins from animal

¹⁶ Coombs, Brandl, and Snowdon describe the Belyuen diet during the late 1970s and early 1980s as one of periodic malnutrition and hunger: "The variable pattern of food intake in the Belyuen and Pipalyatjara communities shows up three periods of greatest shortage or crisis in each fortnight, when children wander looking hopefully for food and mothers swallow their pride to ask for food wherever they suspect it to be. (One particular group of widows at Belyuen known well to us, suffered constant headaches during these periods, from hunger, and also from anxiety about finding enough food for the youngsters in their care.)" (1983: 356).

products. The fresh sea foods in the Belyuen diet make up for the otherwise general "lack of fresh food at the local store" and, even when available, for its cost (Coombs, Brandl, and Snowdon 1983: 356).

From these figures, one can begin to see the relevance of the food preference model that Hawkes, Hill, and O'Connell have described (1986). Some aspects of the Belyuen diet, such as their preference for marine foods over terrestrial foods, would be difficult to measure by an optimal foraging model (Yesner 1987: 287). Some shellfish, like plant seeds, are abundant, easy to collect, and extremely low in calories, 800 kilocalories per kilogram of flesh (Table Two, C). However, the time and energy required to process and to convert these products into foods is significantly lower than for plant products. For instance, the cycad nut requires extensive processing; after collecting it, one must soak, pound, and cook it. Sea snails simply require cooking on top of coals. The energy expended in collecting other seafoods such as large mud crabs (*Sesarma smithi*) varies across the Northern Territory. Near eastern Arnhem land, crabs are found lying in the sand. Near the Daly River, crabs burrow long tunnels into hard, thick clays that lie exposed during low tides. On the Cox Peninsula, women travel across dense mangrove jungles and through thigh high soft mud. Here, the crabs often burrow meter-long holes in the soft, silty soil and are difficult to drag or to dig out. For all this work, the return per kilogram of crab flesh is only slightly higher than sea snails -- some 930 kilocalories -- although the fat content is 8 to 12 times higher. Other marine products provide much larger returns. Sea turtles and sea cows have the bulk and caloric value of small bovines and large kangaroos. However, the relative density of land versus sea cows would need to be predicted in order to make claims about the comparative returns of hunts from the different environments.

Other aspects of the Belyuen bush food diet fit Hawke and O'Connell's core claim that abundant plant foods that require intensive processing will drop from the

diet before less abundant high caloric items. Most notable is the absence of the cycad nut (*Cycad media*), the 'Pumpkin yam' (*Amorphophallus galbra*), and various water lily species from the diet of Belyuen families (Table Two, B). All these were important to the precolonial diet and are abundant and easy to collect. But all require intensive preparation to process or to remove their toxins and have a lower caloric return per gram than mammal and fish meats. An even more accurate picture of the decreasing importance of plant foods as dietary items to Belyuen women and men is reflected in their knowledge of the names and uses of plants and animals versus their actual use of them. Provisionally, it appears that of the 125 plant taxa that senior women name, 54 are still said to be *miya* (E, *meidjem*, B, plant foods), but only 27 are considered safe to eat because techniques of removing toxins are not needed or are still known, and only 10 are regularly collected.¹⁷ Further research can demonstrate if the number of known plants is significantly higher, but even these figures show that there has been a drastic reduction in the consumption of plant foods. This, however, tells us little about the importance of these foods in other aspects of Belyuen socio-economic life, especially how women's knowledge of foods is used to construct an authentic Aboriginal identity which reverberates into other economic spheres.

Foods are not disembodied calories. Foods, like people, have social identities. This is true from Western and local Belyuen perspectives. Symbolically, for the Westerner there is an important difference between vast fields of grain and thick jungles filled with yams. From a Western perspective the difference lies in grain's representation of the vast increase in productivity of an agricultural life over a life of hunting, fishing, and collecting. The wheat basket embodies national ideals of progress and well-being: from the midlands of America come the wheat that feeds

¹⁷Four fruits, three bush potatoes, one yam, one grass, one vegetable, and one nut.

the world. For Belyuen Aborigines, food sites also symbolically embody socio-economic ideals. I have already noted that people have durlq or 'totems' and maroi or 'personal dreamings' of local foods and materials. Foods are related to persons and peoples and this relationship accounts for the jungle's ability to produce yams and the sea's ability to produce fish. People know what to get, when, and where to get it; the country knows to whom to give foods.

Foods have a social element not only in what they mean symbolically, but what knowledge of them can gain a speaker politically. Older women use their knowledge of plant taxa and their experience in local lands, along with their knowledge of mythic sites and texts, to position themselves at the forefront of legal fora. When anthropologists and legal aides come from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority or from the Northern Land Council to collect mythic information about sites and country borders they are directed to senior Wagaitj and Beringgen women. Likewise when linguists and popular writers arrive on the community to conduct research, they are directed to older Belyuen women. Cultural knowledge wields authority not only locally, but in regional and national politics.¹⁸ The political and cultural authority that women have in these areas reverberates into the economic sphere; grounded in their cultural authority, older Belyuen women have significant, albeit not always decisive, influence in the day-to-day allocation of resources such as what items are bought with younger people's welfare checks.

Within a local context, Belyuen individuals claim authority based on their knowledge of bush foods. Claims of authority are made in the ordinary face-to-face

¹⁸ Ward Goodenough writes, "As multiculturalism becomes more pronounced and elaborated and the field of power becomes greater with increasing social complexity, multiculturalism becomes an ever more important consideration in the management of power relationships. As such, it also becomes an increasingly serious problem in the politics, education, and other institutions which are the instruments by which people control access to more specialized microcultures and to the power and privilege they confer" (1978: 86).

conversations in which women and men decide where and what to hunt on any particular day. Take for instance, Jean Zirita's statement: "this time now find two crabs in a hole and BWERI (FAT)!" She said this one day in late April 1989 when a group of women and I were deciding where to go hunt later in the afternoon. Her statement is interesting because it is quite direct for a people who, usually, value indirect discourse. Similar statements are sometimes tempered by "might be, we just try and look" or framed indirectly, "one old lady said" Jean's statement makes a claim both for what is true "out there" (an environmental fact) and for what is true "in here" (in her head); i.e., she is making a knowledge claim: I know how the country works. Claims such as Jean's can be challenged directly or indirectly.

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

je: Joan Ela: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born 1943.

en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.

je: this taim naw faindim fatwan stingarei

This time now we will get fat stingrays

en: mait be nothing manggin, wi gana weit that flawer, waitwan im kam awt; nothing yet.

Maybe not, cousin, we have to wait until that white flower blooms, it has not yet.

Note that Emily Nela who is significantly older than Joan Ela tempers her rebuttal by the conditional "maybe not" (*mait be nothing*). Still, this is a direct face-to-face challenge of Joan's knowledge and authority claim. There is a benefit to these face-to-face challenges; here, Joan leaves the conversation knowing, or remembering, that the white flower signals the fattening of stingray and that Emily Nela is someone to whom to defer. Other challenges to a person's knowledge claims occur behind the scenes. When decisions of where to go and what to hunt must be made, people align and realign themselves for or against another's suggestion based on their own preference for a place, social group, and type of hunting-gathering

practice, and their own evaluation of a speaker's ability to predict the spot where a food will be found. Such challenges are not age or gender specific and occur in contexts other than hunting trips. If a person is having a bad run for her money the driver for the day hears behind the scenes: "don't listen to her, you know what happened last time -- NO MEAT."¹⁹ People follow those who are on a lucky roll. The analogy to dice games is pertinent because of the analogy women and men make between luck in hunting and luck with cards (cf. Povinelli 1991). Personal authority is linked to an ability to pick a winning hand whether it is cash in hand or a handful of geese.

The use of bush foods also has a political function in a regional context. Belyuen Aborigines claim that the Cox Peninsula produces foods abundantly for them and therefore they should be given the economic aid necessary to live on and off the country. The extent to which they rely on bush foods is an important issue in the political debate over land development and human needs. In the politics of land-use and human needs, regional and national governments ask, who relies on this stretch of country? Is there anyone who could make a more productive use of the land? If so, how can the disenfranchised group be fairly compensated? In a regional Anglo-economy that might be best described as "hunting wild cattle," the Northern Territory government finds it difficult to argue that it has developed the countryside to date (cf. Davidson 1980). No one uses the Cox Peninsula more than Belyuen Aborigines. But they are also hard-pressed by caloric measures like the ones outlined above: though bush calories are critical to their diet, they rely more heavily on grocery foods. It is useful, therefore, to focus on the connections and pressures operating between the Anglo-Australian market economy and Aboriginal bush economy in order to illuminate the economic importance of bush foods to the

¹⁹ "now mar llsen lei lm, yu sæbi bifar, PIYAWA (E)."

dietary needs of the Belyuen community. It does not seem useful, at this point, to isolate the "foraging moment" (Winterhalder 1987: 313-314) without first showing how that moment is part of a larger political-economic system.

The Belyuen community shares with other Australian Aboriginal settlements common social and economic features. It is involved in an important land claim (the Kenbi Land Claim for the Cox Peninsula); it maintains cultural and economic ties to its traditional lands further south; most income is derived from welfare; and as "bush blacks" members of the community are often used as informants for projects about traditional cultural practices. Belyuen bush lore is distilled, mixed with that of other northern groups, and then presented to the wider Australian reading and viewing public as the Aboriginal culture of the north.

In 1989-90, Belyuen's population fluctuated around two hundred and ten, increasing at times to two hundred and twenty five or more. Of the usual population, there were ninety-two children seventeen and under (45 percent) and approximately fifteen persons above fifty. Belyuen women often remark on how the composition of the community is bottom heavy. "More and more" children are said to be born "all the time." While a birth is always celebrated, people compare the high number of children to the scarcity of old people. The community is said to be "falling away" because "all the old people gone now, only babies, this Belyuen." Yet, according to records, the relative youth of the Belyuen population was slightly more pronounced in 1973 with 45.9 percent of the community under the age of fifteen (Altman and Nieuwenhuysen 1979). Although the population was smaller at that time (196), there is a slight aging of the population. Indeed, Belyuen's age profile is near the top of the curve for Aboriginal communities. Many have populations of more than 60 percent children under the age of fifteen. While these records present an image of the Belyuen community getting slightly older over the last seventeen years, older women's and men's perception and rhetorical use of the

relative *number* of older and younger people makes Belyuen seem like a community of children. Senior Belyuen Aborigines say that the large number of young people is an important reason why they fight for country and why they continue to hunt, fish, and gather. They must do both to maintain the life of their families by meeting the budgetary needs of their households with the bush foods they collect and to maintain the life of the country by providing the regular human presence necessary for the country to remain productive. Balancing these two productive spheres can be very stressful.

The middle-aged women who are in the position to take the place of the old people passing away, increasingly ask who is going to pay for all the Belyuen children and attempt through this rhetoric to negotiate who will receive moneys coming into the community and how these moneys will be distributed and used: will people buy beer, cars for outstations, fishing lines, or steaks? In the past, senior Belyuen women controlled access to most of the community's welfare economy, although this varied individually according to kin networks, luck in redistribution schemes like card games, and problems with social security paperwork. However, the use of government benefits on the community has increased significantly over the last six years. In 1989, over a third of the community (77 people) were receiving some form of social security payment. Approximately 53 individuals were receiving unemployment benefits, 9 were receiving family allowances, and 15 were receiving pensions. My records show that in 1984 less than half of this number were receiving unemployment benefits, and they were receiving them more sporadically. A similar number were receiving family allowances and pensions. Over the last five years, then, welfare income in the community has doubled. The previous five years had seen little increase in welfare income. Fisk notes that at Belyuen (Delissaville) in 1978, 10 people were receiving unemployment benefits, 18 people pensions, and 5 people were receiving family allowance. In 1981, he shows a

similar number obtaining benefits, 7 people were receiving unemployment, 15 pensions, and 7 family allowances. The new people receiving unemployment benefits over the last ten years are mainly young and middle-aged men. While women have not lost money, the changing income pattern has shifted the concentration of money from older women to younger men.

Although the majority of people at Belyuen receive government benefits, the community and local government employ a number of people. The Northern Territory Government, in an effort to lower unemployment in outback towns by providing skills to young people, initiated community-based employment schemes whereby, for short stretches, women and men on the unemployment rolls are employed to learn skills such as carpentry, cooking, and first aid (it should not surprise marxist feminist anthropologists that men learn carpentry, women cooking, and men and women learn first aid). While the program lasts, communities can choose to cut off the social security and welfare benefits of those who refuse to work or who are fired from the job. Although by working people can double their incomes, the high number of people knocked off all unemployment compensation because they refuse to participate or have been fired levels off any significant overall increase in funds flowing into the community.

In addition to direct government aid, the Belyuen community employs about eighteen people in various administrative, janitorial, construction, and maintenance jobs. The Northern Territory Education Department employs another six people as teaching assistants for the otherwise Anglo-Australian run and staffed school. Finally, a small crafts industry accounts for some income into the community. About eight women periodically make and sell crafts, while about ten men are employed by a hotel outfit to dance tourist corroborees during the Dry season.

At Belyuen, various employment patterns emerge depending upon the perspective one takes. If one views employment based on family connections,

Council jobs are virtually monopolised by one sibling set. Of the eighteen positions, eleven are held by one family and their affines. However, looked at from a difference in sex, jobs are held almost equally by men and women: thirteen women and twelve men hold jobs. Yet the types of job that women and men hold reflect what Gayle Rubin (1975) has called a "sex-gender system." Of the jobs held by women, six are in the school, two in the community office, one in the community grocery store, and two are janitorial. These jobs are paid less than jobs men hold. Of the jobs held by men, two are in the office and the rest are mechanics or grounds jobs. Still, data gathered from other Aboriginal communities show that Aboriginal women's economic position has declined even more dramatically as they have been incorporated into the capitalist economy (Bell 1980; C. Berndt 1980; Gale 1974, 1983; Goodale 1980; Hamilton 1975). In Bloomfield, North Australia, an Aboriginal Community of approximately 263 persons, Christopher Anderson (1982) reports that thirty-one men are employed in a variety of labor and administrative duties, while only two "young women" are employed full time in the local store and several others are employed part-time in the kindergarten and as cleaners.²⁰ Annette Hamilton (1975) attributes this decline in women's status to the shift in their relation to the means of production when they are forced from a subsistence to a labor economy. In the capitalist economy, theoretically, women have a right to sell their labor freely on the market; however, the market is structured to absorb women's labor as less physically and mentally fit than men's and so at a lower remuneration.

Although more persons within the Belyuen community are receiving benefits and salaries, the monetary solvency of Belyuen households has not changed much since the early eighties. Several factors have intervened. Belyuen, like other

²⁰ I am supposing that workers other than these are men. Anderson only marks the sex of a worker if she is female. He does not provide the ages of workers.

communities, has had to accommodate itself to the shifting tides of the Australian economy. As government subsidies lessen, communities must find ways to increase their revenue. One controversial way is through the payment of rent. The economic policies of the City of Darwin also affect the Belyuen community. For example, in 1987-88, the City stretched electrical lines across the harbor to the small 'Wagait Residential Development,' an non-Aboriginal residential block on the northeast coast of the Cox Peninsula. At the time, the Belyuen community had the option to link up to Darwin power as well, which they did. Whereas before, electricity was supplied free of charge to Belyuen residents from a community power plant, now electrical charges are tacked onto the rent bill. It is hard to tell how severely these new bills cut into the real earning power of households because households only pay them sporadically. But Belyuen women see the talk of bills (even if the cost continues to be absorbed periodically by the Council) as fitting into a dangerous pattern:²¹

Getting harder, we used to get things free, now we have to pay for everything. Might as well go to my own country now. Getting more and more like a Bagot here.²²

This is a surprising statement when one considers the past hardships that women describe in their oral histories: enforced labor, sexual abuse, internment camps,

²¹ See Myers (1986: 39-40) on how the Pintupi have similarly described an initial period of bounty among Anglo-Australians change to one of enforced work with little pay. A interesting study would compare such stories and the different economic conditions that groups who tell them faced: stockmen in the desert regions versus plantation hands in the coastal areas.

²² Bagot is a small Aboriginal enclave in the middle of Darwin. It was a settlement for Aborigines in the 1930s when its location was still 'out of town.' Now people at Belyuen see Bagtoteers as unable to move and go hunting, as being swamped by bills, and as being swallowed up by the Anglo dominated city. See Penny Taylor's photo-essay (1988).

periodic and random incidents of violent racism and war. But it does have a strong resonance with other aspects of the conversations women have about the past:

You get all that information. Those, they, they had strong culture. They have ceremony every day, corroboree and dance. Today we struggle now.

It is important to contextualize Belyuen's economic position in the Australian economy. Economic conditions on Aboriginal communities are generally poor when viewed from a perspective of income and commodity wealth. Figures from the 1986 government census showed that 90 percent of Territory Aborigines earned less than the average wage, and that more than 60 percent earned less than half the average wage. The situation elsewhere in Australia is similar.²³ Belyuen falls solidly within an economic context of structurally impoverished Aboriginal communities.

In north Australia during the colonial and early postcolonial period, pastoralists and agriculturalists would "hire" Aborigines during the Dry season for planting and rounding up cattle and then force them away from the ranch or plantation during the Wet season. In this way, Anglo entrepreneurs did not have to provide upkeep for their workers for half the year. Not only was the Anglo economy based on a primitive form of pastoralism, but this primitive form relied upon and was underpinned by an even "grosser" economic form: Aboriginal hunting and gathering practices. The Anglo economy of the north still cannot afford to incorporate Aboriginal labor. The critical needs of Aboriginal outback communities cannot be met by regional resources. In some way then, the Anglo economy is once

²³The Commission into Poverty in 1974 reported that in Brisbane only twenty-six percent of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander men earned \$80 or more per week. No women earned more than this, and 47 percent of households were below the poverty line. Moreover, one-fourth of all income was derived from government sources (Brown, Hirshfeld, and Smith 1974; Hill 1975).

again relying on bush foods to feed a large segment of people, even as most government officials persist in evaluating the bush-foods component to the regional economy as negligible.

Because of the complex intersection of local, regional, and national politics and economics, Belyuen social groups shift and realign themselves in different contexts. Old and young, women and men from different social groups vie over the use of a truck, over money, and over the use of houses and outstations. The employment pattern on the community provides many older women and young men with the time to hunt (although the young men do not do as much hunting as their female relatives), but it denies them the resources to buy the vehicles and materials needed to get to hunting grounds. Vehicles, of course, vastly increase the actual energy cost of food production. From these various socio-economic pressures arise the temporal patterns of Belyuen hunting practices.

Temporal Patterns.

Since I began visiting the Belyuen Community in 1984, hunting trips have changed over the course of the year in two ways: there has been increases in the number of trips made and in the amount of time people spend in a particular environment from the Wet to Dry season. Table Four presents several ways of viewing Belyuen food collection practices over time. I look separately at temporal patterns that arise from the duration of the trips and from the "person hours" Belyuen men and women spend outside the Belyuen community. Person hours are the combined time that an entire party spends on a hunt: the total number of people times the duration of the trip. The duration of a trip is simply when a group left the community and when it returned. So, if a group left at noon and returned at 8 pm, the lapsed time was eight hours. If seven people were on the trip then the

person hours were fifty-six. Viewed in this way, most trips lasted about six hours with or without my presence. Also, both the total and average number of hours people spent hunting rose, as would be expected, from a low in the hot, rainy season (December through February) to a high in the cool, dry season (June through August). In some months the average number of hours people spent outside of Belyuen almost doubled. The significant drop in the hours spent in the bush in May, June, and November is an artifact of my absence from the community and their reduced time in the bush. I was absent for a week and a half in May while working on aspects of the Kenbi Land Claim in Darwin, in June there was a 'dry run' of the land claim hearing in which most of the adult Belyuen community participated, and in November the Claim was heard in full. Generally, in the dry season, many people spend from late morning to late evening away from the community or they camp day and night on their outstations for a few months or more. Three families spend the majority of the year on outstations, using the Belyuen community as a base camp. During the Dry season people remaining on the Belyuen community call the place a "ghost town" and indeed it has that abandoned feeling to it: eerily quiet and hot. The disquieting feel of abandon results not only from people's absence, but also from the knowledge that stories and events are happening elsewhere. People who stay at Belyuen during the Dry season are "missing out." People collect foods and narratives of self when they hunt, camp, and travel through the region. Shared knowledge of and economic reliance on the Cox Peninsula binds together the Belyuen community.

DAVID PARSONS: How important is it, or how important do you regard it for people to talk language, Aboriginal languages?

HARRY SINGH: I think it is very important. A lot of it is to -- in connection with culture and the tie with the land. That really holds us together and without it there is nothing worth talking about (Kenbi Transcript: 1601).

Table 4b summarizes what people are doing during their time away from the community. The data come from time allocation charts for hunting trips in which I participated.²⁴ The last column of Table Four, B shows what part of the total number of trips per month the data represent. Instead of figuring small children into the total time, I counted the person who minded these children as contributing to the work of the hunt.²⁵

The amount of time spent away from the community over the course of the year still shows an increase from the Wet to the Dry season, except for lows in May, June, and November. People go on longer trips during the Dry season, but they do not spend more time hunting on those trips. Instead, the time people actually spend hunting increases and decreases in a wave-like manner. The average number of persons going on a hunting trip also shows no direct link to seasonal shifts. This is explained by the local 'mode of transportation': flatbed landrovers which I and most other truck owners on the community use comfortably carry about eight to ten adults, plus children and equipment. What are people doing while they are away from the community? Why? This Table clearly shows that they are spending only about one-third of their hunting trips hunting.

Belyuen men and women spend a significant part of their time in the bush engaged in what economists call unproductive labor. During this unproductive

²⁴ The total person-time was found by multiplying the total number of foragers and child-minders by the total lapsed time for the trip to get the total amount of person time involved in a hunt. To get the time spent hunting, I simply noted start and stop times for all the productive members of the trip and added these together.

²⁵ Jon Altman does not count child-minding in his analysis of productive work, in this and other ways his differentiation of women's labor from productive labor is problematic (1987a).

labor-time, people sit, talk, weave, travel from place to place, and play. But Belyuen Aborigines say that this "leisure time" is producing economic well-being by providing the conditions for country and people to "find" the historical and mythic relationship that exists between them. People are not passive receptacles for an active countryside -- being in a place jogs the memory; i.e., being in a place provides the conditions for people to "remember" the historical and mythic narratives they can use to claim rights to a place. Women often say, "sitting down here makes me remember all the old stories." For instance, an Emi sibling set established an outstation at a site on the north coast of the Cox Peninsula during the 1960s and 70s. When the senior male sibling died (as did his younger brother soon after), the camp was abandoned for a while as is the practice with places or articles with which the deceased are associated. David Biernoff says of this practice: "[p]laces where people have died or been seriously ill must be avoided. The spirit of the dead man may still be in the vicinity, as may be the powers which caused the death (or illness)" (1978: 97). The children, widows, brother, and sister of the Emi men began returning to the northern outstation in the 1980s, not only to collect foods, but also to collect the stories that demonstrate their relationship to the area. The deceased men appear to the family periodically. Belyuen Aborigines from all language groups discuss the brothers' appearances as a sign that their kin must look after that section of the country. For those Emi who can meet and interact with their deceased loved ones, their reasons for wanting to live in that section of country are quite compelling.

As I noted above, authority to speak (to tell historical narratives and to act as an informant for Aboriginal legal aides, anthropologists, and popular writers) is rooted in experiential knowledge. Because Emi spend a much greater time in the area than other groups they have more stories for the place and so can wield more authority in discussions about it. Likewise women in general spend a greater

amount of time in the bush and are able to claim a greater productive benefit to their labor than a strict economic analysis would suggest.

Table Five explores differences between food collection practices of men and women. Three women's activities (fishing in sea and estuarine creeks, collecting crustacea and snails in mangroves, and digging for fresh-water turtles in blacksoil plains) are compared to men's one dominant foraging practice, sea-hunting. This table compares women's and men's practices according to the average number of persons participating, the average time people spend on an activity, the total duration of the trip, and the total caloric return. The accompanying graph shows the caloric gains and debits for each activity. As the table shows, women spend about 635 hours per year fishing, 188 hours hunting in the mangrove, and 112 hours hunting for turtle in blacksoil plains. Clearly one reason women spend four times the number of hours fishing as they do crabbing is because the return from the former is much greater than from the latter, and even greater when compared to the return from longneck turtle hunting. However, men are able to spend a third of this time to produce twice as much as all women's activities. Moreover, fewer men have to engage in the practice. What does this difference in productivity "mean" for gender politics at Belyuen? From one side, other than when they are collecting long neck turtles, women get a good return for their effort. And women typically look for turtles before or after a day spent fishing or crabbing. If I analyzed separately the time women devote solely to turtle hunting, the time would fall to about 30 hours per year. Finding a turtle is a bonus to the bush basket, but it is not profitable enough to devote time often or solely to the activity. From the other side, men's sea-hunting practice is so productive, one wonders why they do not do it more often. A partial explanation is based on market issues. The amount of money people spend on foods, alcohol, and small commodities leaves little left for the purchase of dinghies or for the petrol to run them. Also, most of the men who

are responsible for the maintenance of Belyuen vehicles and who are reliable drivers work full-time on the community. This leaves them with little time to hunt, unless they go after a day's work. These after work hours are usually devoted to fishing, not sea-hunting; most sea-hunting occurs on weekends. This tells us why men do not hunt more, but why do women collect crabs at all (the return on foods like yams, fruits, bush potatoes is even less than on crabs and long-neck turtles)? An answer returns us to a point I made above: foods are significant in ways other than the calories they embody.

In an otherwise informative discussion about Australian Aboriginal men's political life, Les Hiatt mistakenly extrapolates from the questionable "junior status" of Aboriginal women and an equally questionable lack of "big womanship" among Aboriginal women to conclude that women's political life is characterized by resistance. He claims, "[f]or the most part, women are not in the business of domination but of resistance" (1986: 16). This view presents one side of a larger debate within feminist anthropology -- whether women's reproductive function, sexuality, and socialization condition them as "resisters," "nurturers," and "compromisers" or as "fighters and singers."²⁶

In the Australian literature the question has been framed in two ways. First, what were the historic dependencies and autonomies of age and gender classes within the foraging group? Phylis Kaberry described women's economic, social, and ceremonial practices in the 1930s. However, it was not until Fay Gale edited a small volume titled Women's Role in Aboriginal Society (1974) that feminist anthropology in Australia was institutionalized. Since then, feminists have argued whether women's position in traditional society can best be described as a 'junior partner' to men (C. Berndt 1954, 1965, 1980; Goodale 1980), or as separate

²⁶ This obviously refers to White, Barwick, and Meehan's. Fighters and Singers (1985).

from but interdependent and equal to men (Bell 1983; Hamilton 1981, 1980-81).²⁷ All these anthropologists agree that in precolonial Aboriginal society women had a great deal of autonomy and authority based upon their economic interdependence with and ceremonial independence from men. Gone are the days when anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski understood and portrayed the Aboriginal family and society as dominated by a brutal husband-father dragging wife and kids in train. More recently, Francesca Merlan has called for a change in the research perspective on Australian Aboriginal gender systems. She argues that because questions about "the comparative situation of the sexes in Aboriginal society" are "stimulated by European concerns about the nature of women's involvement in society," the focus has been on traditional socio-cultural systems rather than on current negotiations of power and authority between men and women in Aboriginal society (1988: 63). The valorization of economic knowledge and prowess and the importance of visiting and using a sentient countryside is certainly critical in the current negotiations of power and authority on the Belyuen community.²⁸ Examining this can help us understand why women collect foods that do not have a high caloric return for the time spent getting them.

Just as handymen and women may be better at carpentry than at plumbing, so some Belyuen women are better at some food collecting practices than at

²⁷ Etienne and Leacock argue that the latter perspective would help to "illustrate the reality of female-male complementary [in small-scale societies] and to document the clash between this egalitarian principle and the hierarchical organization that European colonization brought about in many parts of the world" (1980: 10).

²⁸ The valorization of women's bush knowledge and practices in the Belyuen community was no doubt helped by the importance attached to this cultural knowledge in the wider Australian community over the last twenty years. Over time, male and female researchers, social workers and lawyers have turned and returned to senior women as "those who know their culture." One must keep in mind that there are important historical reasons why women, rather than men, now have this knowledge. During his stay at Delissaville in the 1950s, A. P. Elkin worked primarily with senior Wagaidj and Beringgen men, and from his fieldnotes we can assume that these men had extensive knowledge of the male side of the Wagaidj and Beringgen cosmology.

others. Some women can find honey in a rain storm when no bees are flying and others can find the underground root 'hairs' of yams long after a fire has passed through an area and pigs have trampled the ground. However, most women do a little bit of all types of hunting, even those typically male activities of spear fishing and shooting. Belyuen women and men alike differentiate some food collection activities from others based on their perceived cultural authenticity. People say that what makes one activity "more" Aboriginal than another is both the activity's likeness to past practices and the degree to which non-Aborigines can perform it. Because most food collection practices bear some kinship to the past, practically everything is an authentic Aboriginal practice, even line and drag-net fishing.²⁹ However, if they wish to garner authority, Belyuen men and women must demonstrate a competence and prowess in a hunting activity other than line-fishing and drag-netting because "any bedagui" can catch a fish that way. A truly impressive person is she or he who spends a large amount of time in the bush and who "sabiz (knows) hunting straight through."

One example is the difference between people who can or cannot go into the thick mangrove mud and return with a large bag of crabs. The ability to hunt in the mangrove establishes an authentic Belyuen identity for both sexes that is pervasive and persuasive. To "sabi mud" ('to be able to deal with it') is to establish an authoritative identity and presence that carries through to other more overtly political practices. In the past, it is said, knowledgeable, clever women and men were expert crab collectors. Clever women, for example, could sense where in the mangrove the crabs would be clustered. They could go in any mangrove, fill one or several bags, and be finished before other people could find one crab.

²⁹ Present Aborigines and past Western explorers report that Daly River Aborigines used pandanus string nets and lines for fishing in inland swamps.

Maybe by the time that lazy person found one periwinkle [thumb-sized sea snail], that old woman would have already found one full bag of crabs.³⁰

"In the olden days," senior people dug large "cages" (deep holes) into the hard, inland ground and filled them with salt-water to store the crabs they collected until they were needed.

Nowadays, the ability to catch a surplus of crabs and store them signals a person's authentic Aboriginal identity. But this practice of "surplus production" and storage may or may not have been a precolonial practice. One of the uses of the earthen 'cages' was to keep the crabs fresh until they could be taken to Delissaville or Darwin and sold. It is not clear, therefore, whether the old cleverpersons that people describe today were taking advantage of precolonial storage techniques for new purposes or whether the entire project was developed as the need for money and goods progressed. But what is more important than whether past people collected crabs for cash or energy is that present women and men articulate these practices as real traditions which distinguish between those who know and are able to practice their economic and cultural identity and those who do not and cannot.

Not only do Belyuen women garner foods and authority in this way, they also are able to mitigate rhetorically the importance of men's hunting, which although less frequent is very significant to the overall bush food contribution. One way they mitigate men's contribution to the economic well-being of the community is by involving themselves in men's hunting practices. Women spot game as their husbands, sons, or nephews drive along; the animal or plant food belongs to the person who spots it first. Even when women are not physically along on a shooting

³⁰ "Maybe that maiyal im findimbet wan airada, but that wulgamen im finished naw, one beiyig full."

trip, or themselves shooting, they make sure they are "in on it." They do this by buying the cartridges, by lending the family gun, or by buying the petrol for the car or boat. In this way they ensure that part of the catch is returned to them. Women also mitigate men's contribution to the Belyuen economy through discursive frames. By constantly claiming that men always drink and never hunt, always fight and never contribute to the grocery bill, Belyuen women, with the help of men's own self-description, push to the background male contributions to the diet. As more young men receive unemployment benefits and use them to buy alcohol, women discursive claims ring truer. The small amount of time it takes men to collect their calories and the small number of men who participate is here used against them. Rather than understand men's productive contributions as coherent practices, women present them as incoherent and erratic. The difference whose hunting practices are more is less meaningful than who consistently performs authentic Aboriginal practices. This is important, first, because Aborigines are trying to affect a sentient, porous countryside with their speech and sweat as they walk through it, and second, because regional political structures favor Aborigines with a traditional aspect.

The political climate of the year can be made the starting point for a broader discussion of how Belyuen men and women distinguish between groups based on their activities over time in the countryside. The lower total and average time spent in the bush during late May, early June, and November occurred during different segments of the Kenbi Land Claim hearing. During the month of November, in and out of court, Belyuen Aborigines daily emphasized how hunting keeps the countryside productive, open (sweet), and alive. As the hearing sputtered on, its endless grind and use of time became a source of irony for older Belyuen women. They said that they were asked to show how the Peninsula was a living productive country, yet they were not able to go out "hunting and minding"

country in order to make it so: "Maybe this country think we nuku le him (AE, lie to him/her)" was the apt way one older woman put the often contradictory needs of acting politically and productively for country. However, even in November, when the hearing ran daily for three and a half weeks, people averaged nearly five hours in the bush per day, and their actual hunting hours increased. The tenacity people displayed in "going bush" after eight hours in court and in increasing their relative hours of hunting can be read both as an index of their commitment and strength of attachment to a hunting-gathering practice or as a palpable measure of the importance of the subsistence economy to the local diet.

The importance that Belyuen men and women place upon the amount of time people spend in the bush lies in opposition to the importance western analysis places on productive and nonproductive activities: how much can a person produce in a certain amount of time. Aborigines and Anglo-Australians are engaged in a political struggle over the interpretation of their labor and over the use and development of regional lands based upon what they produce. Each emphasizes a different productive benefit. Anglo-Australians produce commodities and thereby the wealth of nations and peoples; Aborigines produce the cultural and economic well-being of country and people.

Spatial Patterns.

The Aboriginal countryside is a patchwork of mythic and secular cultural history. Inland sites are linked to seaward sites by birth places and maroi sites, places of deaths and burial grounds, women's and men's ceremony and durlq sites,

and old Aboriginal camps and new Anglo-Australian squats. Biernoff has noted the importance of the mythic countryside to the organization of Aboriginal activity.

For the traditional Aborigines in eastern Arnhem Land the land is not only replete with meaning, at several levels of reality, but is also the container and focus of highly ambivalent and potentially dangerous powers. The awareness of these powers and of the localities where they are concentrated is imparted implicitly and explicitly to the individual, because the safety and happiness of not only the individual, but also of close friends and relatives will be threatened by trespass onto land where such power is concentrated. Beginning in infancy this awareness is constantly reinforced as knowledge and experience increase. This has a marked effect in restricting and patterning movement, access to land, and land use. The locations where such power exists are avoided, being accessible only to a few people in the community, usually the elders (1978: 93).

Anglo-Australian attempts to narrow the range of Aboriginal movement relate to these cultural notions of space.

The Anglo-Australian government's attempt to restrict Belyuen Aborigines to the Belyuen community and the peoples attempt to establish outstations and day camps away from it are part of a national conflict over land. Altman and Nieuwenhuysen believe Aboriginal communities are becoming less centralized because "life for Aboriginal people on government and mission-sponsored settlements is deteriorating in quality" and the "'comforts' of the material advantages of more available and European-style goods and services in centralised communities seem increasingly to be outweighed by the many social costs for

Aboriginal groups of settlement life" (1979: 78). As noted above, a Belyuen woman remarked that life is "getting harder" for local Aborigines. In what way?

At Belyuen, housing, transportation, and living conditions have measurably improved since the seventies (personal communication with Maria Brandl) when many people had no place to live, no money to buy food, and no transportation to camping and hunting grounds. Since the 1970s welfare benefits have increased, although many children and young adult men and women continue to suffer periodic undernourishment. Social stress caused by alcohol and overcrowding would be hard to measure as having increased or decreased significantly; it is high and constant. Deaths attributable to alcohol and fighting have occurred intermittently since the 1950s, but, ironically, have contributed to the sentimental attachment that the Belyuen Wagaitj and Beringgen feel towards the Cox Peninsula region. The tragedy of a person's death is mitigated over time as his or her spirit sinks into the country and becomes a mark of the longevity of Wagaitj and Beringgen Aborigines' presence on the Cox Peninsula.

Altman and Nieuwenhuysen note that another cost of settlement life is the hardship some groups suffer when they reside on another group's traditional land. Virtually all people living at Belyuen are "foreigners" in the sense that their traditional countries lie to the south. Issues of residential rights are likely to arise in conversations³¹ whenever women discuss the past locations of Aboriginal groups in the Cox Peninsula region. As migrants, Belyuen Aborigines have few statutory rights under the current land claim legislation. However, the day-to-day process of living on the Cox Peninsula is not immediately affected by the strictures of traditional owners, because these people are, as it were, absentee landlords. So, while personal economy and autonomy are factors, it is not just the level of one's

³¹ I look at this in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

own "life-style" that is at issue when women describe their lives as "getting harder." It might be better to read the above statements in terms of their commentary upon the relative benefits and losses that Belyuen Aborigines have seen accrue to different ethnic and social groups. Most important is land availability. They have seen Darwin grow from a small rural center to a large tourist-oriented city where the local Government highlights the affluence of the non-Aboriginal population's standard of living and the cultural resilience of the Aboriginal population as a means of attracting more tourists and tourist-related industries. These industries and people then close off larger segments of land. Juxtaposed to this, the poverty and landlessness of their own community seem to become more entrenched while economic conditions stay relatively set, or even while improving in some areas. As well as observing Darwin's changing demography, Belyuen women and men have observed the changing composition of the white population on the Cox Peninsula.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the Anglo population on the Cox Peninsula consisted of small plantation owners, miners, and lighthouse keepers. In the mid 1900s, the presence of non-Aborigines increased: army facilities were located on the north coast and on an east coast armlet. Bill Harney and Jack Murray, two superintendents of the Delissaville settlement in the 1940s and 50s, began running tours near both of these sites. The number of non-Aboriginal squatters also increased at this time. By the 1970s, non-Aboriginal squatting had further increased and building had begun on a section of alienated land on the northeast coast of the Peninsula. This residential development, The Wagait Development, blocked or bulldozed many Aboriginal ceremonial and food collecting grounds, in particular, a site where male initiation was held and a women's ceremonial business ground. In a nationwide broadcast, an ABC television program documented the competing interests of Cox Peninsula non-Aborigines and

Aborigines, framing the conflict as a clash between modern development and stone-age traditions. Who had superior rights to this property, Anglo-Australian developers who were increasing the value of the land by building houses and infrastructures or local Aborigines who were attempting to maintain a 'timeless undeveloped' countryside?

Although the sale of residential blocks was rapid, the occupation of them was far slower. This delay resulted in large part from a lack of infrastructure on the Cox Peninsula in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The relatively short distance across the Darwin Harbour was a prohibitive economic and social distance for those Anglo-Australians who had to commute to work every day by ferry or by road. During the monsoonal wet season, the ferry ride was slow and tumultuous, while the road was severely gutted by the rains. As infrastructures increasingly link the conveniences of the Darwin urban landscape to the more isolated settings of the outback, more families are taking up residence in rural areas. The very environment that is seen as "unsuitable" for agricultural and pastoral industries may be potentially idyllic for residential blocks because they can be sold as places where people can experience the "outback life" while enjoying the cultural, artistic, and economic benefits of urban living. The appropriation of the Daly River word wagaitj (sandy beach) for the Anglo-Australian Wagait Residential Development is but one example of the way Australian politics and economy draw upon the signs of its Aboriginal heritage at the very moment it is appropriating Aboriginal country. In an example of balder disregard and symbolic appropriation, the Northern Territory Government has tentatively named the Point Margaret inland -- where they have plans for a oil refinery -- after the Anglo surname of an old Kiyuk woman who fought eleven years against the government's plan to develop this area. In 1989, the population of mainly Anglo-Australians living on the Wagait Development had reached about one hundred. Most residents are middle to upper class and are

politically conservative. At no other time have Belyuen Aborigines had to live so close to Anglo-Australians from this socio-economic group.

This political economy of land allocation significantly affects the spatial patterns that arise from a year's hunting, fishing, and gathering practices. Table Six shows what kinds of environments people use throughout the year, and the amount of time they use them. As this table shows, women and men make a high and steady use of the sea and of estuarine creeks throughout the year, but they fluctuate their use of the open forest regions: women seasonally collect craft objects and men seasonally hunt for feral pigs, bullock, and kangaroo. Women use the inland region around Belyuen during the Wet season to collect stringy bark for bark paintings, small hollow eucalyptus trunks for didgeridoos, and bush palm fronds for dilly bags and baskets. These products are most pliable and easy to procure after the rains have slowed and the ground has dried a little. Their collection falls off dramatically during the Dry season when the bark begins to stick to the tree and the bush fronds become brittle. Women also pace themselves, working hard during the late Wet and taking a break from craft work during the Dry when there are more enjoyable things to do such as sit on the beach and fish. Although women use the mangrove year round, they increase their use of it in the drier part of the year. Men and women use dense vine tangles, blacksoil plains, and wetland swamps only when foods associated with them become available in large quantities (Table Seven). The tables showing the use of different environments "spatialize" the time charts I discussed above: they break down the time women spend in the bush into the environments in which they spend it. What these tables does not show is the different amount of time they spend in, say, two different mangroves. There are after all many mangroves on the shores of the Cox Peninsula. How do people chose between mangroves, for instance, or blacksoil plains?

Belyuen men and women are presented with a number of choices about where they can go and collect an object. To which mangrove of the numerous named hunting camps should they go? Over the course of a year, roads dry out and increase the number of sites available. Indeed, as Table Eight shows, Belyuen Aborigines significantly increase the number of places they visit in the Dry season. Hunting sites also provide women with a choice between different combinations of environments. For example, each of the estuarine creeks on the Cox Peninsula has a different surrounding countryside, and so a different selection of foods. Like people, places have certain personality traits, contours, and characters that make them appealing to some and not to other people. Bagadjet is a good example.

Bagadjet is a hunting camp located behind a vast mangrove which connects to a large estuarine creek. A small wetlands swamp is to its east, fertile yam grounds are on either side, and a large fruit tree stand is in its southern open forest. At different times of the year, this campground appeals to different sets of people. During the early Buildup when crabs are most abundant and heavy, women who like to collect them prefer Bagadjet because it is large enough for a number of women to hunt there profitably. Other women prefer Bagadjet during the Dry season when the heat generated from its location is mitigated, and when geese and turtles can be found in its swamp. During the late Buildup, young children prefer Bagadjet's open forest to others as a fruit collection area. Here, the green plum (wuRnyin E, *Buchanania obovata*) stands stretch across the forest allowing everyone to fill billycans with these intensely sweet and satisfying fruits.³² Other than when these foods are in season, no group likes Bagadjet as a place to go and sit down for the day. It is "closed up" and there is "no breeze." In addition, the mangrove blocks the view of the sea and a dense vine tangle darkens the immediate

³² Australian nutritionists and Belyuen Aborigines alike are "proud" of this little fruit, because it bears one of the highest naturally occurring contents of vitamin C in the world.

country behind it. People cannot see danger approaching in the form of 'kidney fat men' (munggul, E 'sorcerers') or non-Aboriginal campers. How then do people decide where to go in instances like this when different desires for foods and places exist at different times of the year? Above I noted that people "follow" those who are good at picking where foods are likely to be found in abundance. Is there a quantitative match between where hunting groups go and the productivity of the place?

Table Eight also explores possible quantitative reasons for a group's use of certain areas to the exclusion of others. The returns of six estuarine creek areas are examined, two on the east coast, two on the north coast, and two on the west coast.³³ Madpil was used most often (66 times) and Bemandjeli came second (53 times). After these two, the numbers drop significantly. Bagadjet was only used twenty-one times, Binbinya nineteen, Bitbinbiyirrk eleven, and Belurriya only nine times. Based on real returns, Table Eight predicts the returns from each place if women had visited them an equal number of times (at 66, assuming that no difference accrues through increased use). In this reordering, Bagadjet is first and Binbinya second in productivity, which is what women say of the two places. If not for the place's productivity, why does a group go to one place rather than another? Along with preferences for a kind of space ("open" and "breezy"), historical and regional economic reasons exist for the lower use of these productive hunting grounds.

People shift their use of the Cox Peninsula from the northeast coasts to the west coasts and central inlands from the Wet to the Dry season (see Map 3). Unusually early monsoon rains in 1988-89 and unusually late rains in 1989-90 are

³³ As I mentioned above, Bagadjet is on the south western side of a large creek, almost more seashore than creek, but as an important fishing, shell-fishing and crabbing site it belongs in the group.

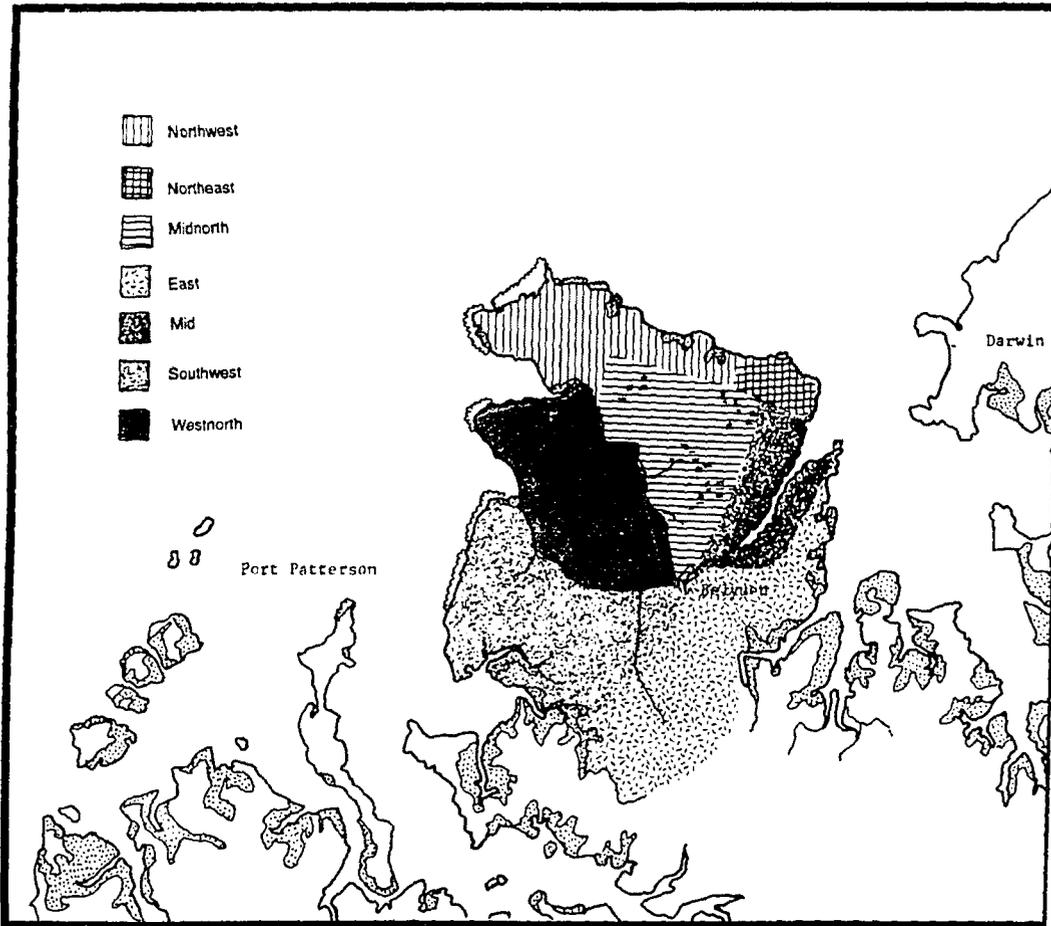
one reason why the trips to the west coast do not taper off more completely starting in November. The seasonal use of the Cox Peninsula portrayed by these figures hardly reflects a traditional "seasonal round" of pre-colonial Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen (cf. Altman 1987a: 22-26 for 'seasonal round'). Betty Meehan notes that the east Arnhem Land Anbarra's use of wetland resources has changed significantly since the precolonial period.³⁴ Belyuen Aborigines use of the Cox Peninsula has changed because of their participation in the wage labor economy, of their historic migration from the Daly River, of Anglo immigration and tourism, and of the use of new technology.

Belyuen men's and women's choices to live at or use a certain place appear to depend on how they identify themselves in relation to that place historically. The responsibilities attached to durlq (paternal or maternal dreamings), maroi (personal dreaming), and burial sites are the most obvious ways that people articulate their ties to certain camping spots. For example, a Kiyuk family looks after burial sites on the west coast close to its outstation. Nearby, a Kiyuk-Laragiya sibling set looks after several durlq sites related to them. On the north coast, as I already noted, Emiyenggal and Menthayenggal families are looking after this region because an important, now deceased, Emi man established an outstation there in the early 1970s and was a 'boss' for several ceremonies associated with the area. This Emi cleverman protects and 'plays fun' with his relations while they are camping in the area.

It would be misleading to present Belyuen Aborigines as driven to camp at any site because of cultural or historical ties to it. Each family has historical and personal ties to a large number of camps on the Cox Peninsula and near the Daly

³⁴ Based on archaeological findings, Meehan claims that pre-contact groups had permanent camps around the large wetland swamps during the colonial period (1977). Later groups had seasonal camps on high dirt mounds nearby, while still later groups only visited the wetlands from Outstations.

Map 3: Trips Made From the Belyuen Community to Different Regions of the Cox Peninsula.



	Neast	Nwest	East	Wnth	Sthw	Mid	Midnth	Offshore	Total
jan	7	2	11	0	1	11	0	9	41
feb	9	13	7	4	5	11	0	5	54
mar	11	6	15	1	4	11	0	5	53
apr	3	9	10	2	5	5	0	4	38
may	6	6	3	8	0	3	3	10	39
jun	1	3	5	15	1	9	4	11	49
jul	1	22	5	5	1	3	4	7	48
aug	3	21	7	11	0	3	13	4	62
sep	5	17	6	11	0	1	33	1	74
oct	1	6	12	6	0	4	22	0	51
nov	4	5	7	12	1	10	11	4	54
dec	15	5	3	8	1	14	1	3	50

River. For instance, the sibling set who now have an outstation on the west coast were born on, grew up near, and nowadays regularly visit a site on the northwest coast. And the Emi who live on the north coast also stay on the west and southwestern coasts during different parts of the year. Not only do people change where they live, hunt, and camp, but, as I noted at the beginning of this chapter, social groups align and realign themselves throughout the course of a year for personal and practical reasons. Fred Myers notes, "Pintupi people did not always live with the same coresidential group or even within a single territory" (1986: 71). He suggests

that we should recognize the spatial component of production in hunting- and gathering societies, rather than envisioning the organization of productive roles as reflecting only the division of labor by sex Marriage [for instance] establishes not only the immediate relations of production but also, by creating ties between distant people, establishes relations of production and access to land within a larger ecological region (1986: 71).

Rather than an effect of history, the claims that families make for local countries based on sentimental, cultural, and historical ties are better understood as historicized discourses used to ground and establish familial rights to a number of places.

Other impetuses behind choices to live or to use one place rather than another have to do with technological reliance. The use of an area is usually dependent on the seasonal condition of the roads or the availability of a boat. The northwest coast and central inland regions are not used very often in the Wet season, except an unusually dry one like 1989. So prevalent is the rhetoric of the 'west coast season' (the use of the west coast in the Dry season when the roads

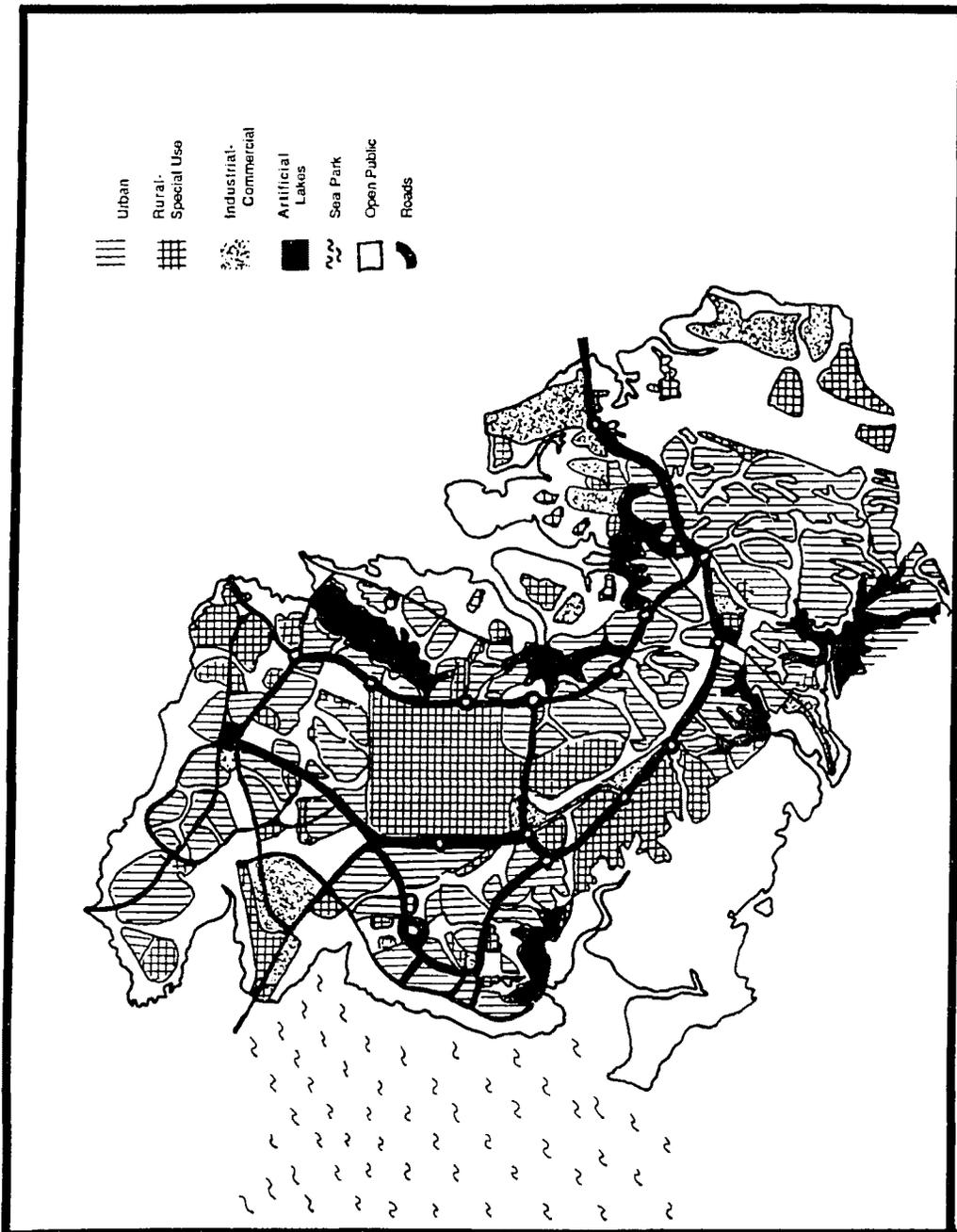
have become firm) that it is difficult at times to remember that feet do not bog in black soil plains. From Bill Harney's, Jack Murray's, and other early Aboriginal Welfare officials' records we learn the past use of the west coast in the Wet season. But these same officials contributed to the necessity of vehicles for the operation of a bush camp and therefore to the closing of a section of the west coast during the rainy season. In the 1940s, when a child or old person died at a bush camp, personal grief was interrupted and mixed with fear that the death would bring about an inquiry and reaction by the Anglo-Australian law. At Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen camps throughout the Cox Peninsula and islands, deaths of persons by tuberculosis, gonorrhoea, alcoholism, fighting, or old age and childbearing resulted in the members of the camp and the person's relatives being rounded up by Native Welfare, tested for diseases, and often punished by internment on a Delissaville settlement. The "blame" that attached to the nominal head of a bush camp for any sickness or death occurring there has become an important reason why no camp is continued for long without a vehicle. This "blame" articulates within the Wagaitj and Beringgen traditional retributive system. Relatives of a deceased person can "pay back" (take revenge on) any member of a camp where the fatally injured guest was staying. Visitors from communities that Belyuen elders believe are "stronger" in ritual and ceremonial power than they are closely watched and rarely encouraged to go far from a source of medical aid. If an accidental injury or death happened to a guest it could provoke a traditional retributive assault that community leaders would be unable to deter.

Finally, the increased reliance of the Northern Territory Government on tourism has had a direct effect on where Belyuen Aborigines go over the course of the year. Both Belyuen Aborigines and Anglo-Australians associate people with places. According to Belyuen Aborigines, birth and death establishes certain rights and duties: the country marks your body in a number of ways, through durlg, maroi,

and a language appellation, and as a result you have a responsibility to the country. Rights and responsibilities accumulate through residence, ceremony, and now, participation in legal causes (such as land claim hearings and the legal registration of sites). Rights to use country can be sorely tested if a person refuses to participate in these activities. People can literally become foreigners to their own country if they have not met their duties and responsibilities for it. People can say: where were you when we were working for this country, although they do so only in extreme social contexts. For Belyuen Aborigines, country is kept open, sweet, and fat by visiting and maintaining outstations and hunting grounds on it. Literally, you make a place feel good by stopping by and using it, by telling mythic or personal stories about it, and by providing physical and legal upkeep for it.

The government claims that what they have not yet made commercially productive is potentially productive because they have the vision and resources to transform 'nonproductive' places into "urban areas," "rural-special use areas," "artificial lakes," "sea parks," and other "use areas" (Map 4). According to government officials, country becomes productive when it has been developed. The Northern Territory government's 'town plan' for the expansion of the Darwin region builds around structures created as "natural" to the country. Geographical space is given a number of productive values: good fishing, ideal residential living, proximity to a recreation area. Contour maps with productive values etched in geographical space coax the countryside to come into being in a certain form: they are the Anglo-Australian equivalent of Aboriginal "song-lines," the durlu tracks that caused the countryside to have its present shape. Moreover, these maps suggest a timeless quality to the various proposed developments --- as if 'urban area,' 'recreation area,' and 'special use area' were a natural part of the landscape as were 'good for mining,' 'pastoralism,' and 'squattling' in the maps of the 1800s.

Map 4: Northern Territory Land Use Plan, 1990.



Local government officials contrast their development plans to Aborigines' supposed slight commitment to and effect on the Cox Peninsula, as demonstrated by its "wild" and undeveloped condition. More pointedly, government functionaries ask how much land do Aborigines need to continue a way of traditional life that is no longer based on a traditional subsistence economy? Within a political-economic framework, hunters and gatherers do not develop the country even when they are wholly or "really" hunter-gatherers. Northern Territory Government officials claim that the bush food practices of "settlement blacks" might as well be described as "recreational," so small is their impact. They believe the lands that Aborigines demand would be wasted.

Whereas Belyuen Aborigines describe open country as productive country, the Northern Territory Government describes open country as that which is unused, wild, and therefore potentially available for development. Indeed, keeping the land undeveloped keeps open the rhetoric of a need for development. In a marxist developmental framework, Aborigines on the Cox Peninsula are getting less, because in the logic of uneven development they cannot receive in kind (cf. N. Smith 1984; Worsley 1984). According to this literature, uneven development is "the material legacy of the world division of labour established during the imperialist epoch" (Worsley 1984: 284). This global focus can be given a regional focus by examining how local governments develop some areas and not others. By claiming that large portions of the Cox Peninsula are unoccupied and undeveloped, Northern Territory administrators avoid engaging in a debate about what kind of development is best for the Cox Peninsula region: there is no other 'use-plan.' They portray the Aboriginal use of the Cox Peninsula as unplanned and haphazard.

In order for the Northern Territory government to claim that the Cox Peninsula is undeveloped and unoccupied it must refuse to recognize the productive use that Laragiya, Wagaitj, Beringgen, and other Aborigines make of it and the

productive outlook they have. The Government can speak of the natural resources that are waiting to be developed, exploited, and put to productive purpose only if they are not already being used. The easiest way to deny that resources are being used is to deny Aborigines access to the equipment that would mark the landscape in a way that non-Aborigines can read, that is with permanent shelters, water bores, and roads.

Instead, the Territory government encourages visitors to Darwin to explore "outback" regional lands by publishing maps and by supporting safari outfits. Belyuen Aborigines watch the tourists, along with local Anglo-Australian residents, who descend on the Cox Peninsula during the Dry season. From what they see, Belyuen men and women make claims about the effects of Anglo activity on the countryside, and they adjust the place of their own hunting activities. It is through hunting that women say they learn about the differences that exist among themselves and between themselves and other groups. Belyuen people watch where in the countryside various ethnic groups live, camp, and work and they monitor how these groups act. Doing so allows Belyuen Aborigines to judge a group's character traits and to construct a social identity for them. This identity becomes the ground of Aborigines' social and political stances: they say that they oppose Anglo-expansion onto the Cox Peninsula because they have seen what Anglos are like.

While Wagaitj and Beringgen at Belyuen prefer the open beach as a camping spot to the 'hot' inland or mangrove-enclosed beaches, non-Aborigines are said not to prefer, but to be unable to use anything else but beaches and these only in a certain way. During the Dry season in the Top End, the days are breezy and warm and the nights clear and brisk. The humidity that haunts the landscape throughout the Wet and Buildup seasons evaporates, taking with it mosquitoes and sandflies. During these months, tourists flock into northern towns on their annual migration

to Katherine's famous gorge and Kakadu's cinematic, crocodile-infested wetlands. Stray tourists take a ferry across the Darwin harbour or drive around to the Cox Peninsula. They usually aim for the Mandorah Pub because it is the only sign of inhabitation, other than the Belyuen Community, on most maps. From Mandorah they explore sites on the north and east coasts nearby. Although Belyuen women and men take advantage of tourism to sell a few crafts and foods, women usually avoid any area that Anglo-Australians are using (other than the Mandorah Wharf, but even here use drops dramatically during the Dry season). During the peak of the tourist season, the Belyuen use of the western region of the Cox Peninsula increases as tourists move into northern and eastern hunting grounds (Map 3). Even when no whites seem to be around to put another prawn on the barbecue, a Belyuen group's day at the beach is often highlighted by the appearance of a group of Anglo-Australians who decide to take advantage of the remote area to strip off their swim-suits or who decide to drive up a crocodile-infested creek on ski jets. Both sights are well worth the wait for those of our group quietly fishing inside a dense mangrove swamp.

While non-Aborigines perform such socially and personally dangerous acts, Belyuen women note that they 'panic' when traveling in the inland forests or mangroves. The over-enthusiasm ("they like themselves," i.e. 'they are prideful') of the bathers and the skiers is rearticulated in a different environment as excessive and out of control ("they got no meru," 'they have no control'³⁵). The excessive, volatile character of Anglo-Australians is seen as well in their historical violent and racist treatment of Aborigines. Belyuen women's and men's lives are spotted by incidents of Anglo-Australian sexual and physical abuse and harassment. Women's evocations of the past veer between explicit descriptions and studied avoidance of

³⁵ Literally 'they have no ass.'

white male violence. Anglo-Australians have shown themselves presently and in the past to be loud, disturbing, and generally, to have an inappropriate way of acting in country. The arrival of Anglo tourists, therefore, changes the places where local men and women go hunting and camping.

Although Anglo activity can interfere with the placement of a hunting trip, it also provides the fodder for the construction of identity based on differences between the activity of Anglos and Aborigines in the countryside. When Belyuen women note that life is getting harder and that Anglo-Australians want all the best places, they are also noting that while Anglo-Australians take the good places they do not enliven them or maintain their sweetness. Instead, by their 'silliness' country is ruined; it returns into itself and refuses to produce. Smelling the sweat of foolhardy people, country refuses to give its fatness and all people suffer. People from Belyuen have only to point across the harbor to Darwin to make the point that white inhabitation of an area usually spells environmental disaster. That the appropriation of an area is backed by intimidation and by structured, differential access to law and resources, only cements the differences Belyuen women and men construct between white and black people, their countries, and their laws.

4. Just Sitting: Resistance and the productivity of a "nonproductive" activity.

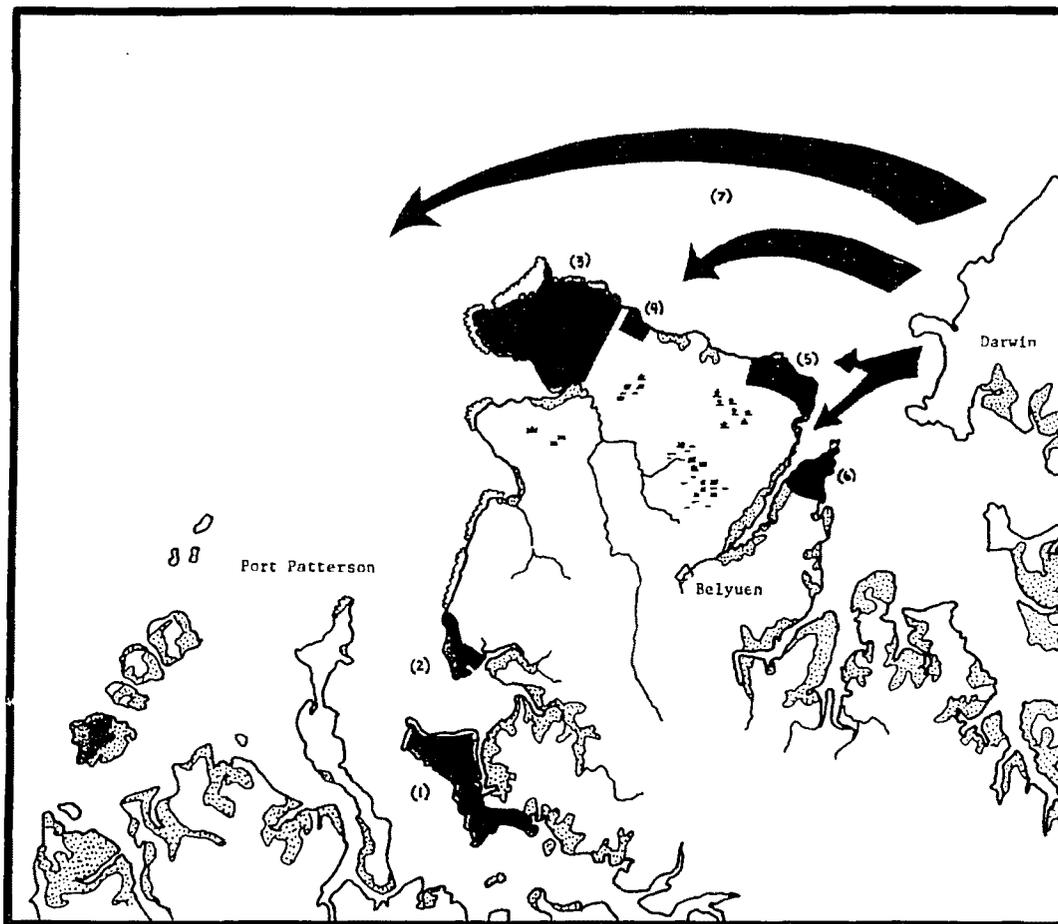
Non-Aboriginal appropriation of the Peninsula has not occurred in a simple unswerving direction. Rather, Anglo-Australians follow old Aboriginal paths, set up commercial or residential outfits, and then abandon them leaving behind residues of infrastructure (roads and cleared land being two such residues) which pave the way for future developments. Indeed, if land tenure were based on Aboriginal

ideology we might understand Anglo-Australian development patterns to be operating along the lines that Biernoff outlined -- non-Aborigines feeling certain places were historically safe and others dangerous (Map 5).

In the past when Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen were confronted by the arrival of Anglo-Australians they would attempt to draw off resources without being drawn permanently into the camp as forced labor. But, in time, Aborigines would move away from the Anglo site. Belyuen women say, "better they left that place before pedagut shoot-im-im (whiteman shoots him)." One way of measuring the effect of a non-Aboriginal presence on Belyuen Aborigines' use of the Cox Peninsula is to analyze the number of camping and hunting sites that people refuse to visit and how this number has changed in their lifetimes. Twenty-three named camping sites on the Cox Peninsula have closed since the 1930s (see also Povinelli 1989a). These places are located mainly on the southwest and northeast sections of the Peninsula where there are large Anglo-Australian residential, squatting, and commercial interests.

The presence of non-Aborigines at a place and the corresponding Aboriginal abandonment of it feeds into a system of land and resource alienation in two major ways. In a direct manner, the Land Rights legislation directs the Commissioner to consider issues of "strength of attachment" when making a recommendation for land. In the backrooms of trials this is sometimes described as the "bums on sand" test. While historical factors are taken into consideration, the best and most likely way of winning a section of land is to have Aborigines living or visiting that section for long periods of time. When Aborigines associate a place as "dangerous" because of the potential for racial confrontation and abandon it for this reason, it weakens any claim they have in court. Courts are self-consciously not deciding political issues of fairness, but testing how forensic evidence conforms to the language of an Act. Legal testability of forensic evidence is seen as a better

Map 5: The Historical Location of non-Aboriginal Activity on the Cox Peninsula-Port Patterson Regions.



- (1) Tin Mining 1880s, Gravel Mining 1960s-1980s, Pearl Shell Industry 1980s-1990s, Residential Squatting 1970s-1990s.
- (2) Residential Squatting 1970s-1990s.
- (3) Lighthouse 1880s-1990s, Agricultural Plantation late 1920s-1940s, Telecom 1970s-1990s.
- (4) Residential and Tourism 1930s-1950s, Cooperative Residential 1980s-1990s.
- (5) Agricultural Plantation 1880s, Agricultural 1920s, Army Installation 1940s, Residential Development 1970s, Pub and Tourism 1950s-1990s, Radio Australia 1960s-1990s.
- (6) Naval Installation 1930s, Pastoral and Tourism 1950s, YMCA, Residential, and Tourism 1970s-1990s.
- (7) Recreational Boating and Commercial Fishing 1860s-1990s.

criterion by which to measure Acts than such fuzzy and subjective issues as fairness. This testable approach to the ravages of history and the resilience of social groups does not attempt to resolve contradictions, rather it leaves them to political groups. But the law does support the historical alienation of the countryside. The law reveals the importance of spatially confining the Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen on the Delissaville (Belyuen) settlement. In time, the government claims that only this belongs to Aboriginal groups and the courts agree.

Belyuen Aborigines abandon a place primarily because time has shown that Anglos will eventually move away in turn: the historical failure of most commercial enterprises on the Cox Peninsula has reinforced this Aboriginal strategy of temporary abandonment and eventual return. However, this strategy has had long-term difficulties because of increasing population pressure on the Cox Peninsula. Aborigines can no longer expect to be able to return to a place they have left to white squatters and campers. That might have been done when land seemed plentiful or when the outrages of white violence seemed to go completely unpunished. But Belyuen family and community heads have learned through interaction with government representatives and ordinary squatters and residents that government and business want all the land, not only one beach or one section of the Cox Peninsula. Rather than abandon a place, Belyuen men and women now attempt to block a site from white invasion by camping on it for increased stretches of time. I noted above that families who work full time on the community have the resources to buy vehicles and machinery for outstations but must spend most of their time away from the outstation working. How do Belyuen families block Anglo-Australians from various sites in the country when they have to work throughout the day?

David Yesner points points out that

Much of the real cost of marine hunting, however, involves not so much the technology as the social relations of production, ranging from the cost of maintaining family or clan territories in order to restrict access to areas where resources aggregate . . . to the cost of maintaining the structure of whaling crews and the ceremonial apparatus necessary for effective whale hunts (Yesner 1987: 289).

At Belyuen, the cost of maintaining Aboriginal territories and outstation infrastructures is shared by various families who work as a somewhat cohesive group to keep others off the best hunting grounds. Perhaps we should be surprised that few Belyuen families have attempted to control large segments of the Peninsula for themselves. For, I have shown that certain families monopolise Council jobs and, therefore, the vehicles and large equipment controlled by the Council. This can make an enormous difference in a family's ability to build solid shelters at an outstation, and to provide water and food supplies to outstation members. Still, Belyuen people say that no matter the discrepancy in income and access to goods, there are no Belyuen bosses over the rich and productive hunting areas on the Cox Peninsula and Port Patterson islands; everyone must pay respect to the mythic and secular sites throughout the countryside. The truth of this statement is demonstrated during stress situations at outstations.

Often, visitors from Belyuen to an outstation create a significant volume of social disturbance by drinking and then fighting over boyfriends or girlfriends. Tempers flare, knives or pickets fly, and people scatter into the moonlit mangroves or down the glimmering beaches. People who have set up the outstation and are seen as its permanent residents are unable to tell trouble-makers to leave because they are usually kin who have come "to keep them company" (to make them "fat" by visiting). Instead, the residents themselves either move away from the main

camp or return to the Belyuen community until everyone has sobered and returned to the community as well. This can make for a series of rather hysterical hops as sober people try to avoid 'trouble-makers' and 'trouble-makers' keep following them out of affection. In one aspect, Yesner's remarks are quite fitting for the Belyuen situation: only those with a close personal or kin relationship to members of an outstation visit and so share in a camp's resources. However, the tangled web of kinship is such that someone usually can be the front person for a polite 'request'³⁶ to use an area around someone else's outstation. Or a more distantly related group can establish a camp some five hundred meters down the beach. The rationale for such requests and camp spacings is consistent with ideas about how country is enlivened by living on it. Belyuen men and women argue that those doing the hard work of maintaining the life of a place should be able to benefit from its resources.

Increasingly Belyuen Aborigines maintain outstations throughout the year in order to resist white encroachment. People without jobs stay and mind a camp, supplied by those with cars and money. This is an effective way of using prejudice to one's advantage, for just as Wagaitj and Beringgen are loath to camp near non-Aborigines, so non-Aborigines fear black camps and rarely approach. This strategy is increasingly being used for places near dreaming sites which suggests that the economics of land appropriation continues to be articulated through a sacred vernacular. This strategy also helps make sense of why one Belyuen group has not taken over, so to speak, one section of the Cox Peninsula. No matter their access to money and materials, these families need other, unemployed people to maintain the outstations. The problem with a strategy of permanent residence is clear. Over time, places become more or less dangerous as people are born, live, and die at

³⁶ See Myers (1982).

them. If Belyuen Aborigines are to follow certain cultural traditions they must abandon a site periodically, but to abandon a site is to invite Anglos to move into it. People are attempting to balance these pressures by moving to the far edge of a site when there has been a death. In this way they can monitor the area without having to camp on top of it.

Another method used to slow the advance of the white holiday camper and permanent squatter is to keep areas 'closed up' by not maintaining the infrastructures that allow Anglos easy access to a favorite camping ground. These infrastructures include the construction of roads, the clearing of camping areas, and the storage of equipment at sites. The term 'infrastructure' itself sounds very modern for the practice of hunter-gatherers. But Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen have kept areas clear, maintained paths, and left dugouts and chipping equipment at sites for a long time. Further, the paths noted in myth and enacted in ceremony or story demonstrate the existence of an integrated and functioning network which Aborigines use to increase their output by decreasing the time needed to re-invent the landscape every time they return to a camping ground. Whereas in the past, keeping a place "open" by regular visits meant decreasing one's overall labor, now it often means inviting the visits of unwanted strangers who then block the use of an area. Because of this, Belyuen Aborigines leave roads in disrepair and areas partially cleared. This is interpreted by non-Aborigines in an typical way: Aborigines do not develop or produce the countryside or with an even grosser claim, because the countryside is not developed, Belyuen Aborigines must be settlement-bound.

TABLE TWO: The Contribution of Bush Foods to the Belyuen Diet From January 1989 to January 1990.*

a. An overview of the bush foods contribution.

	Gross Weight (kg)	Kilocalories 89-90
Shellfish	64.66	51727
Crustacea	597.9	305835.6
Inland `meat`	2455	5468657.4
Fish-Stingray	2518.1	2414858
Sea mammals	2462	5287275
Eggs#	1613	161300
Vegetable	353.2	400255
Total	10063.86	14089908

b. The collection of Vegetable products.

	Gross (kg)	Flesh(kg)	kcal
Dioscorea Transversa	279.75	279.75	363675
Potatoes & Bush Palms	15.05055	15.05055	19565.72
fruits/sugargrass	50	25	15000
nuts	8.3925	0.3357	2014.2
Total(kg)		353.19305	
Total (kcal)			400254.9

c. The collection of shellfish.

	Total from 9 Sites:	Other:	Total:
Hermit crab	68.72525	3.73	72.46
Nerita lineata	20.2539	5.0355	25.29
Nerita didymus	10.12695	1.119	11.25
Telescopium telescopium	113.67175	2.238	115.9
Batissa violacea	2.89075		2.891
Mactra obesa	30.67925	0.373	31.05
Mangrove `worm`	30.0265	7.087	37.11
Chiton	7.6465		7.647
Crassostrea amasa	0.746		0.746
Terebralia palustris	3.5435		3.544

* Rather than provide an exhaustive list of all the foods that Belyuen men and women collect, Section A groups these foods into appropriate categories for my discussion. "Vegetables" include any plant products; grasses, fruits, tubers, bulbs. "Inland `meats`" include honey, reptiles, mammals, and fowl as the local ethnoclassification system stipulates (cf. Povinelli 1990).

TABLE THREE: Monetary and Caloric Values of Foods Purchased from Grocery Markets.

A: Percentage of Expenditure for major consumption items.



B: The Monetary and Caloric Values of Foods Purchased from Local Groceries.

<u>Foods</u>	<u>Kg/liters</u>	<u>kcalories/kg</u>	<u>expenditure_(A\$)</u>
Sugars (kg)	5330	2145325	8658
Sugars (l)	9366.6	3812202	27185.60
Milk (kg)	452.4	24401820	3689.40
Milk (l)	364	2629900	364
cereals	8211.8	30794250	18176.60
roots/legumes	1341.6	1577000	4596.80
vegetables (canned & fresh)	1585.5	586635	2077.40
Tobacco	33.85		70296.20
Fats	486	4252500	1768
Nuts	26	6000	832
Fruit	697.58	523125	1638
Meat	9807.07	29421300	216923.20
Eggs	38.9	64947.5	5460

TABLE FOUR: Temporal Aspects of Belyuen Aborigine's Hunter-Gathering Activity.

A. Total and Average 'Lapsed Time' (duration) Spent on Hunter-Gatherer Activities.

	Total Hrs	W/ Author	Avg Hrs	W/ Author
jan	93	80	4.89	5.33
feb	131.75	114.75	4.38	4.41
mar	159.5	155.5	4.83	5.02
apr	182.5	120.5	6.08	5.74
may	104	77	4.52	4.05
jun	125.25	93.75	3.8	3.9
jul	281.5	257	9.08	10.28
aug	393.75	198.75	8.75	8.61
sep	473.25	292.75	8.76	8.71
oct	296.35	178.35	7.41	7.43
nov	80.25	49.25	4.01	4.91
dec	146	127	4.42	5.3

B. Total and Average 'Person Hours' Spent on Trips into the Countryside Compared to Times Spent Hunting and Gathering.

	T in Bush	Avg in Bush	T Hunting	Avg Hunting	Avg # adults	#/T Trips
jan	743.75	43.32	369	19.92	6.8	19/33
feb	1123.5	40.13	706.75	26.39	8	28/42
mar	1099.75	39.28	523.15	17.37	7.6	30/45
apr	1299	55.79	404.5	18.39	7.9	22/40
may	536.5	31.39	371.25	19.36	7.6	19/33
jun	659.75	46.58	340.5	24.32	9.2	15/41
jul	1658	100.59	446	28.09	9.1	16/42
aug	1524.75	64.96	368.65	12.86	6.7	24/51
sep	1408.5	59.7	335.45	14.63	7.1	23/64
oct	1176.4	66.1	344.8	14.62	9.3	18/48
nov	550	50	214.7	21.47	8.6	11/47
dec	1441.7	66.72	678.95	30.04	11.5	22/46

TABLE FIVE: A Comparison of the Difficulty of Hunter-gathering Activities verses the Returns From Those Activities. f is for female, m for male. f: s/e (seashore and estuarine creeks) returns are for fish, rays, and prawns; f: m(mangrove) returns are for crab and seasnails; f: b(blacksoil plains) returns for longneck turtles; m: s (sea) returns are for sea mammals and turtles.

Type	Avg #people	Avg-time per person	avg caloric output per person	Total-time year	T caloric return output/ yr	
f: s/e	8	2.6	150/hr (390)	635	8* = 762000	2318629
f: m	3	1.5	357/hr (535.5)	188	3* = 201348	334596
f: b	5	1.5	200/hr (300)	112.4	5* = 112400	90223
m: s	5	3.0	200/hr (600)	234	5* = 234000	5287275

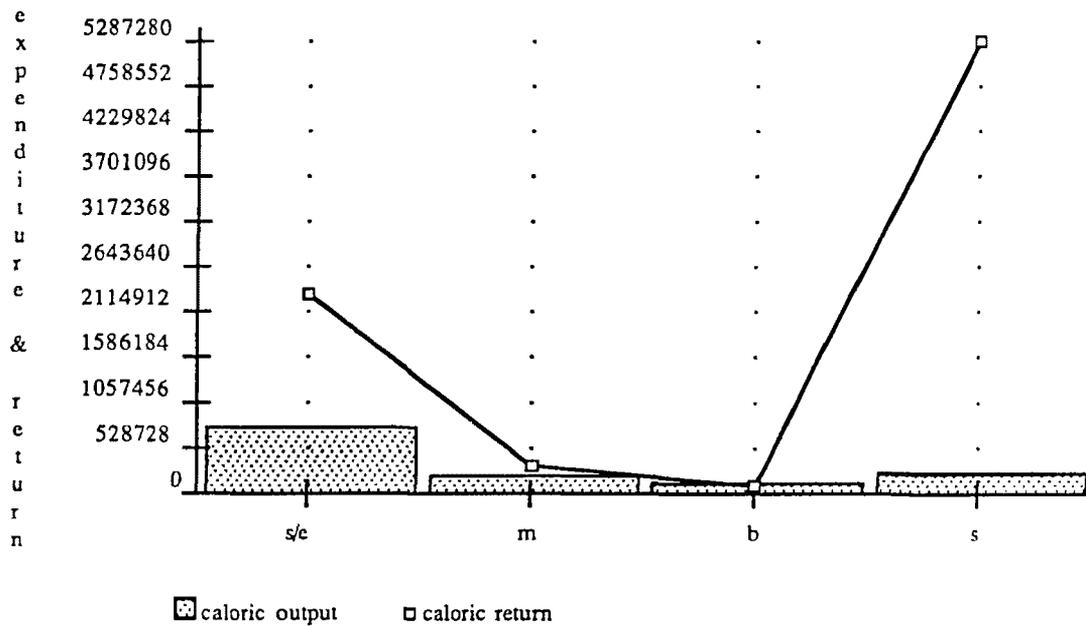


TABLE SIX. Lapsed Time Spent Hunting and Gathering Foods and Materials [Total (Average)] in Various Environments. OF: Open Forest, M: Mangrove, DVT: Dense Vine Tangle, RC: Rocky Coast, SS: Offshore, B: Blacksoil Plains, S: Seashore, E: Estuarine Creek, SW: Wetland Swamp, SP: Freshwater Spring.

	OF	M	DVT	RC	SS	B	S	E	SW	SP
jan	2.3 (.56)	9.4 (1.18)	.5 (.5)		2.7 (.88)		20.5 (2.93)	33.3 (3.33)		
feb	17.5 (1.75)	9.8 (1.22)	.5 (.5)		4.8 (1.58)		33.8 (2.41)	37 (2.64)		
mar	15.7 (1.57)	4.9 (.97)	12 (2.4)	5.4 (1.1)	1.3 (.42)		42 (2.63)	21.5 (2.69)		
apr	5.4 (.68)	17.6 (1.6)	9.5 (2.38)	3.3 (1.32)	9.1 (1.31)		26.1 (2.17)	16.1 (2.17)		
may	18.8 (2.35)	9.2 (1.31)	2 (1)	1 (1)	1.3 (1.25)	.4 (.18)	20.8 (2.31)	27.5 (3.44)		
jun	9.3 (1.32)	18.5 (1.85)	12.8 (2.13)	1 (1)	2.3 (1.13)	3.2 (.81)	22 (2.75)	16.8 (3.35)	2 (1)	4.5 (.9)
jul	20 (1.82)	21.3 (1.63)	7.5 (1.25)	6 (1.2)	4.8 (2.38)	4.8 (2.38)	27.3 (2.73)	61.5 (3.84)		2 (.67)
aug	5.3 (.88)	25 (1.79)	1.75 (.58)	2.25 (.75)	5.6 (.69)	19.9 (1.65)	44.8 (2.48)	24 (2.67)	6.3 (1.56)	9 (4.5)
sep	5.9 (.66)	22.5 (1.6)	.5 (.5)	2.5 (1.25)	13.5 (1.13)	14 (1.25)	55.4 (2.31)	18.5 (2.64)	31 (1.42)	.25 (.25)
oct	5.5 (.92)	23.3 (1.59)	3.75 (1.25)	2.5 (1.25)	2 (.67)	10.8 (2.15)	22.8 (2.28)	14.8 (2.11)	28.1 (1.52)	
nov	8.5 (.71)	16.7 (2.09)	2.75 (.69)		2.5 (.83)	.2 (.15)	10.7 (2.14)	17.5 (2.5)	6.7 (1.33)	
dec	19.3 (1.53)	9.8 (1.63)	1 (.5)	4.85 (1.21)	1 (1)	59 (3.05)	18.8 (2.68)	1.8 (1.45)	.25 (.25)	

TABLE SEVEN: Temporal Collection Elements of Some Items on the Ethnocalendar and 'Real' Returns From Selected Food Categories. (**) low use, (...) high use.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bush Potatoes											
Bush Fruits											
cucumber											
white plum											
green plum											
black plum											
billygoat plum											
wild grape											
red apple											
white apple											
cocky apple											
Yams											
Sugarbag											
Cane grass											
Fowl											
Small mammals											
porcupine											
possum											
bandicoot											
bat											
Large mammals											
bullock											
pig											
kangaroo											
wallaby											
Sea mammals & turtles											
sea turtles											
freshwater											
turtle eggs											
dugon											
Lizards											
Fish											
rays											
large sea fish											
Shellfish											

Total Gross Kilogram (eggs = number of) of Foods Collected.

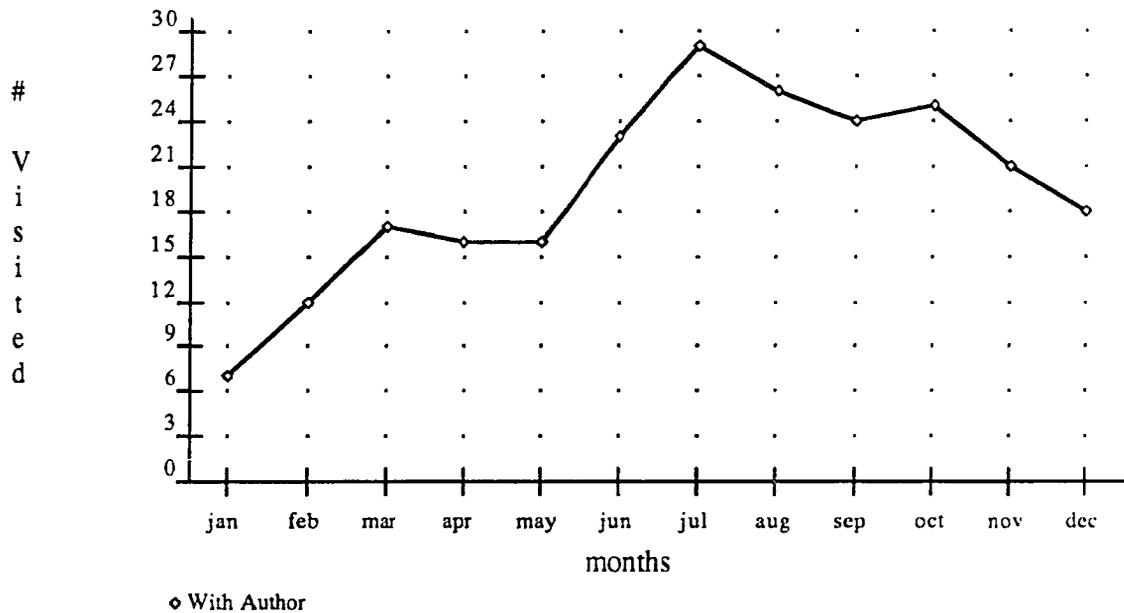
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Shellfish	24.5	7.8	29.8	41	9.4	20.1	1	50.8	2.2	15	12.4	9.6
Crab	7.1	16.6	5.8	47.7	4.2	82.1	54.5	45.5	71.	124	56	15.7
Eggs	185	0	0	500	0	62	292	58	17	.9	40	0
Dugon	149	149	0	149	0	149.2	0	149	0	0	0	149.2
Sea turtle	6	56	168	6	56	279.8	224	168	56	0	0	0
Fish	88	77	4.6	2.4	21.4	9.	56.6	5.4	8.4	41.4	2.9	59.1
Rays	1.1	12	14.5	10.1			12.	26.4		7.5	2.1	
Fresh turtle			5.6				27.2	.9	7.5	8.6	.2	
Roos	6			15.7	3.7			6.1				

TABLE EIGHT: Uses of Sites on the Cox Peninsula, 1989-1990.

A. Differing Returns (Kg) By Place at Equivalent Numbers of Trips .

	Fish	Snails	Crab	Trips	Calories
Bitbinbiyirrk (E)	---	607.2	---	11 * 6	102009.6
Binbinya (W)	203.8	89.8	175.7	19 * 3.5	328219.5
Belurriya (N)	104.1	---	---	7 * 9.5	114093.6
Madpil (E)	61.7	48.6	147	66	150759.3
Bemandjeli (N)	136.6	70.3	34.7	53 * 1.3	178615.5
Bagadjet (W)	14.5	159.3	334.2	21 * 3.1	213597.7

B. Number of Named Sites Visited, 1989-1990.



CHAPTER FOUR: 'Settlement Bound': Finding Economic and Social Organization.

Constant labour of one uniform kind disturbs the intensity and flow of a man's animal spirits, which find recreation and delight in mere change of activity.

Karl Marx, *Capital* 1987[1887]: 322.

Introduction.

Belyuen people portray their connection to the Cox Peninsula countryside as longstanding, intimate, and culturally appropriate. Because they and their foreparents have hunted, camped, and traveled throughout regional countries since anyone can remember, the country recognizes Belyuen sweat and languages and receives the spirits of their dead. Men and women from Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen groups have conducted and passed through ceremony in the region and have received maroi and personal names from the country. The Northern Territory government, however, portrays Belyuen Aborigines as a settlement-bound group who use the countryside mostly for recreation. Forgetting that Native Welfare policies confined Aborigines to settlements, or saying that this is the kind of history that is best forgotten, Territory officials and local Anglo-Australians emphasize the present commodity orientation of Cox Peninsula Aborigines to argue that Belyuen Aborigines do not need regional lands.

This chapter addresses how local Belyuen understandings of the relationship between human bodies and stretches of country work within and through postcolonial settlement, market, and consumption practices. I outlined in the last chapter some community employment and consumption statistics: who worked, at what, and what foods people bought and consumed from local grocery stores. Here I focus on Belyuen women's and men's historical and present participation in the Anglo-economy. Aborigines and Anglo-Aborigines draw the one into participating in the other's economic understandings and practices. How do men and women, young and old, Anglo and Aborigine differently experience their economic history? How do cultural notions of the countryside work -- produce meaning -- in capitalist economic settings, in particular during rent and capital crises on the community?

Recently, Helen Ross has examined the material aspect of Aboriginal housing in Central Australia. She writes that

[t]he patterns of life which have long been established in and for traditional camps create habits which are not easily changed when people move into other types of dwelling. They also create expectations about how housing should fit in with lifestyles -- expectations which can lead to intense frustrations if new forms of housing interfere with accustomed ways of behaving. Traditional camp living arrangements help to explain some of the expectations people hold about housing, and highlight some of the difficulties that introduced forms of housing present (1987: 59).

With these words in mind, the following examines the history and form of the Belyuen settlement and its relationship to Belyuen understandings of the connections between groups of people and the countryside.

1. "Sweet potato . . . hn everything": Working in and with the past.

Belyuen women and men describe a longstanding participation in Anglo economic practices: in unpaid agricultural and war industries' labor and in wage labor.¹ Although people's oral narratives are about the economic conditions they experienced in the 1930s to 1960s, they reflect a much longer history of Anglo and Aboriginal economic

¹ Brandl, Haritos, and Walsh discuss Laragiya employment in the Overland Telegraph Company, Laragiya and Wagaidj employment at the Charles Point Lighthouse, and Aborigines' use as domestics in Darwin. (1979: 86-93). They also describe Cox's pastoral activity, European use of the Port Patterson Islands for recreational sailing and camping, P. H. Mitchelmore's lease of Quail and Southern Grose islands, and his later lease of the Point Charles area (1979:81-84).

interdependence. Belyuen women engaged in three distinct forms of labor: they were forced to dig and mind gardens in exchange for rations, they were paid wages for domestic services, and they worked at war industries, usually in hospital-related work. Men worked in gardens, built roads and houses, and were scouts during World War II.

Anglo-Australian run gardens, plantations, and pastoral projects were started on the Cox Peninsula and near the Bynoe Harbour very soon after the founding of Palmerston (Port Darwin). The 'Douglas Peninsula' itself was renamed in honor of Dillen Cox who had a large plantation there in the 1870s. The use of Aboriginal labor on these projects is hard to piece together. In the 1800s, few records were kept. Even in the early 1900s, records are scant and Aboriginal men's and women's names and country affiliations are variously spelled and interpreted in, for example, the medical records that were kept on Aboriginal camps at Talc Head and Charles Point. The following is an example of the information at hand.

The presence of Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen Aborigines on the Cox Peninsula during the early colonial period is rather easy to demonstrate in the primary literature of the period. But documenting their use as a labor force on local plantations is more difficult. After reporting a trip to the 'Douglas Peninsula,' a *Times and Gazette* reporter writes of Messrs. Clopenburg and Erickson's plantation at West Point:

About three years ago these enterprising pioneers, with little more than two pairs of willing hands and a few spades, axes, and picks, &c., entered upon the arduous task of making a bit of a clearance near the beach for the purpose of rearing pigs and poultry Whatever was made outside went into the "clearance and plantation fund," and so happily has the plan been carried out that at this day these two working men have, without any hired labour beyond

the assistance of a few natives, cleared and fenced in 105 out of their section of 320 acres.²

Who were these "few" Aborigines; what group were they from? A few months earlier the same newspaper reported: "On Wednesday morning Mr. Peter Erickson took over to the Peninsula about fifty natives, who, we hear, are to work on his plantation near West Point."³ Perhaps, Erickson brought Darwin-dwelling Laragiya to the Peninsula, but he might have brought other groups as well. I noted earlier that De Lissa used a "gang of natives" from the East Alligator River to work on his sugar plantation. Erickson and Clopenburg were not the only ones who used Aboriginal labor. In a later *Times & Gazette* article, a reporter writes of Merrs. Harris and Head's plantation at Kunggul Beach, also on the northeast coast:

Between 40 and 50 acres of the jungle have been cleared, and the stumps remaining in the ground having well rotted they expect to be able to put in the plough next year. The soil has almost the same characteristics, except that it does not carry to such a depth before joining the bed-rock, as that at West Point Plantation. I may mention here a peculiarity which may be interesting to geologists and ethnologists. A thin white chalky-kind of layer, not more than a third of an inch in thickness runs between the soil and the bed rock, and this the lubras eat in large quantity, and evidently relish.⁴

² *NTT&G*, April 15, 1882.

³ *NTT&G*, January 9, 1882.

⁴ *NTT&G*, February 24, 1883. The older women at Belyuen have often laughed, as they and I recorded ethnobiological terms, about their mothers and grandmothers who loved this clay (*pele*, E) and hid it in their petticoats to nibble on when they worked around the West Point and Darwin region.

This is the typically scrappy information present from the period. Again we know that Aboriginal women ("lubras") were working on Harris and Head's plantation, but we do not know what group they were from. Reporters for the *Times and Gazette* traveled to and from the Cox Peninsula, Bynoe Harbour, and Port Patterson islands reporting about the progress of economic projects in the area, but rarely do the Aborigines they casually mention have any social identity beyond "native." Sometimes Aborigines appear and disappear like phantoms depending on what paper one is reading.

In 1897, a reporter for the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* wrote that the two Charles Point lighthouse keepers, Christie and Benison, had a large, well-kept garden, but fails to note any Aborigines who worked in it.⁵ However, south Australian papers do refer to the Wagaitj and Laragiya at the Charles Point Lighthouse. The Weekly News reported as early as 1906 that Christie "who had `been formally adopted a member of the Wogite tribe' took Larrakia with him on a trip to the Daly River `the Wogite blacks being all away.'"⁶ In a later article in the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, an anonymous author, probably Christie, writes:

the blacks say that at Perron Islands, Channel Point, and Point Blaze, "Im (the cyclone) close up finish `em." The forests to the west are more damaged than to the eastward, and at Two-fella Creek and West Point the damage is slight.⁷

Whether these `blacks' (I assume Wagaitj and Beringgen who are from the Peron Island - Anson Bay regions) also tried to explain to the anonymous author that the cyclone or whirlwind followed a Dreaming track extending from the Peron Islands to the Charles Point Lighthouse and that it came as punishment for Anglo-Australian disturbances to

⁵ *NTT&G*, September 24, 1897.

⁶ Quoted in the Kenbi Land Claim (1979:116) from H. W. Christie in a 1906 article "Down on the Daly" *Weekly News Adelaide*, May 5, 1906.

⁷ *NTT&G*, February 1, 1916.

sacred sites in the area, we do not know. Present-day Belyuen women with whom I discussed this cyclone suggested that it probably came from the southern whirlywind Dreaming site and was probably caused by a white man humbugging with it. Belyuen women are using their understanding of what Anglo-Australians are likely to do and how the country is likely to respond to them: here, the earlier story I described of the tjeingithut (deaf, stubborn, know-it-all) character of white Australians is pertinent. But what non-Aborigines made of the Aboriginal character was also important to the pattern of their economic incorporation into colonial north Australia.

Anglo colonists viewed "wild" Aborigines as tricksters who were not to be trusted, as chimeras and fantasies who were hard to locate, and as 'bush natives' who retained the 'essence of the noble beast.' Note the description of 'wild Aborigines' by one of the first settlers in Darwin: "[t]he natives [Laragiya] were always alert for trouble and could disappear swiftly if there was any available cover . . . natives . . . disappeared like magic" (Kelsey 1975: 79). Dominic Daly another early Port Darwin settler wrote:

Much has been written and much has been said about the proper treatment of natives. My experience teaches me that there is only one rule that holds good -- firmness accompanied by kindness, fair play, and an honest payment for work done. And, above all, to keep the aboriginal in his proper place -- to stand no insolence, or disobedience; for when a native shows signs of sulkiness and defiance, it is perfectly certain some mischief is brewing (1887: 75-76).

An historian of the colonial conflict between settlers and Aborigines, Henry Reynolds, states that the Anglo-Australian perception of Aborigines' personality as a Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde like type -- at one moment, pleasant and noble and at the

next, criminal and savage -- persisted throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s as some Aborigines with mixed parentage took to bushranging and banditry.

All the folk wisdom of the frontier was confirmed. Even apparently civilised blacks could not be trusted. Given half a chance they would revert to a savagery rendered more dangerous by a veneer of sophistication (1987: 78).

The relationship between Aborigines, Australian colonial administrators, and the bandit-convict population was complex. For now it is useful to note that colonial officials branded the convict and Aborigine in like terms: as an untrustworthy, violent class who had to be watched constantly for tell-tale signs of trickery, treachery, and insurrection (cf. Hughes 1986).

Aborigines were supposed to be transformed by their entrance into civil society.⁸ By teaching them the art of agriculture, Anglo colonists thought European culture would sprout forth from them: so the political-economic theory of the day had predicted. But no transformation occurred. Aborigines refused to break their backs trying to plant the outback soil and Anglo-Australians were forced to come to uneasy terms with Aborigines' dislike of the drudgery of menial wage work. If Aborigines were supposed to be transformed by the civilizing effects of an Anglo presence, they were also expected to die off. But although there was a very high death rate they did remain a presence in towns, failing to disappear into the background. Northern Aborigines' failure to die off and failure to signify the mark of civilization in which raw materials are transformed into useful, profitable objects presented government officials with the problem of how to manage the

⁸ See Frederickson's discussion of American ideology about the Afro-American's entrance into 'civil society' (1971).

population. Most legislation about Aborigines was characterized by containment. By the late 1930s, laws were passed that were supposed to keep Aborigines on the Bagot and Kahlin reserves in Darwin unless otherwise employed (Bartells 1988a). As Darwin emerged from a rustic-settlement into a city-town, Aborigines became like store supplies; things to be listed, counted, moved to places of need, or stored until further required.

G.N. 140/39

EMPLOYMENT OF ABORIGINALS WITHIN THE TOWN AREA OF DARWIN

The attention of employers of aboriginals is directed to Regulation 33 under the Aborigines Ordinance 1918-1937 which enacts:

(1) "An employer, who employs any aboriginal within the town district of Darwin Centre shall not, without the written authority of a Protector, suffer or permit that aboriginal to be or remain upon any premises which are owned, occupied, inhabited, used or controlled by that employer and which are situated within the town district of Darwin Centre at any time between the hours of seven o'clock in the evening of any day and six o'clock in the morning of any day following.

(2) If any employer referred to in the last proceeding sub-regulation contravenes the provisions of that sub-regulation, any licence to employ aboriginals held by him may be cancelled by any Protector".

Employers who do not possess the required authority are requested to instruct their aboriginal employees to return to the Bagot Compound every evening.

CECOCK

Chief Protector of Aborigines

C. E. Cook was Chief Protector and Medical Officer of Aborigines in the Northern Territory from 1927 to 1939 during which time Aborigines were issued steel-disk name tags ('dog tags'), were hired out as a cheap domestic labor force, and had their films censored (cf. Brandl, Haritos, and Walsh 1979: 215).

They were not to see any film which tended to lower their respect for the white man; an odd provision indeed, when white men were daily trying to prostitute their women (Powell 1988: 185).

During the 1940s at Army installations in the Daly River, Aborigines saw films that Cook may or may not have thought portrayed the right relationship between the white and black man. Tarzan, for instance, supposedly civilized the African outback by his presence, not as a proper starched English aristocrat, but as a barbarian in scant clothing.

'Tarzan'

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.

gz: Grace Ziyesta: father Marriamu, mother Menthayenggal, born circa 1930.

- en: *yiylnmi ben lök piktja a meit*
you and I saw a film, huh mate?
- gz: *eh mmmmm*
eh mmmm
- en: *plktja rili piktja ei*
film a real film, huh?
tarzen tarzen yiylnmi ben lök
tarzan tarzan you and I saw it
- gz: *mmmm*
mmmm
- en: *tarzen mibela ben lök mama plktja*
we saw tarzan, momma, the film

Like older ones, new laws that barred Aborigines from areas near the center of Palmerston-Darwin were often justified on the need to protect white moral sensibilities.⁹ Laragiya and other Darwin-dwelling Aborigines were barracked inland behind Port Darwin. The old Delissaville camp, which had been used in the years after De Lissa's sugarcane failure as a small garden interest and as a general store, was chosen as the site where the 'Wargite' would be settled. During daily expeditions and midnight raids, Aborigines living throughout the Peninsula and Bynoe Harbour areas were removed by force from the beaches and jungles and interned in the settlement. Or so the self-styled bush man and friend to the Aborigines, Bill Harney would write. Harney was well-known throughout Australia as a bush poet, a radio personality, and with A. P. Elkin's encouragement, the author of a dozen books on Aboriginal life in the Northern Territory (see Harney 1952, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1965, 1968 for references to Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen). Harney's Songs of the Songmen, a book co-authored with Elkin, includes four songs of the 'Wagaitj' that Harney rather fancifully lyricizes, including two 'women's songs' (Harney and Elkin 1968).¹⁰

⁹ There are many such articles and letters to the editor in the *NTT&G* and *Northern Standard* (afterwards abbreviated *NS*). Note just selections from the following two:

"About eleven o'clock, on Tuesday night, a charge of dynamite was thrown over the cliff into the black's camp. We cannot bring ourselves to believe we have any among us who would be so diabolically inclined as to wantonly injure them, but some care should be taken by thoughtless youths for the future, or they may bring themselves into trouble" *NTT&G* November 9, 1878.

"Sir, -- With others of your readers I was pleased to read your animadversionary [sic] remarks upon the above subject ["The Black Nuisance"], in your last issue but one; and I for one think that some steps should at once be adopted to abate if not remove the same. Several of the principal streets of Palmerston are periodically infested by gangs of unkempt, jabbering niggers -- loathsome in aspect, scab-ridden in body -- and caricaturing the decencies of civilized citizens by an ostentatious [sic] display of semi-cinctures almost as repulsive as nudity itself. For reasons of decency and morality such exhibitions should, I think, be restricted" *NTT&G* December 25, 1880.

¹⁰ One of these women's songs is about men's and women's separate song-space ("men make taboos, and so do we,/ And while we hold ours we are free) and the other is about love magic. See Harney and Elkin (1968: 39 and 40-41).

Harney presents a picture of the settlement of the Aboriginal 'Wargites' on the Cox Peninsula in terms that best reflect his own bush prowess.

We headed the nose of the *Pirate* towards a group of natives on Foster's Beach, and as we neared I could detect a restlessness in them similar to that of a flock of magpie-geese when the hunter creeps upon them, and the numbers on the shore became less and less (1961: 52).

Harney continues his pragmatics of bush morality by describing how he and Jack Murray tried to sneak up on the "unseen horde of Wargite in the green jungle," but only succeeded in finding one "half-blind woman."

Realising that this method of approach was useless, I returned to the beach and stacked all their rags and personal gear into a large heap. I spotted a large pet pig they kept, and pointing to this and the heap of rags, I delivered my ultimatum. They must come down to the beach and hear my story, otherwise I would burn the rags and kill the pig. This was final.

After this oration I dressed; then boiling the billy we had a cup of tea and awaited results.

My idea of burning the rags and killing the pig was really a bluff, but I knew that aborigines have a great horror of having any of their clothes burnt -- for such a thing would bring on a sickness and cause them to die -- and, having a real affection for pets, they cannot suffer them to be killed. I was simply using a law of the tribal elders -- magic versus force! (Harney 1961: 54).

Of course, it was only after some hundred years of European presence in the Northern Territory, when more was burnt and killed than clothes and pigs, that another 'law of

the tribal elders' was not used, allowing Harney and his friend, the later superintendent of Delissaville, Jack Murray, to sit on the open beach and drink their tea without being speared.

Bill Harney's writings are a good example of how Anglo-Australians were intimately tied to and affected by the Aboriginal culture and economy. Throughout his work, Harney emphasizes the links between the white Australian character and national identity and the character of "real bush" Aborigines. W. E. Harney and I. Idreiss developed portraits of outback Aborigines that allowed middle Australia to embrace them as part of the national character. M. R. Bronnin has written an interesting dissertation that examines the advocacy stance of writers like Harney, Idreiss, and even Herbert Basedow, the anthropologist (1980).¹¹ These men were attempting not so much to record the sociological facts of Aboriginal life, as to explore the links and discontinuities between the identity of Australian Aborigines and Australian bushmen, quintessential Anglo-Australian national heroes: the equivalent of American cowboys. But to claim that a link existed between black and white man, popular writers such as Harney had to participate themselves firsthand in local economic and cultural practices. And writers had to distinguish between what most Australians witnessed of Aboriginal life and what Aboriginal life was "really like."¹² While

¹¹ "These descriptive discussions of the aborigines were considered unsatisfactory by anthropologists writing in the same period, such as A. P. Elkin, W.L. Warner, and W.E.H. Stanner because they were often not specific to dates, locations, and tribes, or to methodology. Some of these anthropologists referred to the paucity of reliable written material on the aborigines, preferring to ignore the mass descriptive books containing material less systematically collected and arranged than that which appeared in their own books" (Bronnin 1980: 246).

¹² Bill Harney was married to an Aboriginal women and so was well aware of conflicting views that surrounded the social character of Aborigines and the Anglo social context in which these competing portraits arose: "With contact came a changed environment and in it aborigines became 'strong-fellow-face' in the presence of the 'too-white-ones' and their learned friends who came to study the black people and who found them stern dour people ever shrouded in the secret mysticism and taboo rituals. But to the white toilers, in the lower levels of their society, who had always rubbed shoulders with the native men and women, the aborigines were a laughing carefree people full of humour and a curious custom, in that they were only too happy to share their female companions with their friends. Out of these two contacts arose

Harney's task was, in part, to advocate the lifestyle of outback Aborigines, his writings have left an historical account that calls into question the lifestyle of urban and settlement Aborigines, including "Delissaville natives."

Now and then some Aborigines on "walkabout" from their settlement at Delissaville, about fifteen miles to the southeast, go strolling by. Some call in, others do not, and we prefer it that way, for a lot of them are hangovers from Darwin and know more about the modern method of hunting their "game" in the town areas than in the bush. Over here one sees that slow decadence of tribesmen more than anywhere else, for town and settlement life has divorced them away from the tribal pattern and it does not take long for contact to turn a good family of Aborigines into a horde that only thinks of the white persons, foodstores, and their unhampered sex drives (1965: 14-15).

Older women and men now living at Belyuen were newborns to eight years old when Bill Harney and Jack Murray 'rounded up the Wargite.' Mary Eladi was living at a northeast coastal site which is presently the Anglo run Mandorah Pub and Hotel. With her were her parents, her sister, Sarah, her half sister, Sharon, and other Emi, Mentha, Wadjigiyn and Kiyuk families. Emi kin included Emily Nela, her parents, brothers, and paternal uncles one of whom was named after a nearby site where he had his male initiation ceremony. Jean Ziya was a small child living in the Darwin Doctor's Gully Aboriginal camp. Grace Ziyesta's parents took her to and from a Cox Peninsula northwest and east coast camp where they had built fish traps. Joan Ela was born in Katherine at the 'Donkey Camp' during the Pacific War. Catherine Burga, now in her 70s, was living near the Finnis River with her husband and sister-in-law. When one of

different lines of thought that prevailed in an ever-changing society that slowly weaned the aborigines away from their hunting and tribal customs" (1960: xv).

her party was involved in the murder of a "cheeky" white miner, they fled south to the Daly River and then north to Darwin. Catherine Burga avoided Bill Harney's net as did a group of Emiyenggal, Menthayenggal, and Laragiya who remained at Anglo-Australian stations in the Talc Head and Charles Point regions. Private Anglo-Australian pastoralists and miners refused to release "their Aboriginal help" to Harney and Native Welfare. Other Aboriginal camps were located at Madjalaba, Bendjigoin, Milik, Binbinya, Bemandjeli and Belurriya -- sites scattered throughout the coastal region of the Cox Peninsula. While to the reader this list might seem a bewildering array of personal and place names, its diversity demonstrates the broad history of people living at the Belyuen community today: people were living and traveling throughout the Cox Peninsula and Daly River region.

Native Welfare attempted to control fully the movements and attitudes of Aborigines in the Delissaville settlement. Bill Harney removed children from their parents if the parents refused to come into the Settlement. He rated and ranked people's abilities ("A+1 works `Good Native as Control'") and personalities ("sulky"). If Harney thought someone was quiet, sullen, or in need of discipline he or she was punished by exile from the settlement and kin. This was thought to have a "quietening" effect on the trouble-maker because it severed the power people drew from local kin and countryside. Delissaville women were often sent to the Catholic Mission at Port Keats, while men were sent to Garden Point, an Aboriginal Compound on Melville Island (Bartells 1988b).

Jack Murray took over as superintendent of Delissaville in 1942 on what turned out to be the eve of the Japanese bombing of Darwin.

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1930.

dz: Deborah Zirita: father Emi, mother Marriamu, born circa 1950.

je: Joan Ela: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born 1943.

me: *laik pip>l fr>m Darwln dæt Jæpani ben start kaming dlswei naw: yeh yeh*
like people from Darwin, the Japanese were starting to come this way now, yeh yeh
dz: *:reidiyow caling war hn then ben kam*

the radio was saying "war" and then they came

me: *yeh `n wi dident now enithing hahaha wi lõk thæt irplein naw. BIG MOB!*

yeh and we didn't know anything hahaha we saw the airplanes now, BIG MOB!

je: *thæt en wir akras*

that and where across

me: *yeh dei ben baming thæt Darwln eriya naw!*

yeh they were bombing, that Darwin area now!

jdz: *plein la darwln*

planes were at Darwin

me: *yeh wi ben onli ben stend>p lõk laik dæt gæmen*

yeh we were only, were standing and looking like this [mocks looking at sky] like

je: *yu mab lang wei*

you mob were a long way away

me: *wen ala plein ai ben ai ben ownli llt>l gerl dir b>t wi dident now dæt waz jæpani dæt*

when all the planes came, I was just a little girl here, we didn't know they were Japanese. That

Darwln eriya waz a llt>l, blek, smowking,

Darwin area was a little, black, smoking place.

Whereas Harney's writings reflect the ease with which he and Murray were able to coerce Aborigines onto the Settlement, Jack Murray's diaries and letters reveal the difficulties he had controlling the movements of the local Aboriginal population. Murray is constantly attempting to centralize the "Wagidj" so that he can distribute them to various economic concerns: to the Army at West Point, to Tom Waite from Native Affairs in Darwin, and along the various projects on the settlement itself. Murray also seems to have believed that by having a central reserve of 'natives' he could more

easily monitor the arrival of new Aborigines in the area and control the sexual activities of his wards.¹³

Wed Jan 7 [1942]

. . . from my deduction after a conversation with him (Willie Woodie), the natives must be camping somewhere in the vicinity of the soldiers camp near Fosters beach & Talc Head. So have decided to [send] Bull Bull & possibly Jack Mowbery per horse back to find out just where they are and how many.

Sat May 19th [1942]

Five girls . . . run about to beach Sunday afternoon probably to make contact with soldiers, came back early Monday morning.

Murray addresses several letters to Anglo-Australians living on and around the Cox Peninsula who were "harbouring natives." He continually cajoles those in charge to collect any "natives" nearby and either keep them off the beach or send them to the Settlement.

The Department of Native Affairs in conjunction w/Police & Military have rounded up all Natives around the Darwin town area & further . . . & sent them to Mataranka for their own protection of course. The Department considers the beach area from Severe's Bluff to Point Charles an unsafe one for them. So we would appreciate your cooperation in keeping these beaches free of natives and instructing natives from now on that they must keep away from beaches

¹³ Letter to Constable McFarland, Thursday December 8, 1942 No. 62, and letter to Director of Native Affairs No.63-64 Wednesday Oct 7th, regarding Maudie Bennett's transfer to Darwin for work. Series No. 1980/11 E.J.Murray Diary's Letters, Darwin Archives.

inside the harbour. If there are any natives in your vicinity we would deem it a good favour if you order them off & tell them they must keep away. It is the . . . of the Dept. with natives this side, to keep them right back in the bush (5 April 1942).

From his diary accounts, it seems that the sexual activity of Aboriginal women was a constant concern of Murray's.¹⁴ For almost two years, the dull repetition of his entries about women's activities on the Settlement deviate from their daily routine of cleaning up the garden and camp only when he notes issuing of a rare food-gathering permit, overhearing or supervising a fight over men, and discovering a woman's escape from the Settlement.

The repetitive labor of the Delissaville settlement shows up in presentday narratives of older Belyuen women. Perhaps there is no topic which dominates women's recollection of their childhood and young adult lives more than their descriptions of the early Delissaville Settlement and the war camps in Katherine and of their attempts to leave and to return to the Cox Peninsula. The Delissaville camp is described in terms of the produce women planted in the garden and the fights that erupted between distantly related Aboriginal groups interned on the settlement. In 'That Old Garden' below, Mary Eladi describes life on the old Delissaville settlement. Although, by and large, Mary tells the story, it is not "her story" in the way I discussed previously: she is not the only one who owns the rights to recount it. Instead, her

¹⁴ As it had preoccupied earlier settlers. On April 20 1878 the *NTT&G* published an unusually sexist and racist fantasy: "To a Black Gin." The poetry and fiction published in the early Territory papers often registered the complete inability of northern male settlers to separate their desires and experiences from the Aborigines around them. Notes these lines from "The Old Squatter's (sic) Soliloquy" published in the *Northern Standard*, 8 March 1929. The poem eulogizes a massacre of Aborigines: "But in tortured dreams, when I fall asleep, I can hear the lubras weeping,/ And spectral blacks through spectral woods are always toward me creeping;/ And ever and ever they beckon me on to strange and mysterious places,/ Where, in my fancy, I see their comrades lie with blood on their ghastly faces."

description of the Delissaville, Katherine, and Daly River camps is a community text told by many people in relatively the same form. The description of the Delissaville settlement reads like a litany of foods; a list that is broken only by a description of the bombing of Darwin and of her trip to Katherine. She describes what was grown in the garden and by the water pool, what was carted from the old boat-landing, and what seeing the bombing of Darwin was like. Then she describes how the trucks came and the dogs went, and finally, how more food was moved. The story ends as the Delissaville families leave for Katherine. I have a more complete version in Appendix One.

'That Old Garden'

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

- me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1930.
 sm: School Master: Anglo-Australian, born circa 1950
 je: Joan Ela: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born 1943.
 cb: Catherine Burga: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born circa 1920.
 dz: Deborah Ziya: father Emi, mother Marriamu, born circa 1950.
 cm: Claire Mamaka: father Marritjaben, Mother Marriamu, born circa 1935.
 en: Emily Nela: father Emiyenggal, mother Emiyenggal, born circa 1925.
 bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.

SEGMENT ONE

- me: *yeh wi yuz tu grow >p owld garden dir pawpaw, painep>l, watermelon, swit*
 yeh we use to grow a garden behind Belyuen, pawpaw, pineapple, watermelon, sweet
powteitow, benana, pinut, dir hn kasava
 potato, banana, peanut, were there and cassava
- je: *wat kasava laik a powteitow?*
 what is a cassava, like a potato?
- me: *kasava naw, en thæt bin yu now bin lang wan ya sneik bin.*
 That is a cassava now, and that bean you know that bean, long one, yeh, snake bean
- cb: *lang wan kasava lm grow ala lang said av the fenz*
 long one cassava, it grows all along the side of the fence
- me: *thæt eriya naw*
 in that area now
- [noise]
- me: *watermelon p>mpkin sneik bin ahm painep>l benana wat-lm dia (E) painep>l*
benana
 watermelon, pumpkin, snake bean and pineapple, banana, what is this, goodness,
 pineapple, banana
- je: [faint]
- me: *wi yuzd tu grow-lm >p dir dir en denatherwan bihaind thæR>n dawn bilow*

- we use to grow them up there there and the other place behind, that place down below,
athersaid
 on the otherside
- dz:* *dir w>zent dir a bar thir ln thowz owld deiz eh dei hed*
 there wasn't, there was a bore there in those days, eh? they had
- cm:* *water irye*
 water there
- je:* *dem water*
 dam water
- dz:* *dem water*
 dam water
- me:* *yeh dem water*
 yeh dam water
- dz:* *hn thei uzd tu cari water far garden end iven dwinking water thætz rait he?*
 and they use to carry water for the garden and even drinking water that's right, huh?
- me:* *yeh yu ken si lemanz dir k>p>l a triz dir lemanz orwendjez*
 yeh and down below there again we use to grow a garden there also
- dz:* *dawn de bat>m?*
 down at the bottom [of the Community]?
- me:* *yeh yu ken si lemanz dir k>p>l a triz dir lemanz orwendjez*
 yeh you can see lemons, there are a couple of trees there, lemons, oranges
- dz:* *hn end wen yu hed am [noise] ownli meibi [noise] bred end an bek b>t wi hed tu*
 and and when you had am only maybe bread and on the back, but we had to
- me:* *yeh b'k>z wi dldent hev ani vihek>l sow pip>l yuztu wak dawn fr>m hir tu dir*
 yeh, because we didn't have any vehicle, so people use to walk down from here to there
lending kari-lm >p naw keis kam bek evri pip>l yuz tu
 to the boat landing, carry them up now, case of things, come back, every person use to
kari-lm >p wan kart>n itj bif
 carry up one cartoon each of beef
- je:* *beit*
 bait
- me:* *bred beit tln kap b'kuz wi never hed vihak>l hir si? thætz wai wi yuztu gu*
 bread, bait, tin cup, because we never had vehicle here see? that's why we use to go
dawn hn plk-lm >p wak >p wak >p en dawn
 down and pick it up walk up, walk up and down.
- [noise]

SEGMENT TWO

- je:* *meik mi lef tellm aliya thæt mab plklnliz yubela si thæt lending thei*
 make me laugh, tell them, all this group of kids, you kids see that boat landing, they
ala taim wak >p wak >p bifar
 use to walk up from there all the time in the past
- cm:* *thei al ben slip sampela*
 they all have fallen asleep, some of the kids
- jz:* *thei al slip dls mab plklnliz*
 they are all asleep, this group of kids
- dz:* *yu mab kld yu ben ilsening?*
 have you group of kids been listening?
- je:* *yu tel-lm aliya lern Abi*
 you tell them, all of them will learn Abi [me]
- me:* *yeh, wel yu mab mather naw thei yuzta wak >p en dawn get-lmbet bredi*
 yeh, well your mothers now they use to walk all the time up and down to get bread

SEGMENT TWO

- dz:* *KatherRain naw*
Katherine now
- me:* *`teik wan dag itj'*
"take one dog each" [said the Army officers]
- dz:* *hn thæt big [faint]*
and that big
- me:* *yeh wi ben kam bek fram KatherRain naw. wi ben gow fr>m ir geta trein thir hef*
yeh, we came back from Katherine now, we went from here, got a train there half way.
wei. Yu now wir thæt reilwei thæt trein bi thir weiting far the pip>l naw fr>m ir
you know where that railway is? The train was there waiting for the people from here.
wi ben teik everithing fr>m ir ala vegetab>lz fr>m ereya
We took everything from here, all the vegetables from here
- je:* *thæt red wan*
that red one
- me:* *swit powteitow, pamkin, watermelon, pawpaw, hanyoin, kebedj, hn evrithing wi*
sweat potato, pumpkin, watermelon, pawpaw, onion, cabbage, and everthing we
ben grow-lm >p irye. wi ben teik al thæt st>f yu now ala the vegetab>lz.
were always growing here, we took all that stuff, you know all the vegetables.

In the narratives, Belyuen women portray life in the mid 1930s as a singular repetition of forced manual labor punctuated only by past dis- and relocations: the Pacific War, an escape from the war internment camps, violence and death in the countryside as they traveled back to the Daly River and Cox Peninsula (see also "From the Daly River and Back," Appendix One).

[At Katherine]

- me:* *shap ben dir*
shop was there
- en:* *big mab m>ni*
lots of money
- bp:* *wir fram m>ni?*
where from money?
- en:* *m>ni fram pip>l mama*
money from people momma
- bp:* *ow yu werk le kemp?*
oh, you worked at the camp?
- me:* *yeh dei werk nat big mab mait bi wan daler flfti ai think hahaha*
yeh they worked, not for a lot of money, maybe one dollar fifty I think, hahahaha

[Leave Katherine]

- en: *thæt thæt thinkabet naw ai ben tellmbet thæt stari main ai ben wak rait bek*
that that I always think about it now, I tell that story of mine, I walked right back,
streit >p le mai bainagula kuntri
straight up to my country, Banagula [place name and en's patrifilial estate] country.
- bp: *thæt rait rait naw rait bek yu ben waak >p Banagula*
that's right, right, now, right back [from Katherine] you walked up to Banagula
- me: *fram dir naw*
from there [Katherine] now
- en: *mipela ben haid dir*
my group hid there [at the Daly River]
- me: *thei ben thei ben g'wei g'wei fram dir naw dls mab [noise] pip>l ben sei `ai think*
they, they went away, went away from there [Katherine] now, this mob, people said "I
thæt pleis klows >p naw' thei ben drimbet naw thei ben think:
think that place is close up now," they kept dreaming now, they thought
- bp: *:yeh sow sam:*
yeh so some
- me: *:hardpela sampela. b>t thei now mar wana stap dir tu lang*
hard way some of them, but they didn't want to stay there too long
- bp: *wai*
why
- me: *bikuz thei ben howmslk bla dlsh>n. le bitj.*
because they were homesick for this one, the beach
- bp: *far the bitj ident It*
for the beach, isn't it
- en: *yeh [noise]*
yeh
- me: *this>n ben In It*
this person was involved in it
- jz: *wipela ben wak >p naw*
our group walked up too
- bp: *hmm ben In It tu?*
mmm you were involved too?
- jz: *yeh mai mather wak >p gata sweg agen en thei ben spllt >p then*
yeh, my mother walked up with a swag also, and they split up then
- me: *thei ben wak >p Adeleid Rlver yu now wir adeleid rlver lz*
they walked to Adelaide River, you know where Adelaide River is
- bp: *yeh ai now thæt*
yeh I know that
- me: [noise]
- en: *fram Tlperari [noise] blg mab tjaina men blg mab pip>l ben llving dir*
from Tiperary [name of a pastoral station] lots of chinese men, lots of people were
living there
- jz: *Abi mipela ben kam bek dlswei*
Abi [me] we came back this way
- bp: *yeh tjainamen naw. witj wei*
yeh chinese men now, which way
- jz: *deili rlver wei*
Daly River way
- bp: *sam ben gow Adeleid sam ben gow Deili rlver?*
some went to Adelaide, some went to the Daly River?
- me: *now mar haiwei thei ben gow b>sh rowd*
not on the highway, they went bush road
- bp: *yeh Deili river wei b>sh rowd*
yeh, Daly River way, bush road

jz: *kam dls wei hef wei kip an wak wak* [noise]
 come this way, half way there, keep on walking walking
hirnaw kam awt Binblnya naw.
 finally they arrived at Binbinya [place-name on west coast of the Cox Peninsula] now

In the midst of these migrations because of the pressures of war, the dangerous powers of foreign country, and the personal and cultural attachments Wagaitj and Beringgen had to the Daly River and Cox Peninsula countryside, Murray understands men's and women's attempts to leave the Delissaville and Katherine camps, where he also worked, only as attempts "to make contact with the soldiers" or to be too "independent." He is constantly at his wits' end trying to motivate women to pull weeds and men to dig post holes rather than to go "walkabout." In one attempt to motivate women to come to work, Murray ceases all rations except to the aged and infirm and to those who work. Murray never acknowledges that the goods women received from the soldiers at Talc Head were in any way a justifiable motivation for their trips, although he uses the same material, if not sexual, motivations as the Talc Head soldiers to induce them to stay at his camp. Perhaps Murray would have been surprised to find himself part of a larger genre of Belyuen women's historical narratives about Anglo's men's attempts to control their economic and sexual activity. Older Belyuen women describe white men as always accusing them of seeking sex whenever they left a camp: "maybe we go for crab, that bedagut (white man): 'I know where your going. You're looking for sex.'"

Murray's attempts to control women's sexual practices were consistent with a general view of the time: control had to be assumed by the State because the Aboriginal male, the real owners of these women, had degenerated into drug-addicted pimps. Douglas Lockwood, a friend of Harney and a long time resident in the Daly River area, notes in The Front Door :

The union newspaper, *Northern Standard*, suggested they [newspapers in the south] should not interfere in matters that did not concern them. People in Sydney Domain could have no conception of Aborigines as they were. They were allowed to wander the streets of Darwin while drinking methylated spirits and hawking their women. The newspaper asserted that there had to be adequate means at hand to protect white women from black men (though it said nothing about protecting white women from white men or black women from white men) (1977: 117).

Though racially progressive for his time, Lockwood gives little thought to what rights Aboriginal women had over their and their children's marriage and sexual practices. Harney and Lockwood wrote that when "eternal triangles among the native people" arose, "[a]s the women herself had no say in the matter, and wouldn't be consulted, the men often went to an independent arbitrator -- generally the policeman or a patrol officer -- to make a decision" (1963: 65). But in the conversations I present throughout this dissertation, Belyuen women state that mothers and fathers decided to whom to give their children. The story about the two female cousins who ran away from Joan Ela's father portrayed women as actors in their own right, although one would drown in the sea near Port Patterson. Minus the death scene, this story is typical of the historical narratives Belyuen women tell about women in the past who ran away, fought, and appealed to other female and male relations when they were in marriage situations they did not like.

Irrespective of how Aborigines viewed their marriage practices, in the 1900s the Anglo-Australian welfare system attempted to establish control of Aboriginal women's sexuality and its "products." Section 45 of the Aborigines Ordinance outlawed the marriage "between female aborigines with persons other than

aboriginals."¹⁵ Obviously there had been a change of heart from the early colonial days when marriages between white men and Aboriginal women were portrayed as a method of "cleansing" the Aboriginal race.¹⁶ In the mid 1900s, children of "mixed blood" were hunted down, separated from their parents, and sent to barracks in Darwin and on Crocker Island. A Wadjigiyn man and woman with mixed parentage walked with Emily Nela from the internment camps at Katherine to the Daly River and then to the Cox Peninsula only to flee south to the Daly again to escape Native Welfare; they hid their young, light-skinned children in sugar and rice sacks along the way. Laragiya women who had their children removed from them often wrote to various government officials asking for their return. Their requests were granted only after they proved to have abandoned their former 'immoral' lives.¹⁷ What started as an informal policy to assimilate and advance 'half-caste natives' based on the Government's assuming a 'ward' relationship to them was formally extended in The Welfare Ordinance, 1953, to include any person

'who, by reason of-

- (a) his manner of living;
- (b) his inability, without assistance, adequately to manage his own affairs;
- (c) his standard of social habit and behavior; and
- (d) his personal associations, stands in need of such special care or assistance as is provided by this Ordinance.

¹⁵ Government Gazette published by the authority of the Government of the Commonwealth, Darwin, N.T. of Australia, Archives.

¹⁶ Cf. Stoler (1991) who discusses similar changes in colonial Asia.

¹⁷ See letter addressed to the Protector of Aborigines by the Laragiya woman, Kitty Fejo, dated December 1934. In N.T. Archives, Darwin, Australia.

As Alan Powell notes, "this Ordinance applied equally to all Territorians; in practice, almost solely to Aborigines and all but about eighty of those in the Northern Territory ended up on the Register of Wards" (Powell 1988: 233).¹⁸

For Aboriginal men living on the Cox Peninsula during the early days of the Delissaville Settlement, life may have been, at times, less tedious than for their female relations. Their sexuality was not seen to be a risk or a threat to anyone because there were seldom white women (who were seen as the group at risk) on the Cox Peninsula. Because the Cox Peninsula had never been a site of serious inter-ethnic violence, the country itself was seen as a safe ground for whites and so the specter of Aboriginal men's (and women's even less) organized resistance to white authority was minimized. Although young men were regularly planting in the garden, digging post holes, and making roads to the various camping sites around the Peninsula, they were also more regularly allowed to go hunting than women, and they acted as scouts for Murray and the Army based at West Point during the war which allowed them some freedom in their movements.¹⁹

The use of Aboriginal men as 'trackers' for the Army, an old racially motivated profession of dark skinned men for white men, is Murray's best justification for the funding of Delissaville, other than its use as a human storage bin. In January 1942, two pilots were found by Murray and 'five boys' (including Jean Ziya's deceased husband and Gracc Ziyesta's deceased father). *The Northern Standard* reported this incident, noting that 1000 Anglo-Australian soldiers were involved in a three day search, but "it is believed that the men may have been found by party including a number of aboriginals which went around the coast in a lugger."²⁰ On June 19, 1942, Fortress Command Headquarters wrote Murray that in order "to bring the Black Watch under

¹⁸ Also, *The Northern Territory of Australia, Welfare Ordinance 1953-1960, Part III, 14 (1)*.

¹⁹ M.Foley (1987, n.d.). See also a description of the "black watch" in excerpts from letter 1980/11 green folder of miscellaneous paper Papers 1 & 2. N.T. Archives: Darwin.

²⁰ *NS*, Friday, January 23 1942.

proper Military Control the following instructions have been laid down":²¹ Murray was to enlist in the Darwin V.D.C. so that he would be under the "control of Fortress Command," was "to organise and carry out" patrols to search for crashed Allied and Enemy aircraft, and was to serve West Point Battery in any capacity they deemed necessary. Murray was paid A.I.F. rates and received "normal Military Rations." The "personnel of the Black Watch" were not paid and received a smaller ration: it was thought that they could supplement their rations with bush foods.

The following story describes how "The Black Watch" found a man trapped in a local mangrove. The man is said to have kept one bullet in his gun in order to kill himself if captured by the enemy. Note how the ethnic identity of the parachutist oscillates between two sets of enemies: the Japanese who were at war with the Australians and the 'English' who were the original enemies of the Aborigines.

'Army Scouts'

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

jz: Jean Ziya: Father Emi, mother Emi, born circa 1935

me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1930.

en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.

bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.

- jz: *Abi thei ben faind jæpani alrait tupela thæt pleis*
Abi [me] they found a japanese man alright, two men at that place
- en: *Abi thei ben ingglesch alrait thei ben sei lm sei mama thæt mæn*
Abi [me] they were english alright, they said, he said, momma, that man
- jz: *ingglesch thei ben getlm*
english they found
- me: *thei ben get-lm parashut kut-lm put-lm le grawnd armi pip>l yu now armi mab*
they got him, cut his parachute and put him on the ground, army people, you know,
army mob
- bp: *yeh*
yeh
- me: *yuzd tu wakarawnd hir everiwir slgn>l naw gata smowk slgn>l*
use to walk around here, everywhere, signalling now, smoke signalling
- bp: *>s mab naw slgn>l?*
our group, now signalled?

²¹ This and other excerpts from letter 1980/11 green folder of miscellaneous paper Papers 1 & 2. N.T. Archives, Darwin, Australia.

- me: fram blekfela gat thæt mæn naw kam >p end plk-lm >p thæt mæn naw*
from Aborigines, "got that man now," "come and pick him up," that man now
- bp: wat thæt, ai ben llsen lm ben hev wan b>let*
what's that, I heard he had one bullet
- me: hmm lm ben hev wan b>let trai tu shut-lm lm self*
hmm, he had one bullet to try to shoot himself
- bp: yeh*
yeh
- me: b>t blekfela ben ketj-lm >p tu kwlk*
but Aborigines found him quickly
- bp: l>kil>ki*
lucky lucky
- me: faindlm*
find him
- en: yukai (E)*
yes
- me: lm w>z gana shut-lm lmslf lm wan b>let*
he was going to shot himself with one bullet
- en: ow now!*
oh no!

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

- en:* Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.
bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.
me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1930.
jz: Jean Ziya: Father Emi, mother Emi, born circa 1935

- en: ow now*
oh no
- jz: armi*
army
- en: dls>n lm shutlmbet mipela gata irplein mama watz rang wlth lm*
this one, he kept shooting at us with an airplane momma, what's wrong with him?
- bp: ai d>now*
I don't know
- en: hingllsh alrait b>t shutlmbet mipela klti*
english alright, but they kept shooting at us, goodness
- bp: ingllsh naw ben shutlmbet yu?*
english now shot-continual you?
- en: hingllsh yeh*
english yeh
- bp: f>k dæt sow thæt the thing naw?*
fuck that, so that's the thing now?
- me: kam >p irye naw efa the war*
came here now after the war
- bp: yeh*
yeh

- me:* *kam bek irye*
came back here
- bp:* *sldawn naw, flnlsht?*
lived here now, finished?
- jz:* *sidawn hir*
lived here
- me:* *sldawn iye thei ben riblIt this set>lment agen*
lived here, they rebuilt this settlement again
- jz:* *flnlsht wi ben meik-lm set>lment*
finished, we made this settlement
- bp:* *this wat lm ben lev>l*
this, what, was it demolished
- me:* *yeh meiklm garden evrithing wir naw pleis fr>m banana, swit powteitow,*
yeh, made the garden, everything, where now place, banana, sweet potato,
painep>l, orwendje
pineapple, orange
- en:* *kasava kasava*
cassava, cassava
- me:* *kasava*
cassava

Mary's first statement is a common way in which violent and ambivalently understood topics are mended and returned to a more sanctioned course. Using repetitive strategies I discuss in later chapters, she directs the conversation to a less stressful topic, in this instance to the Delissaville gardens: "came up here now . . . rebuilt . . . the garden." This effectively ends the 'hard story' that Emily has been telling and silences a troublesome part of the past which cannot be easily reconciled with the present group of people, one of which is a white American woman.

The prowess with which Mary Eladi is able to manipulate this conversation is probably the surest evidence of her long involvement with Anglo culture and economy. But these oral histories emphasize both Aborigines' involvement in and disengagement from white economic activity. Aboriginal people were always coming and going from Aboriginal and Anglo camps, but, Aborigines only appear in the historical record when they are near to white authority. If history is read from the regulations and records Anglo-Australians passed and kept, Aboriginal history is one of increasing curtailment and control. But Belyuen women interpret and present their historical involvement in

the Anglo economy as a clever manipulation of white people: they and their parents could use and evade white resources and controls.

By traveling in and out of the Anglo economy, Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen accomplished two things: they established longstanding cultural and economic ties to the Cox Peninsula while maintaining similar ties to their southern country and they gained a fountain of information about how Anglos act. Ambivalence about a place or a group of people (here, Aborigines' ambivalence about Anglo commodities and practices) and subsequent goings and comings to and from sites in the countryside have had positive results. By leaving and coming back to Delissaville, the Cox Peninsula, and the Daly River, Belyuen Aborigines say that the country has become infused the sweat, memory, and essences of their foreparents. Viewed in this way, Belyuen Aborigines' historical involvement with the Anglo economy on the Cox Peninsula is only a small part of their total economy of land use: Anglo rations and jobs are another resource in the countryside. The Anglo economy has certainly used and abused Aboriginal groups since colonists forcibly interned Aborigines on small Cox Peninsula plantations, but Aborigines use the Anglo economy, adjusting it when they can to benefit their own cultural aspirations for country. How do these aspirations relate to Aborigines' present-day use of the Belyuen community and local markets?

2. Narrowing the Circle: The Composition and Location of Households

Descriptions of the Australian Aboriginal household have fit somewhat snugly within Marshall Sahlins' definition: "the household is to the tribal economy as the manor to the medieval economy or the corporation to modern capitalism: each is the dominant production-institution of its time" and each has "contradictions all its

own" (1972: 76). Sahlins opposes the household or the "domestic group" to the family in that the domestic group could be composed of various sets of people from the same age group. In a like manner, Hart and Pilling defined the Tiwi household as those "who lived together day after day, hunted as a unit, pooled the results of their food getting, and ate and slept together" (1960: 13). They too opposed the household to the family. For them the family consisted of the husband, all his wives, and their children, while the household consisted of the husband, his wives of suitable age (because of infant betrothal, other wives are often small children still living with their parents), and their young children.²² In his ethnography of the Walpiri, Desert People, Mervin Meggitt equates a household with a domestic group (1965; see also D. Bell 1983). Meggitt writes that the Walpiri had three types of households: a widow's camp, a bachelor's camp, and clusters of "residential units." The composition of a residential unit usually consisted of a man, his wives, and their young daughters and uncircumcised sons, but a residential unit could also include anyone for whom a man had "strong ties of affection" (1965: 79). In 1965, Les Hiatt argued that the term "hearth" group better described the smaller socio-economic divisions of the Arnhem Land groups, the Anbara, Marawuraba, Madai, and Maringa, then did the term household.

A community camp consisted of a number of hearth groups, each with its own fire and, at certain times of the year, its own shelter (1965: 24).

Hiatt's hearth group consisted of a man, his wife, and their children.

²² Hart and Pilling note the influence of Catholicism in the 1950s on the composition of the Tiwi household. According to Hart and Pilling household composition had changed due to monogamy, but its functions were the same (1988: 115-8).

Compared with Pilling and Hart's, Hiatt's, and Meggitt's descriptions, the Belyuen household seems at once a chaotic and creative thing. There are no longer any young men's or widows' camps, although many household heads whose resources have been severely stretched to provide for young men say that they wish there still were "bachelor camps." Many young men and women create a type of communal housing by moving in groups from the households of one parent (or aunt-uncle) to the house of another. A residential unit consisting exclusively of a man, a woman, and their children does not exist, although ten of twenty-four houses are nominally headed by a man and woman. I say 'nominally' because the composition of even these households periodically change: husbands and wives leave each other and new couples, children, or siblings move in. Of the other households, nine are headed by a widow or a divorced woman.

Senior men and women say that a female-led household is a recent innovation (as was a widower-led household). In the past, a widow might have remarried her husband's brother, consanguineal or classificatory. Although some Belyuen women have had several husbands from widow remarriages, most have had just one (though several lovers). They explain, "I had my husband, finished now, more better I sit down by myself." Not literally, of course. Because of severe overcrowding on the community, few people ever sit alone. Nor would they want to do so. Being surrounded by one's kin is a sign of health and well-being.

A widow's household is one of the largest on the Belyuen community because it is rarely "locked up." On average there are eight people living in any house, but in a widow's often eighteen people are living in a space no larger than a small convenience store. Many residents are young children whose parents have left them in the care of their grandmother (cf. Coombs, Brandl and Snowdon 1983; Povinelli 1991). Periodically, older men suggest that a widow's camp be built. And older women, over-stressed by the demands of their large households, often

threaten to build one and leave their children and grandchildren to their own devices. But an older woman, who is nominally in charge of a house, is unwilling to abandon it, even if she may periodically threaten to do so.

The widow provides the main economic support for the household. She is aided by any young married couple living there who have an income and by older sons and daughters when they can be coerced into chipping in money or groceries.

Even though senior women are themselves relatively autonomous -- able to remain unmarried and to control, as well as anyone, the comings and goings of people in their households -- they do not attempt to transform the entire socio-economic sex-gender system. Instead, some senior widows articulate a strong desire to maintain their personal autonomy by not remarrying and pressuring their daughters and sons to follow a more traditional pattern. Belyuen widows rhetorically position their rejection of remarriage within an authentic Wagaitj-Beringgen cosmology by the selective and innovative telling of mythic narratives.

Mythic stories can be told to emphasize any of a number of social identities: the speaker can highlight that crab man is a crab, a man, or a father to someone else. When they are telling stories to their daughters, older women typically highlight the sex and kin relations between mythic actors. In this way, the stories highlight the sexual trickery that exists between members of the family, especially between the father, mother, and daughter. Mythic stories that emphasize the sexual trickery and treachery between the sexes within a family teach and legitimate a certain stance that widows take: finding a good husband (or wife) is part skill and part luck but not something to be tested twice. To have had a bad husband (or wife) and to go "more and more" (remarrying again and again) is to be silly and unable to learn from one's past: it is to be tjeingithut like Anglo-Australians.

All this does not translate to a social solidarity of old women as against young women. Diane Bell notes a solidarity between older Walpiri women that is

articulated through the "widows' camp" (1983) but at Belyuen the solidarity of the "pensioner women" is largely dependent upon political and ceremonial necessity rather than economic or social desire. Although many women at Belyuen have the same social status (unmarried widow) and although senior women derive and draw their authority from their aged experience, senior women or widows see this status as only an incomplete identity, most salient during interactions between Aboriginal and Anglo-Australians or during ceremonial, educational, and some foraging contexts. This seems to correspond to what Mervin Meggitt noted of the Walpiri men:

As we have seen, a system of age-grading embraces all the males over the age of about 12 years. But this did not produce a hierarchy of social classes or culminate in a gerontocracy; there was no solidary group of old men who wielded political power throughout the tribe. It is true that, within each community (and nowadays in each settlement camp), the old men made up a common-interest group; but it was informally recruited and cut across by moiety and descent-line affiliations. In general, the group or clique possessed social prestige simply because its members had a longer, but not necessarily wider, experience, particularly in ritual matters, than did their juniors (1965: 250).

While "the wulgamen (old ladies) mob" is always the group asked to go and collect bush foods for a political, social, or ceremonial occasion, in most day-to-day activities and interactions, being a member of a certain age group is cross-cut by other kin obligations or language group affiliations.

If what older women want to do and what the conventions they learn and reproduce open up a gap between their practices and their beliefs, this gap is most

clearly seen in the disagreements between older and younger women about monogamy and domesticity. For all their desire for personal autonomy, most older women argue with their young daughters about how best to look after their husbands. Many of the ideas older women express seem to conform to Western stereotypes of the domestic family: women should cook, clean, and do the laundry; men should get a job. But young women as a group have multiple sexual partners, children outside of stable male relationships, and rarely take up a classic domestic position in the household. When challenged, young women say to their older parents, "I'm just following your lead." Indeed, the transition from a male to a female headed household does not seem to have affected fundamental ideas of how a family group should be organized. A question then is how do widowed women and married couples in charge of a house decide who eats, sleeps, and lives there, and who can visit, borrow and rely upon the resources of the household?

The Belyuen household is both an enacted set of kin relationships that exist between people and, through time, a set of relationships between a human group and a place. People have an affiliation to a household (a group of people) and to a house (a place in the landscape). Most scholars of Aboriginal society have emphasized, along with the economic and kin aspects of the Aboriginal household, a spatial dimension. Les Hiatt locates his group around a hearth, while a key part of Meggitt's definition of the household is that place where a non-member cannot go. Emphasizing a different aspect of the spatial composition of groups, Fred Myers states that countrymen are those with whom one is likely to camp and "travel together" rather than primarily one set of kin (1986: 90-91). In his understanding, group composition occurs through the negotiation of various types of "proximity": social, geographical, personal, and ceremonial. Actual countryman "bands" are split into "on-the-ground residential groupings and more enduring social formations" or "landowning groups" (1986: 72). From this we can see that when trying to pinpoint

an Aboriginal household, ethnographers pin down the objective structures that exist when a group literally sits down on the ground or moves together across the land. However, they are careful never to equate the location where they find this unit with the group's 'home'; i.e., country. How are modern settlement households like and not like camps in the countryside? What is the relationship between affiliations people have to households, or, "hearth groups," and the affiliations they have to houses or "camps"?

Belyuen persons manipulate the varying degrees of kinship as a primary tool for organizing households. The primary features of the Emi and Wadjigiyn kinship classification system are given in Illustration One. (In this discussion I make reference only to the Emi terms.) The Emi and Wadjigiyn kinship system has no moieties or semi-moieties (in Aboriginal English "skins") and is fairly standard for the Daly River (cf. Scheffler 1978). Two lines of descent are emphasized, one through the mother's father and the father's father (tiemila and kaqul, respectively) and one which passes through two female links (mo.'s mo., makali). This is most clearly seen in the second generation below ego. Here, regardless of one's daughter's children's sex both are called makali, while the sex of one's son's children mirror one's father's parents. Emiyenggal and Wadjigiyn kinship has collateral extensions of siblings and cousin sets; distinctions are made between older and younger members (in Batjermal a distinction is made between ego's older and younger father, while in Emi a distinction is made between ego's older and younger siblings). All people fall within these categories or are placed into them (for example, a non-Aborigine who marries into a family is given the proper kin classification). Not to be within this system is to be a stranger: waganbaiyawwana, "we don't know where this person is from." A large group of people can have the same kin classification to ego: forty people may be my sister. And in ordinary conversation, kin classificatory

terms are most often used to refer or speak to a person.²³ But everyone with the same classification, adja (sister) for example, is not understood to be equally "close" to ego. Harold Scheffler points out that there are many linguistic ways by which a speaker can distinguish between the people that the kin classificatory system equates (1978: 128). Indeed, the ability of Belyuen speakers to make and to collapse distinctions between what the system offers as equivalent and what people understand at one level, as separate, allows Belyuen individuals to manipulate the composition of households.

Any non-Aborigine who has spent time on the Belyuen community first learns the terms for sister, mother, brother, cousin, grandmother, grandfather, and etc. However, in order to differentiate between types of siblings, linguistic tags like "same father, same mother," "real," and "blood" are applied to the consanguineal relatives of a person. These tags are used when young Belyuen people ask their parents about their ancestors, when older Belyuen men and women talk amongst themselves about how distant relatives are related, and when anyone is describing his or her relationship to consanguineal kin. Belyuen Aborigines also distinguish between types of "cousin" (E, panin, male cross cousins and manggin, female cross-

²³There are several very common ways people distinguish between extended sets of siblings, parents, aunts, uncles and etc. Stanner identified eleven categories of address and reference used by Aboriginal groups in the northwest of the Northern Territory: personal names, nick names, terms of kinship relationship, terms of age status, terms of social status, possibly secret names, terms for membership in social divisions, circumlocutory terms which themselves fall into several subgroups, metaphorical terms, signs, and expletives (1936-37). His general categories still serve as a good guideline for the conversational practices of Aborigines living at Belyuen and for the Daly River groups that I have encountered. Of these naming practices, nick names, kin terms, age status terms, circumlocutory terms, metaphorical terms, signs, and expletives are the ones most commonly used (cf. Povinelli 1989b). Some terms of reference are used rhetorically to position a person vis-a-vis a group. Wulgamen (old lady, and wulman old man) is used as a referent and as a play for affiliation. A speaker seeking to get the aid of another might say: "you and I are wulgamen now"; i.e., you and I have a similar set of grievances and understandings and should therefore act together (see also, Brandl 1980). Along with class names come social rights and responsibilities: old women garner respect and authority, but they also must assume more responsibility for the management of the household and of women's ceremonies.

cousins). The consanguineal strictures against marrying one's "real" mother's brothers daughter or father's sister's son is described as panintjetma ngathaninin panbapuRwuR ('cousin you and I have the same blood inside') or in Aboriginal English as "we're full cousins." Full cousins should treat each very differently than more distantly related cousins: their relationship is marked by closeness and teasing, as opposed to the formal, reserved relationship of distant cousins.

Households also reflect degrees of kin and language group connections. Consanguineal families share houses, while older sibling sets usually share a section of the Belyuen community. More important than the static location of houses, however, are the flexible movements of families between them. Sons and daughters (or brothers and sisters) of people who manage a house take advantage of their ability to impute equivalence between parents (and persons in their siblings' category) if they are having trouble in the place where they are living. For instance, if a person is having trouble with her consanguineal mother, she may go to her mother's sister's house since in this circumstance, people claim, "alla same mother." However, Belyuen Aborigines also differentiate between how all these "same" mothers and fathers should treat their consanguineal and classificatory children.

Belyuen people note the differences between types of classificatory relations when they judge the responses a person gives to a troublesome relation. Significantly, classificatory mothers and fathers can refuse to recognise a person as a real son or daughter during particularly heated exchanges. During them, classificatory parents emphasize the distance between themselves and the child that formal kinship terminology mitigates. It is common to hear, "Yeh, I'm her mother alright, but I never made that girl. I don't know where she came from."²⁴ Claims like

²⁴"Yeh, I'm im mother alright, but I never been make that girl. I don't know where im been come from."

this one are registers of extreme upset. In similar exchanges, consanguineal parents stress the blood relationship that exists between members of a family. Appeals and fights are formulated on certain kin lines: "I'm the one now that made you, me, me been carry you around." From this we can see that people do not escape the ties of immediate family through the extension of it. Rather, the ability of persons to go to "other mothers" allows tempers to cool and confrontations to dissipate until that time when "real" families are able to reconvene. Once the crisis has passed, an offender can make an appeal to his or her parents and siblings by saying, "I belong to you." This appeal works because belonging to a social group and to a stretch of country is understood as a necessary and essential part of life. But belonging to a group entails duties as well, including that the group be responsible for you until the time you assume responsibilities for others. Understanding how kinship terminology is used in ordinary and extraordinary conversations helps us understand the mechanisms by which household composition varies according to set criteria.

The stress people experience attempting to maintain a household because of claims by extended kin causes them to reevaluate their allegiance to a building as a dwelling.²⁵ The affiliation they have to a house is stressed when, for instance, a group of drinking men and women descend upon a widow's house. At this point, nondrinking members of the household are faced with a few choices about what they will do. They can wait for people to finish drinking and leave. They can "talk hard" and tell the drinkers to go somewhere else. Or they can themselves leave the house. Usually all three of these strategies are employed. During prolonged drinking sprees, people retreat first to separate rooms,²⁶ then to different houses

²⁵ Although I am using Heidegger's famous distinction, my discussion depends on Belyuen men's and women's own notion of presence and absence in place (cf. Heidegger 1971).

²⁶ As Bateson noted in *Naven*, proximate space can often defy culturally understood proximate behavior as different groups within that space vie for its meaning. "A single house is divided

(based on principles of kinship discussed above) and finally, or often in the first places, to hunting and camping sites in the countryside. A person's ability to "shift" or move camp is valorized on the community. Older and younger people alike state that a person should be able to stay at a number of houses or camping sites; moreover, shifting from place to place is critical since it constitutes "visiting" a place, house, or kin and thereby keeping it and them "open and warm." To be "stuck" in one place -- to own and have access to only one home or camping-hunting site -- is to be an impoverished person both personally and materially. In some sense then, the entire Belyuen settlement and surrounding countryside is an extended house or dwelling through which members pass on their way to and from better social relations. Each house and every camp is a series of divisions that can be more or less emphasized as autonomous dwellings as the kin system can be expanded or restricted. Whether it is the geographical divisions of a camp by hearths or of a house by rooms and mats, a 'house' is defined by people's sense of being or dwelling together.

In the anthropological literature an analytical opposition was proposed to explain various ideal and real Aboriginal social formations fieldworkers encountered; that is, a distinction between the clan and its estate and the horde and its range (Radcliffe-Brown 1930-31; Stanner 1965a; Berndt and Berndt 1964). Annette Hamilton has described this opposition as a "distinction between the 'religious' and the 'economic' systems"; whereas the clan owns the estate, the horde "does not own anything, but merely utilizes the products of a number of estates" (1982: 86).

between two or three men related by patrilineal ties; and this division of the house is felt by the men to be very real, almost a matter for stiffness and formality. The man who owns one end of the house will avoid intruding upon his brother's or his son's residence at the other end although there is no screen or wall dividing the house, only the big sleeping bags in the centre of the floor. But although typically the women of a house are not mutually related, they seem to be much less conscious of the divisions and will constantly bandy remarks the whole length of the house" (1977: 143).

Stanner (1965a) and the Berndts (1964) attempted to explain the existence of these two social formations as due to the nature of the Aboriginal spiritual or religious life on the one hand, and their hunting and gathering way of life on the other; while Aborigines may have an ideal patrilineal and patrilocal group in mind, the realities of a foraging lifestyle necessitate a looser confederation of "relatives and friends" (Stanner 1965a).

In some ways Belyuen men and women describe a similar tension between two desires: on the one hand they wish to remain in or return to the country where they have paternal and maternal dreamings (durlg), personal dreamings (maroi), and shared names (ngiRwat)²⁷ and on the other hand they want to "shift places," that is, to move and visit relatives and sites they have not seen for many days or years. Moreover, the more people travel in order to visit a place or person, the more sentiment they create for stops along the way. These stops can be a remote camp site in the countryside or a small convenience store on the interstate. But critical to Belyuen women's discussion of what they feel for places is the action of the place on them.

Women and men say they worry over ("cry for") places to which they have personal or mythic attachments but cannot find a way of visiting. And they often express their distance away from them as a physical ailment: "I feel no good about missing that place" and "this cold [flu] now has come up from worry for that place,"

²⁷Briefly, people can receive their Aboriginal names in a variety of ways, but they usually receive them from a person (a relative or a ceremonial guardian), from a site where they or their older kin were born, and from places they or their parents have rights over. Ceremonial ties and long-term residence are also factors in name bestowal, but all, nominally, place the person receiving the name in a custodial relationship to the place or person with the same name. Often, more than one person has the name of a place. This establishes a series of linkages between people: same named persons are supposed to exchange gifts and then remain close throughout their lives. The sharing of names on a regional level insures that groups remain connected to each other economically through the exchange of gifts and goods and socially through the exchange of sentiment (See also Brandl, Haritos, Walsh 1979: 49; Elkin 1950; Merian 1986; Levi-Strauss 1963).

(see also Myers 1979). But the responsibility for or the cause of their physical and emotional upset is the country acting as an agent, calling them to return and visit. Explaining their "need" to camp, hunt, and travel across the country, women and men say that places are pulling them along: "this place got him now, he's going to always be listening this place calling him." Women explain my continual return to Belyuen in similar terms; they say, "this Belyuen got you now, it keeps pulling you back." People who do not care for and cannot hear the voice of places where they were born, lived, or named for are "cruel"; they have no feelings and can hardly be described as fully human. Non-Aborigines who have no country, "no dreaming," and who seem to have no remorse upon leaving a place are "strange people" and are, at a certain level, incomprehensible. Even the Wagaitj and Beringgen living at Belyuen who have not seen their Daly River country for many years often say, "I never left that place, I am there now" and locate this absent place as their home. But, many different families may have competing stories for a single place because of how they experienced the site at different times of the year or in their lives. And as elsewhere in Aboriginal Australia, people have competing claims over the use and ownership of any place based on their various mythic attachments to it (cf. Berndt 1982; Sutton and Rigsby 1982; Williams 1982). Home, then, is a number of interlocking places where people develop systematic, heart-felt links of responsibility. And places are thickly lain with human history and sentiment (Myers 1986a; Sansom 1988).

There are two tensions, then, operating on the Belyuen community. On the one hand, Belyuen Aborigines have sentiments for a number of places based on their cultural understandings of the sentient countryside. On the other hand, these sentiments reverberate through Anglo-Australians' historical attempts to rationalize and restrict the Belyuen household onto the Delissaville (Belyuen) settlement.

The "rationalization" of the English countryside was achieved through the privatization and enclosure of common lands.²⁸ In the outer reaches of colonial Australia, Anglo administrators attempted to sever Aboriginal groups' ties to their country by containing them on settlements, "out of harm's way." Although settlement is often represented as providing protection to those settled, 'harm's way' is both the extended arm of capitalist development wherein entrepreneurial explorers open up trading routes by massacre and extortion and, schizophrenically, the illusionary arm which colonial administrators project in order to present something from which they can protect their indigenous 'subjects.'

The garden confines of the Delissaville settlement (which women discussed above) are one example of the two 'arms' of colonial and postcolonial land appropriation. The geography of productive gardens -- fenced in, even rows of agricultural produce -- symbolically represent what Anglo administrators wished to do with Aborigines: transform their economy, instill in them a capitalist work ethic, and restrict their movements. The gardens failed to produce either commodities or wage laborers. Indeed, even the countryside, "opened" by the supposed confinement of Aborigines onto the Delissaville settlement, failed to produce any measurable value. All was washed away by the fierce monsoons or blew away during the harsh dry season. Even if the immediate results were unprofitable, the confinement of Aboriginal people onto settlement gardens in order to describe the land from which they were removed as "pristine," has proved useful in the long run to local government. Administrators view crown land as a capital and natural reserve whose resources can be exploited at a later date. The Laragiya's, Wagaitj's, and Beringgen's use of the land as a means of livelihood unsettles this

²⁸ "During the eighteenth century one legal decision after another signalled that the lawyers had become converted to the notions of absolute property ownership, and that (wherever the least doubt could be found) the law abhorred the messy complexities of coincident use-right" (E. P. Thompson 1975: 241).

notion of a land held in reserve. Therefore, land alienation and the rationalization of the 'roaming' Aboriginal household go hand in hand. A family's means of production is confined to the settlement through the creation of a labor market. The place where one can find dwelling and through labor (sweat) find identity is narrowly restricted. But although Belyuen families spend a good deal of their lives on the Belyuen community in houses, they relate to houses as to sites in the countryside.

Belyuen Aborigines articulate similar types of attachment to houses (dwellings) and the Belyuen settlement itself as to ngiRwat places, maroi sites, and burial grounds. Houses are like bodies and places in their ability to absorb a person's sweat and thereby become, for some, a safe and, for others, a dangerous place. Just as camping sites are protected by deceased relatives who were associated with them, so a household is protected and disturbed by deceased husbands and daughters, mothers and sons; a disturbance that can influence whether people stay in a house in spite of its decaying state, or abandon it in spite of the lack of housing elsewhere. When persons die their spirits must be placated: to remove or placate the "worry" of these spirits, Belyuen Aborigines smoke a house or tear it down. This might seem prohibitive in a settlement context where houses are expensive, but many houses are old anyway and can be rebuilt with the government subsidies I discussed above, set aside for the training of community carpenters.

Living on the settlement has also affected where Belyuen men and women find marois (personal dreamings). The place where most people find their personal dreamings has shifted from numerous locations in the bush to a central freshwater spring dreaming located behind the Belyuen community. Because of their common maroi and its mythic importance, young children and adults "born from" the waterhole are responsible for all the places to which that waterhole is connected, but in particular, for the community itself. At the moment when one system for relating humans to the countryside is being constricted, another system intervenes

to broaden the relationship: maroi are restricted to a durlq site on the Belyuen community, but because of underground tracks that link this site to others in and around the Cox Peninsula, Belyuen Aborigines see themselves as responsible for a broad geographical region.

So while there is pressure from capitalistic structures for a "progressive narrowing of the circle" (of the economic unit to the domestic home; cf. Engels 1972[1884]: 112), Belyuen Aborigines' use and understanding of kin classification and the countryside at times reflect and at times resist this constriction. By understanding kinspersons to be equivalent and extended sets of the same type of person and "home" to be a series of sites to which a person has sentimental and ceremonial attachments, Belyuen Aborigines deny the limits of the nuclear family, household, and building. However, the primary distinctions that people draw for consanguineals and the particular attachments they have to sites on the land comply with socio-economic forces that constrict the home to the building where the nuclear family resides. The ways that Belyuen men and women play with these various notions of home and kin are clearly visible when issues of rent payment arise.

In order to collect rent from those who use a house, the Community Council retreats to the notion of the residential unit discussed above: what family lives in a house, can any clear kin unit be found, and, if so, who is the senior head? When this small group is confronted for payment, they use the available rhetoric of extended kin and of the valorized notion of the traveling Aborigine to disassociate themselves from any particular building to which they are assigned.

I got big family here I just leave this stinking house anyways, I shift for a change.

People ask, "who is the boss of this house?" They use existing notions of custodianship: "I am the one who looks after this place" and if pushed state: "let him have it then, I'll go to my own country." In statements like these, Belyuen Aborigines describe the custodian as a person who dwells in a place, thereby keeping it open, warm, and productive. Because of the importance of this work, "owners" (traditional land owners or owners in a capitalist sense) are beholden to the custodians, not the custodians to the owners. It is, therefore, total nonsense for owners to demand rent from a family who is doing them a favor. Owners who act in such a manner find their country unoccupied and thereby subject to harm. The custodians "shift" to another place, either to their own country or to another where they have residential rights. Practically, however, on a community or settlement, if everyone has to pay rent no matter to which house persons go, the rent will find them. More critical to this discussion is that even when people move to outstations or camps on the Cox Peninsula during extended rent crises, attachment to the community, and often to a particular house, brings them back. They 'worry' for Belyuen and the places where their parents and parent's parents have lived and died. Often by the time a family returns to the community, the rent crisis has passed. However, the long-term effectiveness of a strategy of abandonment and return is doubtful just as it is presently a suspect strategy for the resistance of Anglo squatters in and around Cox Peninsula. The Council must produce funding from somewhere because of a decrease in government assistance and a shift in national government policy away from assimilation and towards self-management.

3. Autonomy and Addiction: Buying into a market economy.

In 1984-1985, there were two grocery stores on the Cox Peninsula, one on the Belyuen community and one on the northeast coast some fifteen kilometers from the community. The Belyuen store was originally financed by a company that specializes in outback groceries, but it is presently run by the Belyuen community. Under the managing agreement, profits exceeding a certain dividend and loan repayment schedule are returned to the community who then use them to finance a community project. For example, in 1987, the Community Council bought a barge for the people to travel to and from the Port Patterson islands. The other store is attached to the Mandorah Pub, a small tourist hotel and bar which sells a limited variety of canned and packaged foods. During 1984-85, most of the revenue that the Pub derived from the Belyuen community was from the sale of alcohol, tobacco, and the fast foods that accompanied their purchase. Because the Pub had a virtual monopoly on sales of alcohol on the Peninsula income from these sales was significant. While no figures are available that give a precise picture of how much was spent, one can estimate by comparing the figures that E. K. Fisk (1985) presents of Delissaville's welfare income by sex to the drinking profile of the community (cf. Table Nine at the end of the chapter).

In the past, Belyuen men and women used each store for a different set of consumer items. Most moneys spent on nonalcoholic goods went to the Belyuen grocery store and most money spent on alcohol went to the Mandorah Pub. Unlike other Aboriginal communities in the north, no 'social club' exists at Belyuen where alcohol is sold to members at a lower rate. The purpose of social clubs is to keep money and people within the community during drinking sprees; a club's presence does not necessarily lessen the amount of drinking that occurs. A Report to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs noted that in 1977 on Palm Island 25

percent of the community income was spent at the beer canteen, while another 25 percent was spent at nearby Townsville and Ingham. In the same year, at Bamiyili, a small community near Katherine where many relatives of Belyuen families live, 27 percent of the total income of the community was spent at the canteen.²⁹

Aboriginal activists point out that while alcoholism is a problem on Aboriginal communities it is also a problem in the wider Australian community. But the Aboriginal alcoholic enters into a racist discourse in which drinking is a supposed sign of both the loss of traditional Aboriginal social control and the continuing inability of Aborigines to 'adapt to a market economy' (cf. Beckett 1964). The destruction of health and the depletion of funds caused by alcoholism are considered different from that caused by tobacco because the rhetoric of addiction does not as easily attach to the latter drug.

In 1988, the established pattern in which money for alcohol went to Mandorah and for food went to the Belyuen store was suddenly upset. The increased number of non-Aboriginal residents on the Cox Peninsula and the increased Aboriginal and tourist population were push factors that led to the opening of a new grocery store in the center of the Anglo residential block, the Wagait Development. The Alewa Grocery Store³⁰ had a greater range of groceries and higher grade of consumer items initially at lower prices. It also sold alcohol. Within three months, most income from Belyuen was being spent at this store, threatening the continued solvency of the Belyuen grocery and the Mandorah Pub. The Alewa store owners explained these results as the inevitability of free market forces. Without romanticizing the plight of any one of these stores or of Belyuen

²⁹ House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. (1977) Alcohol Problems of Aborigines. Final Report. Australian Publishing Service, Canberra.

³⁰ This is a pseudonym for the store.

consumers, let us look more closely at the "freedom" of the market on the Cox Peninsula and how it relates to Belyuen notions of place.

Belyuen Aborigines have a common market strategy of getting credit or delaying the payment of debts by making a store owner "sweet" in much the same way that one makes a place sweet by visiting and using it. The place, in this instance the store, gradually becomes familiar with the visitors and begins to give abundantly without requiring as much effort (money up front). Kin support each other's petition for credit: one person uses his or her own reputation for timely payment and long-term residency as "collateral." By extending the number of persons with debts, the debt burden of each person in a family is lessened for a while. While obtaining a network of debts can only temporarily extend one's finances, Belyuen women and men know local markets often quickly open and close ironically because of credit problems. They, therefore, charge a large amount of foods and goods and wait until the store closes, evaporating their bill.

The Alewa store owners also "sweeten" their customers by providing rides to and from the store at a fair rate and giving extra big portions of foods and free knickknacks. The store owners' motivations for extending credit are also fairly straightforward. With several markets in the area, people have a choice of where to shop. Belyuen men's and women's income is distributed along a very wide system of kin, cards, and domestic and ceremonial obligations. A 'bookdown' system helps mitigate the free flow of cash by tying the owner and customer at numerous points before the money enters the system. By inducing people to spend their money in the form of credit before actually receiving it, store owners attempt to control the direction money will flow. While the Alewa store owners initially allowed Belyuen Aborigines to bookdown only a small percentage of their income, this official system was soon exceeded dramatically, and entire checks were handed over to the owners on pay day. From an economic viewpoint, the possible individual greed of the

owners is not an issue. Rather, the example is interesting because it demonstrates how capitalist demands for increased profit necessitate the contravention of the rhetorical freedom of the market. This is a microcosm of a larger global system of enforced debt (pressures of debt in third world countries ravage aid plans, transform moderate governments into extreme ones, and corrupt a nation for hard currency, all ensuring that money flows back to the first world; Enloe 1989). Unlike third world states, however, the income and expenditures of Belyuen residents are relatively stable and basic breadbasket items remain fairly constant (Table Three). While women and men engage in a miniature tourism economy (selling crafts) and a small bush food trade (collecting and selling fish and crab), this added income is no more than an extra two hundred dollars a year for about eight people and five hundred dollars a year for another fifteen people. In such a restricted monetary system, businesses must continually look for new ways to increase their share of the market. One way to increase one's share of the market is to extend credit as was done first by the Alewa store and then, as a competitive measure, by the Belyuen store as well.

Because both stores were allowing bookdowns and people were taking advantage of the credit, Belyuen men and women did not have the income to meet their bills. Most nondrinking men and women began to pay one bill every other fortnight, or to pay "half and half" (half their check to one store and half to the other). Many drinking men and women charged bills at both stores but only paid back the Alewa grocery to ensure that their alcohol supply was not cut off. Because of the sudden strain on their cash flow and after repeated warnings, the owners of the Alewa store sent out legal notices advising Belyuen people to pay their bills or face court fines and jail time. However, because the financial solvency of the Alewa store depended upon Belyuen individuals continuing to patronize it during and after the financial crisis, this "hard talk" (direct talk and action; cf.

Lieberman 1985; Brenneis 1984) was supplemented by friendly explanations of why the Belyuen people had a responsibility to pay their bills on time: the owners pointed out that they had bills to pay as well and that the store was a business, not a free dispensary of foods.

Whereas, Weber's focus was on the "origin of the bourgeois class" especially its famous "protestant ethic" (1958: 24), my focus here is on multiple and competing notions of work and monetary ethics. During the money spat, Belyuen women and men agreed as a group that nothing is free and that payment always accompanies a service. This view reverberates with their understanding of the necessity for ceremonial and ritual exchanges and their deep-felt responsibility for the correct management of country. However, when discussing the matter, they returned again and again to several issues. First, the owners "liked bookdown bookdown": no one forced them to allow people to bookdown, rather the owners themselves sweetened up people and then persuaded them to charge "more and more." The owners were portrayed as never satisfied until a person had charged to their limit or had surpassed it. Women and men portrayed themselves as coerced into a practice they did not like, but with which they had no choice but to comply. The conversational item "no more like" is a strategy speakers use to position themselves as unwilling laborers: if one does not like what they are being asked to do, then those who are asking should reward the labor in some way, with money, credit, transportation to somewhere, and etc. Belyuen women often say that they "do not like the business (work)" of telling stories, histories, or providing ethnoscientific data. Indeed, they do not always enjoy the work; it can be boring and tedious: the point is if they nevertheless work they should be paid. People use this same conversational item to suggest that because the store owners liked what they were doing -- they benefited from the practice -- they had no right to demand immediate payment. To claim not to like the business of booking-down, as Belyuen

men and women did, is an attempt to realign the power structure and throw responsibility for its results onto someone else.

Another issue that Belyuen people raised in order to explain their position in the dispute was their permanent residence on the Cox Peninsula. People claimed that the country, sites in it, and local Aboriginal people were tied to each other's well-being for the long-run and that this was the basis of proper land management.

Because people and places are dependent upon one another for their physical and social life, each must necessarily look after the other -- the one by visiting and the other by providing foods and cultural identity. But Belyuen women noted that no one has to go to every named site every day or even every week. Rather, a person should go hunting and camping at a place when it is the "right time." As I showed in the last chapter, the right time can be a matter of season, group consensus, available transportation, and whim. People must decide what is the best place for a food or activity on a certain day, and who are the right people for a particular type of hunt in a particular place. Likewise, deciding the right time to pay a bill can be a very complicated business. The right combination of personal sentiment, available funds, transportation, and an otherwise clean slate of debts is needed, i.e., country custodianship and store management must be considered in a number of social, ceremonial, and economic contexts. The unswerving schedule of charging and paying off an entire bill every fortnight seems overly greedy and slightly perverse to local Aborigines. No one can be responsible for such an excessive situation and so Belyuen men and women say that they should not be "punished" for the demise of the Alewa Store.

Issues of personal autonomy which continually arose in conversations marked the seriousness of the conflict in many people's eyes. While there is some debate in the Australian literature about whether Aborigines have real "enduring" and "hierarchical" political structures (Sutton and Rigsby 1982; Hiatt 1986), there is

general agreement that Aboriginal societies share a pronounced 'ideology' of autonomy and egalitarianism. Such an emphasis is important in this case, for, even before the owners could discuss particular person's bills, they had to convince Belyuen families that they had a right to demand payment from them at all.

At Belyuen, senior men and women state unequivocally that there are "no bosses." This unequivocality has as much to do with real emerging family-based class structures on the community as with the verity of the statement itself.³¹ Even so, Athol Chases' description of boss-like behavior as excessive and loud seems to fit the Belyuen viewpoint very well.

There can be a 'big man' for ceremonies, and a 'boss' for sites and country, but rarely a 'boss' for people . . . The ethos is that to set oneself up as a spokesperson or a leader of people against others is an act of foolhardiness, and one which will lead to public humiliation . . . Leadership, if it occurs, is covert (Hiatt 1986: 15).

People passionately feel that, outside of prescribed ritual exchanges, they have a right to decide to whom and at what time they will give and who can demand things from them. Asking itself should be done covertly as a suggestion rather than a demand. One must "think about" the other person, must "feel for them" when giving as one gives a visit to a place because of deep sentimental attachments to it.

³¹ People are often most unequivocal about Belyuen having no bosses when individuals from families with high incomes and connections to white or Aboriginal sources of power attempt to force social or economic changes onto the community. Galvanizing younger and older people around the rhetoric of "no bosses here" poorer, but often more 'traditional' individuals can isolate persons or families attempting to direct the community, but the influence of working, wealthier individuals and families in areas like community hirings and regional politics is not diminished.

Whether money, honey, or attention, people insist that neither sentiment nor goods can be demanded from them.

Just as Belyuen men and women claim that some hunting practices are more authentic than others based on the activities' difference from Anglo practices, they also claim that a clever Aborigine is one who cannot be starved and who can walk away from white culture when it does not suit him or her. As I demonstrated above, Aborigines have historically walked into and out of direct involvement in the Anglo economy. Skeptical, conservative whites living at the Wagait Development say that Belyuen Aborigines are soft and spoiled and that they would starve if left to themselves in the bush. They read or knew Bill Harney and other Welfare officials who portray Wagaitj and Beringgen history on the Cox Peninsula as one bounded by the fifteen miles of the Delissaville reserve. Wagaitj and Beringgen Aborigines say that they can always go back and live off the bush. They emphasize their long walks to and from the Daly River and point to their regular camps and outstations on the Peninsula as evidence of their cultural and economic flexibility. But the different responses of the drinking and nondrinking groups to the Alewa market crisis highlighted to local Aborigines and non-Aborigines how the production of needs intervenes between the Aboriginal rhetoric of the commodity-free unburdened, autonomous Aborigine and the non-Aboriginal rhetoric of the "spoiled black."

At the height of the market controversy, nondrinking men and women could quit most of their business at the Alewa store. No longer productive or sweet, the Alewa store was ignored by them; they slowed down their payments or did not pay at all. These people remarked on how they were able to be satisfied with "just a little bit" and compared this with old bush practices.

like in the bush, maybe you get little tea, sugar, smoke, that's enough. You gana be satisfied.

The owners, faced with a group of people who could do without goods other than such basic foods items as rice, flour, tea and sugar³² which could be purchased at the Belyuen store, decided they had been too hasty in their approach. They asked Belyuen individuals for smaller repayments and promised new items for sale as a way of reobtaining people's business. However, drinkers could not quit their business because they could not quit drinking. During this time, Belyuen families discussed the notion of the alcoholic as a person with a disease, an addiction. These two groups then faced each other, the nondrinkers arguing that drinkers had lost their "culture" because they had to go "more and more"; they were becoming like bedaquits (Europeans) who could not be satisfied with "just enough for themselves." Nondrinkers pointed to Anglo-Australian appropriation of the countryside; this is what being white was like: having inordinate greed and disregard for one's country and kin. Drinkers argued that they were just getting "enough," which, because of the addictive quality of drinking, is more and more. They also pointed out repeatedly that nondrinkers were "itchy" for tea, tobacco, and hamburgers as drinkers were "itchy" for alcohol.

No matter who needed what more, after the major debts were repaid, only people on unemployment and a selection of other reliable debtors were allowed to charge their bills at the Alewa grocery. The owners decided that they had learned their lesson and were not going to be caught in such a tight monetary bind again. However, by selecting young drinking men as suitable debtors, they got a reputation for "liking drunken people." Senior Belyuen women symbolically likened the owners and drunken people in their focal concern for money and grog, and in their need for

³² There is a certain irony in the inclusion of tea, sugar, flour, and tobacco in this list. As Sidney Mintz (1985) has noted elsewhere, colonial agents used these foods to establish footholds into countries.

more and more of whatever they desired. Older women and several nondrinking older men juxtaposed themselves to the store owners and the drinkers by saying that they were not able to think about one thing only. They were torn between refusing and satisfying the people for whom they cared. They look at their kin's starving bodies, "feel sorry" for them and feed them, or they look at the addictive shakes of their sons and daughters and buy alcohol to "cool them down." Moreover, older women say that they must bear the brunt of the entire bread basket, that they have to stretch continually beyond the widening drain on funds to find food and clothing for an increasing number of people. From these women's perspective, the owners (and the law to which they have recourse) both support irresponsible behavior and addiction and punish excesses of it.

So far, a person's refusal to pay a bill on time has not resulted in anything more serious than a cut off from ready credit. However, the store's threatened recourse to the law changed the field in which Belyuen families played with stores. The conspiracy of the law and the economy was pointedly developed. Yet one reason why the Alewa owners never actually called in the police is that in the racial politics of the Northern Territory Aborigines are "bad risks." Those who extend credit to Aborigines lack sense, and the police suggest that all involved attempt to work things out. Not surprisingly, appeals by whites to blacks to be "fair" to them and pay their bills usually get nowhere, mediated as the requests are by a long history of white threat, intimidation, and sanction.

Although Belyuen Aborigines say that they cannot starve, one of the consequences of losing their credit is that they have to think of ways to extend their money through fortnightly payments. The notion that Aborigines spend their income without consideration of their long-term budgetary needs has begun to give way to an understanding of the saving strategies they employ. Altman notes the ways Gunwinggu fluctuations in expenditure are linked to methods of saving. He

notes that a common way for Gunwinggu outstations to 'save' their money is to stock certain supplies that are easily stored and preserved, such as drums of flour, tea, sugar, and rice. Money left over from the purchase of cheap bulk items is used to buy or maintain equipment for the camps (Altman 1987a: 64-65). On the Belyuen community, this 'banking system' is used only during limited periods: at the beginning of the Dry season right before a family moves to its Outstation camp. Drums of food are then bought and transferred to the camp and left there even if the family moves back to the community for a short period of time. Buying large, cheap drums of foods while living at Belyuen has the unintended result of attracting large numbers of extended kin to one's table. Households that have a large supply of food staples or tea find it very difficult to refuse to share them without incurring serious social isolation: being labelled as the same kind of person as the Alewa store owners, a person who is too "greedy," a person who "cares too much" for temporal items such as rice and not enough for enduring ties for kin and country. In fact, people are liable to label another person greedy not only for storing bulk items, but for keeping any item that can be segmented, be it a wallaby, a hamburger, or a stick of gum; those who eat "straight through" neither looking to the right or left are "too fucking greedy." Camps and houses, like foods, can be ever divided to provide a "bit of room" for kin. By this time, it should be clear how issues of autonomy and of kinship are negotiated in daily interactions and exchanges. Because I belong to you, you have a responsibility to feed and house me, and this responsibility can be dissipated only if we both have nothing and nowhere to go. The more one accumulates, the less one needs all of what one has and the greater pressure on the person to share. Belyuen women and men respond to these pressures by buying little and relying on small fluctuations in the cash supply to make ends meet.

Men and women receive several kinds of cash surpluses: tax, research, and royalty payments and money from tourists. In the Northern Territory, through the

Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1976), businesses which extract goods from Aboriginal lands must contract with the relevant group. In the rich uranium fields of Arnhem Land and in the copper-rich country of the south, significant returns from mining flow into community coffers and into the Aboriginal political arms of the Northern, Central, and Tiwi Land Councils. In the rich tourist centers of Kakadu National Park, Katherine Gorge, and Uluru National Park, some money flows into Aboriginal communities from crafts and management schemes (cf. Altman 1987b).³³ The Daly River lands, from which Belyuen language groups receive royalties, have so far produced little of capital value. Yearly royalties come from a small pet meat industry which shoots feral pigs and bullock and from a small bush safari outfit which guides tourists through the area. Indeed, Wagaitj and Beringgen men and women complain that their country "got no money," and younger Belyuen people joke that the money they do receive from it is worth no more than toilet paper when compared to Arnhem Land mining royalties. The relatively small amount of royalties Wagaitj and Beringgen receive can be increased for some individuals and family groups in several ways: outright addition (everyone chipping in their allotment) for items such as a car, gifts and debt repayment, and gambling.³⁴ Although small, the relative certainty of these royalty payments give women and men a bank against insolvency. They plan purchases or bookdown alcohol with these proceeds proffered as collateral. The same use is made of tax rebates except that this income is usually larger than royalty income, while the number of recipients is smaller.

Unlike tax rebates and royalties that are used as a bank against insolvency, money from researchers and tourism is treated like money in the bank by postponing full payment for services and items. Many women and men who sell

³³ See, Volume 9 No. 1 1985 of Cultural Survival Quarterly 'Parks and People'.

³⁴ I have described elsewhere how close kin play in teams to win money (Povinelli 1991), see also Berndt and Berndt (1947) and Altman (1987a).

crafts and dance in tourist corroborees tell the buyer not to give them the entire payment, instead they gradually "draw out" (take) the money as they need it. Because money is not in hand, kin cannot ask for it. When monies have been completely depleted, people ask for credit based on the seasonal return of crafts and dance and ceaselessness of cultural knowledge. The response from merchants and researchers is mixed and the outcome of this a strategy often depends upon the personal relations between the parties.

This kind of work, dancing and describing culture, opens up more than just a bank of funds. Through this work, Belyuen women and men continually reexamine the open-ended economy of need between Aborigines and Anglo-Australians. Belyuen Aborigines constantly experiment with the efficacy and effectiveness of their demands for rightful payment and the form that these payments can take. As well, they experiment with the needs of others: how much does this lawyer, anthropologist, welfare worker, or store owner need me? Again and again, rightful need and proper practices are framed and said to be based on authentic Aboriginal practices. It is conceivable that the relatively large population base of Belyuen families compared to other groups on the Cox Peninsula make their present strategies more effective. Aborigines in Darwin suffer extreme insult because they are a minority compared to other segments of the population. But there is no guarantee that the strategies Belyuen people employ today will work tomorrow if the Cox Peninsula is developed as a large residential area.

I should note that no critical moment in the history of the Belyuen interaction with the market economy was reached when I was there in 1984-85, 1987, 1989-90. Belyuen women and men have been engaged in complicated market interactions for quite a long time, which was precisely the point of the first section of this chapter. 'Ideology' and 'discourse' on neither the Belyuen nor the non-Belyuen side is wholly its own or wholly the other's, instead each begs, borrows,

and coerces identity from the other in real power hierarchies. I turn to these processes in the next chapter. What are the precolonial and colonial identities of Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen people? How do these cultural identities account for who is living, working, and traveling through Cox Peninsula and Daly River countries?

TABLE NINE: Distribution of Income For The Purchase of Alcohol.

Average money for 1978 & 81 going toward the consumption of alcohol.

Unemployment	738.58
pensions	778.62
total fortnight	1519.21

-

Average money for 1978 & 81 going to the consumption of non-alcoholic items.

unemployment	738.59
pensions	1305.35
family allowance	168.11
total fortnight	2212.05

Adapted from Fisk (1981).

CHAPTER FIVE: "No Clothes, Strong Culture": The Politics of Representing the
Precolonial Past.

The task for this subtrend in the current experimental moment is thus to revise conventions of ethnographic description away from a measuring of change against some self-contained, homogeneous, and largely ahistorical framing of the cultural unit toward a view of cultural situations as *always* in flux, in a perpetual historically sensitive state of resistance and accommodation to broader processes of influence that are as much inside as outside the local context.

Marcus & Fisher on Raymond Williams, *Anthropology As Cultural Critique* 1986:78

Introduction.

Today, Beringgen, Wagaitj, and Laragiya persons live in the cities and countryside throughout Australia. But in the Top End of the Northern Territory, most Laragiya live in the greater Darwin region; most northern and southern Wagaitj and a small group of coastal Beringgen live at Belyuen. Other coastal Beringgen and Wagaitj families live at Aboriginal communities in the Daly River area: at the Daly River Mission and at the Port Keats (Wadeye) and Peppimenarti settlements (Map 1). What accounts for this social geography? What does the historical record tell us about where these Aboriginal groups were living and hunting and what were their practices before Europeans arrived on northern shores? These academic questions are similar to political questions that Aborigines and non-Aboriginal Australians face today as they attempt to sort out the political puzzle of land tenure and rights. These queries are especially vexing in the Northern Territory where there is an Aboriginal land rights act. There, many people have reified a version of the historical record and have taken certain anthropological models of Australian Aboriginal land tenure as the "truth."¹ The contradictions and confusions that arise in modern legal settings are attributed to the confusions of individuals rather than, as William Roseberry puts it, to the "disordered past" and the "disordered present" (1989: 56-79).

¹ Note for example the Lands Commissioner's, Mr. Justice Maurice Olney, comment, "[i]t is now fashionable in some quarters to suggest that Mr. Justice Woodward was mistaken in his understanding of the traditional relationship between Aborigines and their land, or that this understanding whilst appropriate in some areas of the NT was and is inapplicable elsewhere. Whilst it is no part of my function to enter that debate, the fact remains that the Royal Commissioner set out his understanding in the first report, invited comment upon it, and received no response that would suggest he was mistaken" (1991: 94).

Many Australian researchers have faced this shifting past when attempting to document the traditional boundaries of Aboriginal territories. Boundaries are continually redrawn as each researcher listens to a new set of informants hammer out present understandings of the past.² This chapter examines the politics of representing the precolonial past. I look at two different groups at two points in time, non-Aborigines in the mid to late 19th century and Belyuen Aborigines in the late 20th century. Keeping with this dissertation's focus on productivity, I explore how the coherent historical and cultural identity of local Aborigines has been produced over the course of the last hundred odd years of white contact.³ I already examined the importance of cultural identity to the economy and politics of north Australia. How does the production of history and cultural identity relate to the production of people and countryside and the production of economic well-being?

Up to this point, I have emphasized the canonical version of Beringgen, Wagaitj, and Laragiya history. I now highlight the inconsistencies of the historical record in order to get at the mechanics of identity construction. First, what do 19th century ethnographers tell us of where Aboriginal countries were located and of where Aboriginal groups were traveling and camping throughout the region? Second, how did

² Nicolas Peterson has recently reviewed the relationship between residential rights and the rules that govern residence. He argues that flexibility in residence is not an important part of, but rather, a consequence of a "reasonably well tuned" relationship to the natural environment (1983). Nancy Williams also argues that the rights of use and the ownership of land are "continuously being acted out, challenged, confirmed, and conflicts concerning them resolved" (1982: 131). William's observation fits alongside Peter Sutton and Bruce Rigsby's that political maneuvers over land use and ownership arise from the "choice" Aboriginal men and women have about their territorial attachments. They argued that, although the location that modern Aborigines assign a group may not accord with the historical record, the method by which they assign human groups to stretches of land is quite traditional (1982; Cf. Sutton 1988; Myers 1986).

³ Interest in the colonial period has proven useful to a variety of tasks in Anthropology: uprooting the 'timeless,' synchronic fashion in which social groups are studied (Rosaldo 1980; N. Davis 1983; Comaroff 1985; Roseberry 1989; Agnew 1990; Kelly 1985), integrating various indigenous models of history in our study (Geertz 1973; Bourdieu 1973, 1977) and exploring how the historical relationship between anthropologists and colonial powers affects the practice of writing ethnography (Hymes 1969; Marcus and Fisher 1986; Asad 1986, 1987).

19th century ethnographers and popular writers distinguish between the authentic and corrupt 'native' and decide what were genuine personality traits of various Aboriginal groups. Colonists' attempts to identify 'authentic' and 'corrupt' Aborigines were continually thwarted by the philosophical conundrums of their times; before one can find them, one must theorize who natural man and woman are.

In the second half of the chapter, I examine how Belyuen women describe the precolonial past. Belyuen Aboriginal women also differentiate between 'authentic' and 'corrupt' practices when describing the "olden days" before white colonization. They ground their histories in cultural differences, highlighting and producing cultural and economic contrasts between themselves and Anglos. How do Belyuen Aborigines "produce" the precolonial past and their cultural identity; what are the criteria they employ to construct a past they have not experienced? Belyuen people portray their connection to the Cox Peninsula countryside as longstanding, intimate, and culturally appropriate. How do they compete with an historical record that portrays their relationship to local lands as relatively recent in origin and as untraditional in form?⁴ Modern Aborigines and colonial Anglo-Australians share an apprehension of the precolonial past: both must describe what neither has experienced. Is there any moment when a historical perspective allows us to witness the authentic Aborigine? Can we find a moment in time when the precolonial past was being recorded but not produced?

⁴ Cf. Justice Maurice Olney (1991).

1. Using, Mixing, Owing: Locating precolonial Aborigines.

The problem with locating precolonial Aborigines is one of time as well as one of space: when does one begin to look for the "olden days"? Belyuen Aborigines say that people had, in their words, "a strong culture" in the "olden days" before Europeans arrived. Then the wallabies were plentiful, the water was sweet, and the air was filled with the high screech of cockatoos. In the olden days, hunting trips were not interrupted by the dull background roar of planes flying in and out of Darwin, by four-by-four Toyota engines and radios, and by police looking around the bush for dope farms and "rebels."⁵ People still cared about the corroborees and ceremonies, believed in the dreamings, looked after the countryside, and were healthy because of it. According to Belyuen Aborigines there was no sickness in those days; there was no alcoholism or the high blood pressure that now kill men and women before they reach their mid-fifties. "I think about it alot," says Joan Ela, a woman in her mid-forties whose husband and husband's brother both died of stress-related heart troubles. "Before, *they* drank just water, sweet from the ground, maybe with a little wild honey mixed in it. They were never sick, before, you know, that whiteman came."⁶ Moreover, according to Joan and others, in the olden days people knew the cultural topography of their paternal and maternal countries and were able to live and to travel freely through them. If these activities were characteristic of the "olden days," they were practiced a long time before Joan's life, or even the lives of her parents. Perhaps they occurred in the lives of her great-great grandmothers and grandfathers. But as early as 1805, Nicolas Baudin, the captain of a French cartographic mission in the south

⁵ Belyuen Aborigines use this term to refer to transient rural squatters. Many "rebels" are young male Anglo-Australians who are subsequently found to be under warrant for arrest. This has led to the general perception among Belyuen women that all white men are 'armed and dangerous' and should be avoided.

⁶ "Bifor thei ben dringk juz watr swit wan frum grawn, meibi mixim up gota tjugerbeig. Thei never ben sik bifor, yu now bedagut ben kom."

seas, had already sailed past Cape Dombey and the Peron Islands (1974; cf. Peron 1809, Map 1). If he contacted Aborigines in the area (he does not report so doing), he might have introduced the diseases that, many say, radically changed the relationship between Daly River and Cox Peninsula groups and the countryside.⁷ Surveying the same coast in 1819, P. P. King saw and was seen by natives off the Port Patterson area (King 1827). In the 1830s, the Australian explorer J. L. Stokes was traveling around the northwest coast of Australia, from Port Essington to the Victoria River. In 1839, he reported influenza "raging among the natives" around Point Emery in the Port Darwin area (1846).⁸ At the Victoria River mouth Stokes notes:

We learnt from the party at the boat that a large body of the natives had been down watching their movements, and apparently intending if possible to surprise them. Though they had approached very near, they would not have been seen but for a shooting party, which got view of them from an overlooking height, crawling along the ground with evident caution. They were probably the same party we encountered higher up, and had traced our trail backwards, in order to see whence, and in what force we had entered their territory. Little did they imagine, as they gazed upon our small party and its solitary boat, that they had seen the harbingers of an approaching revolution in the fortunes of their country! (1846: 89).

⁷ Robert Hughes (1986) discusses the strategic importance of Baudin's voyage to the British settlement of South Australia. Already competing with the French for colonies and sea lanes for their rich trade routes, the British saw the French 'scientific' missions as half-veiled attempts of the French government to establish settlements in Australia. This helped encourage the British administration to establish south Australia as its new penal colony.

⁸ For a discussion of the role that disease played in the 'Age of Exploration' see Crosby (1987) and Cronon (1990[1983]).

But Stokes was one in a line of "harbingers." Nowadays, Belyuen Aborigines locate Marritjaben country, Joan's patrifilial country, just north of the Victoria River on the coast near Cape Dombey. Other Belyuen residents have many paternal and maternal links to coastal lands between these points and north to the Finniss River. Their ancestors must have seen the billowing sails of Stokes' ship. Stokes comments upon the possibility that he himself is being watched. He often notes finding traces of Aborigines where he landed (remains of "feasts" and old camps).⁹ Stokes traveled at a time when many writers represented Aborigines as having a magical, trickster, half Caliban-half Ariel nature.¹⁰ Although Stokes does not mention seeing natives between Port Patterson and the Victoria River, he cannot be sure when he was being seen or not, and if he did see Aborigines, he cannot be sure if they were acting friendly or hostile towards him. Stokes notes at Point Emery (Darwin) how friendly the natives there seem to be; they even go so far as "presenting themselves without spears." But Stokes attaches a footnote to this observation, and this note is one of the earliest examples from the Darwin-Cox Peninsula region of the suspicion with which Anglo-Australians regarded the Aborigine; 'indigenes' were a confusing mix of trustworthiness and trickery.

Speaking of natives appearing without spears, reminds me to mention for the information of future explorers, that their arms are always near at hand. They even trail them sometimes between their toes, a fact which travellers should ever bear in mind (1846: 19).

⁹ For example, along the northwest coast Stokes writes, "We noticed several old traces of natives" (1846: 32).

¹⁰ I examined this in Chapter 2 and 4.

This footnote recalls Foucault's argument that in the 19th century the use of surveillance arose alongside a new police state mentality (1979). The Australian nation was founded as a penal colony in the 1780s, and developed police tactics like other nations during the Industrialization Period. Yet, in the north of Australia during the surveying years, explorers were not the only ones watching for tell-tale signs of human activity and intentions. Whether or not Joan's specific ancestors saw the billowing sails of Baudin's, King's, and Stoke's ships, Aborigines living in the region were soon on the look-out for the white sails of merchant and exploratory vessels. If 'indigenes' were always potentially deadly tricksters, then so also were Anglo settlers and merchants whose sails might, on one day, carry with them food and goods and, on another day, police or settlers with intent to kill. Did Aborigines view Europeans as tricksters, people who might be kind, who might have guns hidden under their breeches, who might have laced arsenic in gifts of flour? Modern Aboriginal writers such as Colin Johnson who are attempting to write an "other" history of the colonization of Australia suggest that they did (1989; cf. Willmot 1988; Davis and Hodge 1985).

While Aborigines, Europeans, and later, Chinese had to watch, listen, and learn quickly of the disposition of the other, most historical documents only portray the colonists' drive to understand the personalities and practices of local Aborigines and Asians. This drive to discover the other had its own particular 19th century Western-European flavor: white writers were interested in discovering their own 'origins' (the reason for their supposedly self-evident world domination). Because they needed new capital and trade routes, they were also interested in discovering the nature of the groups they encountered. Western interests in origins questions and in the natures of the people they encountered created the dominant questions of northern settlers: what were the original places, personalities, and practices of local Aborigines? Are the present locations of Aboriginal groups representative of where they were in the past?

To what extent have their residences shifted? The historical record gives at best an ambiguous answer.

Early explorers do not give the names of the groups they encountered as they travelled past the Darwin, Cox Peninsula, and Anson Bay shores. But the questions of who were the groups explorers encountered and what were their 'national' borders soon became central to Northern Territory ethnologists, government officials, and popular writers. Interest in a "folk's homeland" was, of course, a broader Western concern. Applying Johann Gottfried von Herder's mid-19th century model of cultural and spiritual heritage depended on finding the homeland of a racial stock from which particular cultural characteristics sprang.¹¹ If this philosophy of culture was not developed to explain the confusing diversity of peoples colonists were encountering, it certainly articulated well with the historical context of colonization: European administrators were fixing their national borders and slicing up the world among themselves. As well, they were demarcating the borders of so-called African, American, and Australian sub-nations (estate and language groups). Northern Territory ethnographers, explorers, and government officials wrote profusely on issues pertaining to the borders of Aboriginal peoples' traditional countries.

Ten years after the founding of Palmerston (Port Darwin), *The Northern Territory Times & Gazette* reported, "our native tribe, the Larrakeyahs . . . invited their brethren from the Peninsular -- the 'Waggites' -- to meet them at their

¹¹ Benedict Anderson writes, ". . . the writings of Rousseau and Herder, which argued that climate and 'ecology' had a constitutive impact on culture and character, exerted wide influence" in the 19th century (1990[1983]: 61). Later he writes that this was "[i]n blithe disregard of some obvious extra-European facts" but that this "splendidly *eng*-European conception of nation-ness as linked to a private-property language had wide influence in nineteenth-century Europe and, more narrowly, on subsequent theorizing about the nature of nationalism" (1990: 66). In *A Short History of Linguistics*, R. H. Robins writes of this Romantic model, "[a]t the beginning of the European and especially of the German Romantic era, and with the forces of European nationalism about to become a dominant theme of nineteenth-century politics, the assertion of the individuality of a nation's speech and its intimate bonds with national thought, national literature, and national solidarity was readily appreciated and initiated a continuing trend of linguistic theory" (1990[1967]: 166-167).

Congregational Union."¹² Since this time Wagaitj (Wogites, Waggites, Wargites, Wagitj, etc.) have been reported to be living, hunting, and conducting ceremony on the Cox Peninsula and Bynoe Harbour-Port Patterson Islands. The earliest literature disputes on whose land they are living. In a popular work The Australian Race, Edward Curr quotes his brother Montague Curr that "Larrakia" land is "in the neighborhood of Palmerston" (Port Darwin) and that "Waggite" land lay¹³ "to the westward of Palmerston, across the harbour, and extend to the Daly River, and perhaps beyond" (1886: 249). In the same volume, Curr presents Paul Foelsche's account of the locality of the Laragiya. Foelsche, the Police Inspector of Port Darwin from 1870-80 and an amateur ethnologist, posited, "[t]he country of the Larrakia extends along the coast from the mouth of the Adelaide River, west to Port Patterson, and stretches about twenty-five miles inland" (Foelsche 1886: 250). In 1881, Foelsche is already noting the dramatic effects of white incursion on the Laragiya: Laragiya knowledge, customs, and society are already "dying out" (1881-82: 6). As evidence, he reports instances of smallpox, influenza, syphilis, and venereal disease among Laragiya families. Local newspapers also represented the Laragiya as becoming increasingly corrupt, often mocking their speech and behavior in the Western courts. Ever since Foelsche, the Laragiya have been described as a race that is slowly dying out. This description is so common, in fact, that one wonders why Westerners might wish it were true. Mr. Justice Olney's recent rejection of the Laragiya's traditional land claim to the Cox Peninsula suggests a partial answer. He writes, "[t]he impact of European and Asian migration had a devastating effect upon the Larrakia, the worst effects of which were compounded by factors such as the Second World War and the development of Darwin as a modern urban area. In the result, the Larrakia all but disappeared as a *readily identifiable and coherent group of people* (1991: iii, my emphasis). In the political

¹² NTT&G, May 3, 1879.

¹³ Curr uses the word 'live' to indicate where a group's land lays.

climate of Australia, if the Laragiya are an incoherent and "dead" remnant of a previously strong culture, then no rights devolve to them.

T. A. Parkhouse, ethnographer and Port Darwin government official, took a stance between Curr and Foelsche regarding the traditional territories of the Wagaitj and Laragiya. In his writings and maps, the Cox Peninsula floats as a 'neutral zone' between the Laragiya and the Wagaitj who he claims mutually detest one another (1895: 638). Parkhouse does not comment on the quality of Laragiya society and culture. Other documents from this period only allude to the presence of Aboriginal groups or to their "dispersal."¹⁴ For example, colonial surveyors in the Anson Bay area report seeing Aborigines but do not state who they were or what happened afterwards (cf. Goyder 1971).

In 1914, Baldwin Spencer, well-known ethnologist and naturalist and later Chief Protectorate of the Aborigines in north Australia, published a map showing the "approximate localities of the various native tribes" (6). It shows the "Larakia" in the Darwin area, the "Worgait" on the Cox Peninsula, and the "Brinken" on the southern side of the Daly River. In Wanderings in Wild Australia, Spencer recalls the camps and countries of the "Larakia" and "Worgait."

In the afternoon I went with Inspector Beckett to examine the native camps in Darwin. There are two of these, one on the top of the cliffs, called the King Camp, and one immediately below it on the shore. The first is really the camp of the Larakia, which is the native name of the original tribe inhabiting the Darwin district. . . . The second camp is mainly occupied by Worgait people whose

¹⁴ Bill Rosser's Up Rode the Troopers is a moving and interesting historical narrative of the atrocities black and white troopers and pastoralists committed against Queensland Aborigines. He notes that the term 'dispersal' is a code word for massacre. From the newspaper articles I quote in the following, it is clear the term is similarly used in the Northern Territory.

country lies on the opposite side of the harbour. Nowadays the different tribes have become very mixed up and "civilised" (1928: 610).

He considers the Laragiya tribe "which once inhabited the country round about Darwin . . . much too decadent to retain anything more than mere vestiges of its old customs" (1914: 152). Again in Wanderings, he describes the supposed breakdown of Laragiya attachment to their traditional country. And again this cultural disintegration is used as a reason why Laragiya lands can be taken from them.

Genuine wild natives would be miserable away from their own country, but in the case of a heterogeneous crowd, such as is now gathered together in Darwin, there was no need to pay heed to this aspect of the matter. They have all long since got beyond any traditional feeling and will only object to being removed from their old quarters because it will interfere with their freedom to do exactly what they like in regard to intercourse with Chinese, Malays and a certain class of Europeans (1928: 612, my emphasis).

Genuine or not, Spencer describes certain aspects of Laragiya male initiation: the age of the initiate, the type of initiation (non-circumcising), and the ritual roles of various male and female kin. Then he describes the Wagaitj male initiation: the young initiate is seized and taken through the bush to the "country of another tribe, such as the Larakia, amongst whom they will spend two or three months" (1914: 157). During this time, the young man is taken to a series of "Larakia camps," including sites in Darwin and on the Cox Peninsula which Spencer has earlier described as Wagaitj country. He finally describes a circumcision rite at one site, emphasizing the joint participation of

Laragiya and Wagaitj, suggesting that "mixed"¹⁵ Laragiya ceremonies are a result of colonial dislocation and ceremonial corruption and that the Wagaitj ceremony remains traditionally and socially complex. Reading Spencer, one gets the impression that Aboriginal cultural identity and practices become more coherent as one moves down the southwest coast from Darwin: Laragiya culture and society are in shambles, Wagaitj less so, and Beringgen even less so.

Herbert Basedow, an ethnographer who also conducted research in the Darwin-Cox Peninsula-Daly River areas in the early 1900s, presents a somewhat different account of the 'traditional' localities of the "Larrekiya," "Wogait," and "Berringen." First he distinguishes between coastal and inland Laragiya groups, the "Binnimiginda" and "Gumajerrumba" respectively. The Laragiya, in Basedow's account, have a large "domain" extending "southwards between the Howard River on the east and the Finniss on the west . . . and forming the southern boundary at about twenty-five miles inland" (1906: 1). Between the Wagaitj and the Laragiya are the "Sherait" or "paperbark natives" who disappear from the anthropological record a short time later.¹⁶ Wagaitj country is said to extend "across the Daly River to about Cape Ford." Finally, the Beringgen's "domain extends from Cape Ford to a point about 18 1/2 miles north of Point Pearce, known to them as *Allaitperra*" (2). Based on the word lists he also provides, Basedow's Wagaitj are the Wadjigiyn (and perhaps the Kiyuk as well) and his Beringgen are the Emiyenggal and Menthayenggal. If Basedow is right about where

¹⁵ Belyuen Aborigines use this term as well to describe the joining together of two patrilineal, matrilineal, or language groups for the purpose of ceremony, travel, or residence. See the next Chapter for a fuller discussion.

¹⁶ *Djeraij* is a Batjema (the Wadjigiyn language) term for belly-button and whirl-wind or -pool. During a mapping trip to the Daly River, senior Belyuen women suggested that earlier ethnologists must have misunderstood their informants who were describing a *djeraij* dreaming (*durlg*) in the area but were mistakenly understood to be referring to a human group. Whether or not there were "bellybutton people," there might have been a Wadjigiyn or Laragiya estate group associated with the now hypothetical whirlpool dreaming located somewhere in the Finniss River area. The Djerait may have been "dispersed" in the early 1800s when miners moved into the Finniss River region; cf. *NTT&G*, October 13, 1888.

language groups' paternal and maternal countries were at the time, they were considerably more southward than now thought.¹⁷

Basedow chops up the countryside into discrete language group "nations" and he interrelates these countries by describing the ritual connections that existed among them. For instance, the Daly River and Cox Peninsula people sent bamboo "message sticks" to one another for "summons and invitations to initiation ceremonies" (1906: 46). Senior Belyuen men and women remember their parents sending these message sticks to and from Laragiya and Daly River coastal groups for these purposes. Where the various groups received these messages is unclear. Most ethnographers only mention in passing the residence -- versus the traditional country -- of groups. Although their traditional lands were supposed to be in the Daly River region, many Wagaitj were living with Laragiya on the Cox Peninsula when Basedow did his fieldwork: he describes a Wagaitj camp at Point Charles returning south to the Daly River for men's and women's ceremonies.

Some members of the anthropological community criticized Basedow for his popular portraits of Aboriginal society and culture. Books such as Knights of the Boomerang seemed, according to some social scientists, to cast suspicion on his scientific writings. It is true that Basedow, more than other anthropologists, consciously attempted to glamorize traditional aspects of Aborigines -- especially their noble demeanor when they lived and hunted in their traditional countries -- in order to change popular opinion about their society. To his credit, however, his scientific articles refrain from judging as authentic or corrupt those Aboriginal practices he

¹⁷ I am not advocating the use of a "language group model" to describe residence or social organization among precolonial Daly River and Cox Peninsula groups. Bruce Rigsby and Peter Sutton write, "We believe that the phenomenal referents of such concepts [speech community, language community, and the like] are fundamentally social -- they refer to groupings of social actors -- and that our analyses and descriptions of Aboriginal peoples and languages are obscured when we substitute secondary terms such as speech community for primary social anthropological terms such as land-holding group, local residence group, ceremonial congregation and the like" (1980-82: 8).

observed. For example, in 1906, like Spencer, he states that Wagaitj and Laragiya have "mixed" male ceremonies, but unlike Spencer he does not describe this as a corruption of former ones.¹⁸

After Spencer's and Basedow's, few reports were published about the Wagaitj or Laragiya for a generation. In the 1930s, A. P. Elkin traveled to Delissaville (Belyuen) where he befriended the superintendent Bill Harney. Elkin wrote in 1950 that most of the 'Wagaitj' lived at the Delissaville Settlement. He states, "[t]his tribe formerly occupied the coastal country from the mouth of the Daly River north to Pt. Charles" (1950: 67). He is one of the few ethnographers who subdivided the Wagaitj and Beringgen groups. In his field notes,¹⁹ he distinguishes between the "Rakragerle" (presently known as the Kiyuk; Rak is a Batjema modifier meaning estate) whose country included the Peron Islands and coastal region up to the Finnis River, the Wadjigiyn whose territory was the northern coast of the Daly River, the "Amiyangal" whose country was the southern coastal side of the Daly River, and the "Mendayangal" whose country was the Cape Ford region. Also living at Delissaville were the "Marriamu Wagaitj" or "Brinken" from the Nadidi area near Cape Dombey. As Basedow, Elkin highlights both the cultural connections and cultural differences between Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen. For instance, he notes that Laragiya and Wagaitj performed mixed ceremonies, had a high incidence of marriage,²⁰ and had personal dreamings (maroi B) from the Cox Peninsula region. In an article about name-sharing (ngiRwat), he interrelates the two groups further by stating that while name-sharing is a Wagaitj

¹⁸ Basedow presents the "mixing" of Laragiya and Wagaitj groups during men's ceremony as a traditional form of exchange: "[a]lthough the *Larrekiyas* do not circumcise, yet when a performance of this nature is about to take place amongst the *Wogaitis*, invitations to be present are sent to the former tribe, and the members of the two hold a joint corroboree [sic]" (Basedow 1906: 12).

¹⁹ Housed in the University of Sydney archives (Laycock 1982).

²⁰ Basedow confirms part of this view, "the *Larrekiya* and *Wogait* are, so far as my observation went, friendly with one another, and tribal intermarriage is not infrequent" (1906: 4).

'custom,' it establishes connections between a number of Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen families and countries. Other cultural systems mitigated against a complete merging of the various groups. The durlq of Wagaitj and Beringgen families were found in the southern Anson Bay region, while the durlq of Laragiya families were found on the Cox Peninsula and Darwin region. This remains the case today. Wagaitj and Beringgen continue to have separate paternal and maternal durlq whose mythic centers are located in southern countries.

Today, most Beringgen, Wagaitj, and Laragiya Aborigines and non-Aboriginal ethnographers say that the Cox Peninsula is Laragiya country, that one should address the land in the Laragiya language if one can speak it, and that Laragiya ceremonies and mythic creatures organized the countryside in the Dreamtime Past. Extensive research conducted by Michael Walsh, Maria Brandl, myself, and others has continually reconfirmed the same combination of precolonial 'facts' that summarize and canonize certain parts of the above disagreements, inconsistencies, and contradictions of the historical record: that the Cox Peninsula and Bynoe Harbour areas are Laragiya country, that over the last hundred years the Laragiya and Kiyuk-Wadjigiyn have had a high incidence of intermarriage and ceremonial exchange, and that there have been far fewer marriages and ceremonial activities between the Laragiya and, as a group, the Southern Wagaitj (Emi and Mentha) and the Beringgen (Marriamu and Marritjaben).

Present ethnography cannot and historical documents do not tell us how different Aboriginal groups *used* the Cox Peninsula, Port Patterson, and Anson Bay regions before colonists arrived. Nor do either tell us when the Wagaitj and Beringgen moved to the Cox Peninsula. From surmises based on genealogical work, the Wadjigiyn-Kiyuk could have arrived one to two hundred years ago; that is, before or after Europeans arrived on the northern shores. Ancestors of Emiyenggal and Menthayenggal families living at Belyuen probably arrived fifty-odd years ago. A smaller set of Marriamu and Marritjaben siblings migrated to the Cox Peninsula with them. We have no way of

knowing if other Emi, Mentha, Marriamu, or Marritjeban families lived and traveled across the Finnis River and Cox Peninsula regions before this. The oldest person now living at Belyuen, a Marritjeban woman, was about ten years old in 1930, roughly fifty years after the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* reported the Wagaitj and Laragiya holding joint corroborees. It is not surprising, then, that today Wagaitj and Beringgen living at Belyuen say the Laragiya and Belyuen groups have "always been mixed."

Beringgen, Wagaitj, and Laragiya may or may not have "always been mixed," but Westerner's tendencies to fix their 'national' borders are at least as old as this "mixing": Aborigines' emphasis on interrelating groups is as old as Westerners' emphasis on separating them. Explorers, ethnographers, and early settlers emphasized the fixity of a group's native country; enthralled with the romantic Volk model they drew lines around countries rather than through them. But Western records also show that Aboriginal groups and countries were connected by ceremony, marriage, and durlq tracks. Creating Aboriginal national types had a devastating effect on those "nations" which were interpreted as of savage disposition. But before colonists could decide which nations were of savage and which were of noble character, they had to determine whether or not they were witnessing genuine articles. To do so, they theorized polar opposites: a pristine and a contacted native. A litmus test then existed for finding authentic cultural traits and texts.

2. 'The Genuine and the Corrupt': Cultural Traits and Cultural Texts.

Ethnologists.

Ethnographers were interested not only in an Aboriginal group's national borders, but also in its character: they wished to document and to describe traditional Aboriginal traits and practices before they disappeared. Ethnographers made regional comparisons of Aboriginal society and culture and, generalizing from them, formulated rules and principles for understanding the Australian 'race' as a whole. They also participated in the grand debates of their time about the social evolution of mankind (McLennan 1886; Stocking 1987). Their ability to develop models of human cultural evolution pivoted on the traditional outlook of their informants; ethnographers had to judge how and if the informants they used to exemplify a certain theory had been tarnished by contact with foreign ("Chinese, Malay and a certain class of Europeans") elements. While ethnographers were looking for and recording Aboriginal practices and texts, they were also unintentionally recording the ways they themselves affected the practices of the people they studied.

Ethnographers regretted the loss and supposed corruption of Aboriginal society during the first years of northern development.²¹ Many attempted to record and to understand what the Aborigines did and how they conceptualized their world before the corrupting process of civilization was complete or, in a more grotesque formulation, before there were no Aborigines left to observe. Ethnographers, however, did not record any and all things Aborigines did. Research instead focused as

²¹In 1930, the British Association for the Advancement of Science at its meeting in Bristol passed a resolution "directing attention to Australian aborigines as being among the most valuable living people for the scientific study of the early history of mankind and urging that the Commonwealth Government should provide for the proper anthropological training of officials entrusted with the administration of aboriginal affairs." *NTT&G*, December 30, 1930.

it still does largely today on the material and social traditions that were seen to be more traditional and so more likely to be disturbed by contact with Anglo and Asian culture. The tension between the methods ethnographers used to collect information and the effect of those methods on the 'purity' of the information thus obtained was never directly addressed, although everyone knew that Aboriginal cultural knowledge and material were 'up for sale' in the Northern Territory since the turn of the century. Perhaps lost to the wit of social theorists of the time, the tensions between ethnographers' practices and their goals were not lost on all commentators.

Close by, a Larrakeyah man, a fine specimen of humanity, anatomically, is attending to some spears. He wears nothing but a hair belt and an apron made of twine. He is quite willing to be photographed for the usual bribe -- tobacco (Ramsey Smith 1924: 137).

Perhaps the greatest satire that has ever been recorded in connection with the Queen's blanket bounty was when in Queensland last month a native just about to receive a blanket dropped down stone dead! It was too much for him.²²

Social insight is not necessarily social critique. Conceptualizing payment for services rendered as a "bribe" and a sudden death from disease or colonial narcotics as a *moment of ecstasy does not judge those who pass out the tobacco and blankets*. The provision of blankets, tobacco, and other goods to Aborigines was business in the usual sense: contracts were offered and records kept. Conducted as business, interactions between Europeans and Aborigines were normalized. Most ethnographers did not

²² *NTT&G*, June 7, 1895.

scrutinize how such transactions affected their attempts to document authentic indigenous practices. Basedow, for instance, argued that Aborigines' entrance into the wage labor system could be understood as the rationalization of hunting and gathering society by productive agricultural practices (1932). Paid Aboriginal informants were in some sense productive members of society: they had something worth a capital exchange. Little attention was paid to how Aborigines' willingness to give information pivoted on the researchers' links to governmental systems of compensation and retribution: could the researcher get government supplies or intercede legally on behalf of the group. Most researchers had dual roles: government officials who provided goods to Aborigines and independent ethnologists who collected information for an impartial scientific record. Researchers assessed the traditional outlook of an Aboriginal group by their commodity dependence (their desire for blankets, tea, tobacco, and flour), but the researcher exchanged blankets, tea, tobacco, and foods for ethnographic information, rarely portraying this ironically. Herbert Basedow wrote that a number of "Wogaits" followed him from their camp at Charles Lighthouse to the Daly River around 1905 and "arranged all sorts of festivities in our honor in return for our *benevolence*" (Basedow 1935: 38, my emphasis). One of the 'festivities' Wagaitj men showed Basedow was a women's ceremony presently considered so dangerous as to warrant revenge slayings if the secret-sacred element of it is witnessed or revealed. Perhaps someone did die. We have no way to know. But as elsewhere in the colonial world, male anthropologists' recording of secret-sacred rituals in Australia tied into an existing gender and economic system. A precolonial aspect of Aboriginal ceremony may have been a competitive and interdependent relationship between men and women.²³ Colonial ethnologists introduced a new

²³ There have been a number of ethnographic studies that have examined the relationship between Aboriginal men and women vis-a-vis economic, social, and ceremonial activities. Cf. Bell (1983), P. Brock (1989), Gale (1983), Rowell (1983), , Goodale (1980), and Hamilton (1981).

dimension: the uneven access that Aborigines and non-Aborigines had to goods and supplies. Aboriginal men mediated between male Anglo officials who had goods and the Aboriginal group who desired them. Basedow writes of the above incident: "[t]he men had excelled themselves in their efforts to win our friendship" (: 38).

The clearest sign of an Aborigine's traditional outlook was his or her ability to perform a ceremony or to recite a mythic text. Government officials and ethnographers believed that "at any moment" Aborigines would lose this ability. There was on one level an immediacy to the quest of recording the "timeless" myths and ceremonies of northwest Aborigines. Many colonists' desire to get rid of northern Aboriginal populations imperiled people and their knowledge. However, the immediacy of the quest to record Aboriginal myths and ceremonies hid its own self-justifying stance as being very timely. The anxiety to collect Aboriginal mythic texts is more 'timeless' than the society itself -- for no matter in what year the researcher stands, the stance of recording the past is an anxious one. In the Western understanding of oral societies, the past is always being lost and falling into confusion; the present is always falling away to the stonelike silence of the unrecoverable past (R. Williams 1973). Paul Foelsche describes the anxiety he felt searching for mythic texts.

The subject of conversation was *the origin of their race*. . . . *I felt anxious to obtain what information I could from the Port Darwin native on the same subject, and on questioning him he stated that he knew very little about it, but that "Lirrawah," of the Southport branch of the Larrakeah tribe, could give me the whole history. . . . This native is a doctor, and held in great esteem by the whole tribe as a learned man, who, as they term it, "knows plenty all about"* (Foelsche 1881-82: 15, my emphasis).

When Foelsche asked his questions to Lirrawah, he is told.

"Nanganburrah," who lives in the ground, is designated "all same Government." He can read and write, and when blackfellows growl write it down in a book. When blackfellows die they go down into the ground to "Nanganburrah," and if they have been good, which is ascertained by referring to the book, "Nanganburrah" gives them a letter to give to "Mangararra," with whom they then live among the stars. If they have been bad and growled they are sent to a place deep down in the ground called "Ohmar," where there is plenty of fire; and long way under this place is a large water called "Burcoot," where one blackfellow named "MadjuitMadjuit" sits down. He regulates the tides according to the changes of the moon. He, like "Mangararra" and "Nanganburrah," never dies (Foelsche 1881-82: 16-7).

Obviously what the ethnologist got was not wholly or only a record of the precolonial mythic past. One of the earliest colonial-era occupations of the Laragiya were message couriers for colonial administrators and businesses. Foelsche employed many Aborigines in this way. In this and other more obvious ways, the syncretic aspects of the Laragiya man's cosmological narrative seem very close to the surface. The reader balks at believing that the Laragiya had a Saint Peter sitting at the pearly gates, keeping track of who had been bad or good, and sending people to the Mangararra heavens or to the fiery furnace of Ohmar. But is it warranted to assume merely from Foelsche's account that the Laragiya man's description was an example of religious truth or syncretism? Perhaps the Laragiya man was trying to explain a very complicated cosmology in terms Foelsche would understand, accept, or allow. Further, we must wonder if Foelsche's story even "happened"; not that Foelsche lied or attempted to misrepresent things, but that the difference between his ostensible purpose as the Police Inspector and as the local authority on Aboriginal culture and

society might have led him to accommodate his textual versions to different readers at different times. At how many different points in time and in the text was the *origin of the Larrakeah people* rewritten? Just as the Laragiya 'doctor' had to imagine how Foelsche thought and so how he should frame his origin's story,²⁴ Foelsche himself had to imagine the thoughts of his listeners when he wrote and contextualized the story. Although he is noted as having been on the accommodating side of the Law's attitude towards Aborigines, Foelsche was in a very complex position, reflected in how he balanced his roles as a student of Aboriginal practices, a member of the small European community, and the dispenser of European justice against the very Aborigines he studied.²⁵

²⁴ The point of which could be multiply interpreted: understanding that Aborigines believe in 'God' and, therefore, should not be slaughtered might be one such interpretation.

²⁵ Foelsche's complex position in the community is best summarized by reading a series of quotes about him.

"... neither Foelsche nor most of his men could escape a degree of association with the 'quietening' of Aborigines; yet Foelsche would never yield to the demands of cattlemen for a native police and it was only the strenuous efforts of the police which enabled Dashwood to collect the evidence he needed to shape his 1899 Bill for the protection of Aborigines" (Powell 1988: 134).

"A young trooper fresh from the south, with some influence at his back, had been entrusted with the leadership of a party to the Adelaide River, where an outrage had to be inquired into. He was receiving his final instructions from Inspector Paul, who remarked, by the way, that if he chanced to encounter a native named Dombey he was to call upon him to surrender, and if he refused he was to open fire. One of the troopers, with a keener sense of humour than barrack discipline, asked in an innocent way -- 'And if, sir, he has his son with him will we call upon Dombey & Son?' The Inspector gave ever such a faint smile, then sternly said: 'What the Dickens are you talking about?' With a hearty laugh the horses' heads were then turned for the road. The young fellow returned all the better for his experiences. When asked by the Inspector if he had knocked over Dombey & Son he smilingly replied that so far as he knew the firm was still intact" (Alfred Searcy 1912: 318-319).

"When Mr. Foelsche, perhaps the most painstaking and accurate of all investigators in the Territory, was photographing blacks at Port Essington many years ago, he found that his prints came out black and white, and that his plates were piebald. He suspected his plates, his solutions, in fact everything in turn, until it struck him that the shiny skin of the nigger itself was the cause. He tried in several ways to overcome this difficulty but failed, until an old sailor who was assisting him suggested that they should dust powdered charcoal over the subject to be photographed. This was found to be successful, as Mr. Foelsche's beautiful photographs abundantly testify. Cotton-tree charcoal has been found to give the best results" (W.Ramsey Smith 1924: 142).

Distinguishing between a 'pristine' and 'contacted' or corrupted native was an exasperating task. Competing philosophical positions surfaced in the early northern newsprint as well as in academic discussions about what people would see if they were looking at the genuine native (cf. Frederickson 1971 for an American example).

Stanner wrote of the Daly River area

[i]n places where no European had ever set foot, or was to do so for many years, a demand had grown up for iron goods, tobacco, tea, sugar, and clothes. There was also a hankering for a sight of such marvels as houses, machines, vehicles, firearms, and bells, one of the most alluring things of all (1979: 81).

Nevertheless, colonial advocates of and opponents to Aboriginal rights to land and humane treatment continually quarrelled among themselves about whether Aborigines had, by nature, a genial disposition and were forced to act atrociously only in response to acts of violence or whether missionaries and others confused a naturally savage disposition with the civilizing effects of a christian colonization.²⁶ Because word of the violent and goods-laden whiteman spread more rapidly than the whites themselves, the uncontacted person was hard to locate and the debate of who such a person would be proceeded.²⁷ Whether mental or material, Aborigines' practices were juxtaposed either to the European or to other Aboriginal groups in order to establish a case for their inherent nobility or savagery.

²⁶ There are many histories about the effect of Australian Christian missionaries on Aboriginal culture and society. See, for example, B. Attwood (1989), H. Reynolds (1982), and E. Gribble (1932).

²⁷ The debate over what constitutes an uncontacted Aboriginal has surfaced more recently. In the 1980s, a Pintupi group who was at first thought never to have encountered Anglo people or their material culture walked out of the Australian Central Desert. The ways that anthropologists and the media represented this group and other Central Desert people were debated in Rose and Michaels (1987) and rejoined in Myers (1987) and Liberman (1988).

Local Settlers, Administrators, and Popular Writers.

Ethnographers were not the only Europeans interested in the Aboriginal character. Local settlers, administrators, and popular writers also were interested in whether nearby Aborigines were traditional or not, but tended to identify Aboriginal groups according to their varying character traits and country-ties rather than to stress Aboriginal cultural texts and performances. Settlers did not want to know what Aborigines did before they arrived, but what they were likely to do when contacted. Knowing the character of the country included knowing the character of the indigenous people who might, more or less violently, oppose white pastoralists' and miners' appropriation of their countries. Settlers', administrators', and popular writers' descriptions of various Aboriginal groups' dispositions have changed considerably over the last hundred and fifty years. Early settlers described a pronounced opposition between the friendly Port Darwin Laragiya and the wild and vicious Daly River Wagaitj and Beringgen.

Since Stokes first introduced a difference between the Port Darwin natives who "presented themselves without spears" and the southern "tribes" who crawled "along the ground" with a mind to attack his ship, this difference in temperament has become an established theme of Northern Territory journalists', settlers', and explorers' writings. *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* featured the antics of 'our natives' (the Laragiya) throughout the 1870-80s. While articles were by no means unwaveringly sympathetic, they did portray the Laragiya as the poor victim of more hostile, aggressive groups such as the Wagaitj and Wulna.²⁸ Note the paternalistic aspect of the following editorial.

²⁸ *NTT&G* January 21, 1882 is typical of the play these fights received from local newspapers.

The recent disturbances amongst the blacks, and the evident discomfort the Larrakeeyah tribe was put to, leads me to enquire whether the Woolners should be allowed to molest them, and why they should not be protected *as in the early days of the settlement*, which protection the Larrakeeyahs *now naturally look for* when other tribes make a raid on their otherwise peaceable existence.²⁹

Harriet Daly, the daughter of the second Government Resident, Bloomfield Douglas, arrived in Palmerston in 1870, and eventually married the surveyor Dan Daly.³⁰ She states that the Laragiya were unusually friendly; "though they were inclined to pilfer and steal where they could," the only "serious mischief they did" was to spear "one of the horses that was turned out near Fannie Bay" (1887: 72-3). However, the Laragiya's 'passivity' was quickly reinterpreted as a sign of their weakness and potential corruptibility: they lacked the virility to resist the Anglo onslaught.

On the contrary, the Wagaitj very quickly obtained a reputation for being deceptive and brutal "bush blacks" who "haunted" the Daly River. Local Port Darwin news-reporters traveled frequently to the Cox Peninsula and Daly River and recorded northern perceptions of the Daly River Aborigines: "[v]ery few natives were met with, and those seen showed altogether a friendly disposition; we are glad to learn this for previously all the tales we have heard of them would lead one to believe them a very bloodthirsty lot. All that were seen belonged to the Wargite tribe."³¹ An extract of Gilbert McMinn's travel journal of November 1877 published in *The Northern Territory*

²⁹ *NTT&G* May 22, 1875, my emphasis.

³⁰ The Daly River was named after another Daly, Sir Dominic Daly, Governor of South Australia from 1862-1868.

³¹ *NTT&G*, May 17, 1879 "Trip to the Daly."

Times and Gazette reports and provokes further violence between Aborigines and non-Aborigines in the Anson Bay area.

We are on a very large lagoon, about 20 miles west of the Daly River, which appears to be the head quarters of a large number of natives. . . . About eleven o'clock in the evening, while engaged in taking an observation, the man on watch gave the alarm of natives, they having succeeded in the darkness of the night in reaching to within twenty feet of the camp; but on the alarm being given and a shot fired at them they dropped what weapons they had and made for the lagoon, 100 yards distant, jumping in and swimming to the other side. After this when we discovered where they were hiding we fired a few rifle shots which kept them quiet for the remainder of the night. . . . Two days later at about ten o'clock in the morning a large number of natives were discovered following the party evincing that they had anything but friendly intentions towards us, and not wishing to have any bother with them, they were quietly given to understand that we did not wish them to follow us. This, however, they paid no attention to, for in about half an hour they appeared in increased numbers, and owing to their conduct it became absolutely necessary to rid ourselves of them; this was accomplished after some difficulty. . . . All the natives I saw about here were fine stalwart fellows, who showed evidence of being well nourished. *I write this fully regarding the natives so that anyone intending to travel or settle in this locality may know what to expect and be prepared.*³²

³² *NTT&G*, April 30, 1881, my emphasis. See also Goyder (1971: 21-26).

From McMinn's directions, I assume he was in Menthayenggal country at Nganthawudi, an important estate of many Mentha families now living at Belyuen. It joins to the south, Tjungarak, another Mentha estate and to the north Mabaluk an important Emi estate. As did Stokes, so McMinn describes southern Daly River Wagaitj as a treacherous lot ("crawled on the ground" and "followed our party").

Another incident in the Daly River further exaggerated settlers' view of the brutality of the Wagaitj. On September 3, 1884, three miners, Noltenius, Landors, and Houschildt, were killed near the Daly River. Harriet Daly wrote the following of the 'Daly River outrage' in her book Digging, Squatting, and Pioneering Life in the Northern Territory of South Australia.

It is difficult for men who have worked shoulder to shoulder in mines and on cattle stations in a new country, to stand with any degree of patience seeing their friends cut down before their eyes by a cowardly gang of natives; and if more of the "Woggites," the tribe who haunt the Daly River, lost their lives than the few who actually murdered the men, it would be nothing to wonder at. These aborigines were of the finest physical development of Australian natives, many of them being over six feet in height. The police were sent off at once, and every endeavour was made on the part of the Government to bring the murderers to justice, but a civilised penal code does not meet the necessities of a case like this. Imagine a policeman in uniform, with a warrant in his pocket duly signed and sealed by a magistrate, riding through miles and miles of uninhabited country, trying to find a certain native whose appearance is unknown to him, who may possibly have thrown the fatal spear unperceived by his victim, and unobserved by any witness (1887: 261).

Four weeks later, in light of the "murders" of the miners on the Daly River, *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* reflected on the rightfulness of Queenslanders "hav[ing] been roundly abused for the manner in which their aborigines have been *dispersed*" and concludes that "some of the right class men are now on the tracks of the Daly River natives, but we do not expect to hear many particulars of their chase; the less the better, in such cases as the present, it is far more sensible to avoid complications by the exercise of a judicious reticence."³³ The "policeman in uniform" was George Montagu who led an "investigatory" party to the area and is thought to have killed scores of Aborigines without regard to their participation in the previous deaths.³⁴ Montague was exonerated of "undue severity," but many southern newspapers regarded the official inquiry as a judicial cover-up. One of the few insights we have to what went on at the Daly is a chilling comment Montagu made about the usefulness of the repeating rifle for his "investigation."

What the other parties have done I do not know, but I believe the natives have received such a lesson this time as will exercise a salutary effect over *the survivors* in the time to come. One result of this expedition has been to

³³ *NTT&G*, October 4, 1884.

³⁴ In *History of South Australia* (1893: 108) Edwin Hodder writes, "[i]n September, 1884, the blacks attacked and killed a number of whites on the Daly River, and made hostile demonstrations at Rum Jungle, where two of them were shot. Parties were sent out to capture the murderers, one composed of the police and commanded by Corporal Montague. The police report of the matter, ordered by the House, did not make its appearance till the end of 1885. This report gave ground for a suspicion that there had been outrageous and indiscriminate slaughter of the blacks without due regard to innocence or guilt. The public demanded an official investigation, and a board of inquiry was appointed. Corporal Montague declared that his first report was an exaggeration, and the result of the inquiry was that the police were exonerated from the charge of undue severity." One of the members of the "Southport party" sent to revenge Housechildt's death writes, "The country is fast being settled, and Government makes no provision for the clear rights of the blacks, nor does it take any trouble to explain our laws and system to them, nor does it afford any protection to our settlers; consequently outrages may be looked for, similar to the Daly murders. Can the Government raise any objection under the circumstances if club law and Martini-henri rifles become the order of the day. Let our Government, the Exeter Hall congregation, and the various aborigines' [sic] societies ponder this question, and make what they can of it."

convince me of the superiority of the Martini-Henry rifle, both for accuracy of aim and quickness of action.³⁵

One must remember that most of the colonial world was experimenting with methods of controlling indigenous populations and, in the process, was discussing how notions of civil society and barbaric behavior could be reconciled in colonial settings. Were men like Montague more barbaric in their actions than Aborigines were portrayed to be? Southern Australian papers said so. But northern writers claimed that in remote areas civilized notions such as dispassionate and discriminate justice had to be modified to fit the rugged environment. Some writers stressed the isolation of the Northern Territory and the unsettled quality of the landscape as the reason that 'normal' justice could not always occur. In the northern papers local incidents of slaughter and revenge were reported side-by-side other articles about Maori trouble in New Zealand, North American Indian Wars, and African insurrections on the "Dark Continent." The white European world was reported to be under siege as it attempted to seize the world. All settlers, moreover, were well acquainted with what Robert Hughes describes as the "sadistic" excesses of the southern penal system.³⁶

³⁵ *NTT&G*, December 26, 1885, my emphasis. This is not the only reprisal party that Montague led in the Top End. In 1875, Aborigines near the Roper River attacked two miners, killing one, a Mr. Johnston. Montague set out to "investigate," but the South Australian Government not wishing for a massacre, sent out another party to meet his. *The Times and Gazette* comments, "[i]t is to be hoped that Mr. Little and Corporal Montague have proceeded so far on their journeys that they cannot receive instructions of this party being sent to meet them . . . if . . . not . . . the progress of the expedition will be seriously impeded, and in all probability the object for which it has been sent out frustrated" (*NTT&G* July 24, 1875). The object was not frustrated. On September 18, 1875, *The Times and Gazette* reports, "they dispersed them thoroughly; and as they (Little's party) found remains of natives, no doubt fully avenged Johnston's death."

³⁶ Of note were the penal colonies on Sarah Island, Port Arthur, and Norfolk Island. Hughes quotes Joseph Foveaux the commandant of Norfolk, "The nature of this Place is so widely different from any other part of the World, the prisoners sent here, are the worse Character & in general only those who have committed some fresh crime since their transportation to Port Jackson, in short most of them are a disgrace to human Nature. . . . [a]fter considering these circumstances, the very little support I receive from the Judge-Advocate and the situation on this Island, your grace will (I am persuaded) perceive that different Examples however

"Northern justice" must be understood within the context of southern Australian penal justice. The brutality of Australian colonists is related to their participation in a nation formed on the basis of the brutal punishment of the criminal class. In the north, control and punishment of indigenous people had to be sufficiently harsh to satisfy settlers accustomed to passing out or receiving extremely harsh treatment. In the northern press during the 1800s, pastoralists, miners, and cattle station managers saw the 'new humanism' of the southern states as inappropriate for the north where they claimed nature and humans (black and white) were still rugged, savage, and inhumane.

The picture popular writers presented of *the* Aboriginal character was constantly being destabilized by the confusing notion of the 'contacted Aborigine' or 'fringe dweller': those native Australians who had been living with Europeans for some time. Northern Territorians gave a number of reasons for the confusion. No one could determine when an Aborigine moved from the category of 'stone-age relic' to 'fringe-dweller' because, as Stanner noted above, even 'bush Aborigines' could already be corrupted. The same group of Aborigines acted radically different at different times and so it was hard to tell what their 'nature' was; even the 'friendly Port Darwin natives' could act unpredictably under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Moreover, the European notion of the divide between natural and civil society was still being hotly debated; the debates themselves creating the terms of the confusion: the bipolar and exclusive categories savage and civilized (cf. Bloch and Bloch 1980; R. Williams 1960, 1973). Settlers certainly had their opinions about how Aborigines should be viewed.

They [the Laragiya] differed slightly, if at all, from the ordinary Australian aboriginal. Just the same low type of physique, the same nomadic habits, the same vices, and the same customs that prevail everywhere else. Darwin's

vigorous if not exactly conformable to Law are on occasions indispensably necessary" (1986: 117).

theory of the law of selection *seemed to hold good amongst them*. The best-looking and best-made men were invariably the most intelligent and the most active, excelling in all their games and occupations (Daly 1887: 67, my emphasis).

The travel journal -- the "biography of a journey" -- became a valuable resource to settlers. Paul Carter has recently proposed that "[i]n the place of the fictional characters of the novelist, the explorer-writer introduced the character of the country" (1987: 73 and 83). For settlers, the character of the country included the character of local Aborigines who were part of the natural flora and fauna. Those intending to settle in a new part of the country usually read the journals of travellers who had been there before or the newspapers of the region which featured extracts from them ("for the information of future explorers" and "anyone intending to travel or settle in this locality may know what to expect and be prepared"). A settler's attitudes and actions towards Aborigines were often based on these writings. Patterns were established between colonizers and colonized that set in motion years of violent or friendly, but always persistent, land appropriation. We do not know if Wagaitj were always using the Cox Peninsula as a hunting and ceremonial ground, but we do know that because of the violence of this period and settlers' use of national traits to describe the Wagaitj, the Anson Bay area was all but depopulated by the mid-1900s. This is a large part of the reason Elkin can report in 1950 that most Wagaitj and coastal Beringgen are living at Delissaville.

3. "Booking down the past": The authentic and the corrupt as discourse strategies.

Although most of the physical violence between Aborigines and non-Aborigines has ceased,³⁷ Aborigines are still judged according to their varying degrees of association with Anglo culture and society. Aboriginal speakers are given greater or lesser authority depending, in part, on the perceptions of an Anglo listener: is the Aboriginal narrator a 'full blood' or from 'corrupt' mixed parentage. Laragiya men and women who live and work in Darwin, who read, write, and speak fluent English, and who are knowledgeable about Aboriginal and Western law are often suspected to have gained their traditional Aboriginal knowledge illicitly, that is, from a book rather than orally from a sage elder. This point is illustrated by the Northern Territory Government's cross-examination of two Darwin Laragiya claimants during the Kenbi Land Claim. Mr. Hughston is counsel for the Government which challenged the claim. Bill Risk and Richard Barnes are Laragiya men. Hughston suggests that Billy Risk learned what he knows from the Kenbi claim book; viz., he learned through a written rather than an oral medium.

MR HUGHSTON: All right. Have you ever read the claim book?

BILL RISK: I have not read right through, no. I have just -- like I say, I have looked at parts of it, that is all.

MR HUGHSTON: All right. You are interested now, are not you, Billy, in learning about the land claim: country, sites and dreamings? Is that right?

BILL RISK: I have always been interested in our country.

³⁷ But not all violence: a group identifying itself as the Klu Klux Klan shot at the Northern Land Council office and into an Aboriginal community outside Darwin in 1989. The Commission on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody is currently holding a nationwide hearing on racial violence in Australian jails.

MR HUGHSTON: Well, when did you first become aware that there was a land claim book?

BILL RISK: Probably about three years ago.

MR HUGHSTON: Three years ago. And did you believe that would contain information about this land claim area, the sites and the dreamings?

BILL RISK: No, I did not. What I believe the book contained was just sort of technical information about the claim.

MR HUGHSTON: Right. Is that still your belief? That the land claim book just contains technical information about the claim?

BILL RISK: Yes, I think so.

MR HUGHSTON: It is a fairly thick book, is not it? You have not had sufficient interest to read the thing from cover to cover to see what it is about?

BILL RISK: What I have looked at is the front parts of the book.

MR HUGHSTON: Yes.

BILL RISK: And if there is any parts in there that I want to read, I read them.

MR HUGHSTON: All right. Well, how did you know that there were parts in there that you wanted to read?

BILL RISK: Because I looked at the front part, the index part.

MR HUGHSTON: Yes. Well, what about the site map. Have you seen the site map?

BILL RISK: Yes.

(Kenbi Transcripts: 2391)

Hughston asks Richard Barnes the same general series of questions about reading the claim book. He then suggests that Barnes 'cheated' by learning some of what he knows from anthropological and linguistic documents.

MR HUGHSTON: All right. Have you also read anthropological and historical texts to try and find out more about the Larrakia.

RICHARD BARNES: I have read - I have read word lists. I have seen word lists which I got from the Institute of Aboriginal Studies on language. They are a lot of words that Uncle George was giving me that I recorded and there are others that he could not remember. And he asked me to get some - get the stuff from Canberra, because he gave it to somebody before. And so I got a copy of a word list of Larrakia words, and - with the object of trying to learn some more from that.

MR HUGHSTON: All right.

RICHARD BARNES: It is a bit difficult, though, to learn from the list itself.

MR HUGHSTON: But are you saying that you have not read anything else in terms of anthropological or historical texts to find out more about the Larrakia?

RICHARD BARNES: I have read the stuff in the - I cannot recall reading anything else, no.

MR HUGHSTON: All right. Would it be fair comment to say that most of your knowledge about the Larrakia and about the claim area comes from having read these materials?

RICHARD BARNES: I put the - I put the information in two classes. The stuff that I read I put in one area as information that somebody else has recorded. And the stuff that is told directly to me, I give that a higher classification in my mind. Simply because it was transferred direct.

(Kenbi Transcripts: 2424-2425).

This is a difficult prejudice to extract oneself from. If people read ethnography and other literature they are seen to have gained knowledge illicitly, if they do not read it, they show a lack of interest in their cultural past. Even if tapes are produced to demonstrate that the knowledge came from an elder, the use of recording instruments may be called into question.

Aborigines who live away from towns and cities confront a different prejudice; they are the 'traditional natives' of the Australian psyche. Whether they are speaking to legal representatives, anthropologists, or tourists, 'bush Aborigines' bear the burden of presenting and performing the cultural difference that marks them in the Australian nation-state. When positioned in this way, Belyuen Aborigines do not "communicate" or relay their cultural differences to Western listeners. Aborigines and non-Aborigines formulate and contest what will count as a 'traditional' and 'authentic' history and identity. They do so within an economy that both discriminates in most instances against cultural differences and holds out a small amount of economic relief based on these same differences. The necessity to formulate a 'traditional practice' and present it to non-Aborigines fractures present practices as speakers separate the chaff from the wheat: what part of a person's practice is traditional, authentic, and valuable, what is not? To tell a story about the traditional, precolonial 'olden days,' Belyuen people must tell a story they do not know. They base their histories on present absences and corruptions of the past. Because the narration of the past affects whether they can make needed money or win precious stretches of land, Belyuen people are pressured to tell Anglos an easy, simple story in which there are clear differences between cultures and ethnic groups, between bush and store foods, between themselves and others.

Belyuen Aboriginal women employ many of the same overt strategies as ethnographers and popular writers when they describe the precolonial past. They distinguish between a traditional precolonial past and a 'corrupt' present. They talk

ambivalently at times about old Aboriginal customs, shifting between a representation of them as inherently good or bad or as marking their culture as superior or inferior to bedagut (white) culture. But there are significant differences between their and Anglo-Australian preoccupations with the precolonial past. In the rest of this chapter, I look at how Belyuen women describe this past and the social pressures on them when they do so.

Before discussing "authenticity and traditionality" as a discourse strategy of local Aborigines, I should note that what Belyuen people consider authentic is not necessarily what they consider to be traditional (cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1987; Beckett 1988). For example, an Aborigine's 'Invention of Tradition' is a very different moment from his or her understanding of certain forms of interaction, cooperation, and resistance with the non-Aboriginal population and government as unavoidable, even unimaginable. If 'Inventing Traditions' is understood as a practice that creates and legitimates group identity and is legitimating because it is thought to be untainted by non-Aboriginal values and activities, then some Aboriginal practices, resulting from the concentration of Aboriginal groups onto mission stations such as Big Sunday corroborees,³⁸ are an 'Invented Tradition' in this sense. However, in cases of unavoidable interaction with Anglo-Australian culture or economy, Belyuen Aborigines say they make choices about what they borrow and how they incorporate the borrowed item into their practices. Delissaville residents used Native Welfare's free rations in a way that is no less an 'authentic' Aboriginal practice than, say, digging yams, though no one thinks that they were a part of the traditional economy. Lenny Singh describes life on the old Delissaville settlement.

³⁸ Cf. Stanner 1979.

LENNY SINGH: Camping out, hunting, and then they come back when they feel like coming back and start work. They used to give out rations for when they go out, you know, camping out. Tobacco, clothes, flour, blankets, mosquito nets. They happened every time they go out. Give them all this stuff, you know. I think it was good because you did not have to buy anything in them days. You know, they was just given out freely, you know. And I think culture, our ceremonies, were all intact, you know. (Kenbi Transcripts: 814-815).

There are two education centers on the Belyuen community: the Belyuen School and, on a crest behind it, the Adult Education building (also called 'Home Management' and 'The Women's Center,' cf. Povinelli 1991). Belyuen women use the Adult Education building for meetings, for linguistic work, and for other women's activities. The Belyuen waterhole lies below the building and the Community spreads out in front of it. A few days before the recording of the conversation below, the new male Headmaster of the school asked Joan Ela, the Adult Education Assistant, if the older women would come down to the school and tell the children about "family history." Family history is a phrase Belyuen women have heard for various activities: doing genealogical work, describing traditional activities, and locating patrifilial and matrifilial estates. A wide variety of topics are included in "doing family history."

At the beginning of the recorded conversation, Mary Eladi, Emily Nela, Claire Mamaka, Jean Ziya, and Catherine Burga (ranging in age from 55 to 70) are filing into the school lot with approximately thirty school children, four young female adults, and the school teachers. Joan Ela sits to one side of the older women "to help them" and Deborah Zirita, a young Belyuen woman who is an Assistant Educator at the school, conducts the interview. Like any social event on the Belyuen Community, there are a

number of other residents sitting around and listening to the older women, but of those above thirteen years, there are no Aboriginal men present.

The topic of family history opens up a space between the traditional and the authentic where women can discuss a number of topics about life before or after the arrival of the whiteman. Deirdre Jordan writes that Aboriginal identity is found in "different worlds of meaning . . . elements from which these worlds are constructed are drawn from various pasts" and that "[i]n the case of tradition-oriented people, selection from the past for the purposes of schooling is controlled by the people themselves, not white teachers" (1988: 126 and 122). While her work emphasizes the agency of Aborigines within pedagogical systems, it fails to explore the complexities of how pedagogical systems interact with processes of memory: those who 'select the past' must at once try to remember and to frame the past, imagine if certain memories are appropriate or not for an occasion, and meet or resist expectations of others for reasons of profit or personality. For instance, older Belyuen women must meet the Headmaster's expectation of what family history is. Should historical narratives focus on the changing nature of Aboriginal social and cultural practices, on the stability of Aboriginal practices, or on the changing nature of Anglo-Australian practices? 'Selection of the past' implies a stability that is illusory. Even this small group of women, united in many common experiences, not only must select from a number of pasts, but each woman must constitute a suitable past for this occasion. Examining myths' relation to history, Peter Sutton has written that myths not only enshrine the status quo, "they are also, in real speech situations, a code in which changes in the status quo are effected by the interlocutors and their audience" (1988: 254). When women tell stories about the precolonial period they negotiate rather than select what will constitute the outlines of a history they have not experienced. By analyzing speech events, we can learn what bridges Belyuen women have built to enter this precolonial past. And we can see the motivation that women have to cross them.

In the segment 'No Clothes, Strong Culture' is one bridge. Belyuen women present those items considered and regularly presented as being from an unrecoverable time: the absence of clothes, the absence of sickness, the daily presence of dance and music. A longer segment of this transcript is given in Appendix One.

"No Clothes, Strong Culture"

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1928.

en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1926.

cb: Catherine Burga: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born circa 1920.

Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.

dz: Deborah Zirita: father Emi, mother Marriamu, born circa 1956.

je: Joan Ela: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born 1942.

'No Clothes, Strong Culture'

[First Segment]

me: *wen ai w>z barn ai ben hev klowz fr>m irye*
when I was born I got clothes from here [Belyuen]

en: *ai ben stend >p n>ting*
I walked around with nothing on

cb: *wi ben laikdawt yu dei ben laikadjet na dls>n mer.rukak (E) n>thing dls>n*
we were like that you, they were like that now, these buttocks, nothing covered these
mer.ru (E) n>ding dlsaid
buttocks nothing on this side.

en: *eeh yeh dætz al naw ownli dls>n*
eeh yeh that's all now. We only had a pubic covering.

cb: *naw bleingket dæR>n n>thing peiperbark getlmbek kaverlm >p mer.ru (E)*
no blanket in that time, nothing, get paperbark cover up the bottom

en: *ai remember dæt*
I remember that

bp: *>hh> far naitaim wen lm kowld*
ahha for night time when its cold

en: *mmmm kowld n>thing*
mmmm cold nothing

dz: *far rein far sheid*
for rain, for shade

cb: *ya*
ya

en: *adia na.rra mer.ru kainyi (E) slster bliinmi yutubela ben laik*
another of my sister's buttocks were hanging outside, our sister, you two were like

- dæt na mer.ru (E) aniting*
that now buttocks outside with no covering.
- bp: yu mami yu tu*
you mom you too
- en: ya mi tu*
yes me too
- ai never ben hev dlisting*
I never had these things [clothes]
[noise]
lftl awtsaid
breasts were outside
- cb: ownli dls ding j>s tai lm >p*
only this thing [breast harness] to tie them up
- je: mait tai kuz j>mp >p en dawn plopplopplop meibi thei lök*
might tie breasts because they fly up and down 'plopplopplop' maybe they see
demselves an vldiyow
themselves on video
- dz: dei dldnt werri [noise]*
they didn't worry
- cb: thædan ngarRon ylnqi (E/Mar) b>mbai ylnmi wula (E/Mar) toptoptop b>mbeRai*
like that goanna's breast, when you and I dance,
dlsan yeinqi (E/Mar)
the breasts go 'toptoptop.'
- [Second Segment]
- dz: now siknes spesh>l b>sh medlsln*
there was no sickness, they had special bush medicine
- je: dei w>z far pip>l ir dir wer far Rowzi h>zbend, Beleritj, trai trai*
there were four people here, there were four: Rosie's husband, Beleritj, they kept
thei ben hev tu get b>sh medlsln. [kris] f>t sow ai gat b>sh medlsln yu
trying; they had to get bush medicine for [Chris]'s foot. So I got bush medicine, you
smellm strang laika blks
smell it, its strong like Vics [mentholated rub]
- [Third Segment]
- bp: ownli dei llsen end raitlm dawn efta putlm langa bök*
[referring to taped ethnoclassification sessions] only they listen and write it down
later in a book
- dz: yu get awldæt Infarmeish>n dowz dei dei hed strang kultjer thei hev seremoni*
you get all that information, those days they had a strong culture, they had ceremony
evri dei karabari en dens tudei wi strag>l naw.
everyday, corroborre and dance, today we struggle now.

Of the three items considered to be characteristic of the precolonial past, memories of nakedness provoke the most laughter. Why is this? Joan states a reason why 'they' presently tie up their breasts, "might tie breasts because they fly up and down 'plopplopplop' maybe they see themselves on video." Who are "they"? Certainly older women did not start wearing clothes because they would see themselves on

videos. A naturalist and ethnographer, Ramsey Smith, gives us some insight into this question. He describes the difficulties he had photographing Darwin Aboriginal women's "body markings" in the early 1900s: "[t]he women are afraid they will be laughed at by others of their tribe; and the aboriginal, who may not or does not mind being half flayed alive, cannot stand ridicule" (1924: 133). Ramsey Smith does not say at what "others of their tribe" were laughing, perhaps at a woman being the subject of his gaze. The women that Smith was photographing were by this time living on christian missions, government settlements, or in squatter camps along Darwin beaches and had been taught to be ashamed of appearing topless in front of European men.

Teaching self-censuring to indigenous people was an important part of the colonial process. Talal Asad has discussed how, in Africa, colonists co-opted some customs and taught young Africans to apprehend with disdain and distrust other customs (1986; cf. Ranger 1987). Brian Attwood has described a similar process in southern Australian colonies (1989). In the Top End of the Northern Territory, Christian missionaries, moral-minded administrators, and upright pastoralists all attempted to instill in Aborigines a sense of shame. Private and church campaigns were focused on efforts to civilize the passions of Aborigines and a relentless legal campaign was waged against Aboriginal "nudity," in particular, women's "toplessness."³⁹

Belyuen Aborigines say the presence of clothes and disease and the absence of daily dancing and singing was a prescribed part of colonial policy and practice; they did not choose them. Ordinances were passed that prohibited Aborigines from entering town limits and later from living at Aboriginal settlements (where they were forcibly

³⁹ It is easy to find in the local papers items such as the following:

"Tis bad enough that they (Aborigines) should be allowed to prowl round the streets in a semi-nude state during the daytime, begging, pandering, and stealing, without being permitted to make the night hideous with their shrieking play or quarrelling" *NTT&G*, January 12, 1884.

" Sir- As a stranger in your town, it appears to me odd, that the Government authorities should allow gangs of half naked savages to block the roads and footpaths, accompanied by hordes of dogs, which attack Chinese residents, and sometimes show a disposition to go for Europeans" *NTT&G*, January 19, 1889.

interned) without proper attire. Another, unchosen result of the colonial years was the spread of disease. Unintentionally at first and later purposefully pastoralists spread various diseases to the Aboriginal population. Finally, Aborigines did not choose to halt many ceremonies and corroborees; dances were forcibly stopped or, as a result of depopulation, impossible to perform. Elkin writes of a Big Sunday ceremony once held in the Port Patterson region,

it is said that the Government told the old men not to hold the ceremony any more, because natives from other parts working in Darwin blamed this ceremony, performed by the almost local natives, for any sickness or other ills which befell them. Many fights were thus caused (1950: 77).

In the above conversation, Joan might also be referring to younger Belyuen women's `shame of their yingiz (breasts).' Young women dance for corroborees at various ceremonies and tourist events in Darwin, on the Cox Peninsula, and in the Daly River area. They are always asking and arguing over whether they will have to dance with or without a singlet. But this issue affects all women at Belyuen and is a useful index for gauging the importance of an event. The `shame' of going without one's top is counter-balanced by the pride that Belyuen women have of being able to perform their cultural heritage. Whether or not a woman is "strong for her culture" in front of Aborigines and non-Aborigines is an issue that affects young and old alike. It is also an old issue. When she was young, Catherine Burga (born circa 1920) traveled all the way to Adelaide for a tourist performance. She described the funny scene when she decided to dance without a shirt and the whites stared at her, their eyes wide-open.⁴⁰ A similar issue arises among young men who wear body paint and "diapers" when they

⁴⁰ "Bedagut (whiteman, AE) im eye dukduk (too big, E) im-been meriduk (open eyed, E) im-been open up now."

dance at ceremonies and tourist corroborees. No matter how whitemen stare, say Belyuen men and women, Aboriginal people should have pride in their culture. *It is a thing* that they do not want to lose. They argue that women must be willing to go yingipalat (E, breasts outside) when the occasion warrants such as for ceremonies and land claims. However, the performance of 'nakedness' does not represent a traditional mode. Belyuen men and women are aware of this saying, "use to be people never thought about it"; before white people came "no one worried about their breast hanging outside."⁴¹ Presenting oneself without clothes becomes the mark of a traditional outlook at the moment that it is noticeably other, and, in the Enlightenment paradigm, measurably better or worse. Nakedness is just one apparent difference between Aborigines and Europeans and between 'traditional' and 'nontraditional' Aborigines.

Not all changes were forced upon Aborigines. People say they chose some and were tricked into choosing other European practices. Nutritional diseases such as diabetes and hypertension were another result of colonial and postcolonial settlement policies: a diet of flour, tea, sugar, and bullock was thought better and more rational than "ceaseless grubbing" for tubers and small reptiles, insects, and animals. Not mentioned in this short history, but often cited in conversations about the contours of the precolonial past is the precolonial lack of tea, sugar, and flour in the Aboriginal diet. Older women use these foods to draw a rhetorical boundary between an Aboriginal way of life before and after the whiteman. Tea, sugar, flour, and a steady supply of fresh water and alcohol were used to induce Aborigines to move away from their traditional camps and onto government-run settlements. These addictive foods upset the rhythm and regulations of hunting and gathering practices. Different groups could travel outside their countries to cities and mining camps without having to obtain permission

⁴¹ "Use to be people never think about it . . . no body been worry about im, yingi (E, breast) been hang outside."

from the resident Aboriginal group to collect foods from the surrounding country. In exchange for labor, Aborigines would receive rations and government-issued clothes and blankets. As larger groups gathered around mines, ranches, and plantations social stress and the loosening of social prescriptions paved the way for Anglo-Australians to portray them as 'corrupt' and so appropriate of their countries.

Bedagut foods are still the mainstay of the Belyuen diet and the center of a number of 'contact stories' told throughout north Australia (Rose 1984; Kolig 1980). Catherine Burga tells a story in which Captain Cook sails into the Darwin harbour,⁴² meets the Laragiya, and gives them gifts of rice, flour, sugar, and tea. The Laragiya think that the grains of rice are maggots, the flour is paint, the sugar is sand, and the tea is poison. Enraged that the whiteman tried to give them useless items and poison, the Laragiya kill Cook and bury him on a knoll in Darwin. The story sometimes ends with Catherine Burga saying, "then all the other whites came and took the Laragiya country away."⁴³ At other times, Catherine stresses how the Laragiya suddenly recognised an object as a food and how this recognition ushered in a new social order. These stories are like 'traditional' mythic narratives in that they describe how the present order came into existence. But unlike the mythic past, it remains to be seen whether the precolonial past is accessible to present Aborigines. Through their everyday interaction with the countryside and durlg, Belyuen people can contact the mythic past. Can they reach the precolonial past through their present practices?

Belyuen men and women stress the importance both of knowing their traditional foods and of being able to do without European foods periodically. On outstations,

⁴² According to his travel log, Cook never sailed into the Darwin Harbour.

⁴³ "[T]hen all im-been (other whites) come take all that country now, finished." Michael Walsh, who worked with the Murinpatha living at Wadeye, published a similar story (Kulamburnt and Walsh 1986). In the Murinpatha story, however, a Malaysian group brings the foreign foods which are not recognized as edible. When the Malays finally show the Murinpatha treacle (sugar-cane syrup) they recognize it as 'sugarbag' (a form of indigenous Australian honey) and make friends with the Malaysians.

people pride themselves for being able to live off the land and not needing to dip into bedagut foods stored in camp boxes. Everyone uses these commercial foods, but everyone also counts the rate at which they use them. Families that live off 'lour' (flour damper) when staying at their outstations are considered shameful. However, the daily collection of foods, while providing cultural "training" to younger Belyuen adults and children, does not provide them access to their precolonial past. Rather, the outstation context and the predominance of hunting and gathering activities prompt people to think about the great difference between their own lives and the lives of their ancestors. At night, after a long day hunting, fishing, or sitting about, people describe their ancestors' lives as "same but different": people in the past did not "shortwind" (have asthma or ill health) when they hunted; they went out everyday and did not have flour, rice, canned beef, and sweet tea waiting at camp if the fish did not bite. Belyuen women remind me that life without these European foods is a life they "can't imagine," although people often speculate on what it might have been like: "just a little bit of sugarbag mix it up with water." It is the gap between what people need and want and what they perceive their ancestors needing and desiring that causes them to comment caustically when whites expect them to tell stories about times and peoples they never met, do not and cannot know.

But Belyuen women's ability to perform ceremonies and to recite cultural texts or ethnoclassification principles distinguish them as people who know their cultural history and who know the importance of its presentation. They are of interest to researchers because of this. In this political economy of 'performative difference,' both Aborigines and their Anglo-Australian legal and ethnographic 'representatives' are encouraged to exoticize Aboriginal knowledge and practices in order to regain economic and political rights to land. By this time it should be apparent that Belyuen women know a great deal about the local countryside (cf. Appendix Two). But as much as women know, visiting researchers can present other facts either sifted from the

ethnographic record -- that Aborigines can read only at the risk of losing their traditional status -- or learned from other Aboriginal communities. While past Aboriginal informants set the conditions for ethnographers' present knowledge, Aboriginal informants have been portrayed negatively within this economy. Ramsey Smith wrote curtly of his work in Port Darwin in the early 1910s,

We pass into the scrub or bush just outside the township, where we find here and there a small day camp of perhaps half a dozen natives. The first thing to do is to pass the usual compliments, the next to ask the ever needless question, "Do you smoke?" and then exhibit a stick of tobacco. The natives hereabouts do not chew. Then we ask, "What name your country?" i.e. What is your tribe? Every separate handful of blacks we came across is composed of members of one tribe. Afterwards conversation becomes general, and we can ask about property, or custom, or dress, or inspect their body markings or their teeth, and finish up by taking a picture and departing, leaving behind more tobacco (1924: 126-7).

But Smith left behind more than tobacco. He, Stokes, and others established an economy of inspection and representation. As the countries of the Laragiya, Wagaitj, Beringgen and other Aboriginal people were slowly appropriated, mythic stories, whose meaning and power derived from a living relationship to that country, became objects of purchase. Mary Eladi has had two 'Dreamtime Stories' published. She, Grace Ziyesta, Annie Ziya and others, have become central witnesses in the Kenbi Land Claim. Mary Eladi notes how cultural texts can be used as economic tools, "You're going to

keep telling mythic stories, you're going to keep telling stories in the right form, and maybe they will give you and me this country."⁴⁴

Belyuen women and past ethnographers are not the only ones who create, emphasize, and exoticize the cultural gap between Aborigines and non-Aborigines. In the last ten years, the publications industry in Australia has marketed the Aboriginal culture of the north; this market is rooted in and dependent upon the notion of cultural difference. Coffee table editions highlight the foods and products that northern Aborigines collect and the uses they make of them. Glossy, high-quality pictures show colorful and exotic animals, plants, and sea products held in the hands of smiling Aboriginal children, sage Aboriginal men and women, and a younger set of healthy, happy looking people. These 'bush foods books' provide a counterpoint to an Anglo-Australian view that northern Aborigines have sunken into an irrecoverable mire of welfare programs and alcoholism; they instead present a smart and resourceful people whose culture is interesting and full. How do popular writers reconstruct the hunting-gathering scene and make it appear pristine? How do Belyuen women create a 'traditional' precolonial practice from their modern hunting and gathering activities? Popular writers can achieve mirages of traditionality by asking women and men to show them their 'traditional' foods, medicines, and products and then editing from the written and photographic record the modern implements that litter the scene -- expensive landrovers used to get to a site, soda and junk foods eaten alongside the bush foods, plastic grocery bags in which the foods are collected, and so on. Belyuen Aborigines use similar strategies of 'cultural editing.'

Because of long experience with the culture industry, before a new researcher arrives in the community, Belyuen women begin deciding what will count as a

⁴⁴ ["You gonna tell-imbet (keep telling) story, you gonna tell that story straight way le-im (to them), maybe they give you and me this country"]. But Theodor Adorno has a more sour prognosis, "culture sprang up in the marketplace, in the traffic of trade, in communication and negotiation" and is "reduced to that as which it began, to mere communication" (1988: 25).

'traditional' medicine and food: what is the difference between a 'medicine' and a 'food.' They choose between the various goods that they now use and those that can be recorded as 'traditional.' They say things like, "not that one, that came from whitemen" or "I don't know about showing this plant to him; it might be an whiteman's plant; this researcher wants traditional Aboriginal plant medicines."⁴⁵ When a researcher contacts the community, Belyuen women find out what kind of thing the person is interested in recording (bush foods, bush medicines, language, culture), then what will satisfy this desire and, at the same time, satisfy some desires of their own. Before researchers have crossed the Darwin Harbour, what will be shown to them, where, and who will talk has all been decided. Usually all this organization goes for a small price: a ride in the countryside, a few cokes, and a quick day of gathering dyes or seafoods for some women, as others entertain the researchers and exchange information among themselves. The 'feedback' that results between researcher and older women affects how Belyuen women understand their food collection practices and what they tell the next researcher who drives down the road (cf. Giddens 1986).

The difference between how women act, what they show, and how and what researchers present to the public creates a good deal of amusement and frustration among Belyuen women. Some older women, tired of the seemingly endless parade of researchers, shake their heads and say, "all of these bush foods are Aboriginal, mangoes and everything, animals too, cows; let the researchers photograph anything now."⁴⁶ Women express a similar sentiment about the creolization of local Aboriginal languages. Words like pudan or pudawen (Port Darwin) and butjigat (pussy cat) are part of the 'real' Emiyenggal language now. Other women who believe it is important to record what older women still remember of 'precolonial' food collection practices,

⁴⁵"I don't know about that miya (plant food) might be pedagut been make-im, this man wants that real one, real one black medicine".

⁴⁶ "All blackfella now this lot miya (plant food), mango and the lot, awa (animal food) bullocky (cow), let them go picturepicture (AE, photograph) anything now".

bush lore, and language become frustrated themselves when researchers ask the same questions over and over: "we do the same thing all the time; why can't that mob of researchers get together and talk to one another."⁴⁷

Even if non-Aborigines were to begin talking to one another, the need for researchers to gather their own material, and disagreements about how to interpret 'data,' would drive them back to the field. For Belyuen women who enjoy doing some aspects of this work and who can find a researcher who will pay them for their time, doing "language-language" or doing "culture business" can be personally satisfying and profitable. It also serves to increase older women's status on the community: they are people who know their culture and who make a good name for the Community within the region. But once again we are led back to the question that dogs researchers' and women's attempts to apprehend the 'traditional' precolonial past. At the beginning of this chapter, I said that finding the practices of the precolonial period was partly a matter of time. How do women evoke a past without presenting themselves as a corrupt part of the present? Belyuen women do so by blurring the distinction between what they experienced as children and what the precolonial 'olden days' were like. By doing this, Belyuen women postpone the question of whether their histories refer simply to their own past or to the Aboriginal Dreamtime.

⁴⁷ "Same thing we doing every time, same piece of this and that, this mob can't get together talk gidja (AE, to each other)?"

4. "Blurring the Gap": Linking the past to the present.

Let us return to the classroom scene above. There are two tape recorders in the room. The principal has one and I have the other. Around me sit a bunch of children who begin playing with the recorder and microphone. The first part of the women's conversation is about who is going to talk, why, and what people are going to say. The discussion begins with Emily Nela telling the school children where to sit down. As is usual in situations when adults visit the school, children are running around asking their mothers and grandmothers for money to buy snacks. Part of the day's history lesson includes going fifteen kilometers down the track to the Mandorah Pub. Both the children and the older women are looking forward to buying take-out food there. After Emily organizes the children, she asks Catherine Burga where they are going to tell their stories because it is still not clear whether all the histories will be given at the school or some at Mandorah. Catherine replies that they will have to wait to see. Deborah Zirita, the young Aboriginal school teacher, asks the school principal what he wants the old women to talk about. While all this is going on, Joan Ela tells Mary Eladi and Emily what she and the principal have already decided would be a good topic, simply, how their families used to live at Madpil and how in the olden times "we all the time been there." She then tells them to speak in a "straightforward way to the whitewoman." Emily Nela disclaims the whole activity by stating, "do not look at me I was not there," a position she will take later in the conversation (see 'You Can Run but You Can't Hide' in Appendix One). After Emily and Mary discuss the reasons for speaking and how to speak to the principal, both tell a short story. They describe stealing bananas from the old Delissaville garden for an old Wadjigiyn-Kiyuk woman, Ngalgin, who lived in the old camp (Delissaville was first located on the opposite side of the Belyuen creek). This story prompts Emily to comment in a way that is typical when women are asked about "the olden days." Mary asks Emily to tell a story about

Ngalgin, and Emily responds that Mary should tell the white principal the people he wants to hear about are all dead. At this point, the conversation slows until the women decide on a new topic: "the story of those two."

'Wife Stealing in the Olden Days'

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.

cb: Catherine Burga: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born circa 1920.

dz: Deborah Zirita: father Emi, mother Marriamu, born circa 1950.

bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.

je: Joan Ela: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born 1943.

me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1930.

jz: Jean Ziya: Father Emi, mother Emi, born circa 1935

sm: School Master: Anglo-Australian, born circa 1950

(present but not speaking, Claire Mamaka: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born circa 1930.

- en: *sldawn hir nather mab kaw wulgamen themanmal: yuwa kana (E)*
[to school children] sit down here, you other mob keep going. Old lady where are we telling stories, to that man sitting there?
- cb: *kumanredi (E) kug>k (Mar)*
they are still standing around, we have to wait.
- je: [Noise]
- dz: [to principal] *yu wana takbet daet ah thing or Maend>ra*
you want to talk about that ah thing or about Mandorah
- bp: [to kids] *yu llsen dlswei nat mi*
you listen to them not to me
- je: *lm wana tellm wi lm-ben tel-lm mi daet stap st>ri*
he wants us to tell them [the children] we, he told me to talk about that 'stop story.'
sæbi ai ben sæbi daet yu sæbi
you know I know that you know
M>dpil hnn wulden taim wi ben ala taim dir
"In the olden times we stayed at Madpil all the time."
streitfarwerd wei le mitjtijtj
talk in a straightforward way to the whitewoman
- ?: *...lending...*
... [boat] landing...
- je: *le lending le lending?*

- at the landing, at the landing?
en: *now mar löking et mi ai never ben dir*
 don't look at me I was never there
me: *nu mar laik tjitjei yera-maka nadiyerRaka piya (E)*
 no more, like the teacher is trying to teach the past to the children
en: *now mar sldawn irye ala taim*
 no, I sat down here all the time
jz: *mænd>ra?*
 Mandorah
en: *kamaqa (B)*
 nothing
cb: [to kids] *hu toitjlm dæR>n*
 who touched that [tape recorder]
me: *yu g>na sei laik [noise] far thet mæn*
 you are going to say . . . for that man
en: *yuwaingo? (E) that waitmæn ?*
 him there? that white man?
jz: *yeda kamaRi kama yena Mænd>ra yena [noise] wakoi yentha [noise] (E)*
 look he is going he is going, there, to Mandorah, there, we missed him now.
me: *wakaiyenthayuwaiwow? (E)*
 [we] cannot go later?
je: *n>ting lm now mar dulm yet*
 no no, he hasn't gone yet

STORY ONE

- me:* *nainanaRaboi (E) mi-bet gldananabananaz wulkembet yusta bi owldpip>l yu*
 We used to get our grandmothers bananas from the old camp, use to be old people you
now yuwanainbenye (E)
 know that way then
jz: *wel wiben [faint]*
 well we used to
en: *napa kanan yena kuman ngalgin (E)*
 haul the bananas back to Ngaigin [personal name] who sat in the old camp.
me: *wel ngalgin nyaw [noise]*
 well Ngalgin now
en: *yu tel-lm al dai*
 you tell him [school teacher] all die
je: *yu g>na tak ln lenggwedje*
 you're going to talk in language
cb: [faint to agnes]
me: *yeh*
 yeh
cb: *poi (E)*
 go on then
me: *weit naw mama kananena (E)*
 wait now mamma [to cb], sit with us
yu sæbi wulamen manqqin kumangita marRdja (E)
 you know old man you and my cousin MorRdja [personal name]
en: *hahaha*
 hahaha
me: *merRdje einlt lt mama themowwa (E) yu now mar sæbi dæt wulman?*
 MerRdje ain't it mamma where now? You don't know that old man?
cb: [faint]

- me:* *ye lm saabi merRdienga (B)*
yeh she knows that MerRdje
- bp:* [to children] *aim g>na tem-lm lm-af If yu mab downt stap*
I'm going turn the tape recorder off if you kids don't stop
- cb:* *yuwai yena (E)* [children noise]
there at
- me:* *adia now adietoi kama kana manggin (E)*
sister now, sister came out.
ei? mal:qa (E) mal:baka (E) [loud children noises]
eh? tell the story, tell the story
ngvelbaka mal:kaRa adje medanve (E)
about how those two grabbed sister
- bp:* *lm fain ye gowhan*
its fine yeh go on

Emily's statement that the old people have all died is a "hard" response (cf. Liberman 1985). There are good reasons for its harshness. Although women talk about deceased relations among themselves and their children, they do so only when some event calls to mind a particular person. In this way, women are not talking about the past as a time now gone, but the present; that is, deceased peoples' place in the present. For example, if a woman finds a very large yam or collects an unusually large number of crabs, she might say that a deceased relative, who was known for his or her ability to collect that food, helped her "see" (find) the food. When brought up in this way, deceased people (and *durlq*) like to be remembered and talked about because they are included as part of the present group: they are a living memory. Non-Aborigines are more likely to ask about the past rather than to remember it, simply because they do not know it and usually do not stay in the community long enough to hear stories as they arise in a casual manner during fights, corroborees, hunting trips, and etc.

After the two short stories that led to Emily's aggressive response, Mary Eladi tells an olden time story about the period when she was living with her parents at Madpil and Bitbinbiyirrk (Joan's suggested topic) and an event that occurred at Kunggul, a beach site not far away (Mary's innovation). Mary starts her story by

describing the practice of 'wife stealing' as the old Aboriginal way of obtaining a mate. In the old Aboriginal way, if a man wanted a wife he stole a person's daughter by grabbing her from behind some bushes. In other conversations, women describe this practice as *ngapa* (carrying away on the shoulders).

me: wel In the wulden deiz naw laik yunow In de wul eberlgn>l wei naw wi ben dir
Well in the olden days now, like you know in the old aboriginal way now, we were there

wen wi w>z ownli llt>l gerlz dæt dei wi yuzd tu llv æt M>dpil en BltlnbiyirRk
when we were only little girls; that day we used to live at Madpil and BitbinbiyirRk on

hn bitj dæt Wanggigi bitj naw Mænd>ra ai w>z n>ther rawnd K>ngg>l krik wel
the beach, that Wanggigi beach, called Mandorah. I was at another beach, Kunggul creek,

biK>z nowwan wan wulmæn mai father stil samb>di wan y>ng gerl fr>m dirye In
one old man, my father, stole somebody -- a young girl from there [Kunggul creek]. In

the eberlgn>l wei dei get If thei wana waif dei gow dei gata snik >p bihaind thei
the aboriginal way, if they want a wife they have to sneak up behind the

b>shez hn dei g>nha stil dat gerl awei si fr>m mather hn father.
bushes and they steal the girl away, see? They steal her from her mother and father;

hn wel wi went dir far h>nting tu get s>m kreb `lp dæt wulmæn keim dawen hn
and well, we went to Kunggul to get some crab, but that old man came down and was

w>z trai tu stil wan y>ng gerl mai c>zln dæR>n dæt mai c>zln hn wi w>z kraiying
trying to steal one young girl. She was my cousin, that was my cousin. We were crying

dæt dei bik>z ai w>z ownli llt>l gerl ai`>s kraiying far help m' mather`n mai
that day because I was only a little girl. I was crying for help. My mother and my

father ræn æn græblm mai k>zln awei fr>m dæt mæn `iz ownli owld mæn
father ran and grabbed my cousin away from that man; he was only an old man

dz: nowb>di kempln an the bitj then dldent now this iriya yet thæt thæt pleisez
then

no one was camping on the beach then, they didn't know this area yet, those places then
ownli j>s bösh rowd [noise]
there was only a bush road

me: bösh rowd
bush road

mmm traid tu teik dæt gerl awei fr>m mai mather and father dæt dei b>t dæt
mmm he tried to take that girl away from my mother and father that day, but that
wulmæn b>t Im ben hert Im leig irye lök irye fr>m mai mather
old man, but my mother hurt his leg here [on the shin bone]

lata pip>l w>z dir dringkin emiyanggal
A lot of Emiyanggal people were drinking there.

dz: this w>z bifar the war ar efta the war

- this was before the war or after the war
me: *bifar the war bifar the war.*
 before the war, before the war
dz: *bifar the war ei yu awl ben muv arawnd ei bifar war ben hirye*
 before the war, you all moved around huh, before the war started?
me: *den wi ben end >p irye naw*
 then we ended up here now
dz: *end >p irye*
 end up here
me: *dæt jæpani war ye wi ben hirye mlsh>nirri skul ala skul kld wi ben*
 that Japanese war yeh we were here yeh missionary school all the school kid, we went
mlsh>nirri skul
 to missionary school

There are two time frames evoked in this short narrative: the time before and the time after Anglos came. Deborah Zirita comments that there were no Anglo-Australian dwellings at Kunggul beach (the Wagait Residential Development is located adjacent to Kunggul beach) and Mary states that wife stealing is the old Aboriginal way. However, this story must have occurred after the arrival of alcohol on the Cox Peninsula. Mary describes the Emiyenggal drinking camp at Kunggul. What do we make of this old way of getting a wife and the motivations that Mary might have for telling about it in a school setting?

The Head Master who has taught on other "more traditional communities" asks a question that is helpful to us. This question seems to assume that women are only referring to the first time frame, that is, the precolonial period. He asks, what were the traditional marriage practices of the Belyuen groups: "in old days, did people have promised husbands and wives here?" Mary tells the Headmaster, "if mother and father promised you that man, you have to take that man," but the young woman who was being 'grabbed' was not promised to anyone. Then the Schoolmaster comments, "so he wasn't stealing someone else's wife?" Mary agrees that the man was not stealing someone else's wife, but was about to have sex with a young girl to whom he was too closely related, someone she called brother.

- sm:* *hmm unaited. In owld deiz pramlst dld pip>l hev pramlst h>zbendz end waivs hir*
hmm United. In old days, promised, did people have promised husbands and wives here
- me:* *yeh In owlden deiz lf mather en father pramist yu thæt mæn yu hæv tu teik*
thæt mæn
yeh in old days if mother and father promise you that man you have to take that man
- sm:* *thæt gerl yer thæt k>zln av yerz w>z shi pramist tu s>mwan els*
that girl, that cousin of yours, was she promised to someone else
- me:* *now*
no
- sm:* *shi w>zent*
she wasn't
- me:* *now thæt owld mæn wanted tuuu tu a meika waif h-*
no that old man wanted tooo to a make wife h-
- sm:* *rait*
right
- me:* *k>z shi w>z y>ng shi w>z mai k>zln*
because she was young she was my cousin
- en:* *wulmæn [faint] kallm*
old man call him
- me:* *wi kal-lm grendfather b>t In eberlgn>l wei wi Kal-lm laik föl meit*
we call him grandfather but in Aboriginal way we call him like full mate
- sm:* *yeh sow hi w>zent stiling samwan elsez waif*
yeh so he wasn't stealing someone elses wife
- me:* *now hi ben gow far y>ng gerl hahaha*
no he went for young girl hahaha
- en:* *hahaha*
hahaha

Placing this conversation in a community context, it is clear how and why women's historical narratives tack between precolonial and postcolonial references. The point of the story is not, or not wholly, the 'exchange of women' as part of a traditional economy,⁴⁸ but rather how the use of narcotics upsets one's ability to act in a correct manner and how the problems of the 'olden days' are the problems (or not, depending to whom one is talking) of the present. This is an important educational story for the Belyuen school children. The alcoholism of their sons and daughters is of great interest to these women. In other conversations, referring to male-female

⁴⁸ The assertion that women are symbolic and real exchange articles in the elementary structure of human society has been discussed at length since Levi-Strauss proposed this (1969). Cf. Hartsock (1983), Chowning (1987), and Strathern (1990).

interaction and drug abuse, women say "it was like that in the old days, and it still is."⁴⁹ Old men go for young girls, as old women go for young men; people sleep with their wrong kin relations. But these old ways are now spliced with new social stresses. Aboriginal revenge killings and sicknesses continue, heightened, it is argued, by the 'silliness' of men and women who drink and then are not able to protect themselves from munggul men (E, sorcerers). Other drugs increase the causes and results of violence.⁵⁰ Furthermore, non-Aboriginal men sexually harass Aboriginal women when they travel to Darwin. Rapes by members of the white community around the Cox Peninsula happen often enough to prejudice most women's views of white male strangers. 'Olden time' European killings and threats of killings are today mirrored by Klu Klux Klan shootings at Aboriginal organizations and residences in and around Darwin. Finally, old government policies of taking children, country, and ritual paraphernalia from responsible senior Aborigines are compared to new welfare and land tenure laws that attempt to regulate peoples' practices. In their historical narratives, older women continually anchor the present in the form of the past or evoke the past when talking about the present much in the way Sansom describes Darwin fringe-dwellers (many of whom are relatives of Belyuen men and women) conceptualizing "persons . . . [as] particularised into existence and . . . in themselves, the past emergent in the present" (1988:158). Because these conversational practices link the present to the past women can move quickly, without being challenged, between

⁴⁹ "It was likadjet in the olden days, im still likadjat im-keep going same way."

⁵⁰ There are several interesting books that examine sorcery and bush magic in modern aboriginal communities, cf. Reid (1983), Sansom (1980), and Elkin (1980). Aborigines have had to deal with the effect of drugs and violence, like other social groups in Australia, for quite a long time. For example, in the *NTT&G*, October 6, 1893 we read of Aborigines smoking opium on Cavanaugh Street in downtown Palmerston, and of "trio of (Aboriginal) fallen sisters" arrested for being corrupted by the effects of civilization's narcotics. In the *NTT&G* January 31, 1896, an article about the passage of the Opium Bill notes that narcotics were just one problem Aborigines face, others such as alcohol and "whites and chinese" keeping "harems of black girls," were great causes of death and suffering.

their experiences and 'the' Aboriginal experience. Again Sansom's work is relevant here. He notes,

Widely appreciated ways for getting things in train, for dealing with the problem that whitefellas pose, for bringing the dispersed people of a region together for celebrations, for coping with financial difficulties in family life, make Aborigines of town and country continentally 'all same' (1982: 118).

How do women elide their years of interaction with Anglo-Australians, an elision mandated by new economic and political demands? They organize what they will tell: stories about the 'olden days,' stories about cultural and ethnic difference. But they are not the only ones who organize and selectively invoke history. For instance, the school master's interest in old Belyuen marriage practices directed some of the conversation. The school topic of "Aboriginal family history" itself organizes the focus of history: stories should be about Aborigines not whites or Aborigines and whites. My interest in matters of productivity skew other conversations. Westerner's historical interest in the boundaries and personality traits of Aboriginal nations have guided most discussions of precolonial Aboriginal history. Belyuen women take advantage of this and turn questions of 'what was it like' to 'what is it like' to be an Aboriginal person in Australia.

CHAPTER SIX: "When We Were Traveling": The changing paths of history and an account of history that paves the way home.

Once in the time of our grandfathers and before the birth of our fathers, a small piece of darkness, fashioned by the very thought of *Ria Warrawah* [an malevolent mythic personality], came floating along on the sea. *Ria Warrawah* manifested himself as a cloud and pulled the island along. He pulled to Adventure Bay and left it there. Our grandfathers watched from the shore. They saw the black sticks by which the *Ria Warrawah* had held it as he pulled it along. Then a piece of the island broke away and came crawling across the sea towards them. Our hidden grandfathers watched on. The creatures touched the land. It carried pale souls which *Ria Warrawah* had captured. They could not bear being away from the sea and had to protect their bodies with strange skins. They spoke and the sounds were unlike any that had been heard. Our grandfathers remained hidden and after a time the creatures mounted their strange sea thing and went back to the dark island.

Colin Johnson *Dr. Woolreddy's* 1987: 4.

Introduction.

Although mid-19th century Europeans were interested in Australian Aborigines' precolonial practices, the world they established in the 'land down under' was markedly different. Older Belyuen people have experienced this postcolonial world. In their childhood in the 1930s, intermittent violence still occurred between Aborigines and Anglo-Australians in the red Central Desert and in the Daly River region. Racial segregation continued, Aborigines were banned from public places such as theatres and the downtown centers. Various anthropologists, ministers, and administrators called for the creation of a "black state" in Arnhem Land as a way of solving the racial conflict and violence.¹ Closer to home, as children Belyuen people saw the Japanese bomb Darwin Harbour. Aborigines did not just witness the Anglo-Australian world around them; they participated voluntarily and involuntarily in many aspects of it: all 'full blooded' Aborigines in the region were registered as wards of the state and subject to decisions made by white Territory officials about where they should live and what jobs they would have (cf. Berndt 1986).

¹ Northern Territory conservatives have used the threat of a 'black state' arising somewhere in the north to intimidate white voters for many years. *The Northern Territory Times*, April 5, 1929, reports that Mr. Bleakley, Chief Protectorate of the Aborigines in Queensland, made an examination of Aboriginal conditions in northern and central Australia, recommending to the Federal government that, amongst other things: A) A reserve be proclaimed for the country where the tribes are still "intact," B) The inhabitants include only the tribes occupying the territory reserved, C) No outside natives be forcibly included, D) Members of the State have perfect freedom of movement, E) The Government be by native tribunal under "benevolent" white directors, F) White advisers, teachers, missionaries and industrial instructors be appointed, G) Severe laws guard against any "contaminating" from outside influences, H) A native tribunal be empowered to deal with contagious diseases, I) Ultimate self-government under native administration, and J) Representation in Parliament. Arnhem Land did become an Aboriginal Reserve, but never obtained even an approximation of these powers.

In *The Northern Territory News*, May 24, 1989 the front page warns "Black State Warning." The article reports that The Lands Minister, Mr. Daryl Manzie, in the midst of an attempt to change the Federal Sacred Sites Protection legislation, claimed the Aboriginal Land Councils wanted to create a "black State in the Northern Territory".

In a country that valorizes the traditional Aborigine and scorns the 'fringe-dweller,' how do Belyuen Aborigines negotiate continuity and change in their "traditional" practices? How do women create a coherent and unified narrative from the diversity of their pasts? I examine how women describe two historical changes, the change in the locality and number of plants and animals and the change in the location of human groups. Both these discussions are about women's experience of environmental, residential, and ceremonial changes in the countryside and in all three women insist that these changes are actually evidence of the continuity of the Dreamtime Past. I analyze how women are able to acknowledge the one and claim the other. First I examine some conversational principles relating to the narration of postcolonial history.

1.

Women do not simply discuss the past; they decide who will speak, in what circumstances, and about what. Sociolinguists have described the overt principles of conversation such as what people say happens and the covert principles of conversational structure such as ways of agreeing and disagreeing, of turn-taking, and of opening and closing sequences.² Overt and covert principles operate in women's

² Michael Moerman writes in *Talking Culture*, "[e]very type of 'discourse unit' that has been studied in conversation . . . is organized interactively and built to meet the exigencies of reception and interception by other participants. . . . Utterances, social actions, and the expressing of cultural themes are simultaneous and mutually constitutive. But their units rarely coincide . . . because participants are themselves centrally engaged in negotiating, interpreting, and disputing them" (1988: 11). The study of conversational 'syntax' or organization has gone a long way in clarifying the ways in which we are bound by our speech. Speech is not free, spontaneous or chaotic. There are methods persons use in doing social life (Sacks 1987). Yet, though many people have discussed methods of relating the conversational and the political (or, micro- and macrosociological structures) few have practiced them (Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel 1981). And although many are now looking at the social and cultural implications of conversational analysis, few are looking at how personal, cultural and political histories influence turn-taking decisions, and how these turn-taking rules effect political and

historical narratives and are critical to understanding how a coherent history is constructed. For instance, when Deborah Zirita says to me, "you get all that information" in the past "*they* had a strong culture," what principles do she and others follow to decide the relevant information and who should provide it? What is the relationship among rules of speaking, land use, and speakers' personal and political agendas?

At the beginning of 'Wife Stealing,' Joan gives clues of how, whatever history is and whenever it occurred, it should be presented ("in a straightforward way"). She does this again in two other segments of the conversation recorded at Mandorah later in the day. The older women, the schoolchildren, and I have gone there to conclude the classroom lesson on 'family history.' At the beginning of the conversation, we have been at Mandorah about ten or fifteen minutes buying snacks and looking at a large water snake in an aquarium. Emily Nela describes how she caught it at a local swamp and traded it to the Pub owner's son. The water snake (nunggudi, E) is Emily's patrifilial durlg. Afterwards, she suggests we go sit down in the shade. I ask what we are going to do next. Mary Eladi responds to no one in particular, "[j]ust tell him [the schoolteacher], we just camped there all the time, in the olden times." Marjorie adds, "[j]ust like how you visit with Beth and tell her stories you tell all these kids."

'In the Wanggigi Shade'

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.

bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.

me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1930.

je: Joan Ela: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born 1943.

dz: Deborah Zirita: father Emi, mother Marriamu, born circa 1950.

(present but not speaking, Clair Mamaka: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born circa 1930.

FIRST SEGMENT

en: elewedā (E) sheid sidawn...
 shade shade [let's] sit down

[segment after children talking]

bp: wat ar wi duwing
 what are we doing

en: now mar langa kaingmerRa (E)
 not in the sun

me: j>s tellm wi j>s stap langa dir ala taim wuldentaimz
 just tell them we just camped along there all the time in the olden times

je: j>s laik haw yu stap langa bet n tellm stariz yu tel al diz kldz
 just like how you visit Beth and tell her stories, you tell all these kids

bp: yeh yu alweiz tel mi
 yeh you always tell me

je: wel haw ala taim tel bet tel dls mab
 well how all the time you tell Beth, tell this mob

je: tu hat
 too hot

dz: yu kldz kam llsen
 you kids come and listen

jz: kam an yu mab irye
 come on you mob here

[Segment after moving to another location for the story]

me: kallm mænd>ra: :wanggli
 call [this place] Mandorah Wanggigi [Aboriginal name for Mandorah]

dz: :b>t eberlgn.l neim:
 but Aboriginal name

This question and response routine is typical of Belyuen women's conversations: people do not direct their statements to anyone in particular. People do not name or otherwise indicate who ought to do something or who is acting incorrectly. Direct address and reference like pointing and referring to a deceased person out of context are seen as rude and potentially dangerous actions (cf. Rosaldo 1973; Brenneis 1988; Brenneis and Myers 1984; Myers 1986 for further discussion of the relationship between disputes, direct and indirect speech and personhood). Speakers criticize indirectly ('like you do with Beth, do with your own children'). Because of this, listeners "play an active role in the co-construction of situational definitions" (Ochs 1988: 19); viz., they actively define the meaning of utterances without verbal

repartee. A listener can "pick up" or "leave" a suggested course of action without verbal acquiescence or refusal. The results of indirect speech are, like direct speech, uncertain. No one takes up Mary's suggestion about what to tell the Anglo teacher and she ends up telling him the story herself. When Joan Ela specifies a little too directly who "you" is ("you tell a story"), Emily states emphatically, "don't look at me, I wasn't there" and Joan risks the reputation of being a "boss."

Each woman has her own way of describing what happened in the past. There are three important organizational items,³ however, that influence how all women present the genre of history: 'like-im' (or the variation 'no more like-im'), 'leave-im' (with the variations 'finished' and 'bambai'), and 'tell-im.' Tell-im is subdivided into tell a short, long, straight, or crooked version of the story.

a. Like-im

Before going down to the school to do family history, older women protested to Joan, to one another, and to me that they did not enjoy speaking in public places about the past. People commonly use the phrase 'no more like' or 'no more like this business' when asked to do a job. When describing how people charged goods at the Alewa Grocery Store, I argued that they used this phrase to shift responsibility for the practice onto the store owners. If persons enjoy what they are doing, no one owes them anything because the activity gives its own reward. People use this phrase in a variety of social settings: when they are asked to sing, to dance for corroborees, to

³ I am borrowing the term "organizational item" from Liberman. Especially see his description of wanti "Letting-it-pass" which seems to correspond to the speech acts of Belyuen aboriginals. Liberman accounts for this use by arguing that: "As well as avoiding arguments, where possible Aboriginal people avoid interaction which looks as if it will not flow smoothly. They prefer not to be troubled by unpleasant matters and to avoid troubling others. While persons in all societies share such an aspiration, Aboriginal people are more inclined to withdraw from potential troubles than persons in European societies. Aboriginals provide a great deal of space for each other, and this is accomplished in part by not pursuing the detail of every matter which might be a source of differences" (1985: 68; cf. 68-71).

gather foods, to give linguistic or historical information, and etc. There are analogous phrases. For example, Emily urges Mary to tell the Headmaster that the people he wants to hear about are 'all dead.' By doing so, she states publicly that the history lesson is being run incorrectly, that she knows it, and that the responsibility for its results are not hers even if she participates. This conversational strategy also arises at outstations. There, the fault for an accident can be high: whoever is responsible for the accident or the camp where it happens is a target in a revenge attack. People living at an outstation are quick to note anything that seems wrong to them -- where the camp is being made, who is living in it, how long it lasts -- and to distance themselves from being identified as "the camp boss." In the event of an accident, fault lies with that person who did not listen to the good advice of others (the boss was tjeingithut). People who organize history lessons, bush camps, or ceremonial sessions respond to statements such as Emily's in various ways: they can "leave" the activity, telling the disgruntled person they do not have to participate, or they can "keep going." If they keep going, they are responsible for what happens and they ought to provide the "workers" with some refreshment or gift. Usually the burden of being a boss is too great; people leave the activity. In the above, however, the headmaster is the 'boss' and so, although women complain, they continue in the history lesson.

b. Leave-im

People use 'leave-im' in at least two ways, to mean an event should be postponed for another day ('bambai' or by-and-by) or that it should be abandoned for good. This second use is usually marked by the word 'finished' and its Aboriginal language equivalents. We have already seen examples of the first use of 'leave-im.' Women did not tell the story of the two cousins who ran away from Banagula until the right speaker was found to put the story outside. But many parts of the past cannot be told even if people choose to do so. If elements of a story or ceremony are no

longer completely known, or the correct people are no longer living to perform the ceremony or story series, it is 'let go' or 'finished.' People say they have 'buried' or 'shut up' the story or performance. Analogously, Belyuen people do not speak the name of or visit sites and perform activities associated with a recently deceased person. But what is postponed and what is finished merge into one another over time: a postponed event might be finished if, in the meantime, those who know how to perform it die and a finished event may be practiced in years hence if a clever person 'dreams' a way and reason for performing it.

c. Tell-im

There are many ways to tell a story. One can give a long or short form, tell it in a straight or a crooked way, and give an inside or outside version of the story depending upon the age, ethnicity, and gender of the audience. Aboriginal scholars have noted that the elisions and condensations of narrative are especially important with regard to ceremonial myths (Berndt 1974; Bell 1983; Hale 1971). Belyuen Aboriginal men and women have 'inside' ceremonial stories that can only be told during performances or among the correct age and gender group. They also have 'outside' versions of the same performance or story for younger people and persons of the opposite sex or of different ethnicity. Basil Sansom's work stands out among the attempts to describe the rules Aborigines follow which govern "the relationship between the presentation and the representation of happenings in everyday life" (1980: 79; see also Liberman 1985). Here I examine how Belyuen women interactively decide what is an inside or outside story and who should present it. Many postcolonial stories present the narrator with significant social complexities.

For example, one day in 1990, Mary Eladi, Joan Ela, Emily Nela, Catherine Burga, and I were driving to a site on the west coast across a bush track on which the women use to walk to and from Delissaville when they were children. I had been out of the

community for a few days meeting with people about registering sites. And we were now on our way to meet Lou Mele, a Kiyuk man from Belyuen, and a surveyor from the Sacred Sites Authority, to map dreaming sites along the west coast. They were sailing around the coast from Mandorah. The women and I had myth and history on our minds. As we drove, the women teased me about what I did while I was away. Sexual teasing is common to our relationship and I deny even the remote possibility of having had sex with the married man they mention, claiming to know the final consequences of such: "maybe he will kill me, you know, and maybe that wife will kill me properly."⁴ In other instances of this conversation, women laugh and describe their husbands' demands on them when they were young -- the cooking, cleaning, and fights over lovers. This day, Emily tells a different story. She describes seeing as a child navy men sail from Darwin to the east coast of the Cox Peninsula and rape Aboriginal women living there. Despite the topic, the story is very funny: Emily compares the sexual equipment of the white naval men to the theRawin (Sea Serpent) dreaming: absurdly dangerous, hairy, and stout. Emily is able to put a version of this story 'outside' on a day when another white man is sailing around the Cox Peninsula to pick up women and she does so in a way that few of the listeners are likely to forget. Outside of her company, the other women describe how Ruby is able to tell stories that otherwise would have to be 'forgotten': "she makes the hard part settle down by making the story funny so that you can listen to it."⁵ The past is not simply a text that one tells or does not tell: it is an experience that must be shaped so that it can be re-experienced and remembered without debilitating trauma.

Of course, the author is also given the opportunity to listen as both a daughter and an ethnographer. In ethnographic and legal contexts such as the mapping exercise, women must think about what history they will tell a white woman who

⁴"maybe im-kill me sabi (you know), maybe dat waif im-bust me properly."

⁵ "Im-make that hard part settle down, make-im a bit funny so you can listen le-im."

straddles the category of researcher and kin. Remembering parts of the past, women say, makes them react "strongly" or "hard" to whites, an emotion they try to avoid in their social interactions. Yet, if Belyuen Aborigines want me and other white researchers who are ostensibly "on their side" to think complexly (also in AE "hard") about the past, then women must tell the stories that complicate the researcher's position. Belyuen women emphasize that Aboriginal culture and history is not "easy"; likewise, Aboriginal ceremony is said to be hard on the initiate for a reason. It is very hard to face and to speak parts of the past, especially in a region and nation that provides many motivations "to forget about it." Who wants to hear about the sexual violence of white men on black women? Of the complicity of white women in the colonial process?

d. Repetition.

Deborah Tannen has recently written on repetition in Western conversation and her analysis of the functions of repetition are relevant to this discussion (1989: 47-53). She notes, however, "[s]ince repetition of sentences and ideas is a means of keeping talk going in interaction, the relative frequency of this type of repetition should be correlated with the cultural value placed on the presence of talk in interaction" (79). Here I look at the role repetition plays in constructing a past that is coherent and listenable, in Liberman's terms, a past and present that is "congenial of Aboriginal fellowship," a necessary step for the formation and maintenance of a social group (1985: 37-43; see also Myers 1986). Belyuen people repeat words or phrases in several ways: they confront or confirm another speaker's words and they repeat their own. Shadow response occurred in the story of wife stealing in the olden days.

dz: *nowb>di kempln an the bitj then dldent now thls iriya yet thæt thæt pleisez*
then
 nobody camping on the beach then didn't know this area yet that that places then
ownli j>s bösh rowd
 only just a bush road
me: *bösh rowd*
 bush road

And later in the same conversation:

dz: *this w>z bifar the war ar efta the war*
 this was before the war or after the war
me: *bifar the war bifar the war.*
 before the war before the war
dz: *bifar the war ei yu awl ben muv arawnd ei bifar war ben hirye*
 before the war ei you all moved around ei before war was here.

There is nothing special about this conversation. The reader can review the texts I present in Appendix One to see how common repetition is. It is also socially meaningful. Shadow repetition confirms that speakers and listeners have a similar view of how the conversation is progressing. Three or more people often repeat the same phrase in a round. In this way, people speak as a group rather than as individuals and the story is the group's story rather than the individual's. People disagree by withdrawing from these repetitive routines. Without leaving the group -- a very strong statement of dissatisfaction -- a person disagrees by not repeating key elements of a story. In Western conversations, such a person may be seen a "passive listener." If a Western speaker believes that the listener has a different opinion, he or she may "pursue a response," but otherwise silence is often interpreted as agreement.⁶ At Belyuen

⁶ Anita Pomerantz has described Anglo speech routines of "pursuing a response" in this way: "If a speaker performs an action that solicits a response, it may or may not succeed. Recipients may not hear the talk or understand it. They may ignore it and continue to be involved elsewhere or even initiate other actions. They may hear and understand the talk but withhold their responses. If a recipient does not give a coherent response, the speaker routinely sees the recipient's behavior as manifesting some problem and deals with it. He or she may abandon the

opinions are often stated silently. While speakers do not pursue the silence, people notice when a person withdraws from a conversation. They may comment afterwards, "I think that old lady thinks another way, she never did say herself."

Repeating a phrase helps speakers avoid direct confrontation. A speaker incorporates the previous speaker's words or sentence construction into her own utterance, lessening the impression of difference between speakers. Everything remains the same about the two utterances except the point.

'Wife Stealing'

- en:* *now mar löking et mi ai never ben dir*
no more looking at me I never been there
- me:* *nu mar laik tjitjei yera-maka nadiyerRaka piya (E)*
no more, like teacher children-conditional put in their heads
- en:* *now mar sldawn irye ala taim*
no more sit down here all time

Instead of the respondent saying, "hey you're wrong about that part," she challenges a story by repeating an alternate version in short, monotone statements until someone in the conversation answers, refers to the repeated statement, or drops the issue.

'Cheeky Yam'

- dz:* *Im laik a a waild laik a*
it is like a a wild like a
- me:* *waild yem yena (E) Im driming thaR>n tjiki yem naw*
wild yam-locative she's Dreaming that cheeky yam now
- en:* *minthene (E) naw*
cheeky yam now
- jz:* *wila (B)*

attempt to get a response, may infer the recipient's response but let it remain unarticulated, or may pursue an articulated response" (1987: 152).

- cheeky yam
bp: *mimi ?(E)*
 pumpkin yam?
me: *wila (B)*
 cheeky yam
en: *now moar thaet n>therwan*
 no that other one
jz: *minthene (E)*
 cheeky yam
cb: *yeh*
 yeh
jz: *yu sei m minthene (E)*
 you say cheeky yam
je: *dæt manster dæt wi ben show yu dæt dei, yeh theRawin (E)*
 that monster we showed you that day, yeh Sea Serpent
en: *nat theRawin (E)*
 not Sea Serpent
je: *hm gata aa laika leig this mab wulgamen sæbi thei tel yu the wan naw callm*
 it has a, like a leg, this bunch of old ladies know they can/will tell you the one, call it
minthene (E) ar wila (B)
 cheeky yam or cheeky yam

Repetition allows women to negotiate the content of history, while maintaining an outwardly consensual view of it.

Alongside these conversational items, there are the three previously discussed principles for how women gain or relinquish the right to tell a particular historical narrative: *being straight for* a story or event, *being there* during the occurrence of a story or event, and *being part of* the story-telling occasion. All of these principles of speaking emphasize (or in the case of repetition rely on) the importance of experience. One cannot tell, leave, challenge, postpone, or bury a story or event which one has never experienced. This is why remaining on the Belyuen community when everyone else is off camping is to a person's disadvantage. In their conversations, Belyuen Aborigines move authoritatively from their experiential knowledge of foods, materials, and the mythic countryside -- where one can collect foods, when, how dreaming sites react to hunters -- to their claims for residential and custodial rights and duties.

Conversations may drive speakers (Sacks 1987), but speakers are driven by their own personal and political agendas: they are not an homologous group upon which speech acts. Personal and political agendas, in turn, affect the content of history by determining who speaks and what is heard about the past. For instance, when Grace Ziyesta is away from the community, Mary Eladi is usually the person who talks to Anglo-Australians about Cox Peninsula history. In part this is because of her personal history. Mary has always lived on the Cox Peninsula or, for short periods, in Darwin and at the Katherine war camps. When Emily, Grace, and Jean left the war camps and walked to the Daly River, Mary was left behind with her adopted Laragiya mother and continued to work for the Army. Because of her history, other women say Mary is 'used to' non-Aborigines; i.e., she is not unduly upset by their conversational style and mannerisms. She is also *straight for* stories about the northeast coast of the Cox Peninsula: she was born at and has a personal dreaming (maroi) from the Mandorah area. Moreover, although her father was Emiyenggal and mother Wadjigiyn, she was raised by a Laragiya woman who taught her many of the dreaming stories for and foods in the Cox Peninsula area. How does Mary describe Mandorah to the schoolchildren?

me: wi uztu llv ir bifar. blg kemp humpti haws wlth peiperbark en swamp. ai w>z j>s
we use to live here before, big camp, humpy houses with paperbark and swamp. I was

lltt>l gerl laik yu. Mai grendfather and grendmather w>z hir seim taim. Thæt
just a little girl like you. My grandfather and grandmother were here at the same time.

mlkwöd dir dæt birriy>l grawnd. Mai grendfather en mai grendmather. uz tu bi
That milkwood there, that's a burial ground. My grandfather and grandmother. Use to be

ala red ep>l tri thir al alang. Dæt owld leidi nowz lm ben ir.
all the red apple trees there, all along. That old lady knows. She was here.

Lats pip>l M>dpil wei BltlnbiyirRk, al mlkst >p Emi, Mentha, Wadjigiyn mlkst.
Lots of people were Madpil way, BitbinbiyirRk mixed up Emi, Mentha, Wadjigiyn mixed.

dz: thru B>lg>l hir tu Bainow Harbar tu trænzmltar Leragiya
through Bulgul [place in Daly River] to Bynoe Harbour to transmittor is Laragiya [land]

- me: still Laragiya. al yuzd tu bi hir k>z blg mab buliya (B) Is irye mab dei yuzd tu*
still Laragiya, all use to be here because of all the relations. This mob they use
- meik a b>sh t>ka, dæt t>ka mada tiuntiu (B). yu now wir waitmæn stei. wi yuzd*
to make a bush tucker, that tucker cycad nut, you know where that whiteman lives, we
- tu p>t Im en dæt water meik Im kam fresh. kam bek feyu wiks p>tlm*
use to put them in that water, make them come fresh, come back in a few weeks put
- In faiyer miya wardarbu(E) yuz tu gow dir getlm yem wir dæt waitmæn dir naw*
them in fire, cycad nut, they use to go there get yams where that whiteman is now.
- Howl dere were im sidown freshwan k>m awt laik er tu.*
waterhole is there where he lives, fresh water comes out like here too.
- je: laik kid grow >p sei now b>sh t>ka b>t lata b>sh t>ka irye. wen grow >p en*
like a grown kid says 'no bush tucker' but lots of bush tucker here. when you grow up
- yer pirentz show yu end yu j>s waking an the grawnd lata b>sh t>ka dir*
your parents show you and you're just walking on the ground, lots of bush tucker there.

Emily Nela is also a knowledgeable senior Belyuen woman. She had a 'clever father,' a 'clever husband,' and many people say that Emily shares this 'cleverness' in her ability to heal and to regard with empathy social situations and personal intentions. Moreover, she is considered one of the best storytellers at Belyuen and one of the most knowledgeable women on Daly River bush life and lore gained when she lived there with her parents. She also lived for a while at Mandorah with Mary; Emily's paternal uncle went through male initiation there. When asked to *do history* -- tell historical narratives or family history -- Emily often tells the story of her two long trips from Banagula to the Cox Peninsula. They are impressive stories and are spliced with the right tinge of horror and humor to make them 'good to listen to.' Her stories hinge on the frame of her fathers' travels up from the Daly River to Darwin. The men are searching for Laragiya for whom they can sing and dance trade songs (wanqqa). Everywhere they go they find Emi, Mentha, Wadjigiyn, Kiyuk, Marriamu, and Marritjaben. Only when they reached wulkempen ('old camping,' Lamaru Beach) in Darwin do they find Laragiya. No matter Emily's cleverness, for her to tell an 'outside

story' of the missing Laragiya in a public context such as a family history lesson (or a court room) is for her to open up a number of political questions about who can speak and be 'booked down' as the proper group for the Cox Peninsula.⁷ How can the Laragiya be the right people for the Cox Peninsula if they were "never around"? Who knows the stories of the Cox Peninsula? Who should look after the countryside? Emily's story has nothing in it that is inherently contrary to the position that the Cox Peninsula is Laragiya land. The 'missing Laragiya' becomes a politically sensitive issue only when attachment to country, or its lack, is an issue of who 'owns' the country.

The question of who was living where in the past arose in many of the above conversations. In the 'Wanggigi Shade' Mary describes the Mandorah of her childhood to the schoolchildren. There were paperbark houses, old people, red apple trees, and mixed language groups (Emi, Mentha, Wadjigiyn). Deborah makes a point that has been made earlier: although there were Wagaitj language groups on the Cox Peninsula for as long as anyone can remember, the Peninsula is Laragiya country. Mary answers, "*still* Laragiya." Why is it necessary to keep bringing up this point? How does the exchange between Mary and Deborah illustrate how conversational rules, personal interactional styles, and legal discourse intersect in the practice of oral history?

Although both Mary and Emily resist being the public spokespersons for family history, they are the only ones who tell stories (if Grace Ziyesta and Claire Ziya are not around). Why is this? Emily asks Catherine Burga to tell a story, but by and large in occasions when non-Aborigines are around, Catherine Burga is kept quiet because "she makes mistakes" explained in her particular case as describing in too vivid of detail the sexual violence that occurred on the Cox Peninsula when she was a teenager and young adult.

⁷ Ruby tells a story that presents Wagaidj claims for residence on the Cox Peninsula, but she then steadfastly maintains that her country is 'long way Banakula' although the Peninsula is her children's country because they came from the Belyuen waterhole. Since the land claim hearing these stories are 'outside.'

For her age (circa 1943), Joan Ela knows a lot about Belyuen family history, in part because she has been taught by her cousin, Grace Ziyesta (MBd), and her father's sister, Catherine Burga, and in part because she has made it her job to know Aboriginal and white 'Law' so that she can act as a translator between non-Aborigines and the older Belyuen women. Some white people view her as a 'boss' because of her position as the Adult Education Assistant. But as she explains it, because she is the youngest she must defer to the other women. Although Joan has definite opinions about what older women should do for their children, she can only suggest a course of action. If she is not heeded, she can threaten to withdraw as the intermediary between the women and non-Aboriginal welfare industry. Importantly, Joan and the other older women can contest, negotiate, and constitute history among themselves only because there are few equally knowledgeable men still living who have the time to talk to ethnographers, schoolteachers, popular writers, and the like. Availability, colonial history, and experiential knowledge all intersect to make sexual difference matter.

We can now see why local and regional issues of power and economy continually arise in women's conversations. Deborah Zirita's question about Laragiya ownership of the Cox Peninsula relates to Mary's expansion of what Joan suggests as an historical text and to Emily's refusal to take a speaking turn. Deborah queries the Laragiya ownership of the land because no matter who manages and knows its stories, if in public occasions the Laragiya's position to the land is not spelled out, then word of a Belyuen 'land grab' could cross the Harbour or could reach the ears of some Kiyuk-Laragiya living at Belyuen, some of whom are related to Deborah. Such "land grabs" have caused considerable fighting between Aboriginal groups, affecting families now living at Belyuen.⁸ What seem to be unruly acts of storytelling -- people choosing or not to

⁸ Perhaps the most famous of these disputes occurred during the Finnis Land Claim; cf. Layton and Williams (1980) and Neate (1989).

tell a story for no discernible reason -- are moments steeped in cultural and political maneuvering.⁹ However, just because one states that a group owns a piece of country, does not mean that conversational and other social rules do not reposition their rights. Mary, who has the authority to speak in a way Joan does not, can go beyond Joan's limited agenda and present the claims of her family to the Cox Peninsula based on their long association with the place: how they lived, died, and were buried on the Cox Peninsula. She can do this without excluding the traditional presence of the Laragiya, as Emily might have to do, because Mary was raised by and knew many Laragiya who were living there in the 1930s and 40s.

Let us look quickly at how these organizational items and personal and interactional styles intersect with Australian legislation. In The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, 1976 three major elements must be satisfied if 'traditional ownership' is to be found and the land handed back to those owners. 'Traditional owners' consist of a local descent group (LDG) for the country under claim, who have common spiritual affiliation (CSA) to a site or sites on the land, and who share primary spiritual responsibility (PSR) for those sites. The local descent group must also forage as of right (FR). The Aboriginals Land Rights Act has been soundly criticized for its inability to deal with the historic realities of dislocation and its consequent effect on what group of people fulfill and practice these four elements (cf. Neate 1989; Peterson and Langton 1983). However, in the years since the Land Rights Act was passed, a succession of Land Commissioners and lawyers representing Aboriginal groups have introduced some flexibility into the Act. For example, in early claims only patrilineal groups were put forward as the Local Descent Group. Over the last ten years, the principle of descent for the Local Descent Group has expanded to include

⁹ Volosinov writes, "Every sign, as we know, is a construct between socially organized persons in the process of their interactions. Therefore, *the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organization of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction*" (1986: 21).

matrifilial groups as well. And several claims have been presented on behalf of a language group. After all is said and done, however, some Aboriginal group must satisfy all four of these statutory elements if they are to gain certain legal rights over a stretch of country. The Act also provides protection for Aboriginal groups who are not 'traditional owners,' but have long-standing ties to a country that is claimed. However, in practice, some Aboriginal claimant groups have excluded rather than included migrants.¹⁰

In non-Aboriginal settings, such as the preliminary investigation of a land claim, when the histories of peoples and places are collected, a person's right to speak before another does, to mal:thena (E, give a story), establishes a socio-political relationship between speakers from different social groups. Those who cannot challenge a story's authenticity based on an opposing observation in the place (perhaps because they reside elsewhere) lose rights to take a turn speaking. Failure to establish rights to speak for the country places one in a potentially dangerous category. How can persons act responsibly in an environment they do not know? How can the country recognize and, therefore, provide for persons who have been absent from the country for hundreds of years? Do people bare legitimating marks of their relationship to a country: personal dreaming marks, ceremonial scars, or everyday and mythic stories? These are questions that contest, negotiate, and establish various groups' rights over country. When two or more groups are placed in a competitive position for use and residence in a country, conversational rules are used to position speakers socially and politically. Speakers resist revealing entire mythic or historical texts when members of an outside group are around to hear. But younger people urge their older relatives not to 'hold-imbet gut' (to refuse to speak), but to tell the stories that they know in order for a younger generation to be 'straight for it' and claim rights based on their

¹⁰ For example the Maranunggu-Kunggarakan/Warai dispute in the Finnis Land Claim.

knowledge. The stories older people tell often center on changes in the countryside. Two of the most noticeable and commented-upon differences are the change in the locality of plants and animals and the change in the locality of human groups.

2.

Students of Australian Aboriginal societies have long emphasized the relationship between the locality of Aboriginal groups and the seasonal availability of plant and animal foods. Take, for example, W.E.H. Stanner's description of Daly River groups among whom he worked extensively from the 1930s through the 1950s.

One rarely sees a tribe as a formed entity. It comes together and lives as a unit only for a great occasion -- a feast, a corroboree, a hunt, an initiation, or a formal duel. After a few days -- at the most weeks -- it breaks up again into smaller bands or sections of bands: most commonly into a group of brothers, with their wives, children, and grandchildren, and perhaps a few close relatives. These parties rove about their family locality or, by agreement, the territories of immediate neighbours. They do not wander aimlessly, but to a purpose, and in tune with the seasonal food supply. One can almost plot a year of their life in terms of movement towards the places where honey, yams, grass-seeds, eggs, or some other food staple, is in bearing and ready for eating (1979: 32-33).

In order to counter the popular view that Aborigines wandered aimlessly, writers such as Stanner portrayed 'traditional' Aboriginal life as rational as the environment on which it was built: it was 'rooted' in the exotic ecology of the Australian outback and governed by social rules regulating how human groups behaved. This is not to say that

Stanner advocated the ecological determinism of Birdsell and others, but only that he and most researchers were rightfully impressed by the compelling relationship between where Aboriginal groups lived and what foods were in season there. Over the last hundred-odd years, the season and location of plants and animals have shifted because of climatic and ecological changes. How do people monitor the environment for signs of change and continuity in species' locality, form, and quantity?

Aborigines living on the Cox Peninsula have faced numerous ecological changes to their hunting and gathering practices. Nowadays, the Cox Peninsula has a modest population of about 200 Aborigines and 100 non-Aborigines. This low population masks long term changes in the countryside. Tullock (1967) and Bolton (1974) discuss the devastating ecological consequences to the Top End wetlands of introduced cow and pig. Other effects of the colonial and postcolonial period have been discussed already: a lowered water table, cleared eucalyptus forests, and shifting mangroves.

Against these ecological changes, Belyuen women compare what they know of the past mythic and ecological habits of plants and animals. Mythic texts provide some reasons for why certain plants and animals are in their present shape and location and why certain Aborigines have these plants and animals as their dreamings (durlg and maroi).¹¹ Elkin relays a Wagaitj story about how the traveling companions, sea turtle and freshwater turtle, parted ways. Each turtle found it difficult to live in the other's habitat and so they separated: one went into the briny sea and the other went into the freshwater billabong. Because of this separation, the Kiyuk (or in Elkin's terms, the Rakraqerle) have the greenback sea turtle as one of their dreamings (durlg). The Wagaitj-Kiyuk story also describes how the mythic sea turtle stopped as it traveled

¹¹ And so the reason for Aboriginal groups' physical characteristics. Meggitt notes similarly of the Walpiri, "[t]he beliefs concerning the inter-relations of patri-, matri-, and conception-spirits or -dreamings also constitute a crude theory of personality for the natives. Possession of a common matrisspirit, which later becomes a person's ghost, *manbaraba*, explains the similarities of appearance and temperament among maternal kin. The shared patrisspirit functions similarly in respect of the men of a lodge or patriline" (1965: 208).

from the Finnis River to the Peron Islands, leaving parts of itself behind which are now key territorial markers for the Kiyuk group.

Belyuen men and women know more about the seasonal location and uses of plant and animal species than what myth provides. In the literature, most myths, such as the well-known Thundering Gecko and Emu narratives of west Arnhem Land, include well-developed plots and characters, but end with a very short, broad, environmental provisos such as 'that is why sea turtle lives in the sea' or 'that is why crabs have big claws and live in the mangrove.'¹² Belyuen women tell other mythic stories: how the porpoise got a blowhole, kangaroo its short arms, and dingo its paws, and why hawks follow the smoke of bush fires.

People know far more about crabs than that they have big claws. (Appendix Two lists some of the foods and materials and their uses older women describe.) During food collection trips, people act and organize their hunting strategies around this knowledge. Women carefully note any changes in the habits of species. When 'foods' stop acting in prescribed ways and following prescribed paths, people must balance often competing scientific, mythic, and cultural reasons for these changes. For instance, while mud crabs live in or near mangroves, peoples' ability to find them is based upon a life-time of experience. Depending on the tide and season, crabs are found hiding in deep holes between mangrove roots or along the edges of creeks. They may be sunning themselves on or between the roots of mangrove trees or lying just below a layer of soft grey mud. Moreover, crabs may not be in the mangrove at all;

¹² There has been much debate in the Australianist literature about the most useful way of understanding the functional and structural properties of Aboriginal myths. Hiatt has reviewed his position on the matter in an edited volume Australian Aboriginal Mythology (1975). More recently, Peter Sutton has discussed Hiatt's attack on the 'charter approach' to myth, and his call for the recognition that myths are a "charter for rights and obligations of possession, control and custodianship, not as charter for a moral system" (Sutton 1988: 252). Sutton writes, "[t]here is a strong argument for seeing site-related Aboriginal myths -- and most of them are so related -- not merely as invented pasts, but as in many cases a combination of invention and memory" (1988: 253).

they may be hiding in the edge of the tide or be lodged inside the intertidal reef. Other foods are "tricky" as well: they employ a number of strategies and personalities to escape from hunters. Foods are said to shift, hide, cover themselves up, "come up," or "sink down" when someone comes looking for them. The strategy a food chooses depends upon environmental and human factors such as the mythic profile of the hunter. Persons can have a "better head" (better insight) for collecting one food rather than another because of their filial or personal relationship to it. For instance, if a woman has a crab patrilineal or personal dreaming, then she may be 'smart' for crab hunting. Emily Nela, whose durlg is the black water snake (nunggudi), prides herself on her ability to locate and to capture this reptile. No matter who finds them, if foods are found in an unusual size, shape, color, or number, people discuss why: what did they really dig, food or personal dreaming? Should one eat it or leave it? Who and what are responsible for the change?

While Belyuen women desire some foods to increase, they are suspicious when species spill over, as it were, their environmental boundaries. Of course, many animals can be found in a number of environments. The kangaroo, cow, pig, and various birds can be encountered in plains, mangroves, and black soil plains. However, each of these animals have their 'habits'; pigs and cows eat and wallow in the mangrove mud during the cool morning, then rest in the shade or feed in the plains during the afternoon. Some foods are more clearly associated with a particular environment: freshwater fish, sea mammals, and grubs are confined to certain larger but well-defined environments (wuda and wutar, freshwater versus salt water). Other foods are associated with several environments; the hunter or gatherer chooses in which one he or she will collect them. For instance, long yams grow best in soil next to cycads¹³ but can be found throughout the coastline and inland. Women prefer to dig yams in the soft sandy

¹³ Personal communication with Vic Cherkoff.

soil of the beach because less energy and time are required there and the yams are typically bigger and sweeter than those that grow in the hard, rocky ground of the open forest.¹⁴ If one year long yams, for example, are found in places they have not been before, people are hesitant to dig or to eat them before they have checked their and their older relatives' memories about the place: did someone live there who liked these foods? Is the site "sending out" the foods as a message to the hunters?

Although the song cycles that can control white development and expansion have not been invented, Aborigines throughout Australia attempt to control the changing seasons and to influence the growth of species by sympathetic means. Controlling a species' behavior is ritually elaborated in 'increase ceremonies.' In these ceremonies, a mythic site associated with a certain food or an important mythic person is rubbed, touched, scraped, painted, or otherwise manipulated. Done properly, this manipulation releases the energy of the site into the countryside, causing a species to grow abundantly. Other mythic Cox Peninsula sites cause bodily deformities if disturbed at all.¹⁵

Individual plants and animals can change their location and increase or decrease their number for social or mythical reasons. As well, a place can change its form to punish or to reward a social group. Belyuen women and men know that many named-sites on the Cox Peninsula and in their southern countries are good hunting grounds for particular foods. For instance, a mangrove on the west coast and another one on the north coast are known to be productive gathering grounds for the sea snail 'long bum' (Telescopium telescopium). Other creeks, black soil plains, freshwater swamps, and mangroves are better or worse for salmon and barramundi, longneck turtles,

¹⁴Freshwater, longneck turtles provide an interesting play on environmental changes (Povinelli 1990). Turtles are found in black soil swamps, but this environment changes significantly over the course of the year: grassy wetlands change into dry fire-hardened grounds.

¹⁵ Performed improperly, a person, in the north Kimberlies for example, might "sicken or contract some permanent deformity" (Kaberry 1939: 204).

goose, and crab respectively. Many place names have root-meanings indicating the food and environmental or mythic features that characterize the site such as bulpulinyni ('passion fruit there'). When a rich hunting ground stops "giving" foods, such as when a mangrove ceases to be a productive crab collecting ground, women discuss why the productivity of the place has dropped. Is it simply that the women have been over-using the area or did Darwin commercial fishermen place too many crab-pots in the mangrove? Did the crabs "learn" it was safer to go somewhere else? Finally, are the social profiles of the hunters influencing the productivity of the swamp? All these economic, political, environmental, and mythic issues are raised and are thought to affect the changing relationship between hunter and the countryside.

If more radical environmental change occurs than a drop or increase in productivity -- such as species succession -- women and men describe the site as withdrawing itself or "coming out of its skin." Radical changes in the countryside challenge certain cultural and cosmological beliefs that ethnographers ascribe to Aborigines: that the countryside is unchanging, that the Dreamtime Past established the world in a certain shape from which it has never deviated. Stanner (1979) asserted that history was "wholly alien" to traditional northwest coast Aborigines. Nowadays, women often talk about the changes they see in the countryside. The following looks at a conversation older women and I had about a site in the region where cypress pines grow.

Perhaps most surprising to the anthropologist are the evolutionary overtones of much of the following discussion. It is useful to summarize what the older women and I were talking about, why, and how the conversation has been going when the transcript starts. The Kenbi Land Claim started in 1979 and dragged through the Australian courts for the next decade. The Northern Territory Government appealed the legality of the claim on a number of grounds, the most important being the argument that the Cox Peninsula was 'alienated land' when the claim was lodged (the

Northern Territory Land Claim Act states that only unalienated crown land is claimable). The Northern Territory Government stated that it had legally annexed the Peninsula as part of the Darwin Township. The Northern Land Council argued that the annexation was an illegal, politically motivated move to halt the claim. In 1985, the Supreme Court was finally going to hear the case and the Land Council expected and got a favorable decision. But the claim process continued to drag on until 1989 when the Lands Commissioner finally scheduled a hearing. By this time I was back in the Community. The upcoming claim influenced many of the conversations women and I had. This then is the context of "getting the right story" about the cypress pines; that is, who knows the right names, uses, and power of regional sites, who should be told about them, and at what cost?

'Cypress Pines Dreaming'

Speakers in Order of Appearance.

me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1930.

gz: Grace Ziyesta: Father Marriamu, mother Menthayenggal, born circa 1930.

bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.

je: Joa Ela: father Marritjaben, mother Marriamu, born 1943.

jz: Jean Ziya: father Emi, mother Emi, born circa 1935.

me: *samb>di yuzte . . . ben growlm >pbet. . .*
somebody used to.. grew them up...

gz: *nowma lmben growlaikdet*
no more, they grew like that

me: *now nat samb>di b>ltzben growlmsel*
no not somebody, but they grew themselves

bp: *watdat*
what is that

me: *saipres pain*
cypress pine

bp: *b>lp>l lm min saipres pain?*
bulpul it means cypress pine?

me: *dat peis*

- that place
gz: *dat pleis*
 that place
bp: *ow rait b>t awl thæt saipres pain lm shsh*
 oh that place, oh right, but all those cypress pines, it shh
me: *lm j>s grow dir langa waitmæn lm ben growlm>pbet plæntlmbetbet*
 they just grew there beside white men who were there growing and planting
B>t Imben GROW IMSELF
 But they GREW themSELVS
je: *sid teiglm berd*
 birds can take sœeds
gz: *Imben grow lmselb*
 them grew themselves
jz: *awa (E) berd*
 bird
me: *en wen waitmæn ben faindlm naw*
 and when whiteman found them now
bp: *yeh?*
 yeh?
me: *thei ben k>tlm naw maitben tjainamen si*
 they cut them now, might be chinamen see
je: *berd ben teiglm sid maitbi*
 bird took those sœeds maybe
bp: *yeh fr>m dlsai sow thei ben laik thei ben tjaplm awl dawn far l>mber*
 yeh from this way, so they, like they took them all down for lumber
me: *wel enden deiben mait bi faindlm tjaini pip>l (1.7 sec) mait bi s'meiglmбет*
 well chinese people might have found them and then (pause) maybe they were making
sumthing els dæt wei dat tj>gabeig ben grow dir le dæt saipres pain
 something else. The other way, that sugarcane grew next to the cypress pines,
wiret ben sldawn blg blg wan
 sugarcane there are big BIG ONES.
bp: *ow ow tj>gabeig yuztu sldawn thir*
 oh oh sugarcane used to be there
me: *ye*
 yeh
- [SECOND SEGMENT]
- gz:** *dls dei naw aiben stat lœk mi mitubela*
 today now I started seeing the cypress pines, me, me, two of us saw them.
bp: *witj ting thæt*
 which thing is that
gz: *ting ting wutiirgat (B)*
 thing, thing, cypress pine
me: *mmmmm*
 mmmm
gz: *lm ben c>ver dæt pleis waaakai (E) Imben grow mar mar mar llt>l llt>l*
 THEY COVERED THAT PLACE WAAKAI (finished) they grew more more more little little
wan ltz stil thir lm blg mad thir
 ones. They are still there. They are a big mob.
me: *sow b>t dei never ben tellm bikuz iz eberlgln>l lend*
 so, but, they never told anyone about them because it is Aboriginal land
gz: *tu m>tj tu m>tj lang dlsh>n*
 too much, too much at this

- wan pleis*
one place.
- je: *yu never ben dir bifar eh*
[to bp] you never were there before eh?
- me: *tu m>tj tu m>tj*
too much too much
- gz: *wakaiyentheni dukamaiyimanga aunti [to bp] perungamanga (E)*
finished finished really too many growing there auntie you [bp] might find wallaby also
- je: *m>s bi sid ar yena (E) m>s bi berd yu now*
must be seed or under, must be, bird you know
- gz: *yüwa (E) wa berd lelm*
look what bird is this
- bp: *ye berd ken teiglm en lm ken thæt sid lm ken meik It akras laik kenggaru*
yeh bird can take them and they can, that seed, it can make it across like a kangaroo
swlm lmken swlm thir
swims, that seed can swim there
- gz: *yaw kamana madjalaba kamaweda elela (E)*
there are some stands at Madjalaba [place name] there
- bp: *sow dæt saipres pain dulm*
so that cypress pine they do similarly
- me: *sid aithingk*
seed I think
- je: *salt water lm bring lm ln*
salt water too it brings them in
- me: *salt water tu*
salt water too
- bp: *mmm*
mmm
- me: *kamibaka (B) wind*
flies on the wind
- gz: *em eh*
em eh
- me: *göd saizwan ye*
good size one yeh
- gz: *sow mar growln geraitj*
so more are growing at Geraitj [placename]
- bp: *yu yuz thæt saipres pain far meiglmbet eniting*
you use that cypress pine for, does it make anything?
- me: *ye iz ownli a lat bllding blg bllding eintl't thei meik tlmber awt ov thæt*
yeh its only a lot, building, big building isn't they make timber out of that
- bp: *yeh*
yeh
- je: *bedagut maitbi*
whiteman might be
- gz: *bedagut*
whiteman
- me: *bedagut*
whiteman
- je: *yuzlm*
use it
- bp: *haw bawt blawi*
but how about us

- gz: *ai downow*
I don't know
- me: *e a*
e...a
- bp: *n>thing wi never lök dæt ting*
nothing we never saw that thing before:
- gz: *thei ben laik dæt*
:they were like that
- me: *ynmi now mar sæbi yunow*
you and I don't know, you know
- bp: *yeh*
yeh
- gz: *ynmi now mar sæbibaka (B)*
you and I don't know that
- me: *bikuz*
because
- jz: *ownli wiy*
we only had the Eucalyptus species
- me: *dei never uztu now wat dæt ting*
they never use to know what that thing was
- bp: *ownli wiy*
only wi [Eucalyptus species]
- gz: *ownli wait bedagut awlrait*
only white whiteman alright
- je: *wen lm göd far watzlm neim eintlt*
when its good, for what's its name, isn't it
- me: *göd far bliding*
it is good for building
- je: *medlsln le meskitow*
medicine for mosquito
- bp: *ye*
yeh
- me: *b>t lm göd far medlsln watzi neim*
but it's good for medicine: :what's im name
- jz: *meskitow*
:mosquito:
- me: *meskitow*
mosquito
- bp: *wen yu bernlm*
when you burn it
- me: *yeh*
yeh
- gz: *yukoj (E,B) meskito sendflai*
yeh mosquito sandfly
- me: *ai ben looklm fairye wiben bernlmbet dætai dæt pleis whir wiben kemping awt dir*
I saw it in fire, we burned it that way, they, where we were camping out there
- je: *dætz awl na eberlgn>l alataim yuzlmbet dæt ding far*
that's all now that aborigines used it for, that thing.

Did the cypress pines grow of their own volition or did someone, pedagut (white men) or chinese men, plant them? Did the site make the cypress pines itself or was someone else's labor and volition integral to the growth process? From where did this new species of pine, which the women had never seen before, come? The women take several positions in the discussion. Mary Eladi states that someone planted the pine trees, but when Grace Ziyesta counters vehemently that the trees grew themselves, she changes her mind and says that although white or chinese men were planting nearby, they grew themselves. Joan Ela provides grounds for compromise by stating that plant seeds can travel from other places. Note Joan follows the conversational practice I outlined above. In the company of senior women, she states repetitively without confronting the two other women, "birds can take seeds." A resolution to the argument is offered indirectly; Joan talks to no one in particular and to everyone listening.

Why is the agency of the trees and site so important? Whether or not the trees grew themselves or white men grew them is not simply a question of legal 'property' in the sense I have discussed previously: whose capital was invested in the trees, how long had this capital been abandoned, could some descendant of the Cypress Pine Planter (a quasi Johnny Appleseed) claim the timber as his or her own, cut down the trees, and keep the profits? Sometimes Belyuen residents articulate their claim to the management of the cypress pines and other regional resources in such terms: if there are to be local industries, profits should go to the Aboriginal community not to the coffers of Darwin businesses. The women's discussion, however, centers on whether the site is a willful agent and, consequently, what the change means. The four women argue about how the pines came to the site, but they all seem to agree that in the end, the site and trees accepted each other. Grace Ziyesta argues that the process of acceptance is "finished"; the site and the pines "grow themselves"; i.e., they

have a healthy, productive relationship. No white men can take the cypress pines by claiming to have caused their development. The wealth of the Aboriginal countryside comes from its inherent power and labor, not from white labor and industry.

These women's argument about the cypress pines highlights the different ways Aborigines and non-Aborigines understand the productivity of the countryside and the production of economic well-being. Mary explains that Aboriginal people have never mentioned the location of these cypress pines to white men because, "it is Aboriginal land"; viz., white men might come and cut the pines down for timber to make houses. Grace Ziyesta remarks on the richness of the area. At this site are tall cypress pines, large nests of sugarbag (indigenous honey), and plentiful wallaby. There are other economic and mythic aspects of Cox Peninsula that Aboriginal men and women "do not tell" to Anglos, or outsiders more generally, because of their apprehension that white men will come "dig them up" or take them away. Grace Ziyesta, known for her traditional and extensive understanding of "Aboriginal culture," insists elsewhere that "Aboriginal country . . . thinks hard" about how it will grow, change, or produce foods. Moreover, in the traditional framework that these women espouse Aborigines do not "tell all"; they "save a little bit" of what they know for later conversational contexts ('leave-im' as postponement or 'bambai'). Non-Aborigines are stereotyped as unable to keep anything back: to save or leave anything for later. Whether they are miners, art dealers, or cultural anthropologists, bedagut have a bad reputation for being radically extractive and loquacious: they take or tell all.

The economic well-being of the countryside depends upon a site and the species within it reacting positively to one another. This is a process that occurs over time. As Grace Ziyesta states, "IM BEEN COVER THAT PLACE WAAKAI ('finished') im been grow more more more little little ones." What does it mean for the process to be "finished"? When do women know something is finished rather than in the process of becoming? To answer these question I need to look at how women use the term

"finished" in other parts of their conversations. Looking at these questions allows us to see how women conceptualize environmental change as part of the continuing agency of the countryside: how they see change, in certain contexts, as continuity.

Belyuen speakers use the term 'finished' and its various language equivalents (such as the Emiyenggal terms wakai, wakaiyentha, or wakai-finished for particular emphasis) in several pertinent ways. In mythic narratives, wakaiyentha occurs at the very end of the story when the characters have reached their final form; e. g., when mythic 'orphan man' has turned into a stone. The end of a mythic and historical person's travels is indicated by wakaiyentha; or, provisionally, 'it was over.' Some narrators use this term more liberally; they say "finished" after each episode of a mythic or historical person's travels: "finished now he left that place." The term "now" is also liberally used in speech and marks a continual state of being. Speakers use the terms 'finished' and 'now' to function as brackets. In mythic or historical stories, the terms, repeated in a low monotone behind each sequence or emphasized at the end of the story, become the beginning and ending marks of thematic segments. If a speaker uses wakai or 'finished' liberally, often a change in vocal emphasis indicates which 'finished' signals the end of the story. At this final wakai, the activity, travel, or ceremony that was in process has ceased and the present form of human and natural life remains. The final form is what we now have.

The finished past, however, is available to people now living: what occurred in the past is more than mere memory. The power of the mythic people who traveled up and down the Daly River and Cox Peninsula is accessible to living people and this power provides the possibility for the present growth of people, plants, and animals.¹⁶

¹⁶In the cypress pine story, the change that occurred can be understood in several ways. The ability of the cypress pines to grow signals the powerful agency of the countryside. Sites can perform powerful acts such as putting trees where they have not been before. Women see this happening at other sites and are less positive about the growth's meaning. When paperbark trees overrun a blacksoil plain, people ponder why the site is denying them the longneck turtle

Because mythic persons created the countryside, they can rearrange it now or introduce new plant species such as the cypress pines. When a place alters its shape or new species settle an area, people say this is evidence of the continuity between the mythic past and historical present: the country's power has reacted to the sweat and language of people passing by it. People fit changes they observe into what they know of the mythic personality of a place and people who live nearby it. Because Belyuen Wagaitj and Beringgen live and hunt on the Cox Peninsula, they witness these changes and dominate conversations about their meaning.

People also use 'finished' when talking about legal and political meetings, work periods, and ritual performances. For all three, people say an event should be consensual, focused, and bounded. A celebration with dancing, music, and food should follow all these events. This view of work mirrors the mythic narrative itself with its prescribed form and joint production. Belyuen Aborigines respond in a less than enthusiastic way to full-time Anglo employment, in part because it is inconsistent with their understanding of healthy, productive work. Young and old claim that white jobs never change and never end. If they listened to Anglo-Australians, they would be sticking price tags on canned fruits for the rest of their lives, themselves stuck to a mundane job. Opposing it to monotonous Anglo wage-labor, people describe the pleasure of changing activities seasonally, including hunting-gathering and social activities. If they are unable to "leave" (postpone) a certain activity for a while, whether this is a community job, a linguistic endeavour, or a social situation, women say that they have to "quit the job for good." It is "no use" to "short wind" over any one activity.

People are constantly changing activities and waiting for the right context to tell or to perform narratives and they do so knowing there is no certainty that what

hunting ground. But whether or not change is valorized, the cause of the change is imputed to the site's willfulness.

one leaves for a while will be there when they return. Will people postpone the recitation of a mythic or historical text only to find that those who knew it have suddenly died? Is a ritual finished for good or will a clever person find a way of bringing it back? In these and other instances, Belyuen people say they must be patient and wait to see what will result. As long as the country remains a willful agent, the old Aboriginal way and the possibility of myth and history continues. Periodic shifts and changes in the form of the countryside are easily incorporated into this view. In fact, the country's ability to react and accommodate itself to nearby events is critical to how Belyuen Aborigines explain what they are doing on the Cox Peninsula.

3.

It is only now becoming clear how various Aboriginal groups transfer rights to use and to reside on a stretch of land. Recent works of Nancy Williams, Fred Myers, Peter Sutton, Bruce Rigsby, and Nicolas Peterson have stressed the dynamic relationship between groups of people and stretches of country. Nicolas Peterson has organized the limited information available on the average size of clan groups in various parts of Australia (see Table Ten).

Peterson argues that, based on computer models, a patrilineal clan of 25 - 50 people was always in danger of extinction and questions why, in such a circumstance, Australian Aborigines maintained a patrilineal clan ideology rather than a "larger and more stable" grouping or an emphasis on bilateral organization. He concludes that the "ideology" of patrilineality is a matter of rights rather than prescriptive rules and that although "the rights do exist independently of residence, they were most effectively held, exercised and transmitted by prolonged residence in the estate in the past" (1983: 139 and 142). Peterson emphasizes the dynamic relationship between

Aborigines and the countryside, especially how specific patrilineal connections to country change through time as new groups reside in new places (see also Peterson 1986).

The above anthropologists have worked extensively with Northern and Central Land Councils and have been struck by how Aborigines negotiate land tenure in the context of colonial and postcolonial changes. Foremost in the political rhetoric of many northwest Aboriginal groups is the well-being of the country, not which particular group lives in it. (Of course, each 'claimant' group says that the country is traditionally theirs and that it responds positively to them.) If faced with 'extinction,' a family group invests its knowledge and ceremonial practices in another set of people (Sutton 1980). For instance, the sole survivors of the group responsible for the cheeky yam durlq might transfer its responsibilities to those people responsible for the sea turtle durlq if the former has no heirs. In this way, human social groups may change over time, but the ceremonial identity of the country never dies. In practice, actual site knowledge and related ceremonies change, old sites and rituals are forgotten and new ones are 'dreamed' (P. Brock 1989). But the core process itself, wherein an Aboriginal group looks after a stretch of country, persists even if the group and ritual content varies. Belyuen Aborigines describe a similar process occurring when they migrated up from the Daly. They stress the connections rather than divisions that exist between the two regions, especially the connections formed by dreaming tracks.

Were Daly River and Cox Peninsula sites originally autonomous or were they always connected? The anthropological literature documents the historicity of some groups' use of "tracks" for once autonomous sites: the use of dreaming tracks in some

Table Ten. Average clan size in various regions of Australia; Adapted from N. Peterson (1983: 135), "Rights, Residence and Process in Australian Territorial Organization."

Area	Year	Population	No. of clans	Average no. in clans
Cape York:				
Wik-Munkan	1927-28	1500-2000	c.30	50-66(est.)
Cape York:				
Yir-Yoront	1933-35	200+	28	30+ to 1
Groote Eylandt	1941	300-500	11	27-32
Groote Eylandt	1953	450	12	37
NE Arnhem Land:				
Murngin	1926-29	- -	c.40	40-50
Blyth River:				
Gidjingali	1958-60	297	19	15.6
Bathurst I.:				
Tiklauila	1928-29	214	6	35.7
Port Keats:				
Murinpatha	1950	339	15	26.6
SE Arnhem Land:				
Nunggupuyu	-	300+	10	30+
Central Desert:				
Walpiri	1953	1000-1200	c.40	25-35

circumstances is an 'invented tradition.'¹⁷ Some Laragiya see this occurring on the Cox Peninsula; they emphasize the division between the culture of the Daly and Cox Peninsula regions. There is also disagreement among various Daly River groups about how estates and language group lands connect. But autonomous and connected sites can serve two different functions, allowing groups to come together and to separate during population crunches. Deciding which is prior to the other is partly deciding at what moment in time one looks. Perhaps autonomous, unconnected sites were a relatively recent precolonial phenomenon: population increases pressuring families to divide the land. As colonial massacre and disease reduced the population and caused groups to migrate from their country, the connections between sites were either utilized, rediscovered, or invented.

When discussing their homeland countries, most Belyuen people emphasize both the environmental markers that distinguish one group's 'property' from another and the connections that tie the various countries together. Which is stressed often depends upon what political, social, or ceremonial work speakers see themselves as doing. Some types of work necessitate "drawing lines" and other types necessitate "lining up country." What many Anglos perceive as contradictory claims about the mechanics of land tenure are different parts of the system appearing in different social contexts.

Belyuen Aborigines draw the sharpest "lines" between language group countries¹⁸ when they discuss royalty payments. Groups must decide exactly where the resources of one group end and the resources of another group begin if they are

¹⁷ Eric Michaels (Rose and Michaels 1987) and Fred Myers (1987) recently argued similarly about the historical nature of site tracks and how emphasis changes over time. Did the Pintupi learn about linking together previously separate sites from the Walpiri?

¹⁸ Wagaidj living at Belyuen say that territory boundaries at a language group level are the only ones pertinent to issues of ownership. Other Aboriginal groups at Port Keats reportedly differentiate owners at the level of patrilineal estates. While Belyuen women and men associate patrilineal groups with certain Raks (estates), they say that all persons with a same language affiliation share in the ability to use, profit, and decide the fates of these smaller land parcels.

to receive royalties. These decisions are hard to make in the Daly River. Few people reside there and resources such as feral pig and cattle roam across language group borders. Moreover, a Wagaitj or Beringgen individual may have his or her birth site in one estate, personal dreaming in another, and paternal and maternal dreamings in yet a third, making for competing claims. Stories surface of young people from one group herding cattle and pig out of another group's land before the slaughter season begins, causing more divisive fights. While many Aborigines view the use of language or estate group borders as contrary to their sharing ethic, whether persons argue for greater or lesser group inclusion, all clearly define some definite border to language group lands (although the location of these borders may also be disputed). Borders are not simply creations of Anglo-Australians, although how they are used and perceived are influenced by Anglo law.

In ceremonial contexts, most senior Belyuen people state that country boundaries are ruptured or "joined" by durlq tracks or by maroi. For instance, Wadjigiyn, Kiyuk, and Laragiya country are joined by a dingo dreaming who walked through each in the mythic past. Because one's durlq dreaming is inherited in most cases from one's father, a group can maintain its rights to its 'traditional country' no matter where it is living. Other types of dreamings, such as personal dreamings (maroi, B; miR, E), are usually acquired by residence. An 'outgroup' family might "catch" or "find" its personal dreamings in another language group's country after residing in the area for a long time. The family claims residential and custodial rights to the land based on these so called conception centers. Finally, an individual's or groups' knowledge of the country, derived either from participation in ceremony or by long-term residence, can become the basis of their claim for residential rights, although, again, other groups may argue against them (cf. Layton and Williams 1980).

Wagaitj and Beringgen consider these practical, historical features of land use and tenure when they decide who should be considered "straight" for a place: the

rightful group to look after a place. When decisions to develop a stretch of country must be made, Belyuen people ask questions such as who is living there, what language do they speak, are there 'traditional' custodians living elsewhere, what do they know about sites and resources in the region? Older men and women at Belyuen emphasize two qualities that create an 'owner': a correct filial connection to and knowledge of the topography and mythic countryside. These two qualities usually do not coincide in any one social group, and so arguments rage among Aboriginal groups about who has priority to a stretch of country and whether its borders should be closed or open to migrant groups.

If knowledge of the topography and mythic countryside defines an 'owner' and a 'custodian,' how do people know who knows what in a society which, supposedly, demands and privileges mythic and ceremonial secrecy? Belyuen Aborigines learn the extent of one another's knowledge by challenge routines. One instance is the challenge to "line up" sites in the correct topological order.

'Where Did We Camp'

me: Mary Eladi: father Wadjigiyn, mother Emi, born circa 1930.

bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.

gz: Grace Ziyesta: Father Marriamu, mother Menthayenggal, born circa 1930.

je: Joan Ela: father Marrijaben, mother Marriamu, born 1943.

- me: *dir naw wadaa wat lm neim paRapiya (E)*
there now what's what's it name, rock python snake
- bp: *kengaru paRapiya (E)*
kangaroo, rock python snake
- me: *dir naw wulman bla mi ben gedjlm nek*
there now old man [husband] of mine it grapped his neck
- bp: *aiyiye*
ah yeh
- me: *lm ben getlm irye nek*
it [the snake] got him here on the neck
- gz: *wir wi ben kemp*
where did we camp
- me: *teiglm awtbet*
kept unwrapping [the snake]
- gz: *wir wi ben kemp*

- where did we camp
me: dæt wulman wir mibla ben sldawn
 that old man, where my group camped
- gz: wir wi ben kemp*
 where did we camp
- bp: wii*
 wow
- me: ahahaaha*
 ahahaha
- gz: eh anti*
 eh auntie
- bp: wir*
 where
- gz: wuta (E)*
 water
- me: uuha*
 uuha
- gz: wir wi ben kemp*
 where did we camp
- me: ye yu sæbi*
 yeh you know
- gz: ... yuqakkaa (E)*
 goodness
- bp: wir wir wir*
 where where where
- me: thæt eriya naw*
 that area now
- gz: nandjyin nandjyin nandjyin*
 Nandjyin [place name on one of the Pt. Patterson Islands] Nandjyin Nandjyin
- me: thæt eriya naw yu howldembet*
 that area now you keep touching
- gz: nandjyin dis>n*
 Nandjyin this one
- me: thæt eriya naw yu howldlmbet*
 that area now this side,
- gz: nandjyin dls>n*
 Nandjyin this one
- me: thæt eriya naw dlsaid Im irye naindjin ai think*
 that area now this side, its here, Naidjin, I think
- bp: ow raindjin*
 oh Naindjin
- je: nai-*
 Nai-
- me: wi ben kemp*
 we camped
- gz: yubela ben kemp dir*
 your group camped there
- me: yeh dls eriya ir lök dis eriya mipela ben dlglmbet*
 yeh this area, here look, this area, my group was always digging [yams]
- gz: mmm*
 mmm
- me: irye*
 here

- gz: *nha wi ben*
nha we were
- je: *wa pleis abi*
what place Abi [me]
- me: *en wi ben gow arawnd irye paRabiya (E)*
and we went around here, rock python snake
- bp: *paRabiya (E) yeh*
rock python snake, yeh
- gz: *NOWMAr Now Mar thæR>n sneik thæR>n sneik Im telln Im th*
NoMore No More, that snake, that snake, its, tell her th-
- bp: *yeh ai now*
yeh I know
- me: *mm paRabiya (E) thæR>n mm ben gidlm*
mm, snake which got him [the old man]
- gz: *wat pleis thæR>n*
what place is that
- me: *thæt b>lp>l nawa eintl*
that's Bulpul [another site on the Island] now, isn't it
- bp: *ow now b>lp>l Im dawn irye*
oh no, Bulpul is down here
- gz: *im irye b>lp>l*
it's here, Bulpul
- je: *ee dir*
ee there
- gz: *en nandjyin Im hir*
and Nandjyin is here
- bp: *ye sow yu be yu ben kemp dlswei*
yeh, so you you camped this way
- me: *yeh*
yeh
- bp: *yeh*
yeh
- gz: *now mar wi ben kemp irye naindjyin wir naidjyin*
no more, we camped here, Naindjyin, where naidjyin
- bp: *naidyin irye*
Naidjyin here
- gz: *irye wi ben kemp*
here we camped
- me: *klows bia wila*
close to us

Such verbal games emphasize the connections and borders between different groups' countries: where does one place start and stop, how does it connect to another place? In the ethnographic literature, there are many examples of how Aborigines "line up" the countryside during ceremony. Strehlow's Song of Central Australia (1971)

looks at how the countryside was sung into existences, so to speak, during men's ceremonies and at how the various songs that each Australian group knew were parts of a larger cultural map of the Central Desert. But what people know of Cox Peninsula and Daly River sites has changed over the course of history. The detours that Belyuen families have had to make around Anglo settlements, mines, and plantations shaped what sections of the country they know. These same detours have forced groups into one country and out of another. The Wagaitj's reputation as 'brutal bush blacks' forced those who survived up to the Cox Peninsula or down to Port Keats (Wadeye).

Belyuen Aborigines downplay the changes that have occurred in the locality and composition of social groups by highlighting the traditionally 'mixed' nature of Aboriginal society. Spencer described mixed Laragiya, Wagaitj, and Beringgen ceremonies as a corruption of former practices. But in 1983, Michael Walsh and Maria Brandl wrote otherwise in a short article about the 'mixed' nature of Laragiya and Wadjigiyn groups and ceremonies in the Cox Peninsula-Bynoe Harbour area.

'Mixing' does not mean 'mixed up' or confused. Rather, it describes the intricate interconnections of all the activities of people in the area claimed (1983: 154).

They argue that cultural connections and joint activities of Aboriginal peoples in the Cox Peninsula, Bynoe Harbour, and Daly River areas influenced how groups became mixed during the colonial period. If, as Peterson argued, small groups were already under threat, then the violence and killings of the colonial period increased this threat of extinction and groups increasingly utilized available kinship relations to arrange marriage patterns that would 'join up' estates.

However, the term 'mixed' can refer to a variety of social situations. It can indicate a socially tumultuous situation such as the Katherine 'Donkey Camp' or it can

more positively describe how disparate families came to be the 'Belyuen mob.' Indeed, in the Northern Territory, especially in the Top End where most Anglos settled, the 'mixing' of Aboriginal groups -- the 'joining up' of two smaller related groups -- seems a common strategy for preserving a local Aboriginal identity.¹⁹ Even so, people at Belyuen say that not only are they "mixed" but they are also often confused and upset by the mixture. While I agree with Walsh and Brandl that people's mixed identities are, at a conscious level at least, a "selection" that is not "distorted nor confused," but rather "a choice from among authentic identification labels of the most appropriate to a given question" (152), the inability to choose anything other than the present mixture -- a mixture filled with historic competition and strife between language and family groups -- fractures the simple positive identity of 'mixed.'²⁰ The following explores some of the senses of the term 'mixed' and how its ambiguity is useful for examining people's approach to continuity and change.

In segments of conversation, references to 'mixed groups' often arise when women describe a site on the Cox Peninsula. 'Mixed' seems to be an explanatory moment: why the Wagaitj and Beringgen live on the Peninsula or why the various Daly River language groups intermarried and are referred to as the 'Belyuen mob.' For example, in 'Wife Stealing in the Olden Days,' Deborah Zirita describes the Wagaitj groups as being "all mixed up Laragiya," while in 'The Wanggigi Shade,' Mary Eladi describes the Wadjigiyn, Emi, and Mentha as having been "all mixed," a phrase that is often followed by "all a same family now."

In a short exchange below ('Tarzan'), Grace Ziyesta describes this mixture in a slightly different way; she insists that the traveling mode of her parents generation

¹⁹ A variety of authors have described this process. See Sutton (1980) B. Sansom (1980) D. Trigger (1987).

²⁰ Brandl and Walsh note that the timeless framework imposed on Aboriginal groups "denies the members of those groups, as human beings, the ability to adapt and to think their way through the possibilities offered by their culture" (1983: 155).

was "all mixed up." Her usage here seems to confirm Brandl and Walsh's reading. She states that people interacted and traveled as mixed groups. Emily Nela adds that the "mixed group" was related through kinship; Grace Ziyesta and her fathers were "brothers." This follows Stanner's statement that "group[s] of brothers" commonly travelled together (1979: 32-33). Moreover, the way that these groups traveled was "straight up" -- it was topologically correct -- following named sites from Cape Ford to Point Charles where they first saw Darwin. Being 'mixed' in this sense seems to carry very little ambivalence or anxiety about being confused. Instead, traveling in kin-related, mixed groups was a way in which social and ceremonial information ('The Big Ceremonial Place') could be exchanged and new people could be introduced to rich and barren, sacred and dangerous places (Biernoff 1978).

'Tarzan'

en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.

gz: Grace Ziyesta, father Marriamu, mother Menthayenggal, born circa 1930.

[Second segment]

en: *ownli ben lõk irye lata pip>l irye*
only saw here lots of people

gz: *al mlkz >p*
all mixed up

bp: *now ala fæmlli*
no, all the family

gz: *al mlkz >p wi ben træv>l*
all mixed up we traveled

en: *beti marin mi ala fatherz*
Betty Moreen, me and all the fathers

'The Big Ceremonial Place'

gz: Grace Ziyesta, father Marriamu, mother Menthayenggal, born circa 1930.

bp: Beth Povinelli: Italian American, born 1962.

jz: Jean Ziya: Father Emi, mother Emi, born circa 1935

en: Emily Nela: father and mother Emi, born circa 1925.

gz: *ala pip>l blg mab Wadjlgyn al mlkz blg siremowni pleis Daramanggamaning*
all the people, big mob Wadjigiyn were mixed, big ceremony place, Daramanggamaning

- bp: *hn anti hu yuztu sldown langa dls pleisez*
and auntie who use to live along these sites
- gz: *lata pipi> ben irye*
lots of people were here
- jz: *evriwan irye naw irriye*
everyone here now, area
- gz: *evriwe naw irriye langa siremowni pleis daramanggamaning*
everywhere now area along this ceremony place, Daramanggamaning
- bp: *yeh dlswan bigwan siremowni pleis eh*
yeh this was a big ceremony place, huh
- gz: *yeh dlswan naw*
yeh this place now
- jz: *wir dei ben sldawn aliya aliya Leragiya ben stap ere*
where they camped, all of them, all of them Laragiya lived here
- gz: *dls>n wadjlgyn naw wul mlkst>p*
this Wadjigiyn now, all mixed up
- bp: *al mlkst>p endei yuztu sldawn irye*
all mixed up and they use to live here
- gz: *ya al mlkst>p dei ben stap langa irye*
yeh all mixed up they lived along here
- bp: *rait e e iven wen yer parenta ben alaiv?*
right, e e even when your parents were alive?
- gz: *mai parenta ben laiv irye*
my parents lived here
- en: *mi mai grenfa n>thing*
me, my grandfather didn't
- bp: *and dir parents? meibi? iven bek dat far dei ben sit here*
and their parents? maybe? even back that far, they camped here
- gz: *dei ben wal mlkst>p ma mai parentz ben lang wei*
they were all mixed up, my my parents were a long way
- jz: *nusens dlswan mab [children]*
nuisance this group [children]
- bp: *dei dld yer parentz kam bek fram dir*
they, did your parents come back from there
- gz: *mmmm*
mmmm
- bp: *le Deili River wei*
from Daly River way
- gz: *aanaddldi*
aa Naddidi [place name in southern Daly River]
- bp: *naddldi*
Naddidi
- gz: *dei ben kam dlswei naw streit >p*
they came this way now straight up
- bp: *mm*
mm
- gz: *langa dls mab na emiyenggal mab mentheyenggal mab wi ben mlkst>p dei ben al mlkst*
to this group now Emiyenggal mob, Menthayenggal mob, we were mixed up, they were all mixed
- bp: *yeh yeh*
yeh yeh
- gz: *en dei ben kam dlswei dei ben lök dls darwin naw.*
and they came this way, they saw this Darwin now.

In other conversations, however, "mixed" and "mixed up" describe a confused and often violent situation. Although, Emi, Mentha, and Wadjigiyn were traveling together and learning of the dreaming sites on the Cox Peninsula, other groups were severely dislocated by colonial massacre and violence. The Government sent 'troublesome natives' from south central and western coastal groups to the Delissaville Settlement. Delissaville is described as resounding with killings and counter-killings and with sickness and madness because language groups were "all mixed up and stuck together." Many Wagaitj and Beringgen families fled the community whenever possible, setting up outstations on the Cox Peninsula in an effort to escape the tensions of the settlement. In family-based groups tensions associated with the Delissaville camp dissipated. In time, Aborigines from distant places left the community. However, people still register ambivalence towards the mixed nature of the community: "[w]e always gotta leave this Delissaville little while give-im rest", "im always been trouble this Delissaville" and "we can't leave-im for good, no matter trouble, we all been born and grow from this place, that Belyuen now." Belyuen is actually unusual in its social cohesion for the number of language groups now living there (in contrast, see D. Bell's description of the Walpiri community, 1983).

But this very ambivalence about a place -- leaving it and coming back -- is a mechanism by which country becomes linked together and associated with a family or larger social group. In leaving and in coming back, whether from Delissaville, the Cox Peninsula, or the Daly River, Belyuen Aborigines say the countryside becomes infused with their and their foreparents' sweat, memory, and essences. Whereas many government administrators were keen to keep ethnic and sexual spaces separate so that goods (and people as goods) could be moved efficiently from one area to another, in their historical narratives, Belyuen women emphasize the links between space and the way space is joined through such structural institutions as kinship and marriage, through

less systematic, but nevertheless social practices as story-telling, and through economic practices such as hunting and gathering. Through kinship, ceremony, economy, and oral histories people are located and positioned in space and thereby establish enduring rights of residence. The environment itself is a series of relations: a place recalling another place, another time, another set of activities. If, as Joan Ela has said, one can find a lot of bush tucker by just walking on the ground, so by just walking along Belyuen Aborigines create a place where they can live.

Throughout this dissertation I have shown how people interrelate three types of "productivity": the production of people and countryside, the production of economic well-being, and the production of history and cultural identity. The term production is my own, but Belyuen Aborigines use similar phrases, country and people "make themselves" by living together and they "find themselves" by patiently watching how the activities of each affect the other. Anglo-Australians, Asians, and other ethnic groups are now part of the countryside Belyuen people monitor. Like a nasty mythic site, Anglos bubble up from the ground, infecting an area and making it unliveable. And like nasty mythic sites, they bring disease and hardship to people who do not treat them in the right manner. But unlike mythic sites, Anglos portray themselves as outside a system of kinship and influence and present alternative models for understanding the productivity of country and people. I have attempted to sketch out some of the ways all these creatures interact on a middle-sized Peninsula in the Northern Territory. Of course, I think there might be lessons here that are pertinent to other places where colonists and residents have met and fought over the meanings of their words and activities.

APPENDIX ONE: Transcripts of Conversations Referred to in the Text.

(L)- Laragiya
 (E)-Emiyenggal
 (B)-Batjemal
 (Marr)-Marriamu

[author's information about transcript]

i	hœd		
l	hid		
ei	hayed		
e	head		
æ	had		
a	hod	:	labinal l, n
aw	how	R	trill R
ö	hood	√	retroflex R
ow	noed	ng	thing
u	who'd	n.g	
er	herd		
>	Hudd		
ai	hide		
i r	here		
air	hire		
ju	hue		
oi	hoy		
ar	hoary		

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1. "Wife Stealing in the Olden Days"

- en:* *sldawn hir nather mab kaw wulgamen themanmal; yuwa kana (E)*
sit down here, another mob, go, old lady where story, that man sitting
- cb:* *kumanRedi (E) kugök (Mar)*
they-standing long way, we keep going
- jø:* [Noise]
- dz:* [to principal] *yu wana takbet dæt ah thing or Mænd>ra*
you want to talk about that ah thing or Mandorah
- bp:* [to kids] *yu llsen dlswei nat mi*
you listen this way not (to) me
- cb:* *Im wana tellm wi lm-ben tel-lm mi dæt stap st>ri*
he wants (us) to them them (the children) we, he been tell this (to) me that stop story
sæbi ai ben sæbi dæt yu sæbi
you know I been know that you know
M>dpil hnn wuldæn taim wi ben ala taim dir
Madpil in olden time we been all a time there
streitfarwerd wei le mitjtijtj
straightforward wayto the whitewomen
- ?:* ...lending...
... [boat] landing...
- jø:* *le lending le lending?*
at the landing, at the landing?
- en:* *now mar löking et mi ai never ben dir*
no more looking at me I never been there
- me:* *nu mar laik tjitjei yera-maka nadiyerRaka piva (E)*
no more, like teacher children-conditional put in their heads
- en:* *now mar sldawn irye ala taim*
no more sit down here all time
- jz:* *mænd>ra?*
Mandorah
- en:* *kamaga (B)*
nothing
- cb:* [to kids] *hu toitjlm dæR>n*
who touch him that one [tape recorder]
- me:* *yu g>na sei laik [noise] far thet mæn*
- en:* *yuwaingo? (E) that waitmæn ?*
him there? that white man?
- jz:* *yeda kamaRi kama yena Mænd>ra yena [noise] wakoi yentha [noise] (E)*
look he-standing-action he standing-action there Mandorah there nothing-having
look he is going he is going, there, Mandorah, there, cannot get it now.
- me:* *wakaiyenthayuwaiwow? (E)*
nothing-having that Fut.
[we] cannot go later
- jø:* *n>ting lm now mar dulm yet*
no no, he hasn't gone yet
- [seconds]
- me:* *nainanaRaboi (E) mi-bet gldananabananaz wulkembet yusta bi owldpip>l yu now*
me-continual get our grandmothers bananas, old camp use to be old people you know
yuwainbenye (E)
that way them
- jz:* *wel wiben [faint]*

- well we been
- en: napa kanan vena kuman ngalgin (E)
carry NF-sit/class there, NF-3P-stand, Ngalgin [personal name]
- me: wei ngalgin nyaw [noise]
well Ngalgin now
- en: yu tel-lm al dai
you tell him [school teacher] all die
- je yu g>na tak ln lenggwedje
you going to talk in language
- cb: [faint to agnes]
- me: ye
yeh
- cb: poi (E)
go on
- me: weit naw mama kananena (E)
wait now momma, NF-sit/class-with
- [seconds]
- yu saebi wulamen manggin kumangita morRdja (E)
you know old man cousin-NF-stand/class-our.dual.exc MorRdja (personal name)
- en: hahaha
hahaha
- me: merRdje einlt lt mama themowwa (E) yu now mar saebi daet wulman?
MerRdje ain't it momma where now? you don't know that oldman?
- cb: [faint]
- me: ye lm saebi merRdjenqa (B)
yeh she knows that MerRdje
- bp: [to children] aim g>na tern-lm lm-af lf yu mab downt stap
I'm gonna turn it off if you mob don't stop
- cb: yuwai vena (E) [children noise]
there at
- me: adja now adjetoi kama kana manggin (E)
sister now, sister-yoi(?) NF-3s-emerge/class NF-3s-sit/class cousin
ei? mal:qa (E) mal:baka (E) [loud children noises]
eh? story-the, story-the
ngyelbaka mal:kaRa adje medanye (E)
hand-the word-NF-3s-hand,action/class sister two-them
- bp: lm fain ye gowhan
its fine yeh go on
- me: wel ln the wulden deiz naw laik yunow ln de wul eberlgn>l wei naw wi ben dir wen wi
well in the olden days now like you know in the old aboriginal way now we were there when we
w>z ownli llt>l gerlz daet dei wi yuzd tu llv aet M>dpil en BitblnbiyirRk hn bitj daet
were only little girls that day we used to live at Madpil and BitbinbiyirRk and beach that
Wangglgi bitj naw Maend>ra ai w>z n>ther rawnd K>ngg>l krik wel biK>z nowwan wan
Wangglgi beach now Mandorah, I was at another [beach] round Kunggul creek because no one one
wulmaen mai father stil samb>di wan y>ng gerl fr>m dirye ln the eberlgn>l wei dei get
old man my father steal somebody one young girl from there in the aboriginal way they get it
lf thei wana waif dei gow dei gata snik >p bihaind thei b>shez hn dei g>nha stil dat gerl
they want a wife they go they have to sneak up behind the bushes and they going to steal that girl
awei si fr>m mather hn father.
away see? from mother and father
hn wel wi went dir far h>nting tu get s>m kreb `lp daet wulmaen keim dawen hn w>z trai
and well, we went there for hunting to get some crab except that old man came down and was try to
tu stil wan y>ng gerl mai c>zln daeR>n daet mai c>zln hn wi w>z kraiyng daet dei bik>z
steal one young girl my cousin that one, that my cousin and we were crying that day because
ai w>z ownli llt>l gerl ai`>s kraiyng far help m' mather`n mai father ræn aen graeblm
I was only a little girl I was crying for help my mother and my father ran and grabbed
mai k>zln awei fr>m daet maen `iz ownli owld maen
my cousin away from that man, was only an old man
- dz: nowb>di kempln an the bitj then dident now this iriya yet thaet thaet pleisez then [noise]
nobody camping on the beach then didn't know this area yet that that places then

- ownli j>s bösh rowd*
only just a bush road
- mə:* *bösh rowd*
bush road
- mmm traid tu teik dæt gerl awei fr>m mai mather and father dæt dei b>t dæt wulmæn b>t*
mmm tried to take that girl away from my mother and father that day but that old man but
Im ben hert Im leig irye lök irye fr>m mai mather lata pip>l w>z dir dringkin emiyanggal
she hurt his leg here look here, my mother did it. A lot of Emiyanggal people were drinking there.
- dz:* *this w>z bifar the war ar efa the war*
this was before the war or after the war
- mə:* *bifar the war bifar the war.*
before the war before the war
- dz:* *bifar the war ei yu awl ben muv arawnd ei bifar war ben hirye*
before the war ei you all moved around ei before war was here
- mə:* *den wi ben end >p irye naw*
then we ended up here now
- dz:* *end >p irye*
end up here
- mə:* *dæt jæpani war ye wi ben hirye mlsh>nirri skul ala skul kld wi ben mlsh>nirri*
that japanese war yeh we were here yeh missionary school all the school kid we were missionary
skul
school
- dz:* *then thei ben al mlkste grups mlkste>p Leragiya*
then they were all mixed groups mixed up Laragiya
- mə:* *ye mentha, emi, wadjlgn ala beringgen pip>l*
yeh Mentha, Emi, Wadjigiyin, all the Beringgen people
- dz:* *maRiamu hn maRitjebn*
Marriamu and Marritjeben
- mə:* *yeh amu naw llt>l blt amu ben hir alrait beti marin*
yeh Amu now little bit Amu were here alright Betty Moreen (personal name)
- dz:* *maRiamu*
Marriamu
- mə:* *ye elata pip>l ben irye!*
yeh a lot of people were here!
- dz:* *bifar thæt djæna bam dir yu mab ben ownli stei irye*
before that japan bomb there you mob only stayed here
- mə:* *yeh dls irriya na dei ben barn wi hæd gowt yad en wi hed dls ding ir werkshap yuz tu bi*
yeh this area now they were born, we had goat yard and we had this thing here workshop use to be
end dls w>z ownli haws hir bla eberlgn>l pip>l. skul uzta bi an n>ther end the kapenter
and this was only house here for aboriginal people, school use to be on another end of the carpenter
shap owver dir. Dal Galen w>z da skul tijer, prlnslp>l Dal Galen yuzta bi irye
shop over there. Dal Gollen was the school teacher, principal, Dal Gollen use to be here
mlsh>nirri skul. mlsh>nirri skul.
missionary school, missionary school
- dz:* *Im ben r>n bai from mlsh>nirri skul*
it was run by from missionary school
- mə:* *ye mlsh>nirri skul naw*
yeh missionary school now
- dz:* *efa thæt mish>ni skul Im ben r>n bai thæt eberlgn>l efirz [noise] eh neitlv efirz*
after that missionary school it was run by that Aboriginal Affairs eh Native Affairs
- mə:* *yeh mlsta ekelten naw b>t Im ben dai naw mlsta ekelten end misez brawn w>z awa skul*
yeh Mr. Eckelton now but he was there now Mr. Eckelton and Mrs. Brown was our school
tijter b>t thir ben mlsh>nirri tu yu si?
teacher but they were missionary too, you see?
- dz:* *wulgamen [noise]superintendent*
old lady superintendent
- sm:* *aa wat tjertj w>z lt hir*
aa what church was it here?
- mə:* *Ei Ai Em*
a.i.m.

- dz:** *thætz eberɪɫn>l llænd mlsh>n*
that's Aboriginal Inland Mission
- sm:** *eberɪɫn>l inlænd yeh lz thæt a kæθhalik mlsh-*
Aboriginal Inland yeh is that a Catholic mis-
- dz:** *unaited tjertj*
United Church
- sm:** *hmm unaited. In owld deiz pramlst dld pip>l hev pramlst h>zbendz end waivs hir*
hmm United. In old days, promised, did people have promised husbands and wives here
- me:** *yeh In owlden deiz lf mather en father pramist yu thæt mæn yu hæv tu teik thæt mæn*
yeh in old days if mother and father promise you that man you have to take that man
- sm:** *thæt gerl yer thæt k>zln av yerz w>z shi pramist tu s>mwan els*
that girl, your cousin of yours, was she promised to someone else
- me:** *now*
no
- sm:** *shi w>zənt*
she wasn't
- me:** *now thæt owld mæn wanted tuuu tu a meika waif h-*
no that old man wanted tooo to a make wife h-
- sm:** *rait*
right
- me:** *k>z shi w>z y>ng shi w>z mai k>zln*
because she was young she was my cousin
- en:** *wulmæn [faint] kallm*
old man call him
- me:** *wi kal-lm grendfather b>t In eberɪɫn>l wei wi Kal-lm laik föl meit*
we call him grandfather but in Aboriginal way we call him like full mate
- sm:** *yeh sow hi w>zənt stiling samwan elsez waif*
yeh so he wasn't stealing someone elses wile
- me:** *now hi ben gow far y>ng gerl hahaha*
no he went for young girl hahaha
- en:** *hahaha*
hahaha

2. "You can run but you can't hide"

- dz:** *Im gata ailend dir wulmaR aoh*
its got an island there WulmaRa [place name on Port Patterson Island chain] oh?
- bp:** *hmm thæt the pleis*
hmm that's the place
- dz:** *this n>ther thæt ailend naw WulmaR wir Im sldawnbet Mæx Mæx Bambu Mæx Bambu*
this other, that island now WulmaRa where he sits down-continual Max Max Bamboo Max Bamboo
- bp:** *bawmer*
Baumer
- dz:** *barma*
Barma
- je:** *thei wak akras hi thei wak >p eh mama*
they walk across huh they walk up eh momma?
- cb:** *bandiik kaRitik kow (E) kug>k (Marr) dia (E)*
reel NF-3s-extend/class keep going keep going, wow
- dz:** *wen im taid awt yu ken wak up le rif*
when the tide is out you can walk up the reef
- cb:** *hmmhm*
hmmhmm
- en:** [noise] *wak>p*
walk up
- cb:** *yü (E/ Marr)*
yes

- en: *rait >p duw>n duw>n*
right up Duwun Duwun [place name on Pt. Patterson Island chain]
- bp: *rait >p*
right up
- en: *Im rait >p yu gow*
it's right up you go
- je: *Im low taid thæt*
it's low tide that
- cb: *duw>n ngulbltjik tjeltjelbaitj*
Duwun, Ngulbltjik, Tjeltjelbaitj [all place names on Pt. Patterson Island chain]
- dz: *rif*
reef
- cb: *mmm bandjik ka (E)*
mmm reef-particle
- je: *taid lang wei Im gow yu ken wak wen Im gu mm meibi le nlp taid yu gana. Im blt virri*
tide long way, it goes you can walk when it goes mm maybe at nip tide you going to, its a bit very
hard
hard
- dz: *wat abawt thæt rif thir Im sei Im gata water dir egen ah ei ei h-*
what about that reef there they say it has a water [hole] there again ah ei ei h-
- en: *ya (E-Marr) ai d>now manggin (E) Im ben sæbi thæt kendu (E/B) thæt irriya*
I don't know I don't know cousin he knew that man-husband that area
- bp: *wuli (E)*
mud
- me: *wuli fr>m wulmaR tu Kabal tu mid>l*
mud from WulmaRa to Kabal to middle
- bp: *le bandjik (E)*
to the reef
- me: *ai dunow wirye thls mab gow >p end dawn geting le howl*
I don't know where this mob go up and down getting at the [water] hole
- dz: [faint]
- en: *yeh wuli vena kama (E)*
yeh mud in NF-3s-stand/class
- dz: *ailend*
island
- en: *ivebeRa ?(E)*
which is that place
- dz: *wulmaR Im ather said endiyen*
WulmaRa its other side Indian [Island]
- je: *haw blg naw kanayi bandjik (E)*
how big now NF-3s sit/class-CA reef
- en: *kaqow manavi wunthu theRawin (E)*
keep going F-3s-sit/class ant bed Sea Serpent
- me: *dæt wan naw thæt llt>l gerl stari thei ben teling yu*
that is the one now, that little girl story they were telling you
- bp: *thæt the wan*
that's the one
- me: *yeh*
yeh
- [noise]
- en: *now ai kent tel ai kent tel*
no I can't tell I can't tell
- [noise]
- en: *bik>z ai never ben dir samb>di tel mi stari*
because I was never there somebody told me story
- bb: *blawag sh>d bi hir end tel shi nowz*
Bilawag (personal name) should be here and tell she knows
- [noise]
- je: *`nat eni mama now yuz howldlmbet g>tz Im gana help/lmbet kugali (Marr)*
not any momma, no use hold-continual guts cousin will help you

- en: mal:thena manggin (E)
story-give cousin
- cb: [noise] merragonu naitipeRdjana ngaingow (Marr) [noise]
- bb: aaha
aaha
- en: aa ai ben dir wen lm ben r>nawei gat dat mai anti naw mait bi [noise]
aa I was there when she ran away with that my aunt now might be
- bb: yeenh
yehh
- en: lm ben r>n awei gat thæt wulgamen hu mama K>nel ala Mægi
she ran away with than old lady who momma-Kunnel [personal name] all the Maggie
- me: mægi lm neim
Maggie her name
- bp: dæt da wan?
that's the one?
- en: lm k>zln bla yu
she's your cousin
- me: yeh
yeh
- dz: [to bp] narthern lend kawsll gata mep æsk mab mep
Northern Land Council has a map ask [that] mob [for a] map
- cb: manggin naingdjei yow (E)
cousin mine now
- samb>di ben r>n >p them tupela
somebody ran up those two people
- en: mama dædi ngamu-ben-nye-weRa (E) ble yer father
momma daddy NF-we two.incl-been-them-conditional of your father
- dz: yeh dæd
yeh dad
- en: bli nylmli father lm ben r>n awei fr>m lm father lm ben j>s gtlmlm f'banagula mai
of your and my father, she ran away from her father, he just got her from Banagula my
kuntri aliya lm ben j>s kleim lm. 'yu mirrid' dæt mai father. nu wan n'yu mirid gat
country all of them, he just claimed her 'you married' that's my father, no one, you married got
mai father lm never ben laiklm mai father si
my father, she never liked him my father see
- me: dæts wai lm ben r>nawei
that's why she ran away
- en: dasarwai hev tu wai lm ben r>nawei fr>m lm naw lm sei that mama ben y>ng dæt leidi
that's why had to why she ran away from him now, he say that momma was young that lady
lm ben r>nawei mai father bla ylnmi father lm never ben laiklm lm mai father tu y>ng
she ran away my father from your and my father, she never liked him my father, too young
lm ben hev tu r>nawei lm ben hev tu r>n awei na
she had to run away, she had to run away now
- je: dæt pleis naw
that place now
- bp: sow yur father ben kemp thir
so your father camped there
- me: lm ben bla lm father wai
she belonged to her [ry] father's wife
- en: lm ben j>st getlmlm n>ngimbanna n>ngginbanna mal: mal:wanna (E) yu tellm
he got her with his finger, with fingers, word, with words, tell her
- me: langa bushwei p>llm-lm arm getlm manggin (E) naw teik-lm b>t lm never ben wana
through the bush way, pull her arm, get his cousin now, take her, but she never wanted to
sldown thæt thæt wulmæn.
sit down [with] that that old man
- en: tu waivs lm ben hev-lm mai father
two wives he had himself my father
- me: lm ben hev, lm-ben meik-lm tu naw
he had, she made for him two now

- en: thæt y>ng wan naw lm ben get-lm mal:wana (E) wei*
that young one now he got her with-words way
- dz: yer k>zl*
your cousin
- en: yeh lm ben pramlst wan lm ben get-lm*
yeh she was a promised one, he got her
- dz: e yer father brather*
he your father father
- en: y>ngest brather wat father main*
youngest brother what father mine
- je: mai father naw wulmæn*
my father now old man
- en: bli-lm father naw that-un ther*
her father now that one there
- bp: thls wan yeh yeh yeh [noise]*
this one yeh yeh yeh
- en: wel lm-ben r>n awei fr>m lm naw*
well she ran away from him now
- je: lm ben teiklm adja (E) tupela mipela*
she took two sisters of mine
- en: lm ben frai!*
she was frightened
- je: ben trai r>nawei akras the pleis tu get tu lang ailend*
tried to run away across the place to get to long island [Indian Island]
- bp: lang lang wei*
long long way
- je: hmm thæt taid lm ben j>s laik k>m ln laik thæt*
hmm that tide it just like came in like that
- cb: mmm*
mmm
- je: m>sta ben samthing laik driming*
must of been something like a Dreaming
- me: tupela ben swlm lm ben swlmswlm b>t dat gerl dident wana gu bek ai dunow wai dæt*
those two swam, she swam swam but that girl didn't want to go back I don't know why that
- gerl ben singing awt far help naw help mi meit help mi kam bek an' yu help mi help mi*
girl was singing out for help now *help me mate help me come back and you help me help me
- meit nathing na*
mate" nothing now
- en: help help help dja- (E)*
"help help help" goodness
- me: dæt gerl never ben gu bek piklm >p lm*
that girl never went back pick her up
- en: ben sei wel lm ben laikadjet laidjet mlsea rubininggi ningi krul gerl*
said well she was like that Mrs. Rubininggi [personal name] cruel girl
- wel lm ben hev tu lök bek flinsht naw lm flinsht*
well she had to look back, finished now, she was finished
- bp: lm ben laik dat theRawln (E) wi ben lök?*
it was like that Sea Serpent we saw?
- me: mmm hn dei ben meitz*
mmm and they were mates

3. "No Clothes, Strong Culture"

- me:** *wen ai w>z barn ai ben hev klowz fr>m irye*
when I was born I got clothes from here [Belyuen]
- en:** *ai ben stend >p n>ting*
I stood up with nothing on
- cb:** *wi ben laikdawt yu dei ben laikadjet na dls>n mer.rukak (E) n>thing dls>n mer.ru (E)*
we were like that you, they were like that now, this buttocks-part nothing this buttocks
n>ding dlsaid
nothing on this side.
- en:** *eeh yeh dætz al naw ownli dls>n*
eeh yeh that's all now only this side [pubic covering]
- cb:** *naw bleingket dæR>n n>thing peiperbark getlmbek kaverlm >p mer.ru (E)*
no blanket, that time, nothing, get paperbark cover up bottom
- en:** *ai remember dæst*
I remember that
- bp:** *>hh> far naitaim wen lm kowld*
ahha for night time when its cold
- en:** *mmmm kowld n>thing*
mmmm cold nothing
- dz:** *far rein far sheid*
for rain, lor shade
- cb:** *ya*
ya
- en:** *adja na.rra mer.ru kainyi (E) slster bliinmi yutubela ben laik dæt na*
another sister buttocks NF-3s-hanging/class, your and my sister, you two were like that now
mer.ru (E) aniting
buttocks [with no covering]
- bp:** *yu mami yu tu*
you mom you too
- en:** *ya mi tu*
yes me too
- ai never ben hev dlsting*
I never had this thing [clothes]
[noise]
- tltl awtsaid*
breast outside
- cb:** *ownli dls ding j>s tai lm >p*
only this thing [breast harness] just tie them up
- je:** *mait tai kuz j>mp >p en dawn plopplopplop meibi thei lök demselvs an vidiyow*
might tie because they jump up and down 'plopplopplop' maybe they see themselves on video
- dz:** *dei didnt werri [noise]*
they didn't worry
- cb:** *thædan ngarRon yIngi (E/Mar) b>mbai yInmi wula (E/Mar) toptoptop b>mbeRai dlsan*
that goanna's breast, when you and I dance, later on 'toptoptop' goes this
yeingi (E/Mar)
breast

[Second Segment]

- dz:** *now slknes spesh>l b>sh medlsIn*
no sickness, special bush medicine
- je:** *dei w>z far pip>l ir dir wer far Rowzi h>zbend, Beleritj, trai trai*
there were four people here, there were four: Rosie's husband, Beleritj, they tried and tried
thei ben hev tu get b>sh medlsIn. Valeriz f>t sow ai gat b>sh medlsIn yu smellm strang
they had to get bush medicine. Valerie's fool, so I got bush medicine, you smell it, its strong
laika blks
like Vics [mentholated rub]

[Third Segment]

- bp:** *ownli dei lIsen end raitlm dawn ehta putlm langa bök*
only they listen and write it down later in a book

dz: *yu get awldæt infarmeish>n dowz dei dei hed strang kultjer thei hev seremoni evri*
 you get all that information, those days they had a strong culture, they had ceremony every
dei karabari en dens tudei wi strag>l naw.
 day, corrobore and dance, today we struggle now.

4. 'Bridjibin'

jz: *yu tel this bet wir wi went Kabal wi dldent gow nir thet pleis*
 you tell this Beth, when we went Kabal, we didn't go near that place

en: *abana (E)*
 which place

jz: *b>t thei ben sldawn kwait ferst taim eh dei ben*
 but they sat down quiet first time, eh they

gz: *mmm*
 mmm

jz: *sldawn kwait dei ben sldawn na kwait dei ben sldaaawn kwaiat ofta dat lm ben*
 sat down quiet, they sat down now quiet they sat dooown quiet after that she [Dreaming]
nung>k kamanthenaiyi (E) thaR>n lm ben muv naw la aliya
 finger NF-3sstand/class-give-CA [fingers emerged] that one, she moved now toward all of them

gz: *langa wik wik (B)*
 in the fresh water fresh water

jz: *dæt da wan naw*
 that's the one now

gz: *wik (B) lm ben kam awt*
 freshwater she came out

jz: *en maria brandl lm ben lök*
 and Maria Brandl, she saw

gz: *maria lm now*
 Maria, she knows

jz: *kamantheni (E) lm ben wanlm naw bilanga drawnlm naw aliya lm ben fraiten*
 she emerged, she wanted them now in order to drown them now, they were all frightened,
alidja thæt wulgamen lm ben tak le lm naw n lm ben gow dawn na dæt nunggu (E) le lm
 all of them, that old lady, she talked to her now, and she submerged now, those fingers of hers.

5. 'Cheeky Yam'

me: *Yeh dæt the kenbi (B/E) naw thæR>n durlg (B) lm got kenbi durlg (B) hn ding*
 yeh that the didjeridoo now that Dreaming it [water hole] has a dideridoo Dreaming and thing
koinme (B)
 mangrove [Dreaming]

dz: *thæt thæt mait bi thæt tjen>l-lm k>m awt dflerent seikred saits*
 that that might be that channel, it comes out at different sacred sites

me: *yeh. lm gat a driming thæt mangow thæt mangrowv owantri en thæt bambu naw lat*
 yeh, it has a Dreaming that mango, that mangrove one, tree and that bamboo [didjeridoo] now lot
driming ln dir. dei sei thæt leragiya pip>l naw fr>m dls water naw lm gow rait
 Dreaming is in there. They say, that Laragiya people now from this water now, it goes right
thru naw kam >p le ailend . evriwir, endiyen ailend, duw>n, mm kam awt dlsaid le,
 through now comes up at the Islands, everywhere, Indian Island, Duwun, it comes out this side at
wat lz mm neim
 what's it's name

je: *bridjibln*
 Bridjibln [place name in Port Patterson area]

me: *bridjibln wei streit, yuwej, streit ahed le Milik thæt ailend dir naw lm kam awt dirye*

- Bridjbin way straight, yes, straight ahead to Milik, that Island there now, it come out there
dæt water fr>m ir glv It langa
 that water from here extends to there
- sm: *yu kidz ar biying tu noizi bi kwaiyet pliz*
 you kids are being too noisy be quiet please
- me: *Im kam læ thæt driming dlsaid la Bainow Harbar wei dæt wat-Im dlswan*
 it extends to that Dreaming this side of Bynoe Harbour way, that, what's it, this one
bobot awa yuwa (E)
 thing beel/class there
- je: [faint]
- me: *wila* (B) *awa* (E) *wila* (E) *yeda minthene* (E)
 cheeky yam beel/class cheeky yam look cheeky yam
- cb: *yu* (E/Marr) [faint]
 yes
 [noise]
- je: *tak y>ng gerlz*
 talk to the young girls
- me: *wel laik sam kld dei gow dawn dir evritaim la*
 well like some kids they do down there everytime to
- en: [to children] *eh llsen stari dir abi tel-Im*
 hey, listen to the story Abi [all] is telling
- me: *aa dat pleis wat dls pleis aaa buwambi*
 aa that place what this place aaa Buwambi [place name on west coast of Cox Peninsula]
- cb: *y>koj* (E/Marr)
 your right
- dz: *bambi*
 Buwambi
- me: *yeh dei al taim gow dawn dir dæt kld ye now hn mait bi thei now mar sæbi dæt*
 yeh, they all the time go down there those kids, you know, and might be they don't know that
meiyidjem (B) awa ngaRawaka minthene (E) *wel Im gow dawn*
 beel/class we.inc.hand/class cheeky yam well she [cheeky yam] submerges
- dz: *yeh yeh*
 yeh yeh
- me: *wel Im gow dawn*
 well she [cheeky yam] submerges
- dz: *Im laik a a waild laik a*
 it is like a a wild like a
- me: *waild yem yena* (E) *Im driming thaR>n tjiki yem naw*
 wild yam-locative she's Dreaming that cheeky yam now
- en: minthene (E) *naw*
 cheeky yam now
- jz: wila (B)
 cheeky yam
- bp: mimi ?(E)
 pumpkin yam?
- me: wila (B)
 cheeky yam
- en: *now moar thæt n>therwan*
 no that other one
- jz: minthene (E)
 cheeky yam
- cb: *yeh*
 yeh
- jz: *yu sei m minthene* (E)
 you say cheeky yam
- je: *dæt manster dæt wi ben show yu dæt dei, yeh theRowin* (E)
 that monster we showed you that day, yeh Sea Serpent
- en: *nat thedownin* (E)
 not Sea Serpent

je: *hm gata aa laika leig this mab wulgamen sæbi thei tel yu the wan naw callm minthene*
 (E)
 it has a, like a leg, this bunch of old ladies know they can/will tell you the one, call it cheeky yam
 ar wila (B)
 or cheeky yam

6. 'In the Wanggigi Shade'

en: elweda (E) *sheid sldawn...*
 shade shade [let's] sit down
 [segment after children talking]
bp: *wat ar wi duwing*
 what are we doing
en: *now mar langa kaingmerRa (E)*
 not in the sun
me: *j>s tellm wi j>s stap langa dir ala taim wuldentaimz*
 just tell them we just camped along there all the time in the olden times
je: *j>s laik haw yu stap langa bet n tellm stariz yu tel al diz kldz*
 just like how you visit Beth and tell her stories, you tell all these kids
bp: *yeh yu alweiz tel mi*
 yeh you always tell me
je: *wel haw ala taim tel bet tel dls mab*
 well how all the time you tell Beth, tell this mob
jz: *tu hat*
 too hot
dz: *yu kldz kam llsen*
 you kids come and listen
jz: *kam an yu mab irye*
 come on you mob here

[Third segment after moving to another location for the story]

me: *kallm mænd>ra:* *:wanggigi*
 call [this place] Mandorah Wanggigi [Aboriginal name for Mandorah]
dz: *:b>t eberlgln.l neim:*
 but Aboriginal name
me: *wi uztu llv ir bifar. blg kemp humpti haws wlth peiperbark en swamp. ai w>z j>s*
 we use to live here before, big camp, humpy houses with paperbark and swamp. I was just
llt>l gerl laik yu. Mai grendfather and grendmather w>z hir seim taim. Thæt mlkwood
 little girl like you. my grandfather and grandmother were here at the same time. That milkwood
dir dæt birriy>l grawnd. Mai grendfather en mai grendmather. uz tu bi ala red ep>l tri
 there, that's a burial ground. My grandfather and grandmother. Use to be all the red apple trees
thir al alang. Dæt owld leidi nowz lm ben ir. Lats pip>l M>dpil wei, BltlnbiyirRk,
 there, all along. That old lady knows. She was here. Lots of people Madpil way, BilbinbiyirRk
al mlkst >p Emi, Mentha, Wadjigiyn mlkst.
 all mixed up Emi, Mentha, Wadjigiyn mixed.
dz: *thru B>lg>l hir tu Bainow Harbar tu trænzmilar Leragiya*
 through Bulgul [placename in Daly River] to Bynoe Harbour to transmitter is Laragiya [land]
me: *still Leragiya. al yuzd tu bi hir k>z blg mab buliya (B) Is irye mab dei yuzd tu*
 still Laragiya. all use to be here because there was big mob relations. This mob they use to
meik a b>sh t>ka, dæt t>ka mada tjuntju (B). yu now wir waitmæn stei. wi yuzd tu
 make a bush lucker, that tucker cycad nut, you know where that whiteman lives, we use to
p>t lm en dæt water meik lm kam fresh. kam bek feyu wiks p>tlm ln faiyer
 put them in that water, make them come fresh, come back in a few weeks put them in fire,
miya wardarbu (E), *yuz tu gow dir getlm yem wir dæt waitmæn dir naw. Howl*
 plant/class cycad nut, they use to go there get yams where that whiteman there now. waterhole

dir wir lm sidawn freshwan kam awt laik ir tu.
there where he lives, fresh water comes out like here too.

je: laik k!d grow >p sei now b>sh t>ka b>t lata b>sh t>ka irye. wen grow >p en yer
like a kid grows up, says 'no bush tucker', but lots of bush tucker here. when you grow up your
pirentz show yu end yu j>s waking an the grawnd lata b>sh t>ka dir
parents show you and your just walking on the ground, lots of bush tucker there.

7. 'That Lighthouse Place'

dz: laik a laithaws eriya naw yu gat thæt Løragiya pip>l ben steiyln dir haws (~) lm gat
like the lighthouse area now, you had Laragiya people staying there house, does that place have
eni haws dir?
any house there?

me: ye sam pip>l yuz tu bi dir bifar ben dir >ntll wan waitmæn ben dir le alidja.
yeh some people use to be there before, were there until one whiteman was there with all of them
wan waitmæn ben dir lm ben growlm >p stak, pin>t, pawpaw hn bønana lm ben
one whiteman was there, he grew up stock, peanut, pawpaw and banana, he
growlm>pbet. watermelan. evrithing lm ben meiklmbet. dls owld leidi ben dir.
grew them-continual, watermelon, everything he made-continual, this old lady was there

je: [faint]

cb: mitjelmar
Mitjelmore (proper name)

me: mlsta mar hn tam eltjelbi. tu pip>l ben dir hn al the eberlgln>l pip>l ben werking
Mr. More and Tom Echeby, two people were there and all the Aboriginal people worked-continual
far them tu. grow >p garden pinut pawpaw watermelan
for those two, grow up garden, peanut, pawpaw, watermelon

sm: haw lang agow w>z thæt
how long ago was that

me: bifar the war [pause] yeh [pause] yeh
before the war yeh yeh

je: thæt sek>nd werld war [faint]
that second world war

me: yeh [pause] enden yeh b>t thæt ferst wan. wi never si dat ferst werld war
yeh and then yeh but that first one, we never saw that first world war

je: j>st dæt sekand wan haw kam ylnmi never si thæt fwrst war?
just that second one how come you and I never saw that first war?

me: ai downt now ai never ben barn thæt ferst war
I don't know, I wasn't born for that first war

en: wi never ben barn yet
we were not born yet

me: le fwrst war
for the first war

en: nathing meit
nothing mate

bp: dlswan naw ben sidawn thir
this one now lived there

me: yeh dlsmab naw wulgamen dei ben sidawn dir
yeh this group old ladies they lived there

bp: tjemela tjemela (E) tel thæt stari wir thæt w>mæn lm ben swlm akras en thæt
mo's fa's sister tell that story where that woman swam across that
krakadail lm ben itlm yu sæbi
crocodile ate her, you know

cb: wat-lm thæt krakadail
what's this, that crocodile

bb: hahaha
hahaha

bp: langa langa wat-lm meibi aim rang
at at what-this maybe I'm wrong

me: wirle
where's this

je: *wen dei ben swim akras*
when they swam across

bp: *yeh*
yeh

me: *ah yeh thæt tʃen>l ailend*
ah yeh that Channel Island

en: *thæt wulmaR wei?*
that WulmaRa way?

me: *this wei ar thæt?*
this way of that?

en: *now mar thls wei*
no more this way

je: *thls wei einlt*
this way isn't it

cb: [faint]

je: *gaRagabildown (Marr)*

me: *nymbeka (B)*
Nym-part (personal name)

bb: *n>thing naw lm caan rimember*
nothing now, she can't remember

bp: *owkei livlm then*
okay leave it then

cb: *ai farget naw thæR>n lang taim ai caan rimember*
I forget that now that story, long time, I can't remember

bp: *livlm*
leave it

[noise]

me: *ai now mar laiglm tel-Imbet thls kaina stari ala taim*
I don't like telling-continual this kind of story all the time

[Second Segment]

me: *yeh wi yuz tu grow >p owld garden dir pawpaw, painep>l, watermelon, swit powteitow,*
yeh we use to grow a garden there, pawpaw, pineapple, watermelon, sweet potato,
benana, pinut, dir hn casava
banana, peanut, there and cassava

je: *wat kasava laik a powteitow?*
what is a cassava, like a potato

me: *kasava naw, en thæt bin yu now bin lang wan ya sneik bin.*
cassava now, and that bean you know (that) bean, long one, yeh, snake bean

je: *lang wan kasava lm grow ala lang said av the fenz*
long one cassava, it grows all along side of the fence

me: *thæt eriya naw*
that area now

[noise]

me: *watermelon p>mpkln sneik bin ahm painep>l benana wat-lm dja (E) painep>l benana*
watermelon, pumpkin, snake bean and pineapple, banana, what this, goodness, pineapple, banana

cb: [faint]

me: *wi yuzd tu grow-lm >p dir dir en denatherwan bihaind thæR>n dawn bilow*
we use to grow them up there there and the other place behind, that one down below, *athersaid*
on the otherside

dz: *dir w>zent dir a bar thir ln thowz owld deiz eh dei hed*
there wasn't, there, a bore there in those days, eh? they had

bb: *water irye*
water there

je: *dem water*
dam water

dz: *dem water*
dam water

me: *yeh dem water*
yeh dam water

- dz:** *hn thei uzd tu cari water far garden end iven dwinking water thætz rait he?*
and they use to carry water for the garden and even drinking water that's right, huh?
- me:** *yeh hn dawn bilow dir agen wi yuzd tu growlm >p garden dere agen*
yeh and down below there again we use to grow a garden there also
- dz:** *dawn de bat>m?*
down at the bottom [of the Community]?
- me:** *yeh yu ken si lemanz dir k>p>l a triz dir lemanz orwendjez*
yeh you can see lemons there, couple of trees there, lemons, oranges
- dz:** *hn end wen yu hed am [noise] ownli meibi [noise] bred end an bek b>t wi hed tu*
and and when you had am only maybe bread and on the back, but we had to
- me:** *yeh b'k>z wi dldent hev ani vihek>l sow pip>l yuztu wak dawn fr>m hir tu dir*
yeh, because we didn't have any vehicle, so people use to walk down from here to there
lending kari-lm >p naw keis kam bek evri pip>l yuz tu
[boat] landing, carry them up now, case [of things], come back, every person use to
kari-lm >p wan kart>n itj bif
carry up one cartoon each beel
- je:** *beit*
bait
- me:** *bred beit tln kap b'kuz wi never hev vihek>l hir si? thætz wai wi yuztu gu*
bread, bait, tin cup, because we never had vehicle here see? that's why we use to go
dawn hn plk-lm >p wak >p wak >p en dawn
down and pick it up walk up, walk up and down.
- [noise]
- jz:** *wat dlsh>n wulman hu ben hir Jek Meri?*
who was that old man who was here, Jack Murray?
- je:** *eh?*
eh?
- me:** *or Bllarni*
or Bill Hamey
- je:** *eh?*
eh?
- me:** *now nat Bllarni Terri Berden tupela Jek Muri Tam Weitz*
no, not Bill Hamey, Terry Burden, two men, Jack Murray, Tom Wates
- je:** *ow yeh Tam Weitz*
oh yeh, Tom Wates
- cb:** *mmm*
mmm
- me:** *Tam Weitz thæt [faint] mm*
Tom Wates that mm
- bb:** *hahaha*
hahaha
- je:** *meik mi lef tellm aliya thæt mab plkinlniz yubela si thæt lending thei*
make me laugh, tell them, all this group of kids, you kids see that landing, they
ala taim wak >p wak >p bifar
all the time walk up, walk up before
- bb:** *thei al ben slip sampela*
they all have slept, some of them [kids]
- jz:** *thæ: al slip dls mab plkinlniz*
they are all asleep, this group of kids
- dz:** *yu mab kld yu ben llsening?*
have you group of kids been listening?
- je:** *yu tel-lm aliya lern Abi*
you tell them, all of them will learn Abi [at]
- me:** *yeh, wel yu mab mather naw thei yuzta wak >p en dawn get-lmbet bredi*
yeh, well your mothers now they use to walk up and down get-continual bread
- dz:** [yells at kids]
- cb:** *awu*
Awu [personal name of one of the children]
- jz:** *kungg>l al ben gow meil*
Kunggul [personal name] family group went for mail

- en: waka kamatha mal:tha (E)
finished NF-3s-stand/class-this story-this
- me: boma nin kimanaindja
- cb: anthani!
anthony! [name of one of the children sleeping, son of Kunggul]
- me: ninaga (E)
belonging to you [yours]
- cb: now mar tjilip!
don't sleep
- jz: hu thæt>n
whose this
- me: Im r>n awei bifar the war ylnmi slster
she ran away before the war, your and my sister
- [noise]
- jz: klti
oh goodness
- je: now mar [noise]
no more
- en: maRiamu teik owver [noise]
Marriamu take over
- me: kamaga pidj>n ingllsh ltz al rait mama slt dawn la mi stari la wi
nothing, pidgeon english, its all right momma, sit down with me [and do] stories with us
- [noise kids]
- cb: mangginyai manggin mala pidgeonentha kunyameta (E)
cousin cousin long-one pigeon-this NF-3p 'they-dual
- me: ya (E/B)
I don't know
- [noise]
- me: yeh wel wan dei ben growlm >pbet now ei aRatu (B) fram dei ben wi ben growlm>pbet
yeh, well, one day, [we] grew-continual, no ei, cousin, from day, we grew-continual
dæt t>ka dæt mab dir naw watermelon laik wi ben redi tu gow naw dei ben sæbi
that tucker, that group there now, watermelon, like we were ready to go now, they knew,
laik pip>l fr>m Darwln dæt Jæpani ben start kaming dlswei naw: yeh yeh
like people from Darwin, that Japanese were starting to come this way now, yeh yeh
- dz: :reidiyow caling war hn then ben
radio calling war and then [they]
- kam
came
- me: yeh 'n wi dident now enithing hahaha wi lök thæt irplein naw. BIG MOB!
yeh and we didn't know anything hahaha we saw that airplane now, BIG MOB!
- je: thæt en wir akra
that and where across
- me: yeh dei ben baming thæt Darwln eriya naw!
yeh they were bombing that Darwin area now!
- dz: plein la darwln
planes at Darwin
- me: yeh wi ben onli ben stend>p lök laik dæt gæmen
yeh we were only were standing looking like that [looking at sky] like
- je: yu mab lang wei
you mob long way [away]
- me: wen ala plein ai ben ai ben ownli llt>l gerl dir b>t wi dident now dæt waz jæpani dæt
when all the planes, I was only a little girl there, but we didn't know that was Japanese, that
Darwln eriya waz a llt>l, blek, smowking,
Darwin area was a little, black, smoking
- je: onli llt>l blt Abi
only little bit [short version] Abi
- me: 'n den neks dei wi lök ala armi pip>l ben kam rawnd ir lata tr>k naw
and then the next day we saw all the army people came around here, lots of trucks now
- je: mitjiRim (E)

- dog
- me:** *yeh dag `n al. `livern dag hir. `teik wan dag itj'*
yeh dog and all, leave the dogs here "Take one dog each".
- bp:** *ehē*
ehuh
- je:** *hahahaha thei ben lain-lm >p wir armi ben*
hahahaha they lined up where the army was
- me:** *armi ben hirye*
army was here
- je:** *eksh>n wan duwln*
show them how you did it
- me:** *lm >p hir, lain >p rait >p dir*
they were up here, lined up right up there
- je:** *al armi*
all the army
- en:** *lain lm >p hir dlsaid an tap*
lined up here, this side, on top [front of the Community]
- je:** *teik-lm aliya thæRai naw*
took everyone that way now
- me:** *teik -lm mipela la KatherRain*
take them, us to Katherine
- je:** *mitiiRin (E) leiv-lm hef ir*
dog, leave half of them here
- me:** *wan itj le dag*
one dog for each
- dz:** *KatherRain naw*
Katherine now
- me:** *`teik wan dag itj'*
"take one dog each"
- dz:** *hn thæt blg [faint]*
and that big
- me:** *yeh wi ben kam bek fram KatherRain naw. wi ben gow fr>m ir geta trein thir hef wei*
yeh, we came back from Katherine now, we went from here, got a train there half way.
Yu now wir thæt reilwei. thæt trein bi thir waiting far the pip>l naw fr>m ir.
you know where that railway is, that train was there waiting for the people now from here
wi ben teik everithing fr>m ir ala vegetab>lz fr>m ereya
we took everything from here, all the vegetables from here
- je:** *thæt red wan*
that red one
- me:** *swit powteitow, pamkin, watermelan, pawpaw, hanyoin, kebedj, hn evrithing wi ben*
sweat potato, pumpkin, watermelon, pawpaw, onion, cabbage, and everthing we
grow-lm >p irye. wi ben teik al thæt st>f yu now ala the vegetab>lz.
grew-continual here, we took all that stuff, you know all the vegetables
- cb:** *HEI*
HEY!
- dz:** [yells kids]
- al:** *end wi ben faind a trein dir waiting far >s fr>m ir*
and we found a train there waiting for us from here
- bp:** *KatherRain*
Katherine
- je:** *Adeleid*
Adelaide
- me:** *nir thæt rowd yu now thæt wir rowd reilwei*
near that road, you know that, where road, railway
- bp:** *yehyeh*
yehyeh
- je:** *adeleid rIver?*
Adelaide River [name of town]?
- me:** *yeh na hir j>s hir hef wei le thæt*
yeh, no, here just half way to that
- je:** *Birri Springz*

- Berry Springs
- me:** *yeh thæt nather reilwei waz*
yeh that other railway was
- en:** *Im ben waiting dir naw*
it was there waiting now
- me:** *mm waiting dir naw. thæt trein. yu think abawt ala pip>l owld pip>l fram ir lata them.*
mm waiting there now, that train, you think about all the people, old people from here lots of them
- bp:** *lata Im ir*
lots of them here
- me:** *wen wi ben traveling fram irye hn ala armi tr>k ben thir waiting far >s*
when we traveled from here and all the army trucks were there waiting for us
alredi In KatherRain
already In Katherine
- cb:** *yukoi (E/Marr)*
yeh
- me:** *hn ala pip>l fr>m sett>lment al redi*
and all the people from the [Delissaville] Settlement were all ready
- cb:** [faint]
- dz:** *yu kidz lisen thæt stari?*
did you kids here that story?
- me:** *finish naw yeh?*
finished now, yeh?
- je:** *yul hev tu sidawn n>ther mab ben gow naw tu m>tj now mal: (E)*
you'll have to wait, another group left now, too much no story.

8. 'From "Old Camp" to "Donkey Camp" and back'

- bp:** *hu In tjardje*
who was in charge [of Belyuen]
- me:** *Jek Meri*
Jack Murray
- en:** *Tam Weik*
Tom Wake
- bp:** *sow al muvd together*
so all moved together
- jz:** *yeh*
yeh
- jn:** *ganaraitj yu gowing bek tudei?*
Gonaraotj [person al name] yu going back [to Kormilda College in Darwin] today?
- bp:** *then war*
then war
- me:** *fram ir armi pip>l ben gow*
from here army people went
- en:** *ir k>k wi hev parti ir ai min dner big mab pip>l ir mama*
here cook, we had a party here, I mean dinner, lots of people here momma
- bp:** *eiye aala blækfela Im ben sidawn langa ir Im ben trævelln*
oh yeh, all the Aborigines, they stayed around here, they were traveling
- en:** *ye beRagut en al*
yeh whitemen and all
- bp:** *beRagut en al*
whitemen and all
- en:** *beRagut yu wana tak abawt emi wiiliiii*
whitemen, you want to talk about army wow
- bp:** *tru*
true
- me:** *hev a big neks dei Belyuen wi hev a parti en den gow*
have a big party next day at Belyuen, we have a party and then go
- en** [faint]

ne
ne

- bp:* *parti? hev a göd parti gemln*
party? have a good party, like
- jz:* *ye*
yeh
- en:* *now mar laik dlne yu now getlm bif laik yu h>nggri*
no more, like, you know, get some beef, like your hungry
- bp:* *end haw yu ben gow gata lowd*
and how did you go with all the stuff
- me:* *bai rowd*
by road
- en:* *blg armi tr>k*
big army truck
- me:* *[route] hip >p dir*
heap up there

[At Katherine]

- me:* *shap ben dir*
shop was there
- en:* *blg mab m>ni*
lots of money
- bp:* *wir fram m>ni?*
where from money?
- en:* *m>ni fram pip>l mama*
money from people momma
- bp:* *ow yu werk le kemp?*
oh, you worked at the camp?
- me:* *yeh dei werk nat blg mab mait bi wan daler flti ai think hahaha*
yeh they worked, not for a lot of money, maybe one dollar fifty I think, hahahaha

[Leave Katherine]

- en:* *thæt thæt thinkabet naw ai ben tellmbet thæt stari main ai ben wak rait bek streit >p*
that that think-continual now, I tell-continual that story of mine, I walked right back, straight up
le mai bainagula kuntri
to my country, Banagula [place name and ry's patrilineal estate] country.
- bp:* *thæt rait rait naw rait bek yu ben waak >p Banagula*
that right, right, now, right back you walked up to Banagula
- me:* *fram dir naw*
from there [Katherine] now
- en:* *mipela ben haid dir*
my group hid there
- me:* *thai ben thai ben g'wei g'wei fram dir naw dls mab [noise] pip>l ben sei `ai think*
they, they went away went away from there [Katherine] now, this mob, people said "I think
thæt pleis klows >p naw' thai ben drimbet naw thai ben think:
that place is close up now", they dream-continual now, they thought
- bp:* *:yeh sow sam:*
yeh so some
- me:* *:hardpela sampela. b>t thai now mar wana stap dir tu lang*
hard way some of them, but they didn't want to stay there too long
- bp:* *wai*
why
- me:* *bikuz thai ben howmslk bla dlsh>n. le bitj.*
because they were homesick for this one, the beach
- bp:* *far the bitj ident lt*
for the beach, isn't it
- en:* *yeh [noise]*
yeh

- me: *thls>n ben ln lt*
this person was involved in it
- jz: *wipela ben wak >p naw*
our group walked up now
- bp: *hmm ben ln lt tu?*
she was involved too?
- jz: *yeh mai mather wak >p gata sweg agen en thei ben split >p then*
yeh, my mother walked up with a swap also, and they split up then
- me: *thei ben wak >p Adeleid Rlver yu now wir adeleid rlver lz*
they walked to Adelaide River, you know where Adelaide River is
- bp: *yeh ai now thæt*
yeh I know that
- me: [noise]
- en: *fram Tiperari [noise] blg mab tjaina men blg mab pip>l ben living dir*
from Tiperary [name of a pastoral station] lots of chinese men, lots of people were living there
- jz: *Abi mipela ben kam bek dlswei*
Abi [me] we came back this way
- bp: *yeh tjainamen naw. witj wei*
yeh chinese men now, which way
- jz: *deili rlver wei*
Daly River way
- bp: *sam ben gow Adeleid sam ben gow Deili rlver?*
some went Adelaide, some went Daly River?
- me: *now mar haiwei thei ben gow b>sh rowd*
no, highway, they went bush road
- bp: *yeh Deili rlver wei b>sh rowd*
yeh, Daly River way, bush road
- jz: *kam dls wei hef wei kip an wak wak [noise]*
come this way, half way, keep on walking walking
hirnaw kam awt Blnbinya naw.
here now, come out [arrived] Binbinya [place-name on west coast Of Cox Peninsula] now

[Army Scouts]

- bp: *so wna yu ben stap hir*
so now you stopped here
- jz: *yeh tll wi ben stap irye naw*
yeh, until we stopped here now
- bp: *hn wir yu ben faind thæt huzbend hir, wir yu ben faind-lm?*
and where did you find that husband here, where did you find him?
- jz: *hir naw*
here now
- bp: *hn wir lm ben, lm ben stap, lm ben du seim thing lm ben gow KatherRain*
and where did he, he stop, did he do the same thing, did he go to Katherine,
Dangki Kemp hn kam bek >p
Donkey Camp and come back up
- jz: *yeh yeh*
yeh yeh
- bp: *lm-ben skawt langa armi wei? thæt huzbend bla yu?*
was he a scout for the army, that husband of yours?
- en: *lm ben ln the armi*
he was in the army
- jz: *lm ben ln the armi wulman*
he was in the army, old man
- en: *unk>l av main, mai unk>l naw*
uncle of mine, my uncle now
- [noise]
- thls wan father Daboi hir mai unk>l bli-lm father*
this one's father, Daboi [personal name] here, my uncle, her father

- me: *werk armi werk*
work, army work
- bp: *skawt?*
scout
- jn: *Im ben le armi then*
he was in the army then
- bp: *lök for plein dlswan*
[he] looked for planes, this man
- jz: *lök rawndbet far armi wir thei fal dawn jæpaniz*
look around-continual for army, when they fall down, japanese
- me: *lök arawnd far wir pip>l yuzt tu fait*
look around for where people use to fight
- en: *en this wan father tu Im ben In armi*
and this one's father too, he was in the Army
- jz: *wulman yena kama kandu (E) tupela bwiRk thei ben gow*
old man at NF-3s-stand/class man [that old man stood there], those two went quick, they went
thir, wak arawndbet evriwir laithaws evriwir
there, walked around-continual, everywhere, lighthouse everywhere
- [noise]
- bp: *löking for Jæpaniz*
looking for Japanese
- jz: *yeh*
yeh
- me: *thei yuzd tu fal dawn yu now*
they use to fall down you know
- jz: *thei fal dawn thei pik-Im up aliya*
they fall down, they pick them up, all of them
- jn: *parashut*
parachute
- bp: *parashut yeh yakaRa wat dat stari thei ben faind wan langa WulmarR Ident It wir*
parachute, yeh, oh my goodness that story, they found on man at WulmarR, isn't it, where
thei ben faind thæt mæn jæpani mæn ar pedagut?
did they find a japanese man or a whiteman
- me: *ingllsh mæn*
english man
- bp: *ingllsh mæn*
english man
- en: *ingllsh*
english
- jz: *dlsaid alrait thei ben faind-Im eh thæt tupela*
this side alright, they found him, eh, those two people
- bp: *thei ben j>s heingIn ar wat*
they were just hanging or what
- en [faint]
- me: [faint]
- jz: *Abi thei ben faind jæpani alrait tupela thæt pleis*
Abi [me] they found a japanese man alright, two men at that place
- en: *Abi thei ben ingglesch alrait thei ben sei Im sei mama thæt mæn*
Abi [me] they were english alright, they said, he said, mamma, that man
- jz: *ingglesch thei ben getIm*
english they found
- me: *thei ben get-Im parashut kut-Im put-Im le grawnd armi pip>l yu now armi mab*
they got him, cut his parachute and put him on the ground, army people, you know, army mob
- bp: *yeh*
yeh
- me: *yuzd tu wakarawnd hir everiwir slgn>l naw gata smowk slgn>l*
use to walk around here, everywhere, signal now, smoke signal
- bp: *>s mab naw slgn>l?*
our group, now signalled?
- me: *fram blekfela gat thæt mæn naw kam >p end pik-Im >p thæt mæn naw*
from Aborigines, got that man now, come and pick him up, that man now

bp: *wat thæt, ai ben llsen lm ben hev wan b>let*
 what's that, I heard he had one bullet
me: *hmm lm ben hev wan b>let trai tu shut-lm lm self*
 hmm, he had one bullet to try to shut himself
bp: *yeh*
 yeh
me: *b>t biskfela ben ketj-lm >p tu kwk*
 but Aborigines found him quickly

bp: *l>kil>ki*
 lucky lucky
me: *faindlm*
 find him
en: *yukai (E)*
 yes
me: *lm w>z gana shut-lm lmsself lm wan b>let*
 he was going to shot himself with one bullet
en: *ow now!*
 oh no!

[English Alright]

jz: *ermi*
 army
en: *ow now*
 oh no
jz: *armi*
 army
en: *dl>n lm shutlmbet mipela gata irplein mama watz rang wth lm*
 this one, he shot-continual us with an airplane momma, what's wrong with him?
bp: *ai d>now*
 I don't know
en: *hingllsh alrait b>t shutlmbet mipela klti*
 english alright, but they shot-continual us, goodness
bp: *ingllsh naw ben shutlmbet yu?*
 english now shot-continual you?
en: *hingllsh yeh*
 english yeh
bp: *f>k dæt sow thæt the thing naw?*
 luck that, so that's the thing now?
me: *kam >p irye naw efa the war*
 come here now after the war
bp: *yeh*
 yeh
me: *kam bek irye*
 come back here
bp: *sidawn naw, flnsh?*
 live here now, finished?
jz: *sidawn ir*
 live here
me: *sidawn iye thei ben riblit this set>lment agen*
 live here, they rebuilt this settlement again
jz: *flnsh wi ben meik-lm set>lment*
 finished, we made this settlement
bp: *this wat lm ben lev>l*
 this, what, was it demolished
me: *yeh meiklm garden evrithing wir naw pleis fr>m benana, swit powteitow, painep>l,*
 yeh, made the garden, everything, where now place, banana, sweet potato, pineapple,
orwendje
 orange

en: *kasava kasava*
cassava, cassava
me: *kasava*
cassava

9. 'Tarzan'

[First segment]

en: *yiylnmi ben lök piktja a meit*
you and I saw film huh mate
gz: *eh mmmmm*
eh mmmm
en: *piktja rili piktja ei*
film really film ei
tarzen tarzen yiylnmi ben lök
tarzan tarzan you and I saw
gz: *mmmm*
mmmm
en: *tarzen mibela ben lök mama piktja*
tarzan we saw, momma, film

[Second segment]

en: *ownli ben lök irye lata pip>l irye*
only saw here lots of people
gz: *al mlkz >p*
all mixed up
bp: *now ala fæmlli*
no, all the family
gz: *al mlkz >p wi ben træv>l*
all mixed up we traveled
en: *beti marin mi ala fatherz*
Betty Moreen, me and all the fathers

10. 'Walking to Banakula':

en: *napa (E) evrithing ya now eevrithing lm kari lm bleingket bllingken evrithing*
carry everything, you know, everything she carried, her blanket, billy-can everything
bp: *yu think*
you think
en: *abawltt*
about it
en: *lm salld mai mather göd boi ow now ai ben*
she was solid my mother, good boy, oh no I was
bp: *klti en then yu ben kembet*
goodness an then you camped-continual
en: *handllm thæt mather evrithing yeh mai brather lm kariylmselb bleingket*
handled that [swag], mother everything, yeh, my brother, he carried his blanket
bp: *eh*
eh
en: *nat mi ai now mar karibet evrithing noow ai ben*
not me, I didn't carry-continual everything noo I was
bp: *yu ben kari llt>l gerl eintit now yu*
you were carrying a little girl weren't you no you
en: *blg gerl llt>l blt ai ben j>s gow wak*
big girl, little bit I just walked

- bp: *llt>l* *yu ben j>s but yu ben* *yu ben wak*
 little you were just but you were you walked
- en: *bikuz ai thinkabet lang wei dls eriya mama wada marrebet (E) pip>l thei slit thir gata*
 because I thought about long way this area, momma, might be hairy people, they slit their with
gres yu now kutlm klti
 grass you know cut them, goodness
- bp: *yeh*
 yeh
- en: *hei sambudi dir but dedbadi dir*
 hey somebody there but deadbody there
- bp: *eh dedbadi*
 eh dead body
- en: *langa krik ala lang mipela faindabet aliya*
 along the creek, all along, we find-continual all of them
- bp: *thæt taim thæt taim*
 that time, that time
- en: *thei kutlmbet gidja yeh pip>l thei kutlm nek*
 they cut-continual each other, yeh people, they cut their neck
- bp: *thæt taim*
 inai way
- en: *iryë kutlm throwt mantha kainyebet manta (E) yeh*
 here, cut the throat throat NF-3p-slice-continual throat yeh
- bp: *mantha (E) kaRabet mantha (E)*
 throat NF-3s with hand/class-continual throat
- en: *gata gres thei ben tai lm >p thæt urye*
 with grass, they tied them up that here
- bp: *fram fram*
 from from
- en: *ai d>now wir fram*
 I don't know where from
- bp: *ai d>now wir fram m>s bi wrang kuntri meibi*
 I don't know where from, must be wrong country maybe
- en: *mait bi mama*
 might be momma
- bp: *waRa yu think*
 what do you think
- en: *thei killm gidja e.*
 they kill each other
- [Second Segment]
- en: *gemln mi ben itlm naw mama thæRun naw ai ben bas arawnd mama dat hyil thæR>n*
 like, I ate them now momma, that one, now, I bossed around, momma that hill, that one
wir yu lök bek mipela gow dir naw an tap kabermal kebermaiyel (E)
 where you look back, we went there now on top, climbed up it
- bp: *kebermail (E) yeh*
 climbed up yeh
- en: *hyill haiwan mama thei tj>klm thæt eim sloowli mipela gow dawn ya*
 now hill high one, momma, they checked their aim slowly we went down, you know
mama sloooow daawn gow dawn naw ai d>now wir wi gow ai ben fram an tap mipela lök
 momma sloooow doown, go down now, I don't know where we went, I was, from on top I saw
thæt kuntri dir naw mipela lök bainagula ne
 that country there now we saw Banagula now
- bp: *yu ben lök fram dir naw*
 you saw it from there now
- en: *gemln ai ben hapi naw yeh mama gemln api mipela*
 like, I was happy now, yeh momma like happy us
- bp: *yakaRa (E)*
 goodness
- en: *thæt>n dls wulman dls y>ngpela hir unk>l yu callmbet*
 that, this old man this you [and your sisters] here call-continual uncle

[Third Segment]

- en: *yeh mama kari lm >p gi napa (E) ai naw mar laiklm lm ah now mar carilm>pbet yu gow*
 yeh momma, carry him up carry I don't like him, I didn't carry him around, "you go
langa mama aha ai ben sei
 to momma" ahaha I said
- bp: *ahha ahahaha*
 ahha ahahaha
- en: *lm evi mama ai now mar laiglmlm*
 he's heavy momma, I don't like him
- bp: *laikylnmi naw adja (E)*
 like you and I sister
- en: *lm lang wei*
 it was a long way
- bp: *lm seirn wei*
 she's the same way
- en: *ai d>nwana carilm yu >p llt>l boi now mar ana annannanana lm*
 "I don't want to carry you up little boy, don't 'anan nanna nanna" he
sei callmbet mai neim emana ennena noow yu gow langa yer mam ye llsen mama
 said calling-continual my name "emana ennanna", "noo you go to your mom, ye listen momma"
lm r>n gata diskainde blliken
 he ran with this kind of billy-can
- bp: *hahaha*
 hahaha
- en: *haha diskainde gat bllaken ee ha lm r>ning ee ee ee*
 haha with this kind of billy-can, he ha, he ran
- bp: *laika kanggaru thathathundi*
 like a kangaroo that that thundi
- en: *mitupela ben llt>l wiyal werk dir e powlismen laik lm mai slster naw oo aa m mitupela*
 when we-two were little, we worked there for a policeman, like my sister now, oo a m, we two
ben weeerik gemln lld>l wail now mar wi gow naw livlm wi trait
 worrked like-pretend little while, no more we went then , left him we were frightened
- bp: *eh*
 really
- en: *gemln daet bedagut powlismen wipela ben werk*
 pretended to that whiteman policeman that we were working
- bp: *dat bainagula*
 that was at Banagula?
- en: *now mar dls>n b>sh mama fram katherRaiyin*
 no more, this was the bush momma from Katherine
- bp: *b>sh wat yupela ben du for lm*
 bush what did you two do for him
- en: *n>thing*
 nothing
- bp: *kam an gemln eee ee*
 re ally, your kidding eee ee
- en: *wi ben j>s faindlm dir mi mipela gow dir naw bllm arimargen bli lm*
 we found them there, I, we went there now with Harry Morgan and his
h>zbend n lm waif mipela ben gow ei now ma stillmbet mitubela ben sei li lm
 husband and his wife, we went "hey don't steal-continual", we said to him
- bp: *ah yeh*
 ah yeh
- en: *downt stillm dat stowmatowz heaaaeveribudi ben dir aaahaa now mar dlsh>n mi*
hunggri
 "don't steal that tomato" heaa everybody was there aahaa, no more, this one, I'm hungry
- bp: *heeeha aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa*
 heeeha aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
- en: *ai ben fullm b>ket*
 I filled a bucket
- bp: *ai wudaben item wan wei*
 I would have eaten them none stop
- en: *behee lm putlm ppp b>ket ei ow k ei ngamanga (E) ai ben tellmlm slster main naw*

- behee, he put them in a bucket ei *ok NF-1p we two-stand/class* I toid' my sister, mine now
- jn:** *unk>l ari*
uncle harry
- en:** *ye ei Im stillmbet mentheimgo diawenaka diawenaka (B) Im sei*
yeh ei, he stole-continual he'd say
batjermal Im wadjigin
batjermal, he's wadjigiyn
- bp:** yeh
yeh
- Im wadjigiyn*
he's wadjigiyn
- jn:** *bla wi bla wi tjemela thæR>n* *Im le deili riva*
our, our mo's mo's brother that man he's at Daly River [Mission]
- bp:** *eeyah* *deili riva wei yeh*
eeyeh Daly River way yeh
- en:** *Im wulman thæt wulman*
he's an old man that old man
- jn:** *mmwulman*
mmm old man
- bp:** *yaga (E)*
gosh
- jn:** *bla wi grendfather thaR>n*
our grandfather that man
- bp:** *ai ben l>klm ai downt think sow n>thing*
I've never seen him, I don't think, nothing
- en:** *Im tjinamen wulman* *mm* *emm*
he's chinaman old man mm emm
- bp:** *aiye*
oh yeh
- jn:** *Im gata het*
he's got a hat
- bp:** *heha*
haha

11. 'Where Did We Camp'

- me:** *dir naw wadaa wat Im neim paRapiya (E)*
there now what's what's it name, rock python snake
- bp:** *kengaru paRapiya (E)*
kangaroo, rock python snake
- me:** *dir naw wulman bla mi ben gedjlm nek*
there now oldman [husband] of mine it grapped his neck
- bp:** *aiyiye*
ah yeh
- me:** *Im ben getlm irye nek*
it [the snake] got him here on the neck
- gz:** *wir wi ben kemp*
where did we camp
- me:** *teiglm awtbet*
took it [snake] off-continual
- gz:** *wir wi ben kemp*
where did we camp
- me:** *dæt wulman wir mibla ben slawn*
that old man, where my group camped

- gz: *wir wi ben kemp*
where did we camp
- bp: *wii*
wow
- me: *ahahaaha*
ahaha
- gz: *əhh anti*
ehh auntie
- bp: *wir*
where
- gz: *wuta (E)*
water
- me: *uuuha*
uuuha
- gz: *wir wi ben kemp*
where did we camp
- me: *ye yu səbi*
yeh you know
- gz: [batjɛm:a] *yugakkaa (E)*
goodness
- bp: *wir wir wir*
where where where
- me: *thæt eriya naw*
that area now
- gz: *nandjyin nandjyin nandjyin*
Nandjyin [place name on one of the Pt. Patterson Islands] Nandjyin Nandjyin
- me: *thæt eriya naw yu howldlmbet*
that area now your touching-continual
- gz: *nandjyin dls>n*
Nandjyin this one
- me: *thæt eriya naw dlsaid Im irye naindjin ai think*
that area now this side, its here, Naidjin, I think
- bp: *ow naindjin*
oh Naindjin
- je: *nai-*
Nai-
- me: *wi ben kemp*
we camped
- gz: *yubela ben kemp dir*
your group camped there
- me: *yeh dls eriya ir lök dis eriya mipela ben dglmbet*
yeh this area, here look, this area, my group dug-continual [yams]
- gz: *mmm*
mmm
- me: *irye*
here
- gz: *nha wi ben*
nha we were
- je: *wa pleis abi*
what place Abi [me]
- me: *en wi ben gow arawnd irye paRabiya (E)*
and we went around here, rock python snake
- gz: *paRabiya (E) yeh*
rock python snake, yeh
- gz: *NOWMAR Now Mar thæR>n sneik thæR>n sneik Im telln Im th*
NoMore No More, that snake, that snake, its, tell her th-
- bp: *yeh ai now*
yeh I know
- me: *mm paRabiya (E) thæR>n mm ben gidlm*
mm, snake which got him [the old man]
- gz: *wat pleis thæR>n*

- what place is that
me: *thæt b>lp>l nawa ɔintl*
 that's Bulpul [another site on the island] now, isn't it
- bp:** *ow now b>lp>l lm dawn irye*
 oh no, Bulpul is down here
- gz:** *lm ir b>lp>l*
 it's here, Bulpul
- je:** *ee dir*
 ee there
- gz:** *en nandjyin lm hir*
 and Nandjyin is here
- bp:** *ye sow yu be yu ben kemp diswei*
 yeh, so you you camped this way
- me:** *yeh*
 yeh
- bp:** *yeh*
 yeh
- gz:** *now mar wi ben kemp irye naindjyin wir naidjyin*
 no more, we camped here, Naindjyin, where naidjyin
- bp:** *naidyin irye*
 Naidjyin here
- gz:** *irye wi ben kemp*
 here we camped
- me:** *klows bla wila*
 close to us

12. 'The Big Ceremonial Place'

- gz:** *ala pip>l big mab Wadjlgyn al mlkz big siremowni pleis Daramanggamaning*
 all the people, big mob Wadjigiyn, all mixed, big ceremony place, Daramanggamaning [place-name]
- bp:** *hn anti hu yuztu sldown langa dls pleisez*
 and auntie who use to live along these sites
- gz:** *lata pip> ben irye*
 lots of people were here
- jz:** *evriwan irye naw irriye*
 everyone here now, area
- gz:** *evriwe naw irriye langa siremowni pleis daramanggamaning*
 everywhere now area along this ceremony place, Daramanggamaning
- bp:** *yeh dlswan bigwan siremowni pleis eh*
 yeh this was a big ceremony place, huh
- gz:** *yeh dlswan naw*
 yeh this place now
- jz:** *wir dei ben sldawn aliya aliya Leragiya ben stap ere*
 where they camped, all of them, all of them Laragiya lived here
- gz:** *dls>n wadjlgyn naw wul mlkst>p*
 this Wadjigiyn now, all mixed up
- bp:** *al mlkst>p endei yuztu sldawn irye*
 all mixed up and they use to live here
- gz:** *ya al mlkst>p dei ben stap langa irye*
 yeh all mixed up they lived along here
- bp:** *rait e e iven wen yer parenta ben alaiv?*
 right, e e even when your parents were alive?
- gz:** *mai parenta ben laiv irye*
 my parents lived here
- en:** *mi mai grenfa n>thing*
 me, my grandfather didn't
- bp:** *en dir parenta? meibi? iven bek daet far dei ben slt hir*
 and their parents? maybe? even back that far, they camped here

- gz: *dei ben wal mlkst>p ma mai parentz ben lang wei*
they were all mixed up, my my parent were a long way
- jz: *nusens dlswan mab [children]*
nuissance this group [children]
- bp: *dei did yer parentz kam bek fram dir*
they did your parents come back from there
- gz: *mmmm*
mmmm
- bp: *le Deili Rlver wei*
from Daly River way
- gz: *aanaddidi*
aa Naddidi [place name in southern Daly River]
- bp: *naddidi*
Naddidi
- gz: *dei ben kam dlswei naw strøit >p*
they came this way now straight up
- bp: *mm*
mm
- gz: *langa dlsmab na emiyenggal mab mentheyenggal mab wi ben mlkst>p dei ben al milkst*
to this group now Emiyenggal mob, Menthayenggal mob, we were mixed up, theywere all mixed
- bp: *yeh yeh*
yeh yeh
- gz: *en dei ben kam dlswei dei ben lök dls darwin naw.*
and they came this way, they saw this Darwin now.

APPENDIX TWO: Number of Animal and Plant Species Named and Frequency of Use When Encountered.

		percentage and frequency used*		
	# species named	n	o	r
Tubers	31	.548	.226	.161
Flowers	83	.385	.265	.385
Woody	8	.875	.125	---
Honey, Clay**	4	.5	---	.5
Funggi, Sea Weeds	3	1.00	---	---
Land Mammals	18	.333	.278	.389
Land Worms, Snails, Frogs	10	.8	.2	---
Birds	66	.697	.227	.076
Crustacea, Shrimp	11	.091	.545	.364
Insects	15	1.00	---	---
Goanna, Crocodile	14	.428	.071	.5
Turtles	6	.167	.333	.5
Fish	31	.193	.129	.677
Snakes	25	.96	.04	---
Sea snails, Chitons	26	.346	.346	.308
Rays, Sharks, Sandfish	11	.091	.273	.636
Sea Mammals	5	.8	---	.2

* n=never, o=occasional, r=regular. Because one part of a species may be used and another part not -- for instance the fruit but not the tuber although both are considered food -- the percentages listed do not always add up to 1.00.

** Two indigenous honeys are regularly collected. The white clay, mentioned in the text, is never now eaten. A honey comb bee is also avoided because of its "cheeky" sting.

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