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ABORIGINALITY: THE AFFIRMATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

IN SETTLED AUSTRALIA

by

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A thesis submitted in accordance with the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
of the Australian National University, March 1984.

All information presented in this thesis is
derived from my own research unless otherwise
stipulated and listed at the end of the work.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Julie Carter".

Julie D. CARTER

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Robert Parsons. 1983. Mogo.



The late Mrs Emily Brain (nee Stewart), Mrs Val Hinton (nee
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Mrs Murray (nee Bamblett), Mr Kevin Smith, Mrs Lisa Smith, Mrs Pat Smith (nee Walker), Mrs Ruth Walker, Mr Alf Penrith. December 1982. Mogo.



Messrs Chapman, Mrs Rita Hanson (nee Chapman), Mrs Ruth Walker. 1982. Cobargo.



View of residential area of Mogo; NSW South Coast, 1982.



Mogo Aboriginal Housing Company homes. Gemma Smith in foreground.
1982.

Abstract

Aboriginal identity in settled Australia has been a largely neglected area of research. This neglect in interest and attention is partly the consequence of entrenched administrative and public views of Aborigines as 'acculturated' people dispossessed (through historical circumstances) of their cultural identity. Few enquiries have been made as to whether this is, in fact, an accurate assessment. Nor has the assumption that cultural identity is distinguished primarily by definitive signifiers, such as language, religion and social organisation, been challenged.

This thesis examines the nature of Aboriginal cultural identity arguing that there is evidence for cultural discreteness - Aboriginality - despite some problematic entailments in Aboriginal social identity.

The dilemmas of Aboriginal social identity begin with socialization. Children internalize their Aboriginal world in the context of socialization with a discrete Aboriginal context and amongst close kin. The harmony of this world is disrupted during secondary socialization when the Australian community's general devaluing of Aboriginality is evident. Coping with such disjunctions inclines people to believe and uphold an identity synonymous with an ideology of Aboriginality. But simultaneously, the conditions of Aboriginality foster other problems of identity. With significant kin obligations and relationships as the principal influences of social life, people constantly face difficulties of self/other differentiation and problems of marking off private space, thought and desire from the public, communal and kinship realm.

Acknowledgements

In a footnote Hebdige (1979; footnote 8:167-168) quotes Susan Sontag's summation of the anthropologist's 'dis-ease', "... he can never feel himself 'at home' anywhere; he will always be, psychologically speaking, an amputee ...". There is more than a grain of truth to this. However, there are a number of people in Mogo who, with certain perspicacity, understood this and sought to help me feel 'at home'. I think especially of my principal friend and teacher Mrs Ruth Walker. She and her family welcomed me into their home and in spite of some of the misgivings from others about my presence in Mogo, were always staunch supporters. 'Nan' guided my learnings in Aboriginal ways; teaching by example the appropriate behavioural and speech forms I could imitate. Her patronage and support ensured entrée into the wider Mogo social world.

I thank Sharon Smith, her granddaughter, for hospitality and a willingness to share her experiences of the difficulties of being proudly Aboriginal yet determined to develop her full potential through opportunities in European society.

I came to know most people in Mogo and enjoyed their companionship in the daily pattern of living. Mr Alf 'Pop' Penrith acted as a grandfather to me and talked of his experiences working seasonally and caring for a family across Victoria and New South Wales. June Walker shared her room with me, and her daughter Ruth and granddaughter Maureen showed me the pleasures and pains of 'rearing up' children. Lisa Smith and I shared companionship through mutual interests. The Hintons, in Blacktown, are favourite cousins of my adopted household and I was equally privileged to know them.

Our household was always awakened by one of Nan's great-grandchildren coming in to see her; I think particularly of Gemma and Mundara. Living in other communities teaches not only

about cultural diversity, but also the richness of human experience. In Mogo, children, as well as adults, enriched my understanding.

The return from one culture and the participation in another is not without adjustment. I thank Dr Nicolas Peterson, my supervisor, for his constant encouragement and support during the process of abstracting the social principles behind the lived experience. He was always a ready listener, just critic, and source of scholarly advice.

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Introduction

In a provocative article challenging both the views of academics and of the Australian public toward urban Aborigines, Langton (1981:16) stated that "... Many Aboriginal people living in the urban centres have refuted the logic of the terminology that has been foisted upon us by successive pieces of legislation, and now by the social scientists; 'half caste', 'coloured', 'part-Aboriginal', 'detribalized', 'remnant' and so on. We have rejected the notion that we are assimilating into the European population and adopting white life styles. We are exploring our own Aboriginality and are finding that the white social scientists cannot accept our own view of ourselves ...". Chase (1981) has added another voice calling for re-evaluation of Aboriginality in settled Australia. Certainly amongst the Australian public it is commonplace to deny a legitimate cultural heritage to these people. The public dismissal of an Aboriginal heritage is partly the outcome of circumstances. Repressive historical legislation and assimilationist policies have hindered the possibilities for cultural maintenance amongst many southern Aborigines and inclined others to mystify their Aboriginality reinforcing the public's perceptions of Aboriginal life-style as little different from that of poor whites. But if that is an accurate picture of the way many Europeans view Aboriginal people in settled Australia, is it an accurate reflection of how Aboriginal people see themselves and would it stand up in the light of a more intimate experience of the everyday life of these people?

It was this interest which took me to Mogo; a small rural community of about 150 Aboriginal people - and a smattering of Europeans - on the New South Wales coast. I knew from some previous work (unpublished notes of Margaret Rees) that Mogo seemed an appropriate place to investigate these questions. Rees' notes had already highlighted how separately Aborigines and Europeans co-existed in Mogo. Indeed Mogo seemed to be an Aboriginal community with a distinct physical identity of long-standing in the heart of settled Australia. Her notes also

mentioned comments from Mogo people about 'bonds between Aborigines' and cultural practices which were 'in the blood'. From these tantalizing remarks it seemed likely that the established standing Mogo enjoyed as an Aboriginal community surrounded by Europeans might provide the context for investigating questions of how Aborigines present their identity in settled Australia. As I later discovered, Keith Smith a member of the Smith-Walker family in Mogo, when interviewed by Kevin Gilbert (1977:186-194) spoke of how highly valued Aboriginality was in the town. Smith had been active in the political developments of the early 1970s surrounding the push for the recognition of land rights. As representative on the National Aboriginal Congress he had enlisted government support for a grass-roots housing company in Mogo.

Smith's mother was a Nye - another Aboriginal family with established connections along the south coast and who today is represented by the third generation of Nye fishermen in Mogo. It was only after tracing the family trees of Mogo people that I learned that intermarriage spanning several generations was common. Smith's remarks and Rees' notes were clues to the kind of Aboriginal identity I might find in Mogo.

In the beginning I lived outside the community but visited it daily in order to make contact with different people to whom I had a letter of introduction from Margaret Rees. I explained that I was a student in Aboriginal studies and wished to learn more about how Aboriginal people lived, but especially that I wanted to learn something of what it was to be Aboriginal on the New South Wales coast. Since this was hardly the kind of learning offered in textbooks, I felt living with and getting to know people was more likely to achieve this.

People were friendly, but guarded. As I showed that I too was not adverse to a port and that I - contrary to their general impression of Europeans - could swear as proficiently as they, I was accepted as one who could 'mix it with them'. However, not everybody accepted my presence without suspicion. At one stage I was accused of being a government intelligence agent and grilled

about the kind of interest I had in Mogo. Partly this fear of governmental manipulation related to the involvement of some of the community in the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972 and their general political activism for Aboriginal causes.

Fortunately my friends took my side in denying these accusations and insisting that I remain in Mogo as their friend. There was also suspicion caused by being female and single. The women of the community had recently seen the marital damage done by a young single white girl living at that time in Mogo and enjoying some reputation amongst the men.

Because of such misgivings I tried to present a very personal profile rather than that of the questioning, note-taking anthropologist. Instead, I wrote letters for people; made beds; cooked the evening meals; and my car was so much a part of everyday shopping and travelling expeditions it was known as 'the taxi'. My note-taking was more a solitary than public activity. I limited the bulk of my social interaction to the women. Rather than asking direct questions of people, I tended to sit quietly listening to the talk of events and topics in which they were especially interested. Often my own curiosity to know more was assuaged by the questions someone else in the group directed to the speaker. Indeed, I saw early the importance of what Eades (1982) argues - the social context of information seeking in Aboriginal communities. Information is largely a concomitant of participation; it is contextually bound, embedded in real-life situations and draws upon observation and imitation as the method of acquiring and communicating information. This is in direct contrast to middle-class Australian styles of direct questioning and attendant assumptions about access to knowledge; being a quiet listener was often the best way to gather knowledge.

After the first month of commuting to Mogo from a nearby town and knowing I was seeking alternative accommodation, one of the younger women of the Smith-Walker family with whom I spent most time, offered me digs. I shared her household - along with her two daughters (aged 18 mths and 8 years) and her younger teenage brother - for three months. Various close kin joined the household

as temporary guests. I enjoyed the luxury of my own room in this crowded household. For the following four months I lived in the home of this woman's grandmother and my principal teacher. I had first met this woman, Mrs Ruth Walker, when she was introduced to me as the oldest member of the community and the one most likely to know everything I needed to know; beginning, of course, with the families' histories. Mrs Walker, 'Nan', was indeed a wonderful, intelligent and witty teacher. She taught me much about Aboriginality, as did the rest of her family, but she also had an equally wide experience of human nature from which she drew.

7 Living and participating as a member of Mogo's Aboriginal community certainly helped me discover the content and style of Aboriginality, but it also involved me in an experiential process I consider as much a part of the appreciation of understanding - in the hermeneutic sense - of learning about Aboriginality. The bulk of each day was taken up with the details of daily life and the consequent cycle of boredom and excitement, harmony and conflict. Although the closest I came to enjoying a kin appellation was 'adopted daughter', people nevertheless tended to mark me as one of them when talking about 'gubbas' (Europeans). My sense of inclusion in their community was signified by peoples' ability to swear in front of me, not to mention their inclusion of me in their cycle of joking stories. My methodology was thus, decidedly personal and by sharing in the experiential dimension of Aboriginality in Mogo I hoped to "... recognize the embodiedness of our Being-in-the-World ..." as the discovery of a "... common ground where self and other are one ..." (Jackson 1983:340).

Reading the history of Aboriginal people through biographies makes plain how much their involvement in wider Australia has been circumscribed. In turn, the signs and meanings by which they interpret their social reality suggest quite distinctive experiences and world views. The symbols encoded in their Aboriginality and shaping their identity are integral to their experience of the world. I have tried to locate such symbols by participating in and observing the everyday life of Mogo. It is the situational contexts of their experience which help to

ground the interpretation and meanings. In the first chapter I discuss the theoretical background to studies about Aborigines in settled Australia. The sociological nature of Mogo as an Aboriginal community, and in particular the discreteness of it as a 'closed' group is described in Chapter 2. Both chapters introduce, by way of background material and historical understanding, the basis for the subsequent exegesis of identity in Mogo. Socialization is a crucial context in the culling and selection of values a society considers sufficiently important for perpetuation. Chapter 3 outlines the socialization process in Mogo while making the point that, following Berger and Luckmann (1971), there are two stages in socialization. Primary socialization is the initial context of identity formation where significant others mediate and modify the social world for the child. It is a process whereby the child identifies emotionally with significant others internalizing their roles and attitudes. Ideally, the basic structure of secondary socialization merely elaborates upon the primary process; only the internalization of "institution-based sub-worlds" (Berger and Luckmann 1971:158) is effected. Most especially it involves knowledge of role-specific understanding. The transition is not accomplished smoothly in Mogo.

Part of the problem of socialization is best illustrated by Keith Smith's comments to Kevin Gilbert about the experience of being black in a European school.

"We all went to Bankstown High and that's where the problem really started because we used to get all sorts of shit thrown at us, black bastards, niggers, you name it ... We were always brought up to be strong-willed, brought up to respect the fact that we were Aboriginal people. When you've got 13 or 14 White kids all around you and calling you a black nigger you learn to fight and if you can't fight you soon learn because you get sick and tired of getting black eyes and a busted nose. Nobody likes a black. This has been proved to us for decades, for 200 years. It gets proven to us everyday, in one way or another, that we're not wanted.

KEVIN: What happens in cases (and I know lots of them and so do you) where the Aboriginal kid hasn't got that identification with the tribal thing?

KEITH: Well, he's confused. He doesn't know who he is or what he is or where he comes from ..."

(Gilbert 1977:187-188).

The 'closed' nature of the community is an ideal environment for raising children to understand themselves and identify as Aboriginal. However, the positive internalizations are undermined in secondary socialization when the child has extensive contact with the structure and roles common to wider Australian society. One of the significant features of this enlightenment is how devalued Aboriginality is in Australian society generally. The resulting emotional and intellectual confusion is what I term 'cognitive dissonance'. I suggest that the slippage between the two internalization processes leads to ambiguity and ambivalence in adult perceptions of themselves and in their valuing of themselves. There are, however, strategies developed within the community for coping with this. An ideology of normative Aboriginal behaviour is often sought to gloss discrepant actions. Moreover, the manipulation of knowledge by the dialectical interaction of truth/fiction and fantasy is also employed. The role of cognitive dissonance during socializing in some other cultures provides comparative material in this chapter.

Finally, Chapter 4 deals with sexuality and interpersonal relations. There are two aspects to this discussion. Firstly, a number of ethnographic situations serve to show some of the character of Aboriginal sexuality and male-female interactions. These are drawn especially from socialization where the refinement of significant community values is marked. What I hope to suggest in the description is the importance of seeing bodily praxis in 'traditions' of appropriate gender interaction as sufficient in itself as demonstrated social knowledge. As Jackson (1983:337) says of Kuranko initiation in Sierra Leone "... What is done with the body is the ground of what is thought and said. From an existential point of view we could say that the bodily practices mediate a personal realization of social values, an immediate grasp of general precepts as sensible truths. Such a view is consistent with the tendency to effect understanding through bodily techniques, to proceed through bodily awareness to verbal skills and ethical views ...".

In the second half of the chapter I draw from Jackson's (1983) concept of bodily praxis, Haviland's (1977) notion of the power of talk and Myers' (1979) concept of Aboriginal selfhood to explore a central dilemma of identity in Mogo. This is the problem of self/other differentiation as expressed by conflicts in resolving the opposing public demands of private dimensions of space, knowledge and sense of self. The conditions nurturing such ambiguity are those of kinship and are embedded in the fabric of Mogo as an Aboriginal community.

Chapter 5 concludes the thesis by drawing together the principal threads of discussion.

CHAPTER 1Theory in Studies of Aborigines in Settled Australia

Until recently theoretical development in studies of southern Aboriginal communities foundered on problems associated with the definition of cultural discreteness. By the end of the nineteenth century most of the anthropological studies of remnant traditional life in southern Australia were documenting memories of a previous period and milieu of Aboriginal practises (see Howitt 1904; Curr 1886-7; Dawson 1881; etc.). Thereafter it seemed that southern Aborigines were in a period of transition and were increasingly culturally impoverished by the experience.

The basic difficulty has been one of category and description. How are we to understand southern Australian Aborigines and what description of their socio-cultural lifestyle most closely approximates their position in wider Australian society? Both questions have become increasingly relevant through the emergence of a political consciousness amongst Australian urban Blacks and their subsequent search for an Aboriginal identity. The nature of this consciousness - heightened initially by Federal Labor Government recognition of their social and political demands - ranges from a pan-Aboriginality based on belief in the commonality of Aboriginal experience, to a radical political agitation for separatism. It was such political factors, events and developments amongst southern Aborigines which challenged the previous scholarly assumptions about their identity.

In this chapter I want to review the major theories used to describe and analyse Aboriginal communities in settled Australia. In part this includes a historical review of the dominant models for understanding such communities as enclaves, and later as units within the context of Australian society. However, the basic limitation of such approaches is their lack of emphasis on Aboriginality as a social reality experienced by social actors. The literature about Aboriginal communities in settled Australia is marked by discrepant opinions concerning the constituent factors of Aboriginality and of life in an Aboriginal community.

In approaching the analysis of my ethnographic data, phenomenology (as the subjective interpretation of social experience) suggested avenues for investigating how members of Mogo society experienced Aboriginality and what they considered its essential elements. One way of eliciting this was watching how adults encouraged the attachment of particular kinds of meanings to the child's experience of interaction with the social world; this involved equally the community's consensual, commonsense understandings of everyday existence. The value of this kind of interpretation is the approximation of the actor's perceptions of his social experiences. Schutz (1972) explained the phenomenological attitude as a cognitive device as much as a pre-reflective faculty: elsewhere it is taken as "the particular experiential form in which common sense thinking takes cognizance of the social cultural world" (Dallymayr and McCarthy 1977:220).

Phenomenological perspectives concentrated on the emic interpretation otherwise neglected in previous models. Moreover, what Aborigines understood by their Aboriginality and how this knowledge impinged upon and shaped their daily existence was now definable as a cultural system.

To some extent phenomenology is an umbrella term. Allied approaches equally instructive were the works of Goffman (1975; 1978; 1979) and Harré (1972; 1979). Both writers have an interest in the expressive and practical orders of social life. Further, Goffman considers social life to be an interactional process - a dramaturgy - which is mutually constitutive between those involved. The basis of these ideas is a concept of a social identity going beyond the determinants of the individual's biological and historical biography. Instead the concept centres on the social actor within a social context, impinged upon by his own and others' interpretation of selfhood. (See Mischel 1977; Douglas 1974; Hallowell 1971; Harré and Secord 1972; Hooks 1979; Kapferer 1976; Beattie and Lienhart 1975; Levy 1973.)

Goffman initiated this perspective by describing interpersonal relations in terms of 'theatrical' performances and impression management; the dramaturgy. Harré extended some of Goffman's ideas in order to overcome the latter's absence of systematic principles for understanding social change. The following quote from Harré (1979:4) illustrates the merging of Goffman's ideas with Harré's improvements. It points out the assumptions of 'social psychology'. "... At the heart of the system of concepts ... is the idea that the public and collective aspects of human life are to be treated as products generated by an interplay between a practical order, concerned with the production of the means of life, and an expressive order concerned with honour and reputation. Both orders are based in but not exhausted by personal and individual competences and beliefs ...". The basic difference between psychological ideas of identity and social ideas of identity is the emphasis in the latter on the dramaturgical quality of the relationship between the individual/group and their environment.

Efforts to elicit group meanings through emic perceptions should enhance understanding of the distinctive cultural expression of Aborigines in settled Australia. Such emphasis marks a retreat from sociological models. Moreover it is an opportunity for describing the southern Aboriginal world as an integrated socio-cultural system in contrast to general non-Aboriginal belief in its impoverishment. As McKeich expresses it (McKeich 1977:262), "... A part-Aboriginal world view is composed of a totality of features forming an integrated whole. The fact that a non-part-Aboriginal world impinges into or is imposed upon it does not diminish the validity of the claims made here. Two important issues are raised. First, in simple terms, a part-Aboriginal world view is both a creative internal socio-cultural system, and a response to external influences such as the informal and institutional impact of the 'outside world'. Second, the 'outside world' has its own interpretation of itself; it has its own body of knowledge, and it embraces its own reality, imparting symbolic meanings in its own terms. Part-Aborigines interpret the 'outside world' in different terms; 'outside' objects, behaviours, situations, ideologies and the like, carry different symbolic meanings for them ...".

Language is an essential aspect of the phenomenological description of the Aboriginal world and I shall argue for the mediation of kin reciprocity and responsibility by way of symbolic approbation in language. "... Language not only objectivates their world, filling it with meaningful objects, it also serves as an index of subjective meaning; furthermore, it enables part-Aborigines to live in a 'common world' as they communicate with one another. Language, here, includes verbal symbols as well as gesticulations, bodily attitudes and movements, clothing, badges, social situations - in fact, everything which is given symbolic meaning within part-Aboriginal society ..." (McKeich 1977:255).

However, there are some qualifications to phenomenological sociology and ethnomethodology in anthropology. The possibility of over-representation is an implicit danger. It usually involves the reification of an individual's subjective meanings. Additionally, there is the matter of establishing the nature of the relationship between ego and external reality. Moreover, individual perceptions of social reality are sometimes a combination of subjectivity and illusion and can be misleading. Finally, critics have occasionally tagged phenomenological approaches as 'psychologism'. Certainly these are pitfalls to be aware of, but they do not necessarily negate the gains.

Like phenomenology, hermeneutics is similarly concerned with interpretation and understanding. It addresses the ethnographic problems of locating the shared cultural meanings in both intersubjective understanding and in praxis. Moreover, hermeneutics acknowledges the role of interpreter and the implications of participant-observation for eliciting the meanings by which people make sense of their social life. Successful hermeneutic understanding relies upon sufficient contextual consistency to prove generalizations. But one of the problems with this is that everyday reasoning often rests "... on tacit understandings that are only made explicit in problematic cases, and that the interpreter must have the capability to treat utterances as an 'index of a general pattern' ..." (Agar 1980:263). Valid interpretation is just as much a problem in hermeneutic methodology as it is with phenomenology.

There are three particular issues of hermeneutic validation; scope of circle, properties of the studied group, issue of validation (when have we got it right?) (Agar 1980:267). Hermeneutics in anthropology has more value if its use is clarified. Are the principles a guide to ethnographic work, or is hermeneutics the avenue to illumination of the properties of the hermeneutic circle of the group with whom the ethnographer works?

Despite the need for careful use of phenomenological approaches there are a number of advantages, apart from general representation of emic social reality. For one, interpretation emphasizes the correspondence between symbol and praxis, or between mind and body. The 'text' in hermeneutic and phenomenological anthropology is embodied, situated and constituted by words and deeds. Indeed, the interpretation denies the necessity for accepting reductionist or intellectualist theories of practical activities. In order to understand everyday life in Mogo these perspectives are incorporated in this ethnography. Phenomenological models encourage description of commonsense meanings and everyday idioms shaping the cultural system and the articulation of this with the community's world-view. Generally phenomenological anthropology has made little impact in studies of Aboriginal communities. This is accounted for partly by the fact that early theorizing was a response to difficulties in administrative policies for 'dealing' with displaced southern Aborigines.

Between the 1930s and 1960s, models of society were circumscribed by concepts which minimized social adaptation and change. Moreover, the prevailing climate of social and political opinion in wider Australian society regarded southern Aborigines as detribalized people moving inexorably toward assimilation. Consequently, of the Aboriginal communities surveyed in central and northern New South Wales by Reay (amongst others, Reay and Stilington 1948; Reay 1949; Fink 1957; etc.), certain features of their social orientation and values were recognized as sufficiently 'traditional' to impede their assimilation.

However, by the mid-1960s, theoretical interests were expanding. To begin with, assimilationist ideas of change and adaptation were proving theoretically bankrupt. Reay (1964:XV) summarized the criticisms in the preface to a collection of papers she edited by young anthropologists whose acquaintance with Aborigines did not predate 1950, "... no one was asking the Australian aborigine to determine his own future. Many of the younger anthropologists were questioning, in conversation, the ethical basis of the assimilation policy, and some were asserting that a policy change was needed. I judged that the time had come to re-examine that policy, so I asked the authors of these essays to write something relevant to 'assimilation' and its implications for the aborigines ...".

However, while this kind of research responded to the need for re-examining assimilationist policies, it consequently encouraged views of Aboriginal communities as perversely and disadvantageously adhering to remnant cultural values. Chase (1981:25) summarized the negative implications, "... Aboriginality in European eyes is reduced to the immediately observable and the primitive. Where manifest Aboriginality in these terms does not exist, the people are perceived as empty vessels, drained of their content by European contact, and capable only of echoing the loud noises from European society ...".

Assimilation policies mislead anthropologists grappling with theoretical notions of cultural identity and the relationship between Aboriginal communities and wider society. The development of adequate theoretical models to comprehensively understand Aboriginal communities was unlikely until researchers accepted Aboriginality as a cultural concept. For some time the legacy of assimilation policies made this impossible, presuming, as it did, a negative attitude toward both the cultural content or continuity of Aboriginal ways.

Moreover, the concept of 'Aboriginality' (see von Sturmer 1973:16ff) had a history of its own. "... Aboriginality is a fiction which takes on meaning only in terms of white

ethnocentrism. It rests on the belief that there are obvious cultural generalities operating over the whole of Aboriginal Australia ..." (von Sturmer 1973:16). Von Sturmer argued against the value of such a gloss on the distinctiveness of Aboriginal cultures by substitution of a pan-Australia Aboriginality. Not only was the concept of pan-Aboriginality an over-generalization, it also encouraged an essentialist view. Aboriginality was assumed to epitomize qualities (e.g. telepathy, tracking prowess, closeness to nature, etc.), "... transmitted genetically or 'through the blood' ..." (von Sturmer 1973:19). Von Sturmer's criticisms were largely addressed to the kinds of models of Aboriginal culture then current in government circles where policies were made to deal with 'Aboriginal problems'. He attacked particularly the development models as popular panaceas for cultural problem solving. Overall von Sturmer was asserting the cultural diversification of Aboriginal society against the then popular belief in the homogeneity of Aboriginality. (Latterly, militant urban Aborigines are re-asserting a pan-Australian Aboriginal identity as part of a Black consciousness uniting disparate Aboriginal groups. However the constitutive elements of this all-embracing identity are less easily pin-pointed.)

In the same volume of papers, Tugby (1973:1-7) saw Aboriginality as constituted by an interactional process between Aborigines and Europeans; what he termed a 'looking glass'. In fact, there is no two-way reflective process involved. Tugby claimed "... A willingness to look longer in the mirror begins with a sense of inadequacy vis-a-vis the others 'in the land'. This feeling of inadequacy is more common among Aborigines. The willingness to accept the reflected image increases with the decline of cultural assurance. Dissatisfaction with the image is a function of pride. These are the factors which affect the emerging notion of Aboriginality ..." (Tugby 1973:3).

A 'looking glass' model was hardly new. Fink's (1967) study of Aborigines in a rural north-west New South Wales town of the impediments to assimilation concluded with the argument assimilationist policy failed because of 'caste-barriers' limiting

Aboriginal social mobility and economic opportunity. Her argument takes the concept of 'caste' and 'status' as central to analysis of assimilation problems in 'Barwon'. She indicates that both concepts operate with the European and Aboriginal communities to determine the behaviour of the participants trying to establish their place in society. In the light of present sociological theory caste-barriers and status-consciousness are less favoured analytic concepts for understanding Aboriginal communities.

"... Aboriginality ... " Fink concluded was "... simply an awareness of a common group identity as 'black' people and an opposition to the ways of white people ..." (Fink 1969:110). The 'caste-barrier' subscribed to in 'Barwon' by certain groups within Black and White circles was most restrictive in the case of the Lower caste part-Aborigines - those living on the mission. This led to her conclusion that "... So long as the White community imposes a caste barrier upon part-Aborigines, one cannot expect much change in these Lower castes, for the fact of being rejected is one of the main determinants of their behaviour. While the caste barrier remains, few of the darker coloured people have any incentive to assimilate themselves, and they prefer to make the best of their lot ..." (Fink 1957:110).

Fink basically saw Aborigines responding to their contrastive position vis-a-vis Europeans; that is, Aboriginality was not being white. In both Tugby and Fink's hypotheses, Aboriginal people had a passive role in the forging and transmission of a 'reactive' cultural identity. Unfortunately, part of the conservatism of these models derived from a fundamental assumption that in themselves traditional cultural values made Aboriginal communities resistant to change. It was a view Elkin promulgated, and later his students - such as Reay (1949) and Fink (1957) and Bell (1956). It followed that Aboriginality was considered an administrative obstruction to successful assimilation. This was especially so if continuity with traditional practices persisted. What Aborigines themselves felt about their cultural identity was of little interest. However, by the early 1970s Aboriginal expression of their cultural identity -

in the arts, literature, politics - prompted researchers to direct their attention to the content of Aboriginality as an issue of identity.

Bell (1965) had first hinted at group identity as a mythology. He tentatively suggested the Aboriginal group is really only a general umbrella term sheltering a number of internal sub-groups. Eckermann tested Bell's material in detail by administering a series of questionnaires based upon the standard Kluckholm and Strodtbeck test for value orientations as applied to five common human problem areas. Studies conducted in both settlement and urban communities posed doubts about the cohesive group identity of Aborigines supposedly bound by mutual kin interests and obligations etc. She noted that sub-group orientation was stronger and more diverse than other researchers gave credit to, "... results from the Kluckholm and Strodtbeck Value Orientation Schedule indicate beyond the shadow of a doubt that the value system supposedly prevalent in this settlement environment is not based on collectivity, group identification and group co-operation; that individuals do not submerge their self-interest to their sentiments as group members ..." (Eckermann 1974:37). On the basis of her results Eckermann was prepared to state this individualism as a dominant value, "... Respondents are predominantly individual orientated; they see European values as much more clearly defined than those of their own group and over-emphasize their identification with what they believe to be European values ..." (Eckermann 1973:37).

Later studies were to comment on the matter of individualism as a breakdown in the coherence of group identity. However, the focus of these researches was largely psychological. They stressed psychological marginality, tension levels and matters of value orientations, as related to Aboriginality (see articles in Kearney, G.E. and McElwan, D.W. 1976).

I propose arguing that another interpretation of Eckermann's findings on individualism is possible. Indeed, that while identity orientation may be problematic, individualism and

group-centredness may not be mutually exclusive. Furthermore, I suggest individualism is strategically important in dealing with others in a confined social world. It allows manoeuvrability in normative social behaviour mediating some of the tensions associated with the domestic domain also being a public domain. Indeed it may be as much an integral factor in social relations as normative kinship and group identification.

Thus while Eckermann rightly pinpointed individualism in identity orientation, nevertheless from my analysis of social relations in one community there is evidence of ambiguity in group identity itself. On one hand there is an ideology of group identity which includes the conventions of normative kin relations and obligations. Yet there is also sufficient flexibility between the ideology and the actual behaviour of people to allow exaggerated displays of individualism. Often egocentric actions are considered moments of aberrant behaviour and are variously termed 'having the shits', 'going into the horrors', 'chucking a mental'. Drunken states are given the same status so that if people act particularly offensively or violently when inebriated there is little moral stigma attached to it. People rarely enquire into the causes of egocentric behaviour of this kind. Having 'the horrors' is a 'normal' psychic state in the cycle of human relationships where actions and feelings oscillate between harmony and discord. It is a condition of sociality and accepted as such. But this kind of individualistic behaviour differs in kind and interpretation from occasions where people behave in ways subversive of normative social relations. And I would argue that what is understood as 'normative' is group identification and orientation. A person with available accommodation in their home who refused it to kin (one of whom was eight months pregnant), thereby forcing them to sleep in their car, is considered to behave asocially. While the offending kin's actions were definitely self-motivated and took an individualistic stance, it ignored a basic social precept of group co-operation and responsibility in kin relations.

Eckermann's work and mine are not necessarily contrary to each other. Whereas her conclusions challenge the conventional

literature describing the focus and source of Aboriginal group identity - and rightly so - my conclusions suggest a view of these differences in identity orientation as complementary, not dichotomous. Secondly, within the range of acceptable behaviours in the community there is some flexibility within norms of appropriate social action and expression. Despite the stress on a normative pattern of kin derived action and discourse, people also find it 'reasonable' for individuals to act at times egocentrically. In short, a certain kind of individualism is consensually approved as part of appropriate behaviour. In fact, individualism is a complementary aspect of the notion of group identity. However in some respects, this is a notion acknowledged in different degrees with respect to gender roles and stages in the life-cycle.

Assimilation models first promulgated stereotypic characterizations of Aborigines as group-centred in their behaviour and values. Definitive characterizations of 'part-Aborigines' were common. They showed a "... willingness to help kin and to be helped by them, to live in close day-to-day contact with them and to emphasize interpersonal bonds ..." (Calley 1959; in Eckermann 1973:28). Moreover, there was sufficient consensus in the literature of Aboriginal social organization for Eckermann (1973:30) to summarize the model of Aborigines in settled Australia.

"... Aborigines today, whether they live in an urban, rural or settlement environment, are different from Europeans with regard to attitudes towards the community. They place much greater emphasis on the group, close family and extended kin relationships and the individual's identification and sharing with the community ..." (Eckermann 1973:30).

Fink (1957) and Reay (1949) considered group identification a defence mechanism against the polarization Aborigines experienced from wider society. Kinship, as the basis of group identification, was cited as a determinant, but qualifications were needed even on such an apparently simply feature of Aboriginal society. To simplify it as a principle of group recruitment ignored the complex principles of kinship since it is not confined to biological connections. Kitaoji (1976) and

D. von Sturmer (1980) indicate from work in the Macleay Valley of northern coastal New South Wales and Cape York respectively, that sociological as well as biological factors recruit kinfolk. A mystification of the actual nature of geneological connection in order to subsume all relatives as kin is not unusual.

When Eckermann argued for precision in definitions of urban Aboriginal identity, rather than suppressing the individualism, part of the problem she addressed was the lack of theoretical perspectives for describing and analysing Aboriginal selfhood. Theoretical frameworks for separating analytically the dimensions of identity received scarce attention until recently in studies of Aboriginal communities. Myers' (1976; 1979) discussion of Pintupi selfhood, although of desert Aborigines living in remote Australia, is a major contribution. A basic focus of his interest is the ideology of Aboriginal personhood.

In order to unravel the threads of Pintupi selfhood, Myers isolates 'concepts of the emotions' as the paradigm of how one should feel and behave. The concepts of the emotions refers only to the realm of social interaction, not to how individuals introspectively experience themselves as 'being Pintupi'. Such central emotions reflect a moral order through which the problems of life in society are dealt with. Thus Pintupi selfhood is embedded in sociality. Myers writes (1979:365) "... The self described in Pintupi ideology is not an aggressive, self-contained, egotistic, autonomous individual. Pintupi concepts of the emotions represent a self that recognizes a significant identity with important others, such that these others are represented as part of the self. One is malleable to these others, not 'hard'. One should be moved, not stolid in wilfulness. Autonomy, when it comes, comes from outside the individual and is not a product of private will ...".

However, Myers found that among the Pintupi the introspective sense of self is not alone a sufficient guide to understanding the motivation or interpreting the behaviour of others.

"... While the Pintupi do explain motivation in terms of emotional concepts, the main question I want to ask is not whether or how these correspond to their real motivations. Rather, I suggest that we see these concepts as a way of representing action and selves in light of a moral order. These concepts as a means of self-objectification, allow for the comparison of one's self to the extrinsic norms of society. I shall argue, then, that these concepts are major constructs of the Pintupi view of what it means to be a person and that they make a significant contribution to the political order of Pintupi life made up of such selves ..." (Myers 1979:345).

His work introduced the problem of subjective dimensions of identity in Aboriginal selfhood. Already in the early mid 1970s there were a number of researchers' doing work on the cognitive aspects of identity for southern Aborigines (see Kearney and McElwain 1976; Dawson 1969; Berry 1970). In most cases this derived from an interest in the education of Aboriginal children and the conditions of schooling imposed by a European education system. The attention to emic perceptions of social experience were innovative directions in research concerned with Aborigines in settled Australia and reflected concerns previously ignored. The desire for better understanding of the social reality of Aborigines grew from general disenchantment with governmental policies for Aborigines' assimilation, integration and self-determination. This encouraged a proliferation of ethnographies detailing sociological investigations of urban Aboriginal communities. Mostly their principal interest was in outlining the socio-economic profile of Aborigines in settled Australia. The sociological school under Fay Gale (1974; 1977; 1982) attempted to survey the socio-economic position of Aborigines within the Australian community. This concentrated upon the details of the economic fabric of their lives as householders and employees and recipients of social service benefits. Rowley's work (1970; 1971) adopted some of the same themes and offered a historical perspective on how all this came about and why it continues. One consequence of the sociological studies of urban and rural southern Aboriginal communities was that it placed Aborigines in the context of theories of Australian society as a whole.

Undoubtedly, the sociological surveys, with their focus on the statistical evidence of the relative socio-economic position of

Aborigines in society, contributed to clearer ideas of how government funds might assist Aboriginal communities. However, knowing details of income, educational standard, housing and health provisions failed to indicate exactly how such structural factors were influenced by Aboriginality.

Earlier studies of Aboriginality (from the 1940s and 50s) were premised partly upon definitions of Aboriginality as racially constituted; largely side-stepping the concept of culturally inspired self-ascriptions. Yet in the flowering of Aboriginal literature in the 1970s it was obvious that concepts of identity and of Aboriginality differed from ideas held by Europeans. For some time few studies went beyond describing the structural factors responsible for the position of Aborigines on the margins of Australian society. The socio-economic models were used to assess the relative position of the Aboriginal community vis-a-vis a set of comparisons; town life versus rural life; or urban Aborigines as an analogous group to impoverished Europeans. The dominance of economic models was formidable in contrast to cultural theories of Aboriginal society. Small wonder Biddle and Smith (1975:125) concluded "... Brisbane's Aborigines appear, for the most part, as typical, working class Australians. To the extent they exhibit 'problems' these appear primarily as a function of poverty and other structural difficulties of their lives the bases for which probably reflect both racial discrimination and to a lesser extent cultural conflict ..." (1975:125).

Later, studies of structural comparisons of Aboriginal communities played into the hands of advocates of the 'culture of poverty' explanation thereby emphasizing adaptive traits as an epiphenomenon of socio-economic position and denying the possibility of cultural continuity. Such approaches again denied cultural traditions a legitimate role in the development of identity. It had been American case-studies which led to new theories of cultural identity and ethnicity in accounting for cultural deprivation. Applied to Australian Aboriginal communities these models sought a relationship between structural factors and cultural traditions. In short, they showed concern over the

articulation of such cultural enclaves with the wider community. The urban experiences of cultural minorities in America and the 'culture of poverty' model was popular in Australia for explaining the cultural discreteness, yet adaptation of formerly traditional Aboriginal society to contemporary European influences. Lewis' (1966) model of the 'culture of poverty' suggested an interactional response between culture and environment which led to circumstantial adaptations. The emphasis was indeed upon change but it remained to explain why some groups were perpetually impoverished vis-a-vis their host society. Adaptation became a tradition of incorporated behavioural styles and orientations perpetuated by socializing and in this way Lewis' apparently dynamic model was rigidified by an adaptation resembling ossification. A number of particular criticisms in the original formulations of Lewis' model are apparent. For one, he details the life of households yet extends this to generalizations about macro-level concerns (see Valentine 1969).

Similarly the 'marginal man' approach presumed the sociologically peripheral position of certain communities. By focusing attention on the structural factors (socio-economic in particular) of the communities their relative position in wider society was demonstrated (see Dagmar 1978). Historical evidence of the relationship between Aborigines and Europeans confirmed the former's marginality. The effects of economic marginality were also thought responsible for deteriorating relationships and roles within the Aboriginal family and community. As Barwick (1974:164) notes "... The marginal economic position of the male Aboriginal worker has inevitably affected domestic organization and the stability of family life ...".

Barwick's (1966) and Gale and Wundersitz's (1983) studies on the sociological character of urban black communities described the reality of socio-economic marginality. These, and similar models, were in some senses, new perspectives for understanding the relationship between Aborigines and Australian society. The unfortunate corollary of these models was the equation of Aborigines as a group, with other depressed classes, but not with

ethnic minorities. This led to a theoretical debate over whether Aborigines were to be understood by class factors or cultural influences: at the same time it deflected interest from the matter of Aboriginality as a social and cultural construct shaping identity.

Given the theoretical limitations of the sociological models for describing the lived understandings of people's social existence, less positivistic sociology offered a neglected insight into the experiential life of Aborigines. Already a 'sociology of knowledge' (Berger and Luckmann 1971) model had been used (McKeich 1977) to describe the part-Aboriginal world. Kolig (1977) too had approached issues of Aboriginality as culturally determined where identity was firmly premised on a dialectical interaction between society and the individual. Similar theoretical approaches were likely to assist my analysis of Aboriginal identity at several levels, in social roles, social identity, and in the nature of introspective selfhood. While the matrix of all three levels of identity are social, how each notion of selfhood is marked from its companions differs. In fact, I propose discussing the specifically cultural and cognitive problems associated with the demarcation process in Chapters 3 and 4.

In these chapters I suggest it is the pervasiveness of kinship and its obligations in Aboriginal communities which significantly impinges upon identity. Indeed these are structural conditions of the environment in which the child acquires its concept of identity and participates in community world-views and systems of meaning. Identity and kinship are symbiotic. A child thus learns who he is, as an 'Aborigine' at the same time as he learns normative behaviour determined as appropriate by reference to the nature of kin relationships. Because kinship defines identity within the community I suggest that a central problem arises for each individual; how to differentiate him/herself from others. Comparative literature on this particular problem is scarce. This is a result of the dearth of ethnographies about urban/rural Aboriginal life in settled Australia. Hallowell (1971) and Levy (1973) write of experiences with the self/others dilemma

in particular cultures, and Myers (1976) has raised the matter in analysis of Pintupi selfhood. However, literature on the bonds of kinship in Aboriginal communities of southern Australia are more copious (Reay 1949; Smith and Biddle 1975; Gale and Wundersitz 1982; Berndt, R.M. 1977, etc.). Fink (1957) has ethnographic details of life on an Aboriginal mission in north-west New South Wales which parallel the kinds of social obligations and problems with property ownership and accumulation endemic in Mogo (see especially pp.107-109). I equate this matter of self/other as analogous to other domains of social interaction, for example, public/private dichotomies.

Kinship responsibilities entail oppositions for individuals. The conditions of meeting these responsibilities are onerous in small communities of finite economic resources. Requests, promised fulfilment because of kin affinity, are generally for consumable material goods. Although there are strategies to manage the compulsion to comply, people are tempted to asocial behaviour. Indeed, they may enact behaviours outside of prescribed kinship norms. In Mogo this involves withholding communally valued items, such as food and alcohol. Both items are part of a structure for symbolically appropriating the dimension of selfhood which is individual, introspective, private and selfish. The social usefulness of food and grog rests with its signification of an expressive realm in which people demarcate the self from others. By definition, separating one's sense of selfhood from the group identity in Aboriginal communities involves asocial behaviour. This is not to be confused with subjective dimensions to social experience. There is nothing for example to prevent a subjective yet positive experience of sharing. However, when kinship demands blur self/other differentiation by asserting 'what is yours is mine, by implication of our relationship', people experience desire subjectively and emotionally for self-assertion. This may or may not appear as asocial behaviour. Deciding whether it does depends upon the action as much as upon consensual opinion. In particular it is the question of whether the behaviour could be excused by the kind of individualism allowed for in normative social exchanges. Asocial action is likely to involve subjective

desires - egocentric, individual, antisocial - which prompt behaviour at odds with a community ethos of personhood. Self/other differentiation is an integral concept in the experience of people learning to discriminate between subjective desires which are acceptable and those which are asocial. When kinship is the matrix of such complex processes ambiguity and ambivalence is hardly surprising. Violence is a specific context where the dilemmas of self/other opposition as a struggle between asocial subjective desire and objectivated community precepts is clear. This assumes, following Marx (1976) that although violence has its origin in subjective desires, whether it is antisocial or not depends upon the kind of violence exhibited and the context in which it occurs.

In the analytic distinction of societal violence 'coercive' violence is analogous to frustrated normative desires whose fulfilment can only be achieved by premeditated forceful social interaction. Contrawise, 'appealing violence' reflects the emotional tensions of introspective selfhood where frustrated subjective desires erupt in asocial behaviour.

Interpersonal violence happens in Nogo. Marx (1976) suggested from a study of violence in an Israeli immigrant town, that it is best seen as a social manoeuvre for particular ends. Whether such ends, or goals, are summed up in individual or societal terms, violence as Marx describes, is best considered part of 'normal' social behaviour and integral to social contexts. In this sense, he negates the value of studies which criminalize violence. As Marx conceives of violence, "... The central questions posed are ... which social factors are conducive to various forms of violence, under which conditions these are likely to occur, which persons become violent, and how various forms of violence are connected to other types of behaviour ..." (Marx 1976:2). For clear analysis he distinguishes between two kinds of violence as they appear in social contexts, and form a continuum of social action. There is 'coercive violence' which involves rational, premeditated use of violence as an extreme method for achieving a social objective. Alternatively, 'appealing violence' is reached from the depths of personal frustration. It is a cry

for assistance. A recognition from the individual that a particular social objective cannot be achieved without help from significant others. The rationale of violence as an aspect of social action is useful for understanding the role of violence in Mogo. The community certainly values a sense of courage and independence in individuals prepared to physically fight in defence of themselves or over issues of loyalty, etc. But fights between individuals such as siblings are generally abhorred. Yet they occur. And in the circumstances in which I witnessed this kind of violence between brothers it had all the traits and masked purpose of 'appealing violence'.

In this case the structural circumstances - the living conditions, the hardships of poverty - were too much for the individual carrying sole responsibility for two families. Immediately after the fracas, the man applying the 'appealing violence' talked to his grandmother about how provoked he was and how he couldn't take the pressure any longer. She is an important and sensitive member of his family group and immediately acknowledged the appeal. The outbreak of violence was thus accounted for as a reasonable response given the circumstances.

Appealing violence might also shed light on the problems people face in dealing with others. Since the ethos of personhood in Mogo is publically orientated and socially bound and constructed, individual resentments are subdued and held in check. Only under the conditions of alcohol does violence have a legitimate expression. People are said 'to go into the horrors'. Basically this excuses their excesses as some form of bracketed behaviour. The excessive and indulgent behaviour allowed under this heading gives scope for personal and idiosyncratic expression. The display of individualism is within the bounds of social norms. The interpretation and style of social violence in Mogo is culturally specific. However, Marx's definition of violence is not entirely culturally determined. He sees specific conditions as conducive to violence and these pivot on relations of dependence, often economic dependence. In cases of mutual dependence between aggressor and victim total destruction of the dependence relation

is hardly the aim: merely, the alteration in the balance of the dependence structure. Thus in Marx's study "... All the outbreaks of violence were precipitated by situations which publicly exposed the unilateral dependence of the aggressor ..." (Marx 1976:101).

Nor does Marx advocate a theory of the innate aggressiveness of man. Rather he upholds the social context of violence as integral to the emergence and purpose of violent action. Therefore violence in social contexts is best seen as purposeful, goal directed and subsumed by dependency. Marx's theory of social violence is certainly applicable to an interpretation of a number of violent outbursts in Mogo.

The conditions of dependency and the social context for violence in Mogo is described in Chapter 2. An outline of the history and sociological background of the community provides a specific ethnographic context in which to explore insights from the theoretical models. Moreover, it is important to gain some impression of the particular structural conditions influencing the community in order to show how their perceived difference in cultural identity isolates them from surrounding society. Mogo has boundary markers - speech styles, the encompassing matrix of kinship, circumscribed relationships with Europeans, and so on - which 'close' it sociologically. Such markers are culturally, not class, derived. This is undoubtedly surprising in the light of 200 years of destructive cultural contact. But it indicates the persistence of a consensual notion of identifiable cultural signifiers of Aboriginality which negate assimilation. As a result, both Mogo people and the local Europeans fail to incorporate their separate lifestyles in a socio-economic commonality. This is partly why class explanations fail to touch the heart of identity matters. Indeed it is not so much a question of economic conditions as world view and meanings attached to social actions which separate Mogo Aborigines from Europeans. Granted there may be sociological parallels with other sub-groups of wider European society, but this hardly impinges upon the understanding Mogo people share of 'knowing themselves' in the world.

McKeich suggests the separate social reality of part-Aborigines which, nevertheless, is cohesive and integrated.

"... The total body of knowledge constitutes a world view - not necessarily without some cognitive dissonance, but sufficiently homogeneous and integrated to enable part-Aborigines to distinguish themselves and to be recognized from outside their ranks, as part-Aborigines ..." (McKeich 1977:256).

I argue that the model of Aboriginality in Mogo posits a public concept of identity, a concept stressing personhood by specific action and as very definitely socially constituted and actualized; indeed, given shape and form only in the presence of significant others. Problems people experienced tend to be those involving some of these significant others. And naturally, at different levels the whole community is drawn into the socio-centric debates - either instrumentally or passively. Subjective experiences of themselves are rarely, and then only cautiously, voiced. In some cases, I noticed people were discouraged from probing the depths of their problematic introspective experiences. For instance, when a leading male member of the community died very suddenly, one of his daughters was especially upset and mystified by the unexpectedness of his illness and immediate death. Over cups of coffee she searched for a plausible explanation of how this tragedy could occur and how she, particularly, felt traumatized by it. Few people failed to sympathize - since the death of her father was a shock to all. However, the kind of support offered seemed to me judicious. Initially her grief was acknowledged and shared - although the listener persistently curbed her introspective probing of the experience by adopting a kind of acceptance of the matter which simultaneously encouraged her to see that life must continue. A kind of fatalism perhaps uttered in a less painful moment as 'well, they're 6ft under and we're 6ft on top so let's get dressed and go to the Club!'.

Finally, the process of acquiring an Aboriginal identity is embedded in social contexts which are themselves comprised of factors in a dialectical relationship. This is as much the structural position the community has with wider European society,

as intra-community knowledge of Europeans and how to deal with them. Additionally, the dimension of Aboriginal perceptions is crucial. The elucidation of all perspectives recognizes that acquiring a social identity is largely an interactive process between the self and the social world.

The following chapters elaborate these points beginning with Chapter 2 describing Mogo vis-a-vis surrounding major society. Chapter 3 builds on this to detail the interaction between social conditions and Aboriginal identity development.

CHAPTER 2

Mogo as a 'Closed' Community; Its Origins and ContextThe Origins

For almost 200 years Aborigines in southern Australia have interacted with Europeans. Even at the beginning of the twentieth century it was believed that traditional Aboriginal culture was bankrupt and that their society had disintegrated. Today, the belief that Aboriginality in settled Australia was extinguished with the demise of traditional life is even more widely held. Aborigines, it is argued, are now largely integrated and assimilated into Australian society. In part there is evidence for this; they live in European-style houses; hold jobs; attend educational institutions and participate in a technologically advanced society. [However, in many cases their actual involvement with the institutions and structures of mainstream Australian society are shallow and collectively Aborigines remain a disadvantaged social group.]

The accuracy of this impression is questionable and the literature (see especially Réay 1964) discussing this issue confused. Bell (1964:64) wrote that "... Generally speaking, the part-Aborigines of New South Wales have no culture of their own to preserve ... Their [Aboriginal] acculturation was a simple one-way process. The Europeans regarded the Aborigines as socially and culturally inferior and as not having anything worth borrowing. However erroneous this may have been, the fact remains that no encouragement was given to Aborigines to preserve their culture ...". Beckett (1964:33) also writing about Aborigines in New South Wales found that

"... These part-Aborigines consciously retain no vestige of their tribal culture, yet they remain in some respects culturally distinct. They live, for the most part, on the fringe of white society, integrated into its economic system but in other respects separate ...".

Bell and Beckett's comments are certainly contrastive: the part-Aborigines of New South Wales are described as having "no culture of their own to preserve", retaining "no vestige of their tribal culture", and so on. But these assertions are placed alongside comments of communities being "culturally distinct", integrated with the economic system "but in other respects separate". These communities are described as both acculturated yet culturally distinctive. Few researchers understood the implications of such contrariness. Obviously Aborigines remained culturally distinct because of the persistence of certain valued cultural orientations. At the time, however, the diagnostic features of Aboriginality were thought of as only religion, language and social organization, none of which was an effective or evident force in settled Australia by the twentieth century. Neither Bell nor Beckett succeeded in explaining the anomalousness of their observations in detail. Mogo is then, in certain ways, illustrative of this kind of sociological phenomenon common to many Aboriginal communities in southern Australia.

While it may be true to suggest the socio-economic life style shares commonality with other disadvantaged segments of wider Australian society, the manner in which economic disabilities are handled is flavoured by an orientation and value system the town's Aboriginal inhabitants identify as strictly 'Aboriginal'. Furthermore, few people in Mogo could be termed as producers or wage labourers. The majority exist on the fringes of the local economy as consumers or recipients of government social services and as clients of local businesses. In this sense, their articulation with the local economy is both restricted and peripheral. Indeed, the foremost question, since the features of socio-economic life in Mogo are known, is why and how these people remain unassimilated after 200 years of contact, in spite of the destruction of the diagnostic elements of traditional cultural life - language, religion, ritual and social organization?

The apparent anomaly raises several issues. Firstly, what does the Mogo community see as distinctively 'Aboriginal'? Secondly, how do they maintain their discreteness and what are the

salient characteristics of their cultural separation? A further intriguing point about Mogo as a 'closed', Aboriginal community is that despite its present profile, its existence as a predominantly Aboriginal rather than European community only began twenty years ago.

A brief history of the Mogo area and its Aboriginal inhabitants provides some understanding of the circumstances leading to its contemporary sociological discreteness but the extant information is sketchy and warrants detailed historical research in its own right. Several histories of the Eurobodalla Shire are available (Gibbney 1980; Bayley 1978). These works are largely concerned with the progress of European settlement in the district and remarks about local Aborigines are generally confined to the kind of interaction typical of the early frontiers. Mogo first came into prominence in 1857 when the Araluen goldfields were taken over by big gold mining companies eagerly absorbing the small-holders. New sources of gold had to be found. Timber milling was already an established source of employment in Mogo before its rise to importance as a goldfield, but the latter industry substantially boosted the town's growth making it possible for the town to apply for a non-denominational, one-teacher school in 1867. So while the town expanded it was determined to avoid the partisan disputes of religion as evidenced in Moruya which had an equally strong Catholic and Protestant population and denominational schools; by taking a government subsidy like the towns of Bergalia, Nelligen and Batemans Bay.

Mogo's prosperity during the latter half of the nineteenth century was linked to the fluctuating fortunes of gold mining and timber milling. By 1876 the returns on small holdings for the many miners in Mogo - a proportion of whom were Cornish - were dwindling. In fact the only survivors of the gold rushes in the district were the large companies with sufficient capital and machinery to sustain their production. Timber-milling remained a better employment prospect and saw-mills sprang up along the south coast, many specifically to supply timber for ship building. A steam-powered saw-mill was established in Tuross in 1865; Batemans

Bay mill opened in 1870 and was followed by mills around Nelligen and the Upper Clyde River. The coastal township of Tomakin was a response to the milling activities up river, on the Tomago. The most active centre of sawing, however, was in the forests between Mogo and Nelligen. For Aboriginal men, the saw-mills offered stable employment and many of the women in Mogo spoke of a childhood punctuated with the names of places such as Durras, Pebbly Beach and Mogo where their fathers worked in mills. Other than mill work, Aboriginal people were employed as farm hands and domestics on the large properties of the district. The Hawdon and Bate farms are two that were mentioned. Many people lived in tents and moved seasonally to fish or to seasonally pick peas, beans and potatoes. The boom period for timber clearing and processing was a short period between 1885 and 1887. There were five mills between Moruya and Batemans Bay employing between 50-60 men; by 1887 only one mill was operating and employing between 10-12 men. The decline must have affected Mogo as the description of the town by a woman accompanying her husband to seek work in Lynch's mill, Mogo, suggests.

"....they call it a town but it is not much of a town. There are two saw mills and some stores but I don't know how many, there are three churches but I have not found out yet how often they are preaching ... We are nearly eat alive with mosquitoes and fleas and there are native dogs ..." (Ann Williams in Gibbney 1980:113).

Despite the revival of timber getting in the 1890s with the expansion of railways and the need for wood for sleepers, a general economic depression significantly affected the south coast. Many people left the district lured by the new areas of land opening up in Queensland and along the New South Wales north coast as small farm holdings. Those who remained helped to establish a dairy industry around Moruya and Bodalla to the south. However detrimentally affected Mogo was by these changes, Gibbney (1980) records a healthy political interest amongst the town's inhabitants. A Labor Party Branch was formed in Mogo in 1909 and in 1918 a tank visited the town seeking money for war loans. Mogo contributed £650. By the mid-1920s it was obvious, however, that further economic expansion along the south coast was dependent on

the still-fledgeling tourist business. On advice from the Mogo Progress Association the shire council cut a road from Mogo to Broulee Beach. An enterprising local businessman hired tents and camping equipment to those who reached Broulee after journeys from Queanbeyan, Braidwood and Sydney.

Thereafter Mogo's history and further development was arrested by an ailing rural economy and the lack of secondary industry. By the early 1960s it was largely a shadow of its former size and mostly comprised of retired farmers and older people. All residents at that time were European. The local general store and combined Post Office were the commercial focus; and with the garage, these bordered the main road, the Princes Highway.

Before the early 1960s the present Mogo inhabitants were itinerants moving the length of the south coast and occasionally working on farms or in mills. Some crewed the ships trading between Sydney and the far south coast. By the twentieth century the roles were reversed. Some Aborigines were camped in lower Church Street, Moruya, in 1917, in the area adjoining the river, but mostly Aboriginal people camped where they could - along the beaches and in the forests. One woman remembered as a child camping with her family on the northern reach of the Clyde River where it empties into the sea at Batemans Bay. At this time there was no bridge and all crossings were made by punt. There was also an Aboriginal reserve at Batemans Bay, but this closed in the mid-1920s, along with a number of others, during a time of public enquiry into the New South Wales Aboriginal Protection Board's policies and activities (see Horner 1974). It is not unlikely that some of the people displaced by this closure went to Sydney to join relatives and seek better housing and more stable employment. Otherwise, they appear to have joined relatives living and moving up and down the coast, from Wreck Bay to as far south as Lake Tyers, Victoria.

None of the Aborigines living in Mogo today had a childhood on an Aboriginal reserve. Some of the families, among them the Stewarts, Walkers and Penriths have relatives at Wallaga

Lake and Lake Tyers and spent time there as visitors. These visits probably coincided with quiet times in the round of seasonal employment. Others, such as the Nye and Butler families, had similar histories of independence as fishermen. In every case the oral autobiographies of Mogo people suggest their long-term familiarity with the district over several generations. A significant number of people mentioned being born in Sydney; or mentioned being expectant mothers or giving birth to children (who are now middle-aged) in Sydney. The links between Mogo and areas of Aboriginal Sydney remain close - in particular with La Perouse, Blacktown and Bankstown - and there is mobility between the two locales with Sydneysiders coming down for holidays; fishing; and to see family. Likewise coastal cousins might spend weeks, even months at a time, with their Sydney relatives.

Bell (1959) first wrote of the connection between the south coast Aborigines and those in Sydney, notably La Perouse, during the development of reserves (see also Beasley in Taft, Dawson and Beasley 1975). That a number of women gave birth to children in Crown Street Hospital or Newtown might be explained by the reserve administrative policy "... of sending pregnant women to the city for confinement when the necessary facilities were not available ..." (Firth, Hausfeld and Moodie 1974:35). Their comment refers particularly to 'Coast Town' located between Mogo and Sydney, but the lack of facilities in the rural Eurobodalla Shire and the presence of kin for support may have been equally attractive to the Mogo people.

What attracted people away from ad hoc dwellings elsewhere to Mogo were the low rentals on the ex-miners' cottages, sub-standard though most of them were. Families with school-aged children required a more settled life and often this accounted for their move to Mogo. Some, like the Nyes, Russells and Butlers, bought their homes in Mogo. The facilities offered by 'town' living were largely inadequate with no water supplied and no sewerage or septic systems. In fact the South Coast Aboriginal Housing Company established in Mogo in 1975 was the beginning of what Rose (1978) terms 'the quiet revolution' for Mogo. Largely

through the efforts of Keith Smith, a member of a prominent Aboriginal family, the local council connected water to Mogo. Living conditions were further improved when ten new homes built to NSW Housing Commission design replaced the sub-standard miners' cottages sheltering several generations. The Housing Company grew out of Federal Labor Government commitment to fund grass-roots Aboriginal schemes. Keith Smith was equally instrumental in negotiations behind the Company's inception since at that time he was the district representative of the National Aboriginal Congress. Establishing a Housing Company heightened the community profile of the Aborigines in Mogo. The original plan to build five brick veneer homes using local Aboriginal men as builders' apprentices expanded to ten homes. The first homes were finished in late 1976 and the remaining five were inhabited in mid-1978. However, while these more comfortable, spacious and modern homes relieved the pressure of close family living, there are still a number of families in Mogo living in sub-standard dwellings. For example, one family lives in a garage of their father's home. The Housing Company also purchased the then derelict Mogo Hall from the local council. After careful renovation it now serves the community as a social centre and pre-school facility. Weddings, funeral wakes and occasional Church meetings are held there. On occasions the Hall is rented to local Europeans for parties or dances. When the travelling Aboriginal Health or Dental Service is in Mogo their van is parked in the grounds of the Hall.

During my seven months in Mogo the Housing Company experienced a number of difficulties, mostly, it seemed, concerning payment of rent by those living in the Company homes. Although this amount was minimal compared with Housing Commission rates and was proportional to the number of bedrooms in the house, reluctance to pay had something to do with a feeling of entitlement to free housing. Perhaps this sprang from misunderstanding about land rights entitlements. The land the homes were built upon was owned by the Aboriginal Lands Trust. At one stage conflict between the community and the local council over payments of rates and therefore entitlement to services turned on the issue of land

ownership. Mogo people wanted titles to their land from the Aboriginal Lands Trust. These issues may be resolved by the recently passed NSW land rights legislation.

A further complication in the business of the Housing Company was the original intention of including Bodalla south of Mogo (about 25 miles) in its building operations. Hence the name, the Aboriginal Housing Company of the South Coast. Bodalla is no longer involved. As a Company the organization is run by ten directors elected from registered members of the Company in Mogo. Membership costs \$1. Initially these people represented "... the major families and were heads of households and/or their wives ..." (Rose 1978:11). One of the difficulties plaguing the Company which is endemic in other areas of social life in Mogo is jealousy. Yet if this impinges upon the smooth working of the Housing Company it is never allowed to interfere with the united stance Mogo shows vis-a-vis other Aboriginal communities. For instance, during discussions about the land ownership in Housing Company schemes it was clear that each Aboriginal community saw itself as distinctive. "... We want the Aboriginal Land Council to have titles to the land we build homes on, so we have land rights to it. No, we're not asking for an area of land like the Wallaga Lake people. We're not the same people ..." (Mrs Ruth Walker in Rose 1978:80). Wallaga Lake and Bodalla eventually formed their own Housing Company and have built a number of homes. Bodalla was originally a member of the South Coast Housing Company because of close kinship connections between Mogo and Bodalla families. On the other hand, in general conversation in Mogo, Wallaga Lake is often held up as a 'joke' - a place of improbability. In answer to questions of 'Where are ya going?', 'Humping it to Wallaga' is a standard reply. However famed the Wallaga Lake oysters are amongst Mogo seafood lovers, it is rarely visited. Occasionally, a few people might go down for a party. But since some heavy drinking is likely and this is not especially welcomed in Mogo, most people treat Wallaga Lake as an object of depreciation. And, of course, what is meant when it is said of Wallaga people that they are 'not the same people' is how different they are from Mogo people in their social behaviour and values.

The Housing Company wasn't the only scheme which intensified the Aboriginal profile in Mogo. Rose (1978) details the history and impact of the Andrew Nye Fishing Company, the employment of an Aboriginal teachers' aide, and use of an instructional programme designed for educationally disadvantaged children run at the Mogo Primary School. The latter was crucial for improving the schooling experience of Mogo children. Moreover, it was obvious that Mogo Primary School was in some ways special since by 1976 of the 26 children enrolled 22 identified as Aboriginal. Their dominance in the school population continues. An Aboriginal teachers' aide also assists the European teacher of the pre-school children. On fête days the Aboriginal parents fully support the fund-raising and generally enjoy good relations with the staff - although these are circumscribed and any home visits are undertaken by the teachers' aide. A number of parents were unhappy with the school principal during my stay.

The fishing venture by the late Andrew Nye and his sons was basically an experiment. The DAA offered a loan to purchase a deep sea fishing trawler with necessary equipment for the salmon and tuna catches. The Nyes are fishermen of several generations and all the sons worked with their father - Andrew Snr. - in the venture. Previously, they fished using a boat and net. At times, plane spotting located schools of fish. The Nyes then drove to the appropriate beach, rowed out and dropped the net which those on the beach slowly pulled in complete with catch. The hauls were then transported to either the Sydney markets or the fish cannery at Eden.

The Mortlocks, one of the few European families in Mogo who know the Aborigines well, earlier on had transported the fish to Sydney. Several of the children from the large Mortlock family were age-mates of Mogo people and they had played together along the beach haunts from Batemans Bay to Broulee. At that stage, many of the Mogo families lived on the beaches. Mr Mortlock, ever the business man, operates an informal pawn-shop from his home and provides the contact phone number for telephone messages rung from outside the community. For a price he also drives people into

town. He literally lives with the Aboriginal residents of Mogo. Although it was intended that the new homes be dispersed amongst the already established European homes, they do in fact form a discrete block. Mortlock is one of the few whites in this block.

Apart from tuna and salmon, the Nyes - as did other men in the community - caught lobsters by diving for them. Several of Andrew's sons had worked in saw-mills and other local industries but like their father all of them felt that fishing as a life style and vocation was far superior. Fishing also enabled them to be self-supporting and to some extent this was evidenced by their material goods - cars, home-ownership and video systems. The Nyes are also a close-knit family with most of the married daughters continuing to live at home with their husbands and families. It is likewise true of several sons. The trawler, the John Dory, was eventually sold. While it was important that fishing allowed the Nye family to work together and involved the men's wives in the process of netting etc., the demands of running a trawler and fishing from it seemed to jeopardize what they saw as the quality of life offered by fishing. This made the use of small boat and net particularly attractive.

The story of the Nyes and their fortunes with the trawler underlines the importance Mogo people attach to a quality of life based upon relatedness, or kinship. The need for close affinity disqualified Wallaga lake, but admitted Bodalla, to the Mogo Housing Company schemes. Mogo itself is constituted by family groups whose genealogies interlock. Kinship is a significant determinant of the discrete character of Aboriginal Mogo. One inhabitant expressed it thus.

"... We'd never want to live away from Mogo. We're a funny lot of people. We're all here together and we're all one big family. We're all related - cousins, aunties and so on - and we find ourselves happier living amongst ourselves than moving elsewhere" (Rosé 1978:14).

Moreover, apart from biological connections between people, often the social 'rearing up' by another family ensured permanent kinship ties. Again the social and emotional support available from kinship helps to maintain the 'closed' attitude of Mogo in relation to the wider community. Economically it is only the Nye family who

are self-supporting. Three men have employment in the local saw-mill, council and electricity authority. The remainder survive by dint of social service benefits. The Aboriginal women seem more successful in securing employment. Sharon Smith is a Social Worker with the Department of Youth and Community Services in Batemans Bay; Betty Stewart is an Aboriginal Health Worker; one of the older women has a casual job as cook's assistant in a local club; and a couple of younger girls work after school hours and week-ends in the local general store. Another is employed by the pre-school as a teachers' assistant.

There are twenty Aboriginal dwellings in Mogo. A number of these are composite households: one home, for example, might shelter several related families whose household heads are siblings. Moreover, Mogo has a fairly mobile population and people tend to circulate between kin related houses within the town. This is a normal strategy in a domestic cycle of intermittent peace and violence. In addition, relatives living along the coast are welcome and on several occasions in my household we had kin from Nowra-Bomaderry stay for several months at a stretch. The statistical profile of Mogo's population resident in twenty dwellings is as follows:

Table 1: Demographic parameters of Mogo's Aboriginal population, 1983.

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Population over 15 years of age (percent)	35 (24.4)	41 (28.7)	76 (53.1)
Population under 15 years of age (percent)	44 (30.7)	23 (16.1)	67 (46.9)
Total population (percent)	79 (55.2)	64 (44.8)	143 (100.0)

The capabilities of women in the community are obvious. Several households have women heads. Why women tend to secure better and more successful employment is difficult to answer. Gale (1974(a) and 1974(b)) amongst others (Barwick 1974; Hamilton 1981;

Grimshaw 1981) have remarked upon this. Barwick's study of Victorian Aboriginal Reserves post-1860 documents a tradition of women's contribution in politics and social life which she also sees as continuous and evident in the sociological studies of urban Aborigines during the 1960s. There is no single explanation for the strength of women's profile and contribution in contemporary Aboriginal communities. Some suggest that matriarchy and the high profile of Aboriginal women is characteristic of Aboriginal families: although this seems to beg the question. Other explanations seek historically or sociologically deterministic factors.

Mogo's sex ratio figures - when broken down by age - confirm the predominance of women over men. While the total number of males exceeds the total number of females, taking the overall sex ratio above the age of 15 years, the sex ratio drops to 55 males for every 100 females. This ratio is based on an estimate of 143 people as the core Mogo population. It is only an estimate because of the high degree of mobility in the population. Some men have left the community to try their luck in the cities - Sydney, Wollongong, Nowra and Canberra. Often they have married women from those areas and this inclines them to reside outside Mogo. These are also the people most likely to comprise the mobile population of kin who live outside the community but regularly visit and stay for several weeks at a time. They are generally, but not always, accompanied by their families. In some cases the men return alone to their parents' home for a respite from domestic life. And, of course, it is not unusual to find young wives suspecting that a return by their husbands to Mogo is merely an excuse for the opportunity to indulge in the pleasures of bachelor life.

It is less common to find Aboriginal women marrying and moving far from their natal homes. A good deal of theorizing about the apparent matri-focality of Aboriginal households (Barwick 1974; Smith and Biddle 1975; Lickiss 1970; general data on urban households, Taft, Dawson and Beasley 1975; Grimshaw 1981) has usually explained the imbalance of male/female figures by reference to the seasonal employment of men, their search for work, or in

less economic terms, as somehow the continuation of a historical phenomenon whereby Aboriginal women adapted and were more easily absorbed into white culture. There is also a tradition in child rearing and the accession to gender maturity which contributes to the pattern. Briefly, child-bearing is one of the significant markers of sexual and social maturity. In the lives of teenagers in Mogo this is evident as young women of 16-18 years bear their first child often begat by a man of about 20 years. It is rarely expected that the couple live as husband and wife. But it is expected that the father - and he is generally known and acknowledged - accepts the responsibility of social fatherhood. Assuming the responsibilities of fatherhood is rarely a difficult option for men. Begetting children is a sign of sexuality and social maturity in the same way as it is for women. Moreover, men are generally as fond of children as women and during childhood both sexes are called upon to assist in the rearing and caring of children - mostly their younger siblings or brothers' and sisters' children.

But while the affection for children is common to both sexes, the management of teenage parenting differs. Since the couple is unlikely to reside together, the teenage expectant mother continues to live with her natal family. After the birth she may resume the life of her peers and the baby is reared by the girl's mother, i.e. the child's maternal grandmother. This pattern of 'rearing up' is very common and can be traced as the normal pattern of child rearing over several generations in a number of families. A girl's second pregnancy is generally the product of a more permanent relationship and the pre-nuptial child is absorbed without fuss into the newly developing family. Occasionally, the child may remain with the grandparents, but this is often a choice exercised by the child.

The core of family life tends to be the mother and children, and in some cases mothers and children of several generations. Mothers, i.e. women, are also central figures in child rearing and this is the product of gender role interpretation. In women's talk of the relations between the sexes

there is an inbuilt assumption of the greater social and sexual freedom available to men. Women often spoke of sexual intercourse as an avenue for binding men who might otherwise stray. Nevertheless, given the greater number of women than men this was an unreal expectation and those men and women having illicit affairs were often doing so with their sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, and certainly with other men and women within the community: which merely intensified the importance of attaching the male to the family household.

In short, traditions of child bearing and concepts of sexual maturity contribute to a family structure which inclines mothers and daughters to collaborate as householders. Fathers and sons have, and it is expected by both sexes that they do so, a freer, less regular profile in the household. Paradoxically, their authority within the family is often paramount. At least there exists an ethos of male superiority which relates more to gender notions than it does to actual circumstances of Aboriginal family life. While children rarely grow up without the support of a social father, many have not known their biological father. In the minds of Mogo women involving their child's biological father in the rearing is very important. More will be said of gender in Chapter 4 but at this stage it is relevant to touch upon areas related to the 'closed' nature of Mogo and its social profile. From the experiences of Aboriginal women in Mogo who have had white fathers of their children and with the relative ease with which these men tend to divest their responsibilities, the appeal of a known, local Aboriginal progenitor does contrast favourably. There are no 'mixed marriages' between Aborigines and Europeans in Mogo. In general, sexual interest and experimentation is kept within the community firstly, and secondly, within the Aboriginal network of coastal New South Wales. The liaisons between Aborigine and European are with sections of Australian society already predisposed to Aborigines through familiarity, even family tradition. What 'mixed marriages' do occur are more likely to be found in the cities or more sophisticated rural areas (see 'Coast Town' study for their figures). Sometimes siblings of one family

marry Europeans, but they rarely continue to live within the Aboriginal community and it tends to be Aboriginal women marrying European men.

Finally, in Mogo the imbalance in the sex ratio might also be due to the fact that while women bear large families, it is often men within the community who beget the children. These men are already attached to a wife and children comprising their immediate household. The women who bear their children are often the teenagers undertaking the significant ritual of first pregnancy.

Since Mogo's social life is not closely articulated with the wider Australian community this also inclines men and women to seek out partners within their community. Few women leave Mogo between leaving school and marriage; for men a move is much more common.

Mention has just been made of the historical development of the district around Mogo together with some of the particulars of Mogo's own history; firstly, as a prosperous gold mining and saw-milling centre, and secondly, as an Aboriginal community. It is hardly surprising that Aboriginal communities are found along the lower south coast; by self-identification Aborigines comprise 3% of the total population in the Eurobodalla Shire (Commonwealth Census: 1981). But what intrigues one about Mogo is its very recent establishment - a mere twenty years - as an Aboriginal community. Moreover, all the titles to the land in Mogo on which the Housing Company homes are built are held by the Aboriginal Land Trust. This indicates some recognition of their cohesion as a 'black' community and its permanence as an enclave. There is a specific profile to the Aboriginality of Mogo as a community.

However, to the casual observer Mogo is unremarkable. A number of small businesses line the highway; a service station, pottery, nursery, antique and french polisher, produce store and the combined general store-post office. Set back from the highway are scattered dwellings. In fact first impressions belie the

interest of Mogo. Nestled behind a natural rise a little south-west of the commercial 'centre' is the residential heart of Mogo. This is 'home' for about 150 Aboriginal people, 430-40 Europeans.

In local European parlance Mogo is considered an 'Aboriginal town' and as we have seen there is some truth to this claim. But what makes a town Aboriginal? Certainly the relative numbers of Europeans to Aborigines might account for it, but this response hides a number of fundamental questions of definition. For instance, on a crude and now anachronistic criteria, Aboriginality was once measured by percentage of racial characteristics. Many individuals in Mogo would fail such criteria, yet live both in the context of their own community and the wider European one, as Aboriginal. Self-definition is an integral aspect of Aboriginality in Mogo both as it reflects on the composition of the town as much as how outsiders acknowledge this.

Moreover, cultural differences in how the world is perceived and given meaning, separate Mogo people from Europeans of the surrounding area. Despite the stereotypic generalizations held of Aborigines, this perceptual difference isn't necessarily understood by Europeans and this is partly because Aborigines themselves have definitive impressions of what Europeans are said to expect of each other behaviourally. So one never swears in front of 'gubbas' (white people) but always presents a polite, well-mannered disposition and neat groomed appearance. At least this is the normative understanding of how one should behave around Europeans. The incongruity likely to arise between such normative views and experiential understanding of European behaviour is lessened by the fact of most Aboriginal/European interactions being largely circumscribed. Socially, Mogo people are active, regular members of darts clubs in Tomakin, Batemans Bay and Moruya. Interactions between all members of these local clubs seem positive and mutually enjoyed. But few, if any, Mogo Aborigines would be personal friends or visit the homes of their fellow players. Indeed, irrespective of social bantry on club nights there is still a degree of separation between the two groups.

Other interactions between Europeans and Aborigines are largely 'service' based and confined to exchanges over business matters, social services and medical care. In most cases, individuals interact on the basis of roles. This interferes with the possibility of gaining any serious inkling of the cultural world of the other. There are exceptions in both 'service' relationships and social interactions. One member of the community belongs to a religious sect otherwise comprised of local Europeans. On the basis of their mutual concerns, she often visited their home for meals or social afternoons. Remarkably, given the limited cross-cultural interactions already mentioned, she had spent weekends and overnight stays in these European homes.

Certain tacit understandings of differences between Aborigines and Europeans restrict the affective component of limited social exchanges. There is, additionally, a sense amongst Mogo people that they and their ways are better understood by their own kind. What truth lies in this is partly a corollary of the boundary mechanisms separating Mogo as a 'closed community', and partly acknowledgement of the history of structural reasons why Aborigines and Europeans have lived differently and separately (see Christie 1980; details of Aboriginal policies, etc. in Victoria).

There are other claims for seeing Mogo as discrete. These are internally generated mechanisms. I refer to socio-linguistic codes; the nature of marriage patterns and kinship; and socio-economic strategies.

Socio-linguistics

Bernstein's emphasis on the socio-linguistic code is that it "... points to the social structuring of meanings and to their diverse but related contextual linguistic realizations ...". (Bernstein 1970:158). In fact he suggests a "... relationship between forms of boundary maintenance at the cultural level and forms of speech ..." (Bernstein 1970:162).

His argument distinguishes two types of socio-linguistic speech: restricted and elaborated codes - respectively tied to context-dependent and universalistic meanings. Restricted codes

are, expectedly, more closely aligned to social structure than elaborated speech. The latter, by comparison, has a certain autonomy. Since the structure of communication involves symbolic orders Bernstein separates the symbolic content of restricted from elaborated codes, "... restricted codes have their basis in condensed symbols whereas elaborated codes have their basis in articulated symbols ... restricted codes draw upon metaphor whereas elaborated codes draw upon rationality ..." (Bernstein 1970:164).

Restricted speech codes are dominant in Mogo. There is no surviving traditional Aboriginal linguistic form, but there is a vocabulary of words commonly known and used throughout Aboriginal communities of coastal New South Wales. Indeed some of them (e.g. 'doorl' = sexual intercourse; 'gub' = white person) are known from other rural Aboriginal vocabularies (see Bryant 1980:54-55). These vocabularies are not used by Europeans: except perhaps by those with a knowledge derived from Aboriginal drinking or snorkel mates. Such knowledge is only relevant in restricted contexts. Specialized vocabularies aren't however, the same as restricted codes. Bernstein argues a class component to the development of speech patterning and symbol ordering. Or what might be simply called the "... means by which object and person relationships are realized ..." (Bernstein 1970:165).

Granted this component, the restricted code of Mogo speech still retains a distinctive cultural flavour. As socialization is the point of introduction to the sociological orderings and power distribution of society then, argues Bernstein, family groups must be correlative with specific communication structures. Why he isolates the family unit as a fundamental in lieu of code acquisition is that firstly, here is the environment for socializing young ('making sense of world, etc. '); and secondly, whilst people are unlikely to speak only restricted codes with perhaps an unpatterned component of elaborated variables, they are less likely to apply them in kin circles. As a correlative of code-types Bernstein thus identifies family types likely to foster these. He talks of person-orientated families allied to

universalistic meaning contexts of speech, especially where the status and role positions between family members are blurred and ambiguous. By contrast the positional-family encourages speech codes where understanding is context-dependent and where family members reference themselves by specific role and status.

Actually, it isn't as simple or as diametric as this. Despite efforts to tie class and code together, Bernstein admits to the lack of homogeneity in classes and argues around this difficulty by postulating a theory that how the code is focused within the family framework determines the nature of the speech patterns, "... thus, we can have an elaborate code focusing upon persons or an elaborated code in a positional family may focus more upon objects. We can expect the same with a restricted code ..." (Bernstein 1970:175).

It is the process of speech acquisition amongst Mogo children that provides them with both a speech code and a cultural component to this. I would say, in Bernstein's terms, that most families were person-centred but with restricted codes. The cultural tinge in the child's developing speech is the incorporation of words or phrases which differentiate the self from others. Particularly, the self as 'black' from others, i.e. white society. A four year old increasingly referred to Europeans he saw on T.V. or who were seen driving through the town, as 'gubbas'. This implied both a self-conscious recognition of his ego as well as who he was in the sense of distinguishable from 'other'. By inversion it also showed sensitivity to a 'black' sense of self. Children are, indeed, frequently addressed by adults with epithets beginning 'black ...'.

The cultural component of Mogo speech codes are inspired by factors other than race. A measure of kin reckoning is introduced in the terms of address. A younger child will be called by his/her parents or close relations as '... my son ...', '... my daughter ...'. Moreover, on one occasion a mother rebuked her young four year old daughter for addressing her uncle without the kin prefix. The same woman questioned her 'MZD' as to why the

second woman's very young brother-in-law called her 'Aunty'. No doubt, with a four year old brother-in-law it seemed feasible that the true relationship - given that his sister-in-law was 20 years older than him - be so described. Despite this possibility the other woman felt it was a mistake to encourage the habit since it mis-represented the actual relationship. Nor was I ever addressed by a kinship prefix by any of the children.

The 'style' of speech, more precisely defined by Bernstein as speech variants and code relationships are usefully categorized for analysis into inter-related contexts usual to socialization. Briefly they are as follows:-

- (1) regulative context - linked to authority orders;
- (2) instructional context - objective nature of object/persons;
- (3) imaginative/innovative context - recreate interpretation of world;
- (4) interpersonal context - affective state of self/others.

Such categories are largely heuristic as Bernstein applies them in his hypothesis. Whatever predominant speech variants are used in them give a key to the likely code. This is perhaps more detailed than illustrative. Body metaphors are common elements of daily speech as is swearing. Since there is a limited stock of profane words, the meaning attached is quite definitely contextually-bound. 'Monkey-cunt', for example, is generally applied to children who are mischievous and only sometimes to adults for the same reason. 'You cunt!', depending upon the context, might be either a positive or negative statement. 'Dead cunt' is always derogatory; similarly with 'fuck ya' or 'fuck off'. To confuse matters then, the restricted speech variants seem to hold for several of the heuristic contexts Bernstein outlined. 'Fuck ya', for instance, is often used in an affective interpersonal context, not uncommonly to indicate affection. Equally appropriately, it might indicate a regulative speech category.

The specifics of context are certainly helpful to gauging meanings of speech. However there are also a number of phrases which seem particular to Aborigines.

The relative class and cultural isolation they share, perhaps even foster, contributes to the argot. Some examples - (1) 'Boiling' - is to get angry; (2) 'to get up someone' - is to raise a matter of issue with someone; (3) 'shame-job' - refers to embarrassment; (4) 'jelly-beans' - jealousy, to cite a few. There are also a number of terms which are gender specific. (1) 'doll' - younger child or woman; (2) 'big man/woman' - someone trying to be smarter than they are; (3) 'big split' - term for female (generally younger girl/baby). Gender specific genital terms exist. 'Moot' - female genitals, is often a term of address ('cunt' is used rarely in this context). 'Monster' is sometimes used as a euphemism for male genitals. 'Babe' is commonly used when requests are both made and refused. In addition it is a term of friendship or endearment though more likely spoken to children of all ages and women.

I've mentioned profanity and its regular sprinkling in everyday speech. The intensity of its use as well as its full expression became a gauge of my acceptance amongst community members. Earlier I mentioned the stereotype behavioural concepts Aborigines hold of Europeans and how swearing was specifically prohibited in front of whites. 'Cunt' in its myriad expressive uses was progressively introduced in speech encounters with me and paralleled developing confidence and acceptance of my involvement with the community and individuals in it. However, the notion of Europeans not swearing remained. Despite my often hasty burst of aggressive swearing, people joked about how I'd behave when next in company with Europeans; how they never knew I swore; 'wasn't I becoming as one of them, etc.

I too was able to do as my Mogo neighbours and 'code-switch'. But unlike them my socialized speech patterns resembled an elaborated code. However, code-switching with variations of Standard English and Aboriginal English was basically a matter of perceived appropriateness. Symbolically it recognized the

different boundaries given to relationships in terms of object/person orientations. Boundaries here are classificatory mechanisms.

Eades (1982) recognizes the difference of speech pattern endemic to Aboriginal people. Unfortunately, few researchers take account of this. There is, writes Eades, "... a failure to take into account the significance of many variations in performance and the social dimension of speaking ..." (Eades 1982:63). Eades refers to varieties of Standard English - evident also in Mogo. But she isolates elements of Aboriginality as they impinge on speech. She argues the need for a major re-assessment in the style of verbal interaction between linguists and Aboriginal informants and details examples of the importance of context in determining appropriateness of different questioning techniques and strategies for seeking information. Her descriptions of these 'styles' is certainly valid for Mogo. "... We have seen the inappropriateness of questions in many Aboriginal contexts and the strong social constraints on information seeking ... I suggest it is very important ... to include comments on the social rules of speaking, especially in the area of information exchange ..." (Eades 1982:79). Eades differentiates between middle-class white Australian 'style' of questioning and that of Aboriginal Australian; even suggesting that the rewards are greater if the former is substituted by the latter. It is important to recognize different styles of speaking as concomitants of different contexts. This departs from a rigid model of speech styles as determined by class differences said to reflect variations of middle-class Australian Standard English.

Bernstein's socio-linguistic work postulates a model of speech codes linked with the socialization matrix. I mentioned that adopting his schema, Mogo society divides into a restricted speech code but within a person-centred family context. Eades supports this assessment of Aboriginal communities with a general statement that "... Status is not fixed in Aboriginal society ... Power derives not from hierarchy and position but from continuing rounds of negotiation. It is kin ties which bind people together

and which ensure constant reciprocity in relationships. Verbal strategies are not needed to fulfil this function ..." (Eades 1982:68).

Perhaps one of the most disconcerting aspects of differences in styles of information seeking between Aborigines and middle-class Australians is the control of information as a prerogative of specific situations found in Aboriginal conversation. Not only is there little obligation to directly respond to an addresser of a question, but in some cases people - even over apparently mundane events - are reluctant to answer since it isn't their prerogative. Perhaps they weren't directly involved. Although Eades draws support from the fieldwork of others in traditional Aboriginal communities on this point, a similar consideration operated in Mogo. "... Keen, Sansom and Harris all demonstrate the importance of the RIGHTS to knowledge, be it religious, special or everyday knowledge. All knowledge is considered an inalienable part of relationships between people and has no value of its own separate from these relationships ..." (Eades 1982:70).

When a newcomer to me moved into Mogo I asked several people for the person's correct name - always bandied in conversation as 'Black Duck'. I never succeeded in discovering his 'real name'. I suspect a number of explanations for this; either I failed to ask for information in the correct form, or people actually had no idea of 'Black Duck's' other name, since 'nick-names' are rampant and generally of more importance for identifying people than standard names. [Perhaps he was a distant kinsman.]

A further technique of Aboriginal conversation noted by Eades is 'silence'. This contrasts markedly with middle-class Australian needs to 'fill' silences. And although little research has explored the function of silence in Aboriginal speech, some studies on silence in American Indian society might be useful (see Basso, K.H. (1970) in Giglioli, P.P. 1942). Basso suggests silence amongst Western Apache is a mechanism for coping with social ambiguity or where predictability in social interaction is lost.

Again in situations of confrontation between individuals in Mogo, silence might be used by one of the protagonists to 'suspend' the predictable response, i.e. anger. Additionally, I've witnessed silence as an effective response to a demand/request by kin which the addressee didn't wish to accede to, but also felt morally bound to assist. She resolved the dilemma by keeping silent. This isn't the same as ignoring the request. Silence is also a strategy for dealing with difficult interpersonal relations. The sociality of the Mogo world is fundamentally kin-based. For various reasons it is also a circumscribed world where people must rely upon each other for financial and moral support. The lack of compensatory relations in the wider society are partly responsible for the closed world of Mogo. 'Silence' - or not speaking directly to a person - thus compensates for the enormous psychological pressure of living so closely and being compelled by models of kin behaviour to maintain idealized relationships. It allows both recognition of disrupted relations and the possibility for continuing effective interaction. In a sense it is an appropriate mode for distancing oneself in personal relationships.

The speech styles I've discussed above are idiosyncratic. Their use - quite apart from a localized vocabulary with its Aboriginal content - divide Mogo speakers from other local people. I've no doubt there are pockets of varieties of Standard English amongst these people too. But the component of Aboriginality described above is what differentiates a cultural idiom speech code from a class-based speech code.

Marriage and Kin

If we are to accept Bernstein's view of socio-linguistics as an integral function of family units as milieus of socialization and learning about the orders of the world, then descriptions of Mogo family structures are needed. Again the pattern of marriage and rules governing interaction between kin makes Mogo distinctive. Of the community of 143 people - a large proportion of the number were children and teenagers (see Table 1). Everyone in Mogo was related to one of the several major family groups comprising the population. These family groups have coherence and a bond derived

from the strength of people's feeling for the closeness of family relationships, especially in times of tragedy or conflict. The groups have both consolidation and corporate identity. The major families are the Stewarts, Walkers, Smiths, Bonds, Nyes, Russells, Parsons, Carberrys and Carriages. Lesser families, though still historically integrated units are the Wellingtons and Penriths. Part of the cohesion of these groups is a result of intermarriage over several generations. Quite often sisters of one family marry brothers of the other. Moreover, serial relationships are common. But such relationships remain within the community. Descent can be reckoned bi-laterally. However, the degree of marital and family instability corresponding with serial monogamy generally means children take their mother's surname. Collmann (1979) argued a case for why this is so after fieldwork at fringe-camps around Alice Springs. He favoured a model of adaptation whereby Aboriginal mothers recognized the principle of supporting mothers' benefits institutionalized by the Department of Social Security. It would be silly to deny that since many of the marriages are de facto, payments by social security might be difficult if the family were presenting as a unit. However, as Collmann argues it, the hypothesis poses a chicken-or-the-egg dilemma, which I don't think he satisfactorily resolves. Nor does it take account of a myriad of other reasons for the marriage patterns of Aborigines.

In Mogo, the life-cycle of various relationships - between spouses, siblings and generations - showed a pattern of fluctuation at whose extremes were intense antipathy or closeness. That mothers support their children by accepting single parent's pensions is one guarantee of financial stability in the lives of people facing daily economic uncertainty must be conceded. This is implicit in Collmann's argument. Moreover, lack of work for either men or women compounds the need to 'work one's head' (i.e. think out; reason) over the mechanics of social security. Many white Australians suspect the Machiavellian motives of Aborigines with regard to social service payments, but I doubt this is generally true. In Mogo one family whose household head had resigned from

the Mogo Housing Co., were supported by their relatives until opportunities improved. Despite his wife's entreaties, and his need to support his three younger children as well as contribute to the care of his brother and his brother's family staying with them, this man refused to register for social service. It was a matter of pride with him. Instead, diving for local seafood afterwards sold to restaurants in Batemans Bay provided his income. And of course people gamble - lotto tickets, pokies, raffles - for the same reason. Fortunately for this man and his family he had a run of good luck winning \$75 in a pub lottery on one occasion and a huge hamper of seafood on another occasion.

Children are a conspicuous element of the structure of Aboriginal families. People love them, 'indulge' them and generally rear them with greater equanimity than is seen in white society. The fragility of nuclear family units has less impact on a community where neighbours are kin; most children's age-mates are kin, and where a number of adults are happily accepted by children as sources of comfort and assistance. In one of the households I lived in the great-grandchildren banged on the front door every morning to greet their great-grandmother. Generally they had cereal with us and could choose from a number bought specifically for them. It was also usual for one or other of the children to sleep at the 'FZ' or 'FB's' home. And however over-crowded homes were, room was always found at the bottom of the bed for children.

The flexibility of child-care was partly attributable to Mogo's intense kinship network: children were often in the care of members of the extended family. Women might have their first child at about 17 years but the responsibility of parental care was generally distributed through the help of older or younger siblings, if not parents.

A significant characteristic of Aboriginal child-care in Mogo is that grandparents or great-grandparents often rear them. Such descent line (mostly maternal) responsibility is only one possibility. One woman reared her 'BD' after her brother's wife died. Kitaoji (1976) writes on the patterns of 'rearing up' she

saw along northern coastal New South Wales. In Mogo the pattern of eligibility for rearing up children was less clear. In one case a great-grandfather looked after his great-granddaughter while the mother worked in Batemans Bay. The child, about 2 years old, used 'mum/mummy' as a general term of address to a variety of people who assisted her during the day. His care of the child, as a man, was unusual. It was known that the mother's preferred arrangement was for her mother to have the child. In my household the practise of rearing children's children - the maternal line - happened over several generations. Often too the rearing of other people's children - children of 'MB' or 'FZ' - prevented them ending in state institutions.

As already noted, it often happened that men and women became parents quite young - generally when in their late teens. Since they were likely to settle down by their early-mid twenties in relatively stable relationships, half-siblings were common and always acknowledged. People often tried to have the 'whole' family together for Xmas; photographs were kept of half-siblings and their presence made real to the Mogo child with talk of their brothers or sisters in Sydney or Wollongong.

As already shown, the history of the Aboriginal community at Mogo is only twenty years old. Mogo people have kinship connections right along the New South Wales coast. Few of the older generation were raised up (as children) in Mogo. But all named various areas of the coast known to them as children and adults. They could also cite a host of places in Victoria and southern New South Wales where they'd done seasonal work fruit picking, bean picking, station work, saw milling, etc. But all returned to the Batemans Bay area as 'home'. Indeed opportunities to establish economic security with ~~long-term~~ employment could be turned down if it meant permanent absence from the coast. Being amongst one's own people was a crucial element of the attachment, but so too was the coastal environment with the love of the sea and seafood. Until Mogo became a town where Aborigines were able to get cheap housing and later establish their own housing company, most people lived on the beaches between Barlins and Broulee. A sense

of common history as Aborigines and amongst their families link people irrevocably. It is also a filter through which the white Australian world is encountered, diminishing for them many of its harsh realities. When people travel interstate or to cities they invariably stay with someone in the chain of relatives.

In Mogo the conventions marking categories of people vis-a-vis oneself are kinship inspired. This immediately separates their experience of everyday social interaction from that of White Australia. 'Brother' and 'sister' are bandied between Aboriginal adults, mostly friends, who are met in town. It is used as a general term of address and greeting but implies the connectedness of people irrespective of actual genealogical relatedness. In some cases 'brother' or 'sister' is an appellation denoting a specific kinship relation. It was explained that a 'first' cousin, i.e. MBC or FZC (as well as MZC and FBC), is often called 'brother/sister' because of the closeness. This is more pronounced when first cousin age-mates were 'reared up' together.

However circumstances tend to impinge on any belief that 'brother/sister' follow a general rule of use. Two older women living together adopted 'sissie' (sister) as terms of address. And during a family bereavement two distantly related women referred to each other in conversation as 'sis'. (Actually, one of the women was raised as an age-mate in the family of her companion.)

'Cous(in)' is a common affectionate name often heard. Close friendships between people - within the community - are described in the idiom of kinship. For example, a close friendship between a middle-aged man and younger man (genealogically, the older man stood to the younger as MZH, i.e. 'uncle') was described as 'x' is like a father/son' to me. They 'followed each other' - that is, kept company, undertaking activities together. Moreover there were areas of the younger man's life and behaviour the older never interfered in, since they were 'mates'. The eldest son of the older man in this friendship, was likewise close to his cousin. They were to each other as 'brothers'. The older cousin had freedom to speak openly to his younger companion by virtue of age. So despite the fact that individuals experience relative autonomy

and a liberation from role and status-defined authority in Mogo, they nevertheless respect certain people on the basis of kinship and age. Since this operates in context-dependent situations, and as all Mogo people are kin to each other, the dimension of power is not fixed or absolute. The adult who reared one is expected to receive respect, naturally (see D. von Sturmer 1980). Usually the nurtured individual is especially mindful of their obligation to the 'parent' and sends cards at Xmas and Mother's Day. (Gifts, if financially possible, are also sent.) Single mothers are often concerned as to whether their children display sufficient respect to them. This reflects a serious concern for the preservation of appropriate kin behaviour despite the very 'indulgent' childhood people have.

The normative rules of kinship indicate respectful behaviour at different levels. Respect, in wider Australia, is usually a concomitant of authority, status or role. The nexus between these isn't necessarily made in Aboriginal child-rearing. No doubt this explains some of the anti-authoritarian behaviour in school. Small children are actively encouraged to debunk authority figures. For adult edification younger children are told to stick a defiant finger in the face of their parents and sing 'la! la! la!' - a note of defiance - at the same time. Swearing might also be encouraged. The first words of a 19 month old child were 'fuck off' - generally applied with some appropriateness. When adults wish to impress the child with seriousness or threats they refer to the police, or to the 'mooki-man', (a figure from the Aboriginal supernatural, but akin to the 'bogey-man' of white childhood).

On several occasions of outbursts of violence between people, a horror of the situation sprang from the abhorrence for fighting between close kin, not of fighting itself. A spat between two boys - first cousins aged 3 and 4 years - led to a serious reprimand by the 'FZ' (aunt) who took each aside in turn exhorting that '... cousins shouldn't fight. They've got to look after one another. If you want to fight, fight with someone else ...'.

When two brothers - adults - began fighting one night, their Sydney cousins were outraged. That brothers should fight - and so vehemently - was unthinkable. Intercession isn't however welcomed. (Those foolish enough to try arbitrating are likely to be hit.) Rules governing interpersonal behaviour, like terms of address, are kin-based, and therefore likely to be most intense and regulatory where descent overtly determines ego's social interactions but diminishing with the strength of the kinship connection. With respect, for example, a certain deference is given to people, like one's mother, because she nurtured you, or to an older kin relation. But Mogo individuals are often openly defiant and challenging of groups in white society - such as the police, hospital system, Department of Social Security, etc. Conflict arising between individuals in Mogo is often settled with a different style. In immediate families recriminations are often both presented and defused as jokes, mainly because the object is not to give offence. This consideration counts for little in disagreements with whites. People were quite prepared to speak openly and aggressively to recalcitrant nursing staff or with a disliked school principal. If serious inter-kin disputes erupt people tend to counter accusation with an ideal self-image. Often this is a highly stylized view of what amounts to a 'good person' and generally bears little resemblance to the individual's actual behaviour. Moreover, this projection of an ideal self might precede an outright denial of the disapproved behaviour. Even in the face of glaring evidence to the contrary.

There are other rules, normative behaviours, operating by principles of kinship. The eldest sibling has final decision in family matters. Older children are constantly instructed in care of younger siblings. Indeed, in times of crisis - even on the lesser scale of those of childhood - siblings are encouraged to seek help from each other before anyone else. Further, the bond of kinship often transcends personal feuds so that in times of crisis, families otherwise divided present a unified front. This is most pronounced when families are involved with the Australian legal system. Loyalties are then a matter of Aborigines versus the police: at least, publically. Privately people might well agree the defendant is guilty and prison would do him/her 'some good'.

Economic

Most of the characteristics of Mogo outlined above distinguish it culturally from neighbouring communities and the matrix of local white Australian society.

Although the low economic status of most people in Mogo - unemployed, invalid and aged pensioners, supporting mothers, etc. - is comparable with similar groups in White Australia, few people see that such commonality is experientially the same. As a small town full of people living precariously in a consumer society, Mogo isn't unique. But that this town is almost wholly peopled with one's relations who, by a series of rules and reciprocal obligations, will share their resources, Mogo is exceptional. And the basis on which reciprocal sharing is effected is firmly kinship, not class, inspired. This is peculiarly Aboriginal. Nor do people's self-conception ally them to poor whites. Their commensurate experience is with other 'blacks'. This identification extends to black Americans - entertainers and singers seen on T.V. Marriage partners are more than likely black. People explained this as other blacks understanding their life (unlike whites), finding it easier to accept them and their colour, and generally having a greater fund of commonality (than with whites).

Insufficient incomes are stretched to provide more when, as most households do, a number of people live together and combine some proportion of their money toward food, rent, electricity authority costs (see Eckermann on how people contributed in south-east Queensland). Of course, it is immediate kin who club together; although in what combination tends to fluctuate with changes in the quality of their interactions. The high number of people per house isn't merely an economic strategy. There is overcrowding and a lack of sufficient and adequate housing for everyone. But the closeness of living which people are accustomed to since childhood makes the individual living alone 'aberrant' in the eyes of others. It arouses 'sorry' feelings and comments that the person must be very lonely.

In my household the head was a woman of 66 years who had her 'D' and her 'DD' and 'DDD' sharing. As well there was the elder woman's bachelor nephew, and less regularly the de facto husband of her granddaughter ('DD'). Apart from me, a number of others joined the household for varying lengths of time; the de facto companion of the household head; a distant female relative of advanced years who needed company; and the son of the daughter of the household head.

Not everyone contributed the same money to 'kitty'. It seemed proportionate to the kind of income received and although it was expected to be a regular contribution occasions arose when people tried to keep more for themselves. For a fortnight, the credit run up at the Mogo shop (usually for staples - milk, bread, tea, coffee, sugar, cigarettes and less often frozen chicken pieces, frozen peas and biscuits) for my household was around \$200-250. Petrol, oil and smokes on credit from the garage might be around \$25-40. Until late in my fieldwork meat was generally bought on credit in Moruya and this often amounted to \$10-20 of mince, chops, bacon and sausages. Groceries for the fortnight were to the value of \$60. Fruit and vegetables, it was soon realized, were cheaper in Mogo at the produce store, than in either Batemans Bay or Moruya. And they were likely to give credit. Apart from food, power for heating, cooking, lighting and washing was an important cost. Electricity authority bills were paid as instalments. Some families lived with the power cut off. Little money, after living costs were deducted, was left for entertainment. Major consumer purchases were financed by hire purchase schemes. But a major supplement of income amongst women was cards. In fact it was possible to win up to \$90 above what one started with - if one was 'lucky' and if it was pension day. But as gambling is a zero sum game gambling was a mode of re-distributing and accumulating cash. In intra-community card-playing one person's winnings was another person's loss. On the other hand in extra-community gambling activity total community income can be increased. Windfalls were hoped for income supplements and therefore people bought lottery-tickets, gambled on horses and played the pokies. That it was not a vain hope was proved when a

regular punter won over \$600 which enabled him to register a car, give \$100 toward the household power bill, buy needed warm clothes for a school-aged child, 'shout' friends a drink, and still have a little over!

While gambling at cards was generally a preoccupation of women some men joined in. However, most men supplemented their welfare income with cash from diving for seafood. The intensity of interest and enthusiasm for card games was evident by their 'sittings' - often with a 'full house' of 10 players (for '100-up') and lasting well into the small hours of the night. Apart from '100-up', 'Jackpot' was played. The games had distinctive styles and skills and some players felt their winning chances were increased by a preference for one game over another.

In the past, seasonal work had supplemented welfare income; however labour shedding technological innovations and the general economic downturn now limit this possibility. Social service payments are presently the economic mainstay. Some of the older men grumbled of the uselessness and laziness of today's younger men, but given the high unemployment rate in the area, I'm not sure their criticism was justified. Besides, with sources of credit in kin and others, it was possible to maintain a degree of flexibility that belied the actual economic resources. However, lower material expectations also helped. As to the degree of flexibility I draw comparison with whites on a similar socio-economic rung, whom I suspect are likely to eke out an existence in isolation from neighbours and devoid of the economic buffer mutual kin support gives.

The economic pattern of Mogo follows that of a socio-economically depressed community. Credit is important. So is 'borrowing' money; although this is only possible because individuals borrow from their relations. In fact, there are a number of problems associated with the necessity for meeting demands of kinship. Sharing, however institutionalized, is counter-balanced by the individual's wish to be 'self-centred'. People revert to subterfuge in order to avoid obligations to kin,

thereby attempting to assert a sense of disguised individual autonomy. Food staples, or special, luxury foods (cake, chocolate) were generally hidden in bedrooms. What food was kept in kitchen cupboards was more-or-less available to those of the extended family who needed or desired it. Outright refusals to requests were rarely heard. It was better to answer with an explanation as to why it was impossible to assist. Whether the explanation was based on fact or fiction was not important. The metamessage was clearly understood by both parties. People, however much they craved autonomy, would assist kin. But sometimes they were cunning with their public. Attempts to balance the demands of oneself against community ideals produced psychological tension dealt with in several ways. But coping-strategies tended to be similar irrespective of personality differences. In general, the construction of community ideals are those based on Aboriginal notions of care of others and obligations due to others. It is more than the adaptive strategy common to the 'culture of poverty' argument which might be used to understand behaviour and norms in Mogo.

In descriptions of themselves Mogo people stress their Aboriginality: 'black kids'; 'black bastard'; 'black cunt/arse' etc. Cognitively they mark themselves as separate from the white community by their spatial use and affective knowledge of Mogo geography. They impose a sense of separateness. Certain of the businesses in Mogo - the pottery, antiques and nursery - are of little, if any, interest to Mogo people: they represent consumer goods of little value in the community. Indeed these businesses acknowledge that their principal source of income is from tourists and passing traffic.

The few European inhabitants of Mogo mostly have acreage properties which removes them from the three main streets where Aboriginal houses and families cluster. Apart from older, retired Europeans, the younger Europeans are mainly refugees from cities, keen to establish 'alternative' life styles for raising families. These people seem to enjoy a certain social familiarity, however limited, with Mogo Aborigines. Nevertheless, Aborigines in Mogo

perceive the locale differently from the rest of the community. Of course they are familiar with the general geography, but perceptions of areas appropriate to Blacks and Whites differ. Most outdoor informal social interaction amongst the Aborigines occurs in places unlikely to be frequented by whites: whether local people or visitors. For example, when 'the boys' hold a drinking party they go 'up the back' (into the State forest). Or people holding a mixed drinking party would adj^{ourn}~~oin~~ to the far side of the Mogo 'park', basically a clearing in the scrub, but bounded by the dirt roads of the residential section of town. The bush is effectively a male domain. Men collect firewood and hunt wild pigs there. Women who went 'up the back' would immediately arouse suspicions of sexual infidelity, jealousy, etc. Europeans rarely visit the principal residential area. There is no reason to. Rose (having worked as a community health nurse in Mogo for about three years) documented the separation between Europeans and Aborigines "... As a rule, the Mogo Aborigines do not mix with the remainder of the White community in Mogo ... but a few of the younger ones maintain some contact, mostly through school or work in Moruya, with whites of their own generation ..." (1976:8).

Mogo Aborigines make use of the surrounding paddocks - rabbiting and collecting mushrooms and blackberries in season. Some of the horses of community members are grazed, informally, locally. Areas of the bush are dumping grounds for discarded car bodies and the mounds of household rubbish the local council service fails to collect. Indeed, many people lived in improvised shelters in the surrounding scrub in the past before the Housing Co. (1976) was operational.

Social interaction between Mogo Blacks and Whites is not likely to be the result of shopping together in the local store. With some exceptions, most of the Aboriginal children tend to play together at the local public school; understandable perhaps since there are few white students. Surprisingly, given the above remarks on separateness, a teenage boy attached to my family brought his white girlfriend home. This girl knew all her Aboriginal age-mates from time together at the local high school

and obviously felt quite at home in the community. However, her ability to mix so easily was due to her school friendships and it was apparent from her remarks that she shared with them a sense of being an 'outsider'. Although this girl, for the short time she and her boyfriend were in Mogo together, was accepted into the community, 'mixed' relationships weren't always approved of. One woman was the mother of two children by different white men. There was a certain discomfort about this amongst older people. Needless to say, parentage made absolutely no difference to the love or care the children received. 'Gubba's woman' as a term of derision was once said to this woman.

Conclusion

As a cultural entity Mogo is discrete as far as Aboriginal people are concerned. Individuals live and return there because it allows them a way of life which takes account of cultural preferences in structuring family life and socializing children in the ways of the world. It seems too that it provides an environment where people can positively assert their Aboriginality, while also bridging in some measure the differences between their community and that of the larger Australian context. Mogo Aborigines distinguish themselves from Aborigines and Aboriginal life styles in Wallaga Lake. The latter is the butt of derisive jokes. Mogo is considered a better place to live. To the outsider the town is less obviously Aboriginal than Wallaga Lake. But as the discussion above indicates, boundary devices operate to contain and 'close' Mogo as a specific kind of community. Certainly life in Mogo forms a matrix of socio-cultural meanings and filters through which to learn about oneself in relation to the rest of the world. Outside it, people often have little skill to cope with the white Australian ways of living. Nor do they feel comfortable. There seems enough psychological distress to ensure that those who leave only do so for a short time. Later chapters deal specifically with the details of Aboriginality developed as a sense of identity and comprising core values, that is, the typified behavioural patterns or "... integrated system of knowledge which constitutes the source of all meaningful behaviour ..." (McKeich 1977:254). A sociological description of the world of Mogo

impinges on discussion of identity since identity itself is
"... socially constructed via the dialectic between man and society
- it is socially bestowed and socially maintained. A man knows
himself, or is known by, the company he keeps, or the company that
keeps him. He belongs as much to his world view as his world view
belongs to him ..." (McKeich 1977:261).

CHAPTER 3

The Beginnings of Ambivalence in Identity; Socialization

"... Identity is a phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between individual and society ... Theories about identity are always embedded in a more general interpretation of reality; they are "built into" the symbolic universe and its theoretical legitimations, and vary with the character of the latter ..." (Berger and Luckmann 1972:195).

Several theoretical ideas shape interpretation of the dialectical process of identity development in Mogo. To begin, I would argue that cognitive dissonance is a feature of identity formation in Mogo. It is the conditions of primary socialization which are responsible. Namely, the fact of significant others being without exception kin relations. Moreover, the matrix of socialization is overwhelmingly a 'Black', closed community filtering information of wider Australian society. These conditions provide a stable context for the beginning of self/other differentiation and the legitimation of an identity largely 'Aboriginal' as understood by the participating adult members. In fact there is a sufficiently objectified understanding of Aboriginality for socializing children.

In the second stage of identity formation a cultural world-view is constructed. Secondary socialization involves the internalized understandings of institutionalized roles but devoid of any affective association with the role-teacher. In discussing the identity process and segmenting it into primary and secondary stages I follow Berger and Luckmann (1972). Thus, what is actually being described and constructed is the dialectical exchange between knowledge of society as both objectivated meaning and subjective experience. Talk of socialization processes are, consequently, an analytic description of how an understanding of social reality is achieved by the individual. In an effort to achieve such processual understanding of reality certain reality-maintenance structures exist. In Mogo violence, gossip, lying and fantasy function in this capacity. The necessity for them is partly the result of the 'cognitive dissonance' apparent during secondary

socialization. By 'cognitive dissonance' I mean modes of perception, organization and categorization of dimensions of the environment and their disparate connection to each other. The concept was first applied in the psychological studies of acculturated Aboriginal communities carried out during the 1960s and 1970s. Value-orientation tests were similarly used to measure degrees of acculturation in relation to European orientations.

However while the term 'cognitive dissonance' is appropriated from psychology it refers more aptly in the present discussion to the kind of slippage from primary to secondary socialization Berger and Luckmann (1972) label 'alternation'. ['Individualism' is an analogous state, i.e. individuals have a choice between discrepant realities and identities.] Other conditions of unsuccessful socialization exist (assuming the two processes come together to some degree). But in general terms, unsuccessful socialization means "... asymmetry between objective and subjective reality ..." (Berger and Luckmann 1972:183). The most appropriate model for understanding a successful/unsuccessful socialization is a continuum of perpetual interaction and readjustment of the subjective/objectivated interpretations of reality. Yet even with successful socialization discrepancies occur. In most cases this is likely to be accommodated. But whether this is possible depends upon the initial conditions of primary socialization and how alternate realities were mediated by significant others. Berger and Luckmann (1972) outline specific structural conditions likely to result in inadequate socialization. Of these, the circumstances of relevance to socialization in Mogo are where incongruity between primary and secondary socialization occurs.

"... The unity of primary socialization is maintained, but in secondary socialization, alternative realities and identities appear as subjective options. The options are, of course, limited by the social-structural context of the individual. ... When secondary socialization has been differentiated to the point where subjective disidentification from one's proper place" in society becomes possible, and when at the same time the social structure does not permit the realization of the subjectively chosen identity, an interesting development occurs ..." (Berger and Luckmann 1972:191).

The development is of a fantasy identity which the individual considers his 'real self'.

This, I maintain, is a cognitive description of socialization in Mogo. During primary socialization the closed and bounded nature of the socializing environment projects a positive subjective and objective sense of Aboriginality. Some of this coherence is undermined during secondary socialization when individuals must confront both the wider Australian evaluation of their Aboriginality as well as the possibilities of different social roles (however limited) available to them. In the case of some Aborigines in Mogo there has been definite efforts within the Aboriginal political movements to actualize these possibilities and an associated chosen identity. I refer to younger adults who have taken active part in Land Rights demonstrations and the tent embassy in Canberra. Even within the community the government funded Housing Company has provided similar scope to tease out the possibility of options for a subjectively chosen identity. Involvement with Aboriginal educational consultative groups is a further example of the opportunity to experience alternative possibilities. But these are somewhat exceptional examples when in fact discrepancies between primary and secondary socialization are a generalized process.

Sociologically Mogo's position is anomalous. Although communities like Bodalla have significant numbers of Aboriginal inhabitants (1981 DAA Community Affairs Profiles: Bodalla 105 Aborigines), there are few other communities along the south coast as solidly Aboriginal as Mogo. This is excepting former reserve communities such as Wallaga Lake, Wreck Bay, Roseby Park, etc.

The child growing up in Mogo is surrounded by significant kin. Often four generations of kin are part of the child's social network. Moreover, apart from his siblings he will grow-up in the company of cousins (FZCh, etc.) and similar age-mates of both sexes. In both the Mogo pre-school and primary school his social

matrix continues to include his kin. Moreover, like himself, his companions have the same sense of Aboriginality with associated behaviours and orientations. But for the first time he is faced with adults who are not significant others, but who nonetheless have a certain authority and set about instructing the children by force of institutionalized social roles into their perspective and realities. None of the school teachers in Mogo are Aboriginal. Some of them, have however, worked with Aboriginal children before. In addition, there is an Aboriginal teachers' aide employed at both the pre-school and primary school. Despite this, trouble between the parents of Mogo school children and the teaching authorities - particularly the headmaster - regularly occur. Hearing only one side of the case it is difficult to judge where the problems lie. However, parents are disturbed by the apparent authoritarianism of the head-teacher's dealings with the children. There is often discontent with his handling of difficult interpersonal relations; whether concerning the students or the parents. It would seem that most of the difficulties spring from a discrepancy in philosophies about children and their behaviour held by the Mogo community and the head-teacher. It would also seem that the attitudes of the head-teacher are more reflective of general institutional attitudes about children's education.

The gap between primary internalization of role and secondary socialization widens for children in high school. Compulsory education to a certain age means that in high school children once again have their kin-companions. But Aborigines no longer form a majority in the school or class population. In fact, they are a minority. Friends they are likely to form with European students tend to be in a similar category to themselves - marginal and a minority in the wider school environment. This was confirmed by a young European girl who came to live, as the girlfriend of one of the younger men (aged 17) in Mogo. I asked her how she found living in Mogo and remarked that she seemed to have lots of peer-group friends in the town. She agreed that she had many friends but had known most of them from high school and had always knocked around with them in and out of school. While the girl had a living parent she was virtually disowned by her and left to fend for herself. Moving into co-habitation in Mogo entailed dropping out

of school and qualifying for the dole. Because of her personal circumstances this girl had a marginal interest and involvement in her school experience and so naturally drifted into close company with her Aboriginal class-mates. Not improbably her social experience of school life was equally peripheral giving her a further commonality with Aboriginal students.

Most Aboriginal students leave school at 15 years. To stay and achieve a certificate at 5th year is unusual but a key to future opportunities in Aboriginal educational schemes. There are various reasons for the high proportion who quit, ranging from economics to a personal disinclination. Indeed, perhaps many of the younger women understand their future with reference to those social roles most common amongst their significant others: namely, motherhood and the corollary of adulthood. A number of children leave secondary school and shortly after become adults by assuming the responsibilities of such social roles. During those years at high school Aboriginal children are introduced to other life experiences and value systems. Knowledge of other possibilities may impinge upon their subjective sense of identity nurtured during primary socialization. If this is so, the individual faces discrepancy and disparity since the options for alternative experiences seem very real but require a break in the transition between primary and secondary socialization and the development of self. The knowledge that other experiences of life are possible and just as real as their own, suggest that the individual might choose his subjective identity and participate in the life-experiences associated with it. In fact, the process is not optional, limited as it is primarily by the individual's social-structural context. Some forms of differentiation in secondary socialization are extreme. For example, where the social-structural option for achieving a chosen, subjective sense of self is limited people may begin to fantasize about their identity. The process of awareness of the wider world and its possibilities generally undervalues the orientations associated with Aboriginality and internalized during primary socialization. So a dual process occurs. Awareness of different realities may widen horizons but simultaneously it undermines some of the equanimity with which the question 'Who am I?' was answered during primary socialization.

No doubt the older generation of Aboriginal people experienced some disjunction in the processual development of identity. The conditions of their employment in wider society clearly indicated a difference and separation, socially and economically, between themselves and others. Fifty years ago Aboriginal people engaged with wider society mostly through employment - as domestic labour and as unskilled workers. The differences between their life options and those of their employers must have seemed acute.

Few Mogo teenagers have the opportunity to experience first-hand the anomalous position between themselves and employers. Unemployment in the area is high, although the local school and general store provide the few jobs which are available within the community. However, security of employment is tenuous, subject to business prosperity and the good will of the school administration. There is less than a handful of employed teenagers - all of whom are girls. The Mogo school employs a pre-school Aboriginal teachers' aide and the local general store gave a few hours per week employment to two teenagers in after-school and weekend work. [Since I left Mogo the general store has changed hands and this avenue for part-time work has closed. The general store has amalgamated with the petrol station and is now staffed by Europeans.] Nevertheless, I suggest that ambivalence and cognitive awareness of other life options have touched their lives including their sense of identity. McKeich (1977:260) argues that this awareness is integral to self-identity as an Aborigine, "... The out-group, by rejecting the primary subject, gives rise to a part-Aboriginal world view, and is now included in that world view and serves to reinforce it. The store of knowledge not only encompasses what part-Aborigines 'know' about themselves; it also takes into account what they 'know' about non-part-Aboriginal society and culture. What they 'know' about outsiders is coloured by their experiences with them, or, more particularly, by their definitions of the relevant situations which they encounter ...". However, my argument extends McKeich's somewhat selective view of the consequences of learning how others regard Aborigines. Ambivalence about selfhood is one of the significant consequences of

unsuccessful socialization amongst Aborigines in Mogo. But the disparity in cognitive understanding of self is mediated by a communal, public acknowledgement of Aboriginality which serves, in Mogo, as a behavioural, and by implication cultural, reference to appropriate and normative interactional modes and roles.

The child is tamed as an uncivilized being with reference to this folk model. By it he learns to share openly; to request from significant others with complete trust in immediate satisfaction; to defer his own wishes to the over-arching group demands etc. Eckermann sums up these normative interactions under the notion of communality whereby Aborigines "... place much greater emphasis on the group, close family and extended kin relationships and the individual's identification and sharing with the community ..." (Eckermann 1973:30). Translated into everyday experience these values show up as a disregard for exclusive use of personal property (borrowing between kin is common and covers everything from clothes and cars to food); an ability to accommodate people and actions outside the less flexible institutionalized role behaviours in European society (parents for example can rely upon other kin, especially MM, to help with the raising of children; it is not a task seen as exclusive); and a first priority interest with the concern of immediate kin (significant others). Few of these publicly orientated strategies are without conflict for the individual in the community. While the ethos of public-centred values reflect concepts of institutionalized social roles in Aboriginal society, in the realm of introspective or subjective self conflict between personal and public desires are evident together with ambiguity in the objectivation of selfhood. By the latter, objectivation of selfhood, I mean the realization of one's subjective selfhood in external, social circumstances. Individuals oscillate between a thorough going egocentrism and identification with community (translated as kin-based) possibilities. At its most extreme the ambiguity resembles a kind of socially exposed schizophrenia. One individual who was considered extreme by the community suffered this oscillation. He would leave home for days at a stretch without providing financially for his wife and three young sons.

During these absences he would be enjoying a good time - according to the gossip which reached us. His return was always accompanied by a major row in the household with accusations of unfaithfulness flung at his very timorous wife. On the other hand, in times of real stress he would approach his immediate family and next-of-kin with effusive protestations of how much he loved and cared for them.

The general point of this case is the behavioural extremes of an individual's interpersonal relations, between egocentrism and group identification, as a common social phenomena in Mogo.

Furthermore, I think there is some significance in the alignment with group interests/identifications in a social or personal crisis. Ideology allows some degree of resolution of the asymmetry between subjective and objective realities with regard to personhood. By the tacit agreement of adults in Mogo, children are socialized along particular lines, and in particular cognitive and affective styles. Adults have a mental template of 'Aboriginality' by which to achieve this end and it is done with a degree of consistency supportive of the ideology throughout Mogo. This is so despite the relative differences in individual attachment to the ideology. The 'template' is a model, or ideology, of idealized Aboriginal behaviours and values. It is partly contrastive, deriving a certain legitimation by life-ways which are not European. According to this model, the ideal Aboriginal person is kin-orientated, generous, concerned with his family, good-humoured, affectionate with children, disdainful of materialism, to name a few qualities. These are in the main people-orientated characteristics. They might also be said to represent aspects of emotional survival. The social value of an ideology of Aboriginality resides with its means for resolution of conflicting interpretations of objectivated and subjectified reality. In Mogo, for example, the individual is encouraged to merge his desires with that of the group (presented as a kin group). The social-structural contexts of Mogo daily life operate on this principle. However, a person may experience an individually motivated response - not to share; to retain exclusive use of his pension, for example. Within the existing social context these behaviours are

not encouraged. Indeed they undermine the socio-economic structure since for one thing the economic viability of Mogo is largely the consequence of resource-sharing amongst extended kin groups. Borrowing, pawning and gambling are three strategies for economic resilience in a propertyless group.

The ideology of Aboriginality mediates the ambiguities of the stresses (of individualism versus group-orientation, and the discrepancies in subjective identity options due to unsuccessful socialization) by providing an ideal of how an 'average', well socialized Aborigine in Mogo behaves. The ideal is a yardstick by which individuals can align their own behaviour and desires and suggests an unproblematic identity.

What social value is there in an ideology of Aboriginality? Firstly, there is a resolution of cognitive dissonance effected by the gloss on actual and perceived behaviour within Mogo. Secondly, it is a means for merging the apparent disparity between primary and secondary socialization and the entailments of this after contact with wider society. In short, Aboriginality enables Mogo people to subjectively and objectively align their experience of Aboriginal realities in ways disallowed by wider society. The disallowance I refer to includes both practical aspects of Aboriginal life styles (e.g. housing arrangements, care of children, resource management, etc.) and affective spheres; namely, the valuing of these practical strategies as positive and as Aboriginal. The institutions of European Australia, e.g. Housing Commission and educational authorities, health bodies etc., often denigrate Aboriginal ways and try to impose or refute Aboriginal perspectives.

At least one anthropologist, George De Vos (1975:165-82), argues that it is the emotional valuing of social activity etc., which has precedence over cognitive processes in guiding human behaviour where dissonance is an issue. He writes of 'cognitive dissonance' as "...the tension produced by inconsistency in perception [producing] a need for resolution by altering what one sees or believes into a more consistent pattern ..." (De Vos

1975:168). This is what produces the ideology of Aboriginality which is characterized by a 'false consciousness' of particular social situations, while simultaneously evaluating positively Aboriginal values and 'philosophy'. He argues within a Freudian, psychoanalytic framework that "... it is not dissonance in cognitive patterns per se which necessitates resolution or consistency in human psychological structures; dissonance is a concern when there is affective arousal ..." (De Vos 1975:169).

The relevance of De Vos' discussion is not mitigated by the issue it addresses - how incest avoidance arises during primary socialization. There is a consistency in De Vos' denial of first order causation to cognitive dissonance and his elaborated Freudian discussion. However, I disagree that the matter of dissonance needs to be seen as an either/or causation. Nor is there a necessity for considering cognitive and affective dissonance as mutually exclusive. Briggs (1982:109-133) develops an interesting exegesis of value socialization amongst the Inuit which draws on some of De Vos' ideas whilst synthesizing the cognitive-affective processes. She writes of the sense of danger implicit in values engendering Inuit social continuity since contradictory values, e.g. killing-nurturance, are both held in esteem by the community. Faced with the question of how children learn to juggle contradictory values during socialization, she suggests cognitive mechanisms for resolution. Inuit are aware of the blurry demarcation between the polar values of esteeming-devaluing. This psychologically tenuous position "... results in values being defended with compensatory intensity. The sense of danger, then, signals that the cognitive devices like compartmentalization and rationalization that societies use for coping with potentially conflictful situations are not complete solutions; but, far more important, it is itself a mechanism for coping with those conflicts ..." (Briggs 1982:122).

From the ethnography of Inuit socialization Briggs illustrates what the contrary values are and how these are embedded in Inuit social structure. Much of what she describes is paralleled in Mogo - the heavy emphasis on interpersonal games as a learning system; the immediate gratification of children's

demands; sensitizing of children to particular kinds of sanctioning (e.g. shaming/ridicule, etc.). Perhaps one of the most interesting and relevant points drawn from her discussion is the issue of both social and personal levels of dissonance. "...Data are particularly needed on the presence, the management, and the social and psychological effects of contradictory values and emotions, both within societies and within individual members of those societies ..." (Briggs 1982:122).

Likewise, the data on Mogo might be seen in this perspective. Not only is there a problem of self/other differentiation at a sociological and individual level, but the amount of cognitive dissonance entailed can be considered on two levels. Firstly, there are the difficulties of being Aboriginal vis-a-vis Australian society. Most of what this involves refers to the disjunction between primary and secondary socialization and is one of the principal interests of this chapter. Secondly, living within the context of a discrete Aboriginal community, influences the experience of both conditions. The social-structural character of Mogo and its position in the district interferes with the prerequisites for successful socialization. Resulting dissonance is, nevertheless, neutralized by a gloss (ideology) which people effect in moments of social ambiguity. They do this by referring the interpretation of events to the public sphere. In this arena, true knowledge is public and discrepant social actions are obscured through gossiping and its inherent affirmation of normative behaviour. This process is dealt with in detail in Chapter 4, especially in regard to an adulterous widower and how he managed the ensuing scandal at his behaviour. The point is however, that true knowledge is public, not private, and that certain principles of common sense and order are confirmed and reiterated in this domain. Primarily this is the function of ideology and its reality maintaining structures. Objectively these structures mystify the actual nature of deviating circumstances. Thus, when normative behaviour is transgressed, ideology, through public gossip, reaffirms and upholds the ideal.

Veracity of knowledge in Mogo is not a simple matter of distinguishing between fact/fiction by positivistic evidence. The distinction is insignificant when the only legitimate context of information is public. A strict dichotomy between fact/fiction for knowledge of social experience is not particularly useful in Aboriginal communities. Their informational styles differ from those of Europeans and are embedded in sociality. How social experiences are interpreted is a matter of consensus. Consequently, fantasy can play an important part in the maintenance of reality. I was unwittingly involved in a situation where fantasy became public if not 'factual' knowledge. An older man became particularly amorous in his regard for me. Most of the feeling he had for me was kept separate from the actual character of our social interactions, but meanwhile he was telling several community members of how I loved only him and we planned to marry. Naturally, the latter would happen once I left Mogo. It was of course a 'fantasy'. An orthodox interpretation of his 'wild' thinking would doubtless stress the resolution through fantasy of certain life-problems - for example, loneliness, repressed sexuality. Certainly these were indeed elements of this man's circumstances. Moreover, in Mogo fantasies are often activated when people feel helpless and powerless to change undesirable personal circumstances. Sometimes, a fantasy about leaving Mogo and establishing a household totally removed from kinship demands and the frustrations of close association alleviates interpersonal stress. In a sense, such spoken fantasies allow people to exercise a vicarious sense of control and independence. But fantasy of the kind the old man was telling about his 'relationship' with me differed from this. To understand the difference between the fantasies it is essential to appreciate how gossip operates in Mogo. Firstly, it is a control on social behaviour by modifying people's actions through public ridicule, shame and public prohibition. Secondly, and more importantly, gossip acts as a kind of public information system. (Ref. to literature on gossip see Haviland, J. 1977; Lienhardt, P.A. 1975; Haviland, J. 1977; Lienhardt, P.A. 1975; Gilson 1976. Allied to gossip are naming systems - see Breen 1982; Gilmore 1982. Lying - see Sweetser 1981 (manuscript).) Public knowledge is generally considered 'true'

knowledge. What the individual knows is of little relevance when kept to him/herself. Without public consent and appropriation information retained by individuals may as well be 'fantasy' or fiction since it has no social connectedness. Hence 'private' opinions are largely irrelevant for the 'truthful' evaluation of evidence. What the unsuccessful suitor tried to do by telling significant community members (generally older people of the immediate family I lived with) of 'our' plans was to introduce the affair into the public arena. In doing so, the fantasy could become 'fact' since all community information of individual behaviour and thought is legitimated here. What legitimates its truthfulness is the effect it has on other people's behaviour. Putting information into the public arena has the direct consequence of affecting interpersonal responses. With the stories of my affair with him, he intended that people would act toward me 'as if it were true'. Whether or not people act overtly as lovers is irrelevant given that 'deep' feelings are kept concealed. Perhaps there is also an element of signification-reversal, i.e. the most intense feelings are publicly paraded as the most casual.

There is a nexus between fantasy and gossip. They may be considered different sides of the one coin and concern public/private knowledge on one side and issues of fact/fiction on the other. 'Private knowledge' is a relative term and is best understood by Eades' (1982) notion of access to information as a corollary of sociality and the questioner's entitlement as kin. In Aboriginal society (Eades writes, 1982:69) "... Knowledge is not a free and easily-acquired good. Knowledge is acquired or passed on as a part of social interaction and is subject to strong controls in many instances.... Much information simply is not available to a non-participant after the event ...". Private knowledge is never understood as a canonical case in the Aboriginal community but refers to a system of information dissemination based on differential access. Even public knowledge may be somewhat restricted. I recall two instances where public knowledge of a local identity was kept from me until after I had personally encountered the individual. There was no thought of preparing me with foreknowledge. Perhaps it was withheld partly from belief

that until I was actually involved, the information was superfluous. In any case, I think the principles of access/withholding of social knowledge differ from those in our society where information assumes a social premise of knowledge informing and thus helping people (see Sweetser 1981; unpublished manuscript).

Whether information is true or false is largely a matter of its relationship to the public domain of the social world. What I've tried to indicate is that shared information - gossip - is hardly a matter of whether true or false, primarily because once knowledge is communally shared, however differentially, people act '... as if ...'. The obvious corollary of this is the behavioural control gossip has. Despite some flexibility in normative behavioural styles in Mogo, gossip is a particularly effective modifier, especially of gender relations. Moreover, male-female interactions are the most common sources of public information and in fact concern the whole community since its social viability depends to some extent on stable family arrangements. Needless to say this isn't easily achieved especially as a good deal of pre- and extra-marital sex is confined to the community. This is socially problematic in Mogo as few men or women are unattached, whether temporarily or permanently. Conflict over women and over men is common. Indeed suspicions can be aroused merely by talking together at the club, particularly if one of the persons is 'single'.

Earlier I suggested that events and emotions people considered important were demonstratively under-stated in public life. I might add that distinguishing between public/private life is rather arbitrary given that Mogo people almost exclusively conceived and express their life style in terms of the publicly orientated social world. There is an apparent casualness to how important affective events are handled; news of death ('... Well she's 6 ft under and we're 6 ft on top, so let's dress and go to the Club ...'); personal misfortune ('... That's life! It's not worth worrying about ...'); farewelling significant others ('... See ya later ...' as they glance away from card-playing).

Although such casualness is not to deny that on occasions full-bodied emotions are publically exposed in passionate outbursts; enjoyment of jokes; and panic when accidents happen.

Briggs develops an argument from such signification-reversals amongst the Inuit. An extreme example of Inuit rationalization of opposing values - aggression/nurturance - is in the connection between injury and nurturance. It is a lesson something like the rationalization 'I only hurt you because I love you'. Briggs writes of this (1982:117), "... A third rationalization that is related, though somewhat differently, to the association between injury and nurturance is that mistreating someone one loves, as in the case of signaaq-behaviour, tests one's own psychic strength, one's ability to endure pain - because of course one feels pain when one hurts someone one loves: 'It's hard to do'. The common theme underlying all these ... rationalizations is that behaviour appropriate to the aggressive value is seen as an expression of the opposite value, nurturant affection ...".

I quote Briggs to illustrate the point of affective value reversals. Nothing as extreme as the Inuit case is found in Mogo. However, there is some sense of preparing children by the same principle for life's vicissitudes. When I had wanted to pick up a small crying baby I was admonished by the mother not to do so as it merely spoilt her. Instead the baby had to learn that needs to some extent must be met internally, and it was from love for her child that she discouraged others from holding her. The same 'lesson' is also evident in later childhood. From the verandah of my house I observed children (aged 4-6 years of mixed sex) playing. One of the girls (aged 5 years) was playing tug of war with a very energetic young adult dog. The dog eventually overwhelmed her and stood over her prostrate body playfully nipping her neck. The adults on the verandah of her house sat unperturbed. Although it was obvious the child was distressed no-one took any notice, except for an age-mate who rushed up and shoo-ed the dog away. For a few minutes the girl lay sobbing. The age-mate offered no help but merely stood and watched her, then turned and rejoined his playmates. After a few minutes the girl got up and did the same. At no stage were adults involved nor their help sought.

Watching the scene it seemed that while social identity in Mogo involved an implicit association between age-mates ['sibling sets'] for support, individuals also learnt that identity had a strong emotional quality. In this sphere Briggs' material is relevant. Identity in Mogo is characterized, simultaneously by group identification and existential selfhood. While people know they may depend for support and material assistance upon the kinship network, it is equally clear that emotional support comes from within. Hence a quiet sympathy is extended to people in distress, but never directly in face-to-face encounters. Sympathy is extended over circumstances but not in relation to internal (psychological) states. In the emotional sphere people are taught to be individually orientated and self-sufficient. Displays of physical affection are restricted between adults (except in 'private') but very open between adults and children and in the rough'n tumble sexual 'horse-play' of certain categories of opposite sexes. Mother/son-in-law relationships seemed to be one such approved category; although age-difference also tended to influence the situation as women often bear children early (late teenage years) and this can merge the age distinction lessening their category differences.

One of the reasons for stressing the affective value of interpersonal relationships is that this is the realm where people establish themselves. A small number of families in Mogo are 'homeless'. That is to say, they habitually move house and often the family is split up with older children kept in the care of grandparents or mother's brother's family in Mogo. Other parts of the family may go interstate or to Sydney on indefinite stays. This degree of mobility amongst the present generation in Mogo is unusual although long-term stability in employment or housing, even sometimes in relationships, is never taken for granted. Indeed for most people their homes in Mogo represent their first long-term residence. Consequently, it is the domain of interpersonal association where stability has always been established. This also explains why so few men and women are unattached and why parenthood is important to their sense of self.

The ideology of Aboriginality operates in interpersonal interaction. Sense and order in the world is the outcome of reference to ideology in the reality maintaining structures of fantasy, gossip, and knowledge control by fact/fiction. Reality maintaining structures provide the gloss on experiential dissonance. It allows Aborigines to live in a social world where they can value their Aboriginality and the specific features of it. Wider Australia is skeptical of the Aboriginality of 'mixed-bloods', but Mogo Aborigines affirm their cultural integrity by virtue of common world-view and socialization practises. For example, the relationship between parent and child within the family in wider Australia rests largely on their relative structural positions and the confining of kinship to the nuclear family. In Mogo personal respect for another is a subjective concern and the authority socially invested in individuals is generally a concomitant of kinship category and age. An older man told me that his son could say anything to the son's first cousin (WZS) because he was older. Moreover, the two cousins spent a good deal of time together and were equally treated by the father as 'sons'. So fictive kinship also influences the etiquette of interpersonal relations. It is rare for authority and role to automatically coalesce in Mogo. This caused the local headmaster quite a few difficulties in dealing with the students since he had no kin relation with them as the primary context of interaction. In a small way it indicates the structural contradiction Mogo Aborigines experience of themselves in the wider world and a further example of the gap between primary and secondary socialization. Another interesting clue to the interpretative structure Aborigines in Mogo impose on experience is their explanation for why children are disgruntled about school. Since understanding of the world is directly mediated by others (kin) children's reluctance for school is thought by adults to be due to people (Europeans) mistreating them in some way. Children themselves rarely grumbled about their teachers. It was more a case of parents' interpreting adversely the headmaster's behaviour. After all, this person was not Aboriginal, nor a kinsman, and the

children were as likely to behave with him as they did with other Europeans - by not swearing or fighting in front of him and generally maintaining a low social profile.

Behaviour in front of Europeans tends to be modified to accord with their knowledge of how Europeans structure the world and value Aborigines within it. Swearing and fighting are often taken as markers of the frontiers of these discrepant worlds. Aborigines see these aspects as integral to their world, but disdained by Whites and often used by Whites to characterize Aborigines. In the close presence of Europeans, Aborigines are often shy and quiet in their behavioural presentation and adopt different tones and speech idioms. Specific behaviours denoted as inappropriate in front of Europeans are publically swearing, cashing pension cheques at the pub, drinking in town and walking the streets drunk. Most of these are best understood in their significance by reference to entrenched European stereotypes of Aboriginal social behaviour. So, reluctance to go to school, as the parents reasoned it, must have been something to do with the school principal and his personality rather than with the children.

Explanations of how the environment is organized, operates and is categorized are person-centred. Certainly this is the matrix of life in Mogo. It is not always clear to Mogo people that other principles operate as first order principles. Children learn some of the manoeuvres for coping with the cognitive dissonance of being Aboriginal in wider Australia through the fantasy games adults engage children in. Inuit play games with a strong emphasis on the emotionally charged context of the experience; according to Briggs. The stability of the forms of these games perpetuates Inuit interpersonal styles. At the same time the games "... provide a way of expressing and managing profoundly felt value conflicts; they are cathartic for both adults and children ... The games, as dramas, create for children the plots of everyday life by selecting stimuli that are to be attended to and interpreting them in cultural terms ..." (Briggs 1982:118-119). Although the content of the games differ in Mogo from the Inuit cases, there is,

nevertheless, a structural similarity in their generalized purpose. A ritualized play-acting about aggression between adult and child is common. Generally their actual roles are reversed, with the child 'apparently' capable of over-powering and aggressively threatening the adult. Often the games are played as roles not as familiar personalities. In other words, the adult threatens the child not with physical violence but the possibility of danger and terror in the form of police; of the local 'bogey-man' (mōōky-man). Always children are encouraged to conquer their fear and assert themselves during these games. Moreover, children also are encouraged to debunk the charisma associated with authority figures: at least at home. Kin encourage very young children to defy their parents to everyone's amusement. Swearing in very young children is also amusing to adults and it is not uncommon for a child's first words to be a profanity. Within the confines of Mogo's community life none of these behaviours are problematic, although by certain ages (3 years perhaps) children are encouraged to be more discriminating in their use of language.

Difficulties arise when children are school-age not because of the possibility of inappropriate language in the school-room; children are taught very early on how to behave with Europeans. But difficulties stem from the school not perpetuating the kinds of socialization experiences and values common in their families and in the Mogo community. Schools are highly structured institutions and largely authoritarian-based. They do not operate by any of the principles associated with kinship. In fact, kinship in wider society is confined to very restricted sets of relationships and is not generalized as in Mogo. Children are therefore faced with learning new sets of rules by which the school and wider European world is ordered and made sense of. For many of them, the lack of continuity with their home environment is unsettling.

Even within Mogo there may be situations where socialization practices and traditions continue in inappropriate circumstances. One of the children in my household was retarded.

Perhaps because of this she was the centre of adult attention and always talked to by other children. However, her day oscillated between intense interpersonal activity and sitting passively in front of T.V. Children are assumed to be able to amuse themselves, only this child was an exception and often seemed cranky from frustration and boredom, but because of the assumption of children's innate self-sufficiency her parents continue to treat her much as the other children - with minor modification. The real tragedy of the situation was the aftermath of the mother and child's return from six weeks at a spastic centre in Sydney. Armed with specially designed toys to encourage the development of motor skills and an accompanying booklet of speech exercises to encourage language acquisition, the mother set about instructing the rest of the household in their dealings with the child. Her resolution to follow the pattern of play and talk begun at the spastic centre soon flagged in front of the disapproving relatives. Some of the baby's exercises were difficult and she got annoyed with herself. The surrounding kin were appalled by the mother's attempts to persevere and ridiculed her continuing. Having read the instruction booklet and watched the proceedings the gap between the medical conception of possible achievement and the lived conditions of inter-familial relations in Mogo was enormous. It would more than likely end the child's tentative progress. Since one of the first principles of care of very young children is not to allow their crying it was impossible for the mother to proceed very far. There is, however, some ambivalence in this practice. For instance, very young children are always attended to if crying, indeed so are children up to the age of about 6-7 years. But apart from pacifying babies, young children are immediately attended to and then ignored (told to 'get home with ya crying'; 'stop that bawling') if no physical injuries are present. People don't enjoy children crying. In a baby this is less easily prevented, but with other children adults are often less tolerant.

The ambivalence of many child-rearing practices in Mogo are clear in the following joke which was popular throughout Mogo amongst the women. At the time of the Chamberlain trial a standard joke in Mogo was to taunt mothers who appeared neglectful of their

children by calling them 'Mrs Chamberlain'. An equally witty extension of the joke was to threaten 'I'll cut that kid's thro and feed her to the dogs!'. The emotively charged ambiguity of this kind of statement resembles Briggs' comments on Inuit taunts, although this was very much a contextually-bound comment and lost favour after the public reporting of the trial ended. Children's wants are synonomous, as Hamilton documents (1981), with needs. There is a distinct period of indulgence since the child is 'only a baby'.

School is not the only experience where the behaviours learnt in Mogo are discounted. With child care a similar discrepancy arises between the local hospital's notion of what is good for children and what the Mogo community considers beneficial. Generally, relations between hospital staff and Mogo parents are amicable but occasionally differences in outlook and notions of health caused unpleasant and antagonistic relationships.

The point of these illustrations is to stress the discrepant notions between the frameworks of child rearing in Mogo and in wider Australia. However, the effect of the discrepancies are less likely in primary socialization, but are experientially significant in secondary socialization.

Socialization is the practise of teaching individuals to become functioning members of society. In Mogo specific behaviours are highlighted and considered Aboriginal. Similar behaviours may be common in wider society too. However, within the context of Mogo's cultural discreteness these behaviours - kinship; gender; styles; language patterns; sense of self - reflect more generalized notions of social action and selfhood. They form specific features of the cultural system by which structure is given to existence. It is the particular combination of valued behavioural patterns which together represent the social reality of people in Mogo. Aboriginality is largely a conceptual term for what people understand as their social reality, but additionally it refers to their collective sense of identity. However, even in a community as culturally coherent as Mogo, identity as an

Aborigine is problematic. One of the reasons for this is the break in continuity between the primary and secondary stages of socialization (this was outlined in detail elsewhere in this chapter). Another is the contradiction that a closed cultural system based upon generalized kinship should have negative, not positive effects, and this is evident in the self/other dilemmas people face in Mogo.

Aboriginal identity is complex and multidimensional, and during socialization the internalization of the cultural system is achieved on different cognitive levels. Disjunction and disparity in selfhood is mitigated by reifying the ideology of Aboriginality. It is mainly the incongruity between European/Aboriginal constructs of 'reality' which requires the over-arching support of ideology for a subjective dimension of Aboriginality as both positive and real. One of the central pivots of the experiential understanding of selfhood in Mogo is by gender interactions and concomitant institutionalized roles - parenting, etc. It is a social medium for individual self-worth and it forms part of the content of Chapter 4. Sexuality also has a social-structural contribution to Aboriginal identity in Mogo. At times it remains the interface - in a very colonial way - of race relations. Women in the community who have children fathered by Europeans are rare and it is generally frowned upon. Sexuality and gender roles, like kinship, have a normative structure which is deeply entrenched in how Mogo Aborigines understand themselves. But it is less the arena of Aboriginal ideology I suspect, for most of the behavioural norms sexuality expresses were imbibed during primary socialization and less directly threatened in the secondary stage. The learning of sexuality is basic to understanding who you are as a male or female person and is generally entrenched by the time children begin to experience the systematic influence of European institutions.

CHAPTER 4

Self/Other Dilemmas: Aboriginality in the Context of Sexuality;
Gender Relations; Kinship

In this chapter I propose to argue that a tension exists between community values about selfhood and the individual's subjective expectations. Three models for analysis are adopted to explicate this tension. I refer to Jackson's (1983) argument on the didactic value gained from ethnographic attention to bodily praxis; Haviland's (1977) discussion of the social implications of 'talk' (gossip), and Myer's (1979) articulation of the private and public aspects of selfhood amongst the Pintupi Aborigines of Central Australia. Together these three models provide a framework for unravelling a number of opposing strands involved in Aboriginality in Mogo. I will not discuss details of the models in the first instance, but will instead introduce facets of each in order to illuminate given aspects of Mogo ethnography.

In the secondary phase of socialization individuals have learnt and experienced the discrepancy between how Aboriginal identity is valued in Mogo and in the surrounding society. At the same time, their awareness of the tensions inherent in Aboriginality have increased. Basically, the tension centres on the opposition between public and private social space, public and private knowledge and between normative and individualistic behaviour.

The chapter begins by elucidating the expressive aspects of maleness and femaleness as an issue of normative behaviour. Within this ethnographic context, there are a number of conventionalized expectations about sexuality and gender. Moreover, interpersonal relations provide a primary context where talking (gossiping) is glossed as public knowledge and carries the force to affirm social rules by asserting their primacy over private knowledge and individualism. Behaviour and the interpretation of it belongs to the public domain.

The body is an equally expressive dimension of selfhood, but its social value in Mogo is related to bodily attributes, notably sexuality and fertility. However, I suggest that Mogo people also use their bodies to mediate the tension of selfhood inherent in Aboriginality. For instance, they use their body to establish physically an egocentric, non-public space - by eating and drinking and thus storing valued consumables within the body. They also appropriate body metaphors to express conditions of privacy, introspection and interiority. The opposition between private and public mores occasionally erupts in disjunctive behaviour. One context where this is often clear is interaction with the opposite sex in ways considered by the community at large as inappropriate. Talking, dancing and laughing with someone other than your spouse is one example of inappropriate interaction. Naturally, sexual infidelity is likewise considered aberrant - although it is in fact frequent.

Alternatively, there are behavioural patterns of male/female interaction which are generally understood as signs of a particular kind of relationship. Buying a woman drinks is a sign of a certain intimacy whereby a man, through the supply of alcohol, is entitled to appropriate the woman's time and companionship. Luxury foods - sweets, ice-creams and confectionary - are similarly associated. The preparation of food for the main meal of the day - the evening meal - ritually expresses male and female roles, as well as publically proclaiming a specific relationship. One of the women in my household was very independent and assertive within the community as a whole. She had a talent for building and knew better than her husband how to repair a car or construct additional comforts to their makeshift house. Nevertheless, she always fell in with the expected norms of a wife and cooked the family's meal while her husband sat in the lounge absorbed in television. This kind of ambiguity in normative/actual gender roles parallels the example cited later in this chapter of the widower and his lover. Both cases illustrate how ideology makes possible the interpretation of exceptions to generalized behavioural patterns. So with the position of men and women in households, while the ideology assigns power and authority to a male, in practise women

tend to dominate by presence and organization. Yet despite people seeing and living with women as the effective heads of households, normative attitudes prevail. The woman who was competent as mechanic and builder subscribed to the ideology by stressing her female role in cooking for and waiting upon her husband. Behind her back people sometimes criticized her by saying she 'wore the pants in the family'.

Such male/female role play was part of a general pattern. Surprisingly, men were often good cooks. Probably in the case of older men, this was partly the outcome of their independent life, moving about rural New South Wales and Victoria in search of work. Younger men who are bachelors are just as likely to be capable of cooking for themselves. They would not necessarily have this task performed by a kinswoman in their household. But a man cooking for a woman is an exception to normative gender practice. It is, however, the context of courtship which allows for the exception without subverting conventional roles. Moreover, the exception is also part of a context where food is used to establish a specific - romantic - relationship and in the process the usual role of woman feeding man is reversed. However, men with 'a woman' never cooked. When the bachelor in our household took to preparing the evening meal most people explained it as evidence of his romantic interest in me. Certainly, on the eve of one of my departures from Mogo he bought two lobsters from our neighbours and made a wonderful meal of lobster salad followed by apple pie and cream. It was a gesture specifically directed toward me. Later at the local Club he insisted upon paying for all the drinks.

What I am indicating by these examples is that certain practices in themselves are expressive of gender norms. These seem to be highly articulated during socialization so that children are very much aware of their gender identity both in its sexual and social aspects.

Such a 'model' of gender development, in practise, is neither straightforward nor simple. Appropriate behavioural patterns and gender styles are community determined, but there is

an additional pressure to subscribe to them because one's neighbours and friends are also kin. In the ethos of Aboriginality in Mogo one's selfhood is public, social and highly integrated by particularly valued social roles. Hence the social importance attached to parenting - the avenue for acquisition of adult status and social maturity. But despite the accent upon a public persona, people also experience an introspective selfhood. The effect of trying to balance the two strands in personality development often produces a great deal of psychological tension. In Mogo pacifying drugs are commonly used. Frequently women are described as suffering from 'nerves' and their treatment ranges from tranquillizers to daily doses of headache pills. Men deal with their depression differently, preferring to drink wine or port. Drinking for recreation is more likely to involve beer.

The learning of sexual identity and concomitant social roles begins in childhood and in an all-Aboriginal social environment. Children are highly valued and loved in Mogo. Teaching them about their Aboriginal identity, 'rearing them up' (the physical aspects of nurturance) and mediating for them the demands upon socialized beings, is considered a serious undertaking. One of the most important responsibilities is instruction in gender identity and norms.

Children are taught specific rules of appropriate gender behaviour from adults. A mother was cutting the very long hair of her eldest daughter (about 12 years). While the girl was acquiring a short hairstyle, her mother was shaping it to encourage the curl and so effect a style more obviously feminine than masculine. A younger female sibling was watching the proceedings and asked why her mother didn't cut the hair very short. Quite firmly, the mother replied that girls don't have that kind of hairstyle - only boys. Indeed, just as with clothes, so with hair; there were styles distinctive of men and of women and these were not interchangeable.

On another occasion an 11 year old boy came into dinner crying. A younger playmate had been fighting with him. Until the adults realized the boy had not fought back, their sympathies were

aroused. Once they were in full possession of the facts, however, both men and women reacted similarly in their condemnation. They taunted the boy declaring that he 'ought to be put into a dress and sent to school'. He was berated as 'weak', and exhorted to stand up for himself. Furthermore, they chided, if he was too scared to fight then that was his problem and not to come home 'sooking'. Adult ridicule was heightened since the boy's adversary was not only younger, but smaller than he was. Meanwhile, the child whimpered quietly under this deluge of scorn and shame. Although the adults' behaviour seems harsh, what they endeavoured to make plain to the boy was firstly, that he must learn to stand up for himself, to make his own position in the social world, and secondly, that a certain male response is appropriate to males. Hence the poignant chauvinism of suggesting he wear girl's clothes.

A child also incorporates his society's concepts of gender by learning how to classify people. Sibling terms of address are encouraged amongst children. For example, girls are often called 'sissy'; 'daughter'; and are especially likely to use such a kin term when talking to their siblings. Rather than use their personal name in moments of distress, girls encourage the younger sibling to 'come to sissy' - denoting the implicit care-giving role amongst kin. Additionally one always seeks kin first in times of trouble. Certainly, adults often refer to each other by kin names in life-crises. During the bereavement immediately following deaths in the community it was not uncommon to hear adults calling each other 'cous[in]' or 'sis' or 'my brother'. Boys are sometimes called 'buddy' as a kind of nickname but generally a boy-child is addressed as 'my son' or 'son' as a kin term, although not necessarily signifying the consanguineal ties of father-son. Kin terms, of course, stress familiarity. In certain contexts they might also form part of the strategy for making claims on people's resources, e.g. 'Help me my brother ... I need \$10'. There are a number of adult women who are known by the kin term 'Aunty Daughter'. This is used instead of a personal name. Moreover, the everyday use of kin terms is common and children are corrected on the mistakes they make; say by assuming an older cousin to be an uncle.

Gender rules are often taught through public discussion (gossip). Consequently adults rarely monitor or censure either their speech or topics of conversation in front of children. Haviland (1977:170) suggests a didactic purpose to the gossip men and women participate in.

"... Gossip is a powerful instrument for manipulating cultural rules. Gossip is a primary metacultural tool, an activity through which people examine and discuss the rules they espouse. Through gossip people not only interpret the behaviour of others, but also discover other people's interpretations; they can thus learn cultural rules at a distance. Through dialogue, gossip allows rules to change; it redefines the conditions of application for rules. Finally, gossip exploits the interpretive potential of rules to advance particular (personal, factional) ends. One talks, in gossip, as if the rule of culture were absolute, whereas cultural rules actually legitimize disparate and often contradictory modes of action ..."

A great deal of time in Mogo is spent in gossip. In Chapter 3 I tried to give some impression of the function and importance of this. Not only does gossip effectively structure social interaction, but linked with fantasy it can induce states of knowledge where people act 'as if it were true'. In a slightly different way gossip (public knowledge) has implications for normative behaviour. Sexual jealousy is a frequent cause of marital disputes. There are 'traditions' of appropriate gender interactions which are often quoted in support of a current discussion of people's behaviour. One of these 'traditions' centres on sexual jealousy and how it is aroused. One of the men in my household explained, for example, that as a bachelor he had often incurred the wrath and jealousy of other men by talking to their wives and buying them drinks at the Club. As has been mentioned, buying food and drink for women is generally understood to entitle a male to certain proprietorial rights over a woman or at least entitling a male to claim the time and company of the woman exclusively. A further illustration of the constraints upon male/female interaction occurred one evening when a group of us went to the local club. Mainly the group comprised couples and between dancing to the band there was a great deal of laughing and joking. All seemed very pleasant and one of the young women

engaged a young man in sexual horse-play. Both of them were 'married' and parents. The man was often a willing partner to these antics, but on this occasion was somewhat recalcitrant. However, they danced together. So far nothing seemed amiss; even I - as a single woman - had danced with him, but everything was certainly not all right according to one of our group, namely, the young man's older, male first cousin. The latter took him aside and upbraided him for neglecting his wife by not giving her his undivided attention. Meanwhile, the older man was solicitous of his younger cousin's wife, talking to her and trying to encourage both of them to participate in the evening as a couple. The younger man was affronted by his cousin's 'interference' and left to walk the 7 kilometres home. However, the older cousin's behaviour was more publicly correct, since his age and close kinship entitled him to speak openly and assert the normative principles of spouse behaviour. 'Horsing around' with other men or women, particularly with other people's spouses is asking for trouble in Mogo. Horse-play is permitted, but usually only between certain kin - mainly mothers-in-law and sons-in-law. This is frequently explicitly sexual and involves grabbing for genitals, wrestling and much sexual joking about potency, availability etc. The same behaviour between age-mates who are not married to each other is very much disapproved of. Moreover, the same sexual horse-play is often a behavioural style husbands used to show affection; and a dash of machismo adds to the sexual titillation. Such joking around was one of the few publicly sanctioned ways to express emotional and sexual feeling for the opposite sex. Despite some very overt signs and verbal references to sexuality, actual sex was covert and clandestine.

Once the young man left the club his 'wife' was upset and explained to me that the older cousin's advice represented the community's view about how spouses should behave. A married man or woman it was suggested, should lavish the whole of his or her time and interest on the other. However, this woman found that such behaviour only exacerbated strife between herself and her spouse, thus leading to more arguments and more problems. Therefore they had decided each should be free to go their own way

and basically they did so. The woman and their child lived in her natal household. The husband generally lived there too, but often slept on the lounge-room couch or in a different room than his wife. During my stay in the same household, he also returned briefly to his mother's house (also in Mogo), and moved a neighbouring caravan into his wife's yard. They now have a double bed rather than a single and he frequently sleeps with his wife.

The flexibility of their arrangement is not common, except perhaps in old age when spouses tend to adopt more 'laissez faire' attitudes. However, I suspect that the decline of sexual interest and attractiveness and the increase in general ill-health with age, contributes to such open arrangements. But there are also a number of activities in the regime of daily living which men and women consider as separate spheres. I refer more to leisure activities - darts, drinking, football, 'clubbing' - than social roles involving tasks such as the care of children and home. Certainly it is less usual for men to undertake housework and cooking, but not uncommon for them to spend time with their children or grandchildren in care and child minding.

Another 'tradition' of normative gender interaction emerged in discussion (gossip) of the aforementioned evening at the club. The father of the older cousin confirmed the correctness of his son in reminding the apparently wayward younger man of his husbandly responsibilities. In fact, in the father's view it was the high-spirited woman who was at fault. Part of the reason why the woman was blamed stems from her own kicking over of the traces of normative gender behaviour and interaction. She rarely visits the local clubs and hotels in the company of her husband. It is a common community belief that she is lascivious and neglectful of her children. Neither of these accusations seemed to me to be entirely fair, but she certainly did occasionally flout basic precepts - a mother's care of her children and the belief that women are less sexually interested and inclined than men. The normative view of women links them to a passive sexuality designed to serve their husband's interests and the female role is celebrated only in parenting. Several strains of this view were

given in discussion of the adulterous woman in Chapter 3. Most people thought the widower foolish to get caught red-handed with the woman. 'Did he expect to keep her?' The woman had a reputation for roaming in search of sexual partners and prior to arriving in Mogo had already, so it was alleged, spent some time at another settlement on the coast 'ynunging' (i.e. having sexual intercourse) with her former husband. The principal wrong done to her husband by the widower, according to a consensus of opinion, was sleeping with her when she had borne 11 children to the husband out of wedlock. The implications of this are that families, the bond between parents and children and the establishing of familial units which are supportive and basic to individual self-esteem, are central factors in rendering the world meaningful. Whilst a lot of joking about the event concerned the widower's sexuality, lust, size of genitals, etc. people were condemnatory about the woman's sexuality. It is generally acceded that after a hysterectomy (which is commonly performed when women (irrespective of age) in Mogo decide their family size is sufficient) feminine sexuality and desire decline. Women who show an acknowledged interest in sex - whether before or after a hysterectomy - are thought aberrant and exceptional. It also increases their susceptibility to attract gossip and jealousy. The high-spirited woman at the centre of the dispute in the club shouldered, it seemed to me, an unfair share of blame and antagonism for this very reason. Admittedly in her case it was public knowledge that she had an 'eye for the men', but her alleged promiscuity was more likely hearsay. However, the widower's lover was definitely promiscuous. Therefore people told the wronged husband that his wife was as much to blame as the widower. Afterall, 'what can a man do if a 'moot' (vagina) is flung in your face?'. Moreover, wasn't the woman a scandal since after 'the operation' (hysterectomy) women stop 'looking for it'?

If we follow Haviland in seeing gossip as a medium for discussion of cultural rules and the interpretation of these behaviourally, then sexuality is certainly shaped and directed in Mogo in the same way. While couples are rarely seen to embrace publically, hold hands, kiss, or display sexual or emotional gestures to partners, there was a good deal of public talk about

the bedroom details of marriages. Indeed these are public discussions to the extent that they are never qualified in front of children. Only once was it ever said that women were actively interested in sex and this was said by a woman who had married into the community. Her views may, thus, have been idiosyncratic. Often others commented that she was a 'funny girl' because her wants and desires didn't always coincide with their (and hence the community's) attitudes and behaviours. The comment concerned her sister-in-law and how aggressive she was; always picking quarrels with the rest of the family. More than likely such antagonism sprang from sexual frustration according to the in-marriage woman.

It is clear that the most significant learning of normative gender behaviour takes place in the family and under the tuition of significant others, i.e. mothers, grandmothers, siblings, fathers and uncles etc. What is observed of children's sexual-social development in Mogo shows the beginnings of the adult ambivalence in attitude toward male/female sexuality.

The sexuality of male children is generally displayed and sign-posted by adults, especially by women. But this openness contrasts with the emphasis given to the sexuality of female children both in the awareness of themselves and amongst the community. Older women - aunts, cousins, mothers etc. - of young boys (between 0-5 years) often draw attention to the boy's genitals. There is talk of 'cocks', of castration (in horse-play) and on occasions the penis is gently flicked or stroked by the woman as she makes lewd jokes about the child's sexuality. Sometimes in horse-play between older boys and women, a woman will make a grab at his genitals while she also lifts her skirts saying, 'it's always good to be open', ('open' i.e. sexually ready, willing and receptive).

Alternatively, I never observed the stroking or touching of female genitals, although verbal attention might be drawn to the genitals when a girl's mother refers to her as 'big split' or 'moot-showa'. The unconscious posture of young girls in sitting with legs astride occasions much laughter. When a two year old girl

minus pants did this, people laughed as her Aunt said she showed 'no respect for her cunt'.

The same sexually inspired horse-play continues in adulthood for boys, but not for girls. Girls are only likely to 'take liberties' with a spouse or with others in later life when active sexuality is no longer possible or desired.

One Saturday afternoon a girl of four years ran into the house crying, followed closely by her father. She had been found in the back-shed playing 'dirty games' (unspecified) and was smacked as a consequence. Both parents condemned such behaviour. The same child faced similar disapproval when walking naked about the house. Although it was amongst the family, her father admonished her being 'naked in public'.

It may, in fact, be misleading to label the genital-centred activities between adult women and younger male children as overtly sexual. [Undeniably there is a link between their behaviour and some of the Freudian notions of castration and Oedipal conflict. Mothers may speak, for instance, of 'cutting ya diddle' etc. Masturbation was hardly approved of. Two young boys were 'flogged' for doing so, and received public approbation through 'talk'.] But young boys are encouraged, or at least made more aware of a phallo-centric outlook in childhood and this continues in adult life. It is not unusual to find adult men fondling their genitals or just standing with their hands in their pants during public conversation. The same behaviour in young boys occurs during times of distress, embarrassment or discomfort. Women's sexuality, or bodily awareness, seems less explicit and certainly less publically sanctioned in its portrayal. Disparate notions of male and female fidelity are underpinned by unequal sexuality. While there may be jokes about feminine sexuality - 'what has she got the other girls in Mogo haven't?' - the references are oblique. By contrast, jokes about male genital size, interest aroused by them etc., is common. So too is it common to find sexual innuendo between mother and son, and brother and sister. But enacted sex-play, as I mentioned earlier, is not

displayed between these sets nor encouraged where young children are involved.

From gossip and observation it seems that women were equally likely to initiate affairs. Certainly both sexes were intensely jealous and accused each other of infidelity and 'making eyes' etc. It was not unlikely that many accusations were true. But couples were held together by a complementary force - namely their children. In my own household, whenever the baby of the young couple was hospitalized marital relations deteriorated. If the baby was home so too was the husband and he was less likely to spend part of the day roaming. Another woman said her young son kept the peace between her and her spouse. And in a more extreme case, a woman had very strained relations with her husband, due apparently to sexual disinterest, but she vowed that she would never leave him as the father of her children. Indeed, if he attempted to leave her she said she would do him a physical injury. Parenting is a valued activity which brings meaning and purpose to people's lives. Building a household unit is likewise treasured since it represents the context of personal development and fulfilment. This is equally so for men and women although women's identification with the family is more visible and therefore often assumed to carry greater significance than for men.

Most marital relationships in the community follow a cycle of smooth, happy interactions followed by violence, upheaval and temporary separations. One person said this oscillation between extremes made for better marriages and making up after a separation was like another honeymoon. Spates of domestic violence between men and women are common enough not to bother people particularly, unless they are especially brutal. Even so, domestic violence has a long history in many Aboriginal families and learning to cope with physical injuries and pain seems very much part of growing up. Fighting between children and between adults is mostly learning to stand-up for oneself. In the last analysis, it seems to me, most people realize that not only must they accept what fate deals to them, but they must learn to deal with psychic anguish alone. A corollary of such existential knowledge is the investment in the

family structure of values and concerns which mitigate life's harsh realities. So whilst adults never express emotional gestures amongst themselves in public, they kiss and cuddle children openly. Indeed, one couple used their child as a 'medium' through which to speak tenderly to each other of their feelings. For example, each said to the child 'Do you realize what a difference your mother/father has made to my life?', or 'Before I met your mother I was always out drinking', 'Look at the wonderful meals your mother makes and how well she looks after me!', and so on.

There is a degree of real cruelty in some of the bashings husbands give their wives. That many women remain with the man is not explainable merely in terms of the former's impoverished circumstances. Several women said they could not leave the father of their children, although some admitted that one reason white men were preferable to black men was that the former were less cruel and less violent.

Thus children not only represent sexuality and fertility, but create structure and bonds in relationships between men and women. Along with marriage (whether de facto or legal) parenting gives access to the adult social world and its meanings. What are some of these meanings? Above I have described some generalized aspects of sexuality and normative behaviour between men and women in Mogo. What it means to be an Aboriginal man or woman is as much determined by ideas about Aboriginality as it is by normative views of sexuality and appropriate gender significations. Indeed, I will argue that the most influential source of identity signification in Mogo is Aboriginality.

Michael Jackson (1983) recently published an article criticizing intellectualistic theories of bodily experience whereby somatic experiences are interpreted in symbolist frameworks and as secondary to verbal praxis. He argues against such trends, maintaining that endless questioning, upon which linguistic and cognitive models of meaning are predicated, only increases the "... phenomenological problem of how I could know of the experience

of the other ..." (Jackson 1983:340). Indeed such techniques, if pursued to the exclusion of other perspectives, merely lead to disembodied and decontextualized interpretations. On the other hand, "... to recognize the embodiedness of our Being-in-the-World is to discover a common ground where self and other are one ..." (Jackson 1983:340).

The context of Jackson's argument is his re-interpretation of particular body movements and their associated ideas during the initiation rituals of the Kurauko of Sierra Leone. However the kinds of theoretical principles informing his interpretation are of interest here. Speaking in the context of Kurauko initiation Jackson suggests that "... what is done with the body is the ground of what is thought and said. From an existentialist point of view we could say that the bodily practices mediate a personal realization of social values, an immediate group of general precepts as sensible truths. Such a view is consistent with the tendency to effect understanding through bodily techniques, to proceed through bodily awareness to verbal skills and ethical views ..." (Jackson 1983:337).

The existential interpretation of bodily praxis is a useful perspective for understanding how tensions inherent in the normative ideas about Aboriginality are mediated in Mogo. The marking of sexual identity with differentiated social roles is simple, apparent and unproblematic in the context of bodily practices. The emphasis upon concrete, bodily experiences is consistent with the cognitive techniques of socialization common in Mogo but also documented in other Aboriginal communities (see Hamilton 1981; Barwick 1966). Aboriginal children acquire knowledge by practical observation, imitation of adult behaviour and interpersonal relations. The focus of this cognitive orientation in learning about the world particularly emphasizes a concrete perspective on identity development through sociality (see Bernstein 1970; Douglas 1975). "... Attitudes toward institutions relevant within the family and those within the wider society are communicated via personal experiences and through accounts given by other family members ..." (McKeich 1977:255-256). It is the

contribution of significant others who mediate reality to Aboriginal children. This is not, of course, a socialization process confined to Aborigines, but the intensity of interpersonal involvement, especially as it is constructed through kinship, makes the Aboriginal case especially noteworthy. This emerges well from the following remarks made by Lickiss, who, addressing classical Freudian theory of personality development, states that "... The intimate personal world that is known to them (Aborigines) as toddlers - and internalized - is not apparently a vivid triangular situation but a larger group of adults and others involved in their needs. In particular, the paternal role is frequently of little significance, and in the case of children of teenage or absent mothers the grandmother's role may be of more significance than that of the biological mother ..." (1971:224).

In previous chapters I argued the existence of an ideology of Aboriginality. By this I meant a shared, consensual understanding of the normative structure of the social world and how individuals in it are likely to behave. It is an understanding constituted by presuppositions about what being Aboriginal means and how this differs from what Europeans appear to be. This ideology provides a model of the social world to which people in Mogo turn, particularly during moments of cognitive dissonance, as they interact with wider Australian society. In short, it is the framework of understanding and interpretation of social behaviour. As a set of ordering symbols, the ideology functions as "... interpersonal mechanisms for the perception, understanding, judgement and manipulation of the world ..." (Geertz 1973:216).

These symbols refer to abstract meanings of concrete social action, but as people apply the ideology there is generally little deference to situation-specific contexts. When the widower was caught by the wronged husband, the former explained his behaviour in terms of hospitality to a kinswoman. If people suspected that this story was not the whole truth they rarely voiced doubt. Indeed, they preferred to believe that hospitality was the central motive of the widower's action. This reinforced the principle of normative social relations between an older man

and younger married woman of related kin. In some situations it is unlikely that ideology could gloss misdeeds as normative. The widower, because he was caught red-handed faced this danger. However his credibility was saved by his reputation as basically 'harmless; poor old cunt'. While he had a nick-name, 'ynunger' (i.e. fucker), it was a source of jokes that he actually did 'ynung' (fuck).

During my stay in Mogo I never witnessed circumstances where ideology failed to resolve discrepant actions. The closest possibility concerned a young man who was perpetually drunk and who having left his wife and children roamed aimlessly in Mogo. His parents lived in Mogo but generally refused to have him in the house citing his behaviour as evidence of a 'no-hoper'. The day his mother died he was drunk and people feared telling him because of the scene he might make and thus precipitate general embarrassment ('a shame job').

What the community attitude implied was that while ideology allows a certain flexibility outside normative behaviour (and this was mentioned in Chapter 1 in the discussion of individual and group centredness) beyond a certain point there is no vindication. The hypothetical circumstances where an individual had to leave Mogo because of serious social transgressions can be imagined although I never witnessed them. Probably such circumstances would resemble the case of the young man; flouting the behavioural norms of close kinship (parents; wife and children) and constant antisocial actions (drinking continually and being abusive). Serious violence between siblings also represents a lapse from normative relations difficult to ignore.

In another case, an elder brother accused his sister of 'poor' behaviour and being lazy. She retorted by forcefully noting the care she showered on her family; notably, making them good meals and keeping the children well-dressed. The reference to food is significant. Children are never denied this. Occasionally adults are denied but food is sufficiently valued that enquiries about hunger are often the first greeting on entry to the home of

kinsfolk. Moreover, a mother's role is the care of her children and the only basis for criticism would be neglect of this responsibility especially ignoring physical needs. By quoting the list of caring actions between mother and children, the woman defended herself by referring to the normative principles of parent-child responsibilities and correspondingly negated the accusations.

In both situations the normative idiom of Aboriginal interpersonal relations, together with a conventionalized view of Aboriginal values, were presented. The same characterization of the principles governing social understanding is clearly articulated by Myers writing of Pintupi ethnopsychology, "... Pintupi concepts of the emotions should be seen as an ideology, as models of and models for how one should feel and behave. They constitute a moral and cultural system that articulates and informs a particular view of social life and the self for the Pintupi, an official representation of what is going on ..." (Myers 1979:345). Myers combines this perspective with another on the function of Pintupi concepts of the emotions, "... These concepts as a means of self-objectification, allow for the comparison of one's self to the extrinsic norms of society ..." (Myers 1979:345).

In the previous examples of the widower and the negligent parent, both the man and the woman appealed to their kinsfolk to acknowledge that their 'wrong' behaviour could be favourably measured against the extrinsic norms of society and that they were therefore blameless.

Myers makes the additional and related point that Pintupi people deny introspection as significant in the understanding of others. A notion of 'privateness' is consequently of marginal value in social understanding. This is also true of Mogo. True knowledge is always public knowledge. Neither introspection nor privateness, both of which might encourage a suppositious reasoning about social action, have emphasis in Mogo. Rather it is public knowledge - shared symbols of social order - which give meaning and interpretation to action. Again, Myers' enunciation of the Pintupi

is directly relevant, "... Emphasizing group ends, shared identity, and co-operation rather than individual ends and conflict, it leads individuals to experience the ideal as real. It also tells them how they should experience such occasions, what moral value to give (them) ..." (Myers 1979:354-355). Although Aboriginality in Mogo is an idealized system of values, action and perspectives, it does function as real within the confines of the community. This partly explains why people are often prepared to accept ideological explanations over those grounded on factual evidence. Irrespective of the fact that the husband saw his wife in bed with the widower, many people in Mogo thought the proffered hospitality explained her legitimate presence in the widower's house. Obviously, people sufficiently experience the 'ideals' to convince themselves that apparent exceptions are just that: apparent only.

The marginal value of introspection is crucial in the success of Mogo ideology, but its marginal acknowledgement has a cost. Since actions are interpreted through public ideology, subjective experiences are largely formless and contextless. Indeed subjective thoughts are likely to be synonymous with the private and individual. As these perspectives run counter to group ends, shared identity and reciprocity, their social existence is largely denied. But in Mogo it was clear that individuals did experience this dimension of their identity, however mystified to themselves and society. I am referring here to the intensity of group centredness and constant kinship obligations. What such denial fostered was a context of social interaction where self/other differentiation was blurred. The following situation illustrates the difficulties of always acquiescing to an identity whose basic values are centred in kinship.

One of the younger women of my household borrowed her sister's car to go south to the administration centre of the region and hence to the social security head office. The money she was collecting was ostensibly for her abortion in Sydney later in the week. At the time she and her family (four children and husband) were living in our house. The wet weather had forced them out of the leaky caravan in the backyard. Instead of returning with the

money, the majority of it was spent on new clothes for the kids and a wedding ring for the mother. My household head was furious that the available money was not spent on legitimate needs and that she was given no remuneration for household expenses - food, electricity, gas, etc. But while washing the dishes the household head voiced her desire to leave Mogo and move into Moruya; right away from the demands of supporting others. This reaction is typical. People fantasize about escape which is never effected. It was mostly milk and bread which the 'guest' family continually used; both of which were staple items of diet and in constant demand. Moreover at the time, two of the regularly contributing members of the household were in Sydney and the loss of their income made the prospect of meeting the electricity bill formidable. This kind of situation is a very real worry but it is also a situation where kinship obligations cannot be neglected or refused.

Outright conflict over these matters is very rare. Alternative strategies favour the couching of resentment in the guise of a joke. The household head mentioned quite openly her disgruntled feelings, but only in jocular fashion and was the first to laugh. The guilty party responded in kind even to the extent of making a related joke at their own expense. In this way feelings were aired and relieved, but potential conflict was controlled. Further, the ideal of kin obligations was seen to be realized and operative. However, straight-out conflict over similar issues may erupt occasionally and this kind of strategy tends to be explained in terms of people being pushed beyond their limits. The situation which springs to mind involved a younger woman whose relations with her spouse were known to be tempestuous. The husband had recently taken off (as he was ~~want~~ to do) and it was rumoured that he was in company with another woman. His estranged wife verbally abused the man in his absence telling their children in particular that she was not like him (i.e. uncaring). The ensuing argument between the woman and her cousin (MZD) concerned who of them was responsibly contributing to the household and care of aged relatives. However, behind the argument was a deeper conflict: without a husband the woman's existential and

social identity was shaken. Other onlookers recognized the implicitness of her real concern and voiced it afterwards. In a sense, going 'into the horrors' was an understandable response to the possibility of a socially ambiguous position. It is the concepts of gender relations and social identity which were at risk in this individual's position. It was not that she and her husband hadn't separated before. This, however, was one of the few occasions when another woman had been involved.

The gloss on self/other distinctions was introduced* in Chapters 1-3. The reappearance of the issue here is to illustrate how people in Mogo resolve the expressive disabilities consequent upon denial of individual, introspective selfhood. Here I am referring to the mediation of the tension between kin obligations and private wants by the symbolic appropriation, in language, of bodily spaces. This mediation process is predicated upon bodily metaphors and demonstrates some of the principles in Jackson's argument for dispensing with dichotomies between mind and body, or between symbol and bodily praxis. Indeed, one can argue that the dimensions of physical existence, as much as symbolism, shape identity in Mogo.

The dimensions of social existence in Mogo warrant an analysis which links thought to language and activity. What I argue (through my ethnography) is that the articulation of self by reference to Aboriginality is elicited by looking at bodily praxis, public knowledge and normative concepts of identity. However, the crucial issue is how these three orders of existence are mobilized/consolidated. I suggest that the articulation of these orders is achieved dialectically and that the process of maintaining ideology involves implicit denial of any personal perspective in the individual's sense of self. This makes self/other differentiation problematic.

The restructuring of actual behaviour to conform with conventionalized modes is often achieved through talking. For example, a younger man who recently took on a good deal of physical work in his job fainted unexpectedly. Quite naturally, his wife

was frightened by the attack and very concerned. Once he began to recover he calmly reassured his worried family and suggested that drugs may have contributed to the weakness. While his own explanation for his attack seemed to me very reasonable, it was completely disregarded by the other family witnesses all of whom adamantly believed too much hard work had been the cause. Hallucinogenic drugs are not popularly approved of. Moreover, this individual had sometime earlier become a Christian, baptized by the Aboriginal Evangelical pastor from Eden. Perhaps too much hard work had been the cause but the discussion left me with the impression that the man's family were reconstructing the events and simultaneously reinterpreting them in-line with a normative view of both the man and his behaviour. This is one example of the power of talking in Mogo.

In an analogous way, speech metaphors are used to express a private dimension of selfhood. This argument is the main gist of this second half of the chapter.

I will contend that a distinctive Aboriginal identity is perpetuated by specific modes of social interaction; i.e. that the pervasion of kinship and institutionalized sharing as a concomitant of kin obligations shapes personal identity. Such obligations create ambiguity and ambivalence for members of the community as they try to differentiate the self from others.

The tension between kinship ethics and the private self are mediated, in speech and behaviour, by the body. With no place in daily life allowing for privacy, interiority and confidentiality, it is only through the body that an individual has an opportunity to experience himself introspectively and separately from his social roles. This is not easily or fully realized. In Mogo there is a difficulty with personal selfhood, of describing introspective experiences. The expression 'it makes you feel really sorry' is recognition of the vicissitudes of human life experience. But when empathy is voiced it is always to a third person, not those immediately involved. Because there is no explicitly private domain, people need ways and means of

maintaining psychological distance from one another. One way is to present a kind of studied indifference to the problems of others, and this certainly discourages, both ideologically and behaviourally, people unburdening their problems.

What I suggest happens in Mogo is that the ideology of kinship glosses the private self by giving primary scope in social interaction to identity as combined social role and social identity. Yet at the level of speech metaphor and idiom, the people of Mogo suggest that a private, introspective self exists, even if it is not acknowledged ideologically. Moreover, I think there is evidence to suggest that personhood is at times best represented by behavioural mode, perhaps partly because there are no imputations or guessing at intention or motivation. For example, individuals often exonerate themselves in contexts of aberrant behaviour by pointing out legitimate interpretations that can only be reflections of an ideal Aboriginal selfhood. By citing such modes of behavioural style associated with Aboriginality, I propose to demonstrate the problematical nature of personhood. This in turn leads to a discussion of certain symbolic dimensions of selfhood which are mystified in the process of identity acquisition.

Because the idiom of kinship is central to constitutive identity, the private self, or ego, is subverted by the social self. In a bounded community of kin relations the ideology of identity emphasizes the encompassing nature of kin and gratification of their requests. Expressing self-centred desires is consequently problematic. However, there are ways of resolving the apparent opposition. Outright refusals are impossible, since these would deny the ideology of legitimate kin claims. It would also present a notion of an un-Aboriginal person. As Eckermann from her work with Aborigines in southeast Queensland writes, (1977:300) the child "... is taught that Aborigines have a better sense of humour than Europeans, are more trustworthy, kinder and warmer, readier to share, and are more interested in people ...". However, prevarication and vacillation, and by the use of projected

altruism, people can both acknowledge the ideology of Aboriginal interpersonal relations and achieve individual wants. Let me illustrate how these mechanisms work.

An individual may wish to go into town and therefore asks to borrow a car. He/she must present a reason which leaves no doubt in the mind of the car owner that he can 'refuse' to help. So instead of a requesting style such as 'I need the car to go to town', the better form is to suggest a pressing reason, e.g. 'I want to see 'x' in hospital; or I've got to get these social forms in - can I take your car?'. If the car owner does not want to oblige, then it is a matter of presenting circumstantial reasons which remove him as a causative agent capable of determining the outcome of the request. 'The car is out of petrol/registration/the muffler is off/tyres are bald' are examples of these responses. Or, less ingeniously, one may say, 'I don't have the keys; I can't find the keys, etc.'. In short, the owner prevaricates. Another example of the same technique is when children are sent to other houses to borrow food stuffs; a cup of sugar, some potatoes, bread, tea or whatever. The householder generally replies 'Sorry babe ('babe' being a special term of address denoting well-disposed feeling) we've only got enough for ourselves'. This is a standard reply - irrespective of what the pantry holds.

Vacillation is used in difficult moments of social tension. This might be when a request requires an involvement or responsibility beyond what the person asked can, or wants, to supply. Finally, altruism may also be used strategically. In moments of interpersonal crises individuals in the wrong will project a highly selective, culturally idealized image of themselves; one structured by the qualities of a 'good' Aborigine. In this instance they are adhering to the principle of identity as determined by social action. But despite such techniques for manipulating the dominance of kinship norms, the central problem of demarcating a public from a private self remains. The ideology of never refusing kin is the inverse of never acknowledging one's own needs as paramount. This arises even with simple matters of food or property. Examples from my ethnography will illustrate these points more clearly.

To begin with, in daily life problems of specifying objects as personal is a lower order example of the central issue, namely, the matter of developing and displaying a personal self in a community where meaningful identity is part of kin-based sociability. I've already mentioned how important kinship is for meaningful social interaction and discourse in the community; and how social identity is an artefact of kin relations. The behavioural ideology of selfhood in Mogo can be understood phenomenologically as reference to a non-problematic, objectifiable social self. How, then, do people mediate the tension of ignoring introspective experiences? And how are private domains of self and experience actualized?

Compared with middle-class white Australians, Aboriginal communities place little stress on concepts of private property or notions of exclusivity. With one's resources at the beck and call of all one's kin, Aboriginal people seek to deflect some of the obligatory kin reciprocity by keeping a low profile. Hence, windfalls at the TAB, 'pokies' (i.e. poker machines for legal gambling in public clubs) etc. will be disguised, generally by adopting any one of the three techniques mentioned earlier. In Mogo this was difficult to achieve, as gossip was rife as a constant monitor and herald of people's behaviour and material conditions.

However, many people still wished to maintain exclusive control over specific resources - e.g. food, money, tape recordings, cigarettes and cars. In fact, amongst their immediate families, people expressed guarded resentment at the inconvenience and thoughtlessness of the demands made by the ubiquitous 'them'. But on the few occasions when resentment was communicated, it was generally a metamessage. Thus, people voiced resentment by making pointed jokes, or by being outspoken and direct in the context of joking. By contrast, direct verbal confrontation of a serious kind was rare. For example, outright accusations of poor behaviour or questioning of motivation were unlikely.

Maintaining a certain control of access to household resources was further complicated by the lack of category distinctions between private and public space within the home. There was, for example, no room in the house associated with an individual's privacy. People found it quite reasonable that others should enter their room whilst they slept, turn on lights, search cupboards for objects, even bombard the sleeper with questions! 'Ransacking' was often thought inconvenient, but not anti-social. Nevertheless, people made efforts to prevent others from finding and using their valued goods. Cigarettes and tapes, especially, were hidden under mattresses.

Staple foodstuffs - milk, bread, sugar and coffee - were generally kept in a less obviously public place in bedrooms. A concealed store was merely one removed from an expected location. With the case of food, this meant taking food away from the kitchen. Although I've already mentioned the lack of association between sleeping and privacy, there was a relative sense of seclusion in the bedroom. The holdings of a kitchen, by contrast, could openly be 'borrowed', used, eaten, etc. by other than householders.

As well as having a minimal notion of private property, people in Mogo lacked a sense of social identity involving privacy. This held for both notions of space and cognition. Hence adults and children, despite the facilities to do otherwise, often slept in the one bed. One woman, living at that time in a three bedroom house with only her two young daughters and teenage brother, generally slept on a $3/4$ mattress with the children in the lounge. She explained that as a child this had been a standard practice with her own parents and siblings. Although she had a double bed in another room and beds for the children their behaviour perpetuated her own socialization pattern. Similarly, an old man who spent a lot of time alone in an empty house was wondered at by others who could only say of his behaviour that he must be 'especially lonely'. Social separateness as a desirable possibility was almost unacknowledged, except when communal suspicion was provoked by individuals being alone and acting eccentrically.

Yet in spite of the ideology of Aboriginal selfhood, people did experience an introspective and subjective dimension. In response to this fantasies often seemed to be a response to a perceived lack of control and opportunity to express a reflexive self. For example, when individuals felt especially harassed by constant demands to borrow objects [demands which could not be refused], they would announce their intention to leave the town or move house within the community. The former strategy was usually adopted in the more drastic circumstances. While all plans were adamant statements of intention to get away from incessant requests and demands, they were nonetheless fantasies and impossible to achieve. This impossibility was largely due to the impoverished circumstances - lack of money; lack of individual resources to furnish a house - and a great deal of hesitation about living outside of their own community. After all, as many people said of those who tried living away from Mogo, "... Whites won't put up with Blacks fighting and drinking and swearing ...".

There was unwritten license for individuals of the extended kin group to eat whatever they fancied from the fridge, cupboard, etc. Whenever they chose they could also take as much as they liked. Complete indulgence was permissible and the usual pattern of consumption in most households followed a 'feast or famine' cycle. However, one should distinguish a scale of license to appropriate without formal consent the food of other households. This scale is a recognition of the proportional claims of kinship as it fans out from the locus of immediate kin, to extended family, and to inter-familial relations through marriage. With food and 'grog' the body became a context for self-indulgence: but it was a socially approved one. Consequently, if a greater proportion of a pension was spent on alcohol, people rarely disputed the individual's right to do so. By contrast, if the same amount had been spent on material goods, the individual would have courted public notice and attendant demands. I never noticed social prohibitions on food/'grog' intakes. One individual in my household had a habit of cooking lots of grilled meat, ostensibly for others, but later throwing it to the dogs. This was,

naturally, considered quirky. But what annoyed people was not how much they ate, but what they wasted by not eating. Some foods, such as seafood (lobster, abalone, oysters, etc.), sweet items and cake, had the status of luxury items and these might be hidden in bedrooms amongst clothes at the back of wardrobes. But they might also serve as media of transaction for wooing, or socially indebteding a person to the giver. Likewise, buying females drinks and food at the pubs established certain rights to their company; a marking of particular social (and sexual) relations.

In short, with food as a pretext, the body served as a legitimate agency of ego-centrism and a context over which individuals had some degree of choice, control and expression otherwise absent in their publically oriented lives. The ultimate result was often obesity. I do not wish to claim that all problems of overweight were due to indulgence, since genetic propensities, diabetes and general ignorance of balanced nutrition contributed as well. Obesity, like its inverse - jogging - could show deliberate choice in the way people used their body. An interesting illustration of this point occurred in discussion about jogs through the local park. A woman, trying to interest her pubescent daughter in jogging, and citing me as an example, met the reply, 'yes, but that's what gubbas (whites) do. Blacks don't!'.

The one person I knew who did begin a diet was also somebody who enjoyed a good deal of solitude. His behaviour thus seemed exceptional. Nevertheless, in discussion about food and diets his stress on aspects of diet related to his regulation of food intake. Perhaps this was an anomalous inversion of self-indulgence. The valued qualities of the body for these Aborigines reside with its sexual potential and potency, and consequent access to adulthood and significance socially. These physical attributes were socially valued inherent aspects of normative identity. Physical good looks were of less consequence.

As I have already suggested, Aboriginality in Mogo has an ideology of personhood which is unproblematic and socially-grounded. That people feel out of kilter with this was evident

when they privately voiced inner resentments and suspicions of others; speculated on the personal motivation of others; and expressed a subjective assessment of their own personal life conditions. Only by way of bodily metaphors could the subjective dimension of personhood be introduced in the public realm. Let me illustrate this with ethnographic examples.

Speech idioms in the community are peppered with metaphors of the body. A particularly pronounced illustration of how language transformed the body as a symbolic medium is to be found in notions of exteriority and interiority. To maintain private knowledge or use of objects, one 'jams it up ya arse'. A similar connotation belongs to the phrase 'cling to it'. To talk frankly with someone, usually in the context of berating them, is to 'get up him/her' and threats of violence might be preceded by exclamations of 'smell the blood'. The body is also a reference for states of being. Keen annoyance is said to be when a person/object 'gives you the pox' or 'gives you a cunt-ache'. To be sexually interested is to 'go smelling'. The body also denotes conditions; being hung over is to have a 'big head'; the inebriated are 'wounded'. Naturally, parts of the body figure in sexual reference. A threat or attitude of annoyance toward young boys is expressed as 'kick him in the cock'. Generally this is a joking reference accompanied by elaborate sexual horseplay between the sexes (predominantly between adult and child). A mischievous child of either sex is labelled as a 'monkey cunt'. Although there are few gender-specific sexual words for men - women (mostly young girls, but also adult women) can be addressed as 'big split'.

Besides these idiosyncratic metaphors, the speech of the community has a number of specifically Aboriginal words. A good deal of these refer to body associations, i.e. head lice; sexual intercourse; genitals. Also, an expression of common appellation applied to friends, co-residents, even oneself, is 'black cunt' or 'black arse'. Cunt is used widely and in varying contexts, and it is not exclusively a sexual term (see 'cunt' in context of swearing in Gilbert 1977:141-148). Swearing by reference to body metaphors is not especially insulting. One of the most powerful insults I

heard was when a female was referred to as a 'gubbar's woman'.

'Black arse/cunt' carries more of a sense of group affirmation than deprecation. The combination of body idiom and colour is interesting in the light of issues of self-ascription. That people are 'black' as a racial category isn't always self-evident amongst southern Aborigines. It is a matter of their own definition and description as much as a consideration of the sociological context of Aboriginality. As one person expressed it "... you can always tell a Kouri by the way they walk, talk and dress. Not by skin color ...'. The same idea was expressed when we once rang the wrong phone number in Sydney. The person who answered indicated our mistake, although the caller reckoned that it sounded very like a 'kouri'.

The question of subjective understanding of identity for southern Aborigines bears more consideration than it has received. But in the final analysis a socialized contributing member in Mogo is not one who has resolved problems of societal anomie, but rather has achieved an existential sense of self against the essentially public dimensions of Aboriginality.

Aboriginality comprises specific cultural traits in Mogo. It refers to particular kinship ethics and normative behavioural ideals. In everyday experiences such principles are evident in the way people talk about each other and events, treat their neighbours (kinsfolk) and express themselves as men or women. Aboriginality is basically an ideology reinforcing cultural ideals by glossing the ambiguities and contradictions common in daily, community living. The most profound contradictions concern Aboriginal identity. Not only does the socialization process leave people ambivalent about their self-worth, but a closed community of kinfolk mystifies self/other differentiation. While people may experience subjectively events in their life public expression of it is hardly possible because of group orientations. As a consequence of this, asocial behaviour is one alternative; another is symbolic mediation of opposing demands. Both are observable in Mogo.

In short, the discussion raised the contexts and problems for self/other distinctions in Mogo suggesting that in both expressive and practical domains these are oppositions (private/public; knowledge/ignorance; male/female; and so on) requiring mediation. But to begin with discrepant behaviours were baffling. By reference to the analytic models of Jackson, Haviland and Myers, some ordering of the intricacies of these ambiguities in Mogo's social reality is possible.

CHAPTER 5
Conclusion

The central concern of this thesis has been Aboriginal identity in settled Australia; in particular, the concept of Aboriginality as it exists in one specific community and how the community experiences it as a determinant of socialization.

From the review of the literature in Chapter 1 it was shown that Aboriginality must be considered from two perspectives; firstly, as it refers to the actors' perceptions of their social reality, and secondly, as it encapsulates the community's world view or cultural system.

Until quite recently, the concept of Aboriginality as a cultural principle was dismissed because of the overwhelming emphasis on sociological perspectives. This was the focus of research, due largely to disbelief in a distinctive, discrete Aboriginal identity surviving amongst what were considered 'acculturated' people. Sociological data on income levels, housing problems and unemployment figures, however, obscured the significance of a continuing cultural dimension. Moreover, the concept of Aboriginality had to gain acceptance by European researchers, administrators and the general public. Aboriginal people themselves were responsible in part for this acceptance by drawing attention to Aboriginality as an issue of identity. In itself this attention was a challenge to orthodox models based upon a priori assumptions about cultural distinctiveness as exclusively the domains of ritual, language or social organization.

Exploring Aboriginal identity in settled Australia has principally involved acceptance of the actor's concept of Aboriginality. This entails considering what the community understands about the meaning of Aboriginality in their daily experience and how such knowledge affects their perception of themselves and of the non-Aboriginal world. The models of

Aboriginal identity based on this kind of emphasis begin with significations in the actor's cultural system, rather than imposing an observer's definition of Aboriginality.

People in Mogo do explicitly conceive of themselves as Aborigines; it is the basis on which all other perceptions are made. Whether or not what it means to be Aboriginal is dissimilar and contrastive from what it means to be working class or an impoverished minority group, the strength of the people's belief in their difference as Aboriginal people is the crucial distinction.

Chapter 3 of the thesis described the divergencies disruptive of a smooth transition from primary to secondary socialization. As expected, observed behaviour in the community confirmed that people do indeed act other than normatively, but in both cases ideology maintains the realness of Aboriginal existence as idealized by the community.

As an ideology Aboriginality functions on two levels; the experiential and cognitive. In the everyday world Aboriginality as an ideology maps patterns of normative behaviour as kin-based and group-orientated, together with details of role (what makes a 'good Aboriginal' mother; or how a 'good Aboriginal' child behaves towards his siblings). It counsels that true knowledge is public and objectifiable and what people know is contextually bound by the circumstances of social interaction and public discourse. Concomitantly there is denial of subjective, secret knowledge as unlikely to be of either substance or consequence.

Aboriginal personhood, according to the ideology, is also public. It is neither introspectively nor subjectively orientated; people are, in fact, discouraged from exhibiting this kind of self-expression. Children are taught that selfhood is existential; but as a lived-experience it acquires meaning and significance from the presence of kinsfolk. Moreover, the ideology is sufficiently integrated in all three-domains to establish the reality of Aboriginality as 'true' of their daily lives. Hence, denying

subjective thinking in public knowledge ensures that interpretation of behaviour aligns with normative models. In fact, of course, slippages between ideology and actual experience occur commonly enough. To the outsider, discrepancies are obvious. Within the community, by contrast, people apparently ignore the lack of consistency and interpret events and circumstances by reference to ideology rather than evidence.

Aboriginality is thus an ideology of both behaviour and cognition, and these are sufficiently interconnected to present an integrated conceptual and experiential understanding of existence. While the pattern of everyday interaction in the social world is thought to reflect a normative structure, in fact, this is assumed only because it is effected by the reality-maintaining structures of ideology. Of course, sufficient conformity exists to give order and structure to everyday life, and for people to ignore discrepancies as aberrant exceptions and, as Chapter 1 pointed out, belief that Aborigines always behave in certain specified ways means that lapses can be covered.

Apart from a model for daily living, the ideology asserts the value of Aboriginal selfhood. The importance of this is clear when people - through schooling, employment or hospitalization - are forced to have extensive interaction with European society. On the whole, they are aware that Aborigines collectively are not particularly well-thought of, although as individuals Europeans may accept them. After a childhood in a community where each child is valued and taught to be proudly Aboriginal, initially this can be distressing.

Primarily, Aboriginality is about identity. Ideologically, this provides a cognitive mode for resolving several dilemmas of identity development which are concomitants of living in a closed, kin-based Aboriginal community. Chapters 3 and 4 of the thesis describe these difficulties in detail but they may be summarized as: ambiguity in the valuing of self which is especially prominent during socialization; self/other differentiation is made difficult because of the nature of the community as kin-based and entailing

particular responsibilities; and finally, the marking of selfhood as pre-eminently publically orientated and motivated by group interests at the expense of a subjective, egocentric dimension. While people do experience their life with others subjectively, it is a problem of learning how to deal with subjective, individualist and possibly negative desires without resorting to asocial behaviour. For example, people have to resolve how to keep exclusive use of certain possessions without denying the right of kin to request them and without behaving in ways that ignore, or refute, the responsibility of kin obligations.

All these issues may be subsumed under a more general debate touched on in the literature, namely Aboriginal identity as a cultural phenomenon in settled Australia. Bell (1964) and Eckermann (1973) referred to it, although neither explored the issue in any depth. In the thesis this argument is taken up. Daily life and the kinds of conflicts in identity development and selfhood confirm the prevalence of individualism, but since such behaviour does not square with normative behaviour and motivation promoted by the ideology, people do not make sense of it as meaningful action. This is the important point missed in the literature; meaning is only given to behaviour through group orientated norms which assimilate individual behaviour.

Eckermann's results from the Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck test, for "... within-culture regularities and between-culture differences in value-orientation areas ..." (Eckermann 1973:32) stressed initiative and independence at the expense of collectivity, group identification and group co-operation. The former qualities are not necessarily exclusive to European society as she argues. Moreover, it is the shared meanings by which people understand each other and act towards each other in the Aboriginal community which is important. Indeed, given the contexts of meaning - public, socially contextual and discussive - shared community meanings are likely to carry more weight than individual perceptions.

In essence, the thesis has attempted to show that to describe Aboriginality and Aboriginal communities in settled Australia the meanings people attach to their social world are of first order importance. In fact people's perceptions of experience and their common-sense understandings, indicate an integrated system of cultural significations by which Aboriginality is imposed on the phenomenological world. This operates as an ideology and it is through this that people articulate the ways in which they differ from wider society and the quality of their cultural distinctiveness. Ideology, furthermore, encourages a positive sense of identity when the conditions of socialization and community context of living have associated problems of some magnitude.

The importance of eliciting Aboriginal models of their cultural world rather than relying wholly upon those constructed through the outside observer's questionnaires, interviews and statistics, is summed up by Langton (1981:16) as a long overdue need for re-evaluation of the direction of most research, "... In whatever discipline, researchers have worked - history, sociology, anthropology, psychiatry - most have failed to perceive the insiders' view - how Black people themselves perceive and understand their conditions ...". The thesis undoubtedly entails issues deserving of further research, especially on identity, and if this is so meets the challenge to find out what Aborigines in settled Australia believe and perceive.

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