USE OF THESES

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SUSTAINING DESIRE
A STRUCTURALIST INTERPRETATION OF MYTH AND MALE CULT IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

VOLUME TWO
PART THREE

THE RITES
CHAPTER EIGHT

Out of the Maternal Shadow

The loving mother teaches her child to walk alone. She is far enough from him so that she cannot actually support him, but she holds out her arms to him. She imitates his movements, and if he totters, she swiftly bends as if to seize him, so that the child might believe that he is not walking alone ... And yet, she does more. Her face beckons like a reward, an encouragement. Thus, the child walks alone with his eyes fixed on his mother's face, not on the difficulties in his way. He supports himself by the arms that do not hold him and constantly strives towards the refuge in his mother's embrace, little suspecting that in the very same moment that he is emphasizing his need for her, he is proving that he can do without her, because he is walking alone.

Soren Kierkegaard
(Quoted in M. S. Mahler, F. Pine and A. Bergman, The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant, pp. 72-3).

I wouldn't belong to any club that would have me for a member.

Groucho Marx
9.1 The Dreaming in Retrospect

Stanner (1963:55-6) once remarked of the development of ritual among the Murinbata

that the conception of reality has been expanding, and with this no doubt there was too a deepening of mystification.

The formulation could well be applied to the Central Australian world as it is depicted in myth. The Dreaming, conceived in terms of symbols, sets up the universe by expanding signification, and the well-formed categories of time and space, now articulated as a network of signs, are its end result. But while the process represents an expansion of consciousness, it is coterminous with the progressive loss of the conditions out of which consciousness was built. The Dreaming thus truly is a mystery; a lost world.

In Chapters Three and Four I drew attention to the Levi-Straussian view of myth and ritual as being complementary but opposed. Writing specifically on the subject of the contrast between life and thought, Levi-Strauss (1981:675) expands on this view by saying:

ritual represents a bastardization of thought, brought about by the constraints of life. It reduces, or rather vainly tries to reduce, the demands of thought to an extreme limit, which can never be reached, since it would involve the actual abolition of thought. This desperate, and inevitably unsuccessful, attempt to re-establish the continuity of lived experience, segmented through the schematism by which mythic speculation has replaced it, is the essence of ritual.

Thus, while ritual makes use of the categories which myth has instituted, it

does not create them, and endeavours rather, if not to deny them, at least to obliterate, temporarily, the distinctions and oppositions [myths] lay down, by bringing out all sorts of ambiguities, compromises and transitions between them (Levi-Strauss 1981:680).
Ritual is thus not a reaction to life as such; it is a reaction to what thought has made of life. It is not a direct response to the world, or even to experience of the world. What, in the last resort, ritual seeks to overcome is not the resistance of the world to man, but the resistance of man's thought to man himself (Levi-Strauss 1981: 681).

As we now embark on an analysis of Aranda ritual, I intend to explore this complementary opposition, although its essential features may already be discerned. The totemic ancestors, as we have seen, were wondrous beings who made The Dreaming happen. But at the same time, this 'happening' instituted man himself. It may well be that the conceptions of Aboriginal man as 'carrying' The Law, or 'following' The Dreaming, are ideas which can only apply to the post-Dreaming era. For it is in the world of the here-and-now, for ever cut off from the total might of The Dreaming as it first occurred, that people have responsibilities towards the ancestral figures. But this was not always so.

If The Dreaming is now something 'special', it was in the beginning all that there was: it was, and in a different sense still is, everything. The ancestors roamed the earth in an atmosphere which they dominated totally. One hears virtually nothing of what one would properly call human activity in The Dreaming. The world then was a world of supermen and superwomen, of heroes and heroines, and even these are thought to have been partly animal or non-human in character. No ordinary men could ever hope to repeat their fantastic deeds: but those men can at least emulate them, and emulate them well.

If The Dreaming is largely silent on man, this is consistent with the way in which it now exists only as some-
thing lurking in the background of events. Certainly, The Dreaming, as both mythically and ritually instituted, is more powerful than the world of mundane human life, but ritual re-enactment and mythical history remain fundamentally different. In myth, man is simply ‘carried along’ in The Dreaming, starting life as a number of embryonic masses to be dealt with passively by super-human agencies. Now men are not so much carried as carriers – bearers of The Law.

In Chapter Six I spelt out the essential features of the relationship between man and the ancestors obtaining in The Dreaming. That relationship was one of displacement and replacement: the ancestral figures, at first aged and unitary, were transformed into spirit children – counterparts of the inapatu. The corollary of this is the subject on which The Dreaming is virtually silent: the fate of man – as progressing from inapatu to aged ancestor. But it is this implicit aspect of The Dreaming of the past which is, more or less, the explicit aspect of The Dreaming of the present. Entry into the secrets of The Dreaming is carefully controlled according to age. The older one becomes, the more secret knowledge one acquires and the more one delves deeper into the mythic past. Thus, if the sequence of The Dreaming was, mythically speaking, from unity to diversity, and from continuity to discontinuity, then one would expect to find the sequence to be reversed in rites (as Levi-Strauss predicts), since the acquisition of ritual knowledge is equivalent to the restoration of The Dreaming as it was in the very beginning.

The symbolic properties of the circle (or mandala) are useful for modelling this relationship. As we saw in Chapter
Six, the 'indefinitely multiplied drama' (Levi-Strauss) of the oedipus complex is portrayed mythically in terms of generational takeover. This takeover institutes a set of 'quintessential' relations, which, in their most abstract form, can be represented as follows.

**Diagram 17. The Double Progression**

According to this diagram, then, The Dreaming, posed as 'the other side', progresses from old to young, which was precisely the fate of the ancestral beings. But The Dreaming's counterpart, waking, visible reality, progresses from young to old. It is along this latter trajectory that we will now begin to move, tracing the subject's pursuit of ritual knowledge through the life-cycle, beginning with conception and birth and ending in death. In effect, then, we pick up where the ancestors left off - with a discussion of spirit children, the final legacy of The Dreaming.
8.2 Conceiving The Dreaming

For the Aranda, just as life itself began with The Dreaming, so the life of an individual may begin with a dream. The dream I refer to is one of the ways in which the conception of spirit children takes place. Such conception is absolutely vital in Aranda religion, for the association of every individual with a totemic ancestor appears as a necessary condition for many religious rights and duties. Each and every person has his identity partly fixed by spirit conception, and as Strehlow (1968:86) points out, it dictates to a large degree the ownership of the sacred tju-runga (see Chapter Twelve).

There is no single, unified theory of spirit conception for the Aranda. Ideas associated with it are good examples of the practical, projective values of mythopoeia. For myths, although ideologically unchanging, develop continuously in response to pragmatic concerns, among which one must include pregnancy. The many and varied descriptions of conception given by different ethnographers bear ample testimony to this and reflect both individual creative interpretation and local cultural differences. The following description of conception ideology therefore has to be treated as exemplary. It reflects no more than a synthesis of many moments of mythopoeia.

Spirit children were described in Chapter Six. (1) Often it is said that these tiny red spirits lie in wait for women. When a woman comes near to a place where an ancestor has left behind a spirit child, the latter may miraculously pierce her body and enter her womb, though the entry itself is always specified as some point other than the vagina,
usually the hip or thigh. The woman knows of this entry, because she feels it as the quickening of the foetus already inside her body. Often, it is said that the conception is really an ancestor hurling an invisible bull-roarer into the woman (Strehlow 1968:87, Carl Strehlow 1908:53). In fact, any type of tjurunga is capable of this fertilising function, as Strehlow (1968:88) describes in relation to the native cat ancestors.

From the tjurunga lost by a tjilpa ancestor only tjilpa-men can come into being: the bull-roarers and the feather-down and the arm-bands and all personal belongings, weapons, and ornaments in possession of the original tjilpa ancestor were filled with tjilpa 'life-cells' (ngantja). Any of these objects can enter into a passing woman and grow into human beings, just as readily as the ancestor himself is able to enter, from the rock or tree representing his final changed form, into the body of a woman whom he wishes to have as his human mother. (2)

The general term for spirit child is ratapa, derived from the verb ratama - to come up, issue forth (Carl Strehlow 1908:52, cf. Spencer and Gillen 1927:363). In Aboriginal English, Aranda people often now speak of spirit babies 'jumping up' from the land. Ratapa is also the general term for child, both intra-uterine and newborn. The child sheds this appellation when it begins to crawl, a point which I will show in this chapter to be of great importance.

Conception may also take place through visions, and, as already indicated, through dreams. Roheim (1933:241-9, 262-3) gives many examples of the conception dreams of women, and these auguries often make reference to the consumption of food. According to Strehlow (1968:89) conception is often attributed to the eating of food, usually with some form of peculiarity. It is, of course, the peculiarities of any of
these events — dreams, visions, quickening of foetus, consumption of food — which provide the basis for interpretation and the consequent assigning of a child to a particular totemic affiliation.

There are, then, many theories about the actions of spirit children — and I have by no means reproduced them all here. But whichever are held, there is a common denominator which links them all. All children have to be regarded as a manifestation or reincarnation of a totemic ancestor. Such identity is an indispensable part of an Aranda's personality: without it, a human being simply cannot be a person. Spirit children represent the potential of The Dreaming's legacy.

Myths may change as a result of 'conceiving The Dreaming'. Dream events and the like are grafted onto existing stories and may alter a narrative's content. Conception is itself a mythical event: it is The Dreaming in action — a manifestation of the pre-existing altjira which has chosen to make itself visible to men. In many myths reproduced by Spencer and Gillen in The Arunta (1927:Chapters XII-XIV), there are references made to ancestral beings 'dropping' people off or leaving them behind in the landscape. The authors seem to be ignorant of the significance of these statements, which are idiomatic ways of saying that living or recently-dead people have been conceived at those places. And it is through these people/place/totemic ancestor connections that the myths are often reworked.

Judgement of an ancestor's presence at a place of conception is, of course, always made ex post facto. Should a woman conceive at a given place, it will not always be ob-
vious which ancestor has entered her body. Gillen (Spencer n.d., Box 2:28) states that conception is generally decided by a council of old men and that this council may not decide on a child's totemic identity for months or even years after the conception event. And as Strehlow (1968:87) states, there is plenty of scope for manoeuvre, because:

If no well authenticated physical [tjurunga] object is near at hand, the theory is advanced that the ancestor whose legendary wanderings once led him closest to this spot lost here one of his tjurunga.

The decision is a political, as well as religious, one.

Conception ideas are thus an important aspect of tjurunga as the latter are tied to historical contingencies (see Chapter Twelve). Conception and birth are, of course, areas of social life where the whims of demography insert themselves into the orderly and conservative schemes of totemic classifications. What we now need to do is to examine something of the way in which the Aranda deal with this threat to order and make cosmos and society correlative (Stanner 1963:Chapter VI), and that means to embark more fully on an analysis of ritual life. In accordance with Diagram 16, we must begin at that point where women, as mothers, quite literally carry the Law by being pregnant, giving birth and rearing children.

8.3 Yet More about Mama and Papa

Spirit children, at least among some Arandic groups, are connected to sticks known as papa. According to Roheim (1933:251-2) the Western Aranda and some Western Desert people undertake 'couvade' restrictions during a woman's pregnancy.
According to Aranda custom, the woman may eat meat if she wishes to do so, but the unborn child does not like it, and may show its resentment by causing sickness. During the first three or four months [of pregnancy] the husband does not kill any large game necessitating the use of spear and boomerang ... The spirit of the unborn child follows him about, and gives warning of his approach to large game. If he attempts to throw a spear or boomerang at any animal, the child will cause the weapon to take a crooked course, and the man will know ... that the child is angry with him. But if the father persists ..., then the sufferings of the mother will be largely increased ... [cf. Spencer and Gillen 1927:492].

However, there is a way out of this difficulty. They make use of a little papa [stick], and stick it into the sand somewhere in the camp. Then the ratapa will spend its time playing with this stick, and the father can go after the big game ... The Pitjantjara, Matuntara and Pintubi carry a pointing bone (kuru) in their hair. Then if [the father] has forgotten to stick the papa in the sand while in camp, he can still get out of the difficulty when he catches sight of the kangaroo or emu. He cleans a bit of sand, and sticks the bone in it. Then the ratapa stops there, playing with the kuru. Otherwise he follows the father in stalking the animal, but he does not do it properly, and frightens the game away.

The relationship between spirit children and papa emerges as something rather more complicated in the work of Carl Strehlow (1908:80), because this latter author maintains that the papa is a tjurunga.

As soon as a woman realises that she is pregnant and that a ratapa has entered her, the future-child’s grandfather, either its aranga (father’s father) or tjimia (mother’s father), goes to a mulga tree (ititja) and fashions a tjurunga [from its wood]. On this he carves with a possum’s tooth a design that has some connection with the ancestor or his totem. He smears it with red ochre and places it in the secret cave where other tjurunga are stored. When the child is born it cries continuously for its tjurunga. To quieten him, the grandfather, accompanied by another man, goes to get the tjurunga from the secret cave. The women say that the grandfather has gone to find the tjurunga, or rather [since they may not say the word tjurunga] the papa, that the child lost when it went into its mother. The grandfather wraps the tjurunga in fur-string so that the women cannot see it and lays it in the ulkumba...
(pulverized eucalyptus bark) of the wooden tray in which the mother carries the child around for the first year of its life. The child is laid in the tray so that its head comes directly over the papa tjurunga. It seems that from this tjurunga, special strength is imparted to the child’s body, so that it grows quickly and in health. When the child is grown, the papa is placed back in the sacred cave with the other tjurunga (see also Carl Strehlow 1913:3, and 1908:82 for Western Desert version).

The papa (see Illustration 10), at least from Carl Strehlow’s account, seems to be connected with the spirit children mentioned in the myth of the native cats (Chapter Five). For part of that myth, as yet to be introduced, tells how the third native cat man (ingkata kubitja) arranged for the birth of children from mulga trees.

As he travelled along between the various camps, he left guruna ... in many of the mulga trees ... At the first mbiljikara camp he [told] the two Malbungka men ... [that] they were to try to make altjira tjurunga, called ititjangarierea, out of the wood of mulga trees. For some reason the Malbungka men were unable to do so ... [So the ingkata told the urumbula men to make them]. I, he said to the old men, have put guruna, or spirits, in the mulga trees. You take a log of mulga wood and split it. The guruna are everywhere in the trees; make the tjurunga for them smooth and good and cut the ilkinja [designs] on them with [a possum’s] tooth (Spencer and Gillen 1927:370-1).{3}

Carl Strehlow also suggests that papa are connected with native cats. In his versions of the extensive wanderings of these ancestors across Central Australia (Carl Strehlow 1907:51-9, 1908:24-6), he states that the native cats are normally thought to have ended their journeys at a place near Barrow Creek called Inapapa. Inapapa is derived from the words ina (wood or stick) and papa. It appears to be so named because when the native cat ancestors stopped there, the young novices in the troops were changed into wooden tjurunga (Carl Strehlow 1907:54-5).
Illustration 10, A *Papa Tjurunga*

The *papa tjurunga*, like other *tjurunga*, is often decorated with designs connected with The Dreaming. This particular example depicts two native cat men spreading out the hot coals of a fire in order to cook some kangaroos.

(from Carl Strehlow 1907:plate III, figure 6)
But the issue of the *papa* is yet more complex, because Spencer and Gillen have denied the truth of Carl Strehlow’s account. They render in its place the following alternative.

Before the child begins to crawl it is carried about in a *pitji* [tray], in which a kind of bed is made for it out of shredded bark called *ratapa ulkumba*. When first it tries to walk it is given a stick called *papa*. This is only an ordinary stick, but is often ‘sung’ by the *aranga* or *tjimia* (paternal or maternal grandfather). [They sing: ‘The child holds the stick and stands’]. There is nothing whatever of a sacred nature about it (Spencer and Gillen 1927:488).

To anyone who has been in close touch with the natives and has seen the extraordinary precautions that are taken to prevent the women from coming into contact with the *tjurunga*, and also the terror of the women if they think they are near any such sacred thing, the statement that one is placed under the child’s head, in a trough carried by the mother, is absolutely incredible. No such thing is ever done – our native informants were more than positive on this point. There certainly is a stick called *papa*, but it is merely an ordinary one, given to a child to help it to stand up and walk in its early days (Spencer and Gillen 1927:586).

These are very strong criticisms, but it seems that they may have been misplaced. Roheim (1974a:68, cf. 1950:71) confirms Carl Strehlow’s account, with only one small difference: he says that it is the father who puts the *tjurunga* in the cradle. T. G. H. Strehlow (1968:68-9) also confirms his father’s account, saying that the *tjurunga* is a bull-roarer with marks of the infant’s conception totem. Perhaps Spencer and Gillen might have been alerted to the truth of Carl Strehlow’s ethnography by the myth of the native cats. For Ilaparintja, the first woman, was given a *tnatantja* pole to carry by the *ingkata kubitja*, but because it was so well wrapped in string, she thought it to be just a digging stick. It was directly after this that she became a mother (see Chapter Five). In fact, by far the most telling inform-
ation that we have on the papa links motherhood, tjurunga, sticks, and walking in the most revealing of ways.

The information I am alluding to here is furnished by Roheim in the form of two myths. Here is the first.

A woman went [looking for] for honey ants but a child was in the [ant]hole and the child went into her. She felt it moving inside so she made a cradle. The little boy jumped out of her navel into the cradle and walked on all fours. He saw his mother lying there and went back into the cradle. (This is repeated several times). He walked back again a fair bit and then she made a little stick, a papa, and gave it to him. He took hold of the stick and she also held it, and he got up on two feet. The woman made herself 'flash' with albetja (tail of the rabbit bandicoot [or bilby](4)) and red ochre. She called him, 'Come along, come.' He came back again to the papa and stood up. Then she decorated the stick with bird's down (andata ...). When he came back he said, 'What has happened to my mother? She looks flash! and my little papa also.' Then she showed the little boy the new tjurunga she had invented (the stick). Then the boy went south, rather far. He stood on the top of a hill and looked back; he saw that his papa had grown into a tnatntja (ceremonial pole) with a tara (tail feather) on top. He came back and caught hold of it. His mother said, 'You have a big one now! Your papa is big! You go a long way now,' she said. She gave him her breast before he went away. He came back very very quickly and [saw his] very big tnatntja with namatuna [bull-roarers] and [possum's] teeth [decorating it]. The woman extended her arms and said, 'Come on, come one' [in sexual invitation]. Then the child was taken by a demon woman; but the mother fetched him back from the underworld. Now she showed him the papa; it was doubled. She pulled out the two tnatntjas and then she blew on them. A great many ratsapa came out (inditjiwuka) from them. Then she and the child and the two tnatntjas all borkeraka (became tired). The woman was called Wilpurknunda (Hit it with the tnatntja), and the boy's name was Ungulara (Clean road) because he always hit the road with the tnatntja (Roheim 1969:206-7).

Roheim's second myth is much shorter and less informative, but it makes for interesting comparison with the first. The story tells of a woman who gives birth to a child.
The boy became big and walked on all fours, looking for his mother. He had a little (papa) stick and he always tried to get up with it. Then he walked on all fours again and found his mother's track. One day he went to [his mother's home] and his mother saw him coming. This must be my child, she thought. She sat down, squatting with her legs open, and put a tjurunga on her head. She called him with open arms and she squatted on the ground with her vagina wide open. He went right in with the papa and he borkeraka (became tired) and became a tjurunga in the mother. The baby inside was too big, so she too borkeraka and tjurungeraka (became a tjurunga) there (Roheim 1969:208).

Since the first of these myths was told to Roheim by an Eastern/Central Aranda informant from Alice Springs, it seems likely that even the people with whom Spencer and Gillen worked make some link between the papa as stick and the papa as tjurunga. But of what kind?

8.4 A Sign of Things to Come

Although this chapter mainly concerns ritual, I will dwell for some time on these two myths. We know very little about the ritual context of the papa, and the myths are the best commentary that we have. In order to analyse them, and make some tentative hypotheses about the role of ritual in early childhood, we can bear in mind two analytical findings of authors working in other areas of the world.

The two papa myths appear to tell contrasting stories. The first concerns the development of a child with a seemingly bright future, of a boy who is told by his mother that he must go far. The second, however, has the opposite impact. It is about a boy who, rather than leaving his mother, orients himself so much towards her that she swallows him up - a boy without a future. The second child, then, recalls Levi-Strauss's handling of certain South American and
Japanese myths which have as their connecting motif the theme of the crying baby. Levi-Strauss interprets this motif, which is also present in the exegetical accounts of the papa, as the archetypal anti-social hero (in the sense that he refuses to become socialized) who remains obstinately attached to nature and the feminine world: the same hero who [elsewhere] commits incest in order to return to the maternal fold, and who [in another context], although of an age to join the men’s house, remains secluded in the family hut (Levi-Strauss 1973c:381).

And in Aboriginal mythology, too, it seems that the crying child — the child who cannot be quietened by his papa — is incestuous and closeted.

The first child, who is something of an adventurer, recalls a quite different analysis made by Freud of a European man’s dream.

A man dreamt that he was a pregnant woman lying in bed. He found the situation very disagreeable. He called out: ‘I’d rather be ...’ (during the analysis, after calling to mind a nurse, he completed the sentence with the words ‘breaking stones’). Behind the bed there was hanging a map, the bottom edge of which was kept stretched by a strip of wood. He tore the strip of wood down by catching hold of its two ends. It did not break across but split into two halves lengthways. This action relieved him and at the same time helped on delivery (Freud 1976:538, original emphasis throughout deleted).

The dream is thus similar, though only superficially so, to the first myth through the motif of the splitting piece of wood, since the boy’s tnatantja pole, itself having grown from a stick, also split lengthways into two parts. However, I think that Freud’s interpretation of the dream shows that the similarity is a good deal more profound.

The interpretation is as follows.

Without any assistance [the dreamer] interpreted tearing down the strip [‘Leiste’] as a great
achievement ['Leistung']. He was escaping from his uncomfortable situation (in the treatment) by tearing himself out of his feminine attitude ... The absurd detail of the strip of wood not simply breaking but splitting lengthways was explained thus: the dreamer recalled that this combination of doubling and destroying was an allusion to castration. Dreams very often represent castration by the presence of two penis symbols as the defiant expression of an antithetical wish ... Incidentally, the 'Leiste' ['groin'] is a part of the body in the neighbourhood of the genitals. The dreamer summed up the interpretation of the dream as meaning that he had got the better of the threat of castration which had led to his adopting a feminine attitude (Freud 1976:538-9).

Presumably, the dream elements not mentioned by Freud in the analysis, which relate how the dreamer would rather be 1) 'a nurse' and 2) 'breaking stones' were also allusions to femininity and castration. The other neglected element is the map which was originally held open by the piece of wood. Since the splitting of the wood (symbolic castration) was 'a great achievement', it seems likely that the map was 'showing the way' out of the dreamer's problems. The way out itself proved to be a double delivery: 1) the birth of the child with which the man was pregnant, and 2) 'deliverance' from the feminine condition which was impairing his achievement.

The two myths about the papa are about a 'hero' and an 'anti-hero': the latter cannot leave his mother, while the former can. Moreover, the 'hero' divorces himself from the maternal embrace in a way very similar to Freud's dreamer. It seems evident, then, that the dream and the Japanese, South American and Aboriginal myths are 'about' the same thing - the symbolic castration which is necessary for a child if it is to accede to the Symbolic and enter society as an independent subject (see Chapter Three). The dream is
particularly illuminating in this respect, because the dreamer is pregnant, and he has to submit to symbolic castration in order to bring on delivery. We may say of him, then, that at the beginning of the dream he is the mother, but by the end of it he has delivered himself from her. This is what Neumann (1972:198) refers to as the hero begetting himself in incest with his mother.

The deliverance is 'the way' which is indicated by the map in the dream; a path which the dreamer must follow in order to be himself. In the myths, too, the motif of the path is important. We already know from Chapter Five the immense significance of tracks in Aranda mythology, as well as their links with the presence and absence of the phallus, and here we are presented with a heroic boy whose future is secured and who goes by the name of Ungulara — 'Clean-road' or 'Clear-path'. His mother is called Wilpurknunda — 'Hit-it-with-the-pole' — even though it is explained that it is the boy who carved the way with his tnatantja pole. Like the native cat ancestors, beings with double penes and tnatantja with which they fashion the way across the landscape (Carl Strehlow 1907:51-5), the boy holds the future before him. Yet his identity, at least in the beginning, is co-extensive with his mother's.

Before he had done any field-work, Roheim (1925:181) surmised that the papa was related to the umbilical cord and that it symbolised "a period of ontogenesis, the psychical relationship between mother and child". Certainly, the papa shares properties with the infant's umbilical cord, since part of the latter may be wrapped in string and placed around the child's neck to make it vigorous, healthy and
content (Spencer and Gillen 1927:488, Roheim 1974a:67, Carl Strehlow 1913:1). Roheim (1925:182) also stated that the time when a child is in contact with the papa should be regarded as a kind of rite of passage between internal (foetal) and external life. These views, I think, are sound, and although Roheim himself never developed them, it is his own field material which gives them further credibility. In the remainder of this chapter I will take a closer look at Roheim's myths to see what they can divulge about the papa.

8.5 Self and Mother

Aboriginal child development is at once very similar and very different from that in Western society. Hamilton (1981), in her work on Arnhem Land child rearing, suggests five major phases: intra-uterine; from birth to six months ('fat and happy'); from six to eighteen months ('clingy'); from eighteen months to three years ('the fearful one'); and from three to five years ('the cheeky one'). These phases cover those which in psychoanalysis are thought to be constitutive of the subject through the emergence and resolution of the oedipus complex, though as I propose to show, the standard model of the oedipal drama needs a good deal of reworking if it is to capture Aboriginal social reality in a faithful way.

Psychology may work from a number of different premises when describing the beginnings of mental life, but there is general agreement that at first – whether inside the womb or out – the infant is undifferentiated from its environment, primarily the mother. This narcissistic condition was pictured by Freud (1984:37) through metaphor.
A neat example of a psychical system shut off from
the stimuli of the external world, and able to
satisfy even its nutritional requirements autisti-
cally . . . , is afforded by a bird's egg with its
food enclosed in its shell; for it the care
provided by its mother is limited to the provision
of warmth.

The analogy is particularly suitable for early intra-uterine
life and really depicts a situation where an individual is
not forced to act. (5)

But it also describes well the predicament of a new-
born infant after unity with the mother has been re-
established through holding and breast-feeding. A well-
handled new-born baby spends most of its time in a half-
sleeping, half-waking state, becoming properly conscious
when hunger or some other tension causes him to indicate
discomfort. When the tension is relieved, the child sinks
back into unconsciousness and reverts to homeostasis. Mah-
ler, Pine and Bergman (1975:41-3) call this 'normal autism',
a condition in which there is no distinction between satis-
faction and demand. If all goes well, in Aboriginal terms
the child begins to grow 'fat and happy'.

Hamilton (1981:30) suggests that when an Arnhem Land
child begins to smile regularly it is regarded as having
reached an important threshold. Precisely the same turning
point occurs in Western children, and at the same time - a
few weeks after birth (Mahler et al 1975:45-6). Smiling
indicates a subtle psychological change, because it means
that the child is beginning to take notice of the world.
Children do not smile unless they mirror their mother's own
smiles and this means a refinement of the senses. Hamilton
(1981:30-1) says that Arnhem Land children scan their envi-
ronment at will by six weeks, and the importance of this is
that something like proper libidinal attachments are being formed (Mahler et al 1975:46). It is not for nothing that the Aranda refer to birth as the receiving of one's eyes (see Chapter Six), since visual stimuli are some of the first which prevent children from falling back into unconsciousness after the satisfaction of needs and demands. So, as Mahler, Bergman and Pine (1975:44) say, the 'egg' has begun to crack. They refer to this phase of childhood as 'normal symbiosis' (Mahler et al 1975:43-51). It is from now on that developments particularly relevant to Roheim's myths occur.

Most children, depending on the quality of maternal care, can sit unsupported by six months, crawl by nine, and walk by fourteen—all these figures being comparable in Aboriginal and Western society (Hamilton 1981:47-8, Mahler et al 1975:passim). Both of the papa myths begin with a child that can crawl, so one would expect the beginnings of perambulation to be important psychologically. And indeed they are, since they coincide with the mirror-phase of which Lacan writes (see Chapter Three). This is when the 'egg' is beginning to hatch, spread across its environment, and become what Lacan (1977b:197) likes to call a 'little man'—in French an hommelette. It is when the individual's identity begins to harden.

At about 6 months, tentative experimentation at separation-individuation begins. This can be observed in such behaviour on the part of the infant as pulling at mother's hair, ears, or nose, putting food into the mother's mouth, and straining his body away from mother in order to have a better look at her, to scan her and the environment ... There are definite signs that the baby begins to differentiate his own from the mother's body. Six to seven months is the peak of manual, tactile, and visual exploration of the mother's
face, as well as of the covered (clad) and unclad parts of the mother’s body; these are the weeks during which the infant discovers with fascination a brooch, a pair of eyeglasses, or a pendant worn by mother ... These explorative patterns later develop into the cognitive function of checking the unfamiliar against the already familiar (Mahler et al 1975:54).

And Hamilton (1981:47) regards the period from six to eighteen months in the life of an Arnhem Land child as being one of tremendous significance. In this time [the children] master the fundamental motor skills, explore the environment with all their senses, gain teeth, become able to initiate social relations themselves and make their desires known; they learn a great deal about their physical and social environment and, most significant of all, learn the foundations of language.

The Aranda mark this time of great psychological progress by giving the child its name. This occurs, according to Carl Strehlow (1913:3) as soon as the child can walk properly, at approximately one year old — when the child is no longer a ratapa. The choice of name is ideally that of the child’s paternal grandfather, the same man who also fashions his papa tjurunga, and it is invariably one which is connected with the child’s conception totem — as also is the papa tjurunga. We do not know whether the papa has anything to do with naming, but it is evident, from both myth and ritual exegesis, that it has a great deal to do with walking.

Mahler, Bergman and Pine speak of the importance of children ‘checking the unfamiliar against the already familiar’, and this also is where one of Roheim’s myths begins. Both stories begin with a child that can crawl; that is, a child that is capable of moving away from the mother and exploring new horizons. But the two children are by no means the same. In the second myth the child is first depicted as

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being alone, except for his papa stick. He is looking for his mother, and one senses that he is perhaps fearful without her. By contrast, the first myth depicts an apparently confident child who always keeps an eye on his mother while at the same time leaving her. He crawls about, explores, checks back to his mother and returns to the cradle, and repeats this action several times. Not so the first child, whose lack of confidence seems to be connected with his inability to find ‘home-base’.

Two consequences follow from this contrast: 1) the ‘hero’ learns to walk, while the ‘anti-hero’ does not; and 2) the first child’s world, including his ‘mama and papa’, is miraculously transformed into something both promising and wonderful, while the second child retreats from the world and has no future. Given the connection between walking and naming, we may perhaps say, after Lacan, that the first child is given a place in language while the second is not (see Chapter Three), and this is consonant with the earlier findings about one child properly submitting to the castration complex and the other being engulfed by his mother.

In Lacan’s understanding, the birth of the subject has to be prefigured by the mirror-phase, and the myths appear to speak to this, although one of them only through silence. In the story about the ‘anti-hero’ there is nothing that could be construed as mirroring. The child is either alone, except from his ineffective papa, or he is enveloped completely by his mother. There is no middle ground and hence no possibility of reflection.

The ‘hero’, on the other hand, is always putting space
between himself and his mother without completely severing connection with her. And it is as a result of this distancing procedure that the mother gives him a papa stick. This miraculously causes him to walk and the whole world is suddenly transformed into a ritual context. The marvels culminate, at least at first, in the child moving away from camp to the top of a far-off hill. There he turns, looks back, and watches as the decorated papa stick is transformed into a tnatantja pole. He immediately returns to catch hold of it. In a culture without mirrors, then, there is nevertheless something spectacular. The child both stands back to take a good look at himself, and comes immediately to grasp himself as well. But he only thus establishes the Imaginary (Lacan) through another - a tjurunga which is regarded as a second body (Carl Strehlow 1908:77).

The narcissistic orientation of the mirror phase is well portrayed in the myth as the boy grasps his transformed papa, and this narcissism is intimately connected with his ability to walk. It is only by standing that his world is transformed, and it is only by walking that he can move away from camp to take a good look at himself. According to Mahler, Bergman and Pine (1975:71-2), walking and narcissism are intimately linked in child development.

With the spurt of autonomous functions, such as cognition, but especially upright locomotion, the 'love affair with the world' ... begins. The toddler takes the greatest step in human individuation. He walks freely with upright posture. Thus, the plane of vision changes; from an entirely new vantage point he finds unexpected and changing perspectives, pleasures, and frustrations. There is a new visual level that the upright, bipedal position affords.

During these precious 6 to 8 months (from the age of 10 or 12 months to 16 to 18 months), the world
is the junior toddler's oyster. Libidinal cathexis shifts substantially into the service of the rapidly growing autonomous ego and its functions, and the child seems intoxicated with his own faculties and with the greatness of his own world. Narcissism is at its peak! The child's first upright steps mark the onset of the practicing [sic] period per excellence, with substantial widening of his world and of reality testing. Now begins a steadily increasing libidinal investment in practicing motor skills and in exploring the expanding environment, both human and inanimate. The chief characteristic of this practicing period is the child's great narcissistic investment in his own functions, his own body, as well as in the objects and objectives of his expanding 'reality'. Along with this, we see a relatively great imperviousness to knocks and falls and other frustrations ... Substitute familiar adults within the setup of Ethel nursery are easily accepted.

Clearly, this account speaks volumes for the 'heroic' myth, although one must be careful of ethnocentrism. Hamilton (1981:56), for example, shows that Arnhem Land children develop according to a slightly different trajectory.

While babies recognise their mothers at an early age, they do not object to being left behind in the care of others ... Once the 8-month mark is passed the infant starts to protest mildly when [the mother] departs, although it will readily be calmed by a familiar caretaker. But by 12 months, when the baby is beginning to walk, it protests at being left with anyone, even a completely familiar grandmother. From about 12 to 18 months the child demands to go everywhere with the mother and is inconsolable if she leaves at all. The usual response is brief initial howling, and if left an uncontrollable weeping. This phase is rarely reached ... as public opinion is solidly against a mother who attempts to leave her crying child, and no matter what she is already carrying or where she is going she will return to carry her child with her. For this reason the incidence of others caring for the child is considerably lower at this age than it is under 6 months. Whatever the significance or advantages of this behaviour ..., it results in highly dependent, passive children with very limited exploratory experience at this age.

In addition, Hamilton contends that in both Arnhem Land (Hamilton 1981:56) and Central Australia (Hamilton 1979:108) children learn about their object worlds in a different
manner from Western children. Whereas Western children tend to have dangerous items kept away from their reach, so indulging exploratory behaviour, Aboriginal children are left to find out about dangerous objects through the bitter experience of pain. This also has the effect of making Aboriginal children less outgoing.\(^6\)

The difference here is, of course, one of emphasis rather than kind. A Western child’s ‘love affair with the world’ is indulged, whereas an Aboriginal child’s is, relatively speaking, discouraged. An Aboriginal mother will actually sometimes discourage walking away from her and instil fear of the environment into the child with stories of ‘bogeyman’ figures (Hamilton 1981:48, 55). But these two methods are only responses to the same phenomena — the narcissistic trends of the mirror phase and the tremendous upsurge in drive potential that comes with standing upright. In the myths, it seems as if we are presented with two opposing maternal strategies — one exemplary, the other bad. The ‘hero’ has his future secured by a mother who ‘keeps in touch’, but allows her child limited freedom. The ‘anti-hero’, by way of contrast, seems to suffer from a fate which Hamilton describes as a cardinal sin of Aboriginal motherhood — desertion. It is, however, a paradoxical desertion — a ‘leaving-entirely-alone’ which culminates in a ‘merging-entirely-with-mother’: ‘self-alone’ seems to lead to ‘self-with-mother’.

8.6 Erecting the Sign

The ability to walk is connected with the papa, but it seems unlikely, as Spencer and Gillen claim, that the papa
is merely a ‘walking stick’ or ‘third leg’. Obviously, the Aranda connect the papa with an erect gait by singing about the child’s ability to stand, but I would assume this to be a metaphorical allusion to independence – what we would call the ability to stand on one’s own two feet. In the myths, we are presented with one boy who is engulfed by his mother, and one who manages to free himself of her to some degree. It is the latter whose little stick successfully aids him in walking, while the former is noted as only trying to stand. The papa, then, signifies independence, though only in a context of maternal care.

The papa appears to fill the role of a ‘transitional object’ (Winnicott 1980:Chapter 1).Basically, the transitional object is something with which a child compensates for loss, typically of the mother. But at the same time, the object is not only a compensation: it has its own value and properties and helps a child learn something of the real world. It is thus both phantastic and objective, which is why Winnicott (1980:16-7) refers to it as ‘intermediate’ or ‘paradoxical’. It is also thought to be one of the keys to understanding the symbolic faculty, in so far as it stands half-way between fantasy and fact, between inner objects and external objects, between primary creativity and perception ... [T]he term ‘transitional object’ ... gives room for the process of becoming able to accept difference and similarity ... [It is] a term that describes the infant’s journey from the purely subjective to objectivity; and it seems ... that the transitional object [security blanket, teddy bear, dummy, etc.] is what we see of this journey of progress towards experiencing (Winnicott 1980:6-7).

Victoria Hamilton (1982:142-3) has summed up Winnicott’s conception of transitional objects (or transitional
phenomena, since they may not be 'objects', but, for example, sounds or body parts) with three key ideas. First, the transitional object is a crucial aspect of a child's individuation and separation from its mother. It is transitional precisely because it is in between mother and child. Second, a child's "use of a transitional object creates a third or intermediate area of experience" that is neither wholly subjective or wholly objective, but simultaneously both. Third, and most importantly, transitional objects or phenomena are defined wholly by their "transcontextual use".

In Winnicott's view, the transitional object is neither internal nor external; it lies or is created in the expanding gap between mother and infant. The transitional object heralds the distinction between individual mental functioning and shared external reality. It is misleading to state simply that the transitional object is transitional between internal and external reality or between illusion and perception since this can suggest that a boundary already exists. It does for the observing adult, but, from the baby's point of view, the transitional object is itself used to create, to discover, and to tolerate the increasingly clear perception of boundaries. In other words, the synchronous 'overlap' disperses into a gap which takes shape as a line or boundary. Initially, the transitional object partakes of both inner and outer reality simply because no border between them has been delineated. The transitional object is the vehicle by which a boundary between two objects is created. The teddy bear signifies the distinction between infant and mother. Logically, this evokes the issue of how we make a distinction, such that space is severed, so that two parts or spaces are created. But the mark of distinction is not itself one of the two objects which fall on either side of the boundary. Thus, the transitional object is not a representation of an internal or an external object. It spans the distance between the early relationship of interactional synchrony between mother and baby and the emerging world of discrete persons and objects. The object is used as a tool of differentiation - both as a comforter to deal with the pain of separation and as an instrument in the child's creation of his own world, including the private world of the mind (Victoria Hamilton 1982: 146).
In Lacan's terms, one might want to say that the transitional object instates metonymy.

The terms 'mark of distinction' are extraordinarily apt to describe what happens to the papa in the myth of the 'hero', since this little stick, which is also the boy in another guise, is transformed into something extraordinarily spectacular, something very 'distinctive'. This is the boy's very future. Of particular interest is the way in which the papa effects a disjunction between mother and child by filling the space between them. The child moves away from the mother, and then back to her, several times; but at the moment he moves furthest, she offers him the papa. As they both hold it together, so the boy stands and becomes independent, apparently because the "potential space" (Winnicott 1980:47-8) between mother and son has been filled. The papa stick, I would thus argue, is in effect a 'toy' (see Plate 13); something which Aboriginal children adopt as a possession during their time of separation-individuation in order to preoccupy themselves. This argument is perhaps given some weight by the role which the papa stick plays in the avoidance of 'couvade' restrictions, since there it is used, presumably on a retrospective model, to preoccupy the spirit child so that the latter will not interfere with the father's hunting. But what is only a little stick on the surface of things opens up a whole new world of interior life, just as the butcherbirds opened up the exterior world with their sticks at the beginning of The Dreaming (see Chapter Five). I would further argue that the papa tjurunga is the materialisation of that beginning which effectively fixes (or pre-fixes) the human soul and creates the person.
Plate 13. Young Aboriginal Child Playing with Stick

(from Spencer 1982:73)

Photographs of young boys playing with sticks crop up often in the literature on Australian Aborigines. This child is Waramanga and appears to be using the stick as a toy spear, but Central Australian children learn to master the art of digging with a stick very early on in life by imitating their mothers when the latter are foraging.
The Aranda appear to have profound insights into this emergence of the subject — insights which link the transitional object with both naming and symbolic castration.

In Hamilton's estimation, the time between eighteen months and five years of age is, for Arnhem Land children, one of two key phases. In the first half, the child is "the fearful one" (Hamilton 1981:67-79); in the second, he is "the cheeky one" (Hamilton 1981:80-84). These two stages correspond broadly to what occurs in Western children. Mahler, Bergman and Pine suggest that after the early narcissistic 'love affair with the world', Western children begin, usually in the middle of the second year, to experience increased separation anxiety.

At first this consists mainly of fear of object loss .... The relative lack of concern about the mother's presence .... is now being replaced by seemingly constant concern with the mother's whereabouts, as well as by active approach behaviour. As the toddler's awareness of separateness grows .... he seems to have an increased need, a wish for mother to share with him every one of his new skills and experiences, as well as a great need for the object's love ....

... [We give] this subphase the name of rapprochement (Mahler et al 1975:76-7).

The rapprochement phase becomes critical some time before two years of age, but it begins to decline gradually through three related processes which help the child to function alone:

(1) The development of language, in terms of naming objects and expressing desires with specific words. The ability to name objects .... seems to have provided the toddler with a greater sense of ability to control his environment. Use of the personal pronoun 'I' also often appeared at this time, as well as the ability to recognize and name familiar people and oneself in photographs; (2) the internalization process, which could be inferred both from acts of identification with the 'good', providing mother and father, and from the
internalization of rules and demands (beginnings of super-ego); and (3) progress in the ability to express wishes and fantasies through symbolic play, as well as the use of play for mastery (Mahler et al 1975:101).

All this, of course, is at the heart of the oedipus complex and its resolution. The former appears to have its genesis in the rapprochement phase and is connected with the child's fearfulness. The latter comes about through, and is consolidated by, the mastery of language and symbolic action. If all goes well, the child is by the age of three becoming 'cheeky': he grows in confidence in and of himself.

Transitional objects are, as stated before, not always true 'objects', and in boys, the penis is very heavily cathed in the mother's absence. Erection and standing upright, incidentally, do not only mean the same thing; they happen at more or less the same time. Boys actually begin to become fully aware of erections at about the same time that they walk (Mahler et al 1975:104-5). Thus, in so far as the genitals are the alpha star in the constellation of the body, the narcissistic 'love affair with the world', which comes with walking and the consolidation of the mirror-phase, is just that - narcissistic. The body and the penis come to be conflated in the growing mind of the child. The very obvious phallic reference of the papa, then, both as tjurunga and transitional 'toy' (stick), is not particularly surprising. The tjurunga as 'other body' is phallic, and in Aranda the term ina - stick, piece of wood (also tree) - is a very common euphemism for penis (Wilkins pers. comm.).

By way of concluding the myth analysis, we can now return to the portrayal of symbolic castration in the myth of the 'hero'. In the story the papa tjurunga is decorated by
the boy's mother with feather down, but it is not the papa alone which is transformed: the mother, too, decorates herself and looks 'flash'. The boy is taken aback by them both. One might see in this a kind of precursor to rapprochement. 'Mama', papa, and son all in some sense appear to be the same thing: the boy is in narcissistic identification with the tjurunga, but the tjurunga is transformed in conjunction with the mother herself, a threefold identification which recalls Roheim's hypothesis about the papa being symbolic of the umbilical cord. But as with the umbilical cord, this paradoxical identification through the intermediate object (papa) is only a potential - a potential that can only be realised by the identification being broken at the 'mark of distinction'.

Rapprochement occurs immediately after the mirror phase, and in the myth we are told that after the boy's papa has been transformed into a beautifully enlarged and decorated txantja pole, his mother extends her arms to him. Something similar happens in the myth of the 'anti-hero', except here, the papa has never been transformed and the boy has never been able to stand on his own two feet. With a tjurunga on her head, this second mother completely swallows her son. It is as if the mother becomes the phallus and the child loses his identity in the process - or rather he fails to find it. For this 'anti-hero' is literally lost, and it seems to be himself that he cannot find. Tjurunga worn on the head are actually known as mburka (Strehlow 1968:56) - bodies (Carl Strehlow 1908:77), which seems to indicate that this particular triad of 'mama', papa and son are to remain as a single being.

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Not so the 'hero', for when his mother holds her arms out in beckoning embrace something quite peculiar happens: the boy is taken away by a mysterious demon woman, but later rescued from the underworld by his mother. The boy thus seems to escape complete union — indeed, any union at all — and this is something we might have expected given his earlier success with the papa. For it is the latter which near the beginning of the story acts as transitional object and prevents union with the mother by (paradoxically) effecting it. When the child returns from one of his short adventures, he makes contact with his mother only through the papa, which thus prevents him going into her arms. This is what makes him walk.

The remainder of the story can be understood through Freud's dream analysis. It has long been known in psychoanalysis that one of the high points of the Oedipus complex is castration anxiety. This is usually brought on after the mirror-phase has been consolidated, when the growing child has a reasonably sound idea of his own body as a totality, as well as the separate bodies of others, including the mother. For boys, one of the main sources of anxiety, stemming from the fact that he still expects the mother to mirror himself, is that the mother is without a penis. As Hamilton (1979:284-5) states, in traditional Central Australia, where people do not wear extensive clothing, the discovery of the 'penislessness' of the mother may be rather less of a shock than in Western society, but there is no reason to suppose that the 'event' is not disturbing, or that it does not contribute towards masculine self-definition.
The oedipus complex may be stated as a problem of destiny: how far is a boy to 'be' the mother, and hence be like her (castrated), and how far is he not to 'be' her or become a 'phallic self'. One of the most important aspects of the rapprochement phase is ambivalence towards the mother, for precisely these reasons: the child wishes to be close to her, yet he fears her; he wishes to bury himself in her lap at one moment, and impishly run away from her the next. This ambivalence bespeaks of a psychological split, and for boys it has concomitant effects on primal repression. Men's unconscious is primarily 'female' in character (Jung's anima) because boys typically heavily repress the desire for the mother and consciously stress the drive to leave her. As Rochlin (1980:174-5) states:

By the age of three (as a rule) a boy has become convinced that to be without a penis is a perilous state. He has himself in mind as a model. A small boy ... need not actually be threatened with mutilation in order to be perceptibly frightened of it. Because even as young children an effective, lasting source of dread develops in us all. It is that the fate of others might well become our own. This is self-reference. It is especially characteristic of young children to take what is plausible for the reality. In boys it inflames the mere fantasy of mutilation at the sight of females to give it a terrible reality. It is a living proof, as it were, that the penis can be 'lost' and makes vividly real these fears and influences the boy's fantasies about mutilation ... [S]uch a repugnant fate will be relegated to repression. However, conditions, circumstances, and experiences may always make what is repressed return to awareness and with it a corresponding reaction. The reaction is often a replication of the original one. While we all fear injury and mutilation, it is a particular, even if a mostly repressed, fright of boys and men. Among boys one commonplace reaction to this inner anxiety is seen in their being prone to exhibitionism with their genitals and playing games with the penis. Manifestly, they are earnestly engaged in prowess.

This, it is argued, is what accounts for men's outgoing and
aggressive attitude. Having had so much difficulty in rejecting what they might have been, boys (and men) spend a lot of time proving to themselves and others what they are.

Thus we are brought back to the similarity between Freud’s dream analysis and the myth of the ‘hero’. Freud’s dreamer had to be delivered from motherhood and femininity. He could only do this by being symbolically castrated — though only in a way that made ‘actual’ castration unconscious and capable of being projected outwards as multiplied phallic power. It is as if symbolic castration got him out of the club and at the same time gave him double membership. The solution is ingenious and it is one which the mythic ‘hero’ duplicates. For this boy also becomes a prominent member, and by a subtle metaphorical process that has yet to be indicated.

The ‘hero’ has a ‘clean road’ to follow; he can do what the Aranda refer to as ‘walking straight’, by which they mean that The Law is being upheld (Spencer n.d., Box 2:17). But what are we to make of the curious detail at the end of the myth where the mother blows on the double tjantjara and causes the issue of a great many spirit children? Blowing on a child is a common way of displaying maternal affection in Central Australia (Meggitt 1962:124), so it seems as if the event marks the affirmation of the mother’s care. But we know from Chapter Five that the erect phalli of the ancestors are said to ‘speak’, and it so happens that bans of silence in ritual are lifted by the placing of tjurunga against the lips of those who have had to be completely quiet throughout a ceremony (Spencer and Gillen 1927:214). As we shall see in Chapter Ten, this ‘gift of speech’ is a
rite connected with symbolic birth: in Aranda it is known as aralkalelama (Strehlow 1971:736), which means 'to cause the mouth to open (to make it speak)' (Wilkins pers. comm.). But the term has usage in an everyday context: it may refer to the giving of the breast to a child (Wilkins pers. comm.), the very event which is mentioned in the myth of the 'hero' at the point where the mother tells him to 'go far'.

These details suggest an interpretation. When the double tnatantja is placed at the lips of the boy's mother, and ratapa issue forth in great numbers, perhaps we are dealing with a relationship between the boy's own spirit and his language. As a phallus, and a symbolically castrated one to boot, the boy 'speaks', and with his language secured, he has become a 'full-blown member' of his society, with a clear way ahead. As an independent person, he may now disseminate knowledge and exercise his own influence. How different is all this from the fate of the 'anti-hero', who suffocated, one suspects, in silence.

8.7 The Missing Father

"Where is the subject?", asks Lacan (1972:189) with characteristic rhetoric, and immediately answers: "It is necessary to find the subject as a lost object. More precisely this lost object is the support of the subject". The lost object to which he refers is the phallus, buried in the depths of the unconscious as a consequence of primal repression and the "constituting metaphor" (Lemaire 1977:Chapter 8) of the oedipus complex. It is through this metaphor that symbolic castration takes place and the area of thirdness appears as 'the mark' of the subject's 'divided ess-
ence' (Lacan 1972:191-2). But there is no oedipus complex without a father, and it is the father who is conspicuously absent in the myths about the papa tjurunga. Even that demon that takes the 'hero' off to the underworld at the critical moment of seduction is specified as female in the myth.

Where, then, is the all-important father?

The papa is simultaneously a 'lost object' and a 'support of the subject'. In the first place, it is said that when a child is born, it cries for the tjurunga that it lost when it entered the mother as a spirit child. The papa is, it seems, the material companion and complement of the child's spirit, a function it is again said to perform when it preoccupies the in utero spirit baby and prevents it interfering with the father's hunt. In the second place, the papa is a 'walking stick'. Admittedly not one which contradicts the solution to the riddle of the sphinx, as Spencer and Gillen thought, but as a 'mental crutch' - (remember again the position of the 'groin' in Freud's dream analysis) - which sediments the human spirit in the person. This function seems to be quite vital. In the transition from 'fearful one' to 'cheeky one', the child gains his soul, and accordingly his confidence. To some extent at least, he has also acquiesced to rules. Now a child with a fixed spirit, he is altogether different from the capricious and unpredictable spirit baby (ratapa) that once lurked in the bush and forced itself upon an unsuspecting mother (cf. Tonkinson 1978:61-2).

Psychoanalysis normally assumes that a father is necessary to help effect this transition - if not always a real father, a symbolic one whose function is to intervene in the
exclusive relationship between mother and child. In Lacan's (1977a:199) terms, this is the father as he is signified in contrast to the son; that is, as the "Name-of-the-Father". But as Lacan himself at the same time points out, in connection with Ernest Jones' (1951:Chapter V) contribution to the physiological paternity debate, when the symbolic context requires it, paternity will... be attributed to the fact that the woman met a spirit at some... rock in which he is supposed to live.

It is certainly this that demonstrates that the attribution of procreation to the father can only be the effect of a pure signifier, of a recognition, not of a real father, but what religion has taught us to refer to as the Name-of-the-Father.

The conditioning effects of the (real) primal scene may, as Roheim argues in The Riddle of the Sphinx, be severe. The Aranda ethnography is not forthcoming on the question of a post-partum sex taboo, although in some parts of the Western Desert, where children know all about their parents' sexual activities (Berndt and Berndt 1945:86), it appears that it is relaxed at the time that the child begins to crawl (Berndt and Berndt 1945:228). The time of crawling, it will be remembered, is also the time when the papa intervenes in the myths. Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that the papa is also, in its role as original companion to the spirit child, the symbolic father.(7)

The papa tjurunga is closely related to the father, as well as the mother and child. In some misty sense, it appears to be all three, a conclusion which Roheim came to long before he went to the field. We have already seen how Roheim understands the papa to signify 'the psychic relationship between mother and child', and elsewhere in Aus-
tralian Totemism he states that since an ancestor enters the womb of a woman who is to be his mother, there is a sense in which he begets himself.

The tjurunga from which a man originates thus stands for his own father (the father-imago), the altjiranga ancestor or rather his father’s penis with which he ‘threw’ his mother (Roheim 1925: 183).

What Roheim refers to as ‘the father imago’ is what Lacan calls ‘the symbolic father’; and here we are forced to deal with the so far neglected negative side of the oedipal drama – the murder of the father.

An infant boy’s dilemma is framed in terms of the degree to which he is to separate from the mother and no longer be the phallus. But at the same time, the dilemma is complicated by the degree of identification which may take place with the father himself, who is the person who first intervenes between mother and child, so making separation necessary. As we have seen, in the Aboriginal context, the possibility for identification probably takes place when the child begins to crawl, a time co-extensive with the mirror-phase and narcissistic identification. But being the father means taking his place as the object of the mother’s desire, which is incestuous – an aspect of the unsolvable oedipal paradox which, through primal repression, constitutes the unconscious. This is why Lacan (1977a:199) wants to claim that Freud’s myth of primal parricide is valid precisely as a myth. It is the murder or castration of the father which constitutes the subject every bit as much as the taking of the mother: both are phantasies absolutely repressed.

Of course, there is no need of a signifier to be a father, any more than to be dead, but without a signifier, no one would ever know anything about
either state of being.

... 

[Freud was led] to link the appearance of the signifier of the Father, as author of the Law, with death, even to the murder of the Father - thus showing that if this murder is the fruitful moment of debt through which the subject binds himself for life to the Law, the symbolic Father is, in so far as he signifies this Law, the dead Father (Lacan 1977a:199).

The findings of Chapter Six, the analysis of the myth of Karora, would lead us to suspect that the Aranda might agree. I will return to the subject of the dead father in later chapters.

Mitchell (1975:79) has described symbolic castration with two felicitous phrases: she says first that it "bears the transmission of culture", and second that it is "the fourth and determinant" term which radically alters the "trinity" of mother, father and child. The idea of it being the 'fourth term' again recalls the findings of the analysis of the myth of Karora in Chapter Six. It is essentially the notion that the resolution of the oedipus complex involves a temporal dimension which Lacan alludes to above as a relationship of debt. The father symbolically castrates the child: but the father himself has also been castrated, and this is the condition of him becoming a castrator, since without it he would not have acceded to The Law. A father is thus always a giver and a taker. He receives his identity from a generation above, and he donates another to the generation below. This again is symbolised in the myth of Karora, where the aged ancestor is mutilated so that the spirit child may come into existence.

So what is taken from one's father is given to one's
son, the former being the condition of the latter's existence in a kind of identity of alternate generations. So we should remember at this point that it is the grandfather of the child who normally controls the fashioning of the papa tjuruna, a situation which leads once more to the question of the riddle of the sphinx. Oedipus gave the correct answer to the question:

'What is the being that has one name, but first four feet, then two feet, and then three feet?' 'Man,' answered Oedipus; for he crawls on all fours, then walks upright on two legs, and adds a stick to help him when he is old (Roheim 1974b:6-7).

For the Aranda, only the grandfather has the stick which is definitive of the little man, and which will cause him to make the transition from four legs to two and gain his name. However, according to both myth and ritual exegesis, the control is by proxy and exercised by women.

In Roheim's (1974b:7-8) understanding, the sphinx is a 'combined-parent figure', an image of the primal scene. If this interpretation is granted, we may perhaps see the dashing of the sphinx to the ground as symbolic of primal repression: the sphinx's devouring power is destroyed by the knowledge of 'the way from four to two to three'; crawling, then walking, and finally being crippled. (8) In the Aranda context, there is no sphinx; only a demon who is, like the sphinx herself, feminine, but who plays a very minor role in the myth of the 'hero'. This demon takes the boy, but it is the mother who rescues him from the underworld. The event occurs when the mother looks 'flash'. As Roheim (1969:207) points out in a footnote, 'flash' is glossed as "decorated ... for receiving her lover''. Perhaps, then, this whole
drama takes place at the end of the post-partum sex taboo - the time when it is the father and the mother together who come to be threatening. The fact that the myths begin with children that can crawl supports this idea. But whatever the exact truth of this, the story is quite emphatic that it is the mother who saves the day.

We know virtually nothing about the papa's role in ritual - only that it is regarded as the source or companion of a ratapa, and that it is also likely to be associated with the ceremonies of native cat ancestors (subincision and the ingkura, which I will discuss in Chapter Ten). But between conception and birth on the one hand, and initiation on the other, there may well be other ceremonies in which the papa has a place. This, at any rate, is suggested by the myths, a point which I think may be connected with the rescuing function of the mother.

Aranda women's rites are poorly documented, although as Strehlow (1968:93, 1971:392-3, 649-53) has said, women do have secret business. Recently, something is coming to light about women's ceremonies and we know from the work of Bell (1983:passim) that Arandic (Aljawara and Kaititja) and Walbiri women possess sacred tjurunga. Of particular interest is the 'kurdu', which, from appearance, is evidently cognate to the tnatantja in the myth of the 'hero' (Bell 1983:ii). Like all tjurunga, the kurdu is treated like a person - as an ancestral being and relative (Bell 1983:199).

The Western Aranda use a head decoration called kutura in a public ceremony designed to instil confidence into novices prior to circumcision (Carl Strehlow 1913:13-7). In the papa myths, it will be remembered, one of the mothers decorated
her head with a *tjurunga*.

It would be surprising if child-rearing was not a central aspect of women’s responsibilities to The Law. (9) According to Hamilton (1979:283-4), the Jangkundjara have women’s ritual *tjurunga*, and they are quite explicitly phallic. This, she surmises, could be important for the growing child, because it is not allowed to attend ceremonies until after weaning (three to four years of age). Thus, the child discovers that the mother is ‘phallus-having’ at a time prior to the resolution of the oedipus complex. It is at this time when the child’s ‘cheekiness’ begins to grow.

How women’s *tjurunga* are used in rites largely remains a mystery, but it could be that women at this stage have to play the role of excluding the ‘symbolic father’. Certainly, Aranda mythical women - the *alŋgarintja* (Roheim 1974a: Chapter 5) - are quite independent and need have nothing to do with men. Their very name means ‘turning away the eyes’ (Carl Strehlow 1907:6), and denotes their aloofness. It is clear from Roheim’s analysis of them that they are both phallic mothers and castrators.

In the myths of the *papa* we have two castrating mothers, but they differ in a most important way. The mother of the ‘hero’ is only a partial castrator. She invites her son to come to her, but at the last moment she has to refrain on account of the intercession of the demon. The result is a castration that strengthens and, paradoxically, enhances phallic power. But the mother of the ‘anti-hero’ knows no such moderation: she takes both child and *papa* deep into her womb. There is no ritual future for the ‘anti-hero’ - perhaps because his mother did not accede to The
Law, since she does not undergo anything like the ritual transformation of the mother of the 'hero'.

Tentatively, I would suggest that women's ritual may have a restorative function for children during the oedipal crisis; that the rites may allay the infant's fears about the mother's 'lack' (divulged in the primal scene phantasy) and place the mother back into focus as the primary source of identification, and in the next chapter I will adduce further evidence in support of this hypothesis. But I should note immediately that the symbolic castration involved in the myth of the 'hero' appears to have a good deal of retrospective determination: the themes of the double nhatantja poles, the lifting of the ban of silence, and the issuing of spirit children are all associated with initiation rites which do not occur until puberty. I suspect, in fact, that the castration alluded to occurs not in childhood, but at a later stage, and that the papa ritual, whatever its possible form, is only preparatory to this. One might recall in this instance the identification of the inapatua with the bearded dragon, suggesting that 'the knife' is only wielded when the individual is already mature (see Chapter Six).

Is it possible, then, for the phallus of women's ceremonies to be symbolic of, and a substitute for, a child which will have to be given up to the symbolic father at initiation? For if the Law is to be carried in the Name-of-the-Father, it must be carried by the mother (as well as everybody else). As Bell was told (see Chapter One): 'We [men and women] follow one Law' (to which one might add, 'and one Law only'). Precisely how women might surrender such phallic power is the subject to which I now turn.
CHAPTER NINE

Into the Arms of The Law

After all, who is a real Jew, truly circumcised? It is not the man who is a Jew on the outside, whose circumcision is a physical thing. Rather, the real Jew is the person who is a Jew on the inside, that is, whose heart has been circumcised, and this is the work of God's spirit, not of the written Law. Such a person receives his praise from God, not from man.

Romans, chapter 2, verses 28-9.(1)

A happy outcome must depend on the good will of supreme violence.

Rene Girard
Violence and the Sacred, p. 283.
9.1 On Being Deaf and Dumb

The fate of the transitional object, according to Winnicott (1980:6)

is to be gradually allowed to be decathedected, so that in the course of years it becomes not so much forgotten as relegated to limbo ... It loses meaning, and this is because the transitional phenomena have become diffused, have become spread out over the whole intermediate territory between 'inner psychic reality' and 'the external world as perceived by two persons in common', that is to say, over the whole cultural field.

This is precisely what appears to happen to the papa. As a toy stick, it may be relegated by the possession of a small spear; and as a tjurunga, too, having completed its task of transformation, it is put aside, taking its place back in the sacred cave whence it came.

The phoenix that arises from the ashes of oedipal conflicts is boyhood. In Central Australia, as elsewhere, this consists in being part of a sexually segregated play-pack and of typically masculine games, such as mock hunting (Carl Strehlow 1913:5). But a great deal lies ahead, and childhood years are but a breathing space between one traumatic conversion and another — adolescence. The children look forward to being adult, though they may be unaware of the difficulties they will face in growing up. They play an oracular game which predicts their future, thereby indicating to them their potential. They call this game altjira ingkanama — 'to set up altjira'. It is a favourite of girls, but it may also be played by boys (Carl Strehlow 1913:6-7, Roheim 1974a:77-80), (2)

Altjira will indeed be set up for boys when they reach puberty, for it is then that the elders put them through painful and perplexing initiation rites. As far as Central
Australian Aborigines are concerned, a child may have in some sense become truly human in early childhood, but only in a way sufficient for childhood. If a child has learned to speak, he has hardly at all learned to listen. As Myers (1979:349-50) recounts for the Pintubi:

A young child continues to sleep in camp with its parents because, as the Pintubi say, the child is 'unaware', 'oblivious', or 'deaf' (patjarru or ramarama). Children do not know; they understand neither events nor when to be ashamed (kunta). Small children are said to be 'unheedung' (ramarama) in that they literally do not comprehend the importance of social events; rather, they throw tantrums, do not listen or respond to parents, sit too close to an affile, play with fire, and so on.

In the Pintubi view the concepts 'thinking', 'understanding', and 'hearing' are expressed by a single term, kulininpa, which means literally 'to hear'. To be patjarru (or ramarama), they say, is to have one's 'ears closed'. The implication is that young children do not process the available information about who is present and what is happening. Those who do are said to 'know' (ninti), or 'to understand' (kulininpa) - implying that one [has learned] what responses are held to be appropriate for various situations.

In other words, as one grows towards maturity,

one learns a folk theory of motivation (how to understand others) and morality (how to place oneself in the light of these expectations). An adult Pintubi should be aware of what is happening and who is present. There is a constant evaluation of the state of the social and physical world.

It is interesting to note that Pintubi apply the term ramarama ('deaf', 'oblivious') to those they consider insane or 'mad': the person's ears are closed. Such an individual does not hear or take note of his or her relatives, possibly injuring close kin or failing to recognize them. In other words, such a person is not in touch with the 'reality' upon which everyone else agrees: he or she does not 'think' (kulininpa).

Of course, a child does 'hear' to some extent: without ever having listened, he would never have taken on language. Like the inapatua, precursors in The Dreaming to the spirit babies from which all Aranda children stem, a young child
has had his ears opened – as well as much else. But the assessment must be relative. What a child knows is not what an adult must know. If the notion of mind depends on ‘sense’ – sight, touch, hearing, smelling and tasting, in short, all those things given to the inapatua along with their sub-incision – then one can have more or less of this. Children have minds, but the latter are tiny; they have sense, but not a lot of it – and certainly not enough to see them adopt the burdens of responsibility which adult life brings.

In order to make men of boys, the Aranda initiate their youths, and it is from this initiation that responsibility is learned. Myers (1982:95) describes a more or less identical situation for the Pintubi as follows.

There is a violent change when the time of initiation comes, around sixteen years. During this and subsequent periods of seclusion from the uninstructed and women, young men come under the watchful eye of their elders; this instruction, accompanied by discipline and a series of physical ordeals (things done to [a young man]): tooth evulsion, nose-piercing, circumcision, subincision, fire ordeals, fingernail pulling), produces – over a period of time – real personality changes. During periods of ritual seclusion, following instruction in and revelation of Law, the young men must go out to hunt for the senior men who ‘give’ them such knowledge. Novices may be beaten and threatened for too much talking, inattention, misbehaviour, or insolence, as well as for previous offences against individual older men. Young men in seclusion now refer to this period sometimes as ‘high school’ and sometimes as ‘prison’, emphasizing both tutelage and restriction of personal freedom.

But at the same time, the curtailment of one kind of freedom is the road to another.

Young men who have finished their instruction and other mandatory ceremonial obligations describe their situation as that of a ‘free man’, as the absence of restraints formerly imposed. They can go where they want, because there is no danger of stumbling onto a male ceremony performance they are not permitted to see. Learning the Law is seen
as an obligation and as a constraint on one's movements and free will. By being subjected to it, one eventually reaches a position of 'freedom', lack of constraints - that is, what we call autonomy ... The freedom is, of course, ultimately the freedom to follow the Law which they have incorporated and to impress it upon successors. Those who have passed through the Law make decisions about when and where the ceremonies will take place, who will be instructed, who take part - participation in this domain is a source of prestige, accomplishment, and personal pride. Finally, having passed through the Law, one may take a wife (Myers 1982:96, my emphasis).

The question of marriage is extremely important and it brings me to the equally important theoretical question of its condition - the avoidance of incest. Taking a broad view of the oedipus complex, Lacan (in Wilden 1968:126) once suggested that it did not appear with the origin of man (if indeed it is not completely senseless to try to write the history of that moment), but rather at the dawn of history, of 'historical' history, at the limit of 'ethnographic' cultures. Obviously, the Oedipus complex can appear only in the patriarchal form of the institution of the family - but it has no less incontestable value as a threshold, and I am convinced that in those cultures which exclude it, its function must be or have been fulfilled by initiation experiences, as ethnology in any case still permits us to see this fact today, and the value of the Oedipus complex as a closing-off of a psychic cycle results from the fact that it represents the family situation, insofar as by its institution this situation marks the intersection, in the cultural sphere, of the biological and the social (my emphasis).

But I think we have to be extremely careful in this regard. Even if it is true that societies such as the Pintubi and the Aranda differ radically from modern ones in their dealings with children, I do not think that we may say that the patriarchal family or the oedipus complex is 'excluded'. That much can be deduced from the previous chapter. Furthermore, it is not entirely clear that the adolescent in 'modern', 'patriarchal' society does not have to go through
similar, if not identical, kinds of traumata to those experienced in Aboriginal initiation. After all, if the metaphor of the Oedipus complex is conditioned by the joint phantasy of sexual intercourse with the mother and the murder of the father, these events are not possibilities in any culture until a boy becomes a man (witness Oedipus's own predicament). It is only with the transition to manhood that one can hope to fulfill a sexual relationship, and perhaps at the same time become a warrior—a slayer of men. Having said that, however, there can be no doubt that The Law, so often so severe for children who have to attend schools from the age of five, is not a factor which intrudes much into the life of an Aboriginal boy. And this has important consequences for its transmission.

Roheim (1974a:76) notes that, for the Aranda, childhood is a time of indulgence.

[If we consider the four main techniques of pedagogy—erection of an ego-ideal, use of a bogey to create fear, corporal punishment, and preaching—the first two predominate, while the third and fourth are nearly absent in the Central Australian nursery. On the whole, it can be said that the parents rule with a lenient hand, and that techniques of intimidation are brought into action only at the threshold of adult life.

The reason that 'techniques of intimidation' are called upon is that children are without 'shame'. Being 'deaf' and 'ignorant' means to be shameless, as Myers implies (see Chapter Twelve for a fuller discussion of the Aboriginal idea of shame).

Roheim (1932:91) states that in Central Australia there is no latency period worthy of the name. Elsewhere, he summarises Aboriginal childhood as follows.

The difference in the ego-development of an Aus-
tralian boy or girl and a child in our civilization is striking. They adjust to reality on the basis of their play activities, they never have to learn new techniques, new adjustments. Growing up never means restrictions, giving up an infantile paradise, giving in to regulations dictated by the adults, but simply a desirable goal towards which human beings are carried by the genital libido. There is no artificial ending of the oral period [i.e., weaning is not abrupt], there is very little restriction of anal and urethral activities, there is no prohibition of masturbation ..., and there is no compulsion to do certain things which would take the place of the child's play activities. The only impulse that is subjected to serious restrictions is the genital; that is, the infant and the child are not supposed to see parental coitus ... There is plenty of evidence of castration anxiety in children (Roheim 1950:73).

Carl Strehlow (1913:3) maintains that children are often not weaned until four or five years of age, and that they are not refused the breast even if a younger child arrives (which is usually the case). Their whole life, at least in so far as it is led within the safe confines of the camp and the mother's ambit, is one which Roheim (1950:72) characterises as governed by extroverted libido and unrestrained aggression. It is marked by play which is most often transparently phallic, even among girls (Roheim 1974a:119-20).

But as Roheim notes, childhood is not a perpetual holiday, and children are taught to fear the bush and the outside world. Their social ambience is severely circumscribed, and any attempt to go beyond the confines of 'home' normally meets with an indirect threat by the mother, who will point to some animal or object and say that it is a dangerous demon (Roheim 1974a:74-5). Among such demons are those stuck-together dogs mentioned in Chapter Four, which Roheim interprets as being projections of the primal scene. I will have cause to return to these demon-dogs later on in this chapter, but what should be noted for the present is the way
in which such 'bogeyman' figures present the Central Australian child with a definite kind of orientation towards the wider world. That orientation is one of fear; moreover, fear, which according to Roheim, is essentially marked by castration anxiety. This contrasts markedly with the supreme confidence of a child within short distance of the 'hearth'. There he is every bit a phallic hero, full of 'cheek' and brooking no restraint. He is beyond The Law.

A lack of propriety is critical at adolescence, for the tremendous upsurge in drive potential that occurs at this time, comparable to that earlier rapid development which happens when children begin to walk, means that the growing youth is a very real danger to the social fabric. It is something like this, as well as something more, that Winnicott (1980:169) has in mind when he says:

It is valuable to compare adolescent ideas with those of childhood. If, in the fantasy of early growth there is contained death [symbolic castration], then at adolescence there is contained murder. Even when growth at the period of puberty goes ahead without major crises, one may need to deal with acute problems of management because growing up means taking the parent's place. It really does. In the unconscious fantasy, growing up is inherently an aggressive act. And the child is no longer child-size.

But in the Aboriginal context, one could argue that the situation is in good measure reversed. For an Aboriginal child, symbolic castration is not severe, even though castration anxiety cannot be absent, and this means that the concomitant phantasy of the removal of the father is indulged. This may not mean that Aboriginal childhood 'contains murder', but it does mean that the 'death' of symbolic castration is largely forestalled by the mother's reinstated phallicism. As a result of this, I would argue, it is the
phantasy of death which is 'contained' in adolescence, since without this full symbolic castration The Law would be in danger of collapse. As I will illustrate in this chapter, Central Australian circumcision is, very precisely, a phan-
tastic death.

Adolescents are vulnerable persons, even though they often think themselves not to be. Rapid growth into adult-
hood means an equally rapid decline of the childhood world, and with it a profound threat to meaning. The great problem of adolescence, in any culture, is that of making sense of change, of retaining identity. To that extent, the trans-
ition to manhood is akin to the mirror stage as a time of self-discovery. And indeed, adolescence shows all the hallmarks of the same regression to narcissism.

[A]adolescent progressive development always pro-
ceeds along regressive pathways; in other words ...
genitality [maturity] can only be reached via the detour of a cathetic connection with pre-
genital drive positions, including ... their re-
spective preoedipal and oedipal object relations. The most fateful danger to the integrity of psy-
chic organization during adolescence lies in this obligatory regression without which emotional matur-
ity cannot be attained (Blos 1979:27).

Adolescents need care and attention, but they need them in a different way than do infants, since parents must be prepared to let children 'take over' when the latter finally grow up. Whereas in a child's infancy parents must affirm their superiority, in adolescence they must in some sense surrender it, a formula which works even for Aboriginal soci-
ety. For even if Aboriginal children are tyrannical and poorly behaved, they are inferior on that very count (even if the children themselves do not think so). Likewise, even if symbolic castration is to be severe in adolescence, the
parents must still allow emerging adults to take their place. Without this simple rule there would be no continuity, for society or The Dreaming. But it is only through the senior generation that this capitulation can take place: only the elders, if anybody, can guide the growing adult through difficulties, because only the parents understand what is in store both after and during the transition (although the senior generation itself may experience its own problems in the general shift in the social fabric that is implied).

Winnicott (1980:176) has captured this relationship between juniors and elders during the time of the former’s growing up in the following way.

The main thing is that adolescence is more than physical puberty, though largely based on it. Adolescence implies growth, and this growth takes time. And while growing is in progress, responsibility must be taken by parent-figures. If parent-figures abdicate, then the adolescents must make a jump to false maturity and lose their greatest asset: freedom to have ideas and to act on impulse.

The Aboriginal situation is at once very different and very similar. Ideas about mature ‘freedom’ are quite distinct from those of Western society, but the notion of there being a danger of misplaced precocity if the senior generation fails to ‘care’ is nevertheless prevalent. The Pintubi, for example, use the term kanyininpa – to hold or look after – when describing the authority which elders exercise over juniors in ritual (Myers 1982:90-100).

The idea of ‘holding’ or ‘taking care of’ is a general one throughout Central Australia. Myers (1982:83) explains that, for the Pintubi, kanyininpa articulates and unifies several areas of Pintubi

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life. It may be used to refer to possession of physical objects ..., to the actualized relationship of 'parent' to 'child' ... It refers also to rights over sacred sites, ceremonies, songs, and designs, all of which are owned ... The concept denotes an intimate and active relationship between a 'holder' and that which is 'held', as indicated in the primary sense of physically holding. Specifically, the word kanyininpa is contrasted with wantininpa, which means 'leaving' or 'losing' something, leaving it behind, breaking off association with it ...

The metaphor invoked by kanyininpa is probably derived from the expression used to describe how a small child is held against the chest (kanyinu yampungka), an image of security, protection, and nourishment.

As Myers himself (1982:99) notes, this image, particularly in so far as it relates to the dealings of elder men with their juniors in initiation rites, recalls Roheim's main thesis of The Eternal Ones of the Dream; namely, that the purpose of the rites is to shift libidinal attachment from the mother to the father (and all the religious paraphernalia that he controls, including the land). When Aranda people now speak in English about a person who is not initiated for his country and dreamings, they refer to the person as 'lost'.

In this chapter and the next I will pursue these matters fully by looking at the male cycle of initiation, a complex of four main rites: 'tossing' (of initiates into the air), circumcision, subincision and the ingkura (the ceremony mentioned in Chapter Five in connection with the myth of the native cats). In the analysis I propose to show how it is that boys, rather than being 'lost', 'find themselves' through identification with the senior generation of males. Since Roheim first put forward his hypothesis about the shift from 'mother right' to 'father right', it has been
elaborated upon and refined, most notably by Hiatt (1975b, 1979, 1984), who has explored the full significance of the Aboriginal idea of initiation as "adoption" (Roheim 1969: 73); that is, as a conversion of allegiance from kinsmen to affines, with mother-in-law and father-in-law substituting for mother and father. Here I propose to pursue the logic of Roheim's and Hiatt's analyses and to show how they are supported, and perhaps refined, by the Aranda ethnography.

9.2 'Sky High' and 'Down to Earth'

Although a child's connections with tjurunga are in some measure established in infancy, children are viewed as being generally ignorant of The Law. The secrets of The Dreaming, at least those of the male cult, may only be anticipated. As Strehlow (1968:96-7) describes:

During their childhood boys learn nothing about the tjurunga of their group. They possess only a vague notion of their existence. The veil of secrecy with which the tjurunga are invested by their anxious fathers arouses their curiosity. Many occasions arise when the whole group assembles on a pula ground [initiation area] or for an ingkura ceremony; and on pain of death the women and children have to avoid the ceremonial site whence only the distant sound of low chanting reaches them in the stillness of the starbright nights and grey mornings. There are scores of places which are barred to the visits of women and children because of their legendary significance ... Apart from a few general beliefs women and children are ignorant, at least in theory, of the sacred traditions revered by fully initiated men.

Whatever the case 'in theory' may be for women, children most certainly are ignorant, and the ordeals of puberty are preliminaries to enlightenment.

Spencer and Gillen (1927:175-80), Carl Strehlow (1913: 12-3) and T. G. H. Strehlow (1971:395-6) all agree that the first initiation ceremony for an Aranda boy is alkiraka
iwuma, which literally means 'to toss up into the sky'.

Spencer and Gillen (1927:176-8) say that it takes place when a boy is between ten and twelve years of age. The men, and in this instance the women also, assemble at a central spot near to the main camp, and the boys who have reached the right age — the number varying from ceremony to ceremony — are taken one by one and tossed into the air several times by the men, who catch them as they fall, while the women dance round and round the group, swinging their arms and shouting loudly, 'Pau, pau, pau-a-a-', the last cry being very pro-longed. Sometimes if a youth has not paid proper attention to a man such as his [father-in-law-to-be], the latter will strike him with a rod as he falls down, shouting out, 'I will teach you to give me food.' The boys are then painted on their chests and backs. [The painted designs] have not of necessity any reference to the totem of the boys. They are painted by [their future brothers-in-law] ...

... [W]hile [the designs] are being painted the boys are told that the ceremony through which they have just passed will promote their growth to man- hood, and they are told by their tribal fathers and elder brothers that in future they must not play with the women and girls, nor must they camp with them, as they have hitherto done, but henceforth they must go to the camp of the men ... Up to this time they have been accustomed to go out with the women as they searched for vegetable food and the smaller animals such as lizards and rats; now they begin to accompany the men in search for larger game, and begin also to look forward to the time when they will become fully initiated and admitted to all the secrets of the tribe, which are as yet hidden from them.

... [V]ery shortly after this, sometimes even before it, the boy has his nasal septum bored through, usually by his father or paternal grand-father, and begins to wear the nose-bone ...

...

Before the time at which a boy is thrown up in the air he is spoken of as an amba kurka, which is the term applied to a child generally ... After the throwing up, and until the ceremony of circumcision, he is called ilmarka.

Carl Strehlow's account of alkiraka iwuma is essentially the same as Spencer and Gillen's, but it adds some
interesting details. When the boys are taken off for the tossing, the men say that they are going to make the boy 'ashamed', the allusion being that they will prevent him from having sexual encounters with grown women and elder girls (Strehlow suggests that Western Aranda boys do not undergo alkiraka iwuma until about fourteen). When the boy is tossed, the elders sing: "He reaches right up into the belly of the sky, up into the belly of the sky he goes". Then, after being painted, he is told: "Do not follow the way of the women. The design with which you are painted is your twin brother" (Carl Strehlow 1913:12). The ceremony has several allusions made to the boy's rapid growth, but when he is tossed, he may be beaten so severely as to have blood flowing from his nose and mouth. At the end the boy is said to have been made kerintja, which Carl Strehlow (1913:13) translates as "morally good" (as opposed to mara [healthy, nice], cf. Chapter Four). He goes to live alone in the bush for several days before returning to his new life in the men's camp.(3).

There are two main points stressed by the Aranda about a youth as he approaches puberty: 1) that he is growing fast, and 2) that the consequences of this growth may be untoward for society. The purpose of alkiraka iwuma is to avert the danger - or at least to begin to avert it by instilling some form of moral sensibilities. Overall, the intention of the rite is quite transparent. The boy is in danger of undertaking an act of hubris. Children are insolent, 'deaf', but by the time a boy reaches his teens he is capable of much more than he was before. Quite simply, he is in danger of becoming a 'criminal' by breaking The Law. Al-
*kiraka iwuma* is, in effect, a fall. An event that makes a boy realise that he cannot go too far, and that somebody is watching him to make sure that he does not, as we might say, 'get too big for his boots' - or, like the emu in the sky, 'get too full of himself'.

The crime that the boy is in danger of committing is twofold - sexual and social. What must be averted is, first of all, precocious sexual liaison, and second, 'going the way of women' (that is, staying in the maternal fold like the 'crying child' mentioned in the previous chapter). The solution to this problem, or rather its prophylaxis, lies in a quite particular formula. It appears first to dramatise the *hubris*. It is as if the elders were ironically telling the boy: 'You think you are a big man already. Well, we will show you how big you are!' And to prove their point they send him 'sky-high'. But *hubris* always end in a fall.

*Alkiraka iwuma* brings a boy literally and metaphorically back down to earth, and if he feels deflated at the end of it, it must be because he was first of all inflated (cf. Edinger 1973:3-36). The inflation is parodied. According to Berndt and Berndt (1945:97), who witnessed a cognate rite in the Western Desert, the boy is said to fly. Flying, of course, is an archetypal image of freedom, exhilaration and ambition, just as falling is one of being in disgrace. But the disgrace is of a well-managed kind. According to Tonkinson (1978:72-3), who has described a similar rite in another part of the Western Desert, the tossing up of boys into the air is designed to release their spirit and to make their penes 'light' so that they can go through circumcision at a later date. It seems, therefore, that the rite both
weakens and strengthens at the same time. It releases one part of the human spirit, but prepares the way for another. A boy will need courage to go through his initiation, and in alkiraka iwuma he begins to learn to 'take it like a man'.

Precocity and inflation are narcissistic conditions where the world is expected to fall into place along with one's expectations of it, and in alkiraka iwuma a boy is given an appropriate form of symbolic orientation. He is painted with a design which is referred to as his twin brother - his mirror image. Spencer and Gillen say that this design may have nothing to do with the boy's personal totem, though a boy's personal totemic ancestor is also regarded as his twin (Carl Strehlow 1913:12). What the painting seems to be is just one of many manifestations of narcissism which occur in rites, including not only the personal totemic relationship in the abstract, but also the relationship that people have with the sacred tjurunga that are regarded as their 'other bodies' (see Chapters Eight and Twelve). In short, imaginary identification is a very general feature of ritual operations, particularly in the liminal condition of rites of passage. And it is a liminal condition that is experienced by the boy as he is tossed into the air - literally between the sky and the earth on the one hand, the men's world and the women's world on the other, and metaphorically between the heights of ecstasy and the depths of despair.

Roheim (1950:76) interprets the throwing up into the sky as "intrauterine regression" and I think there is good reason to agree with this. Not only is the boy said to be tossed into 'the belly' of the heavens and to be in a nar-
cissistic condition, but the sky itself is the place where, as was pointed out in Chapter Four, the Milky Way exists as a mother and son stuck together in eternal sexual intercourse after the latter's circumcision (at least according to some Western Desert people). As I shall show below, the incest motif is quite appropriate to the context of initiation, for circumcision is quite explicitly recognised as a separation of mother and child analogous to the cutting of the umbilical cord. I would say, then, that *alkiraka iwuma* is a kind of symbolic birth: the boy is 'dropped' from 'the belly' of the sky as a preparation for being 'cut'.

*Alkiraka iwuma* is a minor rite, but it indicates some very important points about the way in which the Aranda conceive of the overall transition that a boy will make in and after puberty. When Spencer and Gillen write of the women 'swinging their arms' during the tossing, they are referring to a specific kind of upwards hand movement (which is part of a more complex set of operations described more fully by Carl Strehlow [1913:12-13]). Bell (1983:214) refers to this movement, as it occurs in the tossing rites of the Aljauwara, as 'sending the power'. The nature of this 'power' is not specified, but I think it may be deduced from other circumstances.

Spencer and Gillen (1927:480) say that when the nasal septum is pierced, usually at the end of *alkiraka iwuma*, a boy has to strip a piece of bark (*iljabara*) from a gum-tree and throw it as far as he can in the direction of the place where his mother was conceived. The mother's conception site is known as the boy's *pmara altjira* - his 'dreaming camp' or 'dreaming place'. *(4) Iljabara is a kind of eucalyptus bark*
which boys, after about their fifth year, begin to use as a toy. They strip the bark from a tree and fashion it into discs, which they then throw, toss and hit with toy spears (Carl Strehlow 1913:5). This game is one which the native cat ancestors’ children constantly played (Carl Strehlow 1907:55-9).

The minor rite of *iljabara iwuma* (bark throwing) may be interpreted as a dramatization of the idea of ‘throwing away childish things’. When the boys throw the bark, they do so as far as possible, as if to put the greatest distance between themselves and the material. A boy who has undergone the tossing rite is indeed about to throw away childish things, because he will no longer need the toy spear with which he used to pierce the *iljabara* bark. He is about to learn to become a true hunter and handle proper weapons.

But in this rejection the boy is throwing away much more than a toy: he appears to be severing a spiritual tie with his mother. This is a psychic break. In his childhood he knew nothing of his own spiritual potential, save perhaps that part connected with the *papa tjurunga*, and even that was governed and controlled by women, especially the mother. If the women are ‘sending power’ during the rite of *alkiraka iwuma*, as Bell suggests, it may well be that the spirit they are fostering in the boy is the spirit he will gain by rejecting the mother’s own. After all, the women motion their hands upwards: it is to the heavens that their power is sent. But it is the heavens from which the boy will fall. This is the fall which will hurt him, but make him strong enough to bear the trial of circumcision – a rite which also happens to be connected with discarded bark.
2.3 Severing Ties

Aranda circumcision rites are part of a socio-religious complex which extends not only throughout the whole of Arandic territory, but beyond into areas such as Walbiri country (Meggitt 1962:281-310), the extreme west of the Western Desert region (Tonkinson 1978:69-78), and the furthest parts of South Australia (Berndt and Berndt 1945:89-94, 99-101, 307-28). The rites I will describe here follow the accounts given by Spencer and Gillen (1927:179-206) and Carl Strehlow (1913:13-33) for Southern and Western Aranda groups respectively. Rather than giving complete, direct accounts of these lengthy and complex ceremonies, I intend to distil from the ethnography a sequence of phases which lends itself to a general symbolic analysis.

Phase 1

Circumcision may be preceded by a dance which is designed to give confidence to the novice. It is a relatively minor affair and is only resorted to if the elders think a novice to be particularly fearful. The dance is an Itata and involves the use of the kutara (see Chapter Eight). After it has been held, invitations are sent to neighbouring camps so that all interested parties will attend the full circumcision ceremony.

The rite begins in earnest when the boy (there may be more than one) is forcibly grabbed by elder men and carried off struggling to the ceremonial ground. This ground is called pula, and the boy is taken to a part of it that has been especially cleared and cleaned. It is known as amboanta or pmarakintja. Everybody in camp, including the women, paints up with special body designs and follow to the amboanta. The women are dismissed for a short while when the novice receives some preliminary instruction about mythology, particularly as it relates to the kangaroo (ghara) and black falcon (jakabara) traditions.

The women return to the ground and begin a dance known as ndaperama. They dance for a whole night, carrying shields in their hands, while the men sing in the background about the ancestral journeys of the mythical ndapa women and how they
learned their dancing from the white-faced heron (Carl Strehlow 1907:87-8). In the meantime, the boy is given various ceremonial adornments and covered with a pinkish clay and feather down.

The women’s dances are carried out at first in front of the novice, who has to sit with his legs curled beneath himself and with his head buried in his folded arms. In this condition he has become a wurtja — the status term for a boy about to be circumcised. As a wurtja, he must render strict obedience to his elders. He may not speak, except under very few circumstances; and even then only in a whisper. On pain of being punished by the spirit being, Tuanjiraka, he must never look at any part of the ceremony unless instructed to do so. At the break of day, he is led through the dancing women and placed upon the knee of a man.

At this stage the boy is handed a firebrand by one of his female relatives — elder sister according to Carl Strehlow, mother-in-law-to-be according to Spencer and Gillen. According to the latter account, the boy’s mother has kept alight a firestick throughout the whole night. At dawn, she lights a fire with it and makes two fresh brands. With these in her hands, she goes to sit behind the wurtja and the man on whom he is sitting and is joined by other women. The mother then hands one of the brands to the boy’s future mother-in-law while the men sing a song about fire. Giving the firestick to the wurtja, the mother-in-law-to-be says to him: ‘Hold fast to your own fire’, which is an explicit order to the boy that he should curb his sexuality and not court women who have been promised to other men.

Following a signal, the boy now runs away and the women and children leave for the camp. The boy has been instructed not to follow. The men sing of the women’s departure, and their voices rise to thunderous tones — ‘The earth shakes from our song’ is a line often repeated. The boy’s mother takes her remaining firebrand back to camp and fixes it in the ground at such an angle as to catch a light wind. This ensures that the stick remains alight. The wurtja has to do precisely the same thing in his own camp. It is said that should either brand be lost or extinguished, both mother and son would die. The brands are eventually thrown away, but not until the very end of the ceremony.

In Spencer and Gillen’s estimation the first phase of the ceremony, marked by the initial participation of the women, is now at an end. The boy ‘goes bush’ for several weeks to mark the break between his old life and his new one. All the time he is under a ban of silence. But Carl Strehlow suggests that there is more to follow, since the wurtja is
now taken on a kind of excursion around the pula ground. The following diagram explains the situation.

**Diagram 18. The Pula Ground**

![Diagram showing the Pula Ground with labeled parts: X, Y, Z, wall, brake, Pula, amboanta.]

Modified from Carl Strehlow 1913:20, cf. Spencer and Gillen 1927:180

The women now return after their being driven away by the booming singing of the men. They dance at the eastern end of the ground - the amboanta - while the men retire to the pula itself, which strictly speaking refers to the central furrow running east-west between two 'walls'. The boy is placed in a group of men and conducted in a half-circle around the western end of the ground (from X to Y in the diagram). At the same time the men throw firesticks in the air. To the south of the pula (at Z in the diagram) a man digs a hole and plants an upright spear in it. A second man takes a shield and thumps it hard upon the ground. This is the signal for the men to run from Y to Z. Each takes hold of the spear and then jumps away from it, the novice being the last to perform the operation.

The wurtja is returned to the western extreme of the pula and covers his face with his arms. The women come there and dance, moving right up to the youth, who occasionally peeps at them inquisitively. All the time the men sing the ndapa song. Then the women are suddenly dismissed, for acts are going to be performed which they must not witness.

The women's disappearance is the cue for the boy to re-enter the pula. He is taken the full length of the ground and back to the amboanta, where he began his ceremonial career. When this is done the boy must 'go bush' for several days.

"During this time nothing of any special nature [happens] to him beyond the fact that he might not
speak unless he was first spoken to ... and that he might not eat freely ... The main object of this partial seclusion is to impress him with the fact that he is about to enter the ranks of the men, and to mark the break between his old life and the new one; he has no precise knowledge of what is in store for him, and the sense that something out of the ordinary is about to happen to him—something, moreover, which is of a more or less mysterious nature—helps to impress him strongly with a feeling of deep importance of compliance with tribal rules, and further still with a strong sense of the superiority of the older men who know, and are familiar with, all the mysterious rites, some of which he is about to learn the meaning of for the first time" (Spencer and Gillen 1927:183).

Phase 2

After his seclusion the novice is taken back to the pula ground and made to sit in the familiar 'foetal' position. Two painted dancers come to the ground and move backwards with a distinctive thigh-trembling movement. Two more actors come into view carrying a wanninga, a ceremonial cross arrangement which functions similarly to a tna-tantja pole. While the men sing of the event that is being dramatised, the youth is for the first time allowed to look at the sacred emblem, which is associated with the red kangaroo (ghara). When he has looked, the novice is taken the length of the pula, followed by the wanninga carriers. The ceremonial cross is planted in the ground, but later uprooted and taken away.

The next day the boy is returned to the amboanta while the men sing of cutting his prepuce with a stone knife. A special design is painted on him which is called pmoara ilkinja, the latter term being the general one for painted designs. The first term, pmoara, is the honeysuckle juice metaphoric of both women’s blood and that of the ancestors (see Chapter Six). The novice is also blindfolded.

The boy is now to be shown more detailed kangaroo acts. The men first begin to sing in angry, thunderous tones about the wanderings of the ancestral black falcons. But then actors come to the pula. One man represents a kangaroo, another a dingo, and the latter runs up to the former and passes through his legs. After this is repeated several times, the dingo gets stuck in between the kangaroo’s legs. The kangaroo shakes him violently and dashes him head-first on to the ground. After several repetitions of the whole scene, the dog is finally killed by the kangaroo. All the time the kangaroo carries a wanninga on his head. At the end
of the performance the actors come to lie on top of the novice for several minutes. The next day the performance is repeated, this time with two kangaroos, each of which carry blood-soaked wood-shavings in their teeth said to represent wounds inflicted on the dingo.

The following day another kangaroo comes onto the ground, decorated in such a way as to highlight his genitals. An act is performed and the boy has explained to him that it represents a mythic event. The explanation of the scene is a secret revelation, for part of it consists of the youth knowing for the first time about spirit conception. He is told that the kangaroo dreaming ancestor really lives, having been reincarnated in the womb of a real woman.

Over the next few days the boy is shown several other acts, most of which involve kangaroos. But one key act in the performances seen by Spencer and Gillen was about a different animal—the central rock rat. A particularly large waniga is used in this act, constructed out of a spear and two short cross-bars, all connected with blood-soaked strings and decorated with white down. It is the most elaborate tjurunga used in the ceremony.

The waniga of the rock rat is said to represent the ancestor’s body. When it is bought to the pula, two men decorated as nightjars dance in front of the boy while clenching sticks behind their necks. These are followed by the waniga carriers, who dip the tjurunga towards the novice, occasionally standing still and giving a distinctive quiver. The waniga is then placed upright in the ground and the novice is instructed to embrace it.

The boy now witnesses another act which involves an old and disabled kangaroo. This is a prelude to a further act in which one man represents a young kangaroo (or joey) frisking playfully among a group of adults. The joey’s frolicking includes darting in between the legs of the adults. But finally he is caught between the legs of one adult and taken across to the novice and placed on top of him. Suddenly, the whole mass of adult kangaroos follow, lie on top of the boy and completely smother him.

The following day this act is repeated, but with a difference. A number of the actors have upon their heads atnuta, drooping decorations which represent the bodies of dead kangaroos killed in the hunt. At the end of the performance these atnuta are taken off the actors’ heads, handed around and pressed against the stomachs of all the men—
cluding the novice.

Two further acts now take place, the last of which is regarded as very important. In it the main actor carries a waninga on top of which is another smaller one. The larger waninga is said to be an old father and the other his son. This double tiwurunga is moved up the pula and dipped towards the novice. It is then placed upright in the centre of the ground and the boy is told to embrace it.

Phase 3

After this (final) kangaroo act the women return to the ceremonial ground, while the men all assemble behind the brake (which in the meantime has been piled higher with branches) at the eastern end of the ground. The women dance on the pula with their children carrying iljabara bark. Later the men also dance, facing east and with grass stalks in their headbands. The women pluck out these while the men are dancing. The novice is included in all these dances and his stalks are taken by his promised mother-in-law. But at a given signal she lifts him up onto her shoulders and runs away, followed by all the other women. At some distance from the ground she sits clasping the boy and surrounded by some other women. Those that do not sit dance up to the youth making beckoning movements.

The men sing a fire song back at the ground, but some later dramatically charge the women while holding shields before their faces. They seize the boy, take him back to the initiation ground and make him cover his face. The women return to camp. In the morning the boy is daubed with red ochre and the women return once more to dance with their inviting movements in front of the boy. A man then hoists the boy onto his shoulders and runs off with him. This is the cue for the women to go back to camp once more.

The boy is taken a good distance from the pula ground. There the men build large fires and cut down a number of saplings which are then scorched. A number of poles, each about three metres high, have been prepared and the burned saplings are fixed to them. All the time the poles are being decorated the boy is under a strict ban of silence. The poles are eventually stacked near to the ceremonial ground in readiness for use.

The boy, now back on the pula ground, is decorated with the branches of the emu-bush. The women return carrying their shields and dance facing the west. The men and the novice come from the west crowded in a bunch, with the novice right at the
centre. En masse they run, throwing bark at the women who quickly flee, followed by the fierce shouting of the men. The emu-bush branches are then stripped from the boy.

A man is now chosen to paint the boy. This is a solemn business of great import; the painter will reveal a design which is part of his own secret repertoire and he has been paid a great compliment in being chosen. The youth and the painter are under a particularly severe ban of silence.

The concealed poles are now brought to the ground. Two parties of men carry them, each running in an opposite direction in front of the novice. The poles are placed in the ground, standing upright in two rows. The boy is hidden from view behind the eastern brake, but as the women return, the brake is torn down so that the youth has a clear view of the poles. The boy, in imitation of a kangaroo, hops forward. A man — the same man on whose lap the youth sat at the beginning of the ceremony — is lying on his back and the novice lies on top of him for about ten minutes. Other men in the meantime fix the poles to their legs. When this has been completed the man lying underneath the novice wriggles free leaving the novice facing the earth. Two women move forward and erase the painted design from the boy's back. As they do, the men with the poles begin to dance while the women strip the leaves off of them.

It is dark, and people sense the ceremony moving to a climax. The brakes are piled high and set alight, casting a fiery glow across the whole ground. Suddenly a man roars and all dancing ceases. The women run back to camp, hastened by menacing shouts from the men. From all sides the low hum of bull-roarers can be heard. The novice is laid on his back and all the stripped poles are piled on top of his body. There is vigorous singing by the men. The subject of their song is the break of day as the sun reddens the sky and gives dark form to the horizon. It may also pertain to the black falcon ancestors, the originators of circumcision, and their fierce and angry 'attacks' on the penes of young men.

The bull-roarers work to a crescendo and the circumcisor comes forward, his beard thrust in his mouth as a sign of fury. He has an assistant, who takes up a similarly fierce position. One of them carries the stone knife which will be used to cut the prepuce; the other has a shield, which he carries on his head. The latter is the boy's father-in-law-to-be. The poles are removed from the boy and he is placed over the shield by his patrilineal relatives. To the humming sounds of bull-roarers, the foreskin is cut. The women and
children can hear the bull-roarers from afar. They are said to believe that the sound is made by the great spirit Tuanjiraka, who comes to take the boy away and make him into a man. But the novice knows better. While still bleeding he is shown the bull-roarers - \( \text{tnangkara} \) - and told that Tuanjiraka is just a story. The bull-roarer is pressed to the wound to make it heal. The boy is told that the \( \text{tnangkara} \) is the spirit of his mother's personal totem - that is, an embodiment of the ancestor connected with his \( \text{pmara altjira} \) (also known as \( \text{pmara tnangkara} \) [Strehlow 1971:604]).

Other \( \text{tjurunga} \) may be loaned to the novice by his relatives, and when the bleeding ceases he is taken to the east of the \( \text{pula} \) ground. He turns to the west, flanked by two elder brothers each carrying one of the stripped poles. Two other brothers mount the banks of the \( \text{pula} \) and hold two more of the poles over the ceremonial ground. This is the signal for the main performers to come forward - the painter, the circumcisor, the latter's assistant, and so on. As each comes forward to embrace the novice, the youth is told that he must not mention the men's names but instead use special relationship terms.

The boy is no longer a \( \text{wurtja} \) - he is a \( \text{rukuta} \). In some areas the foreskin may be consumed by a younger brother to make him grow strong, and blood from the wound may be rubbed against the breast or foreheads of sisters. Sometimes a sister may wear the dried foreskin around her neck. The boy himself is normally smoked to dry his wound and finally taken off into the bush in the company of an elder relative, usually a brother or brother-in-law.

The time in the bush is a return to the 'wilderness'. A number of foods are taboo, including most meats. Many of the same taboos are observed by his mother in her camp. In addition, the boy's father and mother must abstain from sexual intercourse for some time for fear of making the boy overly licentious. Every day the mother greases herself and her digging sticks, allowing nobody to go near the latter. These acts will help her son's recovery.

Finally, the boy has to learn a kind of secret code known as \( \text{angkatja kerintja} \) (literally, '[morally] good speech') and practise it with other men. In this code most normal things are referred to by peculiar names. There is a paucity of specificity in the language. For example, the same word may be used for woman, mother, wife, black cockatoo, white cockatoo, sun, duck and other things besides. Such talk causes great confusion and hilarity. The boy refers to himself as \( \text{injitjatjua} \),

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which is also the term for dog. As a rukuta in the bush, the women refer to the novice as ‘the child’; the children refer to him as ‘the hidden little man’. There does not appear to be any recourse to a pervasive principle of antonymy, as occurs, for example, in Walbiri secret speech (Hale 1971).

9.4 The Matriarchal Groundwork (Phase 1)

The Itata dance that may be held prior to circumcision has more or less the same function as alkiraka iwuma: it makes a boy stronger in anticipation of his ordeal. But according to Strehlow (1968:97), there is rarely need for this extra encouragement. "Aranda boys", he says, submit to their ordeal with eager expectation and with a cheerful courage that sustains them more or less successfully in the hour of trial.

Elsewhere he elaborates on this.

With a view to training themselves to bear the anticipated painful rites which took place at the age of puberty, all boys ... in Central Australia used to exercise themselves constantly in the art of suffering pain without a moan or tear. Often from the age of four or five young children could be observed sitting around their parents’ fire at night, picking out small red coals with their little hands and placing these on their forearms and upper legs ... Again, the children used to practise staring with wide open eyes while pretending to strike blows at each other: anyone who shut his eyes when a blow just missed his face was laughed at as a coward (tiralta). At a later stage small flakes of sharp stones ... were used by the larger boys ... for inflicting minor cuts on their own limbs; and courage could then be measured by the length and depth of the self-inflicted cut. Years of such preparation were necessary in order to teach boys ... the lesson that with practice it was possible to bear a very high degree of pain ... without uttering a cry, even though the eyes were streaming with tears. Even then there were failures. I remember a native boy ... who vanished into the bush one day in order to undergo circumcision. Some weeks later it was whispered among the children that when he was being operated on he had cried for his mother like a child. His sister was utterly outraged at this disgraceful rumour; and she threatened to beat unmercifully anyone who passed on the story (Strehlow 1971:397-8).
Of course, this much self-abuse makes one suspicious, for it begins to look like insecurity — what Roheim (1932:49) calls in a different (but related) context "anxiety lurking behind the bravado". Nevertheless, a boy about to be circumcised is supposed to demonstrate strength of character and manly attributes, and above all else 'not to go the way of the women'. Yet it appears that a great deal of the first phase of the ceremony is quite specifically about the women’s way.

Everything about this phase suggests a theme of matriarchy — that is, the idea that women in some sense 'rule the roost' (see Hamilton [1984] for discussion of this in the Aboriginal context). The ceremony begins with the dance ndaperama. This term appears to be constructed from erama, (to become) and ndapa, which is the name of a group of ancestral women who danced their way along the MacDonnell Ranges in The Dreaming, so creating the long valleys which cut right across Central Australia (Spencer and Gillen 1927:344-6). The dancers appear as these women brought to life in the present, and like their mythical counterparts, they have the normal attributes of male power.

The women dance with shields, which are normally men's objects. In myth the ndapa not only had shields, but spear-throwers as well. During the first part of their journey they were half men and half women, and they performed their own circumcision ceremonies on the men they encountered.

These women had long clitorises, each clitoris being like a penis. They had three of these penises [sic] altogether, one in the middle where the clitoris is at present and two on each side, where we now find the labia. Njiptia, the leader of these women, took a stone knife and cut off all the male organs, leaving only a small one, the clitoris. In a Pitjantjara version of the same story the mutilation is effected not by a woman,
but by a kangaroo man who first cuts of the women's penes and then cohabits with them (Roheim 1950:69).

The ndapa women are, as both Roheim (1950:68) and Hamilton (1984:15) point out, alkngarinta women — women who do not have to have anything to do with men, even to the point of being able to produce children without them. They are the same alkngarinta women who, in all likelihood, are represented in the myths and rites involving the papa tjurunga.

Myths of matriarchy normally describe a fall from power and that power being taken over by men (cf. Bamberger 1974). Something like this, I would suggest, is dramatised in the first phase of the circumcision ceremony — not so much as a shift from the profane and the female to the sacred and the male, but as a shift from the boy's spirit being under female care to it being under the care of males. For as I showed in the previous chapter, it is a boy's spiritual welfare, as well as his physical well-being, which is under female control during his early life. And as I will show later on in this chapter, the general drift of the circumcision ceremony reflects this. But for the moment it is enough to note that as far as circumcision ceremonies are concerned, it is the women who do the 'groundwork': everything has to stem from their specific role in re-creating The Dreaming. As the Walbiri say, the ceremonial ground has not been instituted until the women have danced the whole of its length (Meggitt 1962:290).

The wrestling of an initiate from female spiritual care, and the transference of that care to men, are dramatised in two main action-sequences: 1) those involving the giving and taking of the firestick, and 2) the young man's excur-
sion around the *pula*. In the first action may be discerned the significance of women as controllers of phallic power. The sexual nature of the firebrands seems quite explicit, for when the novice is handed his stick he is told to 'hold his fire', meaning that he is to take responsibility for his budding sexuality. An Aranda myth explains how fire used to be housed within the penis of the euro (grey kangaroo) (Spencer and Gillen 1927:348-9); a second equates an ancestor's phallic body image with fiery qualities (Strehlow 1971:510), a theme that has already been encountered in relation to the Milky Way (see Chapter Five); and a third uses the symbol of the firestick to encapsulate the phallic appearance of the native cat man Malbungka (Strehlow 1971:517). Everything suggests that fire is representative of the passions - 'burning desire' (cf. Roheim 1974a:165).

It is the novice's mother who first controls this fire, but from her original and single firestick she has to create two brands: she 'doubles up', a theme which we know from previous chapters to symbolise separation and the move towards independence. But at this early stage the boy is still identified with his mother. The fate of her firestick is also the fate of his. He is beginning to separate from her, but still retains her identity. Among the Walbiri, as apparently among the Aranda, the mother's brand is not extinguished until the time of circumcision. Both the cutting of the prepuce and the extinguishing of the fire represent death for the boy (Meggitt 1962:294).

Carl Strehlow's account of the novice's early journey around the *pula* ground has to be understood in this light. The boy is taken in two stages: first in a semi-circle,
while the men throw firesticks in the air, and second in an arc which completes the circle. At the end of the journey comes the embracing of the spear. This movement may relate to the idea of 'turning around', which Bell (1983:210) states to be an idiomatic way of expressing the conversion that takes place at initiation. In Aranda this idea is known as alknga rama (Wilkins pers. comm.), which seems literally to mean 'to see eyes' (perhaps with the general meaning of gaining insight). Certainly, at the end of the circular movement the men sing loudly in the background about the boy having to 'turn back' or 'return' (albuma) (Carl Strehlow 1913:21). This may not be exactly the same as 'turning around', but I think that the two ideas can be shown to be ritually connected.

During the first semi-circular movement, the novice and all the men who run with him toss firesticks in the air, while the second movement is towards the spear. This suggests a transition: a movement of throwing away and a concomitant one of acquisition. Since the firestick symbolises a boy's identity with his mother, one would expect the spear to symbolise male power — the power to which he is to be transferred. It may well be that the fire/spear opposition is homologous with that between domesticity (the realm of women) and the wild (the realm of men as hunters). According to Meggitt (1962:287), the spear is a straightforwardly phallic symbol in Walbiri initiation. In addition, the general act of embracing in the rite signifies the novice gaining strength by absorbing, though not understanding the nature of, the "lodge patri-spirit" (Meggitt 1962:295, 302, 305). In the Aranda case, the actors, including the novice,
appear singularly impressed with the power of the spear. They embrace it and immediately jump back, as if they have received a strong 'charge' or shock. At the very least, then, the spear is a source of power, reacting when one is dealing with one's 'fire'.

This is the cue for the women to leave and they do not return for some time. I would therefore suggest that the embracing of the spear marks the beginning of the boy's transfer of identification from female to male, a break which is consciously symbolised by the boy's brief stay in the bush. Everything from now until the latter part of the ceremony is held in secret. The boy has, in effect, regressed - 'returned', as the Aranda say. But in order to understand exactly the nature of the destination, the totemic acts performed before the apprehensive youth's eyes require examination.

2.5 From Dingo to Kangaroo (Phase 2)

In most descriptions of circumcision ceremonies in Central Australia there are many references to kangaroo acts. Spencer and Gillen suggest that, in the Aranda case at least, this is simply because of the local importance of kangaroo myths. Were the initiations held elsewhere, they say, other totemic acts would predominate. It seems, however, that they missed the 'international' significance of kangaroo myths and rites in Central Australia. Carl Strehlow's account of circumcision also involves kangaroo acts, and throughout the Western Desert, the kangaroo (maJu) is the totemic animal connected with this first main initiation rite (see, for example, Mountford [1976:337-74]). This is
presumably related to the fact that the kangaroo has a bifid penis (see Chapter Five), thereby being regarded as the originator of genital mutilations by the Walbiri. I will return to this matter later, but it is necessary first to show how it is related to much else besides.

Kangaroo social structure is a complex arrangement which provides Aborigines with a model: it is 'good to think'. First of all, in relation to the mother/child separation which occurs in circumcision, the strength of attachment that has to be broken is duplicated in the extremely close bond that exists between a kangaroo mother and her young joey. As Roheim (1969:67) has pointed out with the analysis of circumcision in view:

this large marsupial is really a fit symbol for the dual-unity or mother-child situation. The young kangaroo is quite undeveloped, "and so firmly affixed to the nipple that it may be correctly described as grown to it. So much force is necessary to detach it that both the young animal and the nipple of the mother bleed freely, and the former dies in a few hours, or perhaps in a few minutes." [Fountain 1907:39. See Illustration 11].

The kangaroo's pouch was, as Frith and Calaby (1969:111) note, viewed by early observers as "an open womb" in which the young spontaneously arose from the nipple. The latter was thought to serve the function of an umbilical cord

in such a manner that the lungs cannot be inflated previous to its rupture. It is therefore most likely that the nipple ... constitutes the mouth of a fallopian tube; and that the umbilical cord, having been supplied from the nipple as from a placenta, passes through the aosophagus and stomach towards its usual destination; after which, the circulation is carried on in the ordinary manner.

The theory of spontaneous pouch-birth has been reported for Aboriginal Australia too (see McKnight [1975:92] on the Wik-
Illustration 11. Newborn Kangaroo Attached to Teat

(from Griffiths 1978:244)

Illustration 12. Maternal Behaviour of the Red Kangaroo

a) cleaning pouch in preparation for birth

b) birth, with young at foot that has just vacated the pouch

c) young at foot feeding from pouch while newborn is attached to second teat

d) young at foot entering pouch

e) turning in the pouch

f) carrying position, with protruding head

(from Frith and Calaby 1969:117-8)
mungkan), and I quote the early European 'misconception' at length because it recalls the Aranda definition of a ratapa (spirit child) as being a child both in the womb and 'bonded' to the mother's breast prior to the time that it can crawl. Strehlow (1971:314) infers (but only infers) that the Aranda do not subscribe to the spontaneous pouch-birth theory, but as I will later show, the idea of female exclusivity which it entails relates in a very significant way to circumcision.

The symbolic value of kangaroo mother/infant bonding is enhanced by the eventual mode of separation. A joey uses the marsupial pouch as a base from which to indulge in tentative explorations, always returning to its warmth and security in times of danger.

It leaves the pouch in the form of a miniature adult, weighing 4-5 kg. Now following its mother at heel, the young animal continues to suckle for a further 4 months. Its younger sibling in the pouch meanwhile suckles from another teat (Strahan 1983:256. See Illustration 12).

The similarity with human suckling, including sibling rivalry, is striking, and the following and returning-to-feed actions clearly relate to findings in the previous chapter.

Another related point, again connected to the discussion in Chapter Eight, is the rather abrupt manner in which joeys may be weaned. Apart from simply refusing access to the breast, mothers may literally let their young down by allowing a joey to clamber into the pouch and then relaxing the muscles so that it tumbles to the ground (Frith and Calaby 1969:118). The same strategy may be used in times of danger when the mother sacrifices her young so as to gain more mobility in flight. The chances of reunion after this
are normally slim, as are those of the young's survival (Frith and Calaby 1969:64-5). Kangaroo mothers, then, while being in certain respects excellent models of maternal care, are nevertheless forced to 'drop' their young when the occasion demands. This 'letting down' is, I believe, symbolically related to further aspects of kangaroo behaviour.

According to Strahan (1983:256):

The usual group [of red kangaroos] consists of a dominant male, a number of adult females, and juveniles of both sexes, but it may include as few as two animals or as many as several hundred. Small groups of young males are not uncommon and old, scarred males may live as solitary individuals (my emphasis).

Large groups of kangaroos, however,

are temporary aggregations only and there is no social organisation in them; when a mob of this size forms, it is a loose aggregation of many individual animals and small parties (Frith and Calaby 1969:70).

Normally, kangaroo groups contain less than ten members, with the commonest figure ranging between two and four. All large congregations, which normally only occur when a number of small groups converge to a well-watered, freshly-green area after good rains, disperse if disturbed. Something like a nuclear family appears to be the only stable unit (see Illustration 13). This is strikingly similar to Aboriginal social structure in the desert, where large gatherings for ritual are only possible when rainfall permits (see Chapter Ten).

Illustration 13 shows the marked sexual dimorphism in adult kangaroos: bucks are much heavier, stockier and taller than does, and this has long been the object of human projection. For example, Morey (quoted in Frith and Calaby [1969:70]) states:
Illustration 13. A Family of Red Kangaroos

The basic unit of kangaroo society is a family consisting of a dominant male, several females, and young. There is marked sexual dimorphism, with the male being bigger and stronger than the females.
because of his size, [a dominant buck] would probably have been the lord of a mob of several hundred bucks and does with their joeys, and he would have kept this position as long as he maintained his strength and skill as a fighter.

But it seems, in view of what was stated earlier about the temporary nature of large groups, that males do not collect and preserve harems, that the basic unit is the family party, and that other individuals join or leave at will. [There is no known] case of a male opposing the entry of another male to the group (Frith and Calaby 1969:73).

What is interesting about this is that males do in fact move between groups quite frequently, quite apart from forming 'bachelor parties'. It seems that the dominant males are often quite tolerant of this (Frith and Calaby 1969:73), but fights may occur, especially when females are in oestrus.

Red Kangaroos can fight savagely and doubtless do so in the wild ... The mature bucks threaten and attack one another particularly in the presence of oestrus females or when a new buck is introduced into an established group. An attacking or threatening kangaroo approaches its opponent ..., drops to all fours, with the body supported on the extremity of the tail and hind feet and paws; the limbs are widespread. The limbs and head quiver ... Fighting may follow when the two animals claw and grapple with the forepaws and, supporting themselves on their tails, deliver powerful kicks to the abdomen with both hindlegs (Frith and Calaby 1969:68).

This aggression has also commonly been the object of human projection. Stories about an "old man kangaroo" seizing an attacker and disembowelling him with a kick from the hind foot are not uncommon in the folklore of European Australia (Frith and Calaby 1969:66), and as I propose to show, Aborigines have been no less struck by a dominant buck's aggressive behaviour in the company of sexually receptive females (see Illustration 14).<6>

Perhaps the symbolic potential of much of this is only
Illustration 14. Aggressive Postures of the Male Kangaroo

(from Frith and Calaby 1969:67)
too obvious: a group of kangaroos mirrors almost perfectly the situation of Freud's primal horde. It is a group of females closely bonded to their children and dominated by a single senior male who puts down potential sexual competition. The result of the casting out is that 'bands of brothers' are formed. In addition, when a senior male finally capitulates and gives up his position, he becomes an 'old, scarred' outcast himself, defeated and crippled by the up and coming generation. In a sense, then, red kangaroos appear to have something akin to an incest taboo. But it is not a law: it is sustained only by violence, not language. It is natural, not cultural. In the following analysis I will show something of what the Aranda make of this Levi-Straussian 'link between nature and culture'.

Kangaroo revelations begin when the novice is conducted to the amboanta. From here he is taken to see the first kangaroo wanninga by being conducted the length of the pula, after first having witnessed two actors dancing with a thigh-trembling movement. According to Carl Strehlow (1913: 21-2) this dancing is preceded by a man coming to the ground holding a firestick. Both the emergence of the man with the firestick and the thigh-trembling actions are accompanied by song. In the first case, the men sing about 'the hard wood giving off a bright shining flame': in the second they sing of 'the thigh-trembling men looking as if they are threshing mulga seed'. Both songs may be interpreted as having strong sexual overtones.

The first appears to be a reproduction of the earlier fire motif: the 'hard wood' is a phallus, and the 'bright shining flame' is desire. The second sexual allusion is less
obvious, but perhaps more revealing. Mulga seed threshing is
women's work and part of a longer process which involves
grinding the seed into flour. When women grind they sit
astride a large stone and pulverize the seed vigorously with
a smaller stone held in the hand. In doing so they not only
produce a white mass of flour between their thighs, they
reproduce the position of the male in sexual intercourse. In
Walbiri secret speech — what the Walbiri themselves refer to
as 'up-side-down' language (Hale 1971:473) — the principle
of opposition or antonymy demands that coitus and semen
(kura) be referred to as ngulu — mulga seed (Hale 1971:
481).(7) In Aranda love songs it is not uncommon for all
types of genital fluids, male and female (and urinary as
well as sexual), to be conflated (Roheim 1974a:161, 165).

I would contend, then, that this initial revelation is
straightforwardly symbolic of sexual desire, but it is sym-
bolic in a particular kind of way. The idea of the women
taking the man's position in sexual intercourse is, accord-
ing to Roheim (1974a:149), strongly redolent of incest, be-
cause

Central Australian women sleep on top of their
small children in a position that was described to
me as being like that of a man lying on top of a
woman during coitus.

This, says Roheim, is at the basis of men's phantasies about
alkngarintja women who, if they appear in dreams, are
thought to

break the man's penis by sitting on top of it. The
old men counsel the young men to make every effort
to awaken if they dream of an alngarintja, for
she might attempt to get on top of them and have
intercourse. Were this to happen, either the penis
would break, or the young man would die.

This is why alkgarintja women are castrators (as mentioned
in Chapter Eight): they are women who possess men's penes- phallic mothers. This first act, then, I would say symbol- ises the boy's libidinal attachment to his mother - incest.

As soon as the initiate has witnessed this dramatis- ation of desire, he is shown the kangaroo waninga. Later he is painted with the pmoara design. The meaning of the wani- nga will become clear below, but we already know that pmoara may symbolise women's or ancestral blood. The painting of the novice, then, almost certainly relates to the idea that he has 'turned back', for if he has regressed then it makes a good deal of sense for him to covered with a design that is symbolic of the womb. Tjurunga boards and stones, which are very often covered with female symbols called pmoara, also share this quality of being 'in the womb' (as I will show in Chapter Eleven). I would contend that this womb identification is related to the novice's narcissistic condition of being very closely bonded to his mother. This is where the symbolic qualities of the alkngarintja women come to the fore.

In the first major act the men sing fiercely about the lakabara hawks, originators of circumcision. The act itself portrays a dingo rushing between the legs of a kangaroo, being caught there, and being dashed to the ground. Eventu- tally, the dog is killed by a kangaroo who carries a waninga on his head. The performers lie on the novice and the act is repeated the next day, with the only apparent differences being the introduction of the bloody wood shavings representing the wounds of the dingo and the fact that there are now two kangaroos. To understand the con- nection of these action sequences with alkngarintja women it
is necessary to recall some of the discussion of dingoes introduced in Chapter Four.

Kangaroos and dingoes are proverbial enemies (just as are dingoes and emus). As Meggitt (1965:11) states:

the dingo is carnivorous by preference, and, by virtue of its size and equipment, it is the most efficient killer to be found among the Australian land animals. In its natural state in the bush, the dingo does not prey only on smaller creatures, but also successfully attacks game much larger than itself, such as kangaroo.

Kangaroo hunting can at times be spectacularly successful. In one recently observed case, a group of five dingoes was seen to take no less than 83 kangaroos near a watering point over a period of just seven weeks (Archer and Flannery 1985:209). A Western Desert myth recorded by Carl Strehlow (1908:11-2) describes how a red kangaroo takes hold of an attacking dog by the ears and bangs its head on the ground (see also 1907:37-40 for an Aranda cognate version), the precise scene which is witnessed during circumcision. But if dingoes are voracious hunters, then they are also, as I pointed out in Chapter Four, predominantly conceived of as being female. What is more, if some Western Desert groups are anything to go by, this femininity is of great ritual significance.

According to White (1975:132-3), one of the most secret of women's ceremonies performed at Yalata is that of "Minjma Baba and Wadhi Baba (Woman Dog and Man Dog)" (cf. Roheim [1974b:82-3] and Carl Strehlow [1908:12-7, 1911:13-5] for related data on men's ritual in the Western Desert).

The ceremony begins with a group of young women dogs travelling. Their leader is white (or light-coloured) and there soon appears on the scene a black (or dark-coloured) dog. The white woman dog urinates, he smells the urine and starts a long chase of the group of women, continuing for several scenes ... The chase ends in the black dog
catching the white dog, she submits willingly and there is an exuberant miming of sexual intercourse. The next scene, without the man, shows the woman giving birth to a number of puppies, and the ceremony ends with their joyful dancing.

There are reasons for supposing that this dingo/woman ritual association holds good for the Aranda too. The Western Desert term for dog is *papa* (White's *baba*), which is the Aranda's term for the child's *tjurunga* held by women. In addition, women and dogs are regarded as similar in relation to men's ritual because

> [a]ccording to the Loritja men [who occupy the country adjacent to the Western and Southern Aranda], the reek of men's blood had the power of keeping both women and dingoes away from sacred caves [bedrizzled with it] (Strehlow 1971:448).

My suggestion is, then, that the women's ceremonies which children attend in their early years, and which seem to be connected with the ritual use of the *papa*, include dingo ceremonies. If this is the case, a boy, at the time he is about to go through his circumcision rite, knows his mother and other women ritually as dogs. He also knows women as 'light' and men as 'dark'.

There is an ethno-zoological point which corroborates this interpretation. According to Meggitt (1962:303, 312), when the Walbiri perform genital operations, special care is taken not to damage what people refer to as the 'inside bone' of the penis. At circumcision youths are referred to as dogs, and it so happens that male dogs really do have bones in their penes. This bone is called either the *os penis* or the baculum, and is "a rod-like structure, grooved below for the passage of the urethra" (Ewer 1973:32). I will return to the symbolic importance of the male dog's penis bone at a later point in the overall analysis of initiation,
but for the moment note should be taken of the fact that the bitch possesses a similar structure known as the os clitoridis (Ewer 1973:33-4), which may well be the reason why virgins are said to have bones in their vaginas (Roheim 1974a:181). In addition, unlike marsupials (Gerhardt 1933:321) dog bitches show a well-developed and prominent clitoris (Ewer 1973:117). All this can only enhance the symbolic value of female dominance in dingo social organisation and further the image of bitches as phallic mothers.

The opposition of men's blood to both women and dogs suggests a general opposition between women's ceremonies, in which children take part, and men's secret rites. I suggest that this opposition is based on a complementarity involving two different views of the primal scene. According to White, the women's dog rite puts the male in a rather ridiculous position. Women appear as takers, submitting willingly to intercourse, but dispensing of the male directly afterwards and dealing exclusively with 'women's business' (birth and child-raising), just as do real dingo bitches in the wild (see Chapter Four). This female exclusivity appears to be something of a joyful triumph against the dark, male force, and this supports the hypothesis I put forward in Chapter Eight regarding the restorative function of women's rites. The women show that they can more or less do without men; they possess their own phalli and the children are comforted by the reinstatement of the mother's status after witnessing the primal scene. To see how this contrasts with the men's rites, it is necessary to return to the kangaroo acts.

Faye Bell (1980:8) has argued that in the first main act of the circumcision ceremony, the novice is identified
with the dingo actor. The performance seems explicit on this count, since the dingo actor is the first to lie on the young initiate. But all the other actors also lie on him, and this suggests a more complex form of 'impression' taking place. In order to understand more fully this multiple identification it is necessary to know something more about kangaroo behaviour and its relation to that of dingoes.

Dingoes and kangaroos are similar to each other in the way in which they 'drop' their young. Kangaroos, as I showed above, do this almost literally, while dingo bitches do it metaphorically when they desert their pups (see Chapter Four). But whereas dingo pups are 'adopted' by a male, the fate of kangaroo young, at least the males, is to be expelled from the group. Both are similar to human situations: the latter because a youth will have to marry out after initiation, and the former because, as I will describe below, it is mainly one's elder brothers who care for one ritually during the circumcision ceremony. It will be remembered also that kangaroos form 'bands of brothers'. But in human terms, what is the nature of the 'dropping' that occurs when mother and son are separated?

In *The Riddle of the Sphinx* Roheim (1974b:117) states that the *waminga* is linked to the idea of copulating dogs. It is, he says, "quite clearly a representation of a copulating pair, that is, of the primal scene situation". We need not dwell on Roheim's evidence for this assertion, because I think its truth can be demonstrated from the Aranda ethnography alone, and in a way which links it to kangaroos as well as dogs. For when in the initiation drama the dingo runs between the kangaroo's legs, gets stuck there and is
dashed to the ground and killed, this is almost certainly a parody of the sexual act.

In Spencer and Gillen’s (1927:184, cf. figure 60) original account it is stated that when the kangaroo actor first comes onto the pula ground, he moved his head from side to side, as if looking for something, and every now and then uttered a sound similar to that made by a kangaroo ... Suddenly the dog looked up, began barking, and running along on all fours, passed between the man’s legs and lay down behind the man, who kept watching him over his shoulder. Then the dog ran again between the kangaroo man’s legs, but this time he was caught and well shaken, and a pretence was made of dashing his head against the ground, whereupon he howled as if in pain.

But if this is an act of aggression between two species known to be deadly enemies, it is also very evidently sexual. When an adult male kangaroo is sexually aroused by a female, it often grasps the female’s tail and attempts are made to grasp her round the neck and chest. Sometimes the ... tail grasping [is] leisurely but, in some cases, the pursuit is fast ... During mating the female adopts a submissive posture with forefeet on the ground. In the Red Kangaroo, mating ... occupies ... [up] to twenty five minutes. It is usually terminated by the female’s breaking away from the male’s grasp (Frith and Calaby 1969:111-2, see also Illustration 15 overleaf).

But in the rite, the dog does not manage to break away. It is killed - and thereby hangs a tale.

In the initiation rites held at Macumba, on the borders of Lower Southern Aranda territory in South Australia, the novice is at one stage harangued by his elders. He is told that he is a fornicator, a perpetrator of incest, a masturbator, and a general disregarder of all rules of conduct (Berndt and Berndt 1945:316). Shortly after this a drama is performed involving a pack of dogs controlled by a
mythical 'devil' woman called Minma Mingari (quite possibly related to Minjma Baba, the white bitch mentioned in the rite performed at Yalata). These are the dogs who, in The Dreaming, attacked a man called Njirana. Like the kangaroos in the second act in Aranda initiation, the dogs carry blood-soaked wood shavings in their teeth (Berndt and Berndt 1945:317).

The story of Minma Mingari is a variant of the widespread myth which I drew attention to in Chapter Five - the story in which the hero, in his amorous advances towards women, loses his penis which turns into his son and carries on the licentious chase. In the Doldea variant Njirana is the father and the penis/son is called Julana. One day Julana tried to force his sexual attentions on Minma Ming-
ari, but the dogs attacked Julana so that he was forced to retreat (Berndt and Berndt 1945:145). Njirana's penis, or what was left of it after it had been severed, began to itch and he subincised it to bring relief. This was the origin of subincision (Berndt and Berndt 1945:103). Spencer and Gillen (1927:168-9) reproduce a similar story in which a kangaroo man is set upon and devoured by a pack of young dogs in the company of their mother. The act is repeated several times as the kangaroo keeps coming back to life, the myth eventually ending with the dogs cutting off his tail (para, which also means penis).

Hamilton (1979:266-7) has said of this myth and its many cognates that they "are some kind of masterkey to relations between the sexes". Given their links with dingoes, symbolic of independent women, this would seem to be true, and Aranda rites add a great deal to the unlocking of the mystery. The South Australian ethnography of the Berndts and White stresses the victory of female dingoes over male sexuality, but in the Aranda circumcision rite this superior position is, quite literally, dashed to the ground (not unlike the novice at alkiraka iwuma). For if the dingo-kangaroo chase is at once a hunt and a sexual performance, it is the dingo who is killed. This, then, is very different to the banishing of Wadhi Baba to the cheerful dancing of dingo women celebrating the birth of pups. And it is very different from the victory of Minma Mingari and her pack of hounds over Njirana/Julana. But the same castration motif as is in these stories (explicit in the second, implicit in the first) is, as I now intend to show, reiterated in the Aranda rite. This one might have expected given the myth about the
kangaroo having his tail cut off by dogs.

When the novice is first shown the waninga he is also shown the dancers with quivering thighs and the man with the firebrand. These represent female and male sexual desire respectively—what Roheim interprets as the primal scene, a view supported by the way in which the boy is said to have regressed or 'turned back'. What he then witnesses is an act of aggressive copulation between an animal which he ritually identifies as feminine and an (obviously) male animal, the kangaroo, about which he knows little or nothing. The killing of the dingo, I would suggest, is a portrayal of male dominance which the youth would have at some stage in the past phantasised about in relation to his parents indulging in the sexual act. But whereas in the past his confidence in his mother's standing would have been boosted in women's dog rites, a completely different path of transformation is to unfold for him in relation to the rites of the kangaroo. Dogs may never know their fathers, and kangaroos, when they are young perhaps 'think' they never will. But the latter are wrong because their 'patriarchal', muscle-bound fathers will assert themselves as the joeys become sexually mature.

As I pointed out earlier, 'old man kangaroo' is a large, robust animal, and certainly superior to any single dog. From the parodied sexual act, he emerges the 'victor' and the dingo is put down. Here the youth is presented with a living phantasy typical of the primal scene: the father has killed the mother. And one might suppose that at the same time he is completely deflated by this, for in the primal scene, when the mother dies or is hurt the infant dies or is hurt as well. He is in a sense 'in' her and thereby
suffers her fate. The 'damage' is portrayed by the blood-
soaked shavings in the kangaroos' teeth during the second
act, and these are the same bloody shavings which were in
the mouths of Minma Mingari's dogs and so associated with
castration.

But just as castration strengthens Njirana/ Julana by
making him 'double up', so too are there two kangaroos with
bloody shavings in their mouths in the second act of
circumcision. And presumably the youth is impressed with
this, since he is covered by both kangaroo performers as
well as the 'dead' dingo, whereas initially he had only
'absorbed' a single kangaroo. Thus, if the primal scene por-
trayed in front of the youth is symbolic of being let down
by the mother, just as happens with both dingoes and kanga-
roos in nature, it is also about the father emerging as a
figure of strength with which one may identify and look to-
wards for care and protection. Evidently, at the beginning
of circumcision a youth is making a transition from dog to
kangaroo, from mother to father, and in the process he is
impressed with the strength that the father gains. For apart
from the kangaroo 'doubling up', it also has a bifid penis.
Paradoxically, the father gains his strength in the castra-
tion of the sexual act.

The next act confirms this. In it 'old man kangaroo'
himself is portrayed, ostentatiously portraying his
genitals.

When all was ready the performer came hopping
leisurely out from behind the men's brake, where
he had been decorated, lying down every now and
then on his side to rest as a kangaroo does ... When the performer hopped out [the novice] was
told to get up and watch. For about ten minutes
the performer went through the characteristic

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movements of the animal, acting the part very cleverly, while the men sitting around the wurtja sang of the wanderings of the kangaroo in [The Dreaming] (Spencer and Gillen 1927:187-8).

The picture, then, is one of peace, with the old leading buck relaxing confidently and without fear of anything within his domain. The leisurely gait is quite faithful to the kangaroo’s true actions, the only thing apparently missing, at least from Spencer and Gillen’s description, being the kangaroo’s tail, which is an important part of the normal crawling action.

When moving slowly about . . ., or when grazing, kangaroos proceed on all fours in a crawl with the forepaws and feet flat on the ground. The forepaws are moved forward together and the hindfeet then brought up together outside them; the tail is used as a prop while they are clear of the ground (Frith and Calaby 1969:63, cf. Illustration 16).

Illustration 16. The Crawling Gait of the Kangaroo

(from Frith and Calaby 1969:63)

There is an English expression, applied in the context of something being obvious, which states that the thing ‘sticks out like dogs’ balls’. The last part of this phrase could well be rendered as ‘like kangaroos’ balls’. As Illustration 14 shows, a kangaroo’s testicles are extremely prominent and they may often be on open display, especially when aggressive postures are taken. But the testicles of ‘old man
kangaroo' and those of dogs, while in one respect similar, are in another very different. McKnight (1975:89) has noted that the Wik-mungkan draw a sharp contrast between placental mammals, such as dogs, and marsupials, such as kangaroos, on the basis of the position of their sexual and excretory organs. One particular feature which distinguishes kangaroos from dogs (and human beings), and which the Wik-mungkan take special note of, is the former's pre-penial testicles (McKnight 1975:90). Kangaroos in effect have their testicles and penes 'round the wrong way', as is shown by Illustration 15. This may well be an important point in circumcision acts, since the novice himself has been 'turned back' and is making the transition from the status of a dingo. Given that it is the youth's sexuality that is at issue in the rites, it would make perfect sense to turn that sexuality upside-down (just as the Walbiri turn everything upside-down with their secret speech).

Faye Bell (1980:8) has suggested that the fact that 'old man kangaroo' lacks a tail must be significant. This may well be true, but it could be objected that Spencer and Gillen simply failed to record its presence. However, the Aranda do use prominent tail decorations in kangaroo ceremonies (Carl Strehlow 1910:10), and such an adornment would presumably have been described by Spencer and Gillen had it been used. I am therefore inclined to agree with Bell's assessment of the situation, and for other reasons than those so far stated.

One reason is that another body decoration - the waninga - appears also to have been missing from 'old man kangaroo'. Another is that the kangaroo uses its phallic
tail as a third leg, a symbol which we have already encoun-
tered in relation to the papa. If it is granted that the
papa is a phallus controlled by women, and that women use
this phallus in their dingo ceremonies, then we might infer
that the kangaroo's loss of his 'third leg' was the result
of the previous copulation with the dog - another variant of
the 'lost penis' motif. According to White (1975:132) during
the women's dingo ceremony at Yalata, the women at one stage
all hop around on one leg in imitation of a male dog's
stance while pissing, and the act is performed directly
prior to the act of sexual intercourse between Minjma Baba
and Wadhi Baba. But if 'old man kangaroo' is castrated, he
certainly appears to be remarkably unperturbed. I believe
there are good reasons for his sanguine appearance - reasons
I will now attempt to elucidate.

When the kangaroo has finished his leisurely crawl, he
lies down on top of the novice who is then instructed about
spirit children. As Tonkinson (1979:86) has shown in a rela-
ted ethnographic context, the doctrine of spirit conception
emphasises the control of sexuality by contrasting nature
and culture or animal and human modes of reproduction. In
particular, humans are opposed to dogs, who involve them-
selves "in unforgivably indiscriminate, often incestuous
copulatory behaviour" - the very behaviour which the novice-
as-dingo is potentially guilty of. Yet many of the acts
which novices witness in Aranda circumcision rites are
parodies of animal sexuality, and this raises an important
question about the role of totemic beliefs and those to do
with conception. However, this is not a matter which can be
fully explored at this stage: I will return to it in Chap-
ter Ten. For the moment I would note only that the revelation about spirit children appears to be a further aspect of the young man's being drawn away from the female realm. How this revelation is connected with the castration of 'old man kangaroo', and the latter's cheerful acceptance of that 'lack', is implicit in the remainder of the ceremony.

The kangaroo without a tail may have been castrated in the hunt-cum-sexual act, but he emerged victorious. Above all else he exhibits confidence - he has what we might refer to as 'a lot of balls'. The important rock rat act, involving the very elaborate waninga, provides the first clue to understanding this confidence. According to Spencer and Gillen (1927:188-9), the rock rat act marks an important turning point in the ceremony. Just prior to it the men gather and decide on who the operators will be. This timing does not appear accidental. The choosing of the circumcisor and his assistants comes in between one revelation concerning castration and another.

The ceremonial acts performed in circumcision rites are always performed at night. The drama is most effective when lit in the eerie atmosphere of firelight: the youth is, in effect, living out a dream and is surrounded by fearsome 'spooks' and 'things that go bump in the night'. Red kangaroos are themselves mainly nocturnal (Frith and Calaby 1969:61), as are dingoes, whose distinctive howls can often be heard in the bush while sitting in camp at night (see Chapter Four). In addition, dingoes often come quite close to camps in order to scavenge, when their glassy eyes may be lit up by the light of the campfire and appear as two independent mobile specks of brightness. This, no doubt, is why
a Pitjantjara kangaroo song refers to a demon-dog as "eyes two" (Roheim 1974b:82).

Other animals symbolised in the rock rat act are nocturnal too. Initially, two men dance as birds. According to Spencer and Gillen (1927:191) these birds are known as kutakuta or "little night hawks". The species is almost certainly the spotted nightjar, which is also imitated in Walbiri initiation (Meggitt 1962:290, 303). I suspect, in fact, that the nightjar is a symbolic transformation of the dingo. This commonly encountered night bird feeds on the wing, swooping to take up moths and other night-flying insects, many of which are attracted in considerable numbers by firelight. When the nightjar comes near such sources of light,

its bright ruby-red eye reflections and conspicuous white wing patches [are revealed] as it flies ... in the darkness (Frith 1976:313).

In essence, then, the nightjar is a flying demon - a 'devil dog' having taken to the air (cf. Meggitt 1950:382-3 on Walbiri flying night-demons with glaring red eyes and associated closely with dogs). Certainly, demon-dogs are sometimes said to appear in the sky (Roheim 1974b:50, 1950:81), and like the dingo, the nightjar is a decidedly female hunter. In the ritual the actors representing the birds tremble and quiver their thighs in a similar way to those men who earlier danced to the song about mulga seed.

The two little hawk [nightjar] men, with legs wide apart and hands grasping the ends of a stick which was held across the shoulders, came along down the pula lines towards the audience, sliding and quivering (Spencer and Gillen 1927:191).

This very same stance is adopted by dancing women at the end of an ingkura ceremony, where it is a prelude to a kind of sexual free-for-all (see Chapter Ten).
If the night birds are hunters, then the rock rat is almost certainly their 'prey'. The central rock rat was earlier called by zoologists the Thick-tailed Rat, referring to the swollen tail characteristic of all species of rock-rats. [E]arly collectors referred to the extreme fragility of the tail which raises the possibility that it may provide an escape mechanism similar to that employed by some lizards. In the case of rock-rats, however, the tail does not regenerate (Strahan 1983:390).

The symbolic value is perhaps too obvious to spell out, and it may well be that the central rock rat is the same species as that rat ancestor reported by Roheim (1950:123) who is an "admired phallic hero" hit on the nose by his sons in a transparent parody of castration, and who elsewhere (Roheim 1974a:184-6) is described in a love song as having his 'spear' 'cracked' in sexual intercourse. But what, apart from the obvious connection between childhood demon beliefs and castration anxiety, is the meaning of this symbolic loss?

When the rock rat waninga was brought out in the ceremony witnessed by Spencer and Gillen (1927:191),

the ... carriers ... ran down the [pula] lines, stooping and bending the waninga towards the wurtja, but without touching him. Stooping every now and then, they stood erect and quivered or stood still.

The waninga itself represented the body of the rat; the main part was supposed to be the trunk of the animal, the point end the tail, and the handle end the head, so that when in use the latter was carried downwards (Spencer and Gillen 1927:191, my emphasis).

Thus, as Faye Bell (1980:8) has noted, it is the tail of the rock rat/waninga that is bent over towards the novice, and this links back to the earlier sequence where the tail
is apparently missing from 'old man kangaroo'.

It is at the time of the act representing the leisurely crawl of the paternal kangaroo that the novice is first told about spirit children, and I would argue that this is directly linked to the castration motif. The drama, it seems to me, amounts to this. In earlier acts the novice has witnessed the primal scene and the death of the mother at the hands of the father. This is, quite simply, a 'return of the repressed' presented to the novice to evoke long forgotten memory traces - traces that have been overlaid by the restoration of the child's integrity by the mother. That integrity is now being shattered once again in order that it may be rebuilt anew. And this time the mother will not turn out to be a saviour. (8)

The primal scene may be understood as the primordial confusion (like the union of sky and earth). For the child, it represents an insoluble problem which has eventually to be dealt with by symbolic castration. But the latter in a sense has two possibilities, depending on whether it is the mother or father who is regarded as the centre of attention. In the former case, the mother appears as a castrator: the father is 'put down' and the child takes his place, which is apparently the Aranda solution to the problem in early childhood. Here the mother is not castrated, but because the child does not make the transition from being to having the phallus, there is a sense in which the child is. The solution is bought at a price. Reunion with the mother gives rise to what we might justifiably refer to as a 'dependent spirit' - a spirit that, while having emerged from the mother to some extent, is still firmly attached. This, I
would argue, is what is symbolised in the very close relationships between dingo bitches and their pups on the one hand, and kangaroo females and their pouch young and joeys on the other — relationships where there is no father at all.

In the second solution it is the father, rather than the mother, who appears as the main castrator. In this case, the father is seen as possessing that which the mother desires and that which the child cannot provide. The latter thereby suffers castration in a different sense: he wants to be the father, but cannot, and gives up the quest on the understanding that he will be able to take the father’s place when he grows up. This solution sees the mother partly rejected and has, overall, a threefold movement: 1) a libidinal shift away from the mother, who is deflated in the child’s eyes; 2) a counter-identification with the father, who is correspondingly inflated; and 3) a rejection of the father on the basis of deferral, which results in projection and a more outward seeking direction. In other words, the journey towards an independent spirit implies the breaking of the spirit which is dependent on the mother at the hands of the father. It is in this context that Lacan’s comment, cited in Chapter Eight, about Australian conception beliefs being the effect of a signifier — the Name-of-the-Father — begins to make more sense.

In each of the first four totemic acts the novice goes through a process of identification with the whole scene. This first happens when, in two successive acts, the mother (as dingo) is killed in sexual intercourse and the father (as kangaroo) gains in stature by doubling himself. In the
third act, the novice 'takes in' and is literally impressed by the father figure's leisurely genital display. And it is precisely at this point that he is told about spirit babies, the implication being that he, like everybody else, came into being as one. The fourth act reinforces this, for here the novice becomes the 'missing tail', in the first instance missing from 'old man kangaroo', and in the second lost from the rock rat's body when 'attacked' by nightjars. In other words, the novice has revealed to him that he is the result of a copulation and that he is but a replica of the father in smaller form - that is, the father's phallus. As I have already pointed out, the birth of the independent human spirit, as it breaks away from maternal domination on the basis of paternal identification, is contingent on symbolic castration. In the rite, the knowledge of spirit conception happens at just such a time of rupture.

Later acts add weight to this interpretation. A drama takes place involving an old and disabled kangaroo. The mythical explanation of this concerns a party of kangaroo men who travelled from Ajaii in Kukatja country. They travelled in two groups, a larger one going ahead and a smaller one bringing up the rear (Spencer and Gillen 1927:192). Then a second act is performed, although as Faye Bell (1980:6-7) has discovered, it is really only a continuation of the first. It consists of a young, frisky joey darting in and out of the legs of a number of adult kangaroos. Just like the dingo in an earlier act, the joey is caught, but he is not killed. Rather, he and the rest of the party - ten in number (Spencer and Gillen 1927:192, figure 59) - throw themselves upon the novice in order that he be suitably im-
pressed with the scene.

The equivalence of the joey and the novice is explicit. As Faye Bell (1980:7, 9) has noted, the young joey in the ceremony, known as Kolakola, is identical with a figure in the myth about the party which came from Ajaii (cf. Strehlow 1971:322-5). And the general significance of the act, in so far as the novice is identified with the whole of the group who smother him, seems to be that the youth has joined the men - what Meggitt calls, in the Walbiri case, the 'patri-lodge'. But how does this relate to the theme of the lamed kangaroo man?

As I have shown more than once, Central Australian myths commonly make reference to lameness. In one such myth recounted by Meggitt (1966:106-13) an initiation ceremony is marked by the appearance of a nameless, lame man [who] limps up to the lad carrying the heavy cross [waninga] so that it rests on his foot. He hands the cross to the boy but snatches it away again, for he thinks it is too dangerous for the boy to touch. The other men remonstrate with him and point out that, as the lad is now initiated, he may now risk such contact. After a time the lame man agrees. He presses the cross against the boy's chest and explains its significance, warning him to remain silent about all he has seen that night.

This myth (which incidentally relates to the Milky Way stories analysed by Roheim and mentioned in Chapter Four), is also clearly connected with events in Aranda rites, such as the embracing of the spear. It also appears to be associated with the idea of Tuanjiraka, the spirit whom the women and children supposedly believe to be responsible for making boys into men. Among the Kaititja, Tuanjiraka (who will be more fully discussed in Chapter Ten) is supposed to hobble along carrying one leg over his
shoulder. Both women and children believe that in some way Tuanjiraka kills the youth and later on brings him to life again during the period of initiation (Spencer and Gillen 1904:343).

Clearly, then, the old lame man is the kangaroo who is 'in control'. Not only does he kill the youths and bring them back to life (in his transformation as Tuanjiraka), he also possesses the powerful sacred waninga embodying the power of the 'patrilodge spirit'. And the control is directly linked to his infirmity: he bears the cross on his foot. Embracing this cross, according to Meggitt (1962:305) is to embrace the 'patrilodge spirit'.

The old, lame kangaroo man is almost certainly a representation of a battle scarred senior male at the end of his days, for here the novice appears to witness the equivalent of the takeover in the primal horde. As Spencer and Gillen (1927:192) say in their fuller description of this act, while the old, lame kangaroo man hobbled around, all the other animals

bunched up together at the western end of the ground, and then suddenly, rising with a loud shout of 'Pau, pau, pau,' ran away to a small gully out of sight of the wurtja ...

Each man carried on his head, and also between his teeth, a small mass of wooden shavings saturated with blood.

The pau cry is the same as that shouted by the women when the youth is being tossed and beaten at alkiraka iwuma and I suspect that it signifies aggression. Certainly, the blood-soaked wood shavings do, since they were earlier used in the ceremony to indicate wounds made to the dingo.

If the mob of ten kangaroos represents a victorious band of brothers, and the lame kangaroo the deposed father, then the young joey called Kolakola is the novice in his new
status. But before the youth can fully identify with this three-generational situation, he first has to ‘ape’ (or ‘kangaroo’) around between the legs of the ‘brothers’.

The young kangaroo ... began frisking about and pretending to rush at the other performers, and, finally, darted between the legs of each man and emerged at the western end of the column, where he lay down for a few minutes. After he had gone through the performance four times, he was caught as he came through the legs of the man nearest to the wurtja ... After the usual explanations and cautions the wurtja was led back to his brake (Spencer and Gillen 1927:193).

It is a pity that Spencer and Gillen remained ignorant of ‘the usual explanations’, though the ‘cautions’ would undoubtedly have related to keeping the scene a closely guarded men’s secret. One may, however, hazard a guess about the relationship between the secret and the explanation.

Crawling out of the legs of the men, which according to Western Aranda and some Western Desert people is a mimicking of actual kangaroo behaviour (Carl Strehlow 1911:2), almost certainly symbolises male birth, an interpretation which is in line with that of Hiatt (1971:86) concerning a very similar ritual complex described by Stanner (1963:9) for the Murinbata. Roheim (1950:83) also seems to favour this interpretation for Central Australia. However, I doubt whether this is a straightforward mimicking of women’s giving birth, since, in the Aranda case at least, the men are adopting the very same position as those original kangaroos who dashed the dingo to the ground in a parody of sexual intercourse. I suggest, then, that ‘male birth’ is symbolic ejaculation; that in the course of ceasing to be a (female) dog and becoming a (male) kangaroo, the novice learns that it takes two parents to make a child, and that the father’s claim to
parentage is every bit as sound as the mother's. But it is important to note that this parentage is not simply physical: I would contend that when men 'give birth' to novices at initiation, they are also rendering to them their **spiritual strength**. Moreover, I would also argue that this strength derives from: 1) the separation of the youth's spirituality from that of his mother (= the death of the dingo); 2) the transfer of that spirituality over to the father's (= identification with male kangaroos); and finally, 3) the release of the spirit through separation from the father's (= 'birth' from male kangaroos).

There is, however, a major disjunction in this sequence: although the novice identifies with the old senior kangaroo at the second stage, it is from the group of ten younger animals that he is born; that is, from the 'band of brothers' rather than the original father figure. There is a very good reason for this and one might have been able to predict it from the analysis made in Chapter Six of the myth of Karora. It will be remembered that Karora and Tjenterama were related to each other as aged ancestor is to spirit child, and that the latter's coming into being was contingent on Karora being lamed. It was this event, taking place in the context of hunting, which formed the 'cross' in my model of the myth as a mandala. Spirit children and aged ancestors are thus identified with each other, and their identity is contingent on the intervention of the intermediate generation acting as hunters. It so happens that another act witnessed by the youth at circumcision dramatises a very similar scene.

In this act several older men appear wearing atnuta,
tjurunga carried on the head and said to represent dead game. Spencer and Gillen (1927:194) say that this is the re-enactment of a mythical event.

In connection with this myth it is of interest to note that at the present day when a kangaroo or wallaby is killed the limbs are always dislocated at the joints, which makes them hang more limply and so renders them more easy to carry. In this condition the body is spoken of as atnuta ... After the performance the atnuta were taken off the heads and handed round, while each man, squatting on the ground, kept the object pressed round his stomach for a few minutes, the wurtja doing this also.

Two major points are significant. First, the older men and the novice are identified with each other by their 'guts', just as were the two bandicoot actors in the rite performed at Ilbalintja. This, I would argue, is the identity of alternate generations equivalent to that between Tjenterama (as spirit child) and Karora (as aged ancestor). Secondly, and most importantly, the identification takes place through the game that has had its legs dislocated - atnuta. Thus, again using the myth of Karora as a model, the atnuta would be the equivalent of that game hunted by the band of brothers, presented to Karora, and eventually taken in his stomach back into the earth. And like Karora, these old kangaroo actors are identified with the game in so far as it is lamed, just as Tjenterama was when the band of brothers mistook him for a bandicoot.

The key revelation here seems to be that the youngest generation receives its strength from the eldest: the identity of alternate generations is based on the rendering of atnuta deep into the stomach (or 'heart') of the initiate. The ceremonial act is undoubtedly connected to the generational takeover by the intermediate 'band of brothers', just
as it was in the myth of Karora. In the last chapter I stated that the identity of alternate generations is based on the castration complex: as the sons take the place of the father (symbolically render him lame), they also come to take possession of women (unconsciously apprehended as mothers) to whom they can offer the phallus in a full sexual relationship. But sexual desire is itself castration, something which is apparently parodied so well in those women's rites described by White. So dispensing of the father is nothing more than taking his place as somebody to be castrated. This is why the joey is 'born' from the legs of the younger kangaroos, yet gains his 'strength' or 'appetite' from the older ones. Male 'birth' is dramatised as ejaculation because the generation below the 'band of brothers' owes its existence to the overthrow of the generation above.

Thus it is clear why 'old man kangaroo' is so sanguine about the loss of his tail - his third leg. It is because he is willingly surrendering it to another generation: not so much the generation that will lame him, but the generation below that - and the one below that, and so on in an infinite chain of reproduction. In a profound sense, the phallus never dies, because it is reproduced as the instrument of desire in every generation. It is never held by any one generation, because as soon as it is taken, it is given away. In effect, it is generation itself.

This, I believe, is the general import of the whole sequence of kangaroo and other acts performed at circumcision. For what the novice appears to witness is a generational takeover of which he is the result; that is, he is being forced to acknowledge his own 'pre-history' - the cir-
cumstances which led to his conception. This is shown very clearly at the last ceremonial drama.

In the very final act the novice is shown a double waninga which represents father and son.

Two men, as usual, carried the waninga, the front one supporting it on his back while the other man helped to keep it upright as they advanced and retreated along the pula path, stopping every now and then to quiver and to bend the waninga over towards the wurtja. [A] man then stood up, and, taking the waninga from the performers, fixed it upright in the path, and the boy was once more told to go up and embrace it. The showing of the waninga to the wurtja is called ... the child sees and knows (Spencer and Gillen 1927:194).

At this point, then, I think there can be no doubt about the nature of the regression or 'turning back' which the novice undergoes. As the painting of the pmoara pattern on his body in any case suggests, he is in the womb, and the pula lines are the walls of the vagina into which the waninga is inserted in an obvious parody of intercourse. Whatever the nature of the revelations concerning spirit children at the time of circumcision, and their relation to physiological paternity, it seems evident that the dipping, quivering waninga is the phallus of the 'patrilodge', and that a paternal relationship is being affirmed by the final act. What 'the child sees and knows' is his father, the source of his being.

Again, the important question of the connection between paternity and spirit conception is raised here, though I cannot at this point fully engage the problem. Suffice it to say for the moment, however, that it seems clear that there are at least two kinds of paternity involved in Aranda ideas about the origins of children; one concerned with lineal transmission, the other with a more 'timeless' Dreaming. As
I will show in the following two chapters, these two ideas are very closely related. But before going on to this complex matter, it is necessary to return to the concluding phase of the circumcision ceremony, when the novice begins to suffer and pay dearly for the secrets which have been placed before his eyes.

2.6 Cut Dead (Phase 3)

The living dream which the novice witnesses when taken from the company of women is provided by a model of the primal horde; a model which, like the one of Freud’s, represents man (as kangaroo) in a state of nature or pre-culture. At the end of his revelations the initiate has been taken to a given point in the total drama of the transition from nature to culture. He has seen the mother put down by the father; the father replace the mother as the locus of power; and the castration involved in the primal scene. He has seen also that this castration is ongoing and that it represents ‘the vital flow as it is transmitted in generation’ (Lacan). Finally, he is faced with the realisation that he is the product of this whole drama.

The whole matter, as Roheim (1938:357) has stated, is an answer to the question: ‘Where do babies come from?’, although I would prefer to render the question as: ‘Where do I come from’.

From the point of view of the Oedipus situation, to know that children are due to intercourse means to know what happens between father and mother, that is, to plead guilty of having witnessed the primal scene.

In the next chapter I will return to the question of how this ‘guilt’ is handled, but in the last part of this
chapter I want show what it entails. For one thing is evident, the actual operation of circumcision is related to the supreme anger of the elders at knowing what the youth has seen. For when they say that 'the child sees and knows', they raise their singing voices to a crescendo, and in loud, fierce tones bellow out a song about cutting the boy, at the same time "striking the ground with their shields" (Spencer and Gillen 1927:194). This is the very posture of an irate kangaroo.

Alarm is ... communicated by thumping the ground with the hind feet. In moments of alarm, the first animal to flee leaps a little higher than usual and, on landing, loudly thumps the ground with the hind feet (Frith and Calaby 1969:69).

When the last main kangaroo act is over, the women return to the ceremonial ground. Everybody dances and the women strip decorations from the men's heads, the novice's being taken by his mother-in-law. The significance of this action is not clear, though it probably indicates a display of affection. For if this is a moment of great tension caused by the anger of the older men, then one might expect a protective stance to be taken by the women - just as they appear to do after the original primal scene when they restore the child's integrity by rejecting the men. This, no doubt, is what is symbolised by the hoisting of the novice onto the shoulders of his mother-in-law, who takes him away and clasps him tightly while the other women dance around invitingly. As Hiatt (1984:192) notes, it is highly significant that this action is performed by the mother-in-law, who appears to be acting as a surrogate mother, with the real mother apparently having 'abandoned' her son.

But there is to be no restoration here. The men, led by
the man in whose lap the novice sat when he received his fire from his mother-in-law at the beginning of the ceremony, charge the women and take control of the boy. When this happens the men sing a fire song.

The singing continued for about half an hour, after which the urantandama man, as well as other men in charge of the novice, ran towards the women, holding shields before their faces. The first-named seized the wurtja, and ... took him back to the pula, where he was told to lie down and his face was covered while the singing of the fire-song continued at intervals all night long. As soon as the wurtja was taken from them the women ran away to the main camp (Spencer and Gillen 1927:196).

The name urantandama appears to be derived partly from the words for fire (ura) and to give (ntama), the idea possibly being that this man will render to the youth his own independent spirit as symbolised by the firestick originally donated by the mother. If this is so, it would make a good deal of sense that the urantandama should lead the charge to repulse the women who threaten to take the youth back into the maternal fold.

After this abortive attempt to 'rescue' the boy by the women, the youth is taken to assist in the construction of the poles which will later be stripped by the women on the pula ground. During the preparation of the poles the men sing the fire song once again (Spencer and Gillen 1927:196), which appears to be connected to the way in which the poles are entwined with scorched saplings. But before these poles are put to use, other actions are performed.

The next event seems to be some kind of display of male solidarity. The boy is decorated with twigs from the emu-bush, placed at the centre of a densely packed group of men, and led (by the urantandama) in an attack to disperse the
women, who are now on the pula dancing ndaperama with shields. To effect the dispersal the men throw bark. Meggitt (1962:287) says that the emu-bush is regarded as "the badge of the novice among the Walbiri" and that it closes the youth's mind to everything except the 'strength' of the sacred songs. It may well be that this 'badge' symbolises the 'band of brothers', since it apparently signifies solidarity by growing in particularly dense clumps (Chinnock 1981:346). At any rate, the novice is certainly at the centre of a tightly grouped mass of males when he charges the women, and Spencer and Gillen's (1927:197) original description makes it clear that the group is constituted largely by the boy's elder brothers.

It is not clear whether the attack on the women by the 'band of brothers' is aggressive or sexual. Spencer and Gillen give no clues about the composition of the women's group, but the significance of the bark throwing is probably linked to iljabara iwuma, and thereby with the idea of separation. However, it is clear from Meggitt's (1962:306) account of Walbiri circumcision that there is definite hostility between the group of brothers (including the novice) and the senior generation, and given the context of the kangaroo's 'primal horde', one would expect this to be sexually based. I suspect that the position of the urantandama is aligned with this. He appears to be the leader of the up-and-coming generation and he is the one who is guardian of the novice's fire. I would suggest this is because he is a model for the novice; the one who gives him courage to leave his mother's protection and make his first tentative sexual adventure. But this adventure is a challenge to the senior
generation: hence the reaction of anger from the senior males. I will return to this idea in relation to the use of the poles just prior to the actual circumcision operation.

Before the poles are brought to the pula ground the boy is painted with a totemic design. Spencer and Gillen (1927: 198) say that this relates to his mother’s mother’s country. According to Carl Strehlow’s (1913:24) Western Aranda account, the boy is still painted with the pmoara design at this stage. But both agree that later on in the proceedings, when it is time for the design to be rubbed off the boy’s back, the erasing is done by mother’s mothers (Carl Strehlow 1913:24, Spencer and Gillen 1927:201). It would seem, then, that the obliteration of the totemic design has something important to do with the maternal side of the family. Exactly what is indicated by the drama of the stripping of the poles.

The poles decorated with scorched saplings are known as aratjita. They are constructed just prior to the concerted attack on the women and apparently by the same group who mounted that attack (that is, the urantandama and the youth’s elder brothers). These men bring them to the pula, fix them in a double line in the ground and later dance with them attached to their legs. In the meantime, the novice hops into view as a kangaroo and lies on top of the already prone urantandama face-to-face. When the urantandama later frees himself from the youth, women come to the pula and strip the charred poles of their leaves. The poles are then piled on top of the novice. It is at the time that the urantandama frees himself from the boy that the latter’s mother’s mothers rush forward to erase the painted design on
his back.

The *aratjita* poles appear to represent the sexuality of the youth's age-mates, an interpretation enhanced by their close association with fire. Meggitt (1962:302) maintains that in Walbiri circumcision ceremonies the dancers with the poles are always represented first by the most recently initiated man. Then, when all the men have danced, they gather together and are massed on the clearing, their poles swaying wildly against the evening sky. They make concerted charges at the frightened novice, who sits with his guardians in front of the audience.

Later on, after the novice has had the sacred *maninga* revealed to him,

"[t]he elder brothers shout at the boy, threatening him with death if he reveals his newly-acquired knowledge to outsiders. To emphasize the point they set fire to the... poles and pretend to spear him with them. Other men dance and wave the burning poles back and forth (Meggitt 1962:303).

The Aranda rite is rather different from that of the Walbiri, but I think that Meggitt's ethnography helps to interpret the Aranda material. The poles are somehow threatening to the novice. The concerted display of phallicism by the young men causes the boy to be frightened. Moreover, this fear is associated closely with fire, which I earlier showed to signify passion. In the Aranda ceremony the *aratjita* poles are also associated with fire. The novice sees them displayed at the time when he has to rejoin the *urant-andama* in close embrace and then separate from him and be left completely alone. This, I would say, means that the novice is being left to face his own sexuality. That sexuality, originally signified by the firestick, was taken from his mother and mother-in-law and transferred to the *urant-"
andama at the beginning of the rite - a kind of pseudo-homo-
sexuality acted out most fully at the time that the uranta-
dama and the novice lie on the ground face-to-face. But now
the novice has to transfer his passions once again. He has
to leave the company of the urantandama, which is simul-
taneously the time when he must have the pmoara or mother's
mother's design erased from his back, and he must witness
the stripping of the aratjita poles. In what way can this be
construed as threatening?

The fact that the aratjita poles are arranged in pairs
is unlikely to be accidental and since these poles are
wielded by recently initiated men, it seems reasonable to
assume that those men have been subincised. I will come to
the question of subincision in Chapter Ten, but I have al-
ready shown (in Chapters Five and Eight) how subincision is
linked with the idea of double phallicism as the outcome of
the acceptance of symbolic castration. I would say, then,
that the poles are symbolic of the young men's sexual pro-
ress - prowess that is derived from having accepted castra-
tion as the solution to the contradictions of the oedipus
complex. And the youth at circumcision is about to proceed
down the same path, which, through the intervention of the
father, is away from the mother and towards the search for
substitutes for her.

Given this route and destination, I would suggest that
the rubbing out of the painting on the novice's back, occur-
ring at the time when he sees the aratjita poles stripped,
makes sense in terms of the novice both turning his back
on, and leaving behind, the influence of his mother (and
through her, his mother's mother). In the place of what he
loses, he is about to substitute a wife; that is, he will gain the phallus from his father and offer it in a full sexual relationship. But before this offer can proceed, he must know the value of castration. This is why the aratjita poles are so closely connected with fire, which signifies the passions, both male and female. Thus, when the women come on to the ceremonial ground and strip the charred double-poles of their leaves, one cannot help but be reminded of the way in which one of Roheim's (1932:55) informants described sexual intercourse: "each time a man cohabits, the penis dies because the vagina is so hot." Putting the matter most straightforwardly, then, when the novice identifies with the aratjita poles he is witnessing the desire of young men and perhaps the birth of his own.

But as Lacan states, 'desire is a metonymy' and it involves nothing less than the elision of the mother through the 'barring' intervention of the father (see Chapter Seven). And so, after the final act is over and the novice has witnessed in mock form the full-blown sexuality for which he is being groomed, the tension rises. The old men sing of the aratjita poles glowing sun-red in the darkness (Spencer and Gillen 1927:201); the bull-roarers rise to a crescendo; the women flee as if in terror; the men switch to singing in deep and fierce voices:

Behold the rage (of the circumcisor)!
Cut through (the youth who is raised) to the sky!

With rolling eyes, as if mad with rage, the operator grips the stone knife..., lays hold of the prepuce and performs the circumcising operation, while the men put much energy into the song:
[The prepuce is cut, with a stone knife it is cut] (Carl Strehlow 1913:24, cf. T. G. H. Strehlow's initiation song reproduced below).

In *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, Roheim (1969:Chapter III) argued forcefully that the foreskin that is cut from the novice at initiation is symbolic of the mother. I maintain that the Aranda ethnography bears out this theory (which Roheim applies Australia-wide [cf. Munn 1969:192, 203]) and in a way which aligns it with Lacan's idea about the instatement of desire as a metonymy. In the first place, as soon as the youth is circumcised, he is compensated for his loss by a tjurunga. This is a bull-roarer or tnangkara which is believed to embody his mother's conception totem. Its function is to make the wound heal quickly and is evidently a substitute for what he has lost until such time that he realises that he can do without it.

Secondly, although Carl Strehlow (1913:25) says that the foreskin is simply buried in a secret place, other Aranda groups give it to a younger brother to make him grow strong (as happens also among the Walbiri [Peterson pers. comm.]). Alternatively, a sister may wear it dried around her neck. In addition, blood from the wound is said to enhance the strength and growth of sisters, particularly their breasts. The foreskin thus invariably goes to people who are still in the mother's care in order to enhance her nurturing role. Thus, if it is true that desire is set in train by the elision of the mother, then circumcision represents this by a profound metaphor. Where there was once the dual unity of mother and son, and concomitantly the boy's foreskin and his penis, now there is a cleavage in each of these. Foreskin, umbilical cord, *iljabara* bark, *urantandama*, and *tnangkara* -
these all now appear as transitional phenomena used to effect both a bridge to, and a break with, the mother.

Both ruptures are realised through the wilful violence of the father - or more accurately the father-in-law. As Hiatt (1984:192) has argued, Aranda initiation first effects a shift in libidinal attachment from mother to mother-in-law, so placing the father-in-law in the role of castrator. It is, in fact, the father-in-law and the mother-in-law's brother who ideally act in co-operation when circumcising the youth (Spencer and Gillen 1927:188-9). So if the father-in-law is a castrator, then it is equally true that the mother-in-law is sexually forbidden. As in all Aboriginal societies, among the Aranda the mother-in-law is strictly avoided by the son-in-law except under ritual licence (Spencer and Gillen 1927:295, 475-6). It is of particular interest in this regard that the secret speech that the novice begins to learn after circumcision, and in which he refers to himself by the same term applied to dogs, conflates the normal terms for woman, wife and mother into a single word - *eroatitja.*

By way of conclusion it should be stressed that circumcision is only part of a longer initiatory procedure. Its singular effect is to bring down the wrath of the (symbolic) father in order to separate the son from the mother, and this is really only a basis for further ritual work. I will look closely at subsequent rites in Chapter Ten, but I will end this chapter by saying something about the *lakabara* ancestors, the black falcon men who are credited with the introduction of the stone knife into circumcision ceremonies. It is these men whose exploits are sung about in
fierce tones by the old men at circumcision, and a brief examination of the mythology associated with them brings into stark relief the sheer cruelty and even grizzly 'joy' (Strehlow 1971:399) which lies behind the violence of initiation.

There are several versions of black falcon/circumcision stories available (Spencer and Gillen 1927:312-9, Carl Strehlow 1908:36-7), the most revealing of which is furnished by T. G. H. Strehlow (1971:398-9).

At Mount Urtera [in Northern Aranda country] the lakabara men flew up into the air and the ilji- iljinga hawks [grey falcons] and ulbmurunta hawks [unidentified species](10) likewise flew up into the air. They continued travelling up in the air. A single male dog kept on travelling below on the ground; he continually disturbed quails, - birds that live in the grass; and above him the lakabara hawks whistled like men. Whenever a frightened quail flew up, the lakabara men up above would seize it and break off its head. They would pluck its feathers up in the air and devour it in mid-air, and they would toss down only its head to the dog (below).

When they were still up in the air, they heard a shield sounding while the women were doing their ndaperama dance east of Tailitnama and west of Erkwakera [still in Northern Aranda country]. Having heard the women dancing, they flew down to the ground. They painted pipeclay stripes down their foreheads in anticipation of a pula, in great anger. They were utterly furious in their anger. They painted their stone knives with blood (drawn from their arms) and with charcoal. Then they went forward on foot upon the ground. They went westward, full of fury ...

A woman came running towards them surrounded with smoke. In their home at Tailitnama there were many deformed women; and these were in the habit of coming (to pula grounds) in order to turn boys into men by means of (burning) bark. This woman they killed. They killed her outright. They cut her into pieces with their stone knives without any more ado. On top of a hill they killed her, because she had come covered in smoke in order to burn (boys) with fire, with her (burning) bark.

Having killed this woman, they went on in fury. They descended upon the plain. They next drew
themselves up where the little hill is now standing, filled with fury, stretching their hands towards the east. They drew themselves up as a very large party of men. And there they remained standing. And now the wallaby ancestors [of Tailitnana] themselves came forward; they bought along their boys of their own accord and offered them up. (The strangers) made one into a man. Then the others lifted up a second (boy), carried him forward, and offered him up; and they cut the fore-skin and let him go ... And so on.

The song of the black falcons is literally roared by the men at circumcision ceremonies and Strehlow (1971:399) states that the singers' anger is a direct parallel to the grizzly enjoyment which the falcons took in driving off and killing women and circumcising young boys. This is how Strehlow (1971:400-2) translates the song.

'We from Alkirapuntja [in the Eastern MacDonnell] are soaring up to the sky; We from Alkirapuntja have shimmering plumage.'

The devourers of quails Decapitate their prey as they fly.

The devourers of quails Hold their prey in the claws as they fly.

From the vault of the sky Feathers alone come floating down.

The ljiangiljinga hawks with flashing eyes Are glaring down with fixed stare.

'We ulbumurunta hawks Are swooping down, fathers and sons.'

With blackened chests [of charcoal] they are swooping down; With lowered heads they are swooping down.

The shield is sounding loudly In the centre of the pula ground.

The ulbumurunta hawk men Are furiously sucking their beards [in anger].

In the centre of the pula ground They are furiously sucking their beards.

'Our stone knives are painted with many stripes; Our stone knives are decorated with fresh bands [of blood and charcoal].'
'Ringneck parrot's tail [knife]? Sever it!
The skin-covered penis! Sever it!'

'The flayed stump! Let it gleam white!
The flayed stump! Let it be stripped of its skin!'

'At the very neck! Cut it through!
In furious anger! Cut it through!'

'Up in the sky! Sever it completely!
Filled with angry glee! Cut it through!'

'Up in the sky! Sever it completely!
At the very neck! Cut it through!'

The ringneck parrot's tail severs it;
It severs the skin-covered penis.

The flayed stump stripped of its skin,
- The flayed stump is gleaming white.

His hands are dripping with blood, they are
- dripping with blood;
His knife slashes and slices.

The stone knife has slipped on the ground;
He looks down [upon it] with unflinching eyes.

The mythology of the black falcons conforms to the
model which I have given of the ceremonies. Viewed mythi-
cally with totemic operators, circumcision appears as a
contrast between great and powerful hunting birds which soar
high in the sky (the elder men) and tiny, frail, timid
quails (the initiates) which live on the ground. For the
black falcon and the quail are very intimately connected in
nature as well as myth.

Small birds cower and scatter] when they hear the
harsh scream of an attacking black falcon. This
falcon is a deadly hunter, and will repeatedly
strike flying birds - even large ones like galahs
and ducks - until they drop to the ground. It will
even fly at bushes to flush its victims from
cover. It prefers to attack young rabbits on the
run, swooping from a height and carrying its prey
to a nearby tree to eat. Quails and starlings are
common items in its diet.

...

Black falcons are found mostly in ... the interior
of Australia. They are apparently nomadic and
occasionally appear in southern coastal areas of higher rainfall. Some of their movements seem to be associated with the nomadic movements of quails, particularly the button quails *Turnix* species (Frith 1976:133).

In Central Australia the most common quail is the little button quail, which is not only nomadic but "also one of the smallest and least conspicuous in colouring". It is known for its curious quivering, rocking movement, presumably responsible for the metaphorical expression, 'quailing', to express trembling fear (Frith 1976:148). All quails are inconspicuous. They are reluctant fliers and rarely seen unless flushed by some hunter such as the black falcon or the dingo (Frith 1976:141-143, 146-9).{11}

Within this mythical matrix, circumcision appears as the equivalent of decapitation, a theme I will return to in the next chapter. It is aided and abetted by the dingo, almost certainly an allusion to the proper co-operation of women in the rites. The fact that the heads of the quails are thrown back down to the dingo once again provides confirmation of Roheim's thesis on circumcision symbolising separation from the mother. And in all of this, the symbolic portrayal of the parental conspiracy in the primal scene, one may say that the 'quailing' novices never stand a chance. Deserted by their once all-powerful, phallus-wielding mothers, they have no option but to submit timidly to the violence of The Law of the Father.
CHAPTER TEN

Laying Down The Law

The command in favour of exogamy, of which the horror of incest is the negative expression, was a product of the will of the father and carried this will on after he had been removed.

Sigmund Freud

Oedipus finally kills Laius, but it is Laius who, at the crossroads, first raised his hand against his son. The patricide thus takes part in a reciprocal exchange of murderous gestures. It is an act of reprisal in a universe based on reprisals.

Rene Girard
10.1 A Singular Death

When a young man has been circumcised he is dead, killed at the hands of the (symbolic) father. Yet it is evident that, in so far as he has been separated from his mother, he has also been born. Circumcision, then, is at one and the same time both birth and death, and it is from this vital stage of being 'dropped' that an independent spirit will emerge. This emergence is the subject of this chapter.

From the previous two chapters we are familiar with the theme of the third or single leg. According to Carl Strehlow (1907:102), Tuanjiraka, the man who women and children believe makes the fearsome hum of the bull-roarer and circumcises young men, is one-legged. There were once many of these men living at Rubuntja, on the borders of Western and Northern Aranda countries. Their name, Tuanjiraka, means 'Short Feet', because their toes were all grown together.

These men cut off their right leg ..., so that in their travels they went on one leg, while they carried the other leg over their shoulder. In camp they put their leg onto their body again, when, of course, they were able to walk on two legs ...

When a youth has to undergo circumcision and sub-incision he is taken to Tuanjiraka. He says to the youth: 'Look at the stars up there'. If he blinks Tuanjiraka knocks off his head with the tail of [a] giant lizard ... At noon the following day, when the body of the youth has become putrid, and is full of maggots, Tuanjiraka puts the head back on and the youth returns to life. Then Tuanjiraka smashes him on the forehead ... with [a shield made from the skin of the echidna], and the youth wanders around dazed ...

Tuanjiraka has a wife, named Melbata, and many children, named Tjangkara (tjangkara is also the name of the large bull-roarer). After the rukuta have undergone the operations they are presented with this bull-roarer, with the words: 'This tjuronga should be called Tuanjiraka'.

The tjangkara and the tuanjiraka bull-roarers are thus
identical, and their function as comforter to a recently circumcised boy is related to Tuanjiraka's single-legged-ness. For if tjangkara and tuanjiraka are the same, the former is also the name of the latter's sons, as well as the bearer of the mother's conception totem. It seems, then, that there is a conflation of identity between mother, father and son, with the theme of the 'single leg' being tied to the link between the latter two. In a Western Desert version of the Tuanjiraka story collected by Roheim (1974b:136), it is the spirit's removable leg, rather than the initiated boy, that is stinking and full of maggots. However, what is especially interesting about Carl Strehlow's account is the way in which the Tuanjiraka men use only one leg when away from camp, but two when they return. There is an important clue here about what happens to a boy after he has been circumcised.

Tuanjiraka (which according to an etymology different from that given to Carl Strehlow means 'has become like a man' [Roheim 1974b:137]) is the specific conflation of mother, father and son because the youth who is circumcised has just realised himself in the primordial confusion of the primal scene: he is that 'third leg' existing between mother and father. Tuanjiraka, just like a boy who learns secret speech, does everything in confusion. He has dogs, but they are possums and native cats. When he is far from somewhere, it does not take him long to get there. Conversely, when he is near to a place, it takes him a long time to travel to it. He only makes fires when everything is wet; he cannot be penetrated with a spear, but spiny grass stems will kill him; he eats porridge made of faeces and consumes only those
fruits that are poisonous (Roheim 1974b:138). In short, Tuanjiraka is a zero signifier, conflating and confounding all differences in his phallic existence.

Roheim (1974b:137) thinks it significant that the tuanjiraka/tnangkara bull-roarer is not a double tjurunga, like, for example, the mbiljikara which was discussed in Chapter Five. The one-legged character of Tuanjiraka certainly seems to imply that singularity is essential to Tuanjiraka's constitution, and later in this chapter I will show the connection of this with the dual character of the mbiljikara. For the moment, however, it is enough to have noted the theme of unity, because it has immediate implications for understanding the status of a newly circumcised youth.

Tuanjiraka is described as having no separated toes, and in this he is closely associated with the inapatua discussed in Chapter Six. Roheim (1974b:139) was told that the tuanjiraka is the same as the [echidna]. In primeval times, the porcupine ancestor initiated the boys, not as this is now done, but by cutting off the whole penis. Within the [echidna] dwelt a soul which should have turned itself into a tuanjiraka. But when it wanted to come out, ... people killed it by covering it with their spears. The spears are still visible in the spikes of the [echidna] (Roheim 1974b:139, cf. Spencer and Gillen 1927:316-7, Carl Strehlow 1907:66-7).

As I pointed out in Chapter Six, the echidna, in its infantile state, is an image of the inapatua - incomplete men who had to be cut and shaped by ancestral beings in order to become properly human. Part of the inapatua's definition (or lack thereof) was their balled hands and feet, the latter condition also applying to Tuanjiraka. Yet according to what Roheim was told, the echidna is not only 'he-that-has-yet-to-be-cut'; he is also 'he-that-cuts-excessively'.

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As it happens, this is not quite the contradiction it may appear. The adult echidna, apart from completely lacking a scrotum, due to the internal situation of its testes (Griffiths 1968:131), has a penis on which

[ t ]he glans is grooved giving the impression of being bifid and each portion bears a pair of bulbous processes each of which bears a rosette of epidermal rays so that the whole glans gives the appearance of bearing four flower-like prominences. The seminal urethra divides into two, each division subdivides and passes to the exterior through the centre of each foliated papilla (Griffiths 1968:131-2, see Illustration 17).

Illustration 17. The Penis of the Echidna

(from Gerhardt 1933:316)

Thus, if the juvenile echidna is the image of (intra-uterine) unity, the adult echidna is precisely the opposite. Not content with simply being subincised, it is, conspicuously unlike the dingo and the kangaroo, completely 'without balls' and has had the subincision operation performed to excess — all of which is perfectly captured by the mythical situation described below by Spencer and Gillen (1927:316).

[A]n old man of the [echidna] totem rushed on the the pulga ground and said, 'I must cut this man with my [knife]', and drawing a knife from a socket in his skull just behind his ear, grasped the man's penis and scrotum, and with one savage stroke of his knife cut them off, and the man fell down dead.

The symbolic value of the echidna's genitals stems from the fact that a rukuta is about to be subincised, for which the natural models are the penis of the native cat and kan-
garoo. The echidna's 'subincision' indicates carelessness on the part of the ritual operator, who in actual rites has to be extremely careful not to cause any real damage to the penis. As Meggitt (1962:304) states, in Walbiri circumcision a boy's agnates watch very closely to see that he is not badly damaged by the ritual operation. Were he to be so, then the operator would be killed. "It is small wonder", states Meggitt, "that some men are literally grey with anxiety when they perform their first operation".

This is all part of the anger and fury of the lakabara men, which, while a necessary part of ritual proceedings, must not be overdone. The echidna is guilty of excessive symbolic castration, which, by bringing an end to human reproduction, stops The Law being carried. Put simply, full castration is The Law carried too far. As it happens, only very old men past their reproductive age are allowed to eat echidna (Roheim 1974a:43), an important matter to which I will return.

Why, then, is Tuanjiraka identified with the echidna if the latter signifies an excessive castration wish on the part of the senior generation? Roheim's work provides the framework for an answer.

One day Jiramba behaved as if he had something particularly important to say. 'Tuanjiraka is the soul (guruna) of man, it is what is inside him.' The old man was fond of theological nuances. Anyone else would have said: 'Tuanjiraka is a guruna, that is, a soul, a spirit, a mythological being'. But the old man said that... the bogey used to frighten the women and children [Tuanjiraka] is really latent in everybody. He is the Psyche, or at least a fundamental part of the psychic structure (Roheim 1974b:140).

Of course, Jiramba did not quite say what Roheim puts into his mouth, but he did say something similar. And as far as
Roheim is concerned, this means that the origin of the soul is also the origin of the morality.

We have already seen that the tuanjiraka is the novice himself. But the position is not quite so simple. For the tuanjiraka is also the tjurunga that is handed to the youth after his initiation and is both his second ego and a representative of the ancestors, that is, of the fathers. Thus the rite is a dramatization of the super-ego development, and the tjurunga is a materialization of the super-ego. All the lies told to the women can now be taken seriously. The boys' heads are cut off, and the traces of this operation can be seen in the Adam's apple [which the men tell the women and children is the mark where Tuanjiraka cut off the initiate's head and placed it back on]. But the old men explain that 'head' means para kaputa (head of the penis, glans penis). Thus the decapitation is a circumcision described in a manner appropriate to uninitiated people. The old men do not observe that what they really describe is a castration rather than a circumcision; for the tuanjiraka is the [echidna] who initiated the youths in primeval times by cutting off their penises [sic].

Thus what is inside, the guruna, the soul, is the castration complex, the anxiety associated with the sexual act. One of the objects of the initiation is to abreact this anxiety, and in the story of the Tuanjiraka the youths have their heads put on again after they have been cut off (Roheim 1974b:141).

I think this more or less sound conclusion is capable of being considerably refined if we take it back to the symbolism of the primal scene.

The echidna symbolises both the elders and castration, and Roheim must be correct to see in its transformation, Tuanjiraka, a link with the primal scene, for this is what the initiate has just witnessed at circumcision. He has paid dearly for his 'crime' and a 'bar' has been inserted to prevent reunion with the mother. This 'bar', being transitional and transcontextual, confuses everything, and the Tuanjiraka who does everything the wrong way round is evidently the same person as the circumcised youth who
speaks a nonsense language. The former, as Roheim's informant stated, is in the latter and speaks from that location.

In so far as the tuanjiraka spirit (guruna) is an inheritance received from the old men (echidnas), the super-ego must be coming into effect. On the other hand, if the tjurunga is a 'materialization of the super-ego', it is evident that the super-ego is something which should not materialize. Women and children must not see this object or learn of its secrets. For what is being instilled into the novice is shame (a very important point to which I will return in detail in Chapter Twelve). Children have no shame, but through initiation they acquire it: and they do so by confronting the situation which they must at all costs avoid - the primal scene. The great paradox of this lies in the fact of death: the phallus kills and death is an intrinsic part of the spirit that is in the novice.

Yet death will strengthen a youth and help turn him into a man, a fact which is linked to the development of his spirit and super-ego. Although The Law of the Father has been affirmed at circumcision, it appears only as a material, external force and not as a matter of conscience, duty or morality. On the other hand, through repression the phallus may be effaced and made unconscious, remaining in the psyche as an active force. This symbolic castration, as I have shown on a number of occasions, is often signified in Central Australia through phallic doubling. It is here, I think, where one comes to realise the significance of Tuanjiraka walking on two legs whenever he comes back to camp. What I now propose to explore is the transformation of this perambulatory theme into the double phallicism of the
native cats, originators of subincision. For after circumcision a novice begins to double back, showing that between the singular way of the young echidna and the excessive 'four way street' of the adult lies a moderate path.

10.2 Splitting the Difference

Circumcision is the most important ritual operation that adolescents go through, but it is by no means their last. When a rukuta is living in the bush he is periodically visited by older men who harshly bite his scalp and chin. The aim of this rite is to make the hair and beard grow strongly, a sign of maturity (Spencer and Gillen 1927:206, Carl Strehlow 1913:33). Needless to say, the operation is extremely painful. It appears to be performed with all the fierceness associated with the black falcons, the blood-letting sometimes even being done with a sharp stick (Strehlow 1968:99). Another form of mutilation which occurs in some Aranda areas is tooth avulsion (Spencer and Gillen 1927:477-9), which happens to both sexes some time prior to marriage. When the tooth is extracted it is thrown as far as possible in the direction of the mother's conception site. However, the main subsidiary rite is subincision - the splitting open of the urethra which occurs among all Arandic groups, usually about six weeks after circumcision, when the original wound has healed.

The main accounts of Aranda subincision are given by Carl Strehlow (1913:33-8) and Spencer and Gillen (1927:207-14).

Subincision is regarded as an important operation, but the associated ritual is less complex than that connected with circumcision. As with the lat-
ter operation, subincision is performed on a *pula* ground. It always begins in earnest with the celebration of the native cat ancestors, though other ceremonial acts may also be performed.

Among the Western Aranda the *rukuta* is taken to the *pula* where he first participates in a brief act. About ten painted young men enter the firelit ground, place themselves in a row and, stooping forwards and holding spears with both hands behind their necks, make the characteristic hissing noise of young native cats at play. At the same time they make their legs tremble. While the old men sing another group, including the *rukuta*, joins in the dance, shouting loudly as they run onto the ground. Finally, a man steps forward, lays a spear on the necks of the first dancers and returns to the company of the elders.

Carl Strehlow says that all subsequent acts are also to do with native cats. In the first a decorated man positions himself with one hand behind his back and calls loudly while moving the other hand on and off his mouth. This calling is known as *raiangkintja*. At the same time that he calls, he puts his torso into a quivering movement. An elder man then embraces the actor, and then, in the presence of the younger men, including the *rukuta*, all the bird’s down on the performer’s body is stripped off.

In the next act a *tnatantja* pole is erected. It is said to represent the spears of the native cat man Malbungka. A man has his back against the pole and moves it to and fro while the old men sing about its movement. Then the *rukuta’s* father is decorated in imitation of the pole.

The *rukuta* and the other young men are now called with the *raiangkintja*. They race to the ground, shouting loudly. The *rukuta’s* father now takes the pole on his back and holds it upright, while the young men run around it continuing with their calls. After this the *rukuta* embraces his father, and the latter then places the *tnatantja* pole against his son’s stomach in order to give him strength to suffer his coming ordeal. Other relatives say to the young man: ‘Do not be afraid. Be quiet and today you will become a man.’

Spencer and Gillen’s description differs from Carl Strehlow’s to the extent that it states that the ceremonial acts are not exclusively native cat. However, these other acts have a similar form and always involve the use of a *tnatantja*. The one described in detail involves a bandicoot actor taking the pole on his back and moving it backwards and forwards in front of another actor playing the part of a woman. The man is suppose to be
trying the 'catch' the woman. Then the rukuta, together with some other men, begin to dance around the pole, which is dipped over towards them while they try to grasp it. After some time the actor playing the part of the woman turns his back to the pole, this being the signal for all dancing to cease. The novice then embraces the pole.

A human table is now made. The rukuta is stretched across it and his penis is sliced so as to expose the urethra. He sits in a shield into which his blood is allowed to drip, later to be emptied into a fire. The old men sing about how sad they are that this operation has to be done. A number of (mainly food) taboos, including one on echidna meat, are made explicit to the boy, and he is told that he must lie down until his wound is healed, for fear of his penis growing crooked. He is given a 'shame decoration' (pubic tassel) and may now be referred to as atua kurka - a little man.

When the youth is first taken for his subincision, a number of women, including his mothers-in-law and sisters, have cicatrices cut on their bodies by his mother. This appears to be related to the fact that it is normally the youth's father-in-law who ritually operates on him. Often at the end of a subincision operation, already initiated men may stand up and call to their fathers-in-law to deepen their own subincision wounds. It is not clear how many times this may happen in a man's life, but the ideal is to have the urethra cut open right down to its base ('to the anus', as the Aranda sometimes say).

When the youth has recovered from his operation while living in the bush, his father and brothers appoint a man to strip him of his decorations. While this is happening the men sing a song which promotes the growing of the beard. Sometimes the young man's face is pricked with fingernails and pointed bones for the same reason. The man who removes the decoration has to be paid by the youth with a gift of meat - tjauerilja, and until this payment is made the youth may not speak to him.

A group of men now take the youth towards the women's camp, where the women are dancing ndaperama. When some little distance from the women, the men stop, shout and imitate the sound of the bull-roarer. The young man, now completely naked, steps out on his own, bolts towards the women, and then suddenly wheels round and runs off into the bush.

The next morning the atua kurka is dressed up with various kinds of decorations and given a shield and a spear-thrower. Again he moves towards the women's camp in the company of the other men, who are grouped around him. He walks in the centre
accompanied by the man who earlier stripped him of his decorations. This man leads the atua kurka closer towards the women, but only so far—then the youth proceeds alone, with his shield in front of his face. The women continue to dance ndape-rama. As he gets close his sisters emerge, throw wooden trays (pitji) at him and then press their hands on the back of his shoulders, at the same time rubbing their faces into his back. After this short ceremony the boy is allowed for the first time to move in the company of the men who have supervised his initiation, though as yet he has to be quiet in their presence.

The following day the men all take up firesticks and again surround the youth to take him towards the women. He is decorated, and carries a shield, a boomerang, and some twigs of the emu-bush. Suddenly the men throw down their brands and the youth steps forward to throw his boomerang as far as possible in the direction of his mother's conception site. His guardian now takes him forward to the women and he is placed on a fire and smoked, while the women either dance, making the gesture of invitation, or place their hands on his shoulders. After a short stay in the bush, the youth now moves permanently back to camp. But he may not speak to any of his ceremonial officials until he has offered them tjauerilja. In such presentations the receivers of the meat always perform a totemic act for the youth, at the end of which the ban of silence is removed by a sacred object, such as a tnatantja, being pressed against the youth’s lips.

Carl Strehlow’s account of the youth’s return to society is slightly different to the above (which comes from Spencer and Gillen). He says that the smoking ceremony is performed some six weeks after subincision. During it, the youth is known as ‘the one to show himself’. The women collect themselves at A on the subincision ground (see Diagram 19 overleaf) and light the fire. The boy is conducted to B, where the men sit around him hitting his head with a shield. Then two younger men hook their fingers together and run clockwise around the main part of the ground (kuaka). At the same time two other men do the same thing but in the opposite direction. Both pairs eventually come back to their starting point. All the time the women are dancing, and the performance may continue for a whole night. At the break of day the boy is smoked. He returns more or less to normal life, though he may not come to the main camp until he has gone through his first ingkura. He may not marry until his beard has grown.

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Subincision is in many respects an extension of circumcision, but with its clear stress upon re-aggregation to society, it is also very different from the earlier ritual death. Above all else, the tone of subincision is very different from circumcision. Meggitt (1962:307) says that a Walbiri circumcisor is later always "sorry and ashamed at having killed [a] boy", and, in the Aranda case, subincision appears to be a time of reconciliation between the generations. As Strehlow (1971:404) writes in connection with the songs which accompany the two rites:

In marked contrast to the savage Circumcision Song [of the lakabara], the Subincision Song depicts father and sons as living together in a happy family group. [The native cat man] Malbungka himself is described as an old bald-headed man with sores on his nose, who is rebuked by his elder sons in irreverent terms when he greedily demands more than his fair share of the meat obtained by the young iliara [young men who have been subincised]. The subincision verse stresses the fact that he is filled with sorrow when he has to subincise his sons.

As the words of the song describe the predicament:

The great Sire Malbangka is sitting;
Huge of body he is sitting.
The *tnatantja* stands, striped black and white; 
The *kauaua* stands, striped black and white.

That great sire, that man sad at heart,
Slices open the urethra till the penis grows broad (Strehlow 1971:406).

This change of heart on the part of the older generation is what I now propose to explore.

10.3 \textit{Relatively Paternal}

From the information that I adduced in Chapter Five concerning the zoology of the native cat it is already possible to understand why that animal is so closely associated with subincision — its remarkable double-penis obviously being of paramount importance. In Chapter Five I also briefly alluded to the way in which native cat young indulge in vigorous, aggressive play — play which, as Illustration 4 shows, also involves a parent animal. The native cat is an efficient predator with a pugnacious disposition, and the play of the young is clearly related to this (cf. Donald Thomson’s [1985:36] description of the fierce hissing of the northern quoll, a very close relative of the western variety). In the first act witnessed at subincision the young men, including the *rukuta*, all dance around trembling their thighs and hissing like real native ‘kittens’. Evidently, this marks a change in character for the youth, who has just had to submit passively to the fearsome anger of the black falcons and ‘old man kangaroo’.

In this first act a parent figure seems to be involved, since towards the end an elder man comes forward and lays a spear on the necks of the young men. This is their cue to cease playing. One thing which Central Australian Abori-
gines find particularly interesting about the quoll is that both parents help in raising the young (Hale and Laughr
en 1983:1), which is in contrast firstly with dogs, where the father is absent, and secondly with kangaroos, where the father has only a negative role. Native cat fathers are, like their kangaroo counterparts, much larger and heavier (up to fifty per cent) than the females (Strahan 1983:22), something which, if the northern quoll is anything to go by, is related to territoriosity and the defending of harems (Strahan 1983:23). Presumably, then, the laying of the spear on the shoulders of the young ‘kittens’ in the subincision act is a sign of benevolent, patriarchal authority.

At subincision the father who ‘killed’ (at circumci-
sion) becomes the father who not only cares, but also re-
stores life. Having quietened his boisterous sons in the first act, the native cat father gives them life in the second. This is the significance of the raiangkintja call. According to Strehlow (1971:361):

Sometimes a young man has to supply blood in such large quantities [at ceremonies - cf. Chapter Eleven] that he faints, and the only remedy applied is the sounding of the raiangkama [raiang-
kintja] call over him. Since the totemic ancestors are believed to have awakened their sons after ‘birth’ by sounding the raiangkama call [cf. Karora in Chapter Six], it is accepted that this call still has the power to restore men to con-
sciousness (etatilama) and to strengthen (ekalt-
ilama) them.

Thus the novice who was symbolically put to death at circum-
cision is brought round by the raiangkintja, which is, very precisely, a call to life.

When the raiangkintja call is made the actor also places his upright body into a kind of quivering motion, which, as I pointed out in Chapter Five, is called alkngantama - 'to
give eyes'. When the quivering occurs small pieces of down scatter from the actor's decorations, and at the end of the act all the down is stripped from his body. The phallic-cum-seminal significance of this action, which Roheim (1932:67) draws attention to, is rather obvious and appears to be quite consciously apprehended. However, as one might expect, it has a deeper significance too.

As stated earlier, native 'kitten' play is vigorous and aggressive, and this has its effects on the adults. Illustration 4 shows several young clambering over one of their parents, a common family scene among quolls. At the end of the breeding season the parents are often in a very poor condition as a result of their labours. Thomson (1985:36) and Strahan (1983:23), for example, note how northern quoll young are kept in the family domain and suckled until they are five months old, by which time they are very large. Teeth are well-developed by this time and the mother's nipples, already covered in a red secretion at the beginning of the breeding season, are very often cut, torn and even suppurating. The young clamber over the mother's back, often keeping the nipples in their mouths and stretching them half-way round her body. The parents lose a great deal of fur, especially from their backs, as a result of the young tearing at it, sometimes leaving scarred, bald patches of skin. Evidently, then, the native cat is an even more powerful image of reproduction through loss than I indicated in Chapter Five.

Native cat ceremonial acts involve the use of many body decorations, including a string apron or "shame covering" (worabakana), a pouch (eraka) and a tail (para, also
means penis) (Carl Strehlow 1910:26). The most important piece of ritual paraphernalia, however, seems to be the *tnatantja* pole, around which the young men dance at subincision. This pole, whose evident phallicism bearsly requires comment, is identified with the novice's father. The dancing which takes place around it is of a special kind known as *warkuntuma*, analysis of which reveals much else about the creation-through-loss motif.

According to Carl Strehlow (1910:5), *warkuntuma* means 'give (us) more (of it)' and it is a kind of entreaty to the actor to perform his quivering motions well. Roheim (1974b:101) was given the same explanation, and states that the youths surround an actor and encourage him with the words: 'Do it well! Tremble!'. Strehlow (1968:57) says when young men move their arms up and down towards the *tnatantja*, this is described as a "humble entreaty (*ingkama*)". But at the same time, the *warkuntuma* is also full of aggression. Strehlow refers to the calls made by the young men as "fierce" and according to Roheim (1974a:45), the Aranda described the way in which they hunted the wildcat [*quoll* as *warkuntuma*], the word used to describe the way the young men circled around the performers at a totemic ceremony. The hunters ran in ever-decreasing circles around the wildcat. The animal became frightened and sat down, and the hunters continued to circle until they were able to spear the wildcat at close quarters.

There is thus a curious mixture of submission and rebellion, of passivity and aggression, involved in subincision acts which requires investigation.

The native cat father is a patriarch, but the female's parental behaviour, which is evidently related to ritual fatherhood when human blood is likened to milk (as explained
in Chapter Five), suggests that he is willing to give up his
great power and strength to the younger generation. Mal-
bungka, one of the great mythical patriarchs of the native
cat ancestors, has already been described as being a man
'huge of body' who is sad when he has to perform subincision
on his sons. Yet those sons also eventually rebuke him. As
the song describes (Strehlow 1971:407-8).

'They [my sons] are busily raking over hot ashes';
With thin sticks they are roasting game' [says
Malbungka].

'The white fat is juicy and plentiful;
The fat of the animals is juicy and plentiful.'

'You there, with your knobbly nose!
You there, with your sunken nose!' [say the young
men].

'You there, with your knobbly nose!
You there with your squashed nose!'

'You there, with your sore covered nose!
Take this meat!

It's enough for you! Eat it!'

As Strehlow (1971:408-9) states, the whole situation here is
supposed to be comic. The eldest generation, appearing in
circumcision as pitiless attackers, is now being viewed
partly with contempt, partly with pity, and partly with dark
humour.(1) Malbungka is undoubtedly an oppressor, "a power-
ful man of tremendous sexual vigour, whose advances could
not be resisted by women" (Strehlow 1971:409), a subject I
will elaborate on below. But he is also the man who will-
ingly opened his veins to give blood to his children.

Like some of the other tjilpa sires, he used to
feed his sons on his life-blood: it was from him
alone that they received their ritual strength
(Strehlow 1971:409).

And in willingly giving of himself like this, Malbungka
appears not unlike a dilapidated native cat parent, spent
and feeble.

The notion that one initiates a decline by having one's vital bodily fluids tapped at the time of marriage is commonly found in the anthropological literature, though it has rarely been recorded for Aboriginal Australia. Yet it seems clear that Malbungka's predicament could well be summarised by the phrase 'the nemesis of reproductivity' - meaning "the ideological association of active sexuality, reproductivity and death [in New Guinea]" (Gell 1975:253). An oft-encountered expression of 'the nemesis of reproductivity' is the vagina dentata motif, and this, I would say, is indicated for the Aranda by the association of alkngantama and blood-letting. The warkuntuma dance, with its entreaty to 'give more', has been interpreted by Roheim (1974b:101-2) as the young men being allowed to participate in the primal scene. If this is true - and the sexual significance of alkngantama is not in doubt - then the younger generation appears to be gaining the phallicism which the older generation is losing. However, before the strength of Malbungka is passed on to his sons, it is necessary for him first to exhibit it and put it to effect. He may eventually turn into a pitiable old man, but he is, first of all, a figure of tremendous vigour and prowess.

Malbungka's sexuality has already been alluded to and it is important for understanding the specific nature of some subincision acts. In the bandicoot act witnessed by Spencer and Gillen there is a parody of animal courtship. One man, playing the part of a woman, is chased by a bandicoot ancestor wielding his pole, which is then bent over to the young men, who try to grasp it. At the end of the act
the 'woman' turns her back on the pole and the novice embraces it. Evidently, the 'woman's' turning of her back signifies submission, and it is a posture adopted by both female bandicoots (Stodart 1977:182) and female native cats (Archer 1974:64) during mating. This would appear to confirm Roheim's suggestion that in ritual performances novices are permitted to participate in a symbolic primal scene, but the exact nature of this participation needs to be specified.

The novice takes the tnatantja pole - his father's phallus - 'to heart', either by embracing it or having it pressed to his stomach. This suggests that the novice, as well as the female actor, also submits to the father's sexuality. Malbungka's sexuality is certainly impressive. In myth he is described as sending his penis many kilometres underground, making the women of Ltalaltuma, in Western Aranda country, aflame with desire (Strehlow 1971:515-6). The accompanying song (Strehlow 1971:516-9) describes the ensuing situation as follows.

In the deepest lakes of their bodies he causes them to throb passionately, -
In their very navels he causes them to throb passionately.
In their chalices of nectar he causes them to throb passionately, -
In their very navels he causes them to throb passionately.
In their chalices of nectar they are churning with passion, -
In the deepest lakes of their bodies they are churning with passion.

Huge of body is the sire, -
Yes, huge of body!
Glowing with pride let him be, -
Like a towering flash of lightning!
Gazing at the circle of his firebrand they are churning with passion.
In their chalices of nectar they are churning with passion.

The swung torch grips them relentlessly,
The flaming tongues grip them relentlessly.

...

A blaze of red he sits without stirring, -
The rotund-bodied sire sits without stirring.

Fiery like the sand dunes he sits without stirring, -
The rotund-bodied sire sits without stirring.

Fiery like the sand dunes he sits without stirring, -
Bedecked with plumes he sits without stirring.

In the circle of the firebrand he sits without stirring, -
Spinning the torch he sits without stirring.

His life-blood is quivering, -
Flashing like lightning, it is quivering.

His life-blood is quivering;
The bunched plumes [on his pole] are quivering.

The trunk of his tnatantja is quivering;
The bunched plumes [on his pole] are quivering
(Strehlow 1971:516-9).

Evidently, everything about Malbungka is supremely masculine. His whole being is identified with sexual desire, signified particularly by the firebrand with which he 'grips' women 'relentlessly' (Strehlow [1971:517] agrees on the phallic interpretation of the fire-stick).

The song about Malbungka's sexual prowess, which is used as a love charm, is particularly interesting in the way it moves from recounting the great sire's sexual exploits to a description of him as a quivering pole - the very same position he adopts in alkngantama. There is thus a very strong sexual component to the young men's submission to Malbungka, and the libidinal attachment of the great father
to his sons is indicated by the way in which the old men sing of their sadness at subincision. As Strehlow (1971:406) points out, it appears that they are saying something very much like: 'This is going to hurt me more than you', or, 'We have to be cruel to be kind'. I would suggest that there is more than a slight indication of homosexuality in these sentiments.

A kind of symbolic homosexuality, tinged with sadism, occurs when native cats play. For example, the eastern native cat, another very close relative of the western variety, is often seen in groups at night with juveniles busily chasing each other's tails (Strahan 1983:20). In some parts of the Western Desert actual homosexual relations may occur as a result of initiation, and Roheim (1932:51) interprets this as a ritual feminisation of young men.

The novice is being made a woman in relation to or by his father. While among the Aranda and neighbouring tribes this is merely one of the unconscious contents of initiation, it is an actual custom among the [Ngalia]. Here the future father-in-law goes about with his son-in-law after initiation and regularly has intercourse with him. They call the younger man 'boy-wife' of the elder one. As a sort of compensation for this intercourse, in which he was made to accept the passive role, he then receives the daughter of his 'husband' as his wife. Among the Aranda and Loritja a man frequently marries the daughter of the man who circumcised him, evidently because, in the unconscious, circumcision is a mitigated form of castration. Being castrated by the father (father-in-law) is suffering what the mother suffers in coitus, i.e. replacing the mother in the primal scene instead of replacing the father.

Meggitt (1966:102) has discovered a similar homosexual theme among the Walbiri, where in myth one kangaroo breaks off the tail of another and thrusts his spear into his anus to compensate for the loss.
In some versions the original kangaroo has been distressed because he failed to provide an adequate tail for the mate he created, and he now repairs the omission. That ngindi in Walbiri means both tail and penis may clarify the symbolism used here (and also among the Aranda; Spencer and Gillen, 1899:443); the episode seems to me to stand for an act of sodomy with a quasi-wife.

This symbolism is obviously related to the kangaroo acts of Aranda circumcision, and, as I pointed out in Chapter Five, the subincision wound is also secretly known as a vagina, thus adding a further dimension to the youth's feminisation. All these accounts shed light on Roheim's statement (see Chapter Two) that 'ambi-sexuality is the cure ... prescribed against the Oedipus complex'.(2)

But actual ambisexual and homosexuality are not really the 'cure'; they are, so to speak, simply a part of the treatment. For although youths are in a sense feminised when they are subincised, this is only a transitional condition which will lead to their own discovery of phallic power - the formula of symbolic castration being repression of the feminine so that the masculine can be more fully projected. There is evidently nothing either feminine or homosexual about Malbununga, whose heterosexual prowess is immortalised in song. And it is the firestick, which signifies Malbangka's rampant libido in one context, which symbolises the novice's own desire in another. So, in so far as the novice is being feminised at subincision, he is also being impressed with vibrant masculinity - a masculinity that will one day be his own when he comes to take his father's place. 'Be quiet', he is told just before being subincised, 'and today you will become a man'.

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10.4 Born Again

Compared with circumcision, subincision is a minor rite: but no man escapes it. It is quite simply necessary to have a subincised penis in order to become a man. If nothing else, the rite 'raises the dead', for whereas circumcision is separation from the mother and ritual death, subincision confirms the separation, but at the same time offers hope of life. So while it is no doubt correct to see in both rites the theme of castration, and therefore to treat them as fundamentally similar (cf. Roheim 1969:79), there is also a sense in which they are very different. The first 'birth' (circumcision) is a negative trauma: the second (subincision) begins to show the way back to a fulfilled life through identification with the father. Hence the symbolic shift from kangaroo to native cat, prefigured, at least among the Walbiri (Meggitt 1962:308, cf. 312-3), by a show of 'happy friendship' between the youth and his circumcisor.

At the beginning of subincision rites, the boy's mother-in-law and sisters undergo body lacerations. I would argue that these are sympathetic with the wound which the novice will suffer at the hands of his ritual operator. The 'penis-as-vagina' which the boy is given when subincised is only the promise of a future - a future that will not materialise until the feminine condition has been rejected. For if the boy is feminised, he is also given a larger and more effective penis, like that of Malbangka. One of the more common phantasies about subincised penes is that they are actually more satisfying to women (Meggitt 1962:313-4, Cawte 1974:126), and one cannot in any case take a wife until after being fully 'cut'. So the subincised penis is only a
vagina in ritual, and when ritual life is suspended and normality returns, it will no longer be a vagina but a super-penis. But if the youth is later to reject his temporary femininity, he is also rejecting his mother and incestuous partnerships. This, I think, may clarify the women's body lacerations, because it is the youth's mothers-in-law and sisters who are cut by his mother - that is, women whom, along with his mother, will have to be rejected sexually if the marriage rules are to be upheld.

After the operation, the boy is brought into women's company for his 'rebirth' (re-aggregation into society). In his first encounter the women dance ndaperama and the novice is led towards them naked. As he approaches them, he suddenly wheels around and runs into the bush. The symbolism of this seems obvious enough: the women to whom he was earlier so attached have come to be objects of fear, and the boy accordingly rejects them, even (or especially) in their ritual standing as ndapa women. He prefers the company of men, with whom he continues to show solidarity. The phallic women, who so impressed him during his childhood, have been shown to be inferior to the father's might.

The next day, however, he comes rather closer to the women. He is decorated and carries a shield, with which he protects himself as his sisters throw pitji. His sisters also stand at his back, press down his shoulders and rub their faces on his back. This short rite possibly symbolises his rejection of his sisters. The pitji is a wooden tray in which children and foodstuffs are carried, and it therefore stands for the sisters' domestic role, including her child-bearing potential. The youth quite literally turns his
back on this, just as he will later turn his back on the femininity inscribed on his penis. Spencer and Gillen (1927: 212) say that the short ceremony is called "anainta-jilima", which is probably a mistranscription of njintilama - 'to cause to be one (alone, by himself)' (Wilkins pers. comm.) - perhaps with the connotation of having left the company of women and joined the men.

The rejection of female kin is most obvious in the youth's next encounter with the women. This time the boy is decorated with the twigs of the emu-bush, which in the last chapter I suggested symbolised male solidarity. He also carries a boomerang, which he throws in the direction of his mother's conception site. While the symbolism of this is rather obvious, its full meaning is indicated by the Walbiri notion that the boomerang is a boy's umbilical cord (Meggitt 1966:117).

Among the Western Aranda, prior to being smoked a youth witnesses the circling movements of men on the pula ground. As one pair of linked men progresses one way round the pula, a second pair travels in the opposite direction, both ending up where they started. This movement is possibly linked to the idea of being 'turned round', since Bell (1983:225) implies that the notion is particularly connected with cementing (negative) ties of shame to sisters and mothers-in-law. On the other hand, if this is so, then the boy is being 'turned round' rather differently from when he first circled the pula ground at the beginning of the circumcision ceremony. In the latter case, the men travelled only in one direction, and the boy was said to have 'turned back'. In subincision, however, not only does the running occur in the
opposite direction (west-east-west instead of east-west-east), but there is a complete double movement, as well as a pairing-up of the men who run the circles.

Given that the youth is just about to be smoked by the women, in imitation of what occurs to a newborn child (see below), it is possible that this 'turning around' is equivalent to the turning inside-out of a child's world after birth. The pairing of the men could conceivably relate to the 'doubling' that has occurred to the boy in subincision and which is giving him the strength to face his new world. For if circumcision is above all else related to the ideas of separation and the division of unity (mother and child), subincision begins to institute the process of redoubling which constitutes the acceptance of symbolic castration (feminisation). At any rate, it is remarkable that the circling of the pula ground both 'doubles' and 'redoubles' that which took place at the beginning of circumcision, as well as turning it round the other way.

As stated above, the actual smoking ceremony appears to be analogous to that which occurs to a baby after birth. Aboriginal children are born with a reddish skin which does not turn black for some time. Smoking the child is said to hasten the darkening process (which elsewhere in Australia is said to give the weak, white child strength [Hamilton 1981:29]), and at the same time bring on the mother's production of milk (the mother also being smoked along with the child) (Carl Strehlow 1913:2). It will be remembered from Chapter Eight that the giving of the breast to a child is called aralkalelama, which also means 'to remove a ban of silence'. It is directly after smoking that a youth may be
released from such a ban which he has in relation to his ritual caretaker. This occurs when he gives the caretaker tjauerilja, in return for which he has a tnatantja pressed against his lips. If the subincised youth has been 'born', it seems that his 'mother' may be a man - which is in keeping with the homosexual attachment that he has just made. (3)

10.5 Fiery Ordeals

A man who has gone through subincision has far from completed his initiation. He is at this time only an atua kurka - a little man, and he takes up residence in the bachelors' quarters some distance away from the main camp. He will not marry for some time, and remains under the watchful eye of those seniors who have seen him through his initiation. In a sense he has become knowledgeable. He has seen totemic acts; been made party to secrets; and even had myths partly explained to him. But this knowledge is minimal, and really all he has done in circumcision and subincision is to have absorbed some of the strength of The Dreaming. As yet, he does not understand this strength: he has not 'digested' it because he has yet to become a true 'eater of knowledge' (Meggitt 1966:71). To fill his own stomach with The Dreaming’s secrets, he must fill the stomachs of his elders with a great deal more tjauerilja.

The main medium for transmitting early ritual understanding is the ingkura ceremony, in which many totemic acts are performed in exchange for immense prestations of meat. Carl Strehlow (1913:38-42) refers to the ingkura as a 'performance' or 'exhibition' (Aufführung): T. G. H. Strehlow (1968:100-12, 1971:350-75) prefers the term 'festival': and
Spencer and Gillen (1927: Chapters X-XI) treat it essentially as an initiation rite. The *ingkura* is, in fact, all these things at once.

The *ingkura* is, in the eyes of the natives, the real initiation centre of any group: it is here that novices who have passed all stages of their physical manhood rites are instructed by their elders in the ceremonies and chants and legends of their own clan. Here they receive the final stamp of citizenship which entitles them to a recognized place in the social and cultural sphere of their people (Strehlow 1968:100).

On the other hand,

while it has been the general practice in Central Australia to stage the full series of commemorative ceremonies attached to a *pwarra Kutata* [major sacred site] only at an *ingkura* initiation festival, it should be noted that these commemorative ceremonies are not in themselves, properly speaking, *initiation rites*: they are acts celebrating and honouring the supernatural ancestors of a great totemic clan. They are religious ceremonies performed both in order to introduce the totemic ancestors to their human clansmen, and in order to honour and please these supernatural beings themselves (Strehlow 1971:377).

The *ingkura*, then, is both a commemorative display and an initiation rite. It is on the latter aspect that I wish to concentrate here, leaving the significance of the former for discussion in Chapter Eleven.

The *ingkura* was first performed by the native cat ancestors and several of its features have already been mentioned in Chapter Five. According to Carl Strehlow the rite is normally performed yearly or biennially and lasts for up to two months or more. In fact, though, an *ingkura* cannot be easily predicted in terms of duration or timing. Two factors are paramount, one demographic, the other ecological, and both find their realisation in a political context of manoeuvre and decision-making. Thus Strehlow (1971:376) writes in connection with the Ilbalintja *ingkura*:
In the old days ... the normal procedure for staging the ... Ilbalintja festival would have been as follows. Firstly, the leaders of the Ilbalintja totemic clan would have held long discussions about the necessity and the advisability of holding the series [of totemic acts]: they would have considered the number of young men requiring instruction in the ceremonies and sacred lore of their clan, the seasonal sufficiency of food, and the likelihood of getting sufficient visitors to assemble from other groups and tribes whose totemic centres were linked by myths with Ilbalintja. If the season proved satisfactory, if there were no epidemics in the area, and if there were sufficient novices requiring instruction, messengers would have been sent to all bandicoot centres in Central Aranda and Anmatjera districts, to *tjiilpa* [native cat] centres along the line of travel taken by the wandering horde that passed through Ilbalintja territory, and to various euro, kangaroo and *iriakura* [bush onion] centres with which bonds of friendship had always existed.

Whatever else the *ingkura* is, it is also a kind of 'gathering of the clans', a bringing-together under the same umbrella of The Dreaming a whole local alliance group, linked by mythical tracks as well as ties of kinship and affinity. For this reason, it is likely that the *ingkura* is held only intermittently in the same place. According to Strehlow (1968:101, 1971:377) an *ingkura* is always held in the vicinity of a major sacred site; that is, at a site from which a prominent totemic ancestor originally emerged and/or to which he again returned. This site always takes pride of place in the totemic acts performed during the whole ceremonial cycle, and for this reason it is probable that a particular site only holds an *ingkura* many years after the last, so as to allow long term clan exchanges. As Strehlow (1968:101) states, *ingkura* have to be held so as not to clash with others. It seems that the favoured time for these large-scale ceremonies is summer, the time of most rainfall in the arid centre of Australia (Maggs 1978:115).
The ingkura is, for the Aranda, the time of social unity, the only time when something approaching the whole network of social relations in which an individual is enmeshed comes together as an aggregate. It is remarkable that Durkheim paid it so little attention. In essence, it recapitulates 'the beginning', when everything was placed together in radical unity under the wing of Ngambakala and his native cat progeny. The three major reports of the festival differ a great deal, though more on points of emphasis than ethnographic fact. Carl Strehlow's is very brief, and T. G. H. Strehlow's, on his own admission, is incomplete in many ways. I propose here to concentrate mainly on Spencer and Gillen's - the account of the ingkura pertaining to Imanda, the important sacred site in Upper Southern Aranda country. The rite was performed in 1896 in Alice Springs over a period of four months. The organisers of this gargantuan event told Spencer and Gillen that its purpose was to 'strengthen' everybody, to impart to them 'courage and wisdom', and to make them joyous, happy and good-natured. In the following description of the rite I have broken the text into a number of phases that will assist analysis.

Phase 1

The ingkura begins with invitations to neighbouring groups. Messengers are sent, carrying with them wooden and stone tjurunga to leave at the places they visit. When the invitations are accepted, the visitors begin their trek to the proposed festival site (which in this case was anything up to three hundred kilometres). They bring with them a great many of their own tjurunga - mainly wooden, though they also bring many others (understood here to refer to everything to do with The Dreaming - see Chapter Twelve) locked in their minds - secret/ sacred acts, body designs, songs and so on. This provides the incentive for the journey: the ingkura is a tjurunga display.
As the ceremony begins to get under way, there is a good deal of singing and dancing in which all members of the community take part. This goes on for about two weeks, after which the ritual leaders (see Plate 1) select a special site, which they clear and make into the sacred ingkura ground (ghala ingkura). This is achieved by digging up the soil to create a broad hollow, and then with the loose sand making a low mound along the hollow itself. This mound is the para or ghala para (ground phallus or earth tail). The one constructed at Alice Springs was approximately ten metres long, sixty centimetres wide, and thirty centimetres high. It ran north-south and represented the ancestral track of the native cats — in particular of the very first native cat man, the son of Ngambakala. The phallus is decorated with emu-bush branches, which represent the young men who travelled with the great native cat leader in The Dreaming.

Phase 2

From now on the ceremony takes place only on the ghala para, and women and children are not allowed near. As Spencer and Gillen (1927:234) say: "From this time onwards, and until the last act of the ingkura is performed, the younger men who are passing through the ceremony must separate themselves completely from the women, and are entirely under the control of the older men. They must obey the latter implicitly. Their days are spent in hunting, so as to secure food, the greater part of which is supposed to be brought in to the older men who remain in camp, or in watching ceremonies, or in taking part in them under the guidance of the old men, and their nights are spent on, or close to, the ingkura ground". Both Strehlows say that the young men are also given namatuna (a type of bull-roarer) decorated with designs representing their personal totems. Each youth is encouraged to swing it frequently in order to keep out of the way of women.

The first act is token. The main ritual leader stands upright and makes the summoning call — raiangkintja. In response, the novices 'come to life', surround him and dance. In reply, the elders come forward, take hold of the youths' sprouting beards, and warn the young men to be on their very best behaviour in the ensuing months — in particular, that they should not be greedy and that they should give freely of tjauerilja to the elders.

The totemic acts now begin in earnest, each being chosen in council by the elders. While the novices are out hunting during the day, the old men make their decisions and oversee preparations for the
acts, which are usually performed by those who have only recently acquired ritual knowledge. Vast amounts of time and care are put into ceremonial decorations. Red ochre, white, red and pink feathers, and human blood drawn from arms, legs and subincised penes are used in abundance. Some acts are performed during the day and not divulged to novices, only to fully initiated men. But many are carried out at night, and in these the youths participate.

The acts witnessed by Spencer and Gillen are too many and too complex to be set down in detail here. They pertain to many different totems, but share a general form which is well summarised by Strehlow (1968:104). "When the performers have been decorated, they take up their position on the edge of the ghala ingkura. To the accompaniment of shrill-sounding namatuna the chief of the ceremonial ground utters [the] raiangkintja. At its sound the iliara [novices] rise from their fires [at the ghala para], rush up to the actors in single file, and swing their bull-roarers lustily. They join in [the] shuffling dance known as warkuntuwa around the main performers, shouting loudly all the while wa/ wa/ wa/ wa/ wa. The actors execute certain conventional movements. From time to time the dancers utter a fierce, loud cry of wei/ and the main performers pause for a moment in their movements and put their chests and bodies into a violent quiver (alkngantama), so that the down from their decorated bodies flies off in all directions. The old men meanwhile are sitting on the edge of the cleared scene. They chant the traditional verses relating to the original episode in the life of the ancestor which is being re-enacted in the ceremony. After several minutes the dancers utter one more fierce cry of wei/ and come to a halt. All of them place their hands on the bodies of the tired actors (erguma), and the ceremony is concluded. An old man then addresses the iliara who have joined in the warkuntuwu dance. He is the owner of the ceremony that they have seen; and he briefly explains to them the meaning of the performance. Sometimes a few of the less important verses of the chant are taught to the iliara on this occasion. Then the young initiates have to gather up their spears and boomerangs and go out hunting for the remainder of the day". However, some of the elder young men, those that have been through several ingkura already, stay behind and learn about the more esoteric tjurunga - secrets not thought appropriate to divulge to iliara. It is these 'elder juniors' who donate most of the blood for the decorations.

When the iliara return in the evening with their tjauerrilja, they gather their strength to witness more acts. These invariably use tnatantja, either
as poles or head decorations and a great many are described by Spencer and Gillen. "In the evening more ceremonies may take place for the further instruction of the weary iliara. If the old men have prepared a tnatantja-pole during the day, this is now set up on the ground. All men who are present sing at its foot the verses relating to this tnatantja, and to its experiences in the dim past. Sometimes they walk around the pole slowly, each man keeping one hand on its trunk. It is used in a special tnatantja ceremony on the following morning at a very early hour, before any women or children can get a glimpse from their separate sleeping grounds" (Strehlow 1968:106). The tnatantja may be treated in a similar way to its use in subincision rites and waved over the heads of the novices. It may also be pressed against the stomachs of the old men, who are said to be emotionally overcome by the sight of the act. Their stomachs are heavy and knotted and the tnatantja relieves their 'heartache'.

There are a number of other typical actions which occur during the long ceremonial train. For example, tjurunga boards are brought out and displayed from time to time, and these too may be pressed against the old men's stomachs to give relief. In addition, there is another dance performed by the iliara. "On many ingkura grounds the iliara are at intervals roused from their fires during the evening, and ordered to perform a peculiar primitive dance, called artjentama, around the earth-mound. Keeping their feet close together they leap sideways, facing the earth-mound, and bending their bodies low towards it; their hands are clasped behind their backs. They utter a series of loud, harsh trills, hrr/ hrr/ hrr/ interrupted from time to time by a fierce wa/ which is yelled at the ghaia para" (Strehlow 1968: 106-7).

About half-way through the festival there is an important change in organisation. In the evening all the men come together on the ceremonial ground and form a dense pack, with the eldest men at the centre and the youngest at the periphery. In this formation they sing for about two hours, swaying backwards and forwards in a concerted mass. In the night the group breaks up, but continues to sing while the old men decorate the heads of the younger ones with emu-bush branches. To each of the senior men who placed these decorations on the heads of the juniors, four or five of the latter are entrusted as 'wards'. The juniors are said to become pmoara to their guardians and are under a ban of silence to them. From this time on the young men are known as ilbanngura.

The festival intensifies over the next few weeks.
The artjentama in particular becomes more pronounced and the novices have to be actually driven from their fires in the morning in order to acquire tjauerilja. The elders gather the iliara together and, swinging their bull-roarers, herd them away from the ghala para. They are told to step up their work, even though the area is rapidly being hunted out.

The iliara also now begin to go through fire ordeals. Sometimes in the mornings, but more often in the evenings after they have arrived from the bush with a delivery of meat, the youths have to approach the women’s camp. Donned with emu-bush decorations, they form a pack and are driven towards the women by the elders, who again swing bull-roarers. The women themselves have made fires and have stockpiled heaps of dry brush and grass. They make the customary invitation movement to the youths, but then shower them with flaming grass and brush. The youths bolt, pursued by the women, who continue to shower them with fire.

The iliara make their way back to the ghala ingkura while the women retreat. A ceremony is going on and the iliara approach in the normal way. They sing of their pleasure at being on the ghala ingkura, of how glad they are to be ilbanngura, and of how they are so tired from the days events. Eventually, after a lusty bout of dancing and aggressive singing, the young men lay down their shields, weapons and emu-bush decorations on one side of the ghala para and then rest with their heads on the other. They are absolutely silent and still; it is forbidden for them to move. As darkness falls the sense of stillness contrasts strongly with the previous pandemonic activity. This period of intensification and fire-ordeals lasts for about two weeks.

**Phase 3**

The festival is now moving towards its climax. The leader of the ingkura spends a day preparing a pair of wooden tjurunga. These are tied together with hair-string and completely covered in thick circles of white down. This is the mbiljikara, the ‘baby pouch’ or ‘two-together’ which was used by the leader of the quolls in The Dreaming (see Chapter Five). At the same time a number of other older men go and cut down a young gum tree to prepare a special ceremonial pole — kauuua. The tree, about seven metres high, is cut down with great care. It must under no circumstances touch the ground. When its branches are lopped off it is taken near to the ghala ingkura, covered in sand, and left to be collected when the men are ready to put it to use.
When the novices return that evening there is none of the revelry or ceremonial acting of previous weeks. Instead, the *ilbanngura* enter the ground quietly, place their emu-bush decorations on a heap which has been steadily accumulating over the past few weeks, and lie down silently with their heads on the *para*. The top of the *para* has during the day been dug over so as to make it softer for the youths' heads. Everybody, including the elders, moves quietly and speaks, if at all, in whispered tones. Something is afoot and there is an expectant air. A number of fires are lit in front of the reclining novices and the ends of some four to eight sticks placed in each. The ceremonial leader, flanked on each side by one other old man, sits quietly and seriously in front of the dimly lit scene.

Suddenly the leader gives a signal; the youths rise up, take hold of the firesticks and run pell-mell across the ground towards the women's camp. The scene is one of indescribable commotion as the youths break up into several parties and surround the women, now huddled together as a group. The novices then hurl their brands over the women's heads: everybody is screaming and shouting as the firesticks rocket through the air. Then as quickly and suddenly as it all started, the scene becomes dark and quiet. The men run quickly back to the *ghala para*. They are quiet and still on the ground, said to have been 'tamed'.

But while the *iliara* were away, the leader had taken up the *mbiljikara*. With the same two men who accompanied him earlier, and linked to them with his arms, he begins to move the *mbiljikara* up and down, steadily and monotonously. The youths do not see this in the dark, but the rhythm is kept up for eight hours — until daybreak, when the young men get their first glimpse of the double *tjurunga*. If the ritual leader should fail in his wearisome task, it is said that the *iliara* would die. Among the Western Aranda, it is said that the *mbiljikara* imparts strength to the novices so that they may be ready for the final part of the ceremony.

The leader now goes to the northern end of the *para*, accompanied by his two assistants, who represent the first two women created in The Dreaming (*Ilparintja* and *Lungarinia* — see Chapter Five). The novices, after first gathering up the piles of emu-bush beside the *ghala para*, follow and form a pack behind the ceremonial leaders to whom they are *pmoara*. All now move in a mass towards the women's camp, the old men in front holding the *mbiljikara* in full view. The women see them from some distance away and renew their characteristic beckoning movements. The party ap-
proaches in perfect silence, but suddenly stops about five metres in front of the would-be sirens. The carriers of the mbiljikara throw themselves on the ground and cover the mbiljikara, and the rest of the party then throws itself on top so that the mbiljikara is completely hidden. This is supposed to represent death (Spencer n.d., Box 2:29). Quickly the men all stand and run back to the ghala ingkura.

Phase 4

The next morning everything is quiet after the exhausting night. But eventually, the old men take a number of sticks, smear them with red ochre and hide them in the body of the ghala para. These sticks (in the Imanda ceremony seen by Spencer and Gillen, which celebrates an important frog totemic site) are said to represent young frogs and were originally carried in The Dreaming by the native cat women, Ilaparintja and Lungarinia. That night a ceremony is performed in which the sticks are taken out of the ghala para and used as clapsticks to provide accompaniment for a song.

The following day, while the novices are out hunting, the kauawa is erected on the ghala ingkura. It is lavishly decorated with tjurunga hanging from the top (primarily namatuna according to Carl Strehlow) and a full rosette of white feathers at the tip. It also has bandicoot tail-tips, headbands, a nose-bone, and a great many downy feathers stuck on with liberal applications of human blood, drawn from the bodies of older men. (5) Carl Strehlow says that the pole is now referred to as tingara - 'the fertile column'. (6) It is meant to represent a man - the ancestor to which the major sacred site was (and is) connected in The Dreaming. It is the 'man-phallus' so often encountered in the myths.

Away from the ceremonial ground a hole is made, filled with dry brush and set alight. After being allowed to burn to a smouldering state, the fire is freshly covered with bushy boughs which do not ignite, but become hot and smoky. Each young man is made to lie in this inferno for some minutes and endure the heat. According to Carl Strehlow, this smoking is preceded by the novices acting with the kauawa. A novice approaches the ceremonial leader, who is decorated like the pole, and presses his head down towards the earth. This indicates that the end of the festival is in sight. One of the young men climbs the pole and tears down the bull-roarers, throwing them down to the chief. The pole itself is then drawn up and manipulated to and fro between two files of men, later to be put back in the ground. Later, when night has fallen, each novice climbs the pole and
then goes off to be attacked by firesticks thrown by the women. When each returns, he receives his namatuna from the leader and swings it lustily. This is said to fill the women with desire for the young man.

But to return to Spencer and Gillen’s account: after the novices have been smoked, they return to the ghala ingkura and await nightfall. The kauua is lit up by a circle of brilliant fires: nobody will sleep this night. Each pmoara man takes his group of trustees to the pole, and the women in their camp begin to call out. The men return these calls and the whole thing develops into a screaming badinage in which all normal rules are suspended. Mothers-in-law and sons-in-law in particular take advantage of the opportunity to indulge in raillery. At daybreak things are quiet, and the women split into two moiety groups in order to excavate trenches and fill them with dry brush.

All the novices are now taken by their elders and painted on their backs. The designs are indiscriminate, in the sense that they appear to have no reference to the youths’ own totems or those of the painters. Strehlow states that the designs may not even have anything to do with local stories, pertaining instead to ‘foreign’ sacred sites. The youths are under a ban of silence, and although they know what everyone else is wearing, they cannot see or know their own designs. According to Carl Strehlow, before this painting can be done, the old men secretly take down the kauua and bury it inside the ghala para. But Spencer and Gillen say that the pole has another fate in store.

It is still morning. The leader of the ingkura calls across to the women’s camp and tells the women that the men are ‘ready’. He then walks towards the para and breaks through its centre by kicking away the loose, sandy earth. He also breaks through the brush that lies alongside the para. Then each pmoara man takes his group of proteges and leads them through the breaks made by the leader. The act is preceded by a final artjenterema dance around the earth mound and a grouping of the novices beneath the kauua pole. In solemn procession, all the men walk towards the women’s camp. The sun is just beginning to rise.

The men stop about fifteen metres in front of the women, who stand by their fires. Each pmoara elder takes his charges in a semi-circular trip towards the women and then returns. The wards are then taken to the fires. Each ilbannyura is made to kneel on a fire, and as the smoke ascends over his body, the women lay hands on his shoulders and
press him down. The act is performed in complete silence and youths of one moiety may only be smoked by women of the opposite one.

The women now disperse and the iliara go back to the ingkura ground. The kauaua is taken down, dismantled or its decorations, and cleaned of human blood. It is then carried to a small hill and laid there to rot and be eaten by white ants. All its tjurunga are returned to their respective owners. According to Strehlow, it is the novices themselves who take down the kauaua and discard it. They seize it, move it up and down, and 'exhaust it of its strength'. It is not left on a hill, but suffers a similar ignominious fate by being dumped in a ditch.

Strehlow - alone among the main commentators - states that the ingkura ground may have an ilbantera (circular ground painting) laid down. It is there from the very beginning of the festival, but is not used until the end. It is first of all enlarged by adding more rings of down, and then, at the end of the ceremony, it is destroyed. First the novices fling themselves onto the painting and move their stomachs across it until most of the down is removed. Then the older men move right across the whole ilbantera, completely erasing it. What down is left is stripped and the ground is covered with boughs.(7)

After the dismantling of the ghala ingkura there is a return to normal life, but this is a gradual transition taking place over several weeks. First of all, a ceremony is performed in which a fire is lit so that everybody, men and women, can sit around it singing and playing clap-sticks. About six or eight men, probably iliara, then step out of the dark and into the firelight. They come into view one by one and peer around as if searching the horizon in order to find something. They then sit down with the singers. After this a number of painted women also step into the light. They dance a swaying, seductive movement with their hands behind their necks, every so often putting their thighs into a quiver. This is the cue for what Spencer and Gillen describe as an interchange of women. Everybody now pairs off, though strictly according to the dictates of the relationship system. This orgiastic seduction carries on for about two or three weeks.

Ceremonies come to a final close with the lifting of the bans of silence. The iliara, when they have returned from the hunt, bring tjauerilja to the pmoara men. Such gifts have, of course, been given to the elders right through the festival; but now the nature of the gift has changed. The meat is no longer just tjauerilja: it is atua gara - lite-
rally 'man meat', that is, human flesh. In exchange for this meat the elders perform ceremonial acts which the iliara learn for the very first time. A number of new motifs mark these acts, such as the young men opening their veins in order to sprinkle the elders with blood, often allowing it to be swallowed. When this is over, the ban of silence is removed.

Aralkalelama may be performed in one of several ways. First, the iliara's mouth may be stroked with a bunch of feathers. Second, the mouth may be touched with a piece of atua gara. Third, the mouth may be touched with atnuta, the ceremonial headgear which represents dead game. Finally, the mouth may be stroked with a tnatantja pole used in the ceremony. Sometimes the pole has prominent use in these ceremonies. The young men run round it, often carrying atua gara. Then the pole is taken down and the men split up into moiety divisions. One group takes the tnatantja and breaks the ranks of the opposing group, eventually stroking the faces of the more senior men with the pole.

10.6 Back on the Track (Phases 1 & 2)

In its general structure the ingkura festival reinforces subincision. Both rites are accompanied by native cat ceremonial dramas and these act out a strong symbolic bond between elders and juniors. Following Roheim and Hiatt, I have suggested that circumcision and subincision are part of a libidinal transference from mother to father, or more generally from women to men. But the ingkura takes this process a good deal further - indeed, to its culmination. For in the ingkura it seems as if the sons usurp their fathers' positions, just as they did in mythical time when they sent Karora back into the earth tired, wounded and exhausted. In the remainder of this chapter I propose to trace the momentum of this minor revolution.

An ingkura begins with a number of weeks' general festivities, while people gather together from their respective countries. 'Business' begins in earnest with the con-
struction of the ceremonial ground, which brings this early free-and-easy phase to an end. The *ghala ingkura* is markedly different from the *pula*. If the 'groundwork' for the *pula* is female, for the *ghala ingkura* it is decidedly male. It is dominated by what one of Strehlow's (1968:103) informants called "the greatest and most sacred of all the *tjurunga*" - the *ghala para*. *Ghala para* literally translates as 'ground phallus'. According to Spencer and Gillen's informants, it is the track taken in The Dreaming by a native cat horde. It will be remembered from Chapter Five that the ancestral track is the 'trace' left behind by the journey of the phallus, the latter forging its way across the landscape and cleaving a path whenever any obstacle is in its way. The *ghala para* is that path made visible - raised from the shallow depression in the ground as if by a kind of emergence. As I proceed with the analysis, the *ghala para*’s relation to the active phallic instrument of the native cat ancestors should become clear.

Ceremonies begin with the summoning call - *raiangkin-tja*. The young men are being called to consciousness once again, and what they see when they 'come round' is similar to what they earlier saw at subincision. But as I noted earlier, one subincison ritual is not a complete ceremony in itself. Ideally, men go through several of these and have their penes cut from top to bottom. The early acts of the *ingkura* are in line with this gradual progression towards ritual strength. Just as there are several operations on the penis before a man is fully made, so too are there many calls to life and many submissions to the paternal phallus. Young men are impressed time and time again with the
trembling alkŋantama, in return for which they offer more and more tjauerilja. And just like Malbungka, the old men are greedy for meat, telling the iliara to work hard and give freely.

It will be remembered from Chapter Six that in the myth of Karora there eventually grew a certain tension between father and sons. Karora became more and more insistent in his demands on an ever-dwindling supply of meat and was lamed and 'put down'. A similar kind of tension seems to be in evidence part of the way through the ingkura, and this echoes the inter-generational hostility that was (probably) first exhibited as early as circumcision (when the novice's age mates were his 'allies', protectors and comforters in the face of aggression from the older men [cf. Meggitt 1962:304, 306-7]).

The tension is initially marked by the warkuntuma dance, which has already been described in connection with subincision. However, Strehlow's fuller description adds some interesting details. For example, alkŋantama is followed by the warkuntuma dancers placing their hands on the actor's body. This, according to Strehlow (1968:57), is done to

the panting main actor in order to 'soothe', as [the Aranda] say, his 'emotions' which have been excited by the part that he has been playing.

Erguma, the word which describes this 'laying on of hands', means to hold, seize or embrace (Strehlow 1971:743), and in this particular context it appears to have the sense of relieving the actor of a burden. On the other hand, that burden is not something which is easily relinquished: it is a coveted possession for which the young men must pay dearly.
Strehlow (1968:57–8) also points out the following in connection with other themes in the dancing:

The young men, who are moving their arms up and down in an attitude of humble entreaty (ingkama), retreat before the main actor as he approaches them with the tall tnatantja. When they have come to the end of the cleared space, both the tnatantja-bearer and the entreatiing group of young men wheel around slowly and then retrace their steps to the original starting point, the main actor still driving them before him. When the starting point has been regained, the young men close in upon the main actor (ulbmerama), and finally they all place their hands upon his body, gripping his shoulders firmly (erguma).

This again harkens back to subincision and appears to be an enactment of Malbungka, or some other ancestral figure, driving his sons before him with his erect penis (Roheim 1974b:129–30, cf. 79 on an identical action in Western Desert kangaroo ritual). At the ingkura ceremony, then, acts are a curious mixture of give-and-take. The elders are at once the men in control and losers: the young men are at once submissive and gaining in strength. It is as if, by taking a submissive posture, the young men stand to gain in the long term, while the older demonstrators, in virtue of taking the active role, come to lose their strength.

It is important to note here that it is not the elders themselves who perform the totemic acts, but older initiated men — men who are fit and energetic enough to perform the dancing. This division of ritual labour is not merely pragmatic: it relates to the symbolic structure of the ingkura. When the acts are performed, the old men are said to get knotted stomachs; that is, they feel sad. To relieve their 'heartache', tjurunga, including tnatantja poles, are pressed against their 'guts'. What is specifically interesting about this is the contrast between what the tnatantja and/or
other tjurunga achieve for the old men and what they achieve for the iliara.

The young men begin to grow in strength as a result of their experiences in ceremonial acts: they gain what the main actor gives up (alkngantama). On the other hand, it seems as if the older generation are weakened: they become sad at what they see, perhaps sorry that they can no longer perform the acts which they themselves own. This is part of the identity of alternate generations which was first acted out at circumcision, when the old men pressed their atnuta head decorations against the stomach of the novice. It seems as if the main actors are literally the medium of transmission of The Dreaming, poised perfectly between senior and junior and existing only in relation to the two ‘flanks’. This triadic structure has a very general application.

In the first half of the ingkura the tension between the different generational levels is held with the balance in favour of the seniors. It is in the second half that the balance is tilted in the opposite direction. But before this can happen, the balance itself is symbolically enacted. The whole group of men assembles on the ghala ingkura and forms a pack, the eldest at the centre, the youngest at the periphery. This formation seems to be the closest the Aranda come to Durkheim’s ‘congregational’ definition of religion, for the whole assembly remains intact for two hours, swaying to and fro as it sings in perfect chorus. The symbolism of unity is partly obvious, partly subtle. As a pack, the assembly is a display of solidarity, but it is an assembly in which the senior men are on the inside and the novices on the outside. Thus, in so far as there is an identity of
alternate generations, there is also an identity between centre and periphery - just as there is in any mandala-figure.

But the symbolism is more subtle yet. In a sense, everything crucial to The Dreaming as a totality is encapsulated in the men's show of solidarity. At the centre of the group, at its 'navel', lie the old men, who possess all the secrets - all the inside meanings. On the periphery are the iliara, youths who are only just beginning to understand The Dreaming, having been given low level access to secrets - outside meanings. In between lay the actors, those men who are responsible for guaranteeing the transmission of secrets from the centre to the periphery. The image is more than reminiscent of the scene when Karora and his sons sit around the Ilbalintja Soak in circles like ripples on a pond. One senses that Karora himself must have been at the very centre of this vortex on his way down to the depths.

At the end of this spectacular show, the group of novices breaks up into smaller parties, each led by a senior man to whom they are pmoara. This term is the same as that already encountered in earlier chapters. It may variously mean honeysuckle juice, menstrual blood, or the blood which courses in the veins of ancestors. To be pmoarinja, states Roheim, means to be 'of the womb' - about to be born, like the nailtail wallabies in the myth of night and day. It seems likely, then, that when the novices are put in the care of ritual guardians, these latter men are 'male mothers' and that the young men are in some sense going to be born yet again.

Spencer and Gillen say that from this time on the nov-
ices are known as ilbanngura. Roheim (1932:63-4) states that his informants maintained that this was incorrect, a view which, on the face of it, is supported by Strehlow (1971: 648). Ilbanngura, says Roheim, are not people, they are ceremonies. An ilbanngura is a ceremonial act which a novice pays to witness during (or outside of) an ingkura. Perhaps the confusion is understandable from what Strehlow has to say. According to him, ilbanngura are sacred acts, some of whose tjurunga may be shown to women. More specifically, these tjurunga are body designs which women are obliged to witness on men after a secret ceremony. This is the very situation which obtains towards the end of the ingkura, when the novices are painted and shown to the women. It seems reasonable to assume, then, that if ilbanngura are not the novices themselves, then they are connected with the tjurunga with which the novices are identified.

Roheim (1932:63) was given an etymology for ilbanngura consisting of the terms ilba (ear) and ngurungura (follow, behave properly, obey). Spencer and Gillen (1927:262), on the other hand, were told that the term meant "not smeared with grease or colour". The ethnography is thus confusing on the term, but the word conceivably has some connection with pmoara, since ilba (as in ilbantera - sacred ground painting) may also mean womb. Indeed, Roheim (1932:100) states that the designs painted on the young men's backs at the ingkura may be called pmoara, and since he was also told that the term "ingkura is really short for ilba-ingkura" ('womb-hole'), it seems fair to say that this central stage of the festival sees the novices about to 'come out'. Having been put firmly in their place by their fathers, the tension
is building to the point where they are beginning to throw
of the yoke - and this seems to be a form of birth.

One point is immediately evident: the ceremonial phal-
lus is the focus of antagonism. Although a certain tension
was building in the first part of the festival, the novices
begin to voice their aggression more forcefully in the
second half. It is now that the artjentama dancing becomes
especially marked, involving harsh, fierce cries yelled at
the ghala para. The response is perhaps not surprising given
that the elders are now literally herding the juniors off to
hunt in the mornings and stepping up their demands for tjau-
erilja under circumstances where it is increasingly diffi-
cult to acquire game. The artjentama, as Strehlow's pictur-
esque description shows, is pure aggression, and it is chan-
nelled in the direction of the most sacred of all tjurunga.

It is during this time that the iliara begin their fire
ordeal. Fire, as I have already mentioned, is symbolic of
desire, and at certain points in initiation the novice has
already had to deal with 'the passions'. In this particular
case, the fire is held by women, and the young men have to
be herded towards them to be showered with it. The iliara
are, perhaps not surprisingly, reluctant to go. The nature
of their reluctance is indicated by their eventual retreat
to the ghala ingkura, when they sing of how happy they are
to be ilbanngura and how they are so pleased to be back on
the sacred ground. This, of course, is very different from
their attitude when they were first taken for initiation -
when they literally had to be captured by the old men and
dragged away from their mothers to the pulu ground. Now they
do not want to leave 'the womb of their fathers' and they
fear the outside world of women, from whose fire they once had to be forcibly separated. But the older men know that this attachment cannot last, and every day the iliara are driven towards the women to face the fire. The young men are being rejected.

At this stage of the ceremony, then, something of a contradiction has been reached. The young men are growing in strength and they are showing signs of rebelling against the might of their elders; but at the same time they fear the consequences of leaving the men's world and returning to the women's. The intensity of the contradiction pervades the whole structure of ritual operations and it now has to move towards a resolution.

10.7 Up All Night (Phase 3)

The movement towards the climax of the ingkura becomes evident at the time when the old men construct the kauaua pole and the mbiljikara, for now the iliara are in a different mood when they return from their hunting. The young men are always quiet when they come to the ghala ingkura. The ghala para has been dug over and softened, suggesting that its awesome power is 'softening' (cf. the description, to be mentioned in Chapter Twelve, of old men being 'softened' when they give up their secrets). In addition, the iliara no longer undergo their fire ordeals at the hands of the women. Instead the tables are turned: the iliara now attack the women with their own fire.

The young men become the possessors of fire by taking up brands especially lit for them on the ghala ingkura. Directed by the leader of the festival, they run to the women
and send the firesticks rocketing through the air. It seems that whereas in the past few weeks the iliara have been fleeing from the women’s fires, they are now asserting themselves. Spencer and Gillen (1927:291) were told that this action by the novices represents an attack made in The Dreaming by some young native cat men on another group. They say that when the iliara come back to the ghala para and lay quietly there, they are ‘wild men’ who have been ‘tamed’. Spencer and Gillen do not say anything more about this mock raid, but if the equation fire=libido is applied, then it may be interpreted as a symbolically erotic encounter—a raid for women.

Spencer and Gillen say that the ‘taming’ of the young men is the result of the presence of the mbiljikara. While the novices are away the great double-tjurungu is placed in position and held by the ingkura leader, who is flanked by two other men holding his arms. The mbiljikara is slowly moved up and down throughout the whole of the night. The novices, however, initially do not see this in the darkness which cloaks the ground. In the morning they catch their first glimpse of the mbiljikara and discover that, had the old men failed at any moment in their arduous task, they (the novices) would have died. How, then, does the mbiljikara ‘tame’ the young men? This is an extremely important question and I intend to devote some considerable space to it. In many ways its answer is the key to understanding the overall significance of male initiation.

In Chapter Five I briefly drew attention to the apparent polysemy of the term mbiljikara. In point of fact, the word has been the subject of some considerable ethnogra-
Phiic dispute. Spencer and Gillen (1899:561) were told initially that it meant "newly-born child". Carl Strehlow (1913:39-40) challenged this, saying that it meant "pressed together" (from the verb mbiljikuma - to be close against). In Western Aranda, said Strehlow, the double-tjurunga is usually known as kuanjatara, which means 'the two in each other'. Sometimes it is called mbekuarinja - 'put together'. However, when Spencer re-investigated the matter (Spencer and Gillen 1927:225) the first view was re-affirmed, and the explanation (given in Chapter Five) was proffered that the mbiljikara was a 'baby pouch' full of children. Finally, when Roheim (1974b:127-9) looked into the question in 1929, he was led to believe that Carl Strehlow's translation was accurate, and that Spencer and Gillen's was probably an error caused by confusion with the word ambilja-ingkura - 'child-hole'. My suspicion is that the investigators were given alternative 'inside' and 'outside' mythopoeic meanings of the same term (quite possibly reflecting regional variations). So what precisely is the mbiljikara?

First of all it is evident from the myth of the native cats that the mbiljikara is a container of spirits from which children are created. It is obvious, too, that it is a double-tjurunga ('pressed-together'). According to Roheim (1974b:127), in The Dreaming, when the mbiljikara was used in connection with the sacred site of Imanda:

Araiaka, the chief of the Bat totem, was the guardian of the mbiljikara ..., which consisted of two tjurungas tied together and kept in a pouch, and from which he had obtained a son who was called Mbiljikara. An ingkura was held at Imanda, and youths from the Wild-cat and Bat totem [sic] were there. Then Araiaka decorated himself and showed the mbiljikara to the novices, saying, 'From this tjurunga I obtained a son'.
But if the mbiljikara is both 'baby pouch' and double-tjurunga, what is the nature of its revelation to the novices?

A similar event to that recounted by Roheim occurs in the long native cat myth told to Spencer and Gillen (1927: 368-9). Noting first that in The Dreaming the novices were all painted up as ilbanngura atua, representing members of all the different totems, they continue:

The final ceremony was concerned with the mbiljikara. The ingkata placed all the tjurunga that they contained in one of them, and put it on one side. He then took the two Malbungka tjurunga and tied them together, winding them round with hair-string. Then he placed them in the second mbiljikara, which he decorated with down. He had, meanwhile, called the two women [Ilaparintja and Lungarinia] back into the camp, and while the ilbanngura men lay with their heads on the para ..., the ingkata sat down, with Ilaparintja on one side of him and Lungarinia on the other, in the same positions occupied at night-time when the guruna from the mbiljikara, on which the ingkata laid his head, came out and went into the two women. The ceremony was associated with the idea that the guruna had come out of the mbiljikara, which was empty, save for the two Malbungka tjurunga, had gone into the women and had given rise to the ilbanngura men and to the women to whom it was shortly to be shown for a brief moment. It was also associated with the fact that tjurunga out of the mbiljikara, together with their guruna, were to be given to the ilbanngura men and their women mates, who were about to be sent out to populate the knganakalas [totemic centres]. This final ceremony was, in fact, the great abanbihuma ['increase rite'], concerned with the reproduction of human beings.

Evidently, then, the mbiljikara act has a good deal to do with human fertility, and that much might have been suspected from the events which occur at the very end of the festival.

Roheim (1974b:132) came to the conclusion that the mbiljikara represents a modification of the primal scene. In Carl Strehlow's (1913:39) description of the ingkura, it is said that the two tjurunga which make up the mbiljikara are
related to each other as father and son. The father is one of the Malbungkas; the son is called Albaramanta. In Spencer and Gillen's version, the two tjurunga are said to represent both the Malbungkas, who are brothers (elder and younger). In the exegetical account Roheim received, it is said that Araiaka had a son who came from the mbiljikara and was named after it. Bearing in mind, says Roheim, that "the ceremony is intended to reduce the primal aggression of the young males", it appears that:

The primal scene is replaced by something that suggests and facilitates a sublimation. Father and son are 'joined together'; heterosexual libido becomes aim-inhibited and homosexual. Moreover, the rite is distinguished from reality in that two penises can be in one 'pouch'. If the old men fail to keep on lifting the two tjurungas during the whole night, the youths must die; for the parricidal impulses had been evoked by the erection in the primal scene.

To which he adds as a footnote:

The threatened death is retribution. In other words, the boys must die if the fathers cannot lift the tjurungas, i.e. cannot get an erection; for they would then dare to wish the death of the old men.

All this, says Roheim, is confirmed in the showing of the mbiljikara to the women.

The women are only shown the reconciliation between fathers and sons for one second, because it is unstable, the rite itself indicating what would happen if the women were not kept away, that is, if there was no repression. The old men throw themselves upon the mbiljikara and the youths throw themselves upon the old men.

And finally in another footnote he states:

Mbiljikara = primal scene. The decisive trauma unites the generations; the old men attack the mbiljikara; the young men attack the old men.

One senses Roheim struggling slightly with this interpretation: it is, I think, a good example of those 'half-
truths' which Strehlow saw as typical of Roheim's work (see Chapter One). Certainly, one can go along with the idea that the *mbiljikara* signifies male solidarity. That much seems evident from the communal display in front of the women. Perhaps the symbolism of the primal scene can also be substantiated to some degree, because the raising and lowering of the *mbiljikara* by the ritual leader and the two adjoining actors representing the first native cat women (*Ilapairintja* and *Lungarinia*) is explicitly said to be an enactment of the novices' 'coming into being'. This recalls the primal scene revelation that occurred in circumcision, when the novice witnessed his own conception and was said to 'see and know' (see Chapter Nine). The *ingkura* revelation appears equally erotic.

Yet I am not sure that Roheim is completely correct in his interpretations concerning male solidarity. The notion that the *mbiljikara*, as primal scene, is 'the decisive trauma [which] unites the generations' is intriguing, and I will later adduce evidence in support of this hypothesis. But several problems remain. First, what evidence is there that the *mbiljikara* signifies 'aim-inhibited and homosexual' libido; and if it does, why should it do so at this particular stage of the ceremony? Second, on a related point, how does the witnessing of the *mbiljikara* 'tame' the young men? And third, what is the exact nature of the collective display in front of the women? Roheim does not attempt to solve the first problem, and his answers to the second and third questions leave something to be desired.

Roheim says that the 'threatened death' of the novices, should the *ingkura* leader fail in his task of lifting the
mbiljikara, is retribution. But it seems to me that the symbolic import of the mbiljikara copulation is rather more obvious. If the young men's spirits came originally from the mbiljikara, and the mbiljikara performance is an enactment of their conceptions, then the old men's 'keeping it up all night' really is the condition of the young men's lives. Without the erection of the mbiljikara, it is not that the young men would 'dare to wish the death of the old men', but that the young men would never have come into existence in the first place. The mbiljikara is before all else the affirmation of the novices' existence, and if it is linked to the potential death of the old men, then there seems to be little evidence that this is directly a matter of the young men's aggression towards their seniors (even though, as I shall point out below, such aggression later becomes a key feature of the ingkura).

Roheim states that the collective display in front of the women, when the mbiljikara is very briefly shown and then smothered by the bodies of all the men, is a double attack: 'the old men attack the mbiljikara; the young men attack the old men'. I can see no evidence whatsoever for this interpretation. Spencer and Gillen (1927:291-2) say that they are at a loss to interpret the event, suggesting only that "what little the women do see simply serves to add to their mystification". They do, however, point out that the women still represent the same external group that was earlier attacked with the firebrands. Carl Strehlow (1913: 40) provides no clues at all, since he says that this particular section of the ritual appears not to be performed by the Western Aranda. Actually, when writing The Arunta,
Spencer and Gillen neglected to mention that they had been told that the tumbling on top of the mbiljikara by the men represents the latter's death. This does not, however, support Roheim's theory of the 'attack': all the men appear to 'die' (or 'tumble down' as it is sometimes known in Aboriginal English). They 'die' together.

Roheim's main evidence concerning the mbiljikara being representative of a homosexual tie between father and son comes from Carl Strehlow's report that the mbiljikara tjurunga are one of the Malbangkas and his son, and he backs the interpretation up with his own informant's account about the Imanda ingkura. Yet Spencer and Gillen say that the two tjurunga are both the Malbungkas - elder and younger brother. No doubt Roheim would see this as a displacement of the main unconscious theme, but I think a more convincing interpretation can be mounted by pursuing the problem from a different direction.

Up until this stage of the ceremony the young men have been in an inferior position - passive, dependent and ritually feminised. They have witnessed the primal scene and as a result have 'died' at the hands of the father. But the way back from death has been indicated by subincision, which is the beginnings of a homosexual reconciliation between fathers and sons. But the function of initiation is to make marriageable men, not women or homosexuals. This being so, it is important to see how the rites manage the transfer of libidinal attachment from mother to father as a temporary phase: being passive before the father has to be temporary, otherwise the whole rationale and function of male initiation would collapse.
At this point it is judicious to make a brief theoretical excursion. The period between the primal scene and acceptance of symbolic castration is, according to Lacan (1977a:289) a passage from 'being' (or 'not being') the phallus to 'having' (or 'not-having') the phallus. The primal scene itself corresponds to the initial destruction of phallicism, the shift from 'being' to 'nothing'. This is what is dramatised as symbolic death at circumcision, when the youth is literally 'found wanting'. But subincision takes the matter a stage further.

At the moment of the primal scene an infant's sexuality is indeterminate and both boys and girls respond in much the same way. Having been shown to be incapable ... of being the phallus that the mother lacks, [the child] is left with the solution of being the woman that [the father] lacks (Lacan 1977a:207).

This, it seems, is the role which boys adopt when they are ritually feminised at subincision, and which they continue to play during the first half of the ingkura festival. I would argue that the importance of such staged regression to potential femininity lies in its relation to a boy's discovery of his masculinity through the castration complex; that is, in its relation to the shift from 'being' to 'having'.

Lacan (1977a:217) maintains that if symbolic castration has, for whatever reason, not been properly consolidated, the Name-of-the-Father is "foreclosed [and] never [attains] the place of the Other" (my emphasis). Foreclosure (Verwerfung) is a term which Lacan borrows from Freud to explain the dynamics of psychosis. He uses it especially in his re-
examination of Freud's (1979b:129-223) study of Daniel Schreber, a German high court judge who suffered from homosexual delusions of being 'screwed' (in all senses of the term) by God (Lacan 1977a:179-225). The crux of Schreber's phantasies were the ideas of 1) undergoing various forms of bodily destruction, and 2) being 'unmanned' and forced by circumstances to adopt the role of a woman. These notions recall the position of a novice through circumcision and subincision, and the parallel, as I propose to show, is far from incidental.{8}

Laplanche and Pontalis (1973:166) point out that foreclosure (or repudiation) has to be distinguished from repression in the repertoire of defensive actions. In primal repression, the force which constitutes the unconscious through 'splitting', the phallus, is given a specific place in the structure of the mind (as outlined in Chapter Seven). In foreclosure, however, the subject refuses to give the paternal phallus any significance whatsoever and acts as if it had never been perceived. Hence the formula: "foreclosure consists in not symbolising what ought to be symbolised ... it is a 'symbolic abolition'" (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973: 168).

When the possibility of castration is indicated by the primal scene, the subject's response is determined by "the law introduced by the father into [the] sequence" (Lacan 1977a:289). If the father's law is not confirmed, then the child straightforwardly denies that the mother is castrated and she becomes, or reverts to the position of, a phallic mother, remaining so for as long as the father is symbolically absent. The latter condition defines the father's
non-existence as an object of identification, so preventing the transition from 'being' to 'having' (or 'not-having'). But when the father's law is affirmed, a different trajectory of development becomes possible.

The reinstatement of the phallic mother is the Aboriginal method of bringing the early oedipal crisis to a close. Initiation, I believe, is necessary in order rectify this foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father. The value of ritual death, and the ensuing feminisation of the novice, lies precisely in the affirmation of The Law—the Law of the Father which makes castration inevitable, together with the splitting of the mind through unconscious acceptance and conscious denial of lack. Tuanjiraka, it will be recalled, is what is in the novice. It is his guruna, his soul, given to him at the moment of ritual death. This soul, as will later become evident, is inserted by the father and is the basis of a youth's membership of his patrilodge. But it is also, in so far as it is constitutive of the unconscious through the discontinuation of foreclosure, a guarantor of proper symbolic thought.

A youth discovers himself through repression. Having had the force of 'non-being' and 'not-having' pushed home, he then defines himself on the basis of possession of the phallus. But if masculinity is thereby affirmed, so too is the symbolic faculty, which requires a stable unconscious structure to articulate the relation between signifier and signified (as I argued in Chapter Seven). In this respect, the use of foreclosure as an explanation of Schreber's delusions of body destruction and persecution becomes doubly interesting, because the denizens and demons of the night so
frequently portrayed in initiation acts, particularly at circumcision, have a very similar quality and structure to the beings who haunted Schreber's world.

Lacan (1977a:217) says that the triggering mechanism of psychosis always consists in the Name-of-the-Father being "called into symbolic opposition to the subject". He seems to mean by this that psychotic delusions are apt to occur whenever a person who has inadequately repressed 'the will to castration' is brought into a relationship with a paternal figure of authority. In such circumstances the subject fails to differentiate between signifier and signified and regresses to a state of imaginary (rather than symbolic) identifications: "The imaginary [becomes] the real" (Lemaire 1977:233) and the projected figure of the primal scene takes the form of a hallucination. Schreber, for example, thought that God and his doctor were "in [a] plot whereby my soul was to be murdered and my body used like a strumpet" (quoted in Freud 1979b:149-50), and here I think one gains good insight into the subjective experience of Central Australian initiation.

Schreber thought that he was being 'fucked' (his own term) by God, by which he meant that, on the one hand, he had to take the role of a woman and, on the other, allow himself to be belittled and made ashamed (Freud 1979b:150). Central Australian novices go through initiation to be given shame, and, as with Schreber, they are first 'murdered' and then feminised in order to induce submission. They also share something of Schreber's delusions, since many of the acts which they witness are pseudo-hallucinations, performed in the spooky, eerie darkness of the bush, lit only as the
occasion demands by the red flames of campfires. The novice at circumcision quite possibly lives out a nightmare as much as he does a dream, and his dazed mind has to cope with many of the demons that have haunted his childhood years—devildogs, the flying red eyes of nightjars, and so on, which Roheim (1972:64) sees as nothing less than dream (or dream-like) projections of the monstrous primal scene.

But we might recall here Roheim's 'two-tier' description (quoted in Chapter Two) of Aboriginal religion having its origins in projection of the primal scene and its culmination in introjection following the failure of the original defence. For if the demons of childhood gain their realistic force partly from the children's lack of symbolic castration (foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father), then these shadowy, evil figures begin to be understood and even inserted into the subject at initiation. Tuanjiraka is an excellent example of this. To women and children he is a 'bogeyman' figure; but to the newly circumcised novice he is both the spirit within and 'just a story'. To some extent it seems that a newly initiated youth is leaving behind the world of 'things that go bump in the night', his imaginary projections, but at the same time taking them on, through his submission to their sheer force. Schreber believed eventually that his feminisation before God was to lead to redemption: "the Order of Things imperatively demanded my emasculation" (quoted in Freud 1979b:151). In Central Australia, as I will discuss in more detail below, to be subincised is also to be redeemed. It is the price one pays for access to The Law, and the paradoxical freedom one gains through submission is in no small measure a function of be-
ing released from 'the fear of the dark'.

The relevance of the transition from 'being' to 'having', and from foreclosure to repression, for initiation is best understood by returning to the subject of Tuanjiraka's singularity. Faye Bell (1980:16) has noted that circumcision is in a sense a kind of declaration of phallicism, because by ridding the penis of the prepuce, the glans is exposed to view. Furthermore:

The glans is exposed naturally when the penis is aroused; the social exposure of the glans [at circumcision] can [thus] be viewed as a social preparation for intercourse, for manhood as the reproductive stage of life.

To which one may add that since the prepuce signifies the mother (see Chapter Nine), circumcision in effect displays the phallus that has been taken away from her. As such, the exposure of the glans is not so much 'a social preparation for intercourse' as the display of the instrument of incestuous intercourse.

But circumcision does 'pre-prepare' a youth. All the time the phallus is in evidence, it is still the object of the mother's desire, and in psychic terms it is still attached to her. She is all it knows. One might recall here that Tuanjiraka signifies this phallic condition with his single leg. But as the riddle of the sphinx implies, a single-legged human identity is impossible. One may have one name, but one may have only two, three or four legs. And when Tuanjiraka returns to his normal life in camp, perhaps also at this time ceasing to do things back-to-front and inside-out, he uses two legs, which according to the riddle of the sphinx is a sign of maturity.

There is good evidence to suggest that Tuanjiraka em-
bodies an ambiguous male/female identity, and that this identity is linked to the novice’s own feminine predicament. In The Dreaming two Tuanjiraka men were born from wooden tjurunga that had been changed from female to male. The spirits connected with the tjurunga entered the woman Lungarinja, but the tjurunga themselves were given to the Malbungkas to carry. The Malbungkas were then circumcised by the Tuanjiraka men. Later, when the young men were being initiated, the Malbungkas used the tuanjiraka tjurunga as bull-roarers with which to herd the young men towards the women’s camp (Spencer and Gillen 1927:365-8).

The Tuanjirakas are not only female in connection with the tjurunga from which they were created. They are also transformable into the tnangkara bull-roarer, which is given to a youth after circumcision and represents his mother’s conception totem. As pointed out earlier, tuanjiraka and tnangkara bull-roarers are the same, so Tuanjiraka clearly has some fundamental connection with the mother.

In The Dreaming, after the Tuanjirakas had circumcised the Malbungkas (apparently without difficulty), they were instructed to circumcise the young men of the wandering native cat troop.

First of all the Tuanjiraka tried to remove the foreskin by means of pieces of burning bark of the mulga tree ..., but it was not successful, so they tried biting with their teeth, and found this better (Spencer and Gillen 1927:366).

There is a direct parallel here between the way in which the Tuanjirakas circumcise and the way in which ndapa women performed the operation with burning bark before the introduction of the stone knife by the lakabara men (as explained in Chapter Nine).
In addition, I pointed out earlier that the Tuanjiraka are associated with the echidna. It so happens that, like the echidna, the Tuanjiraka are excessive castrators.

As before, the Tuanjiraka men performed the ceremony of circumcision on the younger men, who were rounded up by the two Malbungkas. It was dark before they had finished their work, and the tradition says that in their hurry they bit off the whole scrotum and penis of the last man, who was running away to avoid them (Spencer and Gillen 1927:372).

There is, then, a double contrast involved in the Tuanjiraka's circumcision attempts. They appear to do the operation simply enough to the Malbungkas, but when it comes to performing it on the young men they first find that they can only do it with difficulty, and then make a complete hash of the job. These contrasts, I believe, are linked to the feminine position accorded to the Tuanjirakas.

As has been pointed out already, Malbungka is the great father figure of native cat ceremonial acts, and the novices are his sons. The Tuanjirakas, therefore, circumcise both fathers and sons. But Tuanjiraka, through the tnangkara, is also a symbolic mother. The circumcising of the Malbungkas, then, might be interpreted as a sexual act, particularly in so far as it again employs fire symbolism. But this maternal sexuality, while moderate and non-problematic in respect of the father, is simply 'too hot' for the novices - and they die.

Initially the fire (for some unexplained reason) proves inadequate to its task, and it is then replaced by a method which is more than adequate. Thus, in so far as the Tuanjirakas represent the mother, we may say first that their erotic desire (their fire) fails to realise the young men's
phallus. Because the fire does not allow circumcision, the young men’s glans remain enveloped by their prepuces, a metaphorical expression of union with the mother. In other words, the mother retains the phallus. But we may also say that in so far as an attempt is made to realise the young men’s phallicism, it is dangerous, and may end in complete failure by excessive castration. Here, the mother’s sexual desire comes to be signified not by the warmth of fire, but the devouring teeth of the Tuanjirakas, from which the young native cat men flee. This, I would suggest, is the mother who lacks the phallus, and from whom, for that very reason, a young boy takes flight. As the myth states quite explicitly, the Tuanjirakas castrated the youth when he was running away from them.

Up to the time of circumcision, then, the human spirit has undergone a double transformation. Signified by the papa, it is initially placed directly in the mother’s care. It remains there for at least the first ten years of life, during which time the child knows nothing of his own secret identity, which is enveloped by his mother’s own spirit. But then, at the time of circumcision itself, the possibility of foreclosure is no longer feasible. The father intervenes and separates the child from the mother, exposing the child’s own vulnerable identity, experienced as death. That identity is marked by the tuanjiraka or tnangkara bull-roarer and by the youth’s own penis, for the first time emerging to lead a life of its own. As yet, however, it has nowhere to go; it knows only ‘the way of the women’ – which is now a castration threat from which to retreat. With the mother removed, only the father can give direction, and this is where tuan-
jiraka relates to the mbiljikara.

Tuanjiraka represents both the mother and the phallus, both the castrator and the 'single leg' that the mother desires. So long as the novice is tuanjiraka, therefore, he acutely feels the danger of castration. He realises himself as the phallus and sees that the way back to the mother is the road to oblivion. In Central Australian symbolism, as I showed in Chapter Four, this may come to be signified by the discomfort of copulating dogs unable to separate, or by the image of a mother and her recently circumcised son stuck together in eternal intercourse, with the son in constant pain. (9) In actual fact, these two images are related in another, less obvious way.

The dingo, like all canids, has a ring of erectile tissue encircling the glans penis. This tissue has little to do with the overall erection of the penis, which is supported by the baculum or os penis, but it nevertheless swells inside the bitch's vagina. This is what causes copulating dogs to 'lock', since the penis cannot be withdrawn until after detumescence (Ewer 1973:116). What is particularly remarkable about this quality of canine 'stuckness' in the Aboriginal context is that it is associated with phallic singularity. Not only does a male dingo have a penis with a swollen ring around it, like that of a recently circumcised man, it also, being the only large placental mammal in the interior of Australia (apart from man), shares none of the qualities of genital bifurcation characteristic of animals such as the kangaroo, native cat and echidna. So, if Tuanjiraka has only one leg while in the bush, one should also remember that a recently circumcised youth living away
from camp has to refer to himself as a dog. And like an incestuous dog, he has only one penis, swollen and in pain.

The relationship which obtains between the mammalian penis and the marsupial one is duplicated in that between the tuanjiraka and mbiljikara tjurunga. Although in The Dreaming there were originally two tuanjiraka tjurunga, the novice is only given one when he has undergone his circumcision.(10) The mbiljikara, on the other hand, is a double tjurunga, and I would argue that the transition from single tuanjiraka to double mbiljikara matches the transition from the 'single' penis revealed at circumcision to the 'double' penis which is given as the final result of subincision.

Subincision is a gradual process, and the subincision wound, the symbolic vagina, is increased steadily over a period of time. It is crucial to note in this regard that the models of phallicism which Central Australian Aborigines find in nature are in line with this gradual progression. In the first place, there is the singular phallicism of the dingo, which represents the recently circumcised novice. But when a novice is a dog, he is actually circumcised by a (symbolic) father who is a kangaroo. This, so I have argued, is not only connected with the kangaroo's bifid penis, but also with the fact that in nature, kangaroo 'fathers' actually do appear to prevent their 'sons' from copulating with their 'mothers'. This in turn is in contrast with the situation with dingoes, where the 'father' has no parenting role whatsoever, either positive or negative.

This relationship between fatherhood and the condition of the phallus is not arbitrary. When a youth is first subincised, he is so not in the context of kangaroo acts, but
native cat ones, and the native cat is completely 'subincised', appearing to have two penes. In addition, native cat fathers take a positive role in parenting, in contrast with both male dogs and kangaroo bucks. But it so happens that in terms of its phallicism, the kangaroo is mediatory between the dingo and the native cat. While its penis is bifid, it is not completely so, the bifurcation only extending to the glans (Owen in Cawte 1974:130). There is thus a threefold progression in terms of phallicism which corresponds with another in terms of fatherhood (see Illustration 18).

The significance of Illustration 18 is this: at any given stage of initiation the symbolic father is always one step ahead of the son in terms of phallic condition. In other words, the son's own phallicism operates according to a kind of deferred model, which is precisely what is said to occur in the resolution of the oedipus complex. The connection between the degree of castration and the degree to which the father parents is a necessary one, because it is only through the father that the break with the mother, and thus symbolic castration, can be accepted. Aranda totemic symbolism appears to represent a profound insight into this psychic process.

Aranda initial ritual thus operates according to the pattern of a promise. When the youth is a dog, he will become like a kangaroo: when he is a kangaroo, he will become like a native cat (and, incidentally, when he is a native cat, he will become like an echidna, a subject to which I will return in Chapter Eleven). At this stage, then, it is prudent to return to the subject of the mbiljikara, because
Illustration 19. Phallicism and Fatherhood

PHALIC CONDITION

Human (unsubincised)  Dog  Kangaroo  Native cat  Human (subincised)

PATERNAL CONDITION

Father absent  Father present, but acts only negatively  Father present in a caring role

the climax of the *ingkura* is the time when the sons come to take over Malbungka’s mantle — in other words, they become ‘fully-fledged’ native cats.

The *mbiljikara tjurunga* represent the Malbangkas, or at least one of them and his son. It thus seems to be important that the *mbiljikara* symbolises the father figure, around whom the novices have earlier had to dance, and to whom they have had to make gestures of obeisance and femininity. This last point is crucial. The father’s entry into an initiate’s life at adolescence cannot be merely momentary. If foreclosure is to be avoided, there has to be a persistence on the part of the father — the very persistence that was lacking in early childhood. It is not the son alone who makes a transition at initiation: so does the father, who must be transformed from kangaroo (the threatening father) to native cat (the caring father). At the same time, in displaying this persistence the father will render to his son his masculinity and strength of spirit by affirming the preconditions of primal repression.

It is this which I believe to be symbolised by the *mbiljikara* act. The *mbiljikara* revelation appears to be structurally identical with the novice’s ‘birth’ from male kangaroos in the circumcision acts. It will be remembered from Chapter Nine that I argued that this birth was in fact a dramatisation of copulation and that the youth was implicitly identified with semen. The *mbiljikara* act appears to have precisely the same import, since it is not only an obvious parody of the sexual act, but also the novices’ conception. The *mbiljikara* act is proof that Malbungka, the great father-figure, can ‘go all night’; it is he who is
identified with the double tjurunga. But more than this, I believe that the mbiljikara also signifies Malbungka's decline as a result of his prowess.

The position of the ingkura leader holding the mbiljikara between two 'women' is a provocative symbol and probably relates to the idea of the male phallus being enclosed by the female element - the 'one' and the 'two' together. But there is a similarity between this triadic arrangement and both the mbiljikara itself and the subincised penis, since both of these latter symbols also embody the 'one' in the 'two'. In psychic terms, the triadic image reflects the repressed structure of the primal scene, the very event which is in view. In other words, the mbiljikara can be taken to represent the unconscious which has been constituted at initiation. It is the paternal phallus which has been 'crossed out' because it is in the mother, an image which indicates the exact nature of Malbungka's decline and fall.

Malbungka is the mbiljikara itself: the tjurunga which are bound together and lifted up and down all night are both his according to Spencer and Gillen. Even if this formula is not generally acceptable, it seems very obvious that the mbiljikara represents the virility of the senior generation, which Malbungka also undoubtedly signifies. There is thus a profound link between Malbungka's virility and that of the novices, since it is the exhibition of the former's masculinity which guarantees the latter's. As the Aranda say, the night-long lifting of the mbiljikara not only imparts strength to the novices, it protects their very lives: if the old men should fail in their arduous task, the young men
would die. Roheim’s account of this, which states that the threat is one of retribution for parricidal impulses triggered by the witnessing of the primal scene, seems to have little explanatory value in the overall context of the initiatory round. There is, I believe, a better way to explain the mbiljikara’s significance.

Certainly, the youths are witnessing the primal scene, but it seems to me that what occurs in the process is almost the opposite of what Roheim states. Malbungka’s virility is in view, but so in a sense is his vulnerability. Spencer and Gillen’s (1927:289-90) description of the scene is worth quoting in full to gain an impression of what I have in mind.

While [the novices] were away the leader, who had remained on the ingkura ground, had taken the mbiljikara in his hands, and with his arms linked in those of his supporters, he lifted the former up and down without any cessation, save for a few seconds at a time, during the whole night ...

... There was very little rest to be had – the monotonous rising and falling of the mbiljikara went on without ceasing, as also did the singing of the old men ... Shortly after five o’clock the ilbanngura ... were roused. Then for the first time since nine o’clock on the previous evening – that was after a stretch of eight hours duration – the leader and the two men supporting him ceased from lifting the mbiljikara up and down. There was little wonder that they looked tired and haggard, but even yet their work was not done [because they had to take the mbiljikara and the novices over to be shown briefly to the women].

The mbiljikara act is hard work. It demonstrates only too well the reality of ‘the nemesis of reproductivity’ which I earlier showed to afflict Malbungka, and one cannot help but be reminded of the fact that Central Australian Aborigines usually only apply the English term ‘work’ to ritual involvement and sexual intercourse (Hamilton 1982:92).
That image of Malbungka as a pitiful old man, teased and tormented by his sons, is in fact the other side of the coin to his virility. Time and time again Central Australian myths or songs come back not only to Malbungka’s manliness, but also to his and other native cats’ diseased or run down condition (cf. Roheim 1969:4-5, Spencer and Gillen 1927:346-7, 382, 384-6, 389). The mbiljikara act appears to show that being a real man is a taxing business.

Roheim is undoubtedly correct in encapsulating the mbiljikara act with the words ‘the boys must die if the fathers cannot lift the tjurungas, i.e. cannot get an erection’, but not in saying that this is because the youths ‘would then dare to wish the death of the old men’. If anything, initiation comes to realise that oedipal wish, because the youths sit and witness the older men wearing themselves out. In circumcision, too, the novice has witnessed his own ‘pre-history’ and seen that his own coming into being was contingent on a kind of primal revolution. Far from initiation rites preventing oedipal wishes, they seem instead to dramatise the virtues and necessity of the oedipus complex as a means of binding the subject to The Law. Men become men in virtue of their fathers making way for them. As Lacan states, it is always the dead father who signifies The Law.

Consider, then, what happens immediately before and immediately after the night-long raising of the mbiljikara. Firstly, for some weeks before the mbiljikara act, the elders have become more and more ‘unreasonable’ in their demands for tjauerilja. In addition, they have been ‘chasing’ the youths away from the ceremonial ground to be show-
erad with women's fire, representative of the sexuality on which they have turned their backs. Youths subordinated on the ghala para initially have a feminine attachment to men, not a masculine attachment to women, and yet the elders are insisting that they 'go back', driven, interestingly enough, by the tuanjiraka bull-roarers swung originally in The Dreaming by the Malbungkas. It must surely be, then, that the novices are being let down by their 'fathers', just as they were earlier let down by their mothers. At this stage of the ceremony one can say that the novices are reaching a stage where they can, so to speak, trust nobody. Fathers who are supposed to love them drive them away into the arms of women who have already let them down. And the fathers expect increased payments of meat into the bargain!

The critical moment comes when the novices take up their firebrands and 'raid' the women. This situation is one of utter turmoil, but it is one in which the youths' spirit is beginning to emerge: they are rekindling the flames of the fire which was extinguished at circumcision. When they quietly return to the ghala ingkura they are said to be 'tamed' by the lifting of the mbiljikara. The idea of domestication, I suggest, is here employed as a metaphor for the transmission of The Law: it is domestication in the sense of becoming 'cultured'. For quite apart from the mbiljikara being a kind of 'All-Father', and thereby being the means of transmitting the Name-of-the-Father, it is used in a context where the young men's sexuality, and thereby society's marriage regulations and human reproductive capacities, are at stake. The mbiljikara 'tames' because it specifies to each and every novice his part in the ancestral
Law: it binds him to his patrilodge. However, this transmission of culture is of a quite distinctive kind.

The mbiljikara act represents the primal scene, and in this I agree with Roheim. But as I have already stated, there is no evidence for Roheim's assertion that the tumbling onto the mbiljikara in front of the women is an attack by the younger generation on the older one. The Aranda in fact say that it is a kind of mass death, and I think that this may be nearer to the truth. I suggest that the mass death is a kind of generalised symbolic castration which resolves the contradictory predicament of the novices on the ingkura ground—that it is the erasure of the paternal phallus and the binding of three generations in a kind of symbolic contract which binds them to carry and transmit The Law. In mundane terms, it is correlative with the commitment to marriage and the raising of a family; that is, the growing up of children who will continue to reproduce the Law of the Father.

The old men carrying the mbiljikara move towards the women amidst a solid bloc of other men, and they are all decorated with emu-bush branches, symbolic of their solidarity. The women beckon them to come further, calling all the time "kuta, kuta, kuta" (Spencer and Gillen 1927:290). Kutakuta is the Aranda name for the spotted nightjar which is represented in circumcision as 'preying' on the tail of the rock rat (Spencer and Gillen 1927:191). The name is almost certainly onomatopoeic, since the spotted nightjar makes a distinctive 'gobbling' or 'bubbling' sound when it calling (Frith 1976:313). The meaning of the women's invitation thus looks quite transparent, and is all the more tell-
ing in view of its link with the feared noises of bush demons, whose true character the young men are beginning to discern. The women are offering the rock rat’s fate to the bearers of the mbiljikara; tempting the men to yield to castration. And the men oblige. The mbiljikara moves steadily forwards and then, when near the women, collapses and ‘dies’.

I think that Roheim is absolutely correct to say that the primal scene is the ‘decisive trauma [which] unites the generations’, but this is not, in so far as it is dramatised by the mbiljikara act, because of the antipathy between elders and juniors. To the contrary, the symbolic castration in front of the women is the moment of revelation in which the young men discover that castration is a condition of being a man; that the father, as well as one’s self, faces emasculation (just as women do, though in a different way – cf. Roheim [1932:68-72] on the female aspect of the subincision wound as the bond uniting different generations of males in the Western Desert). Indeed, the emasculation is shown to be both the result of the women’s own lack – the latter’s desire for the phallus – and the very condition of existence. Had the father not offered himself up to the ‘jaws’ of woman, the son would never have come into existence. Castration is an essential feature of being, and the mbiljikara act demonstrates its necessity.

The mbiljikara is the ‘joined together’ because it is two tjurunga combined as a phallic unity, but it symbolises much more than this. ‘Two together’ is also the condition of primal repression, when the castrated phallus finds its location in the realm of the Other and is projected out into
consciousness as an integrated unity. At this stage of the ceremony, then, everything comes together — men with double penes that are secretly vaginas, phallic tjurunga that are also ‘baby pouches’, and conscious masculinity and unconscious femininity.[12]

There is one final point about the mbiljikara which is especially noteworthy. In The Dreaming the mbiljikara is described as being a ‘baby pouch’ stocked with spirits (guruna) which go into women and cause conception. In ritual, too, the mbiljikara is regarded as a phallic instrument from which the young men derive their existence. As Araiaka, the bat leader of Imanda stated: ‘From this tjurunga I obtained a son’. This affirmation of paternity is a broadly based one relating to membership of the patrilodge, but it has important implications for the understanding of the Aranda’s attitude towards physiological conception. For the guruna which comes from the mbiljikara is not the spirit which enters the mother from an ancestral being; that is, it is not a spirit child. To the contrary, it is a spirit which is in some sense opposed to the spirit child — and one of its concrete manifestations appears to be semen.

I will return to the subject of spirit children later, but I should point out immediately that ancestral and paternal contributions to a child’s existence are both spiritual. Among the Western Aranda, for example:

Every man was ... a double personality, and had, as it were, two ‘souls’. But these ‘souls’ were not imagined as being purely ethereal. When a man was sleeping and dreaming, one of these ‘souls’ (i.e. that part of him which was mortal and was called guruna) left his sleeping body and actually went through all the experiences which the sleeper saw in a dream state ... Similarly, the atua njaitja (the spirit double who is the manifest-
ation of a totemic ancestor] could take on a separate shape when the man with whom he was indivisibly linked was awake and going about his ordinary business (Strehlow 1971:598-9, my emphasis).

Strehlow (1971:594-8) implies that physiological paternity is understood as the transmission of *guruna*, and this seems to be confirmed by Roheim, who was told on one occasion that sometimes a woman may see a man’s *guruna* in her dream. She will run to him even though he is another woman’s husband. They have intercourse and she has a child (Roheim 1972:91).

On another occasion it was explained to Roheim (1950:129) that pointing bones (sorcery implements) project *guruna* at an intended victim and that this spirit substance is equated with semen (as well as other body substances). In addition, the *tuanjiraka* spirit which is said to be inside a novice after circumcision is also a *guruna*, and as I have shown at length in the previous chapter, the novice witnesses his own conception during the kangaroo ceremonial acts which introduce him to the patrilodge. Everything therefore points to the *guruna* as being the spirit of paternal transmission — semen.(13)

The equivalence makes perfect sense in terms of the general drift of initiation towards the resolution of the castration complex in the *mbiljikara* act. For not only is the spirit received at initiation that which is given by the father: it is also the same spirit which gives the subject the strength to become a father himself. As the equivalence of *tuanjiraka* and the echidna indicates, the *guruna* is at the very heart of the castration complex. In essence, then, the *guruna* is ‘the vital flow as it is transmitted in gene-
ration' - 'the will to castration inscribed in the Other'. It is surely no accident that the ingkura festival takes place in the context of a 'gathering of the clans', a more or less full expression of the local alliance group and its reproductive potential. What we now need to explore is the fate of the copula which brings everybody together - the phallus to which every novice on the ghala ingkura is subordinated.

10.8 Finale (Phase 4)

The pithy remark which Levy (1973:373) uses to characterise "the main private message" of supercision in the Society Islands could well be applied to the much grander "phantasmagoria" of Aranda initiation - "'masculinity is safe'". An important aspect of the guarantee of manhood is the releasing of the young men from a subordinate, feminine position. In a sense, symbolic castration is a partial return to the phallicism that was so thoroughly put down at the time of alkiraka iwuma and circumcision. A mother (and many other women besides) may be rejected through the psychic operations of initiation, but a wife (and possibly many lovers) will take her place when libido is partially channelled back in the women's direction.

The morning after the mbiljikara act is quiet: a culmination has been reached. But the rhythm picks up and a new phase begins with the hiding of sticks in the ghala para. These are said to represent young frogs (the frog being the most important totemic species of Imandla) and to have originally been carried in The Dreaming by Ilaparintja and Lungarinia, the mothers of all the novices witnessing the
mbiljikara scene. Eventually the sticks are used as musical accompaniment to song.

These sticks are not stated to be papa tjurunga, but they are likely to be related. The myth of the native cats reproduced by Spencer and Gillen makes no mention of them, but it does say that directly after the mbiljikara act, the two women gave birth to children — primarily sons. Furthermore, Ilaparintja is at the same time given a nhatantja pole to carry which is wrapped so that it cannot be seen (just as the papa is also wrapped when given to the women). I would therefore tentatively suggest that the sticks are analogous to the spirit children with which papa are normally associated (a subject I return to below).(14)

But from now on there is not one phallus on the ghala ingkura, but two. The ghala para is now accompanied by the erect kauaua pole first cut down and constructed when the mbiljikara was made. It is lavishly decorated, dangling with tjurunga, in particular the namatuna bull-roarers. Its tip is regaled with white feathers, and it is made to resemble a man with body decorations. For apart from being a fertility symbol, an erect, productive phallus, the kauaua is a man. It is the very body of Ngambakala himself, and as such is superlative among tjurunga. The relationship between the kauaua and the ghala para is almost certainly accounted for by the latter being a track: in The Dreaming, the phallus was carried by the ancestral native cats and made that track. The ghala para is the 'seminal trace' and this may well be connected with the fact that 'young frogs' (clapsticks) are found within it.(15)

The erection of the kauaua is the signal for the young
men to be smoked. Smoking normally signifies birth and I think the symbolism may also apply here. But this time it is men, and men alone, who perform the smoking operation. Spencer and Gillen (1927:294) describe it as an extremely trying ordeal, with the heat being intense and the smoke stifling. They also seem to imply that it is some form of disciplinary measure. If the smoking signifies birth, then, it may well be part of the strategy of rejection by the old men, who seem to be making life at the ingkura as uncomfortable as possible for the novices.

Carl Strehlow's Western Aranda account may be revealing in this respect. He states that just before being smoked, the novices 'play' with the kauaua pole, and one of them approaches the leader of the ingkura, who is identified with the pole, and presses his head down towards the earth. One of the young men then climbs the kauaua and tears down the namatuna. The 'going down' of the ingkura leader is thus connected with the 'coming up' of the novices (= namatuna) from the phallic pole, probably another expression of 'the nemesis of reproductivity'. Each of the namatuna has the novice's conception totem inscribed upon it, and this relates back to the account of the original ingkura performed in The Dreaming, since then all the recently initiated men were given wives and sent out to populate all the local totemic centres. This, together with the earlier remarks about papa tjurunga and conception totemism, raises the important question about the relationship between a man's ancestral spirit (not the guruna) and initiation. This is a problem which I propose to clarify in Chapter Eleven, since it has implications that would take me too far away from the sub-

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ject of the ingkura.

Directly after the smoking rite the male and female camps indulge in a peculiar form of badinage. The characteristic feature of this banter is that it is not rule-governed. All night long the men and women exchange their shouts and no heed is paid to propriety. It seems that the time when there is a marked separation of male and female, is also a time when there is a general social dissolution signified by unruly speech. I would suggest that this social breakdown also signifies continuity, since not only does it occur at the moment when the primordial kauaua (representative of Ngambakala’s primeval unity) appears on the scene, it also strongly recalls the separation of male and female in the sky world. Communication without rules is a contradiction in terms, since it is the equivalent of non-communication, and the latter condition is the very one which applies to the sky beings with whom Ngambakala is so closely associated (as shown in Chapters Four and Five).

The next ritual act confirms the idea of continuity on the totemic level. Each novice is painted with a totemic design and in an apparently random way. In addition, not one of the novices can see his own design, which is on his back, nor learn about it, on account of the general ban of silence. This, as Spencer and Gillen (1927:figure 110) show, is a truly remarkable scene in which the novices are gathered around the ceremonial pole and completely unaware of who they are (in a totemic sense). They can, however, identify others. The situation is, in fact, narcissistic, since there is complete continuity between subject and object and only imaginary identification obtains. This, I would argue, is
the closest the Aranda come to the Durkheimian conception of the 'collective'. Paradoxically, however, the society comes to its closest point of adhesion when there is nothing to put together. The unity is quite radical. (16)

The ceremonial kauaua signifies radical unity. Like Ngambakala, it is an unlimited potential - what I think the Aranda might agree to call 'the future' as well as 'the past' (The Dreaming). The kauaua is also the ghala para in a state of erection, the 'working' phallus which leaves its trace and which thereby ensures the vital flow guaranteeing future generations. The ancestral track therefore has a temporal as well as a spatial component, and one might be tempted to see in the kauaua the Central Australian equivalent of Old Father Time. But one might also recall that Old Father Time carries a sickle to signify the "dimension of castration" (Lacan 1977b:248) inherent in chronology.

Just like Old Father Time the ceremonial phallus has to move in a never-ending cycle, giving itself up to every future generation. This very clearly is the import of the last part of the ceremony on the ghala ingkura. The kauaua, having been ignominiously teased and stripped of its tjurunga, is straightforwardly 'killed' and laid to rest. In Carl Strehlow's version the kauaua is buried in the ghala para, which suggests that it 'goes down' in precisely the same way as the ingkura leader. In other accounts (T. G. H. Strehlow, Spencer and Gillen) it is simply left 'high' or 'low' (hill or ditch) to rot. But the ghala para too suffers this fate. The leader of the ingkura steps forwards and rends asunder the ghala para, dissecting both itself and the accompanying accumulation of emu-bush branches into two
parts. It seems as if in doing this he is voluntarily surrendering and giving up his own powers, which indeed he is by disseminating his knowledge. He has come to realise that knowledge and has spent himself in the process.

One may be certain that this interpretation is sound, since it is rendered almost directly by the Aranda. The ghala para, as far as the novices is concerned, is the oppressor from whom they have been released. As one of Strehlow's (1968:108) informants said:

The ghala para kept us tied down to the sacred ground. Every morning we went out hunting. We formed parties for hunting wallabies and bandicoots ... [W]e slew them in great heaps. We were hungry and we had sore feet. We were not allowed to eat what we had killed. Towards the end of the festival season game was almost exhausted and all fruits had been gathered. Our stomachs were empty. We grew lean. We tightened our hair-string belts. Our bellies sang all day.

The ghala para kept us tied down to the ingkura ground. The earth-mound oppressed us; it wearied us; it exhausted our strength. Its might was too great for us; it was the greatest of all sacred tjurunga. We were powerless before it.

But the death of the kauaua and the death of the ghala para are the young men's answer, and in these deaths the elders are suicidally complicit. The kauaua pole is violently uprooted by the iliara. It is to them symbolical of the ghala para ... which has tormented them during the weary months of their toil on the ingkura ground. They seize the pole in a body ... They 'weary it and exhaust its strength' just as the ghala para during the preceding months wearied them and exhausted their strength and oppressed their days and nights. The iliara rudely strip the pole of its decorations. It is flung away into a deep gutter and covered with branches. They form themselves into a long, straight column. In single file they advance sideways with shuffling steps across the sacred earth-mound. Their feet cleave a deep breach in the centre of the ghala para. The great tjurunga has been shattered; its spell has been broken; its power is no more (Strehlow 1968:111).
The symbolism here is largely transparent: the act is symbolic castration pure and simple. Roheim would have seen in it, I think, the truth of his assertion that the 'homosexual' union of fathers and sons is unstable, and the view has something to recommend it. It seems that when the novices treat the pole and ghala para with such disrespect, they achieve their release: they break free of containment. This is the nature of their birth, which is symbolised as escape from the paternal phallus. But one must not forget that in the primal scene the son identifies with the phallus, and he learns that he is the issue of his father. And he only knows this through the discovery that the paternal phallus 'dies' as it creates his identity. The father is always crippled by the son.

The 'dimension of castration' reveals the subtlety of the ingkura, in which the juniors move from subordination to the spectacle of their elders 'giving up'. It is as if the latter were saying: 'You think that you have been mutilated, emasculated and humiliated. But do you not see that this is the condition of being a man? We are your elders only on condition that we share this fate with you. And by accepting it yourselves, you too will one day become elders.' The novices thus learn that they are the father's castration; that the paternal phallus is being 'crossed out' as they form their independent identities. 'Coming', 'going', and 'coming into being' are all inextricably linked.

According to some ingkura accounts the young men, before discarding the kauaua, are led by their pmoara guardians through the broken ghala para and into the women's camp. They are smoked by the women, who also lay their hands
on the young men's shoulders. There is a strict division here: men may only be smoked by women of the opposite moiety — marriageable women. If this smoking is a rite of re-aggregation, akin once again to the smoking which takes place after birth, then it is of a quite specific kind. It evidently signifies marriage, or at least the proper channelling of heterosexual, non-incestuous libido. On the other hand, the definite maternal nature of the act, in its imitation of birth ritual, recalls Levi-Strauss's (1969:489) contention that "all marriage verges on incest": a wife is in all respects a substitute for the kinswomen who have been rejected. The heat to which the iliara succumb, then, is the same fire which they have been for so long scared to face while secure in their attachment to men. Now 'the will to castration' is affirmed and the festival ends with a celebration of the group's fertility, as the young men search for, and find, their women, who dance with the characteristic seductive movements of the nightjars which attacked the rock rat's tail at circumcision. (17)

The culmination of the ingkura reaches 'the point of indifference' for quite specific reasons. Continuity, a condition in which there is a lack of discrimination, is initially synonymous in Aranda mythology with the situation of the sky beings, who portray a way of life perfectly poised between infancy and old age, between the chained-together inapatua and the slumbering aged ancestors. The novices, too, have reached this point. They are men in the prime of condition, like Iliingka himself. But unlike Iliingka, they portray their mediate state as a moment in time. These men really were once spirit children, and as we shall see, they
will one day also become aged ancestors. They live their lives in between these two conditions, not as a negation of them both.

One final important detail of the ingkura requires scrutiny. Apart from the ilbantera which may be used at the ingkura (a subject which I propose to leave until the following chapter), there remains the question of the removal of the novices' bans of silence. In particular, I need to comment on the remarkable fact that tjauerilja may be referred to as atua gara - 'man meat' or human flesh. The removal of the ban of silence seems somehow to involve cannibalism, and given what was discovered in the myth of Karora, perhaps this should come as no surprise. (18)

The symbolic use of human flesh recalls Freud's contention that, in the myth of the primal horde, the sons, spurred by their remorse, attempted to incorporate the dead father into themselves by cannibalism. And from the analysis of the previous chapter, we know that this is an important factor in the resolution of the symbolic primal scene, since the old men offer themselves to the stomach of the novice as atnuta - game with broken legs. Nothing, I think, could be more plainly stated in calling tjauerilja atua gara than the truth of the idea that in the overthrow of the father one at the same time absorbs the paternal law. In the ceremonial aralkelelama, there are three different types of 'feeding'. The tjauerilja itself may be given as atua gara; the atua gara may be replaced by atnuta, as in circumcision; or the iliara may be 'fed' with tnatantja pole. The last most certainly represents the symbolic father, and so, I believe, do the others.
At this point I am touching on a matter which can more adequately be discussed under the heading of increase ritual (in Chapter Eleven), but I should point out now that when the father has been 'killed' at the ingkura, he is thought to go into the ground where he becomes, amongst other things, a source of game. This 'going down' may actually be dramatised in the ingkura when the novices play with the kauaua. The dead father, then, is a productive father, and the 'food' he continues to produce in his death is the strength which he imparts to the men who take over from him.

Calling tjauerilja 'man meat' looks as if it stresses a realisation. In the myth of Karora, when the young hunters took game to their father, they did not know they were preying on their own brothers and that their father was a cannibal. But as animal game became more scarce, the sons began to look to their own welfare. They seemed to sense that, in the absence of game, they might be next for the ancestral stomach. Accordingly, they rebelled: the father was lamed and the future assured. A truly primal (horde) scene which is realised time and time again at the ingkura.

The novice is released from his ban of silence at the moment that he fully joins the ranks of adult men. He becomes a potential consumer of tjauerilja rather than a donor. In The Dreaming, Karora, like all other ancestors, was said to have preyed on his sons, who were also the elder brothers of Karora's human sons. But after The Dreaming a different situation obtains. For according to the totemic cycle of re-creation, the identity of animal and human being, apart from being a relationship of brotherhood, is also an identity of alternate generations, as the following
The diagram makes clear the relationship between consumers and producers of *tjauerilja*. The game which is obtained in the hunt by juniors, which corresponds to their brothers, is also the fathers of the generation which consumes it. To become a fully adult man, then, is to become someone who has 'taken in' the father, which is precisely the position which the *iliara* are about to adopt when they are released from their bans of silence. Moreover, the more senior one becomes, the more *tjauerilja* one receives, so there is a relationship between the amount of game consumed and one's position as guardian of The Law. The situation, I believe, shows the explanatory value of Freud's myth of the primal horde. The Law is always signified by the dead father, consumed, and thereby carried, by his sons. This is
the secret to which the young men have become party and from it they gain the gift of speech.

There is also a lesson in the Aranda material about the primal horde. Lacan says that 'the symbolic Father is, in so far as he signifies [the] Law, the dead Father', and Freud had said much the same thing in claiming that the 'will of the father' was carried by his successors 'after he had been removed'. However, Freud's myth conspicuously lacks extended commentary on the nature of the father's will. For Freud, the primordial father was simply the 'ogre' who kept the women to himself and prevented any competitors from intruding sexually into his domain. (19) But the will of the father must have been a good deal more than this to have brought the oedipus complex, incest prohibitions, exogamy, and totemic religion into being. The primal father could not have been the purely negative, restrictive father, like 'old man kangaroo': he must also have been the father who cared about the future of his offspring, like Malbungka. Without this, no cultural transmission of The Law could possibly have taken place (a view I will now explain).

Levi-Strauss (see Chapter Three) says that Freud attempted to explain the origin of exogamy with events which presuppose it, and the same error applies to Freud's view of the origin of religion. In order for the father to be incorporated into the subject, the father must himself be bound to his son and wish to secure the latter's future. The father cannot become a model, and thereby be introjected, unless he has entered into a positive relationship with his son, and the homosexual libido this requires arises from the father's own oedipus complex - as a positive reflex of the
antagonism between father and son. Laius must have had an oedipus complex too, and without his initial aggression none of the drama of the Oedipus myth would have ensued.

But in any case, as Roheim (1974b:191) himself has pointed out: "We are already finished men before our fathers die", and there can therefore be no grounds for supposing that the transmission of The Law had its origins in the real death of the father. The primal sire must have been willing to surrender to his symbolic death, since without this he would have cleared no path for succeeding generations and would therefore have failed to guarantee his memory. This is one more reason why it is 'completely senseless' (Lacan) to attempt to determine historically the dawn of man, the origin of the oedipus complex and the birth of the symbolic faculty. If the primal sire himself had an oedipus complex, then he too must have had a father ... and so on.

The ingkura ceremony is in a sense the high point of Aranda religion, because it momentarily brings to view the object which is at the heart of desire - the phallus. And in the most sacred of all the tjurunga, the ghala para, broken and renewed with every generation, we see everything which makes desire incapable of satisfaction - the phallus must always be on the move. So one is reminded that

[t]he phallus reveals its function here. In Freudian doctrine, the phallus is not a phantasy ... Nor is it as such an object ... in the sense that this term tends to accentuate the reality pertaining in a relation. It is even less the organ, penis or clitoris, that it symbolizes. And it is not without reason that Freud used the reference to the simulacrum that it represented for the Ancients.

For the phallus is a signifier, a signifier whose function ... lifts the veil perhaps from the function it performed in the mysteries. For it is the
signifier intended to designate as a whole the effects of the signified, in that the signifier conditions them by its presence as a signifier (Lacan 1977a:285).

The phallus is the signifier of desire itself, which plays its vital role only when masked. In Aranda terms one might be inclined to say that it is not so much a transcendent signifier as a transcendent tjurunga, though for both psychoanalysis and Aranda religion it is the phallus which provides the condition for the revelation of knowledge. According to Lacan (1977a:291):

The function of the phallic signifier touches here on its most profound relation: that in which the Ancients embodied the Nous and the Logos.

If this is so, perhaps all knowledge is of the carnal kind and the Aranda, too, have their 'ancients', the totemic ancestors, to reveal the corpus.

10.2 Summary of the Cycle of Initiation

Stanner (1963:2-21) was not wrong to describe initiation in terms of the 'lineaments of sacrifice'. Neither was he wrong in picturing the process, albeit unwittingly, in terms of a mandala (see Diagram 21). Stanner only applied his model to a single rite, but I think it is possible to adopt his insights to help summarise the findings of the last two chapters. His diagrammatic representation of sacrifice is reproduced overleaf.

Edinger (1973:41) has presented a pictorial description of the growth of consciousness in a fascinatingly similar way. This diagram, which is also reproduced in simplified form overleaf (Diagram 22), may be compared with Stanner's and combined with it to reduce Aranda initiation to its
Diagram 21. Stanner's Model of Sacrifice

Diagram 22. Edinger's 'Psychic Life Cycle'
essential elements and effects.

In analytical psychology (and sometimes in psychoanalysis) the process encapsulated by Edinger's diagram is referred to as individuation - a strengthening of autonomy. But there are two types of autonomy - responsible and irresponsible. These, in Edinger's terms, are active and passive inflation, and they correspond to the two types of 'freedom' alluded to by Myers in Chapter Nine (the freedom to be inside The Law and to follow it, and the freedom which comes from being outside of The Law and ignoring it). Absolutely crucial to the whole edifice of 'sacrifice' is the notion that in order to move from irresponsible freedom to the responsible kind, it is necessary to regress.

Analytic work with adolescents demonstrates, almost monotonously, the reinvolvment of ego and superego functions with infantile object relations. The study of this subject has convinced me that the danger to ego integrity does not derive solely from the strength of the pubertal drives, but comes, in equal measure, from the strength of the regressive pull ... I have come to the conclusion that the task of psychic restructuring by regression represents the most formidable psychic work of adolescence. Just as Hamlet longs for the comforts of sleep but fears the dreams that sleep might bring, so the adolescent longs for the comforts of drive and ego gratification but fears the reinvolvments with infantile object relations. Paradoxically, only through drive and ego regression can the adolescent task be fulfilled. Only through regression at adolescence can the residues of infantile trauma, conflict, and fixation be modified by bringing to bear on them the ego's extended resources that draw, at this stage, support from the developmental momentum of growth and maturation. This forward movement is made feasible through the ego differentiation or ego maturation that is the normal heritage of the latency period. The reality-bound and self-observing part of the ego is normally kept, at least marginally, intact during the regressive movements of adolescence. Thus the dangers of regression are reduced or regulated, averting the catastrophic danger of the regressive loss of self, of a return to the undifferentiated stage, or of merger (Bloch 1979:152-3).
As I have shown, in Central Australia this regression is firmly controlled and perfectly 'stage-managed' to fit the circumstances of an Aranda youth's predicament. He is taken back into mythical time and witnesses the preconditions of his own history in order to rediscover the Name-of-the-Father that was foreclosed in his infantile years. The whole event is mythically grounded and one is reminded of Jung's (1956:419-20) description of:

The regressing libido ... retreating back step by step to the ... stage of earliest infancy. Even there it does not make a halt, but in a manner of speaking continues right back to the intra-uterine, pre-natal condition and, leaving the sphere of personal psychology altogether, intrudes into the collective psyche ... The libido thus reaches an inchoate condition in which ... it may easily stick fast. But it can also tear itself loose ... and return to the surface with new possibilities of life.

But the 'collective psyche' here is not the unconscious composed of so-called archetypes, but The Dreaming itself - a socially endorsed and collectively transmitted set of dogmas with sacred power. For Central Australian Aborigines the encounter with the unconscious is never merely 'personal'.

In the regressed state of initiation there is a strongly held idea that one pays a price. Initiation is a kind of schooling, but it is also a punishment for not having already accepted The Law. A youth will be 'paid back' right from the time of alkiraka iwuma for his misdemeanours in the face of men, particularly the father-in-law. But there is a stronger sense in which it is the youth himself who 'pays'. Myers' Pintubi informants seem almost to come close to a metapsychological explanation of initiation when they talk of offering their subincised penes for others to hold when the latter have been offended in some way.
Men told me, 'With this one you can go anywhere', and that it is 'like a hundred dollars' with which you can pay (Myers 1982:97).

Among the Lower Southern Aranda, too, the subincision wound has the same significance: it is regarded as the cut that will save your life, the life of your wife or the life of your friend - it is the iteti-lela (or the 'paying with a life') (Berndt and Berndt 1945:329, my emphasis).

Here, then, initiation and the idea of 'personal sacrifice' come together.

Stanner's and Edinger's models coincide to the extent that they picture sacrifice as an abstract operation which fashions the individual into a being of "higher worth" (Stanner 1979:121). An abstract notion of sacrifice is also explicit in initiation, which, following Lacan's (1977a:265) description of symbolic castration, one might refer to as the moment of cut [which] is haunted by the form of a bloody scrap - the pound of flesh that life pays in order to turn it into the signifier of the signifiers, which it is impossible to restore.

Everybody seems to agree that one 'pays' for access to symbolic life, and since this payment is the price of restoration to the community, the return to the world which one was first of all forced to leave, I propose the following diagrammatic summary of Aranda initiation incorporating elements of Stanner's and Edinger's 'sacrificial' models (see overleaf).

Initiation passes through four rites, whose structural relations map onto a circle. In this way, the rites reveal themselves not only as a temporal sequence, but also as terms of structural opposition. Alkiraka iwuma - tossing up to the sky - corresponds to the point of transition which
Stanner says is marked by a positive sign. And this is indeed what occurs during the rite, which is designed to mark the body of the initiates as inflated – 'sky-high'. On the opposite side, however, lies subincision, which corresponds to the second point of transition in Stanner's scheme and is marked with a negative sign. Thus whereas the human body becomes the phallus in alkiraka iwuma in order to signify the youth's inflated state, in subincision a symbolic vagina is given to indicate castration and sub-
mission.

Alkiraka iwuma and subincision are of relatively minor importance when compared to other initiation rites. They are only transition points, or 'moments in and out of time' (Turner). The movement into alkiraka iwuma is marked by a confident mood bordering on hubris, but the movement out is marked by alienation—a fall. Similarly, subincision has its beginnings in a mood of complete submission, but ends on a note of what Edinger calls complaisance—a more positive mood in which the youth is prepared to learn from his superiors. In each case, the youth is marked by possession of 'the tools of the trade'. In alkiraka iwuma he is unapprenticed, but in subincision his apprenticeship is ensured.

In between alkiraka iwuma and subincision lies the vital stage of circumcision. This is Stanner's negative status, which in Aranda terms is quite simply a death—the 'sacrificial attitude' (Edinger). It lies between the alienation of alkiraka iwuma, on which it sets the final seal through the symbolic break with the mother, and the mood of acceptance at subincision. It is the castration of the phallus, signified earlier as a positive sign, but later to be replaced with a negative equivalent.

Opposed to the death of circumcision is the new life which is received at the ingkura, where a positive status is conferred. Very far from dead, the novice throws off the yoke of the father at the ingkura and becomes a man of independent spirit once again, though this time within the bounds of The Law. Passive inflation thus describes the strength of character which comes from complaisance and which marks the young man's return to society—with shame.
The journey from childhood to adult status in Central Australia is a kind of circling growth towards the prime of life, what we would call a 'coming up in the world'. But the journey round a circle never ends and the novices have only bought their way into a further temporal condition which will move inexorably to its own critical point. For as the ingkura festival dramatises only too clearly, elders are also subject to changes and must pass the tests of time. As the novices 'come up', the elders must 'go down', and it is to this latter trajectory that I must now turn.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

Dreaming of Retirement

What we cannot reach flying we must reach limping.

Friedrich Ruckert
(Quoted in S. Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle [in On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis], p. 338).

[]The Lord with the unpronounceable name is precisely he who sends children to barren women and old men. The fundamentally transbiological character of paternity ... has something that is originally repressed there, and which always re-emerges in the ambiguity of lameness ..., with the meaning that remains hidden.

Jacques Lacan
The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis, p. 248.
11.1 The Subject of Paternity

In a sense the ingkura is the peak of the ritual cycle, but it is very far from being its end. Indeed, for those who have participated in it as iliara it is a beginning. For not only does a youth become a man after the ingkura, in the sense that he can take a wife and begin to raise a family,(1) he also gains sufficient status to become a 'star' in ritual performances. Where he was once a mere youth dancing warkuntuma, pleading with the alkgantama performers to 'give more and more', he may now, if the old men see fit to make him so, become an ancestral figure himself — a giver rather than a receiver. And this is all part of the steady accumulation of ritual knowledge which takes place during the second half of a man's life.

The pursuit of secret knowledge is the main driving force of an adult man's religious life and it has three distinct stages (which have already been encountered in relation to the initiation rites).(2) First of all, there is the time when elementary secrets are revealed; that is, when a youth is going through the different steps of initiation culminating in the status of atua (man). The second stage comes when young men are deemed fit enough to be full ceremonial actors themselves. Thus the men who perform the kangaroo, native cat, and other acts at circumcision, subincision and the ingkura are not the very old men, but 'elders' of intermediate age; men whose recently-acquired married status make them appropriate persons to symbolise the giving up of phallic power in alkgantama.

The final stage comes when these men no longer perform the ancestral rites, but simply direct them from the wings
of a ceremony. These are the true elders who are kaltjandora — very learned (Roheim 1950:146), and one of the main indicators of their wisdom is their comprehensive knowledge of songs and chants. No ceremony is complete without these chants and the old men alone can sing them (Carl Strehlow 1910:5). What Strehlow (1971:126) calls "magic virtue" pervades them and they are at the very basis of the respect paid to old men (Strehlow 1971:384). As Roheim (1950:146-7) states, because an old man has comprehensive knowledge of totemic chants, he

is also powerful in magic. When a man becomes a yangkua (a nearly helpless graybeard) his magical power is at its highest point.

Only senility annuls the respect due to a ritually powerful person (Strehlow 1968:156, 166, cf. Tonkinson 1978:83).

The ritual secrets a man will seek in his mature years may be many, but access to them may prove difficult, since elders do not always freely render them. And in any case, the rules and regulations which govern their distribution and acquisition are extremely complicated, and take place in a sometimes overtly political context of manoeuvre and competition (Strehlow 1968:Chapter III). Broadly speaking, however, three factors are paramount: 1) relationship to father; 2) relationship to mother; and 3) personal totemic affiliation.

Although not explicitly stated in the ethnography, it seems that these three factors are most important because a person’s spirituality is defined in terms of a triadic pattern of totemic allegiance. For example, a Western Aranda man, Patika, from Lalta, whose personal totemic affiliation was mouse, also regarded himself as ‘being’ kangaroo and
honey ant through relations to his parents. He explained the reasoning behind this to Strehlow (1971:596).

Itakuba was the first kangaroo ancestor who originated at Ajai. Itakuba begat Kantowara. Kantowara belonged to the snake totem of Winbarku [in Kukatja country], but he was a kangaroo man too; and when Itakuba died, Kantowara became the ceremonial chief of Ajai. Kantowara married a woman from Lukaria, and begat me. My [mother's] conception site is Lukaria, and I am jiramba [honey ant] like my mother; but I am also a kangaroo man [like my father and father’s father].

The account suggests that a Central Australian man believes himself to be constituted by three ‘substances’, and Strehlow (1964a:730) clarifies the relationship between two of them.

Briefly, the Aranda doctrine of conception involves a belief in two souls possessed by every human being. Intercourse between a man and a woman results in a foetus which has a mortal human ‘life’ (or ‘soul’) of its own: in other words, man comes into being initially like the animals, whose existence also results from mating between male and female parents. But man differs from the animals in acquiring an all-important second ‘life’ (or ‘soul’) which is immortal. This second soul is part of the ‘life’ of one of the immortal supernatural ancestors, which entered the body of an already pregnant woman at some definite point of the landscape.

The mortal soul which Strehlow refers to is the guruna which comes from the mbiljikara at the ingkura, and as I stated in the previous chapter, this appears to mean that the mortal soul is essentially patrilineal. Patika’s account would seem to confirm this, since it specifically contrasts three generations of agnatic inheritance with both his own conception affiliation and that of his mother. As Strehlow (1964a:744) points out, "religious obligations imposed by personal monotonotism" (i.e., conception affiliations) sharply divide patriclan members who otherwise regard themselves as a corporate patrilodge. The nature of the totemic
link to the mother, as suggested by Patika, appears to be a function of her personal spirit taking care of her children. The common ritual feature of throwing things in the direction of the mother’s conception site to signify separation confirms this, and suggests further that the matrilineal tie is as much discarded as inherited (cf. Meggitt [1962:passim] on Walbiri notions of ‘matrispirit’).

Psychologically speaking, the idea that one’s spirit is constituted as a trinity is quite correct: at any given moment, the human soul really is constituted as a specific interpenetration of maternal and paternal identifications which give rise to an independent character specifically it’s own. In the Central Australian formulation, the independent spirit is deemed to be ever present, as also are both maternal and paternal substances. But the pattern of interaction between the three is not the same throughout the life cycle. As should be clear from previous chapters, a young child knows nothing of his totemic identity, just as he knows little, if anything, about the patrilodge. On the other hand, he does know ‘women’s business’ and his continued identification with his mother prevents his independent spirit from being in view. But with initiation, the situation alters radically.

An important aspect of the ingkura is the acquisition by the novices of the namatuna bull-roarers, each of which is inscribed with a design pertaining to the youth’s personal totem. The namatuna is a kind of ‘aphrodisiac’ used in love magic and replaces the tuanjiraka (or tnangkara), representative of the mother, held after circumcision. As Roheim (1974a:149, cf. Strehlow 1971:505-6) points out, the
namatuna is the bullroarer that "calls the women to the men" and enters women's wombs to make them conceive. This is one of the ways in which an ancestor may decide to become reincarnated and it appears to be on the model of the namatuna that the Western Aranda tjilpa sire, Kulurba, swings a firebrand while his penis 'shouts a summons' to pigeon women at Ltalaltuma (Strehlow 1971:508-14).{3}

The acquisition of manhood, marked by possession of the namatuna, is linked with the independent spirit in another way. As Strehlow (1944:73) states:

Every adult person in the Aranda tribe used to have at least two names - an ordinary name which could be mentioned by everybody, and a secret name which was known only to the adult initiated men of the bearer's own group ...

Thus my [Eastern Aranda] informant Kolbarinja bore that name because Kolba was his conception-site; but since he was regarded by the initiated men of his own group as the reincarnation of the great totemic ancestor of Kolba himself, his secret name (which had to be kept secret from all women, children and uninitiated persons generally) was Therambalkala.

Similarly, one of my [Northern Aranda] informants bore the name of Tjenterama since he was regarded by the initiated leaders of his group as the reincarnated ancestor of Ilbalintja who had originally borne this name. In ordinary life, however, my informant was addressed as Gura (.... = bandicoot), because the original ancestor Tjenterama had belonged to the bandicoot totem.

Tjenterama, it will be recalled, is a manifestation of Karora, whose secret life was partly revealed in Chapter Six. In a moment I will say more about Gura's assumption of his secret name, but before doing so I wish to propose a general interpretation of the latter's significance.

A man learns his own secret name after initiation, and receives his personal namatuna at the ingkura, because he is about to embark on a kind of journey of self-discovery.
In the years following upon the last initiation ceremony the young man has to undergo a period of probation. His elders carefully note his conduct in order to determine his fitness to receive possession of his own personal tjurunga. He must be respectful towards his elders; he must be attentive to their advice in all things. He must know the value of silence in ceremonial matters; no account of his past experiences may issue from his lips when any women or children or uninitiated boys are within hearing. His own marriage must conform to the laws of his group; a perverted desire for women who are forbidden to him is one of the greatest bars in his struggle and search for further knowledge and the power that comes with wisdom.

Up to the present the young man has knowledge only of the tjurunga relating to the p María kutata, the 'everlasting home', where the most honoured totemic ancestors of his own clan lived ever from the beginning, and where they went to their final sleep when they had grown tired of living. He himself has been initiated according to the rites traditional at this 'everlasting home'. Whatever his personal totem may be, he has in a sense become a citizen of this María kutata.

The day comes [however] when his elders determine to make him owner and guardian of the tjurunga relating to his own totem (Strehlow 1968:112).

Given that initiation is both an introduction to the patrilodge and an affirmation of paternity on the one hand, and a partial rejection of the mother and the women's world on the other, knowledge of one's own personal totemic identity is contingent on a specific configuration of paternal and maternal substance. When the former is injected, the latter is rejected, and as a result, the independent spirit begins to bear significance. As I propose to show in detail in this chapter, the second half of life is a continuous drift towards more intimate knowledge of one's personal totemic ancestor, which, it will be recalled, is precisely the opposite of what occurs while the child is in the care of women. As stated in Chapter Eight, when a spirit child enters a woman, it leaves behind its totemic identity: it is
said to lose the *papa tjurunga* and only remains attached to it until such time as it is named. It would seem, then, that one's early years are marked by a kind of totemic 'amnesia'. In a sense, a child forgets his origins in The Dreaming, and after initiation, when he has become a man, he sets out to recover them.

11.2 Self-Discovery

The quest for one's own totemic identity begins soon after the *ingkura* and young men may have to pay heavily for the privilege of knowing the secrets that are in a sense already their own. The would-be seeker of knowledge may have nails pulled from his fingers on the pretext of making him a better fashioner of *tjurunga* (Strehlow 1968:112-4, cf. 1971: 414-5). But as soon as the wounds are healed, a party of men is assembled to take the young man to the cave or secret tree-platform in (or on) which his conception *tjurunga* are stored.

Strehlow (1968:114-8) gives a detailed account of Gura's initial encounter with himself. When he was a young man, Gura was taken by his immediate paternal relatives, elder clan members, and *kutungula* ('ceremonial assistants')(4) to the Ilbalintja storehouse - a storage platform in a tree. The place was approached with caution and reverence. Steps were taken to warn the ancestors of the party's arrival, because the *tjurunga* are saturated with *arungkulta* - "deadly magic" (Strehlow 1971:137) - that has to be handled with the utmost care.(5) When the platform was found it was taken down.

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The leader steps down and proceeds to unravel the hairstring from the bundles. The men present begin to chant the verses relating to the sun totem and to the bandicoot totem of Ilbalintja. The bandicoot and sun tjurunga, all made of mulga wood, are then handed to each man in turn. The old men receive them from the leader and pass them on to the younger men. The young initiate receives them last. The verse belonging to each tjurunga is chanted as it is being handed around. Each man in turn presses it affectionately to his body (Strehlow 1968:115-6).

The procedure was then repeated for other tjurunga and a certain amount of mythological information was divulged, mainly by means of hand-signs.

As soon as the tjurunga were put away, the party returned to a cluster of stones which it had passed on the way to the store. The old leader lifted up the top stones to reveal a round, smooth, red-ochred one beneath. Gura’s father took him forward and placed the stone in his (Gura’s) hands. These stones are at Atualawuraka, where Tjenterama and all Karora’s sons went down in The Dreaming. Indeed, as Gura’s father explained to him, these stones are Tjenterama and Karora’s sons, and Gura is consubstantial with them, because a spirit child from them entered Gura’s mother to give rise to Gura himself. Gura had, in effect, returned to his place of conception and when he took hold of the stone he was told:

This is your own body from which you have been re-born. It is the true body of the great Tjenterama, the chief of the Ilbalintja storehouse. The stones which cover him are the bodies of the bandicoot men who once lived at the Ilbalintja Soak. You are the great Tjenterama himself: today you are learning the truth for the first time. From now on you are the chief of Ilbalintja; all its sacred tjurunga are entrusted to your safe keeping. Protect them, guard the home of your fathers, honour the traditions of your people. We still have many things to tell you. More verses, greater and more secret ceremonies will be made known to you than to any of your mates. They are all your own heri—
tage; we have only kept them in trust for you. Now we are getting old, and we pass them on to you since you are the true chief reincarnate. Keep them secret until you are growing old and weak; and then, if no other young men of the bandicoot totem are living, pass them on to other tried men from our clan who may keep alive the traditions of our forefathers until another chief be born (Strehlow 1968:116-7).

Finally, but most significantly, Gura heard the sacred verse which contains the name of Tjenterama. This was also the new, secret name for Gura himself, which I drew attention to earlier: it is his tjurunga retnja. Even at Atualawuraka it was uttered in whispered tones. With this done, the red stone of Gura’s ‘other body’ was put back in its original place and the party left the site. On their return, the men passed an aged ghost gum which was pointed out as one of the manifestations of Karora. That night a ceremony was held in honour of Tjenterama. It was Gura’s own ceremony now; personally his to dispose of as he saw fit (though within the bounds of The Law).

Strehlow (1968:118) states that not every man is as fortunate as Gura in assuming his totemic identity. As I stated earlier, learning of one’s tjurunga is contingent on a variety of circumstances, largely political, so that the more successful a man is in acquiring them, the more he is likely to be both fortunately placed and of distinctive character. In essence, the accumulation of tjurunga is a measure of a man’s autonomy. On the whole, the more senior the man, the more prestigious his ancestral associations and the more free he is to dispose of ritual services. It is men such as this who conducted the great ingkura festival for Spencer and Gillen in 1896 (see Plate 1). And it is the same men whose careers in other ceremonies would be known far and
wide throughout their own and adjacent territories. Gura was clearly just such a man, since it was he who divulged to Strehlow all the inner secrets of the Ilbalintja Soak.

Strehlow (1968:122) states that a man is likely to be about twenty-five years of age by the time he receives his "tjurunga-body".

He will often be thirty-five or forty years of age before the most secret chants and ceremonies that are linked with it have passed into his possession ... In due course of time he will become a member of the respected assembly of old ceremonial chiefs who are the honoured trustees for the ancient traditions of the whole clan.

These latter two age periods are those which correspond to the ceremonial roles of performer and singer respectively, and these have very important links with the assumption of one's secret identity. I propose now to examine the two roles in their general form and then discuss them in relation to a specific ritual context.

11.3 Of Blood and Names

The types of ceremonial acts in which a grown man may participate are numerous, and although they are all concerned in some way with the totemic ancestors and performed on the basis of mythological precedent, they are very far from being all of a piece. Roheim (1932:57-73), in his detailed discussion of the ethno-classification of rites, mentions nine different kinds (though with some overlap between the categories), and it is clear from other discussions - in particular that of Carl Strehlow (1910:1-9) - that the whole question of the purpose, function, and nomenclature of ritual acts is one on which there is no absolute preponderance of opinion. Having said that, however, the main cere-
monial complex with which men are associated in their later years may be specified as being what has come to be known as 'increase ritual', and it is upon this that I will concentrate.

The so-called increase rite goes by many different names in the literature. Spencer and Gillen (1899:Chapter VI, 1904:Chapter IX) originally adopted the term *inditjiwuma* to apply to 'increase rites', though later on Spencer came to prefer the word *anbanbiwuma* (Spencer and Gillen 1927: Chapter VIII). Carl Strehlow (1910:2) insisted that the proper term applied to a ceremony designed to increase a natural species was *mbatjalkatjiwuma*, which is said to mean 'to bring forth' or 'to make into good condition'. T. G. H. Strehlow (1971:329), on the other hand, says that the term literally means 'to scatter'. *Inditjiwuma*, says Carl Strehlow, is only applied to a ceremonial act when it is revelatory; that is, when it is performed for the purposes of initiation. But to make things more complex still, Roheim (1932:62-3) states that the revelatory act is called *ilbanngura*, while *mbatjalkatjiwuma* means "to make the footsteps or track", implying that the ceremony re-creates the primordial wanderings of the ancestors. In addition, although *mbatjalkatjiwuma* is applied to rites which have efficacy in terms of enhancing natural fertility, it is only the lesser form of a more powerful 'increase rite' known as *utnitjia*, the latter being distinguished by the use of ceremonial shields (Roheim 1932:62, 65).

Much of this confusion seems to stem either from regional variation or from the hazy definition given to terms by Aranda people themselves. Basically, I think that
we may justifiably divide totemic ceremonies into three categories which are not mutually exclusive: 1) acts which are performed for the purpose of controlling nature; 2) those which are performed in order to pass on knowledge to junior generations; and 3) those which are performed as commemorative acts.

Essentially, all rites are commemorative, and this is indeed their most obvious purpose. They are performed because The Dreaming has to be followed — because:

The ancestors ordered it to be so, and that is why we follow their instructions faithfully and do not do otherwise (Carl Strehlow 1910:8).

As Durkheim (1976:371) once remarked, the representative quality of Central Australian rites has to be taken as their central feature. Most (perhaps all) rites are also performed with the purpose of passing on knowledge, and this is again connected with the value and authority of tradition: when ritual knowledge is transmitted, The Dreaming is guaranteed. Of the three categories, the one which has in the past often received the most attention — 'increase rites' — is the one with the least generality.

Ceremonial acts may sometimes be performed in order to increase a certain species, but often there can be no such intention because of the unsuitability of the totem (for example, 'stone', 'dark hole', 'trench'). Of such acts, says Carl Strehlow (1910:8), one may say only that "they are customary". It seems likely that the magical intent of commemorative ceremonies is secondary and a reflex of some other 'impulse'. Strehlow (1971:375-6), for example, states that even at the end of an ingkura, people are apt to think in terms of the land having been vivified and made pro-
ductive, even though the manifest and primary purpose of the rite lay elsewhere. Exactly what that other 'impulse' might be should become clear in this chapter.

I stated earlier that the ritual division of labour is essentially tripartite: young men pay tjaueriila and participate in dancing by way of entreaty ing the main actors to perform well; middle-aged men are the main actors, who both perform the characteristic alkangtama quivering and give their blood for various ceremonial purposes; and the old men are the ceremonial masters, who dictate the proceedings and complete them with their songs. There is an important and revealing relationship between blood-giving and singing, and therefore between the intermediate and elder generations, which helps to clarify the general purpose of commemorative rites and the notion that such rites have natural efficacy.

Strehlow (1971:447) says that tjurunga may sometimes be described as being "very thirsty for blood": if they are not well 'fed', then their 'magic virtue' may turn against men. Spencer and Gillen (1927:173) also describe a situation where about seven or eight younger men are called upon during the Upper Southern Aranda kangaroo increase rite of Inteera to

open veins in their arms and allow the blood to spurt out over the edge of the ceremonial stone on top of which they are seated. While this is taking place, the men below sit still, watching the performers and singing chants referring to the increase of the numbers of the kangaroos which the ceremony is supposed to ensure.

In this case, at least, it seems that the giving of blood and the singing of chants is a specific kind of combination, with each having a complementary role to play in the increase of kangaroos.
It is worth pointing out at this stage precisely how the Aranda conceive of singing. Strehlow (1971:119) says:

There are no native words to correspond to our terms 'song' or 'chant'. The Aranda denote a stanza in one of their sacred songs by the term tjurunga retnja (= 'tjurunga name') ... [T]he Aranda term 'tjurunga' in this context signifies the sacred stone or wooden objects that represent the changed bodies of the ancestors.

This is so, explains Strehlow (1971:119-22), because whenever tjurunga are revealed, as, for example, when Gura was taken to the secret store at Ilbalintja, it is vitally necessary that the verses appropriate to them be chanted. In Aranda terminology this means that

they must be able to call them by those names (= tjurunga retnja ...) which the ancestors had bestowed upon themselves at the beginning of time (Strehlow 1971:120).

This last point is extremely important and requires explication.

"According to native beliefs", writes Strehlow (1971: 126),

couplets had been composed by the totemic ancestors themselves, who had insisted that they be transmitted unchanged from generation to generation, since only in this way would they be able to preserve their magic virtue.

The different words which Arandic dialect groups employ to describe this composition translate as 'to throw out a name', 'to call out a name' or 'to call out one's own name'.

According to the aboriginal theory, the ancestor first called out his own name; and this gave rise to the most sacred and secret couplet or couplets of his song. Then he 'named' (rneuka) the place where he had originated, the trees or rocks growing near his home, the animals sporting about nearby, any strangers that came to visit him, and so forth. He gave names to all of these, and thereby gained the power of calling them by their names; this enabled him to control them and bind them to his will. In each instance he not merely gave them a name, but also described them briefly
within the narrow limits of his couplets. In this way a series of couplets, loosely associated by time, space, and story was brought into being; and this series constituted the song that each ancestor left behind for the benefit of those human beings who were reincarnated from himself and from his own supernatural children (Strehlow 1971:126, my emphasis).

Given that old men are ceremonial singers, it seems that they are not only learned, wise and imbued with magical powers: they also reduplicate very exactly what the ancestors first did when the latter emerged from their underworld slumber. They call out ‘names’, and thereby bring everything in nature into being, because it is the songs themselves which are the potent force which vivifies the land and causes, amongst other things, natural species to increase. It would appear, then, that there is a profound sense in which the old men are the ancestors, an important point which, as I will now show, is confirmed by the ceremonial use of blood.

The link between an ancestor, his name and all his other ‘names’ has already been mentioned in Chapter Five: an ancestor calls his world into being through an initial discovery of his subjectivity and the projection of this onto external reality. In the myth of Karora discussed in Chapter Six, this process was seen to be synonymous with ‘wishing’ and ‘desiring’: the ancestors lived in a world where dreams really came true. It will be remembered, however, that in the totemic cycle of re-creation deduced from the myth of Karora, the ancestor himself is placed between two spheres of ritual reality. On the one hand, Karora remains in the ground, where he smiles with contentment whenever people come to visit him. His purpose there is to issue forth ban-
dicoots in the way he did at the beginning of time — through his ‘wishes’, ‘desires’ and, as we now appreciate, his ‘names’ (or ‘songs’). On the other hand, Karora was placed back into the ground by a swirling flood of pmoara juice, symbolic of both ancestral blood and castration. Thus it is blood which, at least in the case of Karora, places the ancestor in the ground, but ‘names’ which cause him to create animals (and everything else in his country) from that underworld position.

Donations of blood and the chanting of sacred verses are complementary in so far as the former puts the ancestor in the position where he will perform the latter. But if this is true, then it implies something remarkable about the old men who sing at ceremonies. It is tjurunga which demand blood, and these are regarded as the transformed bodies of the ancestors themselves. On the other hand, it is the ancestors who revitalise the landscape through their singing, so that one would have to conclude not only that the old men are identical with the tjurunga — that they both represent the ancestor in his condition of borkerama beneath the ground — but also that it is the old men who demand blood from their immediate juniors. And indeed, in spite of the fact that the tjurunga are held in sacred storehouses and tree platforms, people actually do say that

the ancestors and all their tjurunga are resting in the ground, in the soak, in the waterhole, or in the rock where they passed to their last rest; and after bringing them and their objects forth in song or in drama, they must be sent back and returned to their proper home (Strehlow 1971:382).

The question that remains concerns the connection of this idiomatic expression with blood.
Durkheim (1976:326-50) interpreted Aranda 'oblations' (offerings of blood) as being in the spirit of sacrifice, and what I said in the previous chapter about 'the nemesis of reproductivity' would endorse this. It is especially interesting in this regard that the echidna, the very image of complete castration, is the subject of men's sympathy whenever it is seen to bleed. When the old men, for whom echidna meat is reserved, discover that an echidna's nose bled when it was killed they say:

- O you poor thing you went round the rock.
- O you poor thing you went round the stone.
- O you poor thing around the rock you must fall.

Failure to chant this spell, on the face of it born out of sorrow for the animal's plight, will bring retribution to the hunter, who will stub his foot and lose his toe-nail when next stalking euro (Roheim 1950:45-6).

The allusions here to symbolic castration are clear enough and I would suggest that the echidna is strongly identified with old men because the latter have fallen prey to 'the nemesis of reproductivity'. The echidna shares this fate. As I pointed out in Chapters Five and Ten, the native cat's spent condition is a result of his parental responsibilities, and in ceremonies the blood which ancestral figures such as Malbungka donate to the younger generation is likened to breast milk. It so happens that the male echidna appears to be hermaphrodite. Not only does it possess a kind of 'mock pouch' (Griffiths 1978:23), but also a large fat pad which is very easily mistaken by the naked eye for mammary tissue (Griffiths 1978:27). But most revealing of all is the fact that echidna milk is pink (Griffiths 1978: 27), thus bringing about a remarkable symbolic convergence
between phallic and mammary functions. No doubt the echidna is reserved for old men partly because of the superior nutritional value of its fatty body, but symbolic factors are also clearly at work. Everything about the echidna, the old 'poor thing', is suggestive of an old man crippled by the draining of his blood over many years of ceremonial involvement.

The link between ceremonial singing and the donation of blood is thus made clear: the more one has been involved in the latter, the greater one's power is enhanced by participating in the former. But one might also here draw attention to a further peculiar characteristic of the echidna, whose extremely strong limbs make it capable of burrowing down "vertically and rapidly into very hard earth to which it clings like a limpet" (Griffiths 1978:24). For men who donate blood in ceremonies are also 'burrowers'; they are heading for the status of an ancestor, indissolubly attached to the land by living deep within the bowels of the earth. It is this 'going down' which I will now examine in more detail.

11.4 The Krantji Utnitjie

When a ceremony takes place, it is not some mere copy of something which the ancestors once did. It is in some respects thought to be, as we might say, 'the real thing'. It may be pointed out that the nearest Northern Aranda equivalents for our idioms 'staging an act' or 'performing a sacred ceremony' are the phrases tjurunga andata ratalelama or tjurunga andata (era) ratama. The first literally means 'to cause a sacred commemorative ceremony to issue forth', and the second 'a sacred ceremony is issuing forth'. The natives themselves would regard it as improper to talk about bringing forward or in-
Introducing a supernatural being to a curious audience. They prefer to speak of the totemic ancestor as making his own appearance to his clan, just as they will always speak of such objects as the iltantera ground-painting and the tnatantiya poles as 'issuing forth' (ratamara) from the ceremonial ground (Strehlow 1971:357).

The reality of this re-creation is well portrayed in the utnitjia ceremony of Krantji.

Krantji Soak lies on the borders of Western and Northern Aranda territories. It is the ancestral home of Krantji-rinja, an ancestral sire much in the mould of Karora, save for the fact that he is a kangaroo.

From the soak at Krantji sprang into life Krantji-rinja himself, who was a true kangaroo. He emerged from it in the beginning with limbs like those of a kangaroo. During the day he was shaped like an animal: he used to eat grass and green herbage in the neighbourhood of the soak. At night he assumed human shape; he decorated his body with down, with marvellous figures wrought in down ... At the bottom of the soak a shield was lying face downward; in the depths of the soak was the home of the ancestor; his windbreak was below ground. Beneath the shield lay all his tjurunga: from beneath this shield did all kangaroo ancestors arise in batches. They emerged in the form of kangaroos, and then assumed human bodies (Strehlow 1968:140).

Like the bandicoots sired by Karora at Ilbalintja, these kangaroos populated the surrounding district, spending all their days there. When the end of The Dreaming saw them tire, they were all transformed into tjurunga at or near Krantji.

Strehlow (1971:305-27) gives a very extensive account of the utnitjia ceremony pertaining to the Krantji kangaroos in Songs of Central Australia, and he refers to it in less detail elsewhere (Strehlow 1964a:733-4, 737, 1968:29-30, 169-70). The following is my own summary of Strehlow's commentaries.
After a number of minor ceremonies are performed, a ground painting (ilbantera) is put down at Krantji. It is said to represent Krantjirinja and other kangaroo ancestors who had come from afar to pass into sleep (borkerama) at the Krantji Soak. Apart from being referred to as a scratched out hollow of the type normally rested in by kangaroos (rantji jintjungga), the ilbantera is likened to a rockplate existing at the very base of the soakage. Krantjirinja is said to have originally sprung from this rockplate. The ground painting consists of a blood-hardened hollow covered with white feather down, representing the kangaroo fat from which all other Krantji kangaroos came into life in The Dreaming. At the very centre of the circular painting is a hole. It is the depth of a man’s arm (that is, as long as possible) and is lined with down.

The first Krantji act consists of the most senior member of the local clan being decorated as Krantjirinja. He wears on his head a half-metre long thatantja para (ceremonial phallus), decorated primarily with red down. While Krantjirinja (that is, the actor assuming his role) reclines on his elbow in the characteristic pose of a kangaroo, another man takes a red-ochred shield and pounds the floor. Krantjirinja then rises slowly, as if from sleep, and turns to face the ilbantera. He then crawls slowly forward like a kangaroo and stops, as though still half-asleep. Leisurly, he moves towards the ilbantera and investigates it with his nose. In perfect imitation of an inquisitive kangaroo sniffing something unusual, he sneezes. When the action has been repeated several times, Krantjirinja moves towards the central hole and sneezes into it. Withdrawing away a little, he again reclines on his elbow, with his back to the ilbantera. A man who is junior to the actor playing Krantjirinja, but who unlike him is actually a reincarnation of one of the Krantji kangaroos, comes forward. He places his hands on Krantjirinja’s shoulders and removes the para from his head. The shield ceases its beating and the act is over.

Some time later a second act is performed. Ceremonial shields and a number of stone tjurunga are brought out. Included in the latter are a number of stones representing the kangaroo fat which originally gave rise to the Krantji kangaroos. All are placed on the ilbantera, one of the shields covering a newly decorated red para. The whole scene is meant to depict the original Krantji Soak with all the tjurunga lying at the bottom. The kangaroo fat stones are said to have come into being as a result of Krantjirinja having been dashed to the ground and killed by his father’s sister who ‘mistook him for a real kangaroo’. She
had flayed him and his fat was scattered all
around. At the beginning of every subsequent act
all these sacred objects are moved 'out of' the
ilbantera (that is, Krantji Soak); and at the end
they are placed back 'in' and covered with
branches. For several days these acts consist of
the waking and sneezing actions described above,
plus a number of others not including Krantjirinja
himself.

Now comes the final act. The Krantji kangaroo man
who had earlier removed the para from Krantji-
irinja's head, comes forward and lies face down on
the ilbantera. He is rubbed on the back by a more
senior man. Then a group of other men, of various
totemic affiliations and clans, come forward and
lie with their backs on the ilbantera. With the
central hole over his back, each man in turn stif-
fens his stomach muscles, arches his back, and has
his navel rubbed with a kangaroo fat stone. The
shields are also rubbed against their navels;
sometimes being delivered with a sharp, forceful
blow. The man delivering the blows and rubbing the
fat stones against the men's stomachs is Krantji-
irinja. He later places his mouth to the stomach of
each actor and slowly raises each one to a sitting
position on the ilbantera while uttering inartic-
ulate moans.

The culmination of the ceremony comes when the
ilbantera and tnatantja para are brought into
perfect union. "On the last day the tnatantja-
para, held by all men belonging to the Krantji
kangaroo clan, [is] twisted about over the central
hole in the ground painting; and the down-tufts
stripped from both the tnatantja-para and the
ground-painting [mingle] with one another as they
[are] thrust down into this opening. It [is] from
these mingled down-tufts - undoubtedly represent-
ing the secretions released by the male and female
generative organs during their union - that the
kangaroos [are] believed to issue" (Strehlow
1964a:737).

The first thing that happens at the Krantji utnitjia is
the construction of the ilbantera and the tnatantja para,
the two crucial tjurunga that will be brought into radical
conjunction at the end of the ceremony. Strehlow (1964a:
733-4) has some interesting things to say about these tju-
runga and their relationship to Krantji totemites. Speaking
of an unnamed person "regarded as the reincarnation of one
of the kangaroo totemic ancestors of Krantji", (7) he states:
As a young man he was, after passing through the physical manhood rites of circumcision and subincision, assigned a definite position in the kangaroo clan of Krantji. He was told which one of the kangaroo ancestors of Krantji had taken on new life in his person, and he was given a tjurunga object of his own as a visible token of his totemic status. He was shown at some time the dramatic act in which his personal kangaroo totemic ancestor had always been depicted; and this act (or these acts if there were several) thereafter became his personal property, together with the verses associated with it. From now until his death only he could perform this act and sing these verses, or authorize his kutungula assistants to do so ... In association with the other members of the Krantji kangaroo clan, he had to allow his blood from his own arm veins to saturate the ground when the sacred ground-painting was being laid down in [the utnitjial. For it was held that new kangaroo life could come out of the ground only after some of the 'life' of the original kangaroo totemic ancestors had been poured down upon it; and the blood which flowed from a man of the Krantji kangaroo totem was regarded as sacred in this special sense when the appropriate Krantji kangaroo charms were being sung during the laying down of the ground-painting: during such an act the blood of the totemite was no longer regarded merely as human blood, but was held to contain some of the 'life' of his original kangaroo totemic ancestor. After the completion of the ground-painting, a ceremonial phallus (called para) was fashioned by the joint labours of all men who belonged to the kangaroo clan of Krantji, and this para was fastened in turn upon the head of every kangaroo performer who approached the Krantji ground-painting in order to blow in its central hole.

Human blood therefore appears to be the substance which embodies the ancestors and their creative powers, and the tjurunga of Krantji Soak demand it from the local kangaroo totemites. When in the Krantji utnitjia the shields, fat stones and other tjurunga are laid on the blood-hardened ilbantera, this is said to be an exact re-creation of the situation as it existed at the beginning of The Dreaming. However, in The Dreaming this situation was not created: it always existed and the ancestral beings were born altjiranga ngambakala - 'out of altjira or 'out of nothing'. How is
it, then, that the ancestors are now 'brought forth' and 'sent back'? How do these idioms relate to the eternal existence of the ancestors in the ground?

11.5 Going Down

None of the myths so far discussed in this thesis suggest that The Dreaming began with anything like a true event, except perhaps in so far as some of them describe the separation of sky and earth. Normally, it is stated that an ancestor, such as Karora or Krantjirinja, lay asleep at the bottom of a soak (or some other site) with a tnatantja towering above him. He is said to issue from the root of this tnatantja as a result of the stirrings of his mind. The Krantji utnitija, however, suggests a more elaborate interpretation of the beginning. For if Krantjirinja is initially asleep, he is not quite alone. In the background a shield is thumping, and as Krantjirinja stirs he is inquisitive about something which is already in existence - the ilbantera.

Although the ancestors begin their lives as uncreated, unitary figures, in the case of Krantjirinja at least, there are three components involved in his coming into being - himself, the ilbantera and the shields. The theme of the thumping shield has already been encountered in Chapter Nine, where it signified, by analogy with actual kangaroo behaviour, alarm and anger on the part of the senior generation. In the great flurry of activity just prior to an uncircumcised boy being descended upon by his ritual operators, the alarm and anger are caused by a threat of incest stemming from the youth having witnessed the primal scene. A very similar theme can be shown to apply in the Krantji
utnitjia.

First of all, Krantjirinja is identical with the para which he wears on his head. As I noted in Chapter Eight, these head tjurunga are known as mburka (bodies) and they are quite characteristic of ceremonial acts when an ancestor is revealed in full regalia. In essence, when an ancestor is represented with a tjurunga mburka or tnatantja para on his head, his whole body is phallicised, just as it was in The Dreaming when it lay at the root of a gigantic, flesh-covered tnatantja, or when the ancestral figure marched across the country carrying such a pole before him to pave the way.

A crucially important point about the Krantji utnitjia, then, is that Krantjirinja is the phallus.

The two most secret and potent kangaroo verses sung at the Krantji utnitjia refer to the ancestor’s ‘death’. Strehlow (1971:322) translates them as follows.

The crooked woman
Draws him down upon an underspread of leaves.

On the fallen leaves he grips her tightly;
Interlocked with her he rises.

The first couplet, says Strehlow, was explained to him as referring to Krantjirinja’s father’s sister and the second line was originally glossed as ‘the fat woman dashes him (i.e. Krantjirinja) to the ground’. His informants glossed the second couplet, which refers to Krantjirinja himself, as ‘he snatches at fallen leaves (viz. after he had been dashed to the ground) and rises to return to the soak underneath the surface of the soil’. "However", says Strehlow 1971: 322),
the words almost certainly bear the meaning given in my translation. The very fact that these two verses were normally excluded from singing while the utnitjia ceremonies were being performed seems to suggest that the hint they afford of incestuous intercourse between Krantjirinja and his father's sister induced the old leaders of the Krantji totemic clan to ban them as much as possible from the hearing of the younger men.

In support of Strehlow, it will be recalled from Chapter Nine that being dashed to the ground may be metaphoric of sexual intercourse in circumcision acts.

The two verses are indeed the most secret of the whole Krantji cycle: they are the tjurunga retinja (tjurunga 'names') of both Krantjirinja himself and his father's sister, Tjakalaka (Strehlow 1971:321).

They are sung only when the central holes in the ground-paintings themselves are being lined with down to symbolize their increased fertility. It is from these central holes of the magically fertilized ground-paintings that the kangaroos are believed to emanate (Strehlow 1971:322).

In fact, it is from the incestuous union of Krantjirinja and Tjakalaka that kangaroos originated, since in the less esoteric explanation, when Tjakalaka 'flayed' Krantjirinja, his 'fat' was scattered everywhere, and from this 'fat' kangaroos rose up. The 'fat' is now symbolised by the tjurunga stones.

I mentioned earlier that the first thing an ancestor is supposed to have done in The Dreaming is to have called out his own name. His second act was to call by name the place where he had originated, and both these 'names' are song couplets. There is an apparent correspondence here with the secret 'names' of Krantjirinja and Tjakalaka sung at the Krantji utnitjia. One of the song couplets is definitely said to be the autodenomination which Krantjirinja bestowed
on himself, but to see how Tjakalaka's 'name' is linked to the place where Krantjirinja originated requires a certain amount of explication.

There is, of course, something paradoxical about Krantjirinja having a father's sister: how is it possible for him to have had a senior relative when he, and he alone, existed at the Krantji Soak from the beginning of time? But a father's sister is a very particular kind of relative and her presence is not quite the paradox that it may at first appear to be. A father's sister is a senior woman of the same patriline as ego, and one should remember that the initial events of The Dreaming took place prior to the institution of marriage rules. It is an essential characteristic of the ancestors that they moved about in patri-couple groups of fathers and sons and were more or less restricted to their own clan areas. They were essentially closed in on themselves and all of one substance, a point which is emphasised again in their predilection for feeding on their own totemic species. I would suggest that Tjakalaka is a refraction of the same essential idea. She is, in effect, Krantjirinja's 'mother', specified as his father's sister in order to be consistent with him in terms of personal constitution.

Bearing this in mind, the main acts at the Krantji untnitjia take on a new significance. Strehlow at one point interprets the final bringing together of womb (ilbantera) and phallus (tna$tantja) in terms of androgyny. Speaking generally of secret/sacred acts, he says:

The final scene, which was regarded as the climax and the most sacred act of the cycle, generally revealed the source of life at the pmora kutata whence the totemic ancestors had first emerged at the dawn of time (Strehlow 1964a:735).
The great inner secret of 'increase rituals', then, is the establishment of the unity of sexual opposites. It is the phallus in the womb, a radical conjunction which harkens back to the very beginning of The Dreaming when the ancestral tnatantja poles pierced the vault of the sky from out of the pmaraja kutata (cf. Illustration 19).

Given that the ancestors first called themselves into being through naming, and then immediately named the places where they were 'born', I think it is fair to assume that Krantjirinja's father's sister is identical with the ilbantera. According to Strehlow (1964a:737), when the complementary forces of male and female, tnatantja para and ilbantera, are brought into conjunction at the Krantji utnitjia, they are not personalized in any way, but [are] merely suggested by ceremonial objects symbolizing maleness and femaleness (Strehlow 1964a:737).

Yet this must be something of an overstatement. (8) Krantjirinja is, after all, identified with the tnatantja para and his personality is quite well defined. Even if he is not represented in the totemic act by his own reincarnation, he is regarded as being consubstantial with all the members of the local clan, particularly those which have been reincarnated from one of his own progeny, and the Krantji utnitjia should therefore be seen as a kind of symbolic return to the mother (father's sister) by all the clan members when they take the phallic pole and thrust it into the very centre of the ground painting.

The term which Strehlow (1971:126) translates as 'to call oneself by name' or 'to call out one's own name' is tnakalama. In everyday speech, this term may be applied to
Illustration 17. The Re-creation of Ancestral Androgyny

This *ilbantera* with *tnatantja* was photographed by T. G. H. Strehlow in 1965. In the original picture the alternate rings are coloured red and yellow, each separated by a line of fine, white down. The whole construction is watched over by a group of elders, some of whom have feather decorations on the heads in imitation of the *tnatantja*. The totemic and geographical associations of the sacred structure are not specified, but the decorated shields suggest that it is part of an *utnitjia* ceremony.
persons who are conceited or vainglorious. To say of somebody that he names himself is to put him down for being boastful (Wilkins pers. comm.). This relates to Strehlow’s contention that the word is derived from *tnakama*, which does not only mean ‘to call by name’, but also ‘to believe in’ or ‘to trust’. The conceited man who names himself is therefore the person who is over-confident, who believes in himself to an inordinate degree, and this recalls the metaphors of being ‘up himself’ or ‘full of himself’ which I applied to Iliingka in Chapter Four.

Ancestral androgyny, then, like any act of incest normally reserved for the gods rather than man, is a kind of *hubris*. Being in oneself is also being in the mother, the dangerous, anti-social action which is obviated at the beginning of initiation, but which appears to be celebrated when senior men move towards the end of their days and return to their countries to perform the local ‘increase rites’. It seems from the Krantji *utnitjia* that it is this incest which calls an ancestor’s progeny into being, for just prior to the final act, Krantjirinja lays face down on the *ilbantera*, and then raises many men up from the central hole, rubbing each one’s stomach with a fat stone and hitting it hard with one of the ceremonial shields. At the same time he groans, perhaps in imitation of the creative voice with which Krantjirinja originally created his world.

Krantjirinja’s ‘death’ at the hands of his father’s sister may be rather more than just a ‘cover-up’ story to disguise incest. According to the more exoteric account, the father’s sister flayed Krantjirinja and it was from his fat that ancestral kangaroos came into existence, the mythical
account clearly explaining the use of kangaroo fat stones in the *utnitjia*. But at the same time, the entry of the tinantarja *para* into the *ilbantera* symbolises the 'going down' of the local clansmen: it is their symbolic death. There are thus two distinct sides to an 'increase rite'. The totemic actors who donate their blood are going into the ground at the same time that totemic animals are said to come out of it. Furthermore, this dualism is aligned with age distinctions, because the efficacy of an 'increase rite' stems from the songs (or 'names') which the old men chant. In other words, when mature totemites celebrate symbolic death, the elders guarantee symbolic birth, and this division of ritual labour relates profoundly to the status of *tjurunga*.

Munn (1970:148) has drawn attention to the idiomatic Pitjantjara expression, used when speaking of the totemic ancestors, that the latter 'became the country'. On the other hand, she also makes it clear that Pitjantjara people sometimes speak of living men when applying the phrase.

Just as the notions of ancestral progeny are objectified, so also living individuals or the particularly remembered dead may be 'thought of' in the guise of ancestral transformation, or as being [ancestors] at a particular place. For example, one young man drew a site connected with certain grub ancestors in which he represented the grubs as oval sacred stones incised with grub designs lying by a waterhole at the site. Pointing to these stones he said: 'My father, my old man ... is lying down.' He was referring to his own father, an old man who was still living; the drawing represented a major site of his ancestral (patrilineal) homeland. The ancestral subject and the living subject, the young man's father, were both assimilated into his conception of the stones (Munn 1970:149).

The account suggests, then, that when people speak of ancestors as being in the country, they mean not only that the ancestors are identified with the *tjurunga* which are located
at major sacred sites, but also that living old men (or recently dead ones) are also identified with those tjurunga. If the same logic were applied to the Aranda material, it would imply that ‘increase ritual’, in its ‘going down’ aspect, is really a transformation of mature men into ancestral beings and tjurunga.

It is this which I believe explains the fact, mentioned in the previous chapter, of old men being sad when they witness totemic acts which they themselves can no longer perform. In effect, the old men are watching themselves being superceded as ancestral figures absolutely coterminous with the tjurunga. Munn (1970:152-3) found a very similar theme in Walbiri ideas about tjurunga inheritance. The Walbiri speak of ‘losing’ The Law when they pass it on to juniors.

For example, one man, speaking of the ancestral sites in his lodge, said that they first belonged to his father’s father ... and then to his father ...: ‘My father lost them, the living then hold them.’ According to another man, a father might say to his son when the latter was first seeing totemic ‘increase’ ceremonies: ‘I might die, you must hold this [dreaming] for me.’ (Munn 1970:152).

The tjurunga, says Munn, are therefore pivotal in intergenerational transmission of The Law, each generation in turn playing the roles of donor and heir. It is these roles which I see as central to the division of ritual labour at ‘increase rites’. The old men are surrendering the most secret/sacred paraphernalia and the mature men are acquiring it.

I will expand on this matter in the next section, where I propose to clarify the question of singing and its relationship to the old men’s surrender of tjurunga, but I should point out straight away that the equation I have
drawn between, on the one hand, becoming tjurunga through symbolic death and, on the other, the theme of maternal incest, confirms in every way Roheim’s general thesis outlined in *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*. Descending into the country, says Roheim (1969:209), is nothing less than the "genitalization of death".

The wandering heroes of the Australian desert all end by becoming tjurunga, the stones or wooden slabs that represent the ancestors. Borkeraka tjurungeraka (they became tired, became tjurunga) is the ending phrase of the myth. But the tjurunga is the penis [phallus]; so that dying is represented as that moment when the body becomes entirely genitalized.

Furthermore, says Roheim (1969:243), if one looks at the tjurunga boards (see Illustration 20), one will nearly always find engraved upon them a kind of graphic story depicting the places an ancestor visited and the things he did there. This is so, continues Roheim, because the environment is symbolic of the mother, and the tjurunga, in so far as it is the phallus or a ‘genitalized’ body, is ‘in’ the mother by being surrounded by ancestral tracks.

The body that is identical with environment: here we have struck rock bottom. What the tjurunga symbolizes and magically achieves is the unity of the infant with the mother. The tjurunga, although it represents the body of an individual, also stands for the environment in which he moves (Roheim 1969:243).

And ‘rock bottom’ is indeed the place that is reached when the Krantji clansmen thrust their tnatantja into the sacred ground painting. Deep in the very heart (or navel) of the earth lies the glistening rockplate from which Krantjirinja originally issued forth: together with it lie the sacred tjurunga which tell his story to the end of his days.
Illustration 20. Examples of Tjurunga Boards and Stones

(from Spencer and Gillen 1927:125-8, 130)

(continued overleaf)
(from Roheim 1969:36, 40-1, 240-3
and Strehlow 1964b:47, 57)

These illustrations show many of the
iconic variations in the representation of
stories on tjurunga. The source texts explain the markings in each
case (cf. Illustration 10).
11.6 Coming Up

Roheim (1969:209) states that because the tjurunga is a phallus housed within a uterus, the ‘genitalization’ of death is paradoxical.

It is not the end, it is a beginning. In our texts [myths] we find the sentence ‘knganakala tjurung-eraka’, i.e. he [the ancestor] originated, he became a tjurunga – as if the end were really a beginning.

But the end really is a beginning for the old men identified with the ancestors and the tjurunga. Once they have been initiated into the innermost secrets of The Dreaming, they become for the first time empowered to supervise ceremonial life and to sing the songs whose efficacy, along with the power of the tjurunga boards, is of paramount importance in guaranteeing the success of The Dreaming. But this ‘beginning’ also has another side.

Strehlow says that whenever tjurunga are taken from their sacred storehouses and tree-platforms, it is vitally necessary to be able to sing the ‘names’ associated with them, and we know that this singing reproduces the beginning of The Dreaming when the ancestors sang the known world into existence. This same vitalisation of the country is the ‘coming up’ side of ‘increase ritual’, as against the ‘going down’ aspect which I emphasised earlier. But it will also be recalled that Krantjirinja’s fat had a similar function to the tjurunga and the songs, since it was from this fat that his kangaroo progeny came to life. Moreover, the cause of his fat being scattered everywhere was his being dashed to the ground by his father’s sister. Death (of Krantjirinja) and birth (of kangaroos) are thus again conjoined, the latter being the consequence of the former.
At two points in *Aranda Traditions*, Strehlow (1968:17, 88) writes of the ancestral 'life-cells' which inhabit both an ancestor's body and any tjurunga object associated with him. These cells, capable of indefinite multiplication through scattering, are called ngantja and they correspond to the ancestral spirit children who 'jump up' from the ground and enter the wombs of women. Ngantja, according to Carl Strehlow (1907:5), means concealed or hidden, and is applied to the ancestors generally to denote their resting position beneath the earth's surface. But this hidden quality is also linked to the ngantja as 'life-cell' or spirit child.

Strehlow says that every man has twin souls, one mortal, the other immortal. The first is the guruna, which I have already discussed, while the second is called the atua njaltja or atua ngantja and is a kind of alter ego.

The totemic ancestor who had become reincarnated as a new human being did not give up his dwelling at the sacred site. He was still present at all times in the rock, the tree or the tjurunga slab into which he had changed at the beginning of time. It was only a part of his substance (or a portion of his living essence) which took on new life in the person regarded as his reincarnation...

[The atua njaltja could take on a separate shape when the man with whom he was indivisibly linked was awake and going about his ordinary business. The atua njaltja could whistle in order to attract the attention of his human double to some danger. The latter then suddenly started, and could take steps to save himself. Men could, however, only see never hear their own atua njaltja: they were too closely linked with him to do the latter. But an atua njaltja could be seen by men with whom he was not physically linked. It was claimed that sometimes when a hunter returned from his quest and was still approaching in the distance, he appeared like two persons to his friends who were watching him from the camp. These two persons were exactly alike in every respect, - exact doubles and identical twins, if I may express the matter thus. But as soon as they approached closer to the camp, the atua njaltja...]

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would vanish, and the watchers in the camp would then realize that they had seen both the hunter and his spirit-double (Strehlow 1971:598-9).

When a man dies his atua ngantja returns to the tjurunga object from which it first sprang in order to be reincarnated once again (although it may sometimes be spoken of as never having left the tjurunga in the first place). However, Strehlow (1971:601) suggests that further reincarnation will never happen quickly. On death, a man’s tjurunga is moved away from its local centre so that nobody will have to sing its ‘names’ and be reminded of the deceased man. But the sacred slab is always eventually returned to its ‘ever-lasting home’ to be sung again. It therefore once more takes its place among the ‘functioning’ tjurunga which, along with the chants, increase the vitality of its homelands. (9)

There are at least two important contrasts between the ngantja and the guruna. First of all, whereas the former is immortal, the latter is completely annihilated at death. The guruna transforms itself into a ghost (Itana), travels northwards to the sea and is obliterated by a thunderbolt (Strehlow 1971:599-601, cf. Carl Strehlow 1907:15-6), never to be heard of again. Secondly, whereas the ngantja is hidden from view and may only be heard by its ‘twin’, the guruna is the visible soul of a man which can be seen in one’s own dreams. However, Roheim (1972:90) contradicts Strehlow’s account and says that:

It is the ngantja that shows visions and dreams to its living double, and it is in these dreams that human beings learn new forms of [some rituals]. The ngantja lives in the ancestral cave and it is here that he is visited by the guruna in a dream .... [The spirit] seen by [a] woman in her pregnancy dream is the ngantja.

In spite of the contradiction in the ethnography at this
point (doubtless a function of the mythopoeic process), Roheim's and Strehlow's comments are revealing about the nature of 'increase rites'.

The contrast between the *guruna* and the *ngantja* is not unlike that between the ego and the super-ego. In each case, the former are images one has of oneself confronting the external world. The latter, on the other hand, both reveal themselves as 'voices' and agencies of observation. Furthermore, the *ngantja*, like the super-ego, performs the role of purveyor of traditions, an important point to which I will return in detail in the conclusion of the thesis. For the moment, however, it is enough to say that since the *ngantja* are so closely tied to *tjurunga* and the ancestors, as well as being the spirit children who guarantee the continuity of The Dreaming, it seems that Munn (1970:157) may be correct in seeing in ancestral manifestations

the [Durkheimian] collective socio-moral order with its grounding in seniority and the past which has been objectified as the determinate, compelling forms of the external environment.

This leads to a crucial point concerning what is actually being reproduced at so-called increase rites. According to Roheim (1932:66) it is sometimes said that when 'increase rites' were performed in The Dreaming, real people were made, not animals like nowadays. On the other hand, we know that animals produced for game are regarded as people, because they provide the basis of the cannibalistic fare consumed at the end of the *ingkura*, a theme which is continued when totemites (sometimes) consume part of their own species when performing *abatjalkatiwuma* (Spencer and Gillen 1927:147-8, Roheim 1969:143, Carl Strehlow 1910: 7-8). This
conflation is, I would suggest, just a single aspect of a more generalised phenomenon which may be defined as the enlivening of the country. When a rite such as the Krantji utnitjia is performed, it is everything in the country, including animals and spirit children who dwell in the land and tjurunga, whose 'fertility' is being enhanced. No other view makes sense of the generalised efficacy of the songs, which, in The Dreaming, called everything in the environment into being.

I suggest, then, that totemic animals and spirit children are aspects of the same ancestral essence, and it is especially interesting in this regard that there is an apparent identity between ratapa and game. As I noted in Chapter Eight, a ratapa is apt to leave a woman's womb and follow her husband in order to sabotage his hunting. This is part of a general dislike which ratapa have of the father killing animals, and pregnant women should not eat much meat on that account (Roheim 1933:251, cf. Spencer and Gillen 1904:614, 1927:492). In Roheim's (1938:344) understanding:

The unborn child protects large game from the father's spear because in the father's unconscious mind the large game he kills is identical with the unborn child.

Perhaps this is true, but the identity also has other implications for inter-generational relations, since the father is the guarantor of The Law, without whom the super-ego would not be introjected.

When old men surrender The Law they are spoken of as losing the tjurunga, and this very same idiom is used when a ratapa enters a woman's womb. For, as I stated in Chapter Eight, when a child is born it is said to cry for the papa
tjurunga which it lost at the time it entered the mother. The papa, it will also be recalled, in its stick or non-tjurunga form, is also the thing which keeps a ratapa pre-occupied when the father wishes to hunt big game. I would suggest that the loss of the papa tjurunga corresponds to the loss experienced by old men in giving up The Law, and the hypothesis is perhaps supported by the way in which the old men sing their chants and revitalise the landscape. For the old men's singing is equivalent to the multiplication by 'naming' which occurred in The Dreaming, and at the same time to the 'fracturing' of the ancestral body which lost ngantja 'cells' in entities left behind or 'dropped off' in the land. The 'fracturing' motif is not dissimilar to Kran-tjirinja's fat being scattered about the landscape, and is also clearly cognate to the fertilising power of ceremonial down.

In effect, then, the corollary to mature men 'going down' at 'increase rites' is the old men 'coming up' in the multiple shapes of animals, spirit children and even landscape forms, which are said to have their own animate force and feelings (Strehlow 1971:584). These are the two sides of The Dreaming as they relate most profoundly to the practice of the male cult, the one being tjurungeraka (becoming tjurunga), the other knganakala (originating). The nature of the interdependence of the two forms is perhaps indicated in the Aranda expression for song composition, tnakalama - 'to call oneself by name'. The word is derived from tnakama ('to call by name'), which literally translates as 'to cut a name' (Wilkins pers. comm.). Words are impressive and expressive at the same time, and if nature comes into being as
a result of maternal incest, we might appreciate the consequences of such hubris to be a kind of earth-shattering verbal score. The problem remains, however, as to the precise function of the ngantja 'cells' which drift across the totemic tracks, like letters in a crossword puzzle, settling at the points to which they give definition.

11.7 A Matter of Life and Death

The subject of the lost tjurunga brings us full circle in the ritual round: 'The totemic cycle of re-creation' is precisely that—a cycle, and the discussion of 'increase rites' has helped to establish its precise contours. If the ratapa is the ngantja which is lost from the tjurunga, and at the same time identified with the animal world (which, it will be remembered, may actually be responsible for conception through ingestion), it has a definite position in relation to both the old men's status, which precedes it, and that of childhood, which succeeds it at the point when the infant is named. This being so, we may re-draw 'the totemic cycle of re-creation' as follows (see overleaf).

Diagram 24 has been segmented into four numbered sections to facilitate discussion of the relations between its parts. Segment 1 represents the old men who are identified with both the ancestors underground and the tjurunga. In terms of mythology, this segment begins with the ancestor stirring and then creating the landscape and other natural features with his 'marks' and 'names'. Transposed into ritual, the situation corresponds to the old men's songs, whose potency guarantees the country's general fertility.

Segment 2 represents the life of infants, who, accord-
Diagram 24. The Totemic Cycle of Re-Creation (Reprise)

ing to the doctrine of spirit conception, have their origin in the landscape maintained by the old men. The diagram suggests that there is a kind of general transition from old to young, a theme which harkens back to 'the double progression' mapped in Diagram 17 (see Chapter Eight). There is also an implicit switch here between male and female. For while the songs which the old men sing enliven the country, the active ngantja 'jump up' from the land into the wombs of women. Given the association of ratapa with papa tjurunga,
and of both with women, there is perhaps evidence here to suggest a particular kind of complementarity between male and female responsibilities towards The Dreaming. However, lack of ethnographic information prevents me from pursuing this matter any further.

Segment 3 represents childhood from the time that a baby is named and no longer referred to as a *ratapa*. A child here is still under the control of women, and what access it has to The Dreaming is governed by them. I would tentatively suggest that the time of naming is also the time when the *papa tjurunga* is taken back to the ancestral cave and that this complete loss of the *tjurunga* marks the infant's transition to proper human form. Segments 1 and 2 in a sense represent The Dreaming in its non-human aspect. To be sure, old men and infants (*in and ex utero*), are human beings, but there is a sense in which they are not *truly* human. Both *ratapa* and ancestral beings are ambiguous on this count, being simultaneously regarded as animal and human.

A child remains in his mother's care up until initiation, after which he can pursue the acquisition of *tjurunga* and learn much about the totemic identities of himself and his relatives. This time of life is marked by segment 4 in the diagram. As he grows older, a man learns more and more secrets, and eventually has the most 'inside meanings' revealed to him. This passage is a return to segment 1, the 'going down' which precedes the 'coming up'. Interestingly, the transition from 4 to 1, like that from 2 to 3, occurs through the assumption of a name. It is at increase rituals, when going down into the earth, that a man chants the most sacred verse corresponding to his secret name.
The question of names is worth pursuing. Ancestral naming begins in death. At the beginning of The Dreaming, the aged ancestors lay in underground caverns in perpetual sleep - symbolic death, and they emerged from the ground to throw out their own names. In ritual, too, full assumption of one's secret identity comes at the time of (symbolic) death at 'increase ritual'. Naming in childhood, on the other hand, begins in life. A child's assumption of his public name is his birth into humanity, the moment when he leaves behind the animal status of a ratapa and, incidentally, when he is safe from the threat of infanticide (Roheim 1974a:70-2). Given that the public name is normally derived from a corresponding conception event, and that the secret name is first revealed at initiation, one can see that the animal and human sides of 'the totemic cycle of re-creation' are interstitial between the assumption of public and secret names. They are also interstitial between life and death; between, one might say, the opposing forces of Eros (the life instinct) and Thanatos (the death drive).

Jung (1969:397) once envisaged the life-cycle in terms of the rising and setting of the sun, a peculiarly apt image for present purposes in view of the Aboriginal conception of human life as rising from, and falling into, the surface of the earth.

In the morning it rises from the nocturnal sea of unconsciousness and looks upon the wide, bright world which lies before it in an expanse that steadily widens the higher it climbs in the firmament. In this extension of its field of action caused by its own rising, the sun will discover its significance; it will see the attainment of the greatest possible height ... as its goal. In this conviction the sun pursues its course to the unforeseen zenith ... At the stroke of noon the descent begins. And the descent means a reversal
of all the ideals and values that were cherished in the morning. The sun falls into contradiction with itself. It is as though it should draw in its rays instead of emitting them. Light and warmth decline and are at last extinguished.

The metaphor is worth pursuing.

The sun appears and disappears with every cycle, but during its absence we assume it to be in another place—on the other side of the earth, or perhaps, if we know nothing of such a place, beneath the ground. In 'the totemic cycle of re-creation' the latter situation applies. When a man reaches old age, he descends into the ground, but after a while he begins to rise again to be reincarnated as a ratapa. When the sun is in another place, we do not see it, but we assume it to be there according to a projected model.

The Aranda do the same in respect of the life-cycle: they assume an underworld which is the source and destination of life. The question which is begged is: what is the source of the model?

The obvious answer is the world of dreams, and following the line of thought I adopted in Chapters Three and Seven, I would contend that the model derives from a projection of the unconscious onto nature. In fact, the dynamic of ancestral subjectivity, and its articulation with that of living men, makes little sense without this model. 'The totemic cycle of re-creation' is essentially a plan of complementary opposition, whose movement presupposes a meshing of two independent systems of difference. These two systems have their entrance and exit points marked by the taking of names (see Diagram 25 overleaf).
Diagram 25. Dual Naming in the Totemic Cycle

The stage prior to the assumption of one's public name is a pre-social one. An infant child is really no more than a particular kind of animal yet to make an entrance into human personal affairs through intersubjectivity. The Aranda seem to recognise this, since a child is not really a person until it is named. On the other hand, the ratapa, representative of the spirituality which marks man off from beasts, is already deemed to be within the child from its time of conception. This paradoxical situation is mirrored by another obtaining in old age. For a man's totemic identity is not fully assumed until he quietly drifts out of social life and into senility, a kind of post-social condition. If we assume, then, that the doctrine of the atua ngantja has some reference to a man's personality and psychic constitu-
tion, it is necessary to take into consideration the fact that its manifestations somehow take it beyond that realm.

The contradiction admits of resolution if we switch the focus of attention away from actual corporeal persons and onto tjurunga. For the pre- and post-social identities of infants and old men are conceived in precisely these terms: old men are said to become tjurunga slabs, while infants are said to stem from papa sticks. The essential personality of a ratapa is not carried by the infant himself; it is more attached to the papa tjurunga, and remains so for as long the child is without a name. After this, the papa may be discarded and taken back to the secret cave. Likewise, the essential personality of an old man is not in his own corporeal constitution, but in the tjurunga slab which represents his totemic ancestor. Jung’s rising and setting sun is, for the Aranda, a journey out of, and back to, the tjurunga which inhabit the earth.

In the seemingly endless debate over Aboriginal knowledge (or ignorance) of physiological paternity, Spiro (1968:257) has been the commentator to point out with most force the oedipal implications of the doctrine. ‘Traditional conception theory’, says Spiro, means that a man understands his origin to be through his own entry into his mother, so fulfilling the wish to take his father’s place. While I hold no brief for the assumption of Aboriginal ignorance of physiological paternity, Spiro makes an important observation here, and the questions of incest and the primal scene are absolutely crucial for the understanding of ngantja and tjurunga. However, I think that the implications are rather broader than Spiro has supposed.
'The totemic cycle of re-creation' guarantees something which is eternal. The tjurunga are indestructible and when men carry the ngantja within themselves, they too partake of something which can never die. When a child assumes its public name it does so through the internalisation and 'crossing out' of the trauma of the primal scene. That is to say, its conscious identity is contingent on an unconscious structure which replicates exactly the oedipal phantasy which Spiro finds at the centre of the idea of spirit conception. The whole of The Dreaming begins in this situation when sky and earth separate and reveal the impossible identity of the primordial phallus, and were it not to continue, symbolic life itself would cease to exist.

'The totemic cycle of re-creation', whose basic parameters were sketched in the events of the myths of Karora and countless other Aranda stories which tell of the origin of the tjurunga, is the guarantee of this existence. As I argued in Chapter Seven, the archetypal image of the circle or mandala is nothing less than the structural condition of the phallus constantly on the move. In infancy, one knows nothing of this structure, yet one's very identity is contingent upon it being hidden. In old age one comes to know its secret, moving steadily towards the ecstatic void of death, whose sheer inexpressibility made the original ancestors "shout [their] appeal for a word to veil and sustain it" (Laplanche and Leclaire 1972:143). Consciousness has its origin in the unconscious and the first order cannot exist autonomously from the second. At the end of its days consciousness glides back into the murky depths from which it sprang: but the bedrock is indestructible and will one day
give rise to a new sun.

From the eternal circle there can be no escape. Iliingka, the man perfectly poised in youth, knows no death, but neither does he truly know life, since he never grew or came to name his world. He simply 'is', an impossible condition that can only be bought at the expense of his humanity: he leaves no human tracks. No doubt this is why, as pointed out in Chapter Four, his sky world is so closely associated with the incestuous youth stuck to his mother in eternal, painful coitus after a circumcision operation, or with shamans, whose inordinate 'flights of fancy' may lead them to their deaths through becoming stuck in the hole in the Milky Way. These people, too, have ceased to leave a trace. If it is true that 'being without nothing', and 'nothing without being' are paradoxically identical, so is it equally true that Eros and Thanatos require each other by way of mutual guarantee. The shaman's premature death and the initiate's eternal pain are both forms of (ec)static immortality, marked, like Iliingka's world, by everlasting repetition. Outside of The Dreaming, or at least 'the totemic cycle of re-creation', life is devoid of interest. Whether in heaven or in hell, there is nothing to say, nowhere to go, and very little to do.
PART FOUR

CONCLUSION
CHAPTER TWELVE

Essential Embodiment

If the picture of thought in the head can force itself upon us, then why not much more that of thought in the soul?

The human body is the best picture of the human soul.


The experience of the unconscious is a personal secret.

Carl Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, p. 52.
12.1 A Great Shame

The Dreaming is often rendered in Aboriginal English as 'The Law', presumably in order to stress the weight of authority entailed by a set of rules and regulations governing human behaviour. The Dreaming instituted both the natural world and the cultural, moral system of human endeavour, while the ancestors, who we now know to be quite strictly identifiable with the oldest and most recently dead men, watch over this creation, demanding strict obedience to its dictates. Everything suggests, then, that Durkheim (1976:387) was correct to see in Aboriginal religion a "great moral force which dominates ... and sustains". Following on from the initial conclusions drawn at the end of Part Two of the thesis, I now propose to examine the nature of this force.

Durkheim would have found Ronald Berndt's (1970:219) claim that: "Morality and religion [in Aboriginal Australia] are not conceived of as being separate spheres of experience" as evidence for his assertion that the conscience collective is at the heart of 'the religious idea'. Yet at the same time the link between religion and morality is by no means straightforward (as Berndt himself goes on to note). Perhaps Stanner (1979:120) has summed up the Aboriginal situation best. He states that there are at least two classes of Aboriginal religious belief which show the very close association of 'spiritual authority' and mundane, material existence.

The first is the class of beliefs concerning the impregnation of women by pre-existing child-spirits that act under their own volition. The second is the class of beliefs concerning the dependence of men on a potential of life (for ex-
ample, of humans, animals, and plants) pre-existing in totem-places. Men could—should—help the child-spirits to do their work, and could—indeed, must—ritually facilitate the release of the potential. But they did not create that store and without it were helpless. The manifestation of life on a visible, material plane was thus a spiritual function. So was the power of humans to subsist on that plane. Those postulates were fundamental to Aboriginal social existence as a form of being-as-it-is.

On the other hand, says Stanner (1979:120-1), the moral or ethical components of this duty are vague.

The myths contain much of the ‘human-all-too-human’ character of man ... Many myths, one cannot say all, had a homiletic effect; perhaps the Aborigines drew a moral lesson from them; but to all appearances a strong, explicit religious ethic was absent, probably for the same reasons that a religious creed was absent. Three vital pre-conditions were missing—a tradition of intellectual detachment; a class of interpreters who had the prerogative or duty to codify principle; and a challenge that would have forced morals and beliefs to find anatomies.

All this made the moral aspect of the religion rather amorphous, although what was there was consistent ... All evidence collected ... establishes that the rites of initiation existed as disciplines. They both fashioned uncompleted man, and transformed him into a being of higher worth.

In other words, there is a morality at the heart of Aboriginal religion, but it is diffuse; there is a Law, but it is not universally formalised; there is a conscience collective, but it is not, as Durkheim seemed to envisage it, wholly standardised. How, then, may we adequately describe and account for it in the Central Australian example?

If altjira is ‘The Law’, it corresponds broadly to what Durkheim envisaged as ‘the sacred’. However, the Aranda term which probably comes closest to sacred is not altjira, but tjurunga, something which Durkheim (1976:120) himself discerned. The word tjurunga is normally found in the anthropological literature to denote the sacred stones or wooden
boards which have from time to time been mentioned in this thesis. But it has a much greater application than this. Basically, tjurunga (a word used as both adjective and substantive) are the legacy of The Dreaming as a whole: all ceremonies are tjurunga; all ritual paraphernalia pertaining to the ancestors are tjurunga; songs, sacred sites, stories and ancestral names are all tjurunga (see Spencer and Gillen 1904:Chapter VIII, 1927:Chapter VI, Carl Strehlow 1908:75-83, T. G. H. Strehlow 1968:84-6). As one of their glosses for tjurunga, Spencer and Gillen (1927:614) give: "Name applied to anything regarded as sacred".

The Aranda appear to link this 'sacredness' with morality and personality in a revealing way. According to Carl Strehlow (1908:75):

The word tjurunga means: [one's] own secret; tju (now laulinja) is an ancient word and means: veiled, concealed, secret; runga means own, my own.

The use of the term 'own' is probably intended here to denote the intense sense of attachment which people feel in relation to tjurunga, since not only are these sacred items usually secret, they

are amongst the very few forms of personal property which may be owned legitimately by individual persons in Central Australia (Strehlow 1968:120).

Normally, personal ownership of anything is frowned upon among Aborigines, who are obliged to give whenever they are asked. As Roheim (1932:77) states, giving is regarded as "the natural expression of good will", and to be seen to be miserly or proprietary is normally regarded as extremely bad form.

This is very different from what happens in respect of
tjurunga. It would be unthinkable for a man to expect another to dispose of tjurunga in any form of generalised reciprocity. To the contrary, formal rules apply in the context of tjurunga transmission, and to acquire sacra one must pay — and pay dearly. The tjauerilja which one gives to the elders is truly a price with which to ‘soften’ or ‘loosen’ the resisting aged guardians of the traditional mysteries, so that they would pass on their secrets (Strehlow 1971:677).

The term ‘loosen’ (tjakilama), which is ordinarily applied, for example, to the extraction of teeth, or of tree-stumps from the ground (Strehlow 1971:769), was explained to Strehlow (1971:677) by one of his informants as follows:

It is with meat that the old men have to be ‘loosened’, so that they will reveal their great tjurunga, which they are clutching so tightly.

What is it, then, that the old men hold so dear that they surrender it with such apparent reluctance?

Durkheim (1976:120) found Carl Strehlow’s meaning for tjurunga — ‘my own secret’ — problematic. Not only did he believe, for reasons that are unclear, that Kempe’s translation of tju — great, powerful, sacred(1) — was more authoritative, he flatly refused to accept that runga could mean what Strehlow stated it to mean.

As for the meaning given to runga, it appears to us very doubtful. The ceremonies of the emu [for example] belong to all the members of that clan; all may participate in them; therefore they are not personal to any one of them.

Surprisingly, Durkheim was in some measure correct here. T. G. H. Strehlow is conspicuously silent on his father’s translation and offers no alternative. This may well be because the suffix -runga (own) is phonetically quite distinct from
the *runga* to be found in *tjurunga* (Wilkins pers. comm.). However, Aborigines rarely play these kinds of word games without betraying some oblique truths, and the link between the personal and social qualities of the *tjurunga* is a matter which needs to be explored rather than dismissed.

Durkheim was prepared to reconcile Carl Strehlow and Kempe by saying that secrecy was the hallmark of the sacred because the latter has to be kept apart from the profane. This, I think, is a promising interpretive direction that can be pursued further and integrated with the strictly personal nature of *tjurunga*. When Roheim (1969:84) investigated the meaning of the term *tjurunga*, he was told by a (probably) Matuntara man that it meant 'own shame' (which Roheim aligns with the anthropological term taboo).

*Tju* means *bora* (shame) and *tju* is added to *runga* (own one, proper one) to stop people from talking too loudly about the *tjurunga*.

In Western Desert languages the term equivalent to *tjurunga* is *kuntangka*, which is derived from *kunta* - shame. Myers (1979:364) translates the Pintubi notion of *kuntangka*, as it is used in everyday speech to refer to something that should not be discussed, seen or displayed openly, as "shamefully embarrassing" or "shameful matters".

Roheim (1969:84-5) states that the reason why *tjurunga* are so closely connected with shame is "obvious".

It is ... significant that the word *runga* (own) is also used alone as a synonymous expression for *kganintja*. *Kganintja* means totem, literally origin. In the myths the verbal forms appear together; thus *kganakala tjurungeraka* (they arose, they became *tjurunga*). Thus we see that two concepts, the concept of shame and the concept of origin are associated with the word and idea of *tjurunga*. Everybody will of course have guessed the implied meaning and this is made quite clear [in] Aranda myth. The first *tjurunga* was owned by
Malbunngka who ... was also the inventor of love magic. The penis of this hero was in perpetual erection and his own penis was his tjurunga. At the same time it was also the first tjurunga that existed; and Malbunngka was the first person who turned himself into a tjurunga. It is therefore obvious that the tjurunga (the penis) has something to do with shame and with origin, or coming into being.

The phallicism of tjurunga (particularly as boards and stones) cannot be in doubt. This comes across strongly not only from this thesis, but also from all of Roheim’s work. Unfortunately, however, Roheim never coherently accounts for why the phallus should be so closely linked to shame, origins, and indeed, the whole of The Law. To engage these problems more comprehensively is to return to Durkheim’s essential problematic of the conscience collective.

12.2 The Psychological and Moral Context

Roheim, as I pointed out in Chapter Two, to a good degree anticipated Winnicott’s theory of the transitional object. In The Eternal Ones of the Dream Roheim (1969:100) wrote of the tjurunga as an ‘intermediate object’ standing "half-way between the Ego and the object-seeking libido". Later in the same book he links the ‘intermediate object’ with the very process of thought itself.

In general we know that we conjure up memory images from our own past to obtain consolation for losses suffered ... The imago is a consolation for losses suffered, and a safeguard against complete loss. Alone, we have our thoughts for company ... The actors of the daydream drama are far easier to love; they never frustrate the desires of their author. Thus we are fully justified in regarding the whole world of thought, of ideas, of imagines, from the libido-economic point of view, as intermediate between the narcissistic and the object-erotic libido position. A materialized ‘imago’ is what we have called an ‘intermediate object’. It represents the link between the ego and the object and unites the ego with the community through the
common necessity of possessing such a link. In dream analysis ... the mechanisms most manifestly connected with the fleeting imagery of dream-land are those of fission [displacement] and condensation, which, like introjection and projection, are defense mechanisms against object-loss. The 'imago' of the object is split off from the object and merged with other objects as found in real life. This process is a repetition of what takes place within the dual unity organization. The child is separated from the mother, but at the same time it tries to effect a re-union with the mother. Therefore fission [displacement] and condensation (separation and re-union) is really the mechanism that corresponds to this primal organization (Roheim 1969:137).

In Chapter Seven I argued that 'this primal organization' is formally constituted by metonymy and metaphor and that 'the totemic cycle of re-creation', in its mandala-like structure, encapsulates the double process. But in so far as metonymy (displacement) and metaphor (condensation) are formal properties of thought, they are also clearly connected with issues of passion and morality. It is to these latter concerns that we must now turn in order to see the significance of the 'zero degree' for 'life as it is lived' (ritual) as well as 'life as it is thought' (myth).

Elaborating on the findings of an earlier paper, Roheim (1969:13, cf. 1943) summarises the sequence of rites of passage as: "loss of object, cathexis of a penis [phallic] symbol, finding of the new object". The phallic symbol here is the same as the 'transitional' or 'intermediate object' and refers to the role of the tjurunga as something with which the subject identifies during rites. I will return to the precise nature of this identification in a moment, but first I wish to note some further fragmentary remarks of Roheim which tie in with this 'transitional' nature of the phallus. These concern the role of the phallus as
representative of the super-ego, that part of the psychic apparatus which in psychoanalysis is intimately connected to, if not quite synonymous with, conscience.

Roheim always maintained that tjurunga are very closely connected with the super-ego. He first mooted the idea briefly in Australian Totemism in connection with Durkheim's theory of religion (Roheim 1925:187-9), but expressed himself more clearly in later works. In one case (Roheim 1932:108) he went so far as to say that "the tjurunga is a sort of materialization of tribal morals", and this is aligned with a further statement about the atua ngantja. A man's totemic double, says Roheim (1972:100-1), is the spiritual agency which warns a man of his infractions of The Law, and it is therefore a representation of the super-ego (as I also suggested in Chapter Eleven).

More specifically, Roheim (1932:109) maintains that the tjurunga "is the father as a super-ego . . ., a second body within ourselves". It represents the "introjection of the father", leading to the formula: 'if my father is in me, then I am my father' (Roheim 1932:178). Indeed, this whole question of introjection, says Roheim (1943:372), is absolutely central to ritual:

Libido is withdrawn from the absent objects (mother, women) and used for the cathexis of the ego. The novices are decorated, supplied with magical penis equivalents which also symbolize a bond with the fathers and a second body of the novice (tjurunga). Duplicate formations are based on the cathexis withdrawn from the object. The novice . . . through identification with the fathers and his contemporaries becomes a real member of society.

Essentially, I think that Roheim is correct, although I believe that he fails to distinguish sufficiently between
the father qua father (that is, the man whose paternity is
critical for membership of the clan) and the father who is
everally 'father to himself' (the ngantja). This is a
question to which I will return, but first I wish to pursue
another line of enquiry.

Aborigines tend to speak of having The Law on rather
than in them. In English they speak of 'carrying' The Law,
as if it were a burden and they were bearers. There is a
formal parallel here (though I would not go so far as to say
it is a semantic one) between this and another common
Aboriginal English expression - to have shame. It is com-
monly said that a person has 'got' or 'not got shame'
according to the degree of propriety characterising his be-
behaviour. What is more, 'falling into the arms of the law' at
initiation is actually designed to instil shame into young
people, so the parallel between the two kinds of 'posses-
sion' may not be coincidental.

According to Myers (1979:361), the Pintubi notion of
shame covers a wide semantic field, for

kunta includes within its range the English con-
cepts of 'shame,' 'embarrassment,' 'shyness,' and
'respect.' The concept of 'shame' is usually asso-
ciated with the discomfort of being observed by
others in the public domain, especially at being
seen to do something that is poor etiquette, ill-
mannered, or wrong. It is, therefore, explained by
the Pintubi as an important consideration in con-
duct.

Myers (1979:361-5) then goes on to describe some of the
everyday situations where the term is used - when children
are shy, when adult strangers meet, when young men confront
elders in ceremony, when sexual matters are openly dis-
cussed, and so on.

Commentators writing of other parts of Aboriginal
Australia have suggested that Aborigines see in shame something bordering on fright. Stanner (1982b:44), for example, states that "Aborigines have the idea that there is something excessively shameful, even dangerous, in the mother-in-law relation", while Hiatt (1978:185) has said that the Gidjingali see fear and shame as fundamentally similar. Meggitt (1962:190-2, cf. Hiatt 1978:186) states that the Walbiri's idea of shame has the same component of fear and also suggests that where there is shame there cannot be anger. The Walbiri say that the mother-in-law's matrmoiety is 'the origin of shame' and that the wife's actual matriline is 'the true source of shame'. On the other hand, the same matrmoiety is also called 'without anger' and it is extremely bad form to lose one's temper with one of its members. Anger (fight) and fear (flight) are, of course, opposites, so it seems as if shame may be one transformed into the other - perhaps akin to the commonly found 'primitive' idea that one marries one's enemies to turn them into friends.

Shame obviously covers a fairly wide range of ideational/behavioural situations, but whatever else it is, it is a negative experience. It is interesting to note, however, that there is little which one could see in Aboriginal behaviour, religious or secular, that one would want to characterise as guilt. This is in line with the fact that Aranda religion has nothing really corresponding to the Christian notion of sin. As Strehlow (1971:346-7) says:

When the first missionaries came to Hermannsburg in 1877 and began preaching about sin in the Christian sense, the old Western Aranda men were not merely incredulous but openly indignant ...
The Aranda firmly believed that they were naturally good.

In fact, they protested to the missionaries: "We are good (\textit{mara}) and morally blameless (\textit{gatalarumba}) people" (Strehlow 1971:347). Roheim (1932:120) found similar sentiments.

When the Lutheran Missionaries began to talk about the doctrine of original sin and to tell these descendents of the eternal dream folk that they were all sinful, wicked beings, they answered with great indignation: \textit{Aranda ingkaraka mara}. 'The Aranda are all good.'

Of course, the Aranda recognise that their people may sometimes do wrong, but it is clear that they do not subscribe to this as a thoroughly constitutional aspect of man.

Roheim does not simply quote the (by Christian standards) elevated self-assessment for ethnographic purposes: he agrees with it and says that it is a perfectly accurate reflection of Aranda social psychology. The reason why the Aranda reject the notion of original sin, says Roheim, is because the development of the super-ego is utterly different from that normally encountered in Western societies.

"[T]he Aranda", he states,

is a happy man. When I made inquiries regarding the sanctions against doing things that were forbidden by ritual, I was told that it is \textit{mokunpa}, very sacred or taboo. (2) Further enquiries showed, however, that \textit{mokunpa} means to talk angrily, so that the idea was really that the old men would be angry and might kill the offender by magic or violence. Then I learned that laws were obeyed not from any intrinsic desire to do so, or on account of any spirits ..., but because they were afraid of the old men. Then again, take the rule regarding coitus. Pintubis and Jumus [Kukatjas] would tell me that no boy should have intercourse before he is initiated and married. Well, what happens if they do? The old men will kill him. Really kill him? Well, if he was not a very obstinate offender, they might be satisfied with spearing him in the leg. But when I came down to facts, it appeared that they had all been having intercourse all their lives [sic]. They had simply taken the risk — and that is the key to their happiness. They
certainly have a super-ego, but not too much of it, and there is more real danger in their lives than intrapsychical danger. The tortures which in neurosis are inflicted on the ego by the super-ego are here really carried out by the old men at initiation, but not introjected by the young. They are men who get what they want, or, as this is not possible in human conditions, we should say that they get a substitute not too far removed from the original. We know them from the cradle to the grave and can say: they are not wicked because they do not try to be good (Roheim 1932:119-20, my emphases).

One may differ with Roheim on some his specific emphases, but I think the interpretation may be taken a great deal further and linked to both tjurunga and the broader notion of shame.

I showed in the previous chapter that in a very real sense the old men are The Dreaming. In a non-literate culture, the great creative epoch cannot be far removed from the here-and-now. In Strehlow's (1964a) terms, one may say that there is no great chasm between "Eternity" and "Time". But the old men, apart from being The Dreaming, are also identifiable with the tjurunga, which are, it will be recalled, nothing less than the transformed bodies of the ancestors. If, then, the old men are The Law, as Roheim states, then the tjurunga must bear their power—and indeed the tjurunga are pervaded with that 'magic virtue' (arung-kulta) which is also the possession of the sorcerer.

All manifestations of the ancestors have 'magic virtue' and such power is only used to cause pain or suffering if a person has done something wrong. For example, when Strehlow first witnessed the Krantji utnitjia, a few days later the leader of the ceremony complained of acute pains in his back. He attributed these pains to Krantjirinja, who, he said, was striking him for having shown the Krantji utnitjia
at the wrong location and in front of non-clan members (Strehlow 1968:29-30). Even then, this old leader had deliberately left out some acts because he had felt too much shame at the idea of displaying the last mysteries to the vulgar gaze of men who were not kangaroo totemites (Strehlow 1971:312).

Roheim (1932:106) recounts a similar case involving tjurunga.

Old Renana had sold me some tjurungas. He was fully justified in doing so according to his present convictions, for he is a Christian and indeed one of the leaders of the Christian community. But he was a fully initiated man before he became baptized and he will in the depths of his heart and convictions remain an Aranda of the old block till he dies. After having brought the tjurungas he had the following dream:—

'My father came to my camp and said', Take the three tjurungas back to the [sacred cave]'; I said, 'No, I wont [sic] take them'. He took a fire-stick and burnt my back.'

Renana's father had long been dead and Roheim (1932:107) not unreasonably refers to him as the image of Renana's conscience.

What is very revealing, however, is the way in which Aranda men may fight ancestral dictates. This comes across strongly in Roheim's account and is perhaps implied in Strehlow's. Strehlow (1971:305) recounts a second example of ancestral retribution where the will to fight back is very transparent. Here, the Northern Aranda euro ancestor of Kaput Urbula, Kwaneraka, was said to have punished one of Strehlow's informants for putting on a ceremony under inappropriate conditions. The informant stated:

'I am aching all over. Kwaneraka is striking me hard for singing his verses and for showing his ilbantera to outsiders. But I am not giving in to him. I am going to strike back at him [by continuing to perform].'

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Stanner (1979:118) once argued that the Aboriginal spirit world is one which 'cares' for man, and that, in so far as the religion is "infiltrated ... by expediency, power, and vested interest", then it is "flawed" - as if anything which did not serve to 'unite hearts' was not religion. This appears to take rather a lot for granted about the 'true nature' of religion as an apolitical formation beyond the interests of individual men. It is not altogether clear that Aranda ancestors 'care' in the sense obviously intended by Stanner. They certainly have power; and it is from this power that good things stem. But the power itself does not appear to have the kind of overarching benevolence which Stanner imputes. Rather, it appears to be more like power in the abstract: benign when properly controlled, but dangerous if allowed to run rampant. According to Strehlow (1968:38-42), it is power that is most certainly without intrinsic moral virtue.

It is in this context that one must seek to explain the Aranda's attitude towards their totemic ancestors and their tjurunga. Above all else, power demands respect, but this does not mean that one always treats it with reverence. Myers (1979:363), for example, states that young Pintubi men know only too well that the elders express their own personal concerns during ritual discipline, and he adds: "In so far as it is recognized, it is resented" (my emphasis). This is surely a corollary to Strehlow's (1971:398) contention that a rite such as circumcision must have found its origin in "an act of deliberate cruelty". In a religious atmosphere such as this one might expect an 'old' rather than 'new testament' view of the sacred.
When *tjurunga* are handled it is in an atmosphere of awe bordering on fear. Strehlow (1971:339) maintains that:

Reverence, mingled with fear, is probably the strongest emotion felt by the privileged men who are visiting ... sacred sites.

And he adds in a footnote:

The Western Aranda adjective describing this state is *enkaritjaritja*, 'full of veneration and anxiety'. The term literally means 'full of enka', *enka* being, like the German *Geist* or the Greek *Thyμος*, the living spirit in human beings. *Enkaritjaritja* combines the meanings of the German adjective *begeistert* (enthusiastic, full of spirit) and the Greek *enthymios* (full of care). Native men who inspect the *tjurunga* at a sacred cave, for instance, are *enkaritjaritja*; and their faces are described as being full of anxiety and care (*anngerara tiratira*).

In other words, care in the context of The Dreaming bespeaks of prudence rather than love.

People may well be anxious in the presence of *tjurunga*: any accidental mishandling of them may have to be paid for with one's life. Failure to treat secret/sacred paraphernalia properly is one of the few crimes in Central Australia for which the elders can inflict immediate retribution. To quote Strehlow (1970:111-2) again:

any breaches of the ceremonial ritual and any refusal by any of the younger members of a local group to submit to the directions of their elders in ceremonial matters were regarded as constituting sacrilege; and sacrilege was punishable by death everywhere in Central Australia. This power to inflict capital punishment for ritual offences was exercised frequently enough to ensure a deep fear of the guardians of the sacred places ... It was a well-founded fear which ensured a great measure of respect for the 'advice' of these persons in all secular matters.

A damaged or broken *tjurunga* would leave an old man 'heart-broken'. Old men are grieved (*ekulitnjika*) if *tjurunga* are lost, damaged or shown to uninitiated people (Strehlow...

Myers states that a key element of the respect for ritual paraphernalia is the feeling that a man has towards actual deceased persons connected with the sacra (cf. Munn's remarks made in the previous chapter). In particular, he hypothesises that emotional ties to land (sacred sites) are often transformations of ties to real people totemically associated with that land. He notes (Myers 1979:358-9):

one's claim to 'land ownership' is an emotional one, through relationship to one buried at a place. Goodale (1971:100) has reported similar customs for the Tiwi, and it may be worth considering the importance of the accretion of 'sorrow' to associated things in the context of the value of sacred sites, sacred objects, and the like. The significance of place in Aboriginal thought may derive some emotional force from the displacement of emotional ties with the dead to places associated with them.

In any case, the concept 'sorrow' is clearly attached to ritual paraphernalia and to sacred places of The Dreaming, both considered of extreme value. On sight of these, older men often begin to wail, because they are 'sorry'. An informant explained this to me with reference to the designs incised on a spearthrower:

Dead men schooled me, gave it to me. When people see it they get sorry. Give one like this to a man and people will see it and give you a woman. Too much crying (from sorrow) for this one.

While this single context cannot make it fully clear, it seems that ritual and sacred things are associated with the memory of people now dead, who previously handled them and passed them on. This is the source, in part, of their emotional value. Charged with reminders of the dead, they make one cry with 'sorrow', remembering that which binds them to this object.

The Pintubi make this explicit in revealing rituals to young men. The elders frequently emphasize that 'this belonged to dead men, you have to hold it and pass it on.' I think we cannot help but regard this theme in male ritual as drawing upon
the strongest sentiments of relatedness and continuity juxtaposed with mortality to imbue that which is of universal and transcendent value — The Dreaming — with the most powerful sentiments of identity available. The significance of this binding or ‘cathecting’ of initiates to the transcendent makes sense to us in the light of the other fundamental social implications of ‘sorrow’.

Myers here reveals, within the cultural logic of the Pintubi themselves, a connection between sacred respect and death. If my analysis of Chapter Eleven is accepted, then one can see a similar connection in the Aranda case, since the old men are already in a sense viewed as dead and embodiments of the ancestors who are in the ground. And in any case, for the Aranda, as for the Pintubi, old men return to their countries with the explicit reason of wishing to die there so that their ancestral spirits may return to their source. Given this link between sentiments on the one hand (respect, shame, grief, etc.) and inheritance on the other (‘carrying’ The Dreaming, taking on The Law from the dead), one is evidently moving towards an indigenous theory of tradition; an understanding of the articulation of history with the subjects whose interests, values and moral commitments make that history a cultural inheritance.

12.3 Back to Zero

In Aranda understanding there is no tradition without the ancestors. Keeping the traditional way of life means to do what the ancestors did (more or less) and to maintain what the ancestors left behind. But knowledge of the ancestors changes over time. As a child the subject is familiar only with the ‘low level’ outside meanings of the traditions, which, while being a part of The Law, represent the
latter devoid of its force. Initiation alters this: in and through it one listens, begins to know and understand things, and senses for the first time the real meaning of shame.

Another important Central Australian sentiment is compassion, an emotion thought to be closely related to grief. In Pintubi, for example, grief (yalurrpa) and compassion (ngaltu) may both be grouped under the same term, ngaltutjarra - a cognate of ngaltu (Myers 1979:355). But although compassion is regarded as a positive emotion, in the sense that it is highly valued and to be cultivated in the 'ideal person', it is one that precedes the disciplines of initiation. Myers (1979:355-6) states that to make an appropriately compassionate person

is the goal of considerable childhood training. Typically, young children holding an item desired by another who cries for it are told 'be compassionate, give it to him' (ngaltutjarra, yuwara). Adults frequently play at this with children, who then become accustomed to sharing.

The Pintubi regard compassion as a definitive attribute of human beings and as an outward expression of an inner feeling towards anybody or anything in difficulty.

Those who do not exhibit such feelings ... are felt to be 'hard' or 'like rocks'. Like rocks, they are without emotion, without recognition of shared identity, and perhaps not quite human (Myers 1979:356).

This very early mastery of identification with others is connected with The Law and The Dreaming, but often in a negative sense; compassion may actually threaten The Law. For example, so strong is compassion that it may stand in the way of the effective ritual punishment of transgressors, who are supposed to be dealt with without compunction.
This identifies a clear problem for those who want to bring sanctions to bear on offenders against moral law — that is, **how to overcome the 'feeling' of sorrow or compassion for 'relations' that might prevent them from carrying out punishment** ...

One might argue that the importance of male initiation and male cult is the way in which a man is re-oriented to a greater value than his relatedness to kin; namely, to the Law, The Dreaming. Those who violate the Law, the Pintubi say, will be killed 'without sorrow.' I suggest that among other things, male initiation provides a mechanism for assuring conformity to things of transcendent value, assuring that concerns beyond the immediate feelings of relatedness will prevail when vital moral issues are at stake. Pintubi describe sacred objects, songs, and such as 'Law' in pidgin, emphasizing their binding power. It seems that in Pintubi theory the binding power of Law over compassion comes from 'sorrow' — the very expression of relatedness to others, just as in Freudian theory the superego derives from the id in order to oppose it. How else could the Pintubi overcome the tendency to 'compassion'? An interesting note is that the men are bound to the higher Law through the same considerations of relatedness and sorrow for the dead, and also that they do it as agents of a higher authority and not of their own will, so that they are not 'responsible'. The Dreaming is something outside of them to which they truly must conform (Myers 1979:359-61, my emphases).

Compassion is a sentiment attendant on identification or sympathy, and it is worth recalling in this regard Roheim's (1974b) thesis on the origins of Aboriginal religion outlined in *The Riddle of the Sphinx* (see Chapter Two). There are, says Roheim, two essential components to Central Australian religion: an 'early' one based on 'projection' and a 'later' one based on 'introjection'. The first functions as a child's defence against the threat of the primal scene by deflecting the content of the latter onto bush-demons. These 'non-human devils' are the monster figures who are thought by children, and supposedly by women too, to be eternally copulating dogs (see Chapter Four), and they
are used by mothers as 'bogeymen' figures to prevent children from wandering too far away from camp (cf. Chapter Eight on the passive, unadventurous character which results from this upbringing). I submit that these beliefs are a corollary of childhood compassion: fear of the outside is the other side of the coin to the positive feelings one has to all those who are close.

Initiation, says Roheim, alters this orientation. The supernatural world is now no longer just a threat, but something to which one must turn for protection. Here, the 'demons' are squarely faced and in the process transformed into beings fit to be emulated.

Our own children play dogs or horses, that is, they pretend they are themselves dogs or horses. They have reached the stage at which they have overcome their animal phobias and introjected their Oedipus complex in a symbolic form in play. I have never seen such 'totemic' games in the classic land of totemism. There the child's games are dominated by the mechanism of projection; he regards some object in the external world as an extension of himself. He is never a dog; but the paper trumpet is his penis. So long as he is a child he remains at the level of projection and knows only his fear of devils. The re-introjection of these beings occurs only after the initiation ceremony. Then they are changed from anthropophageous and phallic demons into protecting ancestors who are removed from all contact with women; anxiety gives way to reverence, love, and identification (Roheim 1974b:142-3).

At initiation, then, the outside world is made partially known and where there once was fear, there is now a sense of respect, a positive sentiment that may overcome the narrow sympathetic commitment to all that is close.

There is thus an important link between people's attitude towards the supernatural and their moral sensibilities. Roheim identifies childhood as a time of projection and this recalls my argument in Chapters Nine and Ten that initiation...
brings to an end the time when the Name-of-the-Father has been foreclosed. Foreclosure, it will be remembered, is distinguished from repression. In the former, the primal scene is not recognised and repressed according to the logic of Lacan's 'paternal metaphor', but instead repudiated, the subject acting as if the trauma had not occurred. This, according to Lacan, is the structural definition of psychotic subjectivity as the latter is distinguished from neurosis. Its result is a lack of distinction between the Imaginary and the Real, such that the foreclosed element is apt to appear in the Real as the Real, and not as a symbolic form. This, I suggest, is at the very root of the childish phobias in Central Australia, when the image of the primal scene is projected onto copulating dogs and demons of the bush.

Roeheim's 'introjection' phase occurs, according to my analysis, at the time when the paternal metaphor is rendered fully effective in the initiation cycle. The Aranda say that circumcision places Tuanjiraka, who is previously known to children as a monstrous decapitator, inside the novice, and the remaining phases of initiation, subincision and the ingkura, see castration dramatised, accepted and given a place within the unconscious. The phallus is from this stage on the focal point of all revelations, culminating in the most secret/sacred transformations that occur in the commemorative rites when the ancestors turn into tjurunga and return to their underworld slumber. At this point, the self becomes the phallus and the ultimate secret of religious life is revealed as 'being-in-death'.

The tjurunga that one becomes is the tjurunga that one
always was, except that in death it assumes a reality which
was veiled and hidden in life - completely before initia-
tion, and partially after that momentous event. This, I
believe, is where Roheim fails to distinguish between the
father's tjurunga and the personal one which is the 'other
body' associated with the atua ngantja. It is true that the
subject introjects the father at initiation, and the Aranda
signify this overtly through the absorption of tjurunga per-
taining largely to the patrilodge. But this introjection
does not constitute the super-ego (the atua ngantja), since
the latter has been there since the time of conception.
Rather, introjection of the father activates a pre-existent
formation and gives it a proper place. Every Central Austra-
lian man has two fathers, one who transmits, the other who
is, The Law - a psychic structure I will try to explain.

Roheim is perhaps correct to say that the Aranda is a
'happy man' because he is not often bothered by the voice of
conscience from within, but a corollary of this, I would
suggest, is the increased chance of 'unhappiness' being
caused from without. There may well be no neurosis in
Central Australia, but quasi-psychotic conditions are un-
likely to be absent. I am not suggesting, of course, that
all Aranda are psychotics (which seems to me to be the
implication of a Levy-Bruhlian position); only that the
tendency towards the fear of spirits may tell us something
about normal Central Australian psychology (just as the
tendency towards neurosis tells us something about normal
Western psychology). In the Aranda case, it seems that
initiation may function partly as a prophylaxis. If Lacan is
correct in assigning the triggering of true psychosis to the
calling of the symbolic father into opposition to the subject, then one can see in initiation both the means by which this opposition is effected and the mechanism through which it is resolved — by giving the Name-of-the-Father a position in 'the place of the Other'.

An Aranda child is not (normally) psychotic, but his moral outlook is intrinsically self-centred. The only rules his seniors teach him are bound to the notion of compassion, which is in line with an imaginary outlook on the world. Without actually confusing subject and object, there is "a recognition of shared identity" (Myers 1979:355), a recognition that may be so strong in adult life that it may get the better of one's moral judgement of a situation. As the metaphor of hardness ('like rocks') would suggest, Aborigines are constitutionally 'soft' in such situations and have to work hard to overcome this. Paradoxically, this general orientation is egocentric, if not egoistic: it stems from the fate of the other being confounded with the fate of the self — a conflation of 'him' and 'me' to the exclusion of 'I'.

This psychological complex is related to the way in which an Aranda child is indulged by its mother — the woman who "gives and never grudges" (Roheim 1932:75) and who, as I have argued, restores a child's integrity during the oedipal crisis by re-establishing her phallicism. But one must bear in mind here Lacan's attribution of psychosis to the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father and its having been called into opposition to the subject. For this excessive mothering is bought at a price — the non-acceptance of the father as the primary object of the mother's desire. Under such
circumstances, not only is the child's libido still firmly attached to the mother, but the interference of the father in this relationship is literally intolerable, so giving rise to the demonic transformations of the primal scene. Life can continue like this only so long as the child is sexually immature. When puberty comes, the desire of women who are close, and the non-acceptance of 'the Law of the Father', is a very real threat to the social fabric. In Aboriginal society, marriage and biological reproduction are economically and politically critical, and in them, if nowhere else, the symbolic father must make his mark.

It is in the context of initiation that a man develops towards maturity, accepting the marriage arrangements that have been made for him by his family. He is 'adopted' by a new mother (-in-law) and a new father (-in-law) and he learns, through the intervention of paternal power, how to behave with the appropriate degree of shame towards these people. As far as possible, he avoids them. The sentiment is also generalised: if a boy at puberty becomes kerintja ('shameful', 'modest') to his mother-in-law, he also adopts this very same attitude towards his mother and sister.

When explaining the origin of repression Freud has often compared it to a flight or called it an introjected flight. We might also call the custom of kerintja a dramatized repression. The similarity between the process as found in analysis and the behaviour of the native is striking. In both cases we have incestuous libido, and a scotomization [conscious denial] ... of the object as the corresponding defence mechanism. But while civilized man withdraws his attention ..., the savage withdraws his whole person (Roheim 1932:97).

Roheim (1932:97-8) interprets this action as reflecting the 'skin-deep' nature of repression in Central Australia, and I would suggest that it relates to the absence of 'sin'.
Shame, it seems, appears as a substitute action which precludes the active fulfilment of a wish all but perceived by the subject — for example, of sexual desire of the mother-in-law, who it will be remembered is actually sexually permitted under ritual license. Shame before the father-in-law I would interpret as a reflex of the opposite trend — the desire to dispose of one’s competitor. It is interesting to note that when a man’s father-in-law dies, the son-in-law has to make a great show of his remorse and ideally should be the person to avenge the dead man: "only after the murderer has been killed, can his heart [stomach] grow calm once more" (Strehlow 1971:610).

Tjurunga, then, in so far as they are ‘inserted’ into the subject at initiation and make him gain respect for his relations, may be seen as the embodiment of repression. The gloss, ‘own shame’, makes perfect sense in terms of the way in which they turn the subject upside-down, as it were, and make him block his drives by flight. So far as the structure of the mind is concerned, we may say that the tjurunga mark the leaving behind of the Imaginary and a consolidation of the Symbolic, thus giving rise in the moral dimension to the possibility of strictures directed against the self — an elementary super-ego. In childhood, an Aranda has little or none of this: he has a morality, but it is based on empathy, not principle. As an adult, however, he can say that there are times when it is necessary to act for a cause outside of himself, because there is something outside of himself that has been ‘raised’ within himself; he has an other within which tells him what he may and may not do on certain occasions — a transcendent ‘Other’ (Lacan) which takes the
subject beyond the confines of his imaginary identifications
and into the realm of a supra-personal Law.

It is critical to note, however, that this Law is not
credited to man. The Central Australian equivalent of the
super-ego is not deemed to be taken from the parents, as
psychoanalysis would have it, but from another place—the
earth, and there is a symbolic truth expressed in this ap-"a priori requirement" (Levi-Strauss).
12.4 In the Spirit of Mythical Time

The corollary of a shallow super-ego is the impoverishment of tradition. If it is true, as Freud (1973:99) suggests, that the "contents" of the super-ego are always those of the parents' own super-ego, this psychic mechanism has to be understood as

the vehicle of tradition and of all the time-resisting judgements of value which have propagated themselves ... from generation to generation.

Traditions (in the plural), of course, are not restricted in Central Australia, but the 'judgements of value' to which they pertain are not extensive. This, I believe, is connected to the well-documented conservatism of Aboriginal society.

Stanner (1979:38) states that Aborigines place such a high value on continuity that they are not simply a people 'without a history': they are a people who have been able, in some sense, to 'defeat' history, to become a-historical in mood, outlook, and life. This is why, among them, the philosophy of assent, the glove, fits the hand of actual custom almost to perfection, and the forms of social life, the art, the ritual, and much else take on a wonderful symmetry.

"One may say", says Stanner, that "their Ideal and Real come very close together". In the same paper Stanner (1979:36) refers to this conservatism as "transcendentalism".

So much of [the Aborigine's] life and thought are connected with The Dreaming that it stultifies his ability to develop.

The moral side of Aboriginal life is thus inextricably tied to ahistoricity. The duty of 'following up The Dreaming' is what Stanner (1979:57) calls

life as a one-possibility thing with a once-for-all character. It is thus perfectly consistent
that the myths should depict men as they do — always in a 'human, all-too-human' fashion, good and bad, cowardly and brave, open and deceitful, filial and unfilial. As though to say 'this is how men are, this is reality. It is also consistent that in actual life they should lack what we recognise as moral zeal or earnestness. And it is just as consistent that they should show a disinterest in 'development' as we understand it, and thus be thoroughly at cross-purposes with much that we [i.e., white Australians] want them to do.

In short:

The Dreaming is a set of doctrines about values — the values of everything — which were determined once-for-all in the past (Stanner 1979:58).

The specific outlines of Aranda mythical history and their links with tjurunga have been examined by Levi-Strauss in The Savage Mind. In that book he suggests that we gain a fundamental insight into tjurunga — here referring only to the sacred boards and stones — if we compare them with archives.

It is known that the tjurunga are stone or wooden objects, roughly oval in shape with pointed or round ends, often engraved with symbolic signs, sometimes just pieces of wood or unworked pebbles. Whatever its appearance, each tjurunga represents the physical body of a definite ancestor and generation after generation, it is formally conferred on the living person believed to be this ancestor's reincarnation. The tjurunga are hidden in piles in natural caves, far from frequented ways. Periodically they are taken out to be inspected and handled, and on these occasions they are always polished, greased and coloured, and prayers and incantations are addressed to them. Their role and the treatment accorded to them thus have striking analogies with the documentary archives which we secrete in strongboxes or entrust to the safe-keeping of solicitors and which we inspect from time to time with the care due to sacred things, to repair them if necessary or to commit them to smarter dossiers. On these occasions we too are prone to recite great myths recalled to us by the contemplation of the torn and yellowed pages: the deeds and achievements of our ancestors, the history of our homes from the time they were first built or first acquired (Levi-Strauss 1966:239).

Following the analogy through, Levi-Strauss (1966:241)
says that the probative nature of tjurunga, in so far as they establish "the tangible proof that the ancestor and his living descendent are of one flesh", means that they especially resemble documentary archives, particularly title-deeds, which pass through the hands of all successive purchasers (and can be restored in case of loss or destruction), but that, in their case, it is a question of a moral and physical personality held by a usufructuary, and not the real property of an owner.

It so happens that tjurunga are even more like title-deeds than Levi-Strauss suggests, since to know the secrets of tjurunga is the very basis of land-claims among Aranda people.

To know the tjurunga of a place is to have rights of access to that place - in some sense to be its 'owner'. This makes Levi-Strauss's next point - that the Aranda lend their tjurunga to neighbouring groups in a similar way that the United States might lend the Declaration of Independence or the Liberty Bell, or France Louis XIV's will, to cement an alliance with a friendly nation - even more telling. Both tjurunga and national archives (and one might add national monuments, archaeological relics, etc. [cf. Levi-Strauss 1966:244]) may be said to represent the collective soul of a 'nation', and objects of such immense value can only be lent in an atmosphere of complete trust. As one of Strehlow's (1968:161) informants said:

The lending of tjurunga shows that we are living at peace with our neighbours: we cannot engage in strife or fight with men who are guarding our tjurunga and who have entrusted their tjurunga to our safe-keeping (also quoted in Levi-Strauss 1966: 241).

The question arises as to why this analogy should
appear so telling. In Levi-Strauss’s understanding tjurunga share with archives the quality of being the material embodiment of history. They insert time into the system and "are the embodied essence of the event" (Levi-Strauss 1966:242).

The tjurunga are the palpable proofs of mythical times, the altjiranga, which could still be conceived without them but of which there would no longer be any physical evidence. Similarly, our past would not disappear if we lost our archives: it would be deprived of what one is inclined to call its diachronic flavour. It would still exist as a past but preserved in nothing but contemporary or recent books, institutions, or even a situation. So it ... would be exhibited in synchrony.

The virtue of archives is to put us in contact with pure historicity.

I would be inclined to say that the function of tjurunga is to signify tradition itself - to bring into view all that which is recognised to be of lasting value. History and the function of the super-ego to that extent go together.

In so-called primitive societies, says Levi-Strauss, there is a strong tendency to deny history any real force. This is so because "there is ... a sort of fundamental antipathy between history and systems of classification" (Levi-Strauss 1966:232) and small-scale societies side with the latter rather than the former. The problem for such systems is, given that history exists in the realm of contingent facts - for example, demographic changes - "how do [they] succeed in eliminating history, or when that is impossible, integrating it?" (Levi-Strauss 1966:233). The procedure, says Levi-Strauss (1966:235) may be summarised by saying that "the historical process" is admitted as a form without content. There is indeed a before and an after, but their sole significance lies in reflecting each other.
A similar situation is envisaged for Aborigines by Stanner (1963:168), who refers to The Dreaming as "the moving shadow of their changing life". Again, then, the sense of tradition recalls the super-ego - or in Aranda terms, the alter ego of the atua ngantja.

Levi-Strauss (1966:235) quotes Strehlow (1968:34-5) on the Northern Aranda to drive home his point about history as 'a form without content'.

The gura ancestor hunts, kills, and eats bandicoots; and his sons are always engaged upon the same quest. The witchetty grub men of Lukara spend every day of their lives in digging up grubs from the roots of acacia trees ... The ghgia (wild plum tree) ancestor lives on the ghgia berries which he is continually collecting in a large wooden vessel. The crayfish ancestor is always building fresh weirs across the course of the moving flood of water which he is pursuing; and he is forever engaged in spearing fish.

... [I]f the myths gathered in the Northern Aranda area are treated collectively, a full and very detailed account will be found of all the occupations which are still practised in Central Australia. In his myths we see the native at his daily task of hunting, fishing, gathering vegetable food, cooking, and fashioning his implements. All occupations originated with the totemic ancestors; and here, too, the native follows tradition blindly: he clings to the primitive weapons used by his forefathers, and no thought of improving them ever enters his mind.

To which Strehlow adds the following (not quoted by Levi-Strauss):

In all his modes of living and in all his multifarious occupations, there is everywhere the same depressing inertia, the same mental stagnation that has stifled so completely all his literary endeavours. Nothing that the ancestors have done can ever be bettered by later craftsmen. In this respect, too, as in all others it is unfortunately true that Central Australia sleeps heavily under the all-oppressive night-shadow of tradition.

All this is clearly connected with the 'human, all-too-human' face of mythical beings to which Stanner (who
incidentally prefers the idea of 'stability' rather than 'inertia' [Stanner 1963:168]) draws our attention. 'The ancestors were men as we are men,' is what the Aranda seem to be saying, in spite of The Dreaming's super-human qualities.

Even if mythical time and the present reflect each other so faithfully, says Levi-Strauss, one cannot get round the fact that myth is a form of history.

Even if mythical history is false, it at least manifests in a pure and accentuated form (the more so, one might say, because it is false) the characteristic traits of an historical event. These depend on the one hand on its contingent status (the ancestor appeared in such and such a spot; he went here, then there; he performed this and that deed ...) and on the other on its power of arousing intense and varied feelings (Levi-Strauss 1966:242-3).

Again Strehlow (1968:31) is quoted to clarify the argument.

[The Northern Aranda clings to his native soil with every fibre of his being. He will always speak of his own 'birthplace' with love and reverence. Today, tears will come to his eyes when he mentions an ancestral home site which has been, sometimes unwittingly, desecrated by the white usurpers of his group territory ...]

... Love of home, longing for home, these are the dominating motives which constantly re-appear also in the myths of the totemic ancestors (cf. Levi-Strauss 1966:243).

Levi-Strauss suggests that historical contingency and the Aranda's passionate love of the earth come together through the myths. Strehlow (1968:30-1) is yet again listed in support.

Mountains and creeks and springs and waterholes are, to him [the native], not merely interesting or beautiful scenic features ...; they are the handiwork of the ancestors from whom he himself has descended. He sees recorded in the surrounding landscape the ancient story of the lives and the deeds of the immortal beings whom he reveres;
beings, who for a brief space may take on human shape once more; beings, many of whom he has known in his own experience as fathers and grandfathers and brothers, and as his mothers and sisters. The whole countryside is his living, age-old family tree. The story of his own totemic ancestor is to the native the account of his own doings at the beginning of time, at the dim dawn of life, when the world as he knows it now was being shaped and moulded by all-powerful hands (cf. Levi-Strauss 1966:243).

Thus, says Levi-Strauss (1966:243-4), when one considers that these mythical events, sites, etc. are those which furnish the materials of a comprehensive synchronic code relating nature and society,

it must be acknowledged that so-called primitive peoples have managed to evolve not unreasonable methods for inserting irrationality, in its dual aspect of logical contingency and emotional turbulence, into rationality. Classificatory systems thus allow the incorporation of history, even and particularly that which might be thought to defy the system. For make no mistake; the totemic myths which solemnly relate futile incidents and sentimentalize over particular places are comparable only to a minor, lesser history: that of the dimmest chroniclers. Those same societies, whose social organization and marriage rules require the efforts of mathematicians for their interpretation, and whose cosmology astonishes philosophers, recognise no break in the continuity between the lofty theorizing to which they devote themselves in these domains and a history which is that not of a Burckhardt or Spengler but of a Lenotre and a La Force.

It is not quite true to say that the Aranda blindly follow tradition, if by that it is meant that in daily life they imitate ancestral behaviour completely. To the contrary, there is a great deal in the ancestors' endeavours that must on many counts be avoided. Outstanding in this regard is the fact that the ancestors always fed upon their own totemic species, whereas present day people normally avoid this, or at least mark the practice with some degree of circumspection. Similarly, there is another very signifi-
cant part of normal behaviour usually missing from the myths — marriage relations. Although it was totemic ancestors who are said to have introduced the marriage system, one hears little or nothing about marriage arrangements in the stories. One is much more likely to hear something of brother/sister incest, illicit sexual intercourse with a mother-in-law, or of a secret liaison between a man and his father's sister than a marriage sanctioned by The Law. The ancestors, then, often appear to be Law-less, and the proscriptions involved in 'totemism and exogamy' seem essentially to be post-Dreaming phenomena.

Psychoanalysis generally teaches us that it takes about five or six years to create a human subject: in Central Australia the task may take many more, symbolically ending only at the finish of the cycle of initiation; that is, when a man may take a wife and raise a family. In a sense, this is the only Law that there is in Central Australia. The hold which the elders have over their juniors is based first of all on the fact that unless the latter pay heed to the former, then they (the young men) will not be able to take a wife — at least not within their local area or without the risk of punishment by the senior men. There are, in effect, only two major crimes in Central Australia: flouting the marriage rules and mishandling sacra, and there is a very close relationship between the two. If a young man proves to be a ‘larrakin’ by taking off with other men’s wives, having affairs with women of the wrong class, or refusing to marry the woman to whom he has been promised by his elders, he will not be given access to his tjurunga. To have the tjurunga means to obey The Law, in secular life as well as in
the ritual context.

I have suggested that the relative shallowness of the super-ego in Central Australia, and the "lack of scruple" which Stanner (1979:31) imputes to Aborigines in general, stem from the important fact of the Law of the Father not becoming a reality until one's middle years — and even then with its field of application narrowly circumscribed. In this light, the character of the ancestors, who are also without scruple, may be seen to reflect social reality. Yet the 'assent to life's terms', of which Stanner also speaks, does make its mark: there is genuine sacrifice in Aboriginal religion, and it occurs when one becomes a mature man ready to marry and reproduce. This, I believe, may have further implications for the myths.

Levi-Strauss (1966:228-31) has noted a certain 'insignificance' which attaches itself to Australian and other totemic myths. Very often, he says, such myths amount to very little other than "an itinerary and [add] little or nothing to the remarkable facts which [they claim] to estab-

Their role seems to be demarcative, rather than aetiological; they do not really explain an origin or indicate a cause; what they do is to invoke an origin or cause (insignificant in itself), to make the most of some detail or to 'stress' a species. This detail or that species acquires a differential value not because of the particular origin attributed to it but because it is endowed with an origin when other details or species are not. History is surreptitiously introduced into the structure in a modest, almost negative way; it does not account for the present, but it makes a selection between its elements, according only some of them the privilege of having a past. The poverty of totemic myths is therefore due to the fact that the function of each is only to estab-

lish a difference as a difference: they are const-
itative units of a system. The question of significance does not arise at the level of each myth taken in isolation but at that of the system of which they form the elements (Levi-Strauss 1966: 230-1).

I suggest that this endowment of the present with origins is linked to the ‘logical contingency’ and ‘emotional turbulence’ of which Levi-Strauss also writes. The sentimentiality which old men feel towards their countries (for attachment to land increases with age, approaching morbid- ity in later years) is, as Roheim points out, built through deflected libido. In my understanding, the specific form of the sentimentiality stems from regression; more specifically, the regression which comes about as a result of the death instinct (as explained in Chapter Eleven) - the desire to return to a state of rest. But this emotional commitment is engendered only as a result of the specific life history of a person, which, amongst other things, dictates the accessibility of sacra - his own and those of his mother and father. Ideally speaking, however, a man always returns to the land on which he was conceived. He dies there and takes with him a group of younger relatives over whom he is recognised to have a certain amount of authority.

‘Emotional turbulence’, then, exhibited in the attachment to land and sacra, is intimately bound to ‘logical contingency’ in the arbitrary wanderings of the ancestors (in the guise of old people). At this point, matters of praxis begin to force themselves into the picture - social relations, territoriality, resource control, human reproduction, etc. (cf. Peterson 1972). Such matters cannot be tackled here, but one may note that the transcendental context within which they take place - The Dreaming - is wholly con-
sistent with the psychological, social and moral dimensions of the operations.

The ancestors simultaneously constitute The Law and lie beyond it because they represent the form of a contentless history - or rather, a history which is adaptable to any content whatsoever. They lie beyond the realm of time, space and morality because they represent only the a priori conditions for those categories, which, in normal life depend upon a repressed structure for their support. The Dreaming is that structure, a 'cosmological frame of mind' which is represented by the eternal presence in the subject of his atua ngantja, whose longing for freedom results in the outburst of emotion typical of the man no longer 'in life'.

From a rather different direction, Munn (1970:157) reached similar conclusions about The Dreaming when she stated that:

it would seem that what is being inherited via ancestral transformations is not simply the moral order and authority structure itself, but also the a priori grounds upon which the possibilities of this order are built.

The external forms to which Aboriginal people submit, represent, according to Munn (1970:157-8), a fundamental mode of orientation to objects in which experience of the self is firmly anchored in objective forms incorporating moral constraints, that is being transmitted down the generations. These fixed attitudes about the relationship of human subjectivity to the external order are prerequisite to the transmission of the Aboriginal 'law'; without them, the moral patterns of Aboriginal culture cannot be adequately communicated or maintained. Put in another way, it is not merely a particular kind of object and meaning content which is being transmitted, but also a particular form of experiencing the world in which symbols of the collectivity are constantly recharged with intimations of the self. Without the assurance of this mode of experience, the moral content cannot
be effectively learned, or its 'force' internalized.

One of Marx's most famous dicta was a comment on the transcendental view of life: religion, he said (Marx 1975: 38), "is the fantastic realisation of the human essence because the human essence has no true reality", meaning that what is intrinsically human can be realised only in and through historical circumstances and practical experience of the sensuous world. Yet it is not altogether clear that Aborigines fall prey to an illusion in their a priorism. Marx's view, it seems to me, applies most forcefully to man's modern predicament, where the structure of the unconscious, constituted very early in life, is called to support a vast array of rules, regulations and principles. In circumstances such as these, content outweighs form and appears to bury it beneath a welter of information. In Central Australia, however, the soul has a paradoxical liberty, in which it may bear less, yet be free to give absolutely everything its stamp. (3) The Aboriginal world, one might say, is governed less by principles which people hold, and more by a principle to which the people are beholden.

One might propose now to follow a Marxist line and trace the articulation of the multiple contents which are assimilated to the transcendent form, or map the contours of 'timeless transformations' taking place through 'too many meanings' in 'an economy of religious knowledge' (Hamilton 1979, Morphy 1977, Keen 1978) - but that is where this thesis ends and another begins. As against Marx, however, I believe that the analysis presented here is a vindication of Durkheim's Comtean view, which saw in religion a kind of
transfigured sociology with necessary and practical consequences for the well-being of the group. As Lukes (1975:467) has averred:

In so far as Durkheim conceived religion in this way — as a mode of comprehending social realities — he can be said to have seen it as a sort of mythological sociology.

It would be much more accurate, I think, to see in Central Australian religion a kind of transfigured understanding of the unconscious — a social psychology rather than a sociology pure and simple. Accordingly, its discourse is often not far removed from that of the psychoanalyst — the root, I believe, of Roheim’s remarkable success as a field-worker. One senses that Roheim and the Aranda and Western Desert men from whom he learned were real soul-mates, both having adopted a position appropriate to the understanding of the other, and each, from opposite ends of the spectrum of civilisation, ready to confirm the others intuitions about the human spirit. It seems to me that such a meeting of kindred souls could only have come about if the secrets which constitute the subject of shame were, in each case, near to the surface. The difference between the psycho-analyst and the Aborigine is that whereas the former has had to drag up secrets from the depths of the soul and reveal the inner self to consciousness, the latter has always known his inner secrets only too well. He does not keep them from himself, but from others.
NOTES
Chapter One

(1) This judgement is retrospective. The word ‘sacred’ is used by Spencer and Gillen on many occasions to describe Aranda ceremonies and the like, but the word ‘religion’ is conspicuously absent from their work, presumably in deference to Frazerian ideas about magic, religion, and the evolution of the latter from the former. Spencer believed Australian Aborigines to be the most primitive race still in existence (see especially the first paragraph of the preface to The Arunta [Spencer and Gillen 1927:vii]).

(2) Spencer’s anthropological interests do, however, stretch back a good deal further. While at Oxford he had attended Tylor’s lecture series on primitive society (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:59).

(3) Spencer and Gillen wrote several other substantial books, though very few papers (at least on matters anthropological). One paper of note appeared in 1898, but this was overshadowed by the publication of The Native Tribes of Central Australia a year later. In 1912 they published Across Australia, basically a learned travel book. In 1928 Spencer alone published Wanderings in Wild Australia, which was essentially an update on Across Australia. In 1914 Spencer (again alone) had also published the more substantially ethnographic Native Tribes of the Northern Territory of Australia, which pertains only to Aborigines of the ‘Top End’. Gillen’s Diary (from the 1901-2 trip across Australia) was published in 1968. There is also a good deal of unpublished material scattered in institutions in England and Australia (see Mulvaney and Calaby [1985] for details).

(4) Before the turn of the century three notable pieces of work had come out of Hermannsburg, two general ones on society and culture (Krichauff 1890a, 1890b, Schulze 1891) and one on language (Kempe 1891). It was about this time also that E. C. Stirling was eliciting information by post from Central Australia, a procedure common in its day and duplicated some time later by R. H. Matthews, who wrote several of his many, many papers on the Aranda. Mounted Constable W. H. Willshire, in addition to furnishing Stirling with ethnographic information (of very dubious quality) by post, also wrote a number of pamphlets on his experiences in Central Australia around this time. In 1897 Charles Winnecke, who had been on the Horn Expedition with Spencer, decided to publish his own journal of the trip after falling out with his Expedition colleagues (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:131-5).

(5) Carl Strehlow’s ethnography had been trickling into Europe for some time before the publication of his major works and a few minor papers were published. From Strehlow’s time at Hermannsburg up until c. 1935 a number of other observers had written about Aboriginal
life in Central Australia. Notable among these were Erhard Eymann (1908), Herbert Basedow (see particularly 1925 and 1935), and Charles Chewings (1936) (cf. note 8, this chapter).

(6) Roheim’s papers are far too many in number to outline here (but a bibliography more or less complete to 1964 can be found in Dadoun [1972:299-313]). Some worth mentioning in passing include: 1) Animism and Religion (published in 1932 [see Roheim 1972:119-60]), which was the first appearance of Roheim’s ethnographic information from Central Australia (and intended as an update on an earlier book on the subject of magic and religion [Roheim 1930]); 2) The Nescience of the Aranda (Roheim 1938), which is Roheim’s definitive contribution to the physiological paternity debate; and 3) Transition Rites (Roheim 1943), arguably his most concise statement on the form and function of Australian initiation ritual (and rites of passage in general).

(7) Currently only in manuscript form, this book is entitled Myths and Dreams of the Natives of Central Australia. It is an account of six informants’ (male and female) dreams and a collection of esoteric stories.

(8) There were, however, others who published data on the Aranda and their immediate neighbours. Several papers came from the members of the Adelaide expeditions (N. Tindale, H. K. Fry and B. G. Maegraith), though few (if any) are of special note. Charles Mountford, although most famous for his work in Arnhem Land and with Western Desert people, has published a little data on the Aranda, as have R. M. and C. H. Berndt and A. P. Elkin. Olive Pink (1933, 1936) published two papers on the Northern Aranda, the latter of which is an important statement on Aranda land tenure. There is also a good deal of unpublished material by Pink which is now open to scrutiny (Pink n.d.).

(9) This has since been re-published as Central Australian Religion (Strehlow 1978b).

(10) Strehlow published a good many papers between the 1940’s and his death, but the majority of those which I have not already mentioned contain only patchy anthropological information (perhaps the exception being The Art of Circle, Line, and Square [Strehlow 1964b]). Taken together, however, they are an important ethnographic resource and I will from time to time draw upon some of them for this thesis. To the best of my knowledge, there is no published full bibliography of Strehlow’s works.

(11) The ethnography of the Aranda is still being amassed in some quantity for this very reason. Land claims and the determination of traditional owners of Aboriginal lands, in accordance with the requirements of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976,
require a good deal of anthropological research, and it must be said that in recent years our understanding of Central Australian Aborigines (including the Aranda) has advanced considerably as a result of the legal rigour often necessarily associated with this kind of research. The vast majority of my own fieldwork in Central Australia, which totals approximately six months, has been in connection with Aboriginal land rights.

(12) Notwithstanding the evolutionist (Spencer and Gillen) and Christian (Strehlow) prejudices of these writers.

(13) Strehlow’s extensive collection of ethnographic records and artefacts is currently in the hands of the Strehlow Research Foundation, a private institution set up in 1978 by T. G. H. Strehlow in response to his increasingly acrimonious relations with public institutions in Australia that might otherwise have managed his material. The Foundation is now led by his widow, Kathleen Strehlow. It is extremely difficult for Australian anthropologists to gain access to the Foundation’s records, though negotiations are currently under way which hopefully will see the Foundation permit a more ‘open door’ policy in future years.

Chapter Two

(1) See, for example, the position taken by Durkheim (1976: 334–9) against Levy-Bruhl in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life.

(2) It seems to me that an integral part of Freud’s understanding of religion (as also with other writers such as Roheim, and particularly Jung) is the fact that so-called primitives have a good deal more religiosity than modern man.

(3) The Dreaming as a description of the Aboriginal ‘totality’ is developed in Chapter Four.

(4) This is a position developed by Hiatt (1975b) in another paper. I propose to elaborate considerably on Hiatt’s general propositions in Chapters Nine and Ten.

Chapter Three

(1) There is, of course, the complicating factor here of the role of the daughter in the family and her relationship to the oedipal triangle. However, I do not consider this question in the thesis, because the work is geared towards an analysis of the male cult. I only discuss female religious life in so far as it is necessary to elucidate the men’s.

(2) Compare this to Bertha Pappenheim’s (Anna O’s) comment:
"Psychoanalysis is in the hand of the physician what the confessional is in the hand of the Catholic clergyman" (quoted in Sulloway 1980:57). Bertha Pappenheim said this in the 1920's. In the early 1880's she had been a patient of Breuer (see Freud and Breuer [1966: 55-82] for her celebrated case study).

(3) I address this matter and its relationship to Levy-Bruhl in a forthcoming paper (Morton in press).

(4) There is a strong tradition in French sociology which views sociology as, or in some sense like, a religion (see, for example, Badcock's [1975:14-22] comments on 'sociology as a religion'). When Don Gardner read an earlier draft of this chapter, he commented that I seemed to be saying that religion is a kind of transfigured social psychology. I agree with that assessment and make further remarks in relation to it at the end of the thesis.

(5) As far as I know, it was another Jungian, Kerényi (1969:1-4), who first drew attention to the similarity between myth and music (though one should bear in mind Levi-Strauss's [1970:15] statement that Richard Wagner was "the undeniable originator of the structural analysis of myths").

Chapter Four

(1) Here I am closely following Strehlow's texts. Although Strehlow (1971:614-5, 694) is quite adamant about the inadequacy of the terms Dreamtime and Dreaming, suggesting in particular that altjiranga cannot by any stretch of the imagination be translated as 'in The Dreaming', David Wilkins has informed me that -nga may sometimes be used in the Eastern Aranda dialect as a temporal suffix. This would mean that altjiranga, in one sense at least, could be rendered as 'at the time of The Dreaming' or 'in (the) altjira'. Perhaps part of the problem here is the attempt to express realities which lie beyond time and space altogether. To that extent Strehlow's gloss - eternity - may have a good deal to recommend it. However, this should not blind us to some of the more prosaic senses of the term altjira. It may be used simply to mean story or myth, or even as a description of the hazy, dazed condition one gets into when drunk (Wilkins pers. comm.). Altjira may at times be used interchangeably with other terms such as thangkara (on which I will comment later in the thesis) and knganintja, the latter being Spencer and Gillen's term (knanja) glossed as totem. Knganintja appears to have the meaning of origin, being related to the verb form knganama - to originate or spring into life (in a spiritual sense - see, for example, Roehm [1972:66-7] for use of the derived form knganakala).
(2) There has been a good deal of debate as to how *altjira* should accurately be translated (as was suggested by the previous note). See especially on this point Carl Strehlow (1907:1-2), Strehlow (1947:10, 1971:614-5, 694), Spencer and Gillen (1904:745, 1927:304-6, 589-96) and Roheim (1969:210-1). On the whole, writers have adopted English translations which suit their own theoretical or ethnocentric purposes. Thus Roheim’s psychoanalytic training makes him favour the term dream, while Carl Strehlow’s missionary zeal prompted him to use God as a translation. Although Spencer and Gillen are often credited with introducing the term Dreamtime, they only use the phrase "dream times" once in a glossary and once in a text (Gillen 1896:185). Throughout their books they rely only on Arandic terms to denote The Dreaming. T. G. H. Strehlow states judiciously at one point that the term *altjira* is not capable of being given an absolutely fixed meaning in English and that its precise meaning has to emerge from context. However, this did not prevent him from offering his own gloss—eternity— or from continuing his father’s lead in rendering God as *altjira* in Bible and hymn translations (F. R. M. 1964, C. B. F. B. S. A. 1956).

(3) Stanner does in fact write about the dualistic nature of The Dreaming, as I will have cause to mention again towards the end of this chapter.

(4) This recalls Meggitt’s (1972:71) remark that the distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal is the Walbiri’s effective gloss on the Durkheimian contrast between the sacred and the profane.

(5) Strehlow (1944:62) actually says that traditional Aranda does not have a term for beginning, but that such a term may be coined for the purposes of translation from the verb *tjontjma*—to begin. The neologism, apparently well-understood by Aranda-speakers, is *tjontinja*. However, how one might say ‘in the beginning’ is not specified.

(6) Spencer and Gillen (1899, 1904, 1927) spell *ngambakala* variously as *ungambikula* and *numbaalla*. To confuse matters further with respect to the problematic of translation, Carl Strehlow (1907:2) glosses *ngambakala* as eternity or eternal (*ewig*)—the former being his son’s rendering of *altjira*.

(7) Spencer and Gillen (1927:307-8) give a similar myth fragment, which, while not mentioning Ilingka, relates how two sky beings descended to earth to create the first people after the earth had been exposed by the withdrawal of an original vast expanse of salt water. The myth is one of a set to be discussed in Chapter Six.

(8) Roheim actually criticises Carl Strehlow and says that the latter’s information must be incorrect. His Western
Desert informants told him that they had originally given Carl Strehlow 'concocted' versions of Arandic myths. Carl Strehlow himself (1908:1) had been critical of Gillen's collection of material on similar grounds, saying that some of it pertained to Western Desert people, and not the Eastern Aranda as was supposed by Gillen. T. G. H. Strehlow (1964a:725) says that he found no traditions of the sky dwellers outside of Western Aranda country, though he sees quite ready to accept the authenticity of Gillen's work. I can confirm from my own field-notes that some Eastern Aranda people of today have knowledge of the emu-footed sky being (see note 22 of this chapter). The whole problem of myth variation and transformation seems to me very likely to be a case of the mythopoeic process in action, a subject with which I begin the next chapter.

(9) This point is nowhere mentioned in the written ethnography. I am grateful to David Wilkins for pointing it out to me.

(10) The theme of predation may be transposed into a sexual code. See, for example, the story where seven emu sisters are chased by men of the dingo totem (anon. 1978:5), a variant of the widespread, and sometimes ritually important, myth about the Pleiades (= Seven Sisters) being chased by a man or group of men identified with Orion (see, for example, Mountford 1976:460-82] for Arandic and Western Desert variants). According to Spencer and Gillen (1927:499) some Aranda believe Orion to be an emu. They also (1927:500) confirm that the Pleiades are seven women, but they say nothing about their association with Orion.

(11) The identification of dogs with humans, as elsewhere in the world, is quite profound in Aboriginal society, since dogs are the only true domesticates found in traditional Australia. I return to the subject of the identity of dogs with the female realm when I discuss circumcision ceremonies in Chapter Nine.

(12) It would be interesting to canvas Aboriginal opinion on the supposed recent killing of a baby by a dingo at Ayers Rock. The single Aboriginal man I have spoken to on the subject thought that a dingo would not kill a human child.

(13) This ignores the question of personal totemic affiliations, where different species certainly can mate. There is no true clan totemism tied to exogamy among the Aranda, and nobody has yet to find any correlation between marriage and personal totemic affiliation.

(14) I am quite prepared to accept that this skewing may reflect a male bias in the ethnography, though it might be a bias with which Aboriginal women are complicit. As the next chapter will show, there are good reasons of an abstract logical kind why the sky should be thought of as pre-eminently male.
The theme of the half-person lacking in symmetry is world-wide. It has been considered on a comparative basis by Needham (1980:Chapter 1), though he comes to no substantial conclusions on the subject, other than to say that the figure is an 'archetype'.

I suspect strongly that this denial stems from the application of the universal equation sex = eating (together with its concomitant, marriage = hunting). If so, this would reinforce my argument about the lack of 'intercourse' existing in the sky. I might add that both emus and dingoes are overtly omnivorous, which adds to their symbolically independent status (because they are both simultaneously hunters [male] and gatherers [female]).

See also Spencer and Gillen (1927:417, 1904:414) where an emu figure and an emu place are called Atnulungu and Atnangara respectively. Both of these names appear to contain the root anha, which primarily means faeces, guts, or anus, but which is sometimes used to denote the female genitals (Roheim 1974a:247, Nash 1981:16).

The cloaca of the New Guinea cassowary is sometimes referred to by Melanesians as the bird's anus or vulva (Gardner 1984:139). Gardner's paper is in part a response to Bulmer's (1967) now classic article Why the Cassowary is not a Bird, in which the author traces the reasons for cassowaries not being placed in the same taxon as other birds among the Karam. For the record, the Aranda apparently do something similar with the emu. Birds, as George Breeden explained to me, are deba, as are bats, while emus, like kangaroos, are gara. Strehlow (1944:65) glosses gara as "all animals that walk on land, and can be eaten". The term may best be translated as game, or in other contexts as meat. Yallop (1977:157) states that the Aljauwara do not treat the emu as a 'bird'. On the mythical treatment of the emu as a flightless bird in Aboriginal Australia see Maddock (1975).

The association of emus with excrement may be widespread in Australia. Apart from the texts of Roheim (1974a:166-7, 170-1), which he uses as evidence for anal birth phantasies, there are others from both northern and southern Australia which suggest this. Buchler (1978:181-2, 194), for example, in his characteristically opaque way, finds a cognate association in Arnhem Land, and Blows (1975) finds it necessary to discuss in detail the link between emus and faecal imagery in order to explicate mythic discourse from Victoria and New South Wales (where emu anal feathers are deemed to have special properties and powers).

I do not wish to overstate the case here, for as will become only too clear in subsequent chapters, I believe, following Lacan, that there is a sense in which the phallus is privileged in signification.
Although Roheim undertook only nine months' fieldwork in Central Australia—and with a variety of language groups—his linguistic abilities appear to have been good. He is certainly correct in his assessment of the meanings of mara. One Aranda word-list (I. A. D. 1979: 18) gives glosses for mara (= mwerre or mwarre) as good, nice, and healthy. The glosses for kona may be found under kewnne (I. A. D. 1979: 15).

In the course of my own fieldwork I once questioned people about Iilingka. I found out little of note, but Johnny Williams, an Eastern Aranda man now resident at Santa Teresa, confirmed that the sky was in some sense evil. In a successful effort to cut short my questioning, he said that the sky is "a place where we send bad people. We don't talk about that one. He's altjira. It is difficult to know the extent of the effects of missionary influence here. In missionary terms altjira is God, though heaven is hardly the place where one is sent for being bad.

The 'emu-feet' mentioned here refer to the shoes made by kadaitja men— the secret killers said throughout Central Australia to wear shoes made from emu feathers so that they leave no traces after committing their gruesome deeds (see Spencer and Gillen [1927: 454-61] for a description of kadaitja in the Aranda context).

I do not know if any Aborigines connect the emu's penis with the subincision wound said to be in the Milky Way, but my own field-notes do confirm that people know of the emu's penis. George Breadon noted to me once that the penis of the emu was extremely large, though when I said that that was all the more remarkable given that most birds do not have one at all, he was perplexed. Pointing to a crow waiting to scavange at our camp, he said that crows too must have penes but they are too small to see!

Roheim writes of the sky beings as representing 'the law of retardation', but his meaning here is tied to certain biological thesis on the nature of phylogenetic and ontogenetic development in man. Basically, in Roheim's terms, retardation refers to the prolonged state of infantile dependency in the human species. Jackson also discusses 'phylogenetic and clinical' aspects of retardation, and writes of 'infantilism' in a way that has some affinity with Roheim.

Levi-Strauss is concerned here with the links between snakes, rainbows and the Milky Way in South American mythology. I am certain that very similar transformations could be mapped over an extremely wide area of Aboriginal Australia, though such an immense task cannot even be begun here.

Some of the brighter stars in this picture belong to the Southern Cross (Crux). Although this constellation is small, it is constituted primarily by four very
bright stars - three above the second magnitude, and one above the third (Moore 1970:244). The configuration is thus very compact and has the unmistakeable form of a cross (although Maegraith [1932:20] suggests - I suspect wrongly - that the Aborigines do not recognise it as such). One wonders whether this cross configuration has anything to do with the motif of being 'stuck' in the Milky Way, especially since Roheim says that one of his myths explains the stuck-togetherness in terms of two sacred objects (tjurunga) juxtaposed to form a cross. Another explains that the Milky Way is a maninga - a ceremonial cross, while a third mythic fragment states that the Southern Cross is but the Milky Way writ small - both being maninga. Carl Strehlow (1907:24-5) recounts a myth in which two dark patches in the Milky Way are said to be ngapatjinbi - ceremonial head-dresses in the shape of crosses. I discuss the symbolic significance of the cross in Chapters Six and Seven. Maninga, as they are used in Aranda circumcision rites, are discussed in Chapter Nine.

(28) It may be noted in passing here that Aranda, in common with other Aboriginal languages, has no simple word which translates as to be. The verb which is used to denote being is nama, which has the primary meaning of to sit - the very action of the emu in the sky (Strehlow 1944:179, I. A. D. 1979:18 [under neme]). 'Pure' verb forms which perhaps come close to 'to be' include erama (to become - often used as a suffix) and abarama (to do, to act) (Strehlow 1944:118-67, 179, 185-6, I. A. D. 1979:14, 33 [under ireme and 'do' - mpwareme]).

Chapter Five

(1) The original actually reads as follows: "Where id was, there ego shall be. It is a work of culture - not unlike the draining of the Zuider Zee". However, I have altered the translation in accord with remarks made by Lacan (1977a:128-9) and Bettelheim (1983:62-4).

(2) These images were first suggested to me by Jadran Mimica.

(3) Eliade also makes this opposition one of 'existential primordiality' (earth) against 'speculative primordiality' (sky) and states that in so far as the former is dominant in Central Australia it "represents a more radical incarnation of the sacred in life and human existence" (Eliade 1973:41). Certainly it is true that the Aranda feel distant from their sky gods, whereas the earthly ancestors are implicated far, far more in both ritual and daily affairs.

(4) Eliade (1973:40) maintains that the sky beings are chronologically prior to the earthly ancestors, though this is only true in the sense that the former were
visible before the latter. My own analysis stresses the importance of the primordial co-existence of both types of 'being', though each in the beginning was 'manifested' differently.

(5) The place called Pmoara by Roheim is Ilbalintja, a sun totemic centre better known in the literature as a bandicoot place (see Chapter Six). This is clear from a variant of Roheim's myth given by Strehlow (1978c:4).

In the beginning everything was resting in an impenetrable thicket of night, and all men, (i.e., the totemic ancestors) were dwelling in this impenetrable thicket of night. They were waiting: 'How should we be able to see anything while this deep night lasts?' Others, such as the kangaroo men and the euro men said: 'We men of the night shall dwell happily in darkness.' Others, such as the emus, the turkeys, and the goannas, retorted: 'No, we desire the sun.' Some iwuta [nailtail wallaby] men were living at Ntamara. They had gone eastward during the night, and now they saw a sight: southward, at Ilbalintja, dawn was breaking. And they sat down, (and may be seen) as low hills. Thereupon Ilbalintja grew red with the dawn, and they rejoiced exceedingly. Other men disliked the sun (which had risen from the earth at Ilbalintja in the form of a man), as, for instance, the euros, the kangaroos, the possums, the wallabies, and many tiny birds: all these are today wanderers in the night.

Roheim's translation of pmoara as womb is not entirely accurate, since, strictly speaking, pmoara describes the blood that may be found in a woman's or an ancestor's body (as will be explained in more detail in Chapter Six). Spencer and Gillen (1927:496-7) say that the Ilbalintja sun 'ancestor' is actually a woman, not a man.

(6) Urbura, as far as I can tell, is always called 'magpie' in the literature. However, there can be no doubt that it is really the pied butcherbird (Carl Strehlow 1908: 63, 1911:23-5).

(7) It is not only Aborigines who associate the crescent nailtail wallaby with the night, since the scientific name for the species is Onychogalea lunata. Plate 7 shows clearly the white, moon-like crescent near the animal's shoulder.

(8) To return to the themes of the previous chapter, there may also be an implicit day/night contrast between the emu and the dingo. Strehlow (1971:667-8) describes the nocturnal "sad wailing" of dingoes and how this is immortalised in song.

(9) These are far too numerous to reference, but one lesser
known myth reported by Elkin (1934:181-3) links fire, a
native cat called Makatakaba, two snakes/women, and the
dark patches of the Milky Way.

{10} As an aside to Strehlow’s point about Christian influ-
ence on the myth, it is perhaps noteworthy that Ngamba-
kala is said to have been born in Dieri country, where
the Lutherans had their first main inland mission.

{11} Spencer and Gillen render this as ‘the very great nat-
ive cat leader’, reading mara as ‘very’. Strictly
speaking, ‘very’ is ndora, although mara (good, nice)
may take on the sense of ‘excellent’ or ‘superlative’.

{12} I am basically following Spencer and Gillen in my tran-
slations here, although it should be noted that Streh-
low (1944:82) has kurka and kubitja as dialectical var-
iants with the same meaning – small.

{13} I am aware that Munn’s work on ancestral transforma-
tions has been subjected to some fairly severe cri-
tiques (Bain 1980, Dubinskas and Traweek 1984). How-
ever, although I cannot go into the reasons for my
judgement here, I consider these works to be not nearly
so damning as the authors would have us believe, and at
some points, I think the arguments are downright mis-
leading or incorrect.

{14} Cawte seems to have been the first ethnographer to have
noticed the significance of the marsupial penis for the
understanding of penile mutilation in Australia (but
see also Singer and deSole [1967] and Cawte’s [1968]
response to their brief communication). In the third
part of the thesis I will have a great deal more to say
about the subject.

{15} I have rendered the two alternative meanings for abil-
jikara as if they both had equal validity. Actually,
this whole matter has been subject to debate and I
cover it more fully in Chapter Ten.

{16} Spencer and Gillen (1927:461-4) say that Ilaparintja’s
name means ‘the changed one’ and that it is the term
applied to a female kadaitja.

{17} The Tuanjirakas’ name apparently means ‘has become like
a man’ (Roheim 1974b:137). It is connected with initi-
atation (in particular, circumcision) and I will have a
good deal more to say about it in Chapter Ten.

{18} I would imagine these to be namatuna bull-roarers,
which are used to make recalcitrant women desirous of
the men who swing the tjurunga. I return to the sub-
jects of the namatuna and alkngarintja women in the
second part of the thesis.
Chapter Six

(1) I do not know this from personal experience, but David Wilkins confirms the point for Aranda people, while Bob Tonkinson has informed me that it is precisely the same in the Western Desert (Jigalong).

(2) The 'birth trauma' hypothesis is most closely associated with Otto Rank (1929). For Freud's own view on the matter see the remarks in Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety (Freud 1979a:227-333).

(3) I propose to generalise the term inapatua, though it may not have currency outside of the Alice Springs district where Spencer and Gillen conducted much of their work. Carl Strehlow refers to the grown-together people as reja manerinja. I am familiar with the term inapa from my own fieldwork, but the word usually found in the literature for the echidna is inalinga.

(4) Spencer and Gillen identify the species as Amphibolurus barbatus, whereas Hale and Laughren (1983:76) identify it as Amphibolurus vitticeps. Actually, A. barbatus has now been re-defined as a "species complex" (Cogger 1979:200-1, 574-6), the two subspecies living in Central Australia being A. vitticeps and A. mitchelli.

(5) I discuss the hunting habits of the black falcon in Chapter Nine. The association of eaglehawk and crow in the mythology of other regions of Australia is discussed by Blows (1975).

(6) Following Carl Strehlow (1908:64) I identify the crow as the Australian raven. However, both the little crow and the Torresian crow also inhabit Central Australia. The former is sometimes known as the small-billed crow, while the latter is also called the large-billed crow. In appearance (including bill shape) the three species are very similar (Frith 1976:578, 580-1).

(7) I cannot say who Gillen's 'Alkapara' is. He does not re-appear in Spencer and Gillen's joint publications, but his name is superficially similar to jakabara, the Aranda name for the black falcon.

(8) See the appendix for further comment on Spencer and Gillen's identification of amungakunjakunja.

(9) Animal ancestors also invariably ate their own totemic species. In some cases animals which particularly feed on definite plants are totemically associated with those plants. For example, a crow and a bandicoot may appear as the main protagonists in a yam story because they both feed extensively on yams (Strehlow 1968:19-21).

(10) The story of Karora given here is nothing like complete and there are many other myth fragments that pertain to it. Further details on Karora may be found in Strehlow


(12) The force of this belief in male procreativity is well evidenced in the following extract from Strehlow (1968: 11).

I remember a fine old man from the Hale River district — a man who to his own great grief had no children — proudly telling me how at the beginning of time, when he was the tjilpa ancestor of Kolba, he had peopled the whole district with sons and daughters. Many of these had become reincarnated through the ages in the form of human beings, and he had thus been responsible for giving life to scores of sons and daughters in the past; in the same way he would, of course, have future 'descendants' long after he himself had ceased to be.

I know from my own experience that Aranda men like to think of themselves as 'good breeders' (their phrase).

(13) So long as we ignore the sun.

(14) The species appears to be the spectacled hare wallaby or kwalba.

(15) Pink (1933:184) refers to "patches of a plant covered with a pink-mauve flower, with crimson centre", which, it is said, "always grows in bandicoot country". She gained this information from the same man who related the Ilbalintja myth to Strehlow.


(17) However, this does not necessarily preclude him being manifested in surface forms. As I will have cause to mention in Chapter Eleven, one of Karora's manifestations is an old ghost gum growing near Ilbalintja.

(18) Hair strings have an important symbolic significance for the Aranda and other Central Australian Aborigines. Spencer and Gillen (1927:406) say that they are called guurknga, the word being derived from guuruna (spirit) and urknga ('substance' or 'essence' — applied, for example, to rotten flesh or the sap of a tree). For reasons that I will not go into here, I believe the guurknga to be a symbolic umbilical cord, which relates to the image of the ilbantera as a navel (as I explain below).

(19) The photograph which is the basis of Illustration 19 is one of a set of highly secret ones taken by Strehlow and published outside of Australia after his death. The
reference I use here is to the French edition of *Geo*, but there are, I believe, other versions of the article in which the photographs are placed — including at least one in English (Colebrook n.d.).

(20) As far as the second is concerned, I believe it may be connected to the well-known Aboriginal custom (not reported in the Aranda literature) of 'putting (under-arm) smell' on people. Gardner (1980:219–20) has the following to say about underarm odour in the context of ritual in New Guinea.

In a society which enjoins frequent ablutions — not to mention the use of deodorants and perfumes — the olfactory characteristics of the unadulterated human body are not often apparent. But in fact there are areas of the body which are supplied with modified sweat glands (the apocrines) which cause the production of odours characteristic of those areas. The glands are stimulated by adrenaline and are found in the arm-pits of both sexes and the vulva and nipples of women (Green 1968:119). These facts suggest at least an olfactory similarity between the crotch of females and the arm-pit.

**Chapter Seven**

(1) Translation (very slightly modified) taken from Derrida (1978:289–90).

(2) Translation (very slightly modified) taken from Derrida (1978:290). The second paragraph is in a footnote in the original text.

(3) The intrinsically magical qualities of the cursor have not escaped the makers of popular television programmes. In one recently televised series, *Automan*, about a man who was created from a computer hologram, the hero (Automan himself) is armed with a cursor which he calls into existence whenever some object is needed. The cursor simply outlines the object, for example a car, and it immediately becomes real — a clear case of dream(ing)’s coming true!

(4) This is what Levy-Bruhl called the "affective category of the supernatural" (see Levy-Bruhl [1983] for application of the idea in the Aboriginal context). Needless to say, the category is no more or no less "affective" than any other (Morton in press).

(5) I have in mind here Lacan’s (1977a:303) analogy of the point *de capiton* (upholstery button), though I would not necessarily care to pursue it any further (other than to say that the image is remarkably evocative of Central Australian paintings of tracks leading from and to central circular points).
(6) Translation taken from Wilden (1968:261).


(8) Translation taken from Wilden (1968:261).

Chapter Eight

(1) Carl Strehlow (1908:52) gives a slightly different description. Compare also Tonkinson (1978:61-2) for the Western Desert, where the likeness of spirit children to the Aranda inapatua is indicated by the presence of webbed feet.

(2) I do not propose here to take up a detailed position on the physiological paternity debate, though my view will be easy to read between the lines of the thesis. Roheim (1938:350) says that spirit conception is sometimes said to take place as the result of a piece of ceremonial down entering a woman along with a man’s semen (that is, when the man has intercourse with his wife shortly after a ceremony). Strehlow (1971:595) says that the Aranda word tenama “can only be translated as ‘beget’. It is used in connection with the father, and is explained as ‘katjia mbarama’, ‘to make a child’”.

(3) It is interesting to note that one of the words applied to spirit children is ngantja (which I discuss in Chapter Eleven) and this same term appears in Pintubi to denote the red mistletoe berry which grows on mulga trees (I. A. D. 1977:74). These red berries sound not unlike Spencer and Gillen’s description of spirit babies, and Parker (1905:51) reports a belief from elsewhere in Aboriginal Australia that:

> The bronze mistletoe branches with their orange-red flowers are said to be the disappointed babies whose wailing in vain for mothers has wearied the spirits who transform them into these bunches, the red flowers being formed from their baby blood.

It would be interesting to follow these associations through to see if they form anything like a coherent set of transformations throughout Aboriginal Australia. Carl Strehlow (1908:52) does in fact say that mistletoe is a favourite haunt of Aranda spirit children, although one has to bear in mind here the important differences between ngantja and guruna (which I will discuss in Chapters Ten and Eleven).

(4) These white tail-tips are used extensively for decoration. Nowadays people may use the tails from rabbits (which, since their introduction to Australia in 1858, have overrun most of the country).

(5) It may be of interest to note that spirit conception,
being the moment when the foetus quickens, is in a sense the child's first action.

(6) Which in Balint's (1959) terms would make them tend towards ocnophilia rather than philobatism - clinging behaviour rather than the adventurous kind (at least in relation to the wider world). As Hamilton (1979:123) has pointed out, Balint's definition of philobatism is peculiarly apt as a description of the way in which the totemic ancestors moved in The Dreaming. The following extract from Balint (1959:29) evidently says much about the myths being considered here.

The outward expression of [the philobatic] attitude is a brave, erect stance; crawling on all fours, as we all know, is not an heroic posture; whereas walking, and especially stalking and strutting, usually is. In this respect it should not be forgotten that walking in an erect position means being fairly well away from the safe earth, the only contact with it being made through the soles of our feet.

In the next chapter I will have something to say about another common phantasy/action of the philobat - flying (cf. Balint 1959:Chapter VIII).

(7) I cannot say whether papa is a motivated term in the sense understood by Jakobson (1962) and Leach (1971), though this does seem to be a possibility. My earlier section heading (8.3) was, of course, meant to point to this question.

(8) Roheim sees this transition as the very image of the primal scene (four legs of the father [on all fours], two legs of the mother, and the 'third leg' between them). He also suggests that Oedipus's name (which means 'swollen foot'), is a symbol of the 'third leg'. The name is, of course, also connected with laming (cf. Levi-Strauss 1972:214-7, Jackson 1979:122-5).

(9) And yet we know surprisingly little about the link between the two. The most intensive study to date has been undertaken by von Sturmer (1980) for the Kugu-Nganychara of Cape York (although the emphasis is secular rather than sacred).

Chapter Nine

(1) Good News Bible: Today's English Version (U. B. S. 1976). The verses have been rendered in Aranda in a translation of the New Testament (C. B. F. B. S. A. 1956): God is rendered as Altjira and it is intriguing to think what Aranda people might make of them (cf. note 2, Chapter Four).

(2) Young boys and girls also have 'totemic' plants associ-
ated with them, and each sex uses the other's in cursing and teasing (sometimes with very obvious indications of castration anxiety—see Roheim [1950:97-8, 1974a:236-8] for details).

(3) These are often referred to nowadays as 'single men's quarters', though married men often frequent them. They are the equivalent of the 'men's houses' found in other parts of the world, though without marked ceremonial functions. Central Australian women also have their own camps.

(4) See Strehlow's (1971:603-4) comments on the mother's conception site and Spencer and Gillen's (1927:305, 591) misunderstanding of the phrase p\textit{marra} altjira. It is evident from Carl Strehlow's work that the mother's conception totem has a very important part to play in the life of any Aranda man. The mother's totem is said to "foster and shield [her children] from harm, in the way that a mother protects [them] during their first years of life" (Carl Strehlow 1908:57). This caring function is also attributed to a man's personal totem (as I will discuss in Chapter Eleven). As will become clear in this part of the thesis, I believe the two totemic figures to signify a male person's degree of independence (or lack thereof). In Carl Strehlow's genealogies (1913:appendix) the name of every person's mother's conception totem is given as well as his or her own.

(5) See Strehlow (1971:637-46) for a discussion of \textit{itata} or 'folk dances' (which have broader functions than indicated here). Interestingly, the Aranda may use drone pipes (instruments not normally associated with Central Australia) in these dances (Carl Strehlow 1913:15).

(6) A recent coffee-table book about kangaroos (Archer and Flannery 1985) gives an excellent idea of the type of projection which takes place onto the red kangaroo. The opening plate of the book (p. 5) has the caption: "Male red kangaroos fight for supremacy". Other captions include: "Wrestling establishes dominance among male red kangaroos" (p. 61); "A mighty male red kangaroo shows off his biceps" (p. 87); "The female red kangaroo is far more delicately built than her muscular mate" (p. 87). I do not think there can be much doubt that such images are universally appealing phantasies.

(7) Thanks to Nic Peterson for alerting me to this material on women and mulga seed.

(8) I am using the term 'repressed' here rather loosely. As will become clear in the next chapter, I think a more accurate term would be 'foreclosed' (foreclosure being a different kind of defence mechanism).

(9) Faye Bell (1980:24), noting Spencer and Gillen's (1927:485-6) description of the use of "ertoacha" (the internal reproductive organs of male animals) in magic,
thinks that "ertoacha" and *erootitja* may be the same word. This is quite possible and I am sure that Bell (1980:23-5) is correct to treat secret speech as something of a symbolic key to Central Australian mythic meanings. Carl Strehlow's (1913:28-32) material on Aranda secret speech forms invites a close semantic analysis.

(10) Judging by its habits and appearance, which align it with the other two species, I have a very strong suspicion that the *ulmarunta* is the little falcon - "A fierce and dashing hunter, the little falcon is the terror of small birds which are its chief prey" (Frith 1976:132).

(11) It may be worth mentioning in passing here that, like the emu, male little button quails incubate the eggs and raise the young. This would again align the quail with the phallus (phallic mother) that is to be 'sacrificed' at initiation.

**Chapter Ten**

(1) The situation is also, I suspect, quite realistic. While younger men have a good deal of respect for elder men's powers, they do not, for all that, readily kotow to them. To the contrary, young men are often quite 'cheeky' to old men. On my first field trip to Central Australia I was very struck by the reaction of a group of younger men (in their twenties to forties) sniggering at an old man who was crying for his country. It is not uncommon to hear derogatory remarks suffused with similar sentiments directed at old men. In Chapter Twelve I take up issues related to this apparently sacrilegious attitude.

(2) I take Roheim's remarks on Central Australian ritual homosexuality at face value here, although I am aware that he never witnessed any real homosexual acts over and above mutual masturbation (Roheim 1932:65, plate opposite p. 71). In the end, my argument does not hinge on the real undertaking of homosexuality. It does, however, depend on the assumption of symbolic homosexual acts creating libidinal attachments between males. In my experience, the Central Australian male is as anti-homosexual as the average white Australian, although Carl Strehlow (1913:98) also reports the practice of pedrarasty. The truth of his remarks, however, are difficult to gauge, since, as with Roheim, his informants appear always to have attributed the practice to other people and not themselves.

(3) The guardian is called by Spencer and Gillen "irkoa-\_atau" ("irkoa-man"). The term is possibly derived from the verb *erguma* - to hold or embrace (Wilkins pers. comm.).
Strehlow (1968:109-10, 1971:378-9) was told by some of his informants that the holding of the Imanda ingkura at Alice Springs, in traditional caterpillar country (a totemic association not directly connected with Imanda), was a gross act of sacrilege. Basically, the whole festival was supported by Gillen's management (see also Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:173-4). I once mentioned this issue to George Braidon, currently a senior man for Imanda and its dreamings, and he defended his ancestors' actions. He stated that the Imanda ceremonial cycle could be performed anywhere, so long as it was by invitation of the local people. His ancestors, he insisted, were invited to perform the ceremonies in Alice Springs and therefore there was no sacrilege. George's father's father was a man called Araiaka (Ray Wood pers. comm.), and Araiaka performed in the ingkura witnessed by Spencer and Gillen (Roheim 1974b:127). Indeed, he may well be the central figure in Plate 16.

Up to two and a half pints per person according to Spencer and Gillen (1927:293)!

This translation is my own. Carl Strehlow (1913:40) says that the word is derived from tjinja mara ('the good, high (pole)'), though as Strehlow (1971:747 [under ilbamarra]) shows, mara, when used to describe sexual organs, may take on the significance of 'productive'. Strehlow (1971:519) translates ilbamarra as 'fertile womb' and also interestingly notes that the word pmara (home, camp, country) may be used as a metaphor for womb (an important point which relates to issues discussed in Chapter Eleven).

The ingkura witnessed by Strehlow also made use of two other structures at the end of the ceremony. One was a tnatantja pole, the other a white pyramid-shaped inkopia or 'anthill'. These appear to have represented dreamings from outside of the local centre (Ilbalintja), though intimately connected with it. The tnatantja represented the pmara flood mentioned at the end of the myth of Karora (see Chapter Six), while the decorated anthill seems to have been connected with Iloara in Anmatjera country (Strehlow 1971:370, 371-2).

I am certainly not the first to have noticed the significance of the Schreber case for an understanding of male initiation rites. Two years ago I heard Les Hiatt give a paper on this very subject, though he concentrated mainly on New Guinea (Hiatt 1983). On the whole, my analysis was arrived at independently of Hiatt's paper, though my interest was certainly spurred by it. Another Freudian case study of considerable relevance here is that of the 'wolf man' (Freud 1979b: 225-366), which Lemaire (1977:238-46) has re-analysed in terms of foreclosure.

Some of these associations may well help account for the tjurunga/papa/dog transformations among the Aranda
and their Western Desert neighbours.

(10) The fate of the second one mentioned in the myth is not known, although the association of tuanjiraka with women makes one wonder whether the latter do not have something to do with it.

(11) This illustration is in a sense incomplete. The status distinctions indicated by the three phallic conditions could well be continued by including the echidna, symbolic of old men. I pick up again on this matter in the next chapter.

Interesting sidelight is thrown on the question of phallic dualism by the Walbiri's use of sign language in which a 'full man' is symbolised by two spread fingers and a 'half-man' by the same two fingers twisted together (Cawte 1968:962, 964). Cawte was told that these signs "derive from the shape of the urinary stream of subincised and nonsubincised man", though I suspect the images go a lot deeper than that.

(12) There is an implicit qualification here of Hiatt's (1971:83-4) classification of the mbiljkara act as a 'uterine rite', although as Hiatt (1971:88) points out, sexual ambiguity is a recurring feature of Aboriginal ritual paraphernalia.

(13) If it is true that the guruna is the soul which binds a man to his patrilodge, then there may well be good sense in saying that it appears in dreams. Dreams are undoubtedly a form of symbolic capital in Central Australia. Among the Walbiri, for example, there is an ideal requirement that dreams be shared with others on waking (Munn 1973a:89), something which no doubt helps to control access to this valued resource through which The Dreaming is constantly being reworked. From my own field experience I know that the Aranda also share their dreams and regard others (i.e., non-dreamers) as having rights in them.

(14) Roheim (1950:70) says that ordinary digging sticks may symbolise papa, while Strehlow (1964b:56) says that clap-sticks may be decorated as tjurunga. I do not know whether there is an association here between music and potency, but there certainly is in other contexts (as I will show in Chapter Eleven).

(15) The way in which the ghala para is situated in a shallow hollow is intriguing - as if the track is always there, but only exposed or 'made real' for the purposes of the ingkura. Certainly the Aranda believe in the constant 'reality' of ancestral tracks and worry these days in case they get damaged or 'hurt' by builders, surveying crews, mineral prospectors and the like.

(16) It should be remembered that tjurunga are brought from all over a large area of Central Australia to the ingkura and this recalls the way in which all the tjurunga
were first made by Ngambakala and later placed within one of the mbiljikara.

(17) One assumes that 'women's business' has also been going on during the ingkura festival and that girls are groomed for marriage and sexuality as well as youths. Pubescent girls are 'subincised' by having their hymens cut after first menstruation (Spencer and Gillen 1927: 222, 484, Carl Strehlow 1913:43), though there appears to be little ceremony associated with this.

(18) I have to confess at this point that I am placing all my eggs in one basket. The terms which I have translated as 'man meat' - atua gara - are actually rendered by Spencer and Gillen (1927:299) themselves as "man's meat", although atua lacks any possessive suffix. On the other hand, not only is the idea of 'man's meat' (i.e., meat fit for men) consonant with the youths being transformed into fully initiated men, atua gara would also normally be an odd way of rendering the idea of human flesh (which would usually be gara atua [Wilkins pers. comm.]). It is not inconceivable that both meanings are extant in the ceremonial context.

(19) See also the rather unbalanced view which Freud (1938: 206-7) takes of the theme of heroic guilt in Greek tragedy (which he sees as a transformation of the theme of the primal horde). He treats the hero as if he were absolutely innocent and merely a scapegoat for the crimes of the chorus "all of the same name and dressed in the same way". With respect to this theme, Girard (1977:203) has noted how:

the collective violence directed against the solitary hero takes place amidst [the] dissolution of distinctions ... The sons of the primitive clan, henceforth deprived of fathers, have all become 'enemy brothers'. Their resemblance is such that they do not possess identities of their own. We are left with a group of people all bearing the same name, identically dressed.

This dissolution of distinctions, taking place within the context of the 'raid', is exactly what occurs in the ingkura (though it is signified in a rather different way).

Chapter Eleven

(1) That is, if his promised wife is old enough. It should be remembered that ingkura are 'cumulative'. A youth may have to pass through more than one before he really becomes a man (just as he may be subincised on more than one occasion).

(2) Children are told exotic stories of The Dreaming (or 'folk-tales') from a very early age.
Strehlow gives three species of pigeon here which I have tried to identify in the appendix.

Kutungula is an important status in Aranda Law. One of the best explanations of kutungula can be found in Pink (1936), though her account is qualified by Strehlow (1968:passim, 1971:passim. The term itself is probably a recent loan-word from Walbiri (Nash 1982) and has assumed a great deal of currency and importance as a result of recent land claim hearings.

The term makamaka is often encountered among Aranda people nowadays. It appears to have the meaning of 'dangerous' or perhaps even 'sacred' in some contexts, such as the description of important sacred sites. As far as I can see, the only report of this term in the main body of literature is in Pink (1933:178), who translates it as 'tjurunga storehouse', i.e., as the equivalent of Spencer and Gillen's pota altjira.

But see also Levi-Strauss's (1966:223-8) argument against treating 'increase rites' as sacrifice.

Almost certainly Ekunjambarinja, the man who took the tnatantja para from the head of the main actor at the Krantji utnutjja.

And I think Strehlow would have agreed, if he had not been arguing specifically against the idea of a transcendental high god.

The literature on spirit beliefs is very complex and confusing and I cannot hope to approach it in detail here. Some of the most detailed information can be found in Roheim (1972:90-8, 122-7) and Spencer and Gillen (1927:Chapter XVI), though a good deal more can be gleaned from combing the other main sources.

It will be recalled from Chapters Five and Six that Ilbalintja is the place where the sun originated according to the Northern Aranda. See also Carl Strehlow (1907:16-7) for further details of sun myths. The literature does not comment on the whereabouts of the sun at night.

Chapter Twelve

I have been unable to trace Durkheim's reference to Kempe.

It is not clear whether mokunpa is an Arandic or Western Desert term.

I see this as related to Levi-Strauss's (1966:263) contention that:

The characteristic feature of the savage mind is
its timelessness; its object is to grasp the world as both a synchronic and a diachronic totality and the knowledge which it draws therefrom is like that afforded of a room by mirrors fixed on opposite walls, which reflect each other (as well as objects in the intervening space) although without being strictly parallel. A multitude of images forms simultaneously, none exactly like any other, so that no single one furnishes more than a partial knowledge of the decoration and furniture but the group is characterized by invariant properties expressing a truth. The savage mind deepens its knowledge with the help of imagines mundi. It builds mental structures which facilitate an understanding of the world in as much as they resemble it. In this sense savage thought can be defined as analogical thought.
APPENDIX

NATURAL SPECIES
N.B. The following list of flora and fauna pertains to the pre- and post-contact environments of Central Australia. Several of the species are now extinct there.

1. Mammals

Bat
(Some fifteen different species inhabit Central Australia. For details see Strahan [1983:271-364]).

Bandicoot
(Desert Bandicoot)
Perameles eremiãna

Bilby
(Rabbit Bandicoot)
Macrotis lagotis

Central Rock Rat
Zyzomys pedunculatus

Chuditch
(Western Native Cat,
Western Quoll)
Dasyurus geoffroii

Dog (Dingo)
Canis familiaris dingo (closely allied to the domestic dog).

Eastern Quoll
(Eastern Native Cat)*
Dasyurus viverrinus

Echidna (Porcupine)
Tachyglossus aculeatus

Euro (Grey Kangaroo)**
Macropus robustus

Kangaroo
(Red Kangaroo)
Macropus rufus

Mouse
(Some ten different species of mice and rats, apart from the Central Rock Rat, inhabit Central Australia. For details see Strahan [1983:365-456]).

Nailtail Wallaby
(Crescent Nailtail Wallaby)
Onychogalea lunata

Northern Quoll
(Northern Native Cat)*
Dasyurus hallucatus

Possum (Common Brushtail Possum)
Trichosorus vulpecula vulpecula

* Not an inhabitant of Central Australia.

** Strictly speaking the Eastern Grey Wallaroo. True Grey Kangaroos do not inhabit Central Australia.
Rabbit

Oryctolagus cuniculus

Rock Wallaby
(Black-footed Rock Wallaby)

Petrogale lateralis

Spectacled Hare Wallaby

Lagorchestes conspicillatus

Wallaby

Two other species of wallaby, apart from the Crescent Nailtail Wallaby, the Black-footed Rock Wallaby and the Spectacled Hare Wallaby inhabit Central Australia:

- Rufous Hare Wallaby - Lagorchestes hirsutus
- Central Hare Wallaby - Lagorchestes asomatias

Wombat (Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat)*

Lasiorhinus latifrons

2. Birds

Black Falcon

Falco subniger

Bush Stone Curlew

Burhinus magnirostris

Butcherbird (Pied Butcherbird)

Cracticus nigrogularis

Cassowary*

Casuaris casuarius - Australian Cassowary (found in New Guinea and northern Queensland).
Casuaris bennetti - Mountain Cassowary (restricted to New Guinea).

Crow (Australian Raven)

Corvus coronoides

Duck

Three species of duck inhabit Central Australia:

- Black Duck - Anas superciliosa
- Grey Teal - Anas gibberifrons
- Pink-eared Duck - Malacorhynchus membranaceus

Eaglehawk (Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagle)

Aquila audax

Emu

Dromaius novaehollandiae

Galah

Cacatua roseicapilla

Grey Falcon

Falco hypoleucus

* Not an inhabitant of Central Australia.
Little Crow
(Small-billed Crow)

Little Falcon

Magpie (Australian Magpie)

Nightjar (Spotted Nightjar)

Pigeon*

Quail (Little Button Quail)

Starling**

Torresian Crow
(Large-billed Crow)

Turkey (Bustard)

White-faced Heron

3. Other Fauna

Amungakunjakunja

Ant (White Ant)

Bearded Dragon
(Jew Lizard)

Corvus bennetti

Falco longipennis

Gymnorhina tibicen

Caprimulgus guttatus

Five species of pigeon or dove inhabit Central Australia:
Diamond Dove - Geopelia cuneata
Flock Pigeon - Phaps histrionica
Common Bronzewing - Phaps chalcoptera
Crested Pigeon - Ocyphaps lophotes
Plumed Pigeon - Petrophassa plumifera

Turnix velox

Sturnus vulgaris

Corvus orru

Ardeotis australis

Ardea novaehollandiae

See Bouton's Snake-eyed Skink, but also identified as Physignathus longirostris, which is probably Lophognathus longirostris in up-to-date classifications.

(The ants which build anthills are really termites [Isoptera], of which there are a great many species).

Amphibolurus vitticeps and Amphibolurus mitchelli

* The Plumed Pigeon is probably the species identified by T. G. H. Strehlow (1971:760) as the Crested Rock Pigeon. Judging by colouration alone, Strehlow's Blue Pigeon would be the Crested Pigeon.

** Not an inhabitant of Central Australia
Bouton's Snake-eyed Skink

Ablepharus boutonii or Cryptoblepharus boutonii or Cryptoblepharus plagocephalus

Crayfish (Yabby)

Parachaeraps bizarinatus

Fish

(At least seven species inhabit Central Australia. For details see Zietz [1896]).

Frog

(At least eight species inhabit Central Australia. For details see Cogger [1979:114-114, 565-73]).

Goanna

Varanus gouldii

Honey Ant

Melophorus bagoti

Knob-tailed Gecko

Three species inhabit Central Australia:

Nephrurus asper
Nephrurus laevissimus
Nephrurus levis

Perentie

Varanus giganteus

Snake

(A great variety of snakes inhabit Central Australia - too many types to be specific about here).

Witchetty Grub

(This term is used to describe a number of different species of moth, butterfly or other insect in the larval or caterpillar stage. Strictly speaking, however, the true Witchetty Grub is the larva of a moth belonging to the Cossidae family. The best known of these lives in the roots of the Witchetty-bush or tjima [Acacia kempeana]).

4. Flora

Bush Onion

Cyperus victoriensis and Cyperus biflex

Casuarina (Desert Oak)

Casuarina decaisneana

Emu-bush

Eremophila longifolia

Ghost Gum

Eucalyptus papuana

Honeysuckle

(Honeysuckle, Corkwood, Corkbark)

Makera Spp (For details of the fourteen Central Australian species, see George [1981:18-20]).
Mistletoe  
Generic name for Loranthaceae — Lysiana Spp., Dendrophthoe Spp., Amyema Spp. and Diplatia Spp. (Barlow [1981] says that at least twelve Loranthaceae are parasitic on Mulga or other Acacia Spp.).

Mulga  
*Acacia aneura*

Mulga Grass  
At least three species go by this name:  
Dwarf Mulga Grass — *Neurachne munroi*  
Window Mulga Grass — *Thrydolepsis mitchelliana*  
Northern Mulga Grass — *Paraneurachne muelleri*

Native Plum  
(Wild Plum)  
*Santalum lanceolatum*

‘Purple everlasting’  
(A great many Central Australian flowers are of the everlasting type. I am unable to identify this species mentioned by Strehlow in the myth of Karora).

*Horawora*  
(Unidentified species, but Strehlow [1971:775] describes it as "herbage species with yellow flowers growing in clay soil and swamp flats").

Yam  
*Vigna lanceolata*
GLOSSARY
N.B. Most of the following words are Arandic, but some are from either Western Desert dialects (mainly Pintubi) or Walbiri. The non-Arandic words are marked WD (Western Desert) or Wb (Walbiri).

albetja tail-tips of the bilby, used as ceremonial decoration, particularly for the head

albuma to return, go back

alkira the sky

alkiraka iwuma ‘to throw up to the sky’ - name applied to the tossing rite held prior to circumcision

alknga eye (though with several metaphorical dimensions in compound words)

alkngantama ‘to give eyes’ - name applied to quivering action of totemic actor as ceremonial down drifts from his body (the metaphor probably indicating the idea of scattering ‘seed’ [Roheim 1969:124])

alknga rama ‘to see eyes’ - name applied to the idea of being ‘turned round’ in ceremony

alkngarintja mythical ancestress - the word may be glossed as ‘turning away the eyes’, a way of expressing the independence of these women who, in The Dreaming, could live quite independently of men

alkngerama ‘to become eyes’ - name applied, according to Roheim, to birth, though it is usually a way of expressing spirit conception

altjira the term which is normally rendered in English as The Dreaming. It may be applied in a variety of contexts to mean such things as story, totemic ancestor, the mythical epoch, and so on. It appears to have connotations such as invisible, unreal (in the sense of unusual), lacking easy definition, and so on. T. G. H. Strehlow translates the term as Eternity

altjira ingkanama ‘to set up altjira’ - an oracular game played by children to tell them what life has in store when they become adults

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition/Explaination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>altjira nditja</td>
<td>Strehlow glosses this as ‘eternal youth’ when it is applied to the ageless emu-footed man who is said to dwell somewhere beyond the Milky Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altjira rama</td>
<td>‘to see altjira’ – phrase applied to dreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altjiranga</td>
<td>ablative form of altjira, meaning from, out of, at the time of, or because of The Dreaming (the term being popularised by Spencer and Gillen as alcheringa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altjiranga ngambakala</td>
<td>Strehlow translates this as ‘having been born of their own eternity’, the key idea being that the totemic ancestors, to whom the phrase is applied, created themselves in The Dreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amba</td>
<td>child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambilja</td>
<td>variant of amba (child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amboanta</td>
<td>place on the circumcision ground where the novice spends most of his time hidden behind a brake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amewara</td>
<td>the Milky Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amiwara (WD)</td>
<td>variant of amewara, also yamiwara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amunga</td>
<td>fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amungakunjakunja</td>
<td>fly-catching lizard credited with the fashioning of humanity by operating upon an infantile embryonic mass (the inapatua) in The Dreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anbanbiwuma</td>
<td>term used by Spencer and Gillen to cover ‘increase rites’ – Roheim (1969:124) was told that the term means ‘making’ (though as with many of the terms which describe ceremony, it contains the root iwuma – to throw)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>andata</td>
<td>term used for both ceremonial down and the ceremony in which it is used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angkatja</td>
<td>speech, language (from angkama – to speak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angkatja kerintja</td>
<td>'modest speech' – secret speech which novices begin to learn when they have been circumcised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anngera tiratira</td>
<td>phrase applied in the context of men’s facial expressions when in the presence of tjurunga boards and stones – 'their faces are described as being full of anxiety and care (anngera tiratira)' (Strehlow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aralkalelama</td>
<td>'to make the mouth open (to make it speak)' – applied in at least two contexts: 1) the offering of the breast to an infant; 2) the lifting of a novice's ban of silence in ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aralta</td>
<td>subincision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aranga</td>
<td>father’s father (real and classificatory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aratjita</td>
<td>poles with scorched saplings attached used in circumcision ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arungkulta</td>
<td>sorcerer’s magic power (also said to be attached to tjurunga boards and stones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>artjentama</td>
<td>type of dance performed by novices around the ghala para at an ingkura ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atna</td>
<td>faeces, anus, guts, vagina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atnuta</td>
<td>limp, dead game with its legs broken – also applied to head tjurunga (which symbolise dead game) worn by old men in ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atua</td>
<td>man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atua gara</td>
<td>'man meat' – name applied to game prestations at the end of the ingkura ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atua kurka</td>
<td>'little man' (= young man) – applied to a youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atua ngantja</td>
<td>a man's alter ego or double, understood to be that part of him which is his personal totemic spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atua njaltja</td>
<td>variant of atua ngantja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baba (WD)</td>
<td>dog (phonetically the same as papa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
bora

'b to become tired' (past tense = borkeraka) - may be applied to describe the totemic ancestors when they go back into the earth at the end of their creative wanderings in The Dreaming

deba

bird (excluding emu, but including bats)

djugurba (WD, Wb)

Western Desert and Walbiri equivalent of altjira (at least in the general meanings of 'The Dreaming' or 'story' - also spelt tjukurrpa)

ekaltilarlma

to strengthen

ekulitnjika

grieved

enka

Strehlow glosses this term as 'the living spirit in human beings' and likens it to the German form 'Geist'

enkaritjaritja

Strehlow glosses this as 'full of anxiety and veneration' and it probably has something of the meaning of 'mindful caution'

era

it

eraka

pouch

erama

to become (commonly used as a suffix in verbs such as borkerama or alkngerama)

erguma

to hold or embrace - in a ceremonial context it refers to the manner in which novices clasp an actor's shoulders after the latter has performed alkngantama

erintja

evil spirit or bush demon (often glossed in Aboriginal English as devil or monster)

eroatitja

word used in men's secret speech to cover woman, wife, mother and a number of other things with feminine associations (see Carl Strehlow [1913:52-5] for complete list) - the term possibly refers to the internal reproductive organs of male animals in normal speech
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gara</td>
<td>meat, (big) game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gatalarumba</td>
<td>'morally blameless' (Strehlow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghagia</td>
<td>wild plum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghala</td>
<td>ground, earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghala ingkura</td>
<td>the ceremonial ground on which the ingkura festival acts are staged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghala para</td>
<td>literally 'ground phallus' - describes the long earth-mound which is the central tjurunga of the ingkura festival and which represents the ancestral track made by native cats in The Dreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghara</td>
<td>red kangaroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gura</td>
<td>desert bandicoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guruna</td>
<td>mortal spirit of a person derived from his parents (probably his father alone) - the spirit which takes journeys and undergoes experiences in dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gururknga</td>
<td>rope made from deceased person's hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilama/lelama</td>
<td>to cause - frequently found as a suffix in compound words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilaparintja</td>
<td>female sorceress or kadaitja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilba</td>
<td>1) ear, 2) womb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilbamara</td>
<td>way of expressing a woman's fertility - it literally translates as 'good' or 'healthy womb'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilbanngura</td>
<td>name applied to young men or the paintings on their bodies towards the end of the ingkura - sometimes also used for a ceremonial act in which the paintings are used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilbantera</td>
<td>circular ground painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilbmarka</td>
<td>uncircumcised youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilia</td>
<td>emu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iliara</td>
<td>newly-initiated young man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iljabara</td>
<td>type of eucalyptus bark used to make toy spear targets - also has ceremonial significance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iljabara iwuma  'to throw bark' - name applied to the throwing of iljabara bark in the direction of the mother's conception site after first initiation rite (tossing)

ilkinja  painted design

ina  wood, stick, tree

inalinga  echidna (also inapa)

inapa  echidna (also inalinga)

inapatua  'echidna men' - embryonic human beings which inhabited the earth's surface as a number of amorphous 'chains' at the beginning of The Dreaming

inditjiwuma  term adopted by Spencer and Gillen to describe 'increase rites' - verb meaning 'throwing out seed' and, according to Roheim (1969:124) apparently interchangeable with alkngiwuma, although Carl Strehlow maintains that it is only applicable to ceremonies performed for initiation purposes (past tense = inditjiwuka)

ingka  foot

ingkama  Strehlow glosses this as 'humbly entreat' when referring to the action of novices dancing around a tnatantja pole at subincision or an ingkura

ingkanama  to set up, arrange

ingkaraka  wholly, completely

ingkata  ceremonial leader (sometimes glossed in Aboriginal English as priest)

ingkopia  anthill

ingkura  final initiation rite which is also regarded as a fertility ritual

inguuupntja  midnight

injitzatjua  word used in men's secret speech to cover dog, star and rukute (recently circumcised youth)

intjaminja  dawn

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ipi(WD?) milk – also ceremonial blood

"irkoa-atua" Spencer and Gillen’s rendering of the term which describes a novice’s guardian at subincision (possibly derived from the term erguma – to hold, embrace

iriakura bush onion

itetilela glossed as ‘paying with a life’ – it refers to the rite of ‘touch-penis’, when one offers another man one’s subincision hole to feel by way of recompense for some wrong done to him

ititja mulga

ititjangarierea wooden tjurunga (invariably made from mulga

iwuma to throw

iwuta crescent nailtail wallaby

jiramba honey ant

kadaitja type of sorcerer who leaves no tracks after killing his victim (in virtue of wearing special shoes covered with emu feathers)

kalaia(WD) emu

kalaia pubanji(WD) ‘the stopped or rested emu’ – name applied to the ‘emu’ formed by the dark patches in the Milky Way

kalaia pubarantja(WD) variant of kalaia pubanji

kama to cut, break

kaputa head

kauaua ceremonial pole used at the culmination of the ingkura ceremony

kanyininpa(WD) to hold, look after, carry, have, keep (a generalised term denoting the responsibility a person has for something or someone else)

kanyinu(WD) variant of kanyininpa

katjia child

kerintja modest, shameful, morally good
kaltja(ndora) (very) learned, wise

knganakala totemic place - the term seems to be related to the idea of originating or 'springing up' from the earth (the infinitive verb form being knganama)

knganintja Spencer and Gillen gloss this as totem, but a better translation would be 'totemic origin' - the word is cognate to knganakala

kngara great, large

kngaribata senior elder man

kngaritja Strehlow glosses this as 'great father'

kona bad, rotten, sad

kuna(WD) anus, excreta (but may also be used for vagina) - the equivalent Aranda term is atna

kunta(WD) shame

kuntangka(WD) 1) embarrassing, shameful, 2) sacred object of stone or wood

kuanjatara Carl Strehlow glosses this as 'the two in each other'

kuaka central part of subincision ground

kubitja small

kulininpa(WD) to hear, heed, understand

kunja Spencer and Gillen gloss this as 'snap up' (the term being found in amungakunjakunja [fly-catching lizard] to denote the swift eating-cum-snatching action of the animal) - Carl Strehlow (1907:6) says that the term is cognate to erguma

kurduru(Wb) ceremonial pole used by women

kurka small

kuru(WD) pointing bone (from the lower leg of an animal)

kutata always, everlasting

kutakuta spotted nightjar
kutara  head tjurunga used in ltata dance

kutungula  Strehlow glosses this as 'ceremonial assistant' - name applied to persons with rights in ritual business but who are not regarded as the 'proper' owners of that business (though a kutungula may have responsibilities in ritual which are peculiarly his own and not those of the 'proper' owner)

kwalba  spectacled hare wallaby

lakabara  black falcon

laulinja  secret, something hidden

lelama/ilama  to cause, make - often a suffix

ljintjiljinga  grey falcon

ltana  ghost (transformed spirit or guruna before it 'dies' )

ltata  'folk dance' (non-restricted ceremony)

malu(WD)  red kangaroo

makamaka  dangerous, powerful, 'sacred' (particularly applied to sacred sites)

manerinja  Carl Strehlow glosses this as 'grown-together'

mara  good, healthy, nice

mbarama  to make, do, act

mbatjalkatiwuma  'to scatter' - name applied to 'increase rite' - Roheim (1969:124) says that it is interchangeable with anbanbiwuma and tjantjiwuma (to 'spread', 'multiply', 'increase')

mbekuarinja  Carl Strehlow glosses this as 'placed together', 'placed against each other'

mbiljikara  two tjurunga wrapped together and used in the ingkura ceremony - it is said that the novices' guruna were obtained from the mbiljikara

mbiljikuma  to join together (from which mbiljikara is said to derive)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mburka</th>
<th>body (may also be applied to tjurunga)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mokunpa(WD?)</td>
<td>Roheim says that this means 'to talk angrily' and that it is applied in contexts of the infringement of The Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nama</td>
<td>to sit, be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>namatuna</td>
<td>bull-roarer given to novices at the ingkura ceremony — it may be used in men's love magic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndapa</td>
<td>name applied to certain widely-travelling ancestresses who are imitated by women at men's initiation rites (especially circumcision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndaperama</td>
<td>'to become ndapa' — women's dance performed at men's initiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nditja</td>
<td>youthful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndora</td>
<td>very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndurpa</td>
<td>real, 'visible'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngaltu(WD)</td>
<td>pity, sorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngaltujarra(WD)</td>
<td>compassionate, 'full of sorrow or pity'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngambakala</td>
<td>this word appears to mean something like 'self-existing' or 'springing out of itself' — it is presumably related to a verb form ngambana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngantja[1]</td>
<td>spirit child, 'life cell' existing as a part of an ancestral being and capable of growing into his likeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngantja<a href="WD">2</a></td>
<td>mistletoe berry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngindi(Wb)</td>
<td>tail, penis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngulu(Wb)</td>
<td>mulga seed — used in Walbiri secret speech (or 'upside-down language') to mean semen and coitus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngurungura</td>
<td>Roheim was told that this word meant 'follow' or 'obey'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ninti(WD)</td>
<td>knowledge, understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>njinta</td>
<td>one, single</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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njintilama  'to cause to be alone', 'to make single'

ntama  to give

papa[1]  name applied to either a special stick or a tjurunga when either is implicated in the early spiritual development of children

papa[2](WD)  see baba

para  penis, tail, phallus

para kaputa  'penis head' - glans

patjarru(WD)  'deaf', forgetful, defiant, unable or unwilling to listen and understand

pitji  wooden tray used for carrying food or babies

pمارa  camp, place, home - also metaphor for womb

pمارa altjira  'altjira place' - site at which one's mother was conceived

pمارakintja  same as аmbоanta (the place where a novice sits for most of his time on a circumcision ground) - Carl Strehlow says that it literally means 'clean place'

pمارa kutata  'everlasting home', 'eternal place' - Strehlow says that this is the general term for major sacred sites where ancestors either left or went into the ground

pڇoara  1) honeysuckle juice, 2) women's blood or that flowing in the veins of totemic ancestors, 3) relationship between novices and their ritual guardians at the ingkura

pڇoarinja  Roheim renders this as 'of the womb' (the suffix inja meaning 'of' or 'belonging to'), though it probably only means this by association with menstrual blood, which is sometimes called pڇoara

pota  mountains, rocks, stones

pota altjira  sacred cave where tjurunga boards and stones are stored
pubanji (WD) stopped, rested
pubarantja (WD) variant of pubanji
pula the central part of the circumcision ground (sometimes applied to the whole initiation ground at both circumcision and subincision
raiangkama 'to call to life'—vibrating call used in ceremony and said to bring the novices to consciousness
raiangkintja noun form of raiangkama
rama to see
ramarama (WD) unheeding, disobedient, mad, extremely angry
rantjitjintjunga hollow scratched out by an animal when it settles down to rest—also metaphoric of those places in the earth (or the circular paintings which represent such places) where animals are said to spring from after 'increase rites'
rataledama 'to cause to emerge'—to produce, bring forth, make appear
ratama to issue forth or 'jump up'
ratapa name applied to infant while in the womb and up to its first year of life (cognate to ratama)
ratapa ulkumba 'baby bark'—soft, shredded bark used as bedding for a child in its pitji or cradle
rela Carl Strehlow renders this as human being or person
rela manerinja Carl Strehlow's term for the inapatua (literally 'grown-together people')
retnja name—also applied to a song verse
rukuta recently circumcised youth
-runga suffix meaning 'own'
tara tail feather
tenama to beget, father
tingara
name applied to the kauua pole at the ingkura - Carl Strehlow glosses it as 'the good, high (pole)', though I strongly suspect that 'good' means 'fertile' in this context

tiralta
coward
tjakilama
'to make loose' - may be applied in the context of extracting secret knowledge from old men
tjalupalupa
navel, 'heart', 'centre'
tjaluputjula
variant of tjalupalupa
tjauerilja
gift of meat given to elders in exchange for secret knowledge
tjibulara
said by Strehlow to mean brightness - used to describe an underground ancestral track of the native cats
tjilpa
native cat or western quoll or chuditch
tjimia
mother's father (real and classificatory)
tjinja
high, tall
tjontama
to begin
tjontinja
beginning
tju
said by Carl Strehlow and Roheim to be a rare word for shame
tjukurrpa(WD, Wb)
Western Desert and Walbiri equivalent of altjira (see djugurba)
tjurunga
general term, used as both noun and adjective, to describe more or less anything to do with The Dreaming, though in the literature it most commonly denotes sacred boards or stones
tjurunga andata
sacred ceremony
tjurungeraka
normal statement at the end of a myth meaning 'turned into tjurunga (boards or stones)' - it is the past tense of tjurungerama (to become tjurunga)
tnakama

to name, call by name, compose a song verse (when applied to ancestral beings) - the term appears to be derived from etna (dialectical variation of retnja - name) and kama (to cut, break), and may be used in everyday speech to apply to boastful persons who 'name themselves' or 'call their own names'

tnakalama

Strehlow says that this is 'the reflexive voice' of tnakama

tnangkara

1) bull-roarer given to youth who has just been circumcised, also called tuanjiraka, 2) used interchangeably with altjira in some phrases such as pmara tnangkara = pmara altjira = mother's conception site

tnatantja

name applied to several different types of phallic objects (poles, head decorations) used in ceremony

tnatantja para

'tnatantja phallus' - ceremonial head decoration

tneuka

past tense of tneuma (to name) - the term is cognate to tnakama and literally translates as 'to throw (iwnuma) out a name (etna = retnja)' - particularly used in the context of ancestral creativity, where it means 'to compose a song verse' (and to name a natural object with it)
	njima

witchetty bush

tnjimatja

witchetty grub

tnjimeta

variant of tnjimatja

tuanjiraka

name of the bull-roarer (also called tnangkara) given to youth after he has been circumcised - the term may also describe the condition of the boy's spirit (guruna)

ulbmerama

to close in upon - used in connection with novices coming forward to surround a ceremonial actor in order to grasp (erguma) him

ulbmurunta

hunting bird allied to the black and grey falcons - probably the little falcon
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ulkumba</td>
<td>pulverized soft eucalyptus bark</td>
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<tr>
<td>ura</td>
<td>fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>urantandama</td>
<td>man in close relationship to a novice during circumcision rite</td>
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<td>urbula</td>
<td>black</td>
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<td>urbura</td>
<td>pied butcherbird</td>
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<tr>
<td>urknga</td>
<td>'substance', 'essence' - literally means juice, sap or vital fluid</td>
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<td>urumbula</td>
<td>a word with wide currency throughout Central and South Australia referring to the native cat ancestors who travelled north from Port Augusta or to the ceremonies associated with them - in Spencer and Gillen's myth the term is reserved for a definite generation of the native cat horde</td>
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<tr>
<td>utnitjia</td>
<td>'increase rite' where decorated shields are used</td>
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<tr>
<td>waninga</td>
<td>usually cross-shaped construction used in ceremony (apparently interchangeably with tnañtjia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>wantininpa(WD)</td>
<td>to lose, leave behind, fail to grasp</td>
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<td>warkuntuma</td>
<td>dance performed by novices around an actor at subincision and the ingkura</td>
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<tr>
<td>wora</td>
<td>youth, boy</td>
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<tr>
<td>worabakana</td>
<td>'shame covering', men's pubic tassel</td>
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<tr>
<td>worawora</td>
<td>type of herbage with yellow flowers</td>
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<td>wurtja</td>
<td>boy awaiting circumcision</td>
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<tr>
<td>yalurrpa(WD)</td>
<td>pity, sorrow</td>
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<td>yamiwara(WD)</td>
<td>the Milky Way</td>
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<td>yampungka(WD)</td>
<td>cuddling, holding a young child in one's arms</td>
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<tr>
<td>yangkua(WD?)</td>
<td>elder, old man</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**yidjaru (Wb)**  
Munn glosses this as 'the world of the living, the ongoing present, or events within the memory of the living'.

**yuti (WD)**  
clearly visible

**yuwara (WD)**  
Myers glosses this as 'give' in the context of being encouraged to be generous and compassionate.
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