4 MARGINAL GROUPS

the unofficial histories

There are three major aspects to this theme revealing the marginal groups, the non-Anglo-Celtic migration to Queensland, and the Australian South Sea Islanders. Together, these aspects provide an history of the often forgotten members of the population within the context of the story of the majority. Excluding the original Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, everyone in Queensland is a migrant or came from migrant stock. Understanding the mix and cultural backgrounds of these peoples enriches our understanding of the cultural landscape.

Investigating Queensland's Cultural Landscapes: CONTESTED TERRAINS Series

OVERVIEW OF MARGINAL GROUPS IN QUEENSLAND

by Helen Armstrong

Histories about Queensland have tended to centre around Anglo-Celtic colonization and subsequent development where the use of land and primary resources has been the focus. This section presents a form of unofficial history; namely an overview of the histories of groups whose perspective of their experiences has tended to be marginalised. In Queensland these groups include Aboriginal peoples, the migrants, the South Sea Islanders (ASSI), women and while not a human group, the environment. The following discussion of the history of these groups draws from a number of existing histories, in particular the work of Henry Reynolds (1987, 1998), Bill Thorpe (1996), James Jupp (1988), Wadley & King (1993), Attwood (1996) and a number of studies on the Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI) including the new research by Lincoln Hayes (1999). The role of women in the history of Queensland is a large study in its own right which unfortunately is beyond the scope of this project; whereas the history of the environment is woven through all the histories.

This study has been broken into three overviews, the first seen from the Aboriginal perspective, followed by the migrants' perspective and the ASSI perspective. The existing histories have been reviewed and thematic analyses have been developed within seven chronological eras, all of which will assist in understanding the resulting cultural landscape of Queensland.

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Aboriginal People's History in Queensland.

The most important histories of the Aboriginal peoples in Queensland are waiting to be written, particularly those histories which precede European invasion. The overview presented here is taken from Henry Reynold's research on the frontier between encroaching Europeans and the Aborigines and Bill Thorpe's sociological analysis of colonial Queensland. Broad contextual information is taken from Wadley & King's Reef, Range and Red Dust (1993). Histories about Aboriginal peoples in Australia have shifted from a focus on anthropological studies to documenting conflicts and their resolution as a form of accommodation. More recently, histories have explored the process of dispossession. Thorpe (1996) suggests that the history since 1788 is one of a complex interdependence of structure and agency which involves neither invasion/resistance nor accommodation. Tindale's 1930s map of approximately two hundred tribal territories in Queensland, based on language, has been replaced by the division of Queensland into seven cultural areas loosely correlating with the major drainage systems (Wadley & King 1993).

The following eras are described as a set of themes, which will assist in enabling a cultural landscape reading of the Aboriginal landscape since European occupation.

Early Contact: Resistance to Invasion (pre-1840)

Establishing a Mindset of Terror

The period, 1788-1840, marks the first resistance to European invasion. The characteristics of this resistance mark the continued misunderstanding between the European and Aboriginal mind. The European mindset was located in centuries of territorial wars across boundaries within Europe where conquest was accepted as the forceful occupation of land and settlements. European perceptions of colonial invasions tended to conform to this model where territory, including all forms of settlement was defended and/or conquered on a battlefront.

In Australia, the original inhabitants did not behave in this way. First, there was no clear indication of Aboriginal settlement as fixed places of habitation. Second, Aboriginal communities operated within a system of shared resources. Initially they were willing to share hunting grounds and water with the newcomers on the presumption that the Europeans would similarly accept the Aboriginal right to some of the European livestock. Third, there was no clear battle-line, which created intense unease in the European mind as they pushed forward without obvious resistance and yet there was always the hovering presence of the Aborigine surrounding them.

Thus when the Aboriginal people in Queensland assisted explorers in some cases and attacked in other cases, Europeans developed myths about sinister attributes of the Aborigines. The fear of the Aboriginal presence and the fact that they could not be caught tended to result in severe over reactions even when Aboriginal people were only 'stealing' food. During this period, terror about the Aborigines was promoted and inflaming myths were fanned by frontiersmen. When the Aboriginal people gathered for feasts, the Western mind saw this as gathering to attack. They also saw firing of grasslands as a form of attack. The Western mind was located in battles for territory rather than struggles for the limited supply of food and water.

Aboriginal Life

During this era, the documented observations of Aboriginal life were located in the southern part of Queensland, namely the area of first contact. At this time, the inland tribes regularly

fired the Darling Downs to encourage grazing animals and the coastal tribes used the prolific wildlife in the wetlands and the sea for sustenance. Great feasts in the Bunya Mountains were also observed at this time. The diet before European contact was said to consist of a number of varieties of yam, the staple of *Cycas* spp in the northern tropics, fish on the coast, kangaroo and wallaby inland as well for all scrub fowl, turkey eggs and a wide variety of fruit and seeds (Thorpe 1996:36).

The Aboriginal social groups involved an intricate web of kinship as a form of social organisation. All these observations on Aboriginal life are clearly those of outsiders.

Early Settlement:
The Brutal Penal Outpost

The penal settlement of Moreton Bay was established during this period in 1824. The settlement was renowned for the cruelty towards convicts, thus establishing a particular climate for social interaction between Aborigines and whites and within the settlement. During this period, the Native Police force (1820s-1830s) was established. Those Aboriginal men who became members of the Native Police were subject to a form of enslavement, in that their role required a symbolic rejection by their kinsfolk (Thorpe 1996). The Native Police force continued throughout Queensland until the 1990s, patrolling Brisbane River, Port Curtis and Wide Bay in the 1840s. The Native Mounted Police Force was considered a key instrument in crushing Aboriginal resistance to the advancing pioneers, acting with such brutality that it caused growing public disquiet (Reynolds 1998).

Early Humanitarians

In the 1830s, there were a few humanitarians who expressed concern that displacement of Aborigines was not followed by compensation. This was given little attention in Queensland. In this period missionaries in Australia were imbued with the belief in evangelization the virtues of civilization and saving souls (Reynolds 1998:113).

Establishing the Colonial Formation (1840s – 1850s)

Aboriginal Resistance

By the 1840s, the occupation had become non-military, as pastoralists moved in to establish their holdings. The Aboriginal people now witnessed an increased number of white occupiers spreading further inland which happened to coincide with a period of drought in the 1840s. By 1844, there was an inevitable struggle over resources between Aboriginal people and the pastoralists.

Aboriginal resistance led to extreme over-reaction by the Europeans resulting in a number of documented massacres; The Breakfast creek massacre (1840s), the Battle of Gladstone (1847), The Moreton Island Killing Fields (1852) and The Hornet Bank Massacre (1857). Apart from open conflict, some Europeans also used poison food as a means of exterminating the black population, the most well documented being the Kilroy Poisoning (1842).

The Aboriginal competition for resources was evident in the persistent stealing of stock and food from the settlements, as well as the murder of shepherds in order to steal sheep or occasional attacks on remote settler/pastoralists. The pastoralists experienced the Aboriginal resistance as guerilla warfare.

Colonized Labour

The early relationships between Aboriginal people and Queensland established a form of Aboriginal labour described as 'colonized labour' (Thorpe 1996). The particular

characteristics of this form of labour, in particular the lack of cash payment, meant that Aboriginal people were unable to accumulate capital and therefore take part in the development of Queensland.

The powerlessness of colonized labour was further exacerbated for Aboriginal people in that their mode of production was based on maintaining resources within the natural environment, to be harvested on a needs basis. The invaders gradually took over these resources, without compensation. Added to which the lack of commodity production by Aboriginal people meant that there was little available, neither cash nor goods, to provide them with an opportunity to compete in the capitalist mode of production.

Perhaps the most significant feature of Aboriginal social formation which rendered them so vulnerable to the enslavement of colonized labour, was their deep attachment to locality that prevented them from relocating after invasion.

Colonial Social Formation

The creation of the colonial society in Queensland involved the transition from an Aboriginal mode of production to a form of capitalism which exploited both Aboriginal land and their labour. Colonial capitalism was based on three major commodities; pastoral commodities, timber and minerals.

The colonial society was a deeply conservative class structured society, initially dominated by the squattocracy of the Darling Downs, Logan and Brisbane Valleys. This group had a far greater sway over the class structure in Brisbane than the squatters had over Sydney and Melbourne. It was a Protestant dominated imperial paternal state where profound class, status, racial and gender divisions prevented social mobility (Thorpe 1996). Thorpe indicates that there were similar patterns of inequality to those of the Ante-bellum South in North America (1996:135). Thus in Queensland, because of the dominance of pastoralism, squatters occupied the highest status in a tight class system.

Missionaries

The activities of the missioners followed the establishment of the frontier. Two missions were established near the early settlement; a Lutheran mission at Nundah in 1838 and a Jesuit mission on Stradbroke Island in 1843. Both failed.

Negotiating an Uneasy Mutual Dependence (1860s-1870s)

Perceptions of Aborigines (1870s)

Fear and terror about the Aborigines persisted. The fear was heightened by the sense of the Aborigines hovering in the shadows, fanned by stories, thus creating a "landscape of dread". These were projected fears as the actual attacks and murders were not numerous and were always related to loss of waterholes, particularly during droughts (Reynolds 1987). The attack on the Chinese goldminers at Gilberton in 1869 was an example where a prolonged dry season prompted an attack on the outlying camps which were traditionally Chinese. After the attack, Gilberton was deserted, but mainly on the basis of myths and stories.

The conflict was at its height during this period because occupiers were spreading all over Queensland. In Maryborough, fear of Aboriginal attack was palpable because of the dense forests and the perceived ability of the Aborigines to retreat to Fraser Island. This again reflects a Western mindset about the nature of 'battle' – fighting at a front-line and retreating to a defended fortress. Despite the fact that the non-Aboriginal community was heavily armed, the specific attacks by Aborigines were not numerous. By creating the myth of black

savages with a thirst for blood, the myth of brutal invasion could be twisted to one where whites were peaceful and the blacks sought conflict (Reynolds 1987).

Shared Frontier

During this period, the relationship between Aboriginal people and the invaders was complicated. In some areas there was fear of attack, whereas in other areas, there was a form of symbiosis between the Aborigines and the pastoralists. The pastoralists and stock owners took on many of the features of the Aboriginal world as much as the Aborigines took on aspects of the white world, particularly around "the masculine business of raising cattle and droving" (Thorpe 1996:38). From this relationship, a rather unusual mixture of cowboy values related to great courage, endurance, discipline and physical stamina emerged. Although the cattle station owners, managers etc. were the apparent masters in control of the situation in reality they had to conform with Aboriginal needs for ceremony, obligations to kin, age-old practice of 'Dreaming' as well as Aboriginal ways of handling stock and maintaining property (Thorpe 1996).

The black frontier embodied knowledge and skills needed by white pioneers, in particular, the black 'guides' and Aboriginal land management practices. The 'guides' may have originally volunteered their services to be able to access white belongings and to ensure that the whites were guided away from sacred sites (Thorpe 1996). The Aboriginal land management practices were skills required by the pioneers, in particular, the Aboriginal knowledge of territory and their hunting/gathering skills, their keen eyesight, their ability to cover distances on foot and their dexterity and strength (Thorpe 1996).

Aboriginal Life (1870s)

By the late 1860s, as the invaders occupied increasing areas of territory, the Aborigines were forced to come into the pastoralist stations because it became too difficult to maintain their traditional hunting and gathering lives. Again their attachment to the locality and their complicated kinship associated with place prevented them from moving on. The problem of maintaining traditional Aboriginal life was further exacerbated by the pastoralists active attempt to drive out the marsupials from grazing land. Once the Aborigines came onto the stations, often forced into colonized labour, they were introduced into different diets which locked them into further dependency.

Any resistance to the loss of their lands or attempts to replace kangaroos with cattle, was met with brutal reprisals by the Native Police force. Horrific accounts of their activities were recorded during the 1860s – 1870s in the Maryborough and Rockhampton areas (Reynolds 1998:101-4).

Colonial Society

By the 1870s, colonized labour was entrenched. Initially, this form of labour was evident as Aborigines undertaking menial tasks such as carrying water around Brisbane. In the pastoral industry colonized labour took the form of mustering, station hands and shepherds. In the timber areas, such as Rockhampton and Maryborough, the Aboriginal skill of bark stripping was harnessed to enable the construction of bark huts, especially the roofs, in the settlement. By the 1870s, however, non-Aboriginal indentured labour was used extensively in the highly localised and intensive work associated with the coastal canefields. As a result coastal Aboriginal groups were further marginalised.

The social structure of non-Aboriginal society continued to be dominated by a deeply conservative and strong class structure. Rockhampton at this time was the second largest

town, even though it consisted of huts and 'humpies' built from ironbark supplied by Aboriginal timber-getters.

Missionaries & Humanitarians (1870s)

By the late 1870s, missionaries and humanitarians were expressing their concern about the brutality of the Queensland frontier in terms of occupying Aboriginal land and enslaving Aboriginal people (Reynolds 1998:106). At this stage a few missions were established such as Bridgeman's reserve near Mackay in 1871. There was poor financial and political support for them, as a result they were disbanded by 1885.

Disturbing the Land Surface: Mining (1880s – 1910)

Perceptions of the Aborigines

The tradition of violence towards the Aborigines was more deeply rooted in the second half of the 19th century. The further north the invaders went, the European mindset became increasingly hostile towards Aboriginal people (Reynolds 1987, 1998, Thorpe 1996). This was compounded by the consolidation of the earlier settlements into towns. The blacks were still seen as treacherous and cunning because of their particular form of resistance. In the 1880s, the embedded fear was most obvious in North Queensland where much of the conflict was now occurring. The Cooktown whites were documented as wanting to exterminate the 'natives' (Thorpe 1996). In other areas an uneasy co-existence had emerged.

Aboriginal Life (1880s)

The Aboriginal people were equally and more justifiably afraid of the whites. In the 1890s, the Cape York Peninsula Aborigines were terrified of the white occupiers which entrenched black submission and white subservience. During the 1880s, the Europeans undertook massive slaughter of indigenous fauna especially kangaroos, possums and dingoes, which inevitably impacted heavily on Aboriginal traditional life. This added to the extensive tree clearing and excessive use of water resulted in significant changes to the way the Aborigines accommodated to the white presence. In settled areas, because of their strong attachment to their land and the erosion of their livelihood, Aboriginal groups formed permanent camps around the edges of towns. On pastoral stations both Aboriginal men and women were exploited as colonized labour. A 1900 survey showed that Aboriginal people in South West Queensland were living on stations in squalor and fear (Thorpe 1996).
Other changes to Aboriginal life were occurring as a result of mineral exploitation, initially gold and later tin.

Mining the Landscape

The impact of gold mining at Palmer River and its resultant destruction of the land and water has not been documented from an Aboriginal perspective, however it was known that there was at least fourteen years of constant conflict with Aboriginal people around the Palmer gold fields. By 1888, when most of the gold was exhausted, the local clans were 'let in' to the settlement. Reynolds (1987:66) provides an evocative description of the first party of 25 tribal elders walking down Maytown's dusty streets with acute anxiety. Mary Graham's (1999) description of the custodial role in relation to land begs the question of how Aboriginal tribes around the Palmer goldfields experienced the destruction of their landscape.

The story of tin mining in the Annan River area of Cape York Peninsula, however, appears to be quite different. This is the territory of he Kuku-Nyunkul people. The anthropologist, Anderson (1983), describes the impact of tin mining on these people from 1885 to 1940.

Anderson maintains that the Aborigines flourished during this period because of the particular form of tin mining that is small in scale and relatively permanent. This enabled Aborigines to establish long term, firm social relations with particular Europeans and to be in some control over the nature of the social and economic interactions. Although the reasons the Kuku-Nyunkul people became involved in this enterprise were most likely related to the loss of traditional land and the introduction of meat and flour to the Aboriginal diet by the miners, nevertheless, there was some tendency towards a more egalitarian social structure (Thorpe 1996:35).

Humanitarians and Missionaries (1880 – 1910)

During the 1980s, the church began to establish mission stations to assist the Aborigines; Hopevale in 1885, Bloomfield River in 1886 and Mapoon and Yarrabah in 1891. Despite the humanitarian intentions, they were poorly funded, as a result the Aborigines on the missions were gradually exploited in numerous ways, including the introduction of opium, by the pearl fishing industry and surrounding pastoralist. By 1895, the Meston Inquiry recommended the missions be closed and that new reserves be created which recognised Aboriginal territories.

There was intense humanitarian activity about the plight of the Aborigines during this period which was met with equally intense opposition in Queensland. The weekly newspaper, The Queenslander, led a crusade against the brutality towards Aborigines in Queensland, particularly at the hands of the Native Police force. The weekly published a collection of articles and letters as The Way We Civilise, which the used to lobby for a Royal commission into the Native Police force. Although this was not successful, there was enough concern outside Queensland for the Aboriginal Protection Act to be passed in 1897 (Reynolds 1998:108-138).
The humanitarian agenda proposed by Meston, namely to provide refuges for Aboriginal people, was subverted by this Act which resulted in the forcible removal of Aboriginal people onto three government reserves, Barambah (now Cherbourg), Palm Island and Woorabinda (Blake 1996, Reynolds 1987,1998, Thorpe, 1996).

Consolidation of Non-Aboriginal Occupancy (1890s – 1940s)

Aboriginal Life

During this period, the "Colonial-Aboriginal War" (Thorpe 1996:184) was over. The dispossessed survivors now existed in the landscape as refugees, either staying close to their own country and kin as town 'fringe dwellers' or as deportees to missions or as continued colonized labour on stations or as incarcerated victims within various state institutions. Between 1911-1940, at least 6000 Aborigines were removed to the three government reserves (Wadley & King 1993).

Humanitarians and Missionaries

By the 1930s there was much missionary agitation and many calls for reform by humanitarians. Missions at this time were highly authoritarian, separating parents from children. Rudimentary schools were attached to some missions. The growth of social anthropology in the 1930s resulted in concern about Aboriginal people being expressed in an international arena with some reformers calling for assistance from the League of Nations (Reynolds 1987). The heightened public awareness resulted in separate schools being established for children living in the fringe camps at Gayndah and Mitchell (Blake 1996:98).

White Society: Colonialism to Federation

The Aboriginal plight was set against particular political and economic attitudes. The 'rulers' of colonial Queensland were still based on a certain squattocracy consisting of a few families and their network, members of whom became powerful capitalist-politicians, establishing the colonial forerunners of the mid 20th century conservative capitalist political life (Thorpe 1996). This resulted in a form of Queensland sectionalism which Thorpe (1996:197) equate with the slave holding South in North America. By the late 19th century, Queensland was dominated by two ideological positions both of which hinged on racialism. The dominant and most powerful position was held by the employers of quasi slaves, colonized labour and the rural proletarians, that is the squatters and planters who controlled the huge pastoral holdings of the interior and the sugar producing belt along the Queensland coast.

The other group were the growing number of Anglo-Celtic Queenslanders who were workers seeking to drive out the Chinese and Pacific Islander labour and to create legislation that would permanently separate Aborigines from Non-Aborigines. This was yet another variation on White Supremacy this time including non-Anglo migrants in the racist agenda (Thorpe 1996).

The history of the Non–Anglo migrant groups will be considered in the next section.

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Investigating Queensland's Cultural Landscapes: CONTESTED TERRAINS Series

MIGRATION TO QUEENSLAND: politics of race and class

by Helen Armstrong

The Migrant – A Queensland Essential

Queensland epitomises the Anglo-Celtic migration project in Australia. The historians, Jupp (1988) and Murphy (1993), point out that immigration has been an integral feature of Australian life since first occupation by Europeans because the colonisers needed a workforce. Although emigrants flocked from Europe to the New World, Australia was not a common destination. Murphy (1993) describes how the need for a workforce prompted many discussions about possible black "indentured" labour or indentured Chinese labour. It was only in Queensland that this occurred because in the rest of Australia the general sentiment was against slavery or variations of it. Instead the workforce was supplied by immigration.

Historical perspectives (Jupp *et al* 1988, Murphy 1993) indicate that the reasons for modern international migration reflect the history of modern capitalism whose seeds lie in the 17th century discovery of the New World; an event which prompted European nations to incorporate vast new lands and their associated wealth into their empires. This could only be achieved, however, by the emigration of potential settlers who would develop and manage the colonies under the tight control of European nation states. Murphy (1993) suggests the fact that so many people emigrated from Europe during the 19th century, approximately 65 million, is an indication of the extent of the crisis in Europe which had resulted from demographic changes in 18th century. Freeman and Jupp (1992) propose that concurrent with the demographic crises, the 19th century development of industrialised European nation states also provided an incentive for emigration. Emerging industrial capitalism required free and mobile labour and a self sufficient trading system where the industrial base was in Europe and the market and source of supplies was in the colonies. As a result, the New World was seen as a place where enterprising people could create new lives (Murphy 1993).

In terms of understanding the migrant landscape, it is important to look at why North America was the preferred choice for the many emigrants from Britain and Europe. Freemann and Jupp (1992) suggest that there were five main reasons why emigrants, particularly those from Europe, selected North America over Australia.

- First, it was closer.
- Second, it had a history of immigration from the early 17th century, thus for emigrants there was a known European presence in the new land.
- Third, because of the general productivity of the land, there was an opportunity for small landholdings which enabled continuity of European land husbandry traditions.
- Fourth, by the 19th century there was a well developed agricultural and industrial economy in North America which guaranteed employment for immigrants.
- Fifth, the ideological construct of the American society had great appeal and ensured that there would be no restrictions on the basis of race or religion.

Migration to Australia differed in all of these five points.

- First, the distance from Europe was vast and intimidating.

- Second, European occupation was recent, as a result very little was known about the new colony.
- Third, productivity from the land was difficult resulting in a relatively small number of very large, privately owned holdings. This meant that there was little opportunity for the Old World tradition of small farms owned by individuals.
- Fourth, during the 19th century the economy was based on primary production and resource exploitation, which, in the main, provided only manual employment opportunities for immigrants.
- Fifth, the colony was British and as Murphy (1993) points out, there was a clear preference for white British immigrants in the belief that that this would encourage the development of a 'culturally superior' colony.

Clearly the differences between North America and Australia have spatial implications which have affected the migrant cultural landscape in each country.

Frontier Space to National Space

There were two significant spatial outcomes of migration to North America and Australia in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The first of these outcomes was the notion of frontier societies and their associated sense of infinite space, that is 'frontier space'. In North America, this perception gradually receded as the settlers occupied the whole continent, forming dispersed close knit settlements. Freeman and Jupp consider 'frontier space' in North America was "an egalitarian force" (1992:12). In contrast, the concept of 'frontier space' in Australian was the 'interior' which was both forbidding and apparently unprofitable. Australian 'frontier space' tended to foster conflict and social divisions because few people had vast land holdings which inevitably created a stratified society. This was particularly true for Queensland whose pastoral holdings exemplified 'frontier space'.

The second significant outcome was the concept of New World 'national space' and again there were strong contrasts between North America and Australia. Homi Bhabha’s (1991) ideas of 'national space' suggest that social realities of nations, in other words conceptions of national identity, are not necessarily the certainties presented in some histories. Instead he suggests they are transitional and responsive to the larger cultural systems which often precede the formation of a nation. This was particularly true for the colonial enterprise. Initially the migrant settler in the New World could only occupy 'marginal space' because the 'national space' was always in Europe. The European 'national space', however, changed as the sense of nationalism in the different nation states grew. Emerging European nationalism was often associated with a willingness to get rid of unwanted groups such as the demobilised soldiers from the Napoleonic Wars, criminals, religious dissidents, and the Jewish people. One effective means of achieving this was to encourage emigration. Over time there was an equal growth in nationalism in New World countries, such as North America and Australia. Nationalism in North America was underpinned by a willingness to accept all newcomers; an ideology which was seen as a "shining beacon of democracy" (Freeman and Jupp 1992:15). In Australia, the 'national space' was exclusive. Migrants were only acceptable if they had the capacity to be absorbed into the British based Anglo-Celtic culture and all migrants were expected to relinquish their former cultural practices. In contrast to the United States, the long domination of the Anglo-Irish resulted in an Australian society which was exceptionally homogeneous. Again this was exemplified in Queensland. Bhabha (1990) provides a post colonial argument which could explain the Australian situation when he points out that controlling minority space [in this case the space of non-British migrants] prevents interference in the modernist project of progress within an homogeneous 'deep nation'. He suggest this is seen "to justify and validate authoritarian and normalizing tendencies within cultures in the name of national interest" (1990:4). Queensland exemplified the highly

selective concept of 'national space' which was embodied in the policy known as 'White Australia.'

The Cultural Landscape of White Australia

Freeman and Jupp point out that the 19th century "proletarianization of the rural population" (1992:12) resulted in working class solidarity in the Australian colonies. This led to a complex relationship between the cohesion of Australian labour movements and immigration policies. In Queensland this did not become apparent until 1900, because of the power of the squattocracy and their exploitative labour policies during the 19th century. The bone of contention by 1901, when the separate colonies became a federated nation, related to the Chinese migrants who had arrived in the 1850s to work the gold fields. The Chinese migrants were predominantly male, diligent and kept to themselves. This was threatening to the Australian labour movement, particularly as the Chinese were seen as culturally isolationist and willing to work for low wages.

Thus it was a racist agenda rather than independence from Britain that was characteristic of the climate immediately preceding the federation of separate colonial States into one Australian nation. This resulted in intense debates about the profile of the new nation. Again Bhabha's (1990) insights into the concept of 'nation' provide explanations for the policies developed at the birth of the Australian nation. He suggests the language and rhetoric about 'nation' indicate certain constructed fields of meaning and their symbols. In this case, it resulted in 'White Australia' where the most popular symbol for the new national identity was the 'Australian Briton' (Murphy 1993:28). Ironically, in the end, intractable dissension related to continuing State loyalties resulted in the British monarchy providing the only form of cohesion. This inevitably undermined any emerging sense of nationhood. As a result the new parliament did not open with a coherent national sentiment, and 'White Australia' seemed a panacea for many unresolved issues. Another factor emerging at this time was the alarm in Britain at the awakening of Asia; a phenomenon which had the potential to challenge European world supremacy. As a result when the new parliament debated about immigration – one of their earliest debates – the agenda was caught up in the sensitive issues of defence as well as labour protectionism. There was also distinct racism associated with these issues; in particular a desire to keep out Asians, Africans and Pacific Islanders.

This brief historical overview sets the context for the migration profile of Queensland preceding the post World War II period.

Queensland Migration Profile (1838-1945)

Migration to Queensland exemplifies all the issues already discussed. The early British migrant occupiers grabbed vast tracts of land and established a squattocracy which, up to 1901, determined the migration policies. The desire for migrants was directly related to the need for a workforce. The workforce, however, had to deal with two vastly different situations, either labouring for pastoralists in the remote harsh dry inland or labouring for plantation owners in the labour intensive canefields on the hot tropical coast. Neither circumstance attracted the type of workforce that met the criteria for membership to the 'national space', namely white Britons. As a result, colonized Aboriginal labour was used by the pastoralists and, until 1900, indentured labour from the Pacific Islands was used by the planters.

Migration to Queensland was not only dominated by the squattocracy, the government established active policies to encourage British migrants from the 1850s on, through the Queensland Immigration Act of 1862. As a result the overwhelming profile of migrants were from England, Ireland and Scotland.

There were a few non-British European groups, in particular the Germans and the Scandinavians. German missionaries were the first to arrive in 1838, establishing a Lutheran mission at Nundah. They were followed later by pioneer German farmers who established close knit communities in Logan Valley, Albert and the Darling Downs in 1861. The Scandinavians, predominantly Danes, arrived in the 1870s and settled in the South East-Brisbane, Maryborough, and Bundaberg.

Apart from the British, the other major migrant groups in the 19th century were the Chinese and the South Sea Islanders. The Chinese migration pattern directly related to the discovery of gold in the Palmer River area in 1861. The initial group, mostly coming from the southern gold fields numbered about 500 but by 1877, at least 15,000 Chinese were working on the Palmer goldfields. As the gold was exhausted, many of the Chinese moved back south or returned to China. Those who remained settled on the far north coast, Townsville and Cooktown. They established market gardens or had small holdings which grew cash crops of banana, sugarcane or maize. By the 1901, with the advent of the White Australia policy, few Chinese were able to enter Queensland.

The South Sea Islanders were indentured labourers so their status as migrants was less clear. After the introduction of the White Australia Policy, this group were forcibly repatriated. Their history is covered more fully by Lincoln Hayes in the third section of the Unofficial History.

In the early 20th century, Italian migrants settled in Queensland. In 1925, about 2000 Italians bought cane farms in the northern sugar district and by 1933, 30% of the Italians in Australia were living in Queensland, either on the cane farms or as orchardists in the South at Stanthope. There were also some Italian migrants involved in the tobacco farming at Inglewood. The Italians in Queensland were interned during World War II at Gaythorne.

Another European group who came to Queensland in the early 20th century were the Maltese. The major migration programme after World War II in Queensland did not have the same impact as it did in other states.

Post World War II Migration

Once again Australia was not the first choice for British migrants, most going to United States or Canada The government, already heavily committed to the new industrial projects and fuelled by post war rhetoric of 'populate or perish', opened the possibility of accepting migrants from the Mediterranean countries and Northern Europe. Within the context of 'White Australia' this was obviously contentious so the government reassured the Australian voters that such Non English Speaking migrants would become 'Australian' under the policy of 'Assimilation'. To achieve this policy no provisions for housing were made on the assumption that migrants would be absorbed into the suburbs, thus aiding their assimilation. A well meaning, but naïve and uninformed, volunteer organisation, known as the 'Good Neighbour Movement', would facilitate this process (Murphy 1993). The very policies aimed at ensuring that the non-British migrants blended into Australian cities resulted in isolating migrants into perceived enclaves even though they were living beside Australians. In Queensland this was evident in West End in Brisbane.

White Australia to White Nation: the Cultural Landscape of Assimilation.

The history of migration from 1945 to the present is driven by three distinct phases in government migration policies. The first phase, known as the Period of Assimilation, extended from 1947 to 1964. Subsequent phases were known as Integrationism (1964-1972) and Multiculturalism (1973-present).

Most migrants coming to Queensland entered Australia in Sydney and Melbourne. In the period between 1947-1965 migrants arrived by ship so the wharves in major cities were the places redolent with memories of arriving in a strange place, being greeted by little known relatives or migrant agents, and being subjected to the procedures which determined where migrants would go after arrival.

Jordens (1995), Jupp (1992) and Murphy (1993) document the history of this period, which was characterised by migrants being taken to 'reception centres' to be processed and in many cases dispersed to sites of employment related to the new industries. Refugees and non-British migrants were required to work for two years in places nominated by the government. Many were sent to the Snowy Mountain Hydro-electricity Scheme. Other Europeans were sent to major industrial centres such as remote cities containing iron-ore mines or coastal steel mills and ports.

The Cultural Landscape of the Period of Integration (1964-1972)

By the mid 1960s, there were problems with the 'assimilationist' policies. The migrant project was certainly building Australia's industrial strength and providing employment. To that extent the project was successful. But the desire to make migrants into Australians who would be absorbed into the fabric of Australian society was not working. This was less relevant in Queensland where the bulk of the migrants were British.

Because migrants had been brought in to work in industry with no provision for housing and minimal provision for English tuition, it was inevitable that immigrant enclaves formed around industrial areas and in inner city areas where housing was cheap. Such enclaves had particularities which, while bearing all the hallmarks of marginality, were different to the concept of ghettos in Europe and North America. Jupp et al (1990) describe these places as zones of transition.

Concern about migrant discontent prompted new policies about migration which came under the umbrella of 'Integrationism'. By the early 1960s the Australian government was competing with other counties for immigrants. As a result they were forced to consider migrants from areas previously excluded because of perceived difficulties in assimilation. In the process of negotiating on a world stage for immigrants, the Australian government officials became aware that their policies were considered anachronistic and inappropriate. Migration practice throughout the world in the 1960s was one which acknowledged diversity; whereas Australia was widely known for its discriminatory 'White Australia Policy'. This particularly acted against Australia's desire to forge links with Asia. In this light, Australia clearly needed to revise the immigration policy which meant better services for migrants on arrival and broadening of the notion of who were acceptable migrants. 'Integrationism' resulted in Australia accepted immigrants from Lebanon and Turkey as well as India, Malaysia, China and South America (Jupp, 1988, Murphy 1993).

During this period, Brisbane attracted a small number of non-British migrants. By the mid 1960s, mainstream Australians were ready to accept the presence of non-British migrants and to accept evidence of different cultural practices. Such cautious acceptance of the migrant presence while maintaining the 'Australian way of life', continued until 1972 when Australia moved into a third set of migration policies known as the 'Period of Multiculturalism'.

The Cultural Landscape of Multiculturalism (1972-1995)

It took until 1970 for the Australian Labour Party (ALP) to realise that working class solidarity existed just as strongly in migrants of non English speaking background as it did amongst 'white' Australians. The ALP set about to woo the migrant vote and their success in the 1972 elections was in part attributable to this vote (Jordens 1995, Jupp 1992, Murphy 1993). In 1973, along with the change in government there was also a major global change resulting from the recession in world trade following the slump in oil prices. As well the plight of refugees from Lebanon and Vietnam had to be addressed. This was to have a marked impact on immigration issues in Australia. Firstly it brought to an end the economic boom which had been the rationale for the immigration policy and secondly Australia accepted its obligation to take in refugees from Asia and Lebanon. In Queensland, Brisbane absorbed the influx of Vietnamese.

In 1984 Australia went into a minor recession during which the Great Immigration Debate started, fuelled by the historian, Geoffrey Blainey, and his rhetoric about the Asianisation of Australia. Although Blainey appeared to get public support which prompted the government to cut funding to immigrant groups and abolish the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, it was a misreading of Australian public sentiment. As a result a number of marginal seats in the larger cities were threatened. The government responded rapidly by establishing the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the National Agenda for Multicultural Australia; such was the change in Australian cultural values. In 1996, with another change in government, the policies changed. Again migration issues were conflated with unemployment issues. In Queensland, migration became the key focus of a new party, the One Nation Party, with an explicitly racist platform.

Bhabha in his study on Nation and Narration (1990) also explores these issues where they are related to marginal groups and notions of nation. He speaks of the counter narratives of nation which destabilise the "ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities" (1990:298). In Australia such essentialist identities are evident in revitalised Chinatowns. Kay Anderson provides an interesting analysis of the background to Brisbane's Chinatown in the late 1980s in her study on Invented Places (Anderson & Gale 1993).

Thus the history of Queensland migration policies have resulted in non-British migrants being marginal groups with the associated predictable spatial outcomes. In the late 20th century, however, post colonial and post modern theories of marginality highlight the shift in perceptions of marginality and difference. There is a growing wish to understand the way migrants value their cultural landscape.

Migrant Landscapes and Place Attachment

The environmental psychologist Low (Altman & Low 1992), suggests that where place attachment occurs, there is a symbolic relationship between a particular group and the place. This attachment may be evoked by a culturally valued experience, but it may also derive meaning from other socio-political and cultural sources; all of which is pertinent to migrant place attachment.

Low proposes a typology of cultural place attachment which she has derived from six symbolic linkages of people to the land; genealogical, loss, economic, cosmological, pilgrimage and narrative.

Table 1
Symbolic Linkages of People and Land.

Source: Altman & Low 1992:166

1. **Genealogical** linkage to the land through history and family linkage,
2. Linkage through **loss of land** or destruction of continuity,
3. **Economic** linkage to land through ownership, inheritance and politics,
4. **Cosmological** linkage through religious, spiritual or mythological relationships,
5. Linkage through **secular pilgrimage** and celebratory cultural events,
6. **Narrative** linkage through storytelling and place-naming.

Low states that along with the six symbolic linkages, there is a process of place attachment which occurs by living in a place. Genealogical attachment to place and loss of place are mutually dependent for migrants, particularly migrants who have come from traditional peasant communities where the family relationship to place has been established for centuries. Often the place attachment is so strong that people from the same village aggregate together in the new country as is the case with some Italian migrant groups in Australia.

Low's concept of 'cosmological' attachment to place has been explored in depth by Norberg-Schulz (1980) in his study on Genius Loci: Towards the Phenomenology of Architecture. Greenbie (1981) in his study, Spaces, also explores sacred places and their meanings. Migrants have great difficulty in reconciling the cosmological aspects of myth and symbol of place in the host country. Although the Asian practice of Feng Shui has been brought to the new countries together with shrines and sacred plants which are incorporated into houses, the profound attachment of place and its mythology remains in the original country. Instead rituals associated with worship, festivals and other ceremonies, although carried out in public places in a similar manner to the country of origin, develop more of a 'secular' and 'narrative' form of place attachment. Low's 'economic', 'secular' and 'narrative' linkages are all very strong in migrant places but they are not necessarily known about outside the migrant community. Such lack of knowledge often results in planning decisions which are insensitive to cultural difference or merely examples of stereotyped ethnicity.

More recent work on place attachment has been published by Dolores Hayden in her book The Power of Place (1995). She highlights the role that public space can play in cultural identity and how urban landscapes are "storehouses of social memories". For Hayden, the power of place means the "power of ordinary landscapes to nurture citizen's public memories" (1995:9). She points out that in an ethnically diverse city such as Los Angeles, race, gender and neighbourhood are poorly represented as reasons for preservation of the built environment. She argues for the rights of minority groups to be represented in the urban built environment in the form of public history or urban preservation. Hayden broadens the notion of place attachment to include those places associated with pain and humiliation. She point out that "coming to terms with ethnic history in the landscape requires engaging with bitter experiences, as well as the indifference and denial surrounding them" (1995:22).

In Queensland many of the migrant places are associated with difficult experiences. The concept that migrant places could include humiliating work places challenges the notion that migrant places are only represented by 'exotic' food and customs.

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Summary

This brief overview of issues related to interpreting the cultural landscape of migration in Queensland shows the importance of understanding the unofficial history, that is the history that has not been documented because of the marginal status of the groups. The third group to be considered in this history, the Australian South Sea Islanders is presented by both Lincoln Hayes as a cultural landscape analysis and Walter Baker, as a broad overview.

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BRIEF HISTORY OF SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS IN QUEENSLAND

by Walter Baker

The recruitment of South Sea Islanders (SSI) for the Queensland sugar trade lasted from 1863 to 1904. The Islanders were called 'Kanakas' and the term is still used although it is now considered to be insulting and derogatory. *Kanaka* is a Melanesian word for 'Man' and was applied by Europeans to the inhabitants of Melanesia. It does not identify people from a particular island. The descendants of this original population prefer to be called Australian South Sea Islanders, mainly to distinguish themselves from recent immigrants and to reinforce their status as a separate and identifiable minority group in Australia.

The recruitment of SSI labour is frequently referred to and described as a 'slave trade' with comparisons made between the conditions and practice of the African slave trade in The US and the Caribbean. The legal position of South Sea Islands workers in Queensland was that of indentured labourers and this situation has been forcefully argued by Moore (1985) and fully discussed by Saunders (1974). The institution of chattel slavery was neither developed nor implemented and South Sea Islanders were never legally slaves to be bought and sold . Nevertheless, regardless of the legal status SSI describe themselves as having been brought to Queensland as slaves and see themselves as the descendants of slaves. Slavery is to be seen in this context as an extra-legal concept embracing (in some cases) the forceful removal of people from their homes , arbitrary arrest and punishment and the forceful prevention of the right of assembly, all of which occurred during the years when labour was procured from the islands.

The description of the traffic has been well documented by missionaries and abolitionists. The excesses committed by the less scrupulous recruiters of labour was described as 'blackbirding' which was essentially a form of kidnapping. "Blackbirding was as full of horrors, of brutalities, of tragedies as was the African slave trade" (Dunbabin 1935). The Islanders fought back in defence of their homes and people and the horrors and brutalities have been recorded on both sides which means that a continuing difficulty exists in any attempt to unravel fact from fiction. Some of the historical sources are clearly unreliable (Moore 1985) and clearly misleading. For example, Dunbabin (1935) asserts that "The blackbirding done in Australia itself was mainly concerned with women." This is not the case as women were seldom recruited and formed a small percentage of the total population recruited from the islands (Edmondson 1984; Moore 1985). The recruitment of labour from the Pacific Islands became better regulated with government intervention in the 1890s and major reforms were implemented relating to contracts and conditions of employment (Edmondson 1984). Nonetheless ,these legal safeguards were in many cases insufficient to protect the South Sea Islander population from maltreatment and discrimination.

> There was unscrupulous evasion of the provisions of the Act by recruiters and others; and savage and sanguinary retaliation by Pacific islanders was frequent; atrocity was countered by atrocity .

(Cilento & Lack, 1959) The authors contend however that South Sea Island labour in Queensland was treated with a "benevolent feudalism".

Post recruitment difficulties

The recruitment of indentured labour from the South Sea Islands was prohibited in 1890 but continued until 1904 due to the fact the sugar cane farmers could not work the land without a

source of cheap labour. The period was marked by considerable unrest and deep political divisions between the sugar mill owners who wanted a source of labour and a body of opinion that wanted a white colony. The SSI though never more than 5% of the total Queensland population (Graves 1993) were a visible and vocal group demanding better pay and conditions of work. In this they were hampered due to the legal position as they were administered under the Masters and Servants act of 1881 which prohibited individual or collective action to improve their working conditions. In theory ,this legislation protected workers from the wilder excesses of employers through legally stipulated conditions of service. In fact their hands were tied.

The Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 was continually amended to restrict the occupational improvement of South Sea islanders. They were forbidden to work as blacksmiths, carpenters or mechanics and could only work as labourers in the sugar industry. There were also restrictions on their freedom of movement and it was forbidden to change work at will. Employers were heavily fined for any breach of these regulations and the smaller cane farmers resorted to hiding South Sea Islander workers by day and putting them to work at night.

Recruitment officially ceased in 1904 under the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901. All islanders who were left by 31st December 1906 were liable to be deported with the exception of children born in Australia and a group of "Ticket Holders" who were exempt on grounds of long residence in Queensland. Opposition to this act was extensive and sustained and the act was amended to prevent the deportation of the old, married couples, land owners and residents of twenty years (Pacific Island Labourers Amendment Act). The effect of this change in the legislation allowed a sufficient number of SSI to remain in Queensland as a small but identifiable minority.

The deportation of the SSI is the only instance in which a migrant group has been deported from Australia and is yet another example in which Australian South Sea Islanders see themselves as the descendants of people who were used as slaves and discarded without recognition or compensation.

Population

There are a number of difficulties in interpreting the statistics relating to the SSI population in Queensland. These difficulties are fully discussed in Cane and Labour (Graves 1993). The total population brought to Queensland is estimated at 62,000. The peak being 12,000 in 1883 when they formed about 5% of the Queensland population. In 1907 with the effect of repatriation the population was estimated as 1568 making up 0.29% of the Queensland population. There are several reasons set out by Graves (1993) for questioning these figures. Firstly the mortality figures are inaccurate since deaths were not always reported. Secondly the children of South Sea islanders were not officially recorded as "Polynesians." Another factor in the under-reporting of South Sea Islanders in Queensland is due to the fact that they migrated to other parts of Australia which was not permitted under the terms of their indenture and so was not reported.

Relatively few women were recruited from the islands and by the time that deportation ceased in 1908 the number deported was 42609 under the Pacific Island Labourers Act (Mercer 1995). The present population of some 20,000 must have resulted from marriages between SSI and Aboriginal and other groups.
The present population of 20,000 in Queensland is concentrated in Mackay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton and Ayr.

Present Position

There is no doubt that the Australian South Sea Islanders are a group much discriminated against and their disadvantages are measured and recorded below levels of deprivation that exists in other Australian communities. Their claims for government assistance as a minority group with special needs are valid. Moore (1985) argues that their treatment after deportation was worse than before and concludes that "Australia's immigrant Melanesians certainly have a valid case in claiming redress from the government." A Departmental Committee report in 1977 concluded that the social and economic status and conditions of the South Sea Islanders are generally below that of the white community. Conditions have not improved for the South Sea Islanders. A report by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 1992 found no improvement on the conditions that existed in 1977. The Islanders were found to be disadvantaged by every index of measurement These included housing, education, health and employment

Identity and Recognition

The present Australian South Sea Islander population of Queensland are a racially diverse group with some 47% having only one parent from the South Sea Islands. Islanders with an Aboriginal ancestor account for just under half of the population with other significant groups being Torres Strait islanders and non-Melanesians who had married into the community. This mixed ancestry gave rise to a situation of choice and also one of conflict. Many ASSI, while acknowledging their aboriginality, have no wish to deny their SSI identity. South Sea Islander culture and heritage was maintained over the years and remained strong supported by this rich ancestral mix. The Islanders did not lose the strong bonds of family connections and included outsiders into their communities. They are also aware of their contribution to the sugar industry of Queensland and would like to se this contribution acknowledged and recorded.

To this end the Human Rights report of 1992 was of crucial importance. The principal recommendation that "The Government should formally recognise Australian South Sea Islanders as a unique minority group which is severely disadvantaged as a consequence of racial discrimination" was supported and further recognised Australian South Sea Islanders as a distinct ethnic group in Australia with its own history and culture.

All the recommendations in the report were supported and accepted by Government (Hansard 25th August 1994). These covered access to social and educational programmes with specific budgetary allocations for schemes for cultural development and community programmes.

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CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF THE AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS: an indicative list of place types in the historic environment.

By Lincoln T. Hayes
(Australian Heritage Commission and James Cook University of North Queensland)

The contribution of Australian South Sea Islanders to the establishment of one of Australia's great industries cannot be overestimated. Over 60,000 people, mostly from Melanesia, were brought to Queensland to clear the land, plant and cut sugar cane. While most returned home (never quite the same) to their Islands and their kin, and many died, significant numbers stayed on in Australia and established lives and homes for themselves. Today their descendants exceed 20,000, forming a significant component of Queensland sugar town populations.

This paper examines the relationships that Australian South Sea Islander people, often known as Kanakas, have had with their physical environment. It explores actual and potential ways in which their lives in Australia have effected a cultural landscape that reflects both their Melanesian ancestry and their status as some of Queensland's earliest and most praiseworthy pioneers. After a brief contextual history of the Islanders in Australia, I will present an indicative (but not exhaustive) list of place types that might be seen as readily identifiable signatures of the South Sea Islanders' cultural landscape.

Sugar

The Queensland sugar industry developed, in part, as a response to the fledgling colony's need tap the wealth that potentially sprang from its extensive tropical environment. In the early 1860s cotton was trialed, but it was Claudius Whish's first commercial sugar crop at Ormiston that proved a significant breakthrough. By the early 1870s, development of sugar land was watched with anticipation, as plantations rapidly sprang up and the Queensland population headed north.

While in 1867 only 6 small plantation mills had been established, by the end of 1874 there were 71 mills (Graves 1979:12). The opening up of sugar lands also brought increased settlement to areas north of Rockhampton, which had previously seen few Europeans. By 1871 Mackay alone was producing over a third of the colony's sugar (Graves 1993:13) and plantation related settlements had been established as far north as Cardwell and the Lower Herbert.

Sugar planters in Queensland in the 1860s and 1870s had little conception of a commercially viable sugar industry away from the plantation. This was partly due to the influence of ex-planters from places like Barbados and Mauritius (Moore 1975). A majority of the Queensland planters were the progeny of wealthy Brits or Scots, but their sole experience of sugar production was from books and journals describing slave plantations from places like Louisiana and Jamaica.

Thus, the 1860s-1870s model of the sugar plantation was a labour intensive one. In order to return a profit, each plantation required a good and plentiful supply of cheap, servile labour.

Europeans would not undertake hard manual labour in the tropics, a reluctance influenced by contemporary medical opinions. These opinions, combined with popular racial theories, predicated that this servile labour force should be *black*.

The Labour Trade

Initial inquiries about recruiting coolies were met with a flat refusal from the Indian protectorate. In response, Logan cotton planter Robert Towns decided to import South Sea Islanders to work at his estate. His first group, recruited from the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) in 1863, proved such a success that other planters were soon requesting Islanders for themselves. As Queensland's cotton industry dissolved, the value of South Sea Islanders had already become apparent to a number of other industries, the most important of which was sugar.

Much has been written and spoken of the Queensland Labour Trade (see eg. Holthouse 1969; Moore 1981, 1992; Munro 1995), and there can be no doubt that grave atrocities were committed in the process of recruiting Pacific Islanders. Many academic historians (eg Corris 1973; Moore 1981) have suggested, however, that despite early phases of kidnapping and violence, the Trade was, on the whole, voluntary and peaceful. Many Australian South Sea Islanders, however, make claims to the contrary, suggesting that a great number of their ancestors were tricked, kidnapped and even enslaved (see Moore 1981). What *is* clear is that Australian South Sea Islanders feel excluded from the standard narrative of their history, and are therefore disenfranchised through the history-telling process. This feeling bears very heavily on today's Islander community and, along with other perceived injustices of the past, conditions their sense of identity and belonging in Australian society.

Plantation Life

A majority of the Islanders who came to Queensland, up until the 1890s, worked on sugar plantations. Each was assigned to a plantation for three years, after which they could re-sign with a plantation or small farm, or go home. Most decided to return after three or six years, but many (for various reasons) stayed, and built lives for themselves in Queensland.
Plantation work was very physical. The division of labour was generally based on race, with "kanaka labour" being reserved for Islanders, generally the most physical unskilled work like land clearance, planting and cutting cane. The days were long and work performance was closely monitored by overseers and drivers (Moore 1985, Saunders 1982 and Graves 1993 provide excellent overviews of material life on the plantations).

Accommodation and food on plantations were highly variable from place to place. Some planters took their responsibilities seriously and provided plentiful food and good accommodation. Others provided a bare minimum of rations and left the labourers to construct their own houses. It is somewhat ironic, then, that the Islanders themselves chose to grow their own food, and construct their own grass huts, primarily out of preference (see Moore 1985).

As the sugar industry developed, into the 1890s, conditions gradually improved for the Islanders. Plantations became increasingly obsolete, being replaced by a system of large central mills being supplied by small farms around the district (see Griggs 1997).

"Time expired" workers were Islanders who had completed a three year contract and were then able to negotiate their terms of service with their new employers. This usually meant better wages and shorter terms of service, because of their reputation as quality labourers (Shlomowitz 1985). Many became accustomed to the Queensland lifestyle and began building lives for themselves around the sugar districts. At the same time, however, there were agitations in the wider community to eradicate their presence.

The Queensland government had attempted several times to cease the importation of Islanders, ultimately relenting under pressure from sugar producers. After Federation, however, the decision was taken out of their hands and, under the White Australia policy, the Islanders were deported. After much agitation the deportation order was relaxed slightly, and some were allowed to stay, mostly those who had been in Australia for 20 years or more. In 1908 the deportations were enforced and all were sent back, excepting around 1000, and another 1000 who Moore (1985) estimates absconded and stayed illegally.

Amid union policies preventing Islanders from becoming ticket-holders, and the arrival (from the 1890s) of Italian and Maltese labourers, the Australian sugar industry was soon proclaiming itself a "whites only" enterprise, and the South Sea Islanders were quickly forgotten. Unable to work in the sugar industry, and squeezed out by other professions, Islander families survived using the technologies taught to them in their island homes to build houses and plant gardens. They survived on subsistence agriculture and earned what money they could doing odd jobs and cutting cane illegally (see Mercer 1995, Fatnowna 1989). Unwanted and unrecognised by the Australian government, they established families and settlements, and most importantly, they survived.

The cultural landscapes of the South Sea Islanders

This contextual history was designed to provide a backdrop for our understanding of the ways in which the Australian South Sea Islanders have impacted on and shaped the Queensland landscape, particularly in the 1863-1940 period. There are many (such as Balanzategui 1995) who have suggested that all traces of those first Islanders have long since disappeared. Much to the contrary, however, the traces *are* there, but they are probably much more noticeable when one examines the historic landscape in an informed manner.
The remainder of this paper will address the different types of signatures that South Sea Islanders have left on the cultural landscape, based on information derived from history, photographs, oral history and archaeological research conducted on sugar plantations in north Queensland (Hayes forthcoming).

Wreck sites: blackbirding ships

While the definition of cultural landscape might be stretched somewhat by the inclusion of the reefs and waters off the Queensland coast, the sheer number of shipwrecks surrounding the Great Barrier Reef begs consideration. The discovery of the *Foam* on Myrmidon Reef near Townsville demonstrates the value of wrecked recruiting ships to our understanding of the Islanders' experience in Queensland. Loaded with returning labourers and their trade goods, the *Foam* provides insight into various aspects of recruitment and the types of cultural materials that were preferred by the Islanders (Gesner 1991). As Gesner (1991) suggests, a significant number of recruiting ships, some of them blackbirders, were wrecked out there somewhere, up to half a dozen of them just off the Queensland coast. In this respect, then, the experience of the South Sea Islanders is not only part of our cultural landscape, it is also submerged on our reefs and in our waters.

Conceivably, this significance also extends to the docks and wharves of Queensland ports like Townsville, Maryborough, Mackay and Lucinda: the places where thousands of new Islander recruits were landed, examined and assigned to employers. The docks at Cairns are also significant to the Islanders, being the location of traumatic deportations in 1908.

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Plantation sites

There were over 150 operational sugar plantations in Queensland at various times between 1863 and 1900. Each plantation held great tracts of land – somewhere between 1500-6000 acres – of which between 10% and 50% was under cultivation at any given time. Almost without exception each plantation had its own sugar mill, giant (although not by today's standards) brick and iron industrial structures with towering chimneys.

Sugar plantations had a major impact on Queensland's environment in the 19th Century. In many areas, the establishment of a plantation was the first significant permanent European presence. Especially in northern Queensland, the plantation districts were frontiers.

For plantation production, large-scale clearance, often thousands of acres, effected by Pacific Islanders. Cane fields were planted, tended and harvested by Islanders. In fact, much of the land that is today used by cane farmers was initially cleared by Islanders.

The physical remnants of the 19th Century sugar industry are rapidly disappearing. New lands are needed for cultivation, and so much of the industry's heritage is being ploughed out or cleared. What does remain, on first appearances, is that which is not easily cleared: mill sites, with their heavy concrete and brick foundations, and other more formal structures. While South Sea Islanders, by the very nature of their employment, may claim such remnants as their heritage, there are other, more subtle, traces of their contributions to the plantation landscape to be found.

While formal barracks and houses were provided for the Islanders on the plantations, they were generally detested, and many chose to construct their own houses, with which they were more familiar and comfortable. These houses were timber framed, and usually thatched with panels of loya cane, blady grass and sago palm (see Downes 1993), comprising a variety of styles, derived from all over Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. Due to the perishable nature of the building materials and the decaying effects of tropical weather, none of these structures are expected to have survived. Using archaeological techniques, however, it may be possible to detect the presence of these structures and reconstruct, to some extent, the type of existence that was lived inside them. Evidence of grass houses was found recently at the site of Seaforth plantation, near Ayr, in the form of artifact encrusted earth mounds, possibly created by the gradual decomposition of the huts (Hayes forthcoming).

Another noticeable trace left by Islanders on the plantations is from the plants that they cultivated. While the diet provided by planters could be good or bad, depending on the plantation, most Islanders detested the overemphasis on meat and bread, preferring instead their own tubers (taro and yam) and fruit, with small amounts of protein. In response, they planted their own gardens, using species in Australia that were familiar to them and importing those they could not get (see Moore 1985). Planters were usually happy to allow them to use plantation land for their gardens, and many also planted fruit trees and food and medicinal plants around their houses. While many of these gardens have now disappeared and are most likely under cane, there are traces of them that can still be found on old plantation lands, usually in the form of wild remnants and surviving mango, guava and coconut trees. The most common place to find these is adjacent to rivers, creeks and swamps, where the water intensive taro was usually grown. Remnant trees are also common in and around the sites of old habitation or barracks sites on the plantation lands.

Similar evidence of Islander activities should also be found on the sites of 19th century farms.

Dwelling sites (pre/post 1900)

In the 19th Century a majority of Islanders were provided accommodation or accommodation space on the plantations where they worked. For workers who became free of any direct obligations to particular employers, the option to build one's dwelling elsewhere was often popular. Despite the growing wealth in some sectors of the Islander population, however, they were legally prevented from obtaining freehold land, and were forced to squat on crown or private lands.

After the deportations, the Islanders allowed to stay were left with no employment and no ready place of accommodation. Many benefited from the benevolence of landowners sympathetic to their cause, who allowed them to establish homes on their lands rent-free. Others were forced to create homes and settlements in the bush, down by the creeks, gullies and swamps surrounding Queensland sugar towns. With little income and little aid from the mainstream community, homes and settlements were created with whatever materials, innovations and traditional knowledge the Islanders could muster.

They established houses and gardens in these anonymous parts of the Queensland environment and many of them stayed in such circumstances until the 1940s and later. In many districts, large groups of Islanders, usually sharing common ethnicity or kinship, gathered and established settlements, such as those at "The Gardens" in Halifax, and on Plantation Creek in Ayr (Mercer 1995).

The remains of these settlements are still evident in many places. Islander habitation sites are generally simple to recognise, by their choice of location (near creeks, swamps) and the vegetation that surrounds them. The remnant gardens are especially diagnostic of Melanesian presence, which will be discussed below. Dwelling sites may also contain significant archaeological remains both above and below the surface.

Gardens

In Melanesia, gardening is traditionally of paramount importance: it is more than a question of subsistence, it is a mark of cultural existence. For Melanesian Australians, too, gardening was as much about cultural survival as physical survival (Hayes forthcoming). Noah Sabbo, an elder of the Islander community in Mackay summarised the situation in a recent documentary:

> Being agricultural people, those Kanakas... they tried to revive it over here, working in the soil, planting the gardens, and it doesn't become old with them, you know, it doesn't become old hat with them – every day they were there. The Kanakas they lived well along here [the creeks and gullies], they could fish in this creek here and [had] two large fig trees here. And they had coconut trees too, along here, so it reminded them of where they came from, the habitat, and this is why they liked to come here, you know.

(Noah Sabbo, in Sugar Slaves, Film Australia 1995).

In their gardens were a great variety of fruits, vegetables, legumes and herbs, most of which were tried and tested Melanesian staples. Some, however, they acquired knowledge of from Aborigines, while they had gained a taste for others from Europeans. The most important elements of the Islanders' food plant roster were the starchy tubers: yam and taro. Preference for one over the other of these depended greatly on the individual's island of origin. In addition to yam and taro, food plants like cassava, sweet potato, coconut, banana, guava and mango were grown. Medicinal and ritual plants were also essential components of the garden (Mercer and Moore 1976).

Mango trees in particular were an important species for Australian South Sea Islanders,

despite their relative insignificance in traditional Melanesian agriculture. If it were possible to pinpoint one specific landscape element that is definitive of the Australian South Sea Islanders in north Queensland it would be the mango tree. South Sea Islander habitation sites, with very few exceptions, all have very strong spatial relationships with deliberately planted mango trees. The oral testimony of Islander descendants often emphasises the importance of these relationships. Fatnowna (1989:110), for example, wistfully recalls how the first thing his father did when establishing their family home was to plant a mango tree. Certainly, while the integrity of garden remnants can often be lost over time, mango trees (and to a lesser extent figs and coconuts) are obvious and very durable reminders of the past presence and activities of an Australian South Sea Islander family.

Burials and cemeteries

The disposal of the dead in the Australian South Sea Islander community, as it is in traditional Melanesian societies, is an intensely personal and private business. Many of those who died on plantations and farms presumably lie buried anonymously beneath the canefields or deep in the bush. Traditional burial practices in Melanesia vary greatly, and it would be difficult to characterise these, especially in relation to the Australian Islanders. Many today still know the location of their ancestors' burials, and that many of them were buried in traditional ways. Substantial research, conducted with considerable sensitivity, would be needed for a greater understanding of these matters.

While many were buried anonymously during the plantation period, towards the end of the 19th Century they were buried more in formal cemeteries, either the plantation's own or the town cemetery. Most, however, were buried in the heathen section, even though by this time many had become Christians. These cemeteries are, today, a focus for South Sea Islanders' recognition of their ancestors. One community in Bundaberg is undertaking a cemetery restoration project there, attempting to create an appropriate memorial to their forebears (Sugar Slaves, Film Australia 1995).

Large scale landscape features

A number of larger historic features on the Queensland landscape are the result of work carried out by South Sea Islanders last Century. One such feature is the Sugar Wagon Trail at Yeppoon, near Rockhampton. The trail is part of a stone-pitched road created by Islanders for the Farnborough sugar plantation, to allow wagons to carry sugar to the coast for export. Originally over 40km, the trail today consists of just over 1km, but represents a substantial achievement by the Islander workforce. It is also an important focus for remembrance, because a number of people died in the course of its construction. A similar track can be found at Habana, near Mackay.

Another significant landscape feature is the stone walling which, although once quite common, is becoming increasingly rare due to destruction. Stone walls can be found in the Bundaberg, Maryborough and Mackay districts, where natural stone littered the pre-European landscape. When plantations were first established, Islanders were set to work clearing the land of stones, which they transformed into terraces and boundary walls. One such wall, at Mon Repos in Bundaberg, is in the Register of the National Estate. Many others, however, are increasingly under threat from cane farmers wishing to increase their cultivation space.

Sacred/ceremonial places

Like traditional burials, the presence of South Sea Islander ceremonial places is uncertain. Mercer and Moore (1976) studied the retention of traditional magico-religious practices among the community and came up with some significant results. One of the most profound

of their discoveries was the presence of at least two *Tarunga* huts or *Haus Tamarans* in the Mackay district. These huts were the venue for many of the traditional ritual practices of the Islander community. While the location of such huts is kept secret, it is not known if any such huts (including any outside the Mackay district) are still in existence or use. It is likely that they were once quite common, and may have been significant components of the Islanders' cultural landscape.

Myth/folklore sites

It is known, from the oral testimony of Islander descendants, that, despite living in Australia and many of them adopting Christianity, ritual practices and mythological beliefs were frequently maintained. In traditional Melanesian folklore, the activities of ancestral spirits, ghosts and tricksters play a significant role in restricting and informing human behaviour. Places become attributed to specific spirits, bringing warnings to the living from the dead, and these places become regarded by the community places as *tambu* or forbidden. One such place is a large fig tree that overhangs the road from Mackay to Habana. Fatnowna (1989) tells the story of this tree, commonly known as the Devil tree, and his excruciating fear of it as a child. It is likely that many such places exist in the folklore of the Islanders. These may become more evident as the contemporary South Sea Islander community becomes better understood.

While the list of site types I have discussed above cannot be exhaustive, it does provide a solid foundation for a characterisation and a general understanding of the cultural landscape of the Australian South Sea Islanders. In many ways it is a discrete landscape, which might easily be overlooked if one was not deliberately searching for it. With a degree of informed insight, however, a landscape is revealed that tells the story of a community that is (and has been) at once marginal and thriving. While the Islanders have not stamped their presence on the landscape with massive structures and large-scale manipulation of the environment, there is nonetheless quite a unique and distinctive character in the way that they have used the world around them for the means of both physical and cultural survival.

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