ONE CEREMONY, ONE SONG: AN ECONOMY OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE YOLNU OF NORTH-EAST ARNHEM LAND

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University in August 1978.
I certify that all parts of this thesis describe my own original work.

Ian Keen

(Ian Keen)
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of the relationship between the organisation, ownership and content of religious practice and knowledge, marriage, and power relations in Yolŋu society.

In the Introduction I argue that older men require the authority gained through their control of secret ceremonies and religious knowledge, in order to sustain a polygynous regime. Further, the particular form of Yolŋu religious institutions makes possible the operation of their particular system of marriage through which some men gain many wives. The marriage system in turn has effects upon the structure and relations of clans.

The chapters which follow present data and analysis in support of the initial argument, and serve to describe the organisation of Yolŋu religious practice, kinship and marriage. The analytical units are emic institutions, and my approach to explanation is to ask what makes possible action according to the rules of these institutions.

In Chapter 1 I describe Yolŋu social categories and groups, Chapter 2 is an analysis of the foundations of religious institutions in stories which state the grounds for ownership of ceremonies and land. An analysis of Yolŋu kinship and marriage follows in Chapter 3. I show that clans and moieties are essential components of the marriage system.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6 I examine the nature, ownership and organisation of regional, public and Ḥarrrra ceremonies. These provide the means whereby older men sustain their authority over younger men on a regional scale; clans are constituted through the ownership of elements of the ceremonies and of land, and those elements are the basis of a system of esoteric knowledge which men gradually acquire.

Chapter 7 shows how one clan's system of esoteric knowledge is constructed and controlled, and how the Ḥarrrra ceremony has a public message. It states
the grounds for men's control of public affairs and female fertility, and dramatizes the relations of interdependence between clans of the same moiety.

In Chapter 8 I examine some of the ways in which men move up the hierarchy of authority and compete for positions of power; how clans convert demographic success into control of ceremonies and land; and the interrelations between religious authority and secular power.

I conclude with an examination of the components of the Yolŋu social system, and compare my own approach to explanation with that of W. Lloyd Warner.
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INTRODUCTION

In his book 'A Black Civilization' (1937) W. Lloyd Warner tried to discover some of the general principles which govern social life among the people he called 'Murngin', by showing the articulation between the natural environment, technology, economic structure, social organisation and totemic system (1937:10-11). The present work follows Warner in two respects: first it is about people of the same area; secondly, I also attempt to explain the interconnections between distinct institutions.

The area of study is the part of the northeast Arnhem Land coast and islands lying between Cape Stewart to the west and Arnhem Bay to the east; a coastal strip which extends about fifteen kilometres inland and which includes the Crocodile Islands, Howard Island and Elcho Island. For convenience I refer to this as the Woollen River area.

Previous ethnographers have referred to the Aboriginal people of northeast Arnhem Land by various names including Murngin (Warner 1937), Wulamba (Berndt R.M. 1955) and Miwuyt (Shapiro 1969). As there are clearly no bounded territorial units larger than the clan I shall follow recent practice and refer to the people, language and culture as Yolŋu (Chaseling 1956, Schebeck n.d., Keen 1977a, Morphy F. 1977, Morphy H. 1977a). The word yolŋu signifies a human being or a black person as opposed to a white or yellow skinned person.

I carried out fieldwork at Milingimbi and Howard Island from August 1974 to October 1975, and at Ngangalaŋa and Milingimbi from June to December 1976. I worked mainly with members of the Dāmbugawumirri, Daygurrgurr and Liyangalawumirri clans.

Warner was also based at Milingimbi some fifty years previously. He worked mainly with Wangurri and possibly Galpu men. Donald Thomson visited this area between 1935 and 1937 when he worked on the mainland in the Ngangalaŋa area. His main informant was a Mildjiŋi man.
Extensive anthropological research has been carried out in nearby areas of north and northeast Arnhem Land by C.H. and R.M. Berndt, L.R. Hiatt, Betty Meehan, F. and H. Morphy, N. Peterson, N. Williams, and others. This research has made it possible to set the data analysed here in a regional context. This is important to my attempt to explain the inter-relationship in Yolŋu society, between relations of power and influence, the system of marriage, the organisation and ownership of religious property and land, and some aspects of religious belief and symbolism.

Adam Smith (1796) defined political economy as the art of managing the resources of a people and of its government. The resources at issue here are not the products of hunting and gathering, but religious knowledge and property, land, and the labour and reproductive potential of women. The system of government centres on the control of religious affairs. Yolŋu men sustain relations of power through an economy of religious knowledge.

My approach will be to examine the connections between certain data: the great influence that certain men appear to have in Yolŋu religious and secular affairs, the structure of the Yolŋu marriage system, and so on. Human desires form the substratum of these connections; certain people have an interest in sustaining the social forms and relations.

Mary Douglas' work has provided the stimulus to my approach to explanation for, although she has made impressive demonstrations of the correlation between aspects of belief and symbolism, and forms of social structure, Douglas provides little in the way of explanation about the nature of the connection between the two aspects of social life. She suggests in her earlier work (1966) that a correlation exists between two kinds of social system and two kinds of spiritual powers. Drawing on Basil Bernstein's sociology of language, she tries in her later work (1970) to take this correlationist approach much further. She classifies kinds of social system and compares these types with typical cosmologies. 'Experience' and political action bridge the two sides. Pollution ideas are largely instrumental or expressive. People try to influence the behaviour of others and to guard the social order: 'beliefs reinforce social pressures', back political power (1966:13). Beliefs also 'impose system on an inherently untidy experience' (ibid.:5). Rituals too.
are used to manipulate the social system or to mediate experience, in Douglas' view. It would follow that social forms are, usually, causally prior to beliefs and religious forms. The primitive world 'has evolved as the appanage of other social institutions' (*ibid.*:111), or 'the most important determinant of ritualism is the experience of closed social groups' (1970:33). On the other hand 'religious forms as well as social forms are generated by experience in the same dimension' (1970:34).

These contradictions result from Douglas' attempts to move beyond what her methods will allow. She seeks objective criteria for the classification of forms of social relation or kinds of belief. To explain the interrelationship requires a model of social or psychological processes which is absent from her work.

Both Gluckman and Turner examined ritual as a social process. Gluckman (1960) saw the social order as redolent with conflict. The enactment of rituals has a cathartic value: it allows the release of rebellious feelings through their expression, and by their reversal reinforces the social order by emphasising the social norms.

Following Gluckman, Turner in his earlier work (1956) regards Ndembu ritual as having a politically integrative function. In his analysis of the Ihamba rite (1968) he suggests two possible outcomes: re-establishment of a relationship between groups, or the establishment of an irreparable breach and a new order. The Nkang'a girls' initiation rite, however, has a different function: it associates axioms of conduct with mystical power (*ibid.*).

Turner is able to show the intimate connection between the enactment of 'rites of redress', the developmental cycle of village structure, and the contradiction between matrilineal descent and virilocal marriage. The causal link between ritual and social order is emotional; rituals purge and exorcize repressed desire, redirect energy from socially negative to positive symbols, and affect behaviour through symbols of ideal values.

Turner introduced a new kind of datum into anthropology: the course of action or 'social drama', placing ceremony as performance in the flux of social relationships. This approach has been absorbed into anthropological methodology (it is reflected in Chapter 8 of this thesis). But whereas Turner classifies types of symbols and puts forward hypotheses about their possible effects on people, a clearly articulated theory of the relation of meaning and action is absent in his analyses.
The kinds of connection between isolates that Douglas proposes are 'experience', 'influence' and 'reinforcement'. Turner suggests psychological processes which occur as individuals experience the ceremonies. I am concerned with connections of a different order. I am also concerned with analytical isolates of a different order from those of Douglas. The analytical isolates whose connection I attempt to explain are not etic constructs such as 'social system'; they correspond to emic constructs (although their analysis necessarily includes etic concepts). I call these isolates 'institutions'. I define an institution as any coherent social practice, position or structure which is governed by rules (see Mackie 1977:80). Yolŋu kinship (gurrutu) is one institution, religious law (maḏayin) is another.

I explore four modes of connection between these institutions throughout the thesis. First I examine the logical relations between Yolŋu institutions. Social action is essentially rule-governed; rules not only direct but constitute or define ways of acting (Searle 1969:34). Since rules contain terms, the rules presuppose or rest on the meaning of those terms (cf. Smith 1960:298). Rule-governed institutions are therefore logically ordered; one is defined in terms of another. A bye-law affecting the owners of a house for example, presupposes the whole institution of ownership — what it is to be an owner.

Secondly, recent developments in philosophy have provided a framework which makes it possible to see a relationship between social structure, social action and meaning. J.L. Austin (1975) shows that people 'do things with words'. For a performative to be correctly carried out a number of conditions must be satisfied:

A.1 There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances; and further,

A.2 the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure involved.

B.1 The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and

B.2 completely (1975:14).
The rules govern what should be said to achieve a given end, who should say it and under what circumstances. J.R. Searle (1969) provides an added dimension in his analysis of speech-acts. He distinguishes between the illocutionary act, such as asking a question, from the propositional content — what the question is about.

Austin's and Searle's approach may be extended to include many kinds of social action besides speech-acts. Two Yolŋu clans may dance in order to 'visit' and 'say goodbye' to a dead person — the conventional effect or 'illocutionary force' of the act.1 One may dance Dog, the other Catfish — the 'propositional' content. Rules also specify who may dance Dog and Catfish and under what circumstances.

The distinction between illocutionary force and propositional content has been especially important in the analysis of Yolŋu ceremony, since many clans do the same thing (for example circumcision) but in many different ways. Each clan owns its means of doing that thing: the song, dance, design and ceremonial object which it uses in the ceremony.

The third mode of connection between institutions lies also in action itself. In Chapter 2 I explore the way in which stories are used in relation to places and ceremonies, to justify and give grounds for ownership and use. This chapter owes a good deal to recent examinations of practical reason (e.g. Raz 1975).

The fourth mode of connection is teleological. Social action is intentional and oriented to given ends. Understanding is explanatory when we understand someone's motives (Weber 1962:35). In this thesis I show some of the religious goals of the Yolŋu and explain how action in the religious sphere is aimed at those goals. I am also concerned with more general motives, especially the desire for power and the pursuit of interests. Men use religious practice to achieve power, influence and prestige, and they justify their achievement in religious terms.2

I shall now sketch in the argument that unites the various chapters of the thesis.

Yolŋu marriage is polygynous; the average number of wives for each age-cohort of adult men gradually increases with age. Some men manage

1Illocutionary force is strictly a property of speech-acts, it is one kind of conventional effect.

2Intentional motives are properties of individual actors. A purpose is the property of an individual or a way of acting, an institution.
to acquire ten or more wives by their sixtieth year. Most men acquire their first wives between the ages of twenty five and thirty years. The men with most wives are in general those with most power and prestige in their communities. They are not only religious leaders but they also have considerable influence in public affairs generally.

Rose (1968) and Maddock (1972) have both offered explanations about how Aborigines sustain such polygynous regimes without wealth such as cattle. Rose argues that women choose to live as co-wives in polygynous households in order to share the burdens of child-rearing and food gathering. He argues that on average the male in a polygynous household is between the ages of forty and fifty and at his productive peak. This arrangement means that young men at their physical peak have few women readily available to them. Older men successfully deprive the younger men of wives through initiation cults which engage their energies from the years of puberty to the middle or late twenties.

Maddock (1972:156) argues that young men remain single because of the promise of religious gratification through a long induction into the religious life, in which 'the power of the elders acting in concert is deeply impressed upon them'. Were women to go through a similar period of instruction their marriages too would be delayed, and so age-related polygyny on any scale would be impossible. The older men therefore exclude women from the initiation ceremonies.

The first part of Rose's argument is difficult to accept since not all hunters and gatherers practise polygyny on any scale. One would expect women in other hunting and gathering societies to have similar problems to Aborigines. I do accept that the older men require authority based on something other than physical prowess in order to make younger men, and women too, conform to the norms. My own statement of the argument is as follows:

1. Age-related polygynous marriage entails that most men marry later than women and have a shorter married life. Young men at their physical peak, the fighting men in Aboriginal societies, are thereby deprived of easy, regular and legitimate associations with women. Marriage is ordered through restrictive marriage rules.

2. On the assumption that a high proportion of young men and women want partners near their own age and of their own choice, then those
older men who benefit most from age-related polygyny can only sustain the arrangements by means other than physical force.

The above also assumes that certain older men do indeed benefit from polygynous marriage, and want to sustain it.

3. Older men derive authority to enforce the marriage rules from their control of valued religious knowledge, and their apparent access to supernatural powers. Some old women have a measure of such authority but women are in general denied access to esoteric religious knowledge and powers, and to positions of control of that knowledge and those powers. Old men's authority enables them to channel the young men's aggressive power towards their own ends rather than against them.

The argument so far can be applied with some modification to many polygynous Aboriginal societies. It does not of course follow that groups of Aborigines who have a system of initiation ceremonies which separate men from women must marry polygynously. The argument does propose that in order for older men to sustain a polygynous regime some means is required to induce others, especially young men, to conform to arrangements which are not immediately acceptable.

In Aboriginal society the means normally consist of some system of initiation ceremonies and religious knowledge. There may be—and may have been other methods. Of course there are differences between Aboriginal societies which the argument put forward so far does not explain. In Appendix 1 I compare four well-documented societies (Gidjiŋali, Wanindiljaugwa, and the Walbiri of both Warrabri and Yuendumu) and show that among most of them the mature but not elderly men have the most wives. The Yolŋu appear to be unusual in that the number of wives a man acquires may go on increasing with his age, and some men acquire more wives than any men of the other societies. The rules of the Yolŋu marriage system, and a number of other conditions, account for the pattern of polygyny. Further, particular conditions and means are required to operate and enforce this system of marriage.

4. A series of up to four sets of affines provides the parties to a bestowal or promised marriage. A man is promised a girl who may not yet be born of a woman who may not yet have reached puberty. Such
a contract is effective over many years, and as I show in my thesis the marriage rules and other norms enable a few men to gain many wives.

5. The Yolŋu system is one of matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (Leach 1961) in which sons tend to marry into the same groups as their fathers. I show that the constitution of enduring bounded groups is a prerequisite for the arrangement of long series of bestowal relations which may be maintained with the minimum of conflict. The continued existence of clans that are corporate in the ownership of religious property and land, meets this requirement.

6. A crucial categorical distinction between MM/MMB and ZDCh, and between WM/WMB and FZDCh is extended to relations between groups and gives the serial form to affinal relations between them; for EGO's group does not compete with his MM's group for wives (see Morphy 1978:218). The very strong division of the society into two patrilineal exogamous moieties serves to support the extension of kin relations to inter-group relations.

7. The marriage rules and relations seem to proceed from the supernatural Beings: moiety, clan, affinal and MM:ZDCh relations receive particular emphasis.

8. Certain features of the marriage system affect the size and form of clans. The marriage rules tend to limit competition for any particular group of women to a group of full brothers with the same M or MM. This fact and the preferential rights of an older brother over a younger results in some men obtaining a large number of wives. Such men may beget a large number of children. If some of a man's sons are equally successful then lineage and clan grow rapidly. Such lineages and clans may split when they grow large. Genealogical connections further back than four generations tend to be forgotten, but corporate rights in religious property remain. Thus many clans consist of a number of lineages and own several countries.

The regular rapid growth of some clans and the decline of others may explain the rather peculiar features of Yolŋu clans: that many consist of a number of lineages and land-owning groups, and many own several often non-contiguous areas of land. West Arnhem Land clans by contrast consist of single land-owning groups called gunmogurrgurr (Berndt R.M. and C.H. 1970:54).
9. Some of the men who acquire many wives and beget many children are men of prestige and power in both religious and secular affairs. Their power is based on the support of affines, potential sons-in-law and sons. If they are members of an already large clan they have the support of brothers and brothers-in-law. They are thus able to maintain the system of religious knowledge and social organisation which underpins their power.

10. Some clans decline as others grow since the men of one marry women at the expense of the other. Expanding clans tend to dominate the religious affairs of smaller clans of the same moiety, and to eventually take over its land and religious property. The decline of some clans creates a shortage of wives for others, who then compete with other clans for women. Such competition may explain the high levels of warfare which earlier accounts report.

The above argument posits a necessary connection between features of religious organisation and expression, power relations and marriage arrangements in Yolŋu society. It also suggests the nature of those connections. Some are causal such as one person or group getting other people to do what they want them to. I assume that a proportion of Yolŋu people desire to have power over others (cf. Leach 1964:10). By power I mean a person's ability to get others to do what he or she wants them to do, regardless of their wishes (see Weber 1964:152). I also assume that some people are prepared to attempt to exercise power over others in order to get what they want.

Other connections are instrumental. The arguments suggest that both old and young men want young wives. The older men employ certain means to gain their ends. The means consist of inducements such as the promise of religious gratification, sanctions such as the use of sorcery and force, and hindrances such as removal of conditions whereby young men could combine to rebel against the old men. The institutions are the instruments. Those whose interests they serve sustain these institutions.

Some of the necessary connections between religious organisation and expression, the marriage arrangements and power relations consist of operational conditions for the systems of action. Wives are allocated according to a system of promised marriage. In this system the parties to
a contract stand in certain enduring social relations one to another. They are defined in part as members of groups to which each is related in a particular way. The marriage arrangements therefore presuppose the existence of enduring groups, and the continued existence of groups of that form is a condition necessary to the successful operation of the marriage system, (i.e. action according to its rules). The conditions are both semantic and operational: on the one hand the marriage rules presuppose the existence of certain groups, on the other hand action according to the rules requires the existence of those groups.

If the argument is correct, one may surmise that the group organisation came into existence before the marriage rules. If so one would expect such groups to have a wider distribution that the type of marriage system. This is indeed true; corporate clans have been reported over the whole of Arnhem Land, but the Yolŋu marriage system is found only in the north-east corner. Where a similar marriage system is found, there are also clans and patrilineal moieties (Sharp 1934a).

The above argument has two main aspects; first it suggests that certain features of Yolŋu religious and social organisation serve the interests of a certain category of men. Together these features constitute a system of social control or government. Also I shall show in the thesis that men compete for positions of power and prestige, so that these features provide also a political arena. Secondly it proposes certain conditional relations between institutions, in particular the clan and moiety organisation and the marriage system.

Few students of Aboriginal religion and society have examined political action or relationships, except in the context of marriage bestowals (e.g. Hart and Pilling 1960; Hiatt 1965). Some have denied that there is any necessary connection between religious practices and belief and social organisation. Others have made various suggestions as to the nature of possible connections.

In proposing a strong relationship between religious organisation and kinship the present work has something in common with that of some early ethnographers and theorists of totemism. Frazer (1898:285) and Howitt (1904) for example speculated about the functional and historical connection between totemism as a means of constituting groups, and exogamous marriage. The debate over the existence and nature of totemism
narrowed to a consideration of the totemic relation which ended with Lévi-Strauss' well-known study (1962).

Many had denied that Aboriginal religion merited the title of 'religion', but Durkheim (1961) took it to be the most basic of all. His explanation implies that people do not so much act upon each other as become subject to general social forces outside their control. Men perceive social pressures, at their height in certain rites, as an impersonal force. They project this force out to the clan emblem which thereby appears to be its source.

Stanner (1966) follows Durkheim (ibid.:342) in finding the 'germs of sacrifice' in Aboriginal religion. He denies that religion is necessarily an expression or reflection of the social order. Totemism and kinship are not necessarily closely related, but are 'conjugate'; and Murinbata society cannot be set up as a unified whole (ibid.:36). He holds that Aboriginal religious belief and practice is best studied as religion: that is, as

A celebration of values and at the same time a dramatization of the moral imperfection of social being (ibid.37-8).

Religion is an ontological system which

affirms reality as a necessary connection between life and suffering (ibid.:56).

Some anthropologists have recently investigated several modes of connection between religious belief and practice and the social order. I have already mentioned the hypothesis of Rose and Maddock, concerning the relation between older and younger men, initiation and polygyny. Hiatt (1971:88) considers male-female relations. He classifies certain Aboriginal ceremonies into uterine and phallic rites and suggests that their purpose is

to extend male mastery into areas where women have natural advantages. The success of the manoeuvres depends on the ability of the men to delude themselves and, through secrecy, to mystify and intimidate the women.

R.M. and C.H. Berndt (1977:296) criticize both Maddock and Hiatt and stress the complementary roles of men and women. The reason they suggest for the exclusion of women from men's ceremonies is that men regard women as innately sacred and not in need of 'ritualized enhancement' (ibid.). This proposition no doubt reproduces the ideology of some Aboriginal men, but leaves unexplained the use of force and the threat of sorcery to guard the secrecy of men's ceremonies.
Like Sharp (1958), the Berndts depict the Aboriginal social order as largely apolitical. The authority of religious leaders does not extend beyond the religious context in their view. There is the basis of 'a governmental structure' (op. cit.:366), but leaders were 'concerned primarily with maintaining order and discouraging disorder' (ibid.:364).

John Bern is one of the very few to have examined the political aspects of Aboriginal religious practice. He shows (1974) that Roper River men compete for the control of ritual estates and ceremonies; control gives a man prestige which cannot, he asserts, be converted into advantages in other social domains. If this is correct then the system he describes is very different from that of the Yolŋu.

Peterson (1972) has explored relationships of a quite different order. He believes clan totemism to be 'an ecological spacing mechanism'. Totemic ideology, designs and conception beliefs are primarily concerned with relations to places. They reinforce clan members' sentimental attachment to land, especially that of old men. Old men living on their own country are 'the nodal points about which bands form' (ibid.:27). My data on the growth and decline of clans tends to subvert Peterson's argument. Clans which grow quickly tend to split and their members become affiliated to land other than their clan land.

Munn (1970, 1973) has examined relations between the individual and land in a very different way. She regards the fundamental tenets of Walbiri and Pitjantjatjara belief to be at the very foundation of a system of social control. She regards two psychological processes as basic: the separation of the self from the external world, and the Ego's 'infusion of this world with his subjective life experiences' (1971:158). Ancestral transformations in Walbiri thought objectify 'the collective socio-moral order with its grounding in seniority and the past' (ibid.:157). The individual is bound to this external authority structure because he regards himself as born with ancestral components inside him. Unlike many anthropologists Munn recognizes that those objectifications are products of the human will (ibid.:160). To maintain a system of social control the attachment of the individual requires perpetual reinforcement (ibid.:158).

Warner's attempt at explanation (1937) is wider in scope than many of the above. Chapter 9 of this thesis includes a critique of Warner; here I outline the points at which his and my approaches coincide.
According to Warner the male section of society is represented as superordinate and pure, the female section as subordinate and impure. Male unity is maintained by initiation, and male superordination made a mystery by its connection with the seasons; in ceremonies the Giant Snake represents both the male section swallowing the unclean female group and the wet season swallowing the dry (*ibid.*: 387-394).

The totemic system provides the ultimate sanctions which unity society. Individuals, their personality defined by the clan totem, are controlled through subordination to 'the sacred' (*ibid.*: 391). Ritual sanctions direct individual action to social ends (*ibid.*: 395).

Kinship is fundamental — technology is 'disciplined and organized by kin relations'; the totemic system provides sanctions to conform to the rules, and concepts for group integration (*ibid.*). The identification of men and women with the seasonal cycles gives men the power to enforce the sanctions (*ibid.*: 396). The political system is gerontocratic, and force provides sanctions to support the system.

There are three main ideas here which are similar to my own: that men derive their authority from their relation to 'the sacred'; that ritual sanctions support the social rules, and that the totemic system provides concepts for group integration.

The problem of the inter-connection between institutions and the nature of power-relations in Aboriginal society remain largely unexplained or ignored. In approaching these problems I do not seek to explain Yolŋu religion as a whole, but only some aspects of its organisation and some features of its expression.

There is a difference between religious experience and expression and the organisation and control of religious practices. People express their grief and cope with bereavement through religious practices. They no doubt derive a sense of meaning and security from the complete account of the nature of existence during and after life which the religion provides (Berndt R.M. 1977:287). The particular forms of that expression are owned and controlled, and the particular structures of religious beliefs and expression are directly related to the ethos, organisation and norms of the society. It is with such particulars that I am concerned.

This thesis has another intent also, in that I aim to describe and analyse Yolŋu religious practice and organisation as a complete system on a regional scale; although my analysis is inevitably one-sided through working mainly with older men.
All Yolŋu words including names are given in the Gupapuyŋu dialect; the orthography adopted is that of Beulah Lowe (n.d.). Names of 'dreamings' (madjayin) are in English where possible, and I append a glossary of these names with their Yolŋu equivalents.
Chapter 1

THE YOLṈU
THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

The clan is the most prominent social unit in Yolŋu society; gender, moiety and age are the most important bases of social categories. Later in this chapter I shall be describing Yolŋu categories and the structure of the named social groups, but shall begin with a brief introduction to the people and their country.

Most of the 1500 or so Yolŋu whose clan countries lie in the Woollen River area live at Milingimbi and ɲangaŋala settlements, at Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island, and at several outstations on the islands and mainland. The total population of these settlements is in the region of 2500. The population of Milingimbi and ɲangaŋala is about 1000.

Milingimbi, one of the low-lying Crocodile Islands, has an area of about 5600 hectares. Nearly half its area consists of mangrove-lined tidal salt-flats which are inundated by the king tides, but eucalypt forest covers the middle of the island. The settlement itself stands mainly among tamarind trees along the sand-dunes and shell-middens which face a long beach facing the east.

Milingimbi was a centre for Macassan trepang gatherers because of its permanent waterhole and fine beach. For similar reasons Milingimbi was a ceremonial centre for the Yolŋu; several hundred could gather at the permanent waterhole towards the end of the dry season to exploit the abundant cycad-palm nuts in the forest, and rush-corms and long-necked turtles from the plains and lakes. Each year they no doubt awaited the arrival of the Macassans, to trade their labour in return for gin, steel tools, dugout canoes and other goods (MacKnight 1976; McKenzie 1976:14).

The Methodist Church established a Mission at Milingimbi in 1922 (McKenzie 1976:23). Another Mission settlement was established in the early sixties on the mainland 10 kilometres to the south, next to another permanent waterhole and close to the Glyde River.

Before the establishment of Milingimbi Mission the Yolŋu did not live in such large aggregations as they do now, but in groups of an average size of about thirty to forty people (Peterson 1972:26). Groups of about that size lived in wet-season camps, which split up into smaller
more mobile family units at the end of the wet season. These units
joined to form much larger groups of several hundred people at
permanent waterholes and lakes towards the end of the dry season when
they performed the major ceremonies (Thomson 1949:16ff).

People probably lived on their own clan country and that of their
M, MM and MMM, and on the country of clans with the same supernatural
Being and ceremonies as their own. The present patterns of mobility
and stories which older people tell suggest that individuals ranged
over a wide area. Young men were particularly mobile, families less
so. Thomson's picture (1949:12) of men living with their wives almost
exclusively on their own clan country is almost certainly incorrect,
although some clans were much less mobile than others (see Meehan 1975:70).

The establishment of Milingimbi Mission attracted a fairly stable wet-
season population of about 300, although many spent the dry season away
from the Mission. The Yolŋu were dispersed during the war, but after
the war they gradually concentrated at the Mission and settled permanently.
Only a few clans remained isolated near their own country. Since the
early seventies about 20 per cent of the people have dispersed to live
at least part of the year at outstations serviced by road or air from
the larger settlements. There are five near ḅaŋgaŋalaŋa, another two at
Howard Island and several in the Buckingham and Arnhem Bay areas. The
population at outstations and small settlements fluctuates greatly but
the maximum at one outstation would be in the region of thirty or forty
people. This movement does not represent a return to a hunting and
gathering subsistence, but is partly a response to the availability of
transport and a concern with land rights.

The island populations of Milingimbi and Galiwin'ku have remained
fairly stable because of their isolation from the mainland. At ḅaŋgaŋalaŋa,
Raminginiŋ and the nearby outstations the population is about 300
all told. The Yolŋu population of Milingimbi is now about 700.

Contact with the towns has increased considerably in the seventies
with the advent of regular air service and the cutting of roads.

Most people who live at Milingimbi do not own that country. It
belongs to the clan of their mother, MMM or MMM. Some have ceremonial
connections with the country and others have a rather remote connection
of some other kind. The largest clans — Daygurrurrurr, Djambarrpuyŋu and
Đumbugawumirri — come from near Buckingham Bay, about 85 km to the east.
These people speak a different language from that of the Milingimbi land-owning groups. The Daygurrgurr clan forefathers were attracted by the Mission and settled on the mainland nearby; they married many women and begot a large number of children. The two other clans from the east have grown to almost the same size as the Daygurrgurr.

These demographically successful clans have pushed out the land-owners, many of whom settled at Maningrida, and contributed to the decline of some of the local clans by marrying women who would otherwise have gone to local men. Their members dominate the ceremonial and secular life of the settlements at Milingimbi and Ńangalala.

In this thesis I describe and analyse primarily Yolŋu institutions rather than those that have been introduced. It is not, however, a reconstruction of a past way of life, but an analysis of current structures and practices. As my presentation of Yolŋu institutions differs at many points from that of Warner (1937) I shall indicate how much these differences may be due to social change.

The Yolŋu have adopted many items of European material culture including clothes, houses, cassette players, motorcycles and motorboats. Many new structures have been introduced such as the hospital, school, store and council. Some men and women work in teams as night-soil collectors, carpenters, mechanics etc. People are learning new skills including literacy. The inflow of cash has increased markedly since 1972 with the advent of award wages and new modes of action such as gambling provide for the distribution of cash.

The most marked change in the pattern of settlement has been the more or less permanent congregation of large numbers of people at one place. The structure of social relationships between neighbours, however, is similar to that of the formerly more mobile bands (see Peterson 1971)

The store provides most of the food consumed at Milingimbi. Hunting accounts for a small part of the diet at the settlement, but for a larger proportion at the outstations.

The incidence of spear fights and homicide has decreased markedly and hostility between clans on the large settlements has lessened, although tensions expressed in fights and accusations of sorcery remain prevalent. Most older Yolŋu people express considerable satisfaction over pacification. Men's violence against women, although still present, takes less extreme forms.
Practices related to warfare and hunting such as carrying packages of human flesh, fat or dried blood to impart prowess (see Thomson 1948:9) have declined. Medicine and sorcery beliefs still have wide currency.

Many tasks that people perform are different from fifty years ago, but the social relationships through which the division of labour is organised have a great deal of continuity with the past. Patterns of marriage show no dramatic differences between the generations. People still marry according to the promise system and polygyny shows few signs of decline. But widows are now reluctant to remarry for fear of losing widows' benefits, and girls are inclined to marry later than formerly, usually after they have left school.

The Yolŋu accepted some Christian religious practices such as the burial service, and a few people regularly attend church services. But Christianity and traditional religion persist side by side. In some contexts Yolŋu people aver that the spirit goes to heaven after death, rather than to Burraluku, Yumayŋa, or the clan waterhole. In other contexts however the same people show where a spirit of the dead entered a clan waterhole. Several people have evolved ideas about the relative status of God and the creator Beings. The notion of power emanating from sacred objects has less currency, I believe, than when Thomson was in Arnhem Land in the thirties, but is still present.

Yolŋu religious practices have changed remarkably little; the major changes have been the deletion of the exhumation and second burial at the town and at Nhangaŋala, although they are continued at the outstations. The Wake has been elaborated to compensate for this impoverishment. The major secret ceremonies may be less frequently performed nowadays. The Nhulmarrk is no longer performed. European categories of time such as the working week and weekend now supplement Yolŋu categories of time, and many English lexical items have been incorporated into Yolŋu languages.

The Yolŋu have, therefore, adopted many new kinds of activities and skills, and some new structures. Some other activities have lapsed. They have adopted some procedures in order to fit European institutions such as the cash economy to their own — a young man might acquire money for marriage payments through gambling. But the focal institutions of clan, ceremony, country and kinship remain. Kinship relations may have a
somewhat different content, but the principles of forming the relationships and the main dimensions of role allocation remain the same. The bases of these institutions — the beliefs in supernatural Beings, their connections with the land and representation in ceremony — remain largely unchanged.

SOCIAL CATEGORIES AND GROUPS

The Yolŋu classify people according to skin colour, gender, age, marital status, child-bearing history, birth order, initiation and ceremonial status, language and geographical origins. A person's identity is primarily as a clan-member; interpersonal relations are primarily governed by kinship.

Males and females are differentiated according to different criteria; males primarily by ceremonial status, women by child-bearing history. Uncircumcised males (gaŋaku) become bachelors (yawirrin') after circumcision. Thereafter their status is related to age and ceremony. Mature men (wurrwiliny) have developed some prestige and take the most active parts in ceremonies. Old men (worrŋu, wulman) or 'big-men' (yindi yolŋu) — i.e. with grey hair — have the greatest prestige and the younger men in general defer to them.

Men are able to acquire the status of song-man, sacred-law man and power-man through their skill in ceremonial affairs, but clan membership and birth order determine in part a man's chances of attaining such positions. A power-man calls the invocations at secret and public ceremonies and is influential in both religious and secular affairs.

Women are classified by age and child-bearing history. They undergo no initiation and are not eligible for formal positions. The main categories are nubile girls (wirrkul), mature women who have born children (goŋman) and old women (worrŋu, wulman). People attribute some old women, undifferentiated categorically from old men, with considerable religious knowledge and accord them corresponding respect. A woman who is the first born of her clan may be acknowledged as its leader and holder of the maŋayin. This does not, however, give the woman the right to take a man's role in any ceremony, or give her access to esoteric performances.

Birth order is important in determining rights. An older brother has a degree of control over a younger. The first born of a group of brothers has preferential rights in women as wives. The first born of the eldest generation of a clan is its acknowledged leader.
The terms 'boss' (bungawu) and 'worker' (djumamirri) denote relations of subordination and superordination in the ceremonial sphere in particular, which extend beyond the clan.

In everyday affairs kinship and subsection categories, and language and clan names are most commonly used. I consider the first two in Chapter 3. Here I analyse language and clan groups.

Three terms, matha, mala and bùpurru occur most frequently in statements about a person's identity. Matha signifies the tongue itself and language or dialect. Mala is a noun meaning group or set, and is used as a pluraliser with other nouns. It also denotes particular kinds of social group in certain contexts. Bùpurru is ambiguous but in one sense it is partially synonymous with mala. I consider groups first.

An unnamed and loosely bounded set such as one man's kin and affines who live at his camp is a mala. Some mala are named, in which case they have clear rules governing recruitment by patrilineal descent; the groups are defined with respect to land and religious property which they own.

I call the smallest named group of this kind a clan. The clan name is frequently used to identify a group and its members. There are about 25 clans in the Woollen River area, having an average membership of approximately 55, and a range of from 4 to 230 (Table 1.1).

Each clan consists of from one to seven patrilineal lineages of up to five generations in depth. The constituent lineages of some clans are connected by one or two putative common ancestors but such connections never extend beyond the clan. Lineages are not named, but people may refer to one as the group or 'side' of a prominent member. Lineage members take the name of the apical ancestor, and we shall see that two sublineages may also be differentiated by the names of their respective ancestors.

Most clans own several distinct named tracts of land which are frequently separated by up to 60 km. Where a clan has several lineages these tend to be affiliated to different countries. I call the group of one or more lineages which is affiliated to one country a land-owning group. People refer to a land-owning group as the people of such and such a place. Under some circumstances the group may be identified by a set of special bundurr or iikan names which is attached primarily to the country of the land-owning group. These names are normally used to identify the group only in the context of ceremonies, but its members may take the names as personal names. Notwithstanding the division of some clans into land-owning groups, all members of a clan own its countries.
Table 1.1: Clans of the Woollen River area and beyond.

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<th>Other dialect name</th>
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<th>Clan</th>
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**YIRRITJA MOIETY**

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Table 1.1 continued

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<td>Djinba</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gurrkamanapinya</td>
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</table>
The relationship between land-owning groups and lineages in the different clans is extremely flexible. The Liyagalawumirri clan, for example, has three countries; the land-owning group belonging to Gurawaña country consists of one lineage; the land-owning group belonging to Mirarrmina consists of three, and the people of the third country Đetjirima (and a fourth smaller place) are all dead. The older members of the Mirarrmina land-owning group look after these vacant countries.

Other clans are less clearly divided. The Daygurrgurr consists of two lineages and owns three main countries. Both lineages belong to one of the countries, but some members of the larger lineage are said also to own a second country, and other members of the same lineage are said to own the third. The Đambilgawumirri clan consists of four lineages; all belong to the clan's one country.

The members of a clan have common rights in its religious property and land. A man from one country can say that the other countries of the clan are his own because they are of his clan. Although all clan members co-operate to perform ceremonies certain religious property distinguishes the land-owning groups. Where these groups are distinct members of each one tend only to produce those designs and perform those dances specifically related to its country (see Morphy H. 1977a:51). Where there are no distinct land-owning groups within the clan members of different lineages or sublineages may own designs and sacred objects belonging to several countries.

Clans coalesce to form larger named groups also referred to as mala. Some people identify themselves by the more inclusive name rather than their clan name. I call these more inclusive groups with names in common use clans-aggregate (Table 1.2). Warner (1937:39) referred to them as phratries. I do not follow his precedent, since the term phratry implies belief in an ultimate common ancestor (Winick 1956:412). Clans of a clan-aggregate have common rights in one or more ceremonies, and in sacred objects of a variety of genre (see Chapter 5). All the Liyagalawumirri clan-aggregate share Carpet Python Being and a song-series. All the Manydjikay share Rock, Mangrove Wood and Barramundi Beings. The member clans of a clan-aggregate do not hold their religious property and land in common, but only those ceremonies that link them.
Table 1.2: Clans-aggregate and their constituent clans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DHUWA</th>
<th></th>
<th>YIRRITJA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
<td>Gamalaŋa</td>
<td>Manjdikay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
<td>Walamaŋu</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Manharrŋu</td>
<td>Wobulkarra</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Manhdhalpuy</td>
<td>Wangurri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Djambarrpuyŋu</td>
<td>Djambarrpuyŋu</td>
<td>Guyamirriilili</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mālarra</td>
<td>Mālarra</td>
<td>Wora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gunbirridji</td>
<td>Balmaŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>?Dhābitjin</td>
<td>Gupapuyŋu/Daygurrgurr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Birrkili</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Members of the Birrkili and Daygurrgurr clans, most of whom live at Milingimbi, are usually referred to as Gupapuyŋu. The two constituent clans are referred to as Daygurrgurr or Daygurrgurr Gupapuyŋu and Birrkili or Birrkili Gupapuyŋu. Manydjikay is the largest clan-aggregate consisting of five clans. The constituent clans such as Wangurri may be referred to as 'Manydjikay, but Wangurri' — 'Manydjikay, yurru Wangurri'.

The differentiation of rights between sub-groups of a clan, differs from that between clans of a clan-aggregate. The land-owning groups of the same clan may make somewhat different designs but they assert their unity and join to sing and dance. The clans of a clan-aggregate need not join to sing and dance for they may well have distinct songs and tunes, and they emphasize their differences by naming the constituent clans and painting the supernatural Beings that distinguish them.

It is possible that some clans have divided to become separate clans of a clan-aggregate. The reverse certainly occurs: two clans of the Djambarrpuypu clan-aggregate have joined together and assert their unity as Djambarrpuypu (see Chapter 3).

Clans-aggregate are not closed. One clan may assert its membership of one in some contexts, another in another context.

Clans form many cross-cutting sets through joint ownership of ceremonies and common language. Such sets are named, but where the names are not in everyday use to identify the members of the set I do not refer to these sets as clans-aggregate. Members of clans-aggregate co-operate to perform ceremonies. Other clan-sets are notional: they go beyond the range of frequent co-operation and contact. The name marks a similarity or shared feature.

Two sublineages of a lineage, land-owning groups of a clan or clans of a clan-aggregate are often distinguishable as 'top', 'forest' or 'up-country' people; as against 'bottom', 'sea-side' etc. Some clans are 'half way' between the two.

Bäpurru

If one asks a person, 'What is your mala a clan-aggregate or clan name, or possibly a dialect name. The question 'What is your bäpurru?' is more likely to elicit the clan name. It is therefore more specific than mala in this context in defining a kind of group. The word signifies more than a group however. Its sense is.
something like 'that whole which includes a supernatural Being, the countries, sacred objects and ceremonies which it created, and the people who are affiliated to those countries and ceremonies' (see also Morphy H. 1977:49).

As I show in detail in Chapter 2, the Yolgu regard ceremonies and certain features of the landscape as the product of the action of supernatural Beings long ago. The land-owning group and clan that own a certain country own the ceremonies attached to that place. Clans that share a ceremony or an element of a ceremony such as a song-series relate that ceremony or element to its own country. Since a supernatural Being created the ceremony and country then either the Being travelled from one clan country to another in Yolgu theory, or the two Beings at the two places are 'the same' or similar.

Each of a clan's countries has several ceremonies related to it, some of which connect the clan's countries together. The clan shares each ceremony with a rather different set of clans. Each clan therefore has a unique set of ceremonies and elements but is connected to many other clans through joint ownership (Figure 1.1). Each of these cross-cutting

Figure 1.1: Clan, clan-aggregate and dialect group (Dhuwa). Note that some clans consist of two or more land-owning groups. Clans are shown in the approximate relations of their countries.
sets of clans, ceremonies, countries and supernatural Beings is a bāpurru. Clans themselves, clans-aggregate and the wide-ranging sets of clans with similar ceremonies are bāpurru.

The word bāpurru is used therefore in some contexts to refer to things other than named groups. One man pointed to a bullroarer and said it was such and such bāpurru— it was a member of that whole. People visiting a funeral are said to be going 'to the bāpurru'. One of I. Morphy's informants (ibid.) said that the word in this usage refers to the group of dead people.

All the bāpurru, including clans and clans-aggregate, their members, land and ceremonies are assigned to one of the two moieties, Dhuwa and Yirritja. The moieties, and consequently the constituent groups of the moieties, are exogamous. Some named dialect groups however cross-cut the moiety division.

Mātha

The Yolŋu mark the similarities and differences between dialects. Many criteria serve to differentiate them; two tongues are similar, but one is fast and the other slow; one is clipped by comparison with another; one word belongs to one dialect, its synonym to another. One name may group together the dialects of anything up to ten clans, another name sets apart the clan's way of speaking.

One Yolŋu theory of language is that the two moieties Dhuwa and Yirritja have distinct tongues (Schebeck n.d.; Morphy F. 1977:55). The Yolŋu also classify dialects into groups according to the demonstrative pronoun 'this'— dhuwal, dhuwala, dhaŋu, djana etc. They say that a person or clan speaks dhuwala'mirri mātha,'the tongue with dhuwala', and so on. This classification is not consistent with the moiety theory since some of these dialect groups cross-cut the moiety division. There are five such dialect groups in the Woollen River area, but some inland dialects are not classified in the same way. The demonstrative pronoun serves to mark dialectal differences which in most cases coincide with what the linguists find to be objective difference (Schebeck n.d., Morphy F. 1977; Heath 1978).

Each dialect group consists of several dialects, each spoken by about three clans. These dialects are recognized by linguists as being distinct, but Yolŋu dialect names may cut across these objective entities (Morphy F. personal communication). Members of each clan all speak one dialect. I
know of no cases where one clan consists of speakers of different dialect groups, except where people consistently use their mother's dialect. Most Yolnu adults speak several dialects including that of their own and their mother's clan. A child learns his mother's dialect first and is supposed to switch to his own clan dialect when adult.

Members of a clan refer to their dialect either by the name of the dialect group (i.e. the demonstrative pronoun) or with their own clan or clan-aggregate name, or the name of a clan or clan-aggregate with a dialect of the same dialect group. Thus members of the Đąmbugawumirri clan say they speak Đąmbugawumirri matha, or they may refer to the dialect as Djambarrpuynu - the name of another clan-aggregate - or as Dhuwal'mirri.

Clans of a clan-aggregate may speak the same or different dialects. All members of Djambarrpuynu clan-aggregate speak Djambarrpuynu dialect, but members of the Liyagalawumirri clan-aggregate speak a variety of dialects - Yānaŋu, Dhuwal, Djinaŋ and Mandhalpuy. Both Djambarrpuynu and Liyagalawumirri clans speak Dhuwal, so that the Yolŋu say that Liyagalawumirri people speak Djambarrpuynu language (Figure 1.1).

Some clans with similar dialects mark them with a name other than a group name. Djambarrpuynu and Marranŋu for example, both speak Dhumal (green lorikeet) dialect.

The dialect group name occasionally serves as an identification. Some Daygurrgurr people call the Guyamirrilili clan Dhuwala'mirri after the demonstrative pronoun the Guyamirrilili use. Those who speak Djinaŋ commonly identify themselves as Djinaŋ.

There is a tendency, by no means universal, to identify a group by two names, a dialect and a bäpurru name such as 'Wulaki matha, Djaŋīwitji bäpurru'. This practice has led both Warner and R.M. Berndt to pair dialect and clan names as if each clan's dialect has but one possible name apart from the demonstrative pronoun. The situation is more complex than this: in various contexts Đąmbugawumirri clan may be said to speak Dhuwal, Đąmbugawumirri or Djambarrpuynu dialects. All speakers of a named tongue are by definition one mala, so at this level mala are not closed either.

Warner (1937:33-4) recognized the existence of clans-aggregate (his 'phratries') and their various bases - common supernatural Being, language etc. He regarded the phratry as a 'weak attempt' to form groups of clans withi
the moiety. As I show in Chapters 5 and 8 the clan-aggregate is in fact an important unit of co-operation in public ceremonies, and has political implications. Warner (ibid.:39-51) pairs a clan name with a language name in his list of clans but does not comment on the fact that many names of both kinds are shared by several clans (see Table 1.1).

R.M. Berndt recognizes three levels of group in his earlier (1955) analysis: a 'babaru' or patriline (lineage) which is associated with one country, a linguistic group ('mada') consisting of up to six patrilines and a 'clan' consisting of several linguistic groups. His mada here corresponds to my 'clan' and his 'clan' to my 'clan-aggregate'. Berndt's model does not fit all cases for we have seen that land-owning groups may consist of several lineages, or a clan may have just one. I have said also that a matha often takes the clan-aggregate name, so Berndt's restriction of 'mada' to one level of grouping is incorrect.

In later works R.M. Berndt takes a different approach. In his most recent statement (1976a:20) he concludes that some mala contain a number of matha and conversely some matha include a number of mala. He therefore indicates each group as a matha-mala 'pair'. It is consequently never clear what kind of a group is identified by the pair of names. My analysis accounts for both states of affairs which Berndt records. Clans of Liyagalawamirri mala (clan-aggregate) speak several matha. Speakers of Djambarrpuynu matha include several clans (mala).

Recruitment to clan, clan-aggregate and moiety is mainly by patrilineal decent. In the next section I examine the principles of recruitment and the internal structure of the clan.

CLAN AND MOIETY MEMBERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

A person belongs to the land-owning group, clan, clan-aggregate and moiety of his or her 'father' (bāpa), the man who was the legitimate husband of the person's mother at the time of his birth, even if this man was not the genitor. Where an infant's father dies and the mother marries a man of a different clan, the child becomes a member also of the clan of his second father who raises him. I call this 'secondary paternity' since it does not cancel his original clan membership. Serial marriage by women to men of different clans is common, consequently dual membership is quite common. Membership of the first father's clan seems to be more significant in terms of identity and rights. People say that they are 'partial' members of the second clan.
People are also related to places and the clans that own them through spiritual conception. The place that is agreed to be the source of the spirit that entered and impregnated the person's mother, is that person's 'own' country; it is his or hers 'of the water'. This place may belong to the person's own clan, or to a different clan of the same moiety.

The conception place has a varying degree of importance. If a clan is dying out, members of another clan arrange for the wife of one of their number to spiritually conceive there, so that the child and subsequent children can say it is their country. Peterson (1972:17) remarks that affiliation through spiritual conception alone cannot be transmitted to the next generation. I do not know whether this is universally true. The clan that inherits a country is normally related to the extinct clan as ZDCh (see Chapter 3). I believe that spiritual conception is combined with this principle to affiliate members of the ZDCH clan to their MM country. The Daygurrgurr Gupapuyŋu for example look after the country of the Wora clan. One of their members owns it because he was spiritually conceived there.

Spiritual conception is also significant in the domination of one clan by another. The Daygurrgurr clan dominates Birrkili clan's religious affairs. The Daygurrgurr leader has Birrkili country as his place 'of the water'.

Members of clans whose fathers have migrated far from their own clan countries become affiliated to places where they live through spiritual conception. This mechanism may conflict with secondary paternity. A member of one Dhuwa clan has an extinct clan's country as his spiritual conception country. A member of another clan was raised by a man of the now extinct clan. The latter not the former looks after the country and its ceremonies.

Spiritual conception gives a man some rights over the land and ceremonies of the clan. These are not, I believe, normally exercised unless the person or his clan is taking over that land and those ceremonies.

CLAN STRUCTURE

The internal structure of clans varies greatly, except that patrilineal relationships never extend beyond the clan. I said that the Daygurrgurr clan's two lineages belong to one of its three countries called Djiliwilri, but that a number of the senior men of one sublineage own another clan
country in addition to Djiliwirri, the country of their fathers. Many younger members of the clan have never visited their clan country and feel a stronger affiliation to Milingimbi and the adjacent mainland, the location of their spiritual conception. Some speak of Milingimbi as Gupapuyŋu (Daygurrgurr) country. I shall examine the genealogical structure of this and the Đâmbugawumirri clans, for this thesis is concerned largely with the ceremonies of these clans.

The word gulukulu, literally meaning 'name', denotes the relation of an individual to an attribute of his own lineage and land-owning group. 'Goanna' is one man's gulukulu, because it belongs to his bāpa (father), FF and FFF. Members of a lineage can be said to have 'one name'. People invoke three kinship categories to explain land-owning group and clan structure. I examine first the Daygurrgurr clan structure.

The two lineages have ten and approximately 220 members respectively. Members of the largest lineage take the name of its founder Galapa宁arritŋarritj, the FFFFF of the youngest living members, the FF of the oldest. The lineage consists of two sublineages (Figure 1.2); each springs from one of the founder's two sons who came to live near Milingimbi when the Mission was founded. Each took one of his father's names. These two men eventually acquired between them twenty-two wives who bore the present elders of the clan.

The elders of one sublineage have taken the name宁arritŋarritj and the elders of the other have taken the name Galapa as well, marking the connection and the difference between the sublineages.

Dhawadanygulili, Djwa, their brothers and their children comprise the 'bottom' or 'seaside' group because most of them live at Milingimbi. Djoma, Bonuwyu, most of their brothers and their children are the 'top' or 'forest' group because they live at Nangalaŋa on the mainland. This division reflects the rapid growth of the clan and the rivalry between the sublineages. After two more generations the ancestral connection may well be forgotten.

The older Daygurrgurr Gupapuyŋu people agree on the general structure of their genealogical relationships. Several Đâmbugawumirri men gave rather dissimilar accounts of theirs. There are four distinct lineages

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1 People have many names; the father's name would have been just one of each son's names.
Figure 1.2: A Daygurrgurr clan lineage and its names.

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Figure 1.3: Three versions of the Đambugawumirri clan genealogy.
of four generations in depth, to which I shall be referring to by the initials of the apical ancestor: G (Guliwan), L (Lamutha), B (Bunbatju) and D (Daymarrupa). Members group these lineages in different ways as the sublineages of lineages founded by two ancestors (Figure 1.3, 1.4).

The clan has a frequently recounted tradition concerning two human ancestors called Djillipa and Daymarrupa who made peace with the Macassans after a fight, and travelled to the Celebes. They have the Macassan names Gayasati and Gayalumbu. One member of the clan told me that Đųmbugawumirri clanspeople are descended from two gāthu (FFF), called Gaysati and Gayalumbu, who are 'for all Đųmbugawumirri, no matter where their mothers come from'. All Đųmbugawumirri are brothers and sisters, he told me, and their country is Gärriyakura, 'Never mind subsections — set aside Wāmut, Gamarrąŋ, Balaŋ, our road is from mārį'mu FF). Each mārį'mu gave the sacred objects to his sons and sons' sons. The solidarity of men with a common father's father is apparent.

Banhdharrawuy, a member of the G lineage, gave one of the two ancestors as the ancestor of his lineage, and the other as the ancestor of the clan leader's L lineage. Both had the same ancestor, the FFF of living members. Lineages B and D were from different ancestors. Another man Bopani grouped his own G lineage with B lineage as the sublineage of a lineage headed by Gayasati, the D lineage headed by Gayalumbu, and the leader's L lineage as separate.

Banhdharrawuy appears to have aligned himself with the clan leader against his mother's husband of D lineage who was to take over leadership of the clan. Bopani put himself and Bāriya as having equal status, but a different affiliation, and isolated the ailing leader. These versions reflect alliances over the succession to clan leadership which I examine in Chapter 8. Bāriya and Bopani were rivals for the leadership, Banhdharrawuy allying himself with the latter.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have introduced the Yolŋu people and examined in outline some of the ways in which they classify the population. The clan is the most cohesive bounded social unit; it is corporate in its ownership of ceremonies and land; its members cohere through a strong patrilineal ideology and relationship to a sacred object.
Figure 1.4: Đambahawumirri clan genealogy.
Clans align themselves with others on several bases including language. Some of these sets, the clans-aggregate, have properties similar to clans. Lineages may grow and divide to become land-owning groups, clans may divide, or separate clans may fuse to become one. Clans are defined not genealogically but with reference to the land and religious property they own. In the next chapter I explore how this ownership is grounded in stories about the supernatural Beings.
Chapter 2

THE FOUNDATION OF THE LAW

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.

Nancy Munn
INTRODUCTION — THE LAW

The ownership and control of ceremonies and religious knowledge is a matter of law (rom). In this chapter I analyse the categories in which ceremonies and religious knowledge are framed, and examine the grounds on which people justify their claims to possess and use religious property and land. The core of the chapter consists of a study of stories, for Warner was surely right in his view that in myths lie 'the ultimate clues to the problem of Murngin social logic' (1937:10).

One purpose of describing the stories in this chapter is to pave the way for the analysis of ceremonies in Chapters 4 to 7. It would not be possible to describe the traditions of all the clans even if they were known. The traditions of one clan of each moiety are representative: the first is the Daygurrgurr (Yirritja), the second Dëmbugawumirri (Dhuwa).

I translate the word rom as 'law'. Rom refers to an institutionalised practice, custom, rule, habit or whole way of life. Religious law includes stories, ceremonies and their elements, and injunctions.

Dhūthaŋu, the Liyagalawumirri clan leader, asked me if I knew his clan law. On learning of my ignorance he told me the story of the Wāgilak sisters, using a bark-painting to point out the actors and locations in the story. Another man referred to the performance of a ceremony as 'law' and people say of those who transgress certain social rules that they are not following the law. Stories are the basis of a clan's law.

THE MAṔAYIN

Religious law is specified by the term maṔayin. I shall use the latter term untranslated throughout the thesis since no English word approaches its meaning. MaṔayin is perhaps best defined as the name of a set of things which includes supernatural Beings, stories, songs, designs, and dances related to them; the natural and cultural objects and creatures which have the same names as the Beings and their attributes; and the
natural and cultural objects and places which are the 'shadows' or 'images' (mali) and 'tracks' (luku) of the supernatural Beings.

To cite one example, the following is a related set of maďayin: The Djaŋ'kawu are waŋarr, which means, in this case, creator Beings who lived long ago. All waŋarr are maďayin. The stories and songs about the Djaŋ'kawu and the sacred objects (raŋga) which are tokens of types instituted by them are all maďayin. Black Cockatoos which followed the Djaŋ'kawu on their journey belong to the same set of maďayin also, and a person may point to a living black cockatoo and say 'That is my maďayin'.

The maďayin of the two moieties are quite discrete, there are Dhuwa and Yirritja maďayin. Land-owning groups, clans and clans-aggregate own maďayin as well as land (see Warner 1937:147). This ownership is indicated either by predicating the group name on to 'maďayin', as in Djambarrpuyŋu (clan) maďayin; or by the use of the possessive suffix gu/ku/wa/wu with a personal or clan name as in Djäwawa maďayin, 'Djäwa's maďayin', or Djambarrpuyŋuwa maďayin.

People talk of the journeys and other activities of the maďayin long ago, and about maďayin lying deep in the waters or under the ground. Such statements are ambiguous, meaning that either a Being or an object which is the 'shadow' of the Being or of one of its attributes, lies there. For the word maďayin is also used publicly to refer to the most revered type of object whose esoteric name, raŋga, should not be spoken by any but adult men.

Many kinds of supernatural Beings are maďayin. It is necessary at this point to describe and differentiate them. Waŋarr are believed to have lived long, long ago; to have travelled, created ceremonies, groups and languages; to have transformed themselves and the country by leaving traces and objects, by going into the ground and becoming part of the substance of the land or of the deep water where they lie.

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1MaIi denotes shadow, reflection and photograph; the supernatural entity, spirit; and transformations, representations or 'projections' of the supernatural Beings.

2Yolŋu do not have categories akin to our 'natural', 'supernatural', etc. The words 'spirit', 'occult', 'ancestral' have the wrong connotations. 'Supernatural' has been chosen as the least unsuitable word.
Malagatj is approximately synonymous with wagarr, but has connotations of aggressiveness and danger.

Motj are giant snakes and pythons believed to lie in deep waters in possibly every clan's country. The Yolŋu believe them to be extremely dangerous, disposed to capture people especially women and children who go near the water; and to rise up like thunder clouds to make thunder, lightning and rain.

Although motj and malagatj connote in addition destructive power, in opposition to the creative and legitimate power of wagarr, there is no absolute distinction as some Beings may be referred to as both motj or malagatj and wagarr.

Most wagarr have the names and attributes of creatures, objects or substances. Wagarr which have such names also have the attributes of human beings; they talk, fight, make camps and so on. In addition they perform extraordinary actions such as travelling underground and creating languages. According to the Yolŋu, many wagarr beings continue to emanate power (mārr) while lying under the ground or in the deep, perhaps in the form of a rock. Certain wagarr have only a human form.

'Old-fella' or fore-runners (qurrunŋgal, buŋarkitj) are human beings of long ago, sometimes referred to as wagarr or malagatj.

Spirits of the dead are of two kinds. Birrimbirr are benign spirits of the dead who are believed to travel to a land of the dead such as Burraluku, an island far to the east; or to Macassar; or to the sea or freshwaters of his own or his mother's mother's clan. Some women and children believe the spirits of their close ancestors return from the clan countries for the Nurrara ceremony, when they may be identified with the wagarr as wagarr birrimbirr.

On the other hand mokuy or mokuy birrimbirr are supernatural Beings which are most immediate and ever-present in human experience. These are malicious ghosts of the dead which haunt the camp immediately after a death and later inhabit thicker forest. People interpret some of their experiences during mourning as influences of the ghost of the dead person. The word mokuy signifies non-living: it refers to the corpse as well as a spirit. The word birrimbirr on the other hand signifies an entity with a non-corporeal mode of existence.

A special category of malign ghost (mokuy) links the rather remote realm of the wagarr and the more immediate realm of daily experience.
They are not of the recent dead but of long ago, though still alive. Unlike the ghosts of the recent dead whose names should not be spoken, they have proper names, and they are the subjects of Sea and Forest songs. Malicious beings with gross penes, they rape young women, 'turn' the country so that people get lost, steal the fat and flesh of the dead, mix it with honey and eat it. People may hear them playing the drone-pipe in the forest. The Yolŋu call them in English 'the devil'. I refer to them as Ghosts.

The Ghosts link the waŋarr, the recent dead and the living in this way: stories tell how they acted in concert with the waŋarr in distant times; people sing about them in mortuary ceremonies identifying them with the deceased; of all the Beings of long ago they are the most immediate in human experience.

The category maŋayin includes ceremonies. An outline of the categories of ceremonies and their elements will help to make sense of the discussion in this chapter. I have classified Yolŋu ceremonies into three main types using a number of criteria. The types are regional, public and the Ḳarrra revelatory ceremony.

A ceremony is a complete event with a programme, having either a descriptive name such as Hollow Log or a proper-name such as Djaŋumby (which is the name of a particular hollow-log coffin). A ceremony-element is a design, object or a sequence of action which may be used in whole or in part in several different kinds of ceremony.¹ Dances and song-series are elements and so is a sacred object.

I call 'regional' a set of four named ceremonies owned by Dhuwa moiety clans: Maŋdayala, used for circumcision initiation; Gunapi; Djunguwan, used for circumcision and in conjunction with mortuary ceremonies; and Njalmarlk. These are 'for everyone', usually attended by people of both moieties and from a wide area.

Public ceremonies serve for circumcision initiation, gift exchange, mortuary and purification, peace-making and as entertainment. All are composed from named sets of songs, dances, painted designs, objects and

¹Strictly speaking a design-type, object-type or action-type; that is an ideal or programme which is realized in a physical object or course of action. The types were instituted by the supernatural Beings in Yolŋu belief (see Wollheim 1968 on works of art as types).
their related dances which are classified as of the forest, plains, saltwater, freshwater, swamp, beach, etc. Each moiety has several versions of each category, and several clans own each version, thereby having 'the same song' or 'the same ceremony'. Clans also combine to own the ceremonies which have proper names—Exchange ceremonies and Hollow Log second burial ceremonies.

In the Njarra or Madayin, which is the most important revelatory ceremony, mature and old men make and show the rangga sacred objects representing aspects of the major wagarr to the young men and others of their own and related clans. Each moiety version is somewhat different and each clan of each moiety performs the ceremony in its own way.

All these ceremonies and elements, the constituent songs of the song-series, the dances and objects are madayin.

THE TRACES OF THE SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

Individuals and groups are related to the land in a particular way through the madayin. The actions long ago of the wagarr described in stories are the basis of that relationship because the imputed actions left permanent traces. These traces of the wagarr link the madayin with places, groups and individuals.

The word lutu means foot or feet, footprints, traces or tracks, root of a tree, base, basis and foundation. Human beings and other creatures leave traces on the ground including spoor and tracks. An observer may deduce from such traces the movements, intentions and identity of the creature that left them. Their activities also create permanent paths and sites (dhukarr and wanja).

Luku refers to the apparent traces of the supernatural Beings in the form of such features as rocks, mounds, gullies, coloured stones, water holes and creeks, or as a deposit of ochre deep in the ground. Yolnu people translate the word lutu in this sense, the traces of the supernatural Beings, into the English 'foundation'.

Munn defines three types of transformation of Walbiri ancestral beings. These types fit Yolnu belief. The wagarr transformed themselves by metamorphosis, as into rocks; by imprinting, as when a Being made a creek by dragging an implement; or by externalization as when an object from the Being's body became transformed (Munn 1970:142).
I will add 'placement', where in Yolngu belief an object used by the Being became transformed. The verb to denote such a transformation is 'turn' (bilyun). Alternatively the suffix 'to become' is added to an object such as ranga sacred object — the being 'became a ranga'. The most common way of expressing the transformation is the use of a pause, and the copula — 'the canoe sank, and there is a rock'.

Two kinds of material object represent the transformation of the waŋarr. The first are those permanent features of the landscape. The second are ranga which the waŋarr are held to have put inside the ground or into the waters. Ranga which men make copy or 'follow' the types instituted and placed by the waŋarr. Many ranga have their equivalents in permanent transformations in the land.

The term łuku can be used to refer to the more important maŋayin. Two clans can have 'one łuku', meaning the same waŋarr and ranga sacred object. An important dance in the ɲūrra ceremony is a 'luku', presumably because in dancing it men 'follow' the waŋarr's actions.

The traces of the Beings in the ground are taken to be the intentional or unintentional results of their actions. For example, Djuranydjura the Dog walked up and down and a rock now stands there; Carpet Python fell down and made a long track. Such traces constitute named locations in particular clans' territories. Clustered together they define areas which clans possess. Some features such as trees or rocks are said to be the 'shadows' or images of the Beings or of their appurtenances. People insist that significant trees have always stood there, or if one is known to have fallen, then that a new tree is taking its place. I once heard a clan leader referred to as the łuku of the maŋayin, suggesting the old man's proximity to the waŋarr. Djäwa, an old Daygurrurr clan leader put it this way:

From the beginning stands the łuku. The song comes from there and I hold it. The song comes from that place, or that place or that place.

THE CONSTITUTION OF CLAN COUNTRIES.

Clan countries contain the traces of the supernatural Beings. Clans own several countries, often widely separated from one another. Where a clan is divided into land-owning groups, each owns one country, but
any member of the clan can say that any of its countries is his own. In this section I examine how these countries are constituted.

Wāŋa is a defined location, a 'place' — a person's place where he or she habitually sits or sleeps, a camp or town, or a named locale. One may ask, 'Njunga nha wāŋa?' — 'Is that a camp?' and receive the reply 'Yuw, gunmulpuy wāŋa' — 'Yes, a wet-season camp.' Or one may ask 'Wanha dhuwala wāŋa?' — 'Where is this place?', and be told 'Gaŋtji' — '(This is) Gaŋtji'.

People refer to extensive general areas by one 'big-name' (rapam). A 'big-name' place is an area which incorporates a cluster of 'small-name' places each of which is said to be the trace of a supernatural Being. Land-owning groups own tracts of land which consist of one or more contiguous 'big-name' places. The land-owning group, and the area as a whole may be known by one of these big-names, which thereby becomes more inclusive than the other names. The group is called 'the people of X'. This predominant name is the 'bone place' (ŋaraka wāŋa), associated with a wagarr and ranga. I call the contiguous owned area a country. Each clan has several countries from 1,000 to 10,000 hectares or more in area. A clan's several countries are not usually contiguous.

A 'big-name' place is an area of several hundred hectares, named sometimes after a smaller site within it, and including several 'small-name' places such as waterholes, springs, lakes and creeks, patches of jungle, headlands and plains. Several of these names are secret.

Some boundaries are clearly defined, such as the edge of a forest or the division between saltflat and grassplain. Other boundaries are less precise — perhaps just an imaginary line between two trees. Sometimes there is no defined boundary, simply one side of a forest is one 'place', and the other side is another.¹ One type of terrain tends to predominate at each 'big-name' place, although many contain a mixed ecology.

Permanent lakes and waterholes are particularly significant in that people used to congregate at them towards the end of the dry season, when they held the big ceremonies.

¹Large tracts of forest require the least clear definition. The clearest boundaries occur in ecologically rich and varied areas.
Some significant places possess qualities of power and danger. People say that dangerous (maḏakarritj) places must be avoided because a Giant Snake or a waŋarr lives beneath the water. As well as avoidance other restrictions apply to such places. One should not, for example, carry long-necked turtles past the Sun's place at the mouth of the Woollen River. To interfere with some parts of the ground or deep waters by excavating is to risk 'blowing up everything', as one man put it.

People attribute mishaps, especially at sea, to the agency of supernatural Beings which inhabit the deep. At some places a gift should be made to the Being; one man said that he got sick because he failed to do this. Some Beings then are taken to be still potentially active.

A number of sites are dangerous or powerful because of the very nature of the waŋarr. 'Cough and Cold' waŋarr placed a tree at Howard Island which is said to afflict anyone who cuts it. Waters in general are taken to affect the health for good or ill because of the powers of the Beings there. Ghosts are dangerous also, as I showed above.

Power (mōrr, ganydjarr) is inherent in the tides and rivers, greatest where the incoming or outgoing tides swirl and when creeks and rivers are in flood from heavy rains. Places where incoming tide and rain-swollen rivers meet have the greatest power and danger and tend to be associated with a maḏayin.

Only 'big-men' (men with grey hair) may approach specific sites at most 'big-name' places. Where there are several waterholes, at least one will be so restricted. Places where there are secret ceremonial grounds and some important 'small-name' places said to have been made by a waŋarr are also restricted to senior men.

Because of all these dangers and restrictions people will not stay in a strange country without friends to guide them, unless forced to do so. This means in effect that people only use the country of clans to which they are closely related, or of which they possess knowledge for other reasons.

Groups and individuals own land. A camp established and largely built by one individual is that person's place, regardless of the clan which owns the country on which it stands. A clan and its members however own the country itself.
Travelling through the country, people define it first by moiety name, Dhuwa or Yirritja. People often know the moiety of the land even if they do not know which clan owns it. Moiety classification of land depends upon the affiliation of the Beings and ceremonies associated with it, and clans owning it, rather than on any natural feature; for all topographical categories are associated with both moieties.

Only a systematic mapping of clan land over a very wide area would render accurate information about the exact size and location of clan countries. On the basis of rather piecemeal data I have deduced the approximate area of ten countries (Table 2.1). The average area of ten 'big-name' places is approximately 3,600 hectares, the range is from about 800 to about 10,000 hectares. The size depends partly on the type of terrain. Countries from fifty to 8,000 hectares have a great deal of forest and coastal or estuarine mangroves. Countries of about 3,500 hectares are rich areas of estuarine plains including some forest and riverine mangroves. Countries enclosed in the 'big-name' countries of other clans are small, up to 1,000 hectares. One estuarine area is of this order of size also, but the owning clan has another country of 2,500 hectares the other side of the river, and another small place further west along the coast. Two clans with country composed of coastal saltflats and grassplains have approximately fifty square kilometres (4,500 hectares) each in total, whereas two clans with predominantly forest land have a total of over 15,000 hectares (Table 2.2).

Each clan owns two to four 'big-name' countries (Map 2.1); Mildjini clan has two, Liyagalawumirri has four or possibly five. As Warner (1937:18) pointed out 'A clan's countries are usually separated by up to sixty kilometres'. Some clans' countries are contiguous however, and sometimes the countries of several clans of one moiety form chains across the land. As Nancy Williams (n.d.) points out, Dhuwa and Yirritja moiety countries alternate along the coast and up the rivers.

One or two of a clan's smaller countries can be enclaves or pockets within or on the coastal edge of another clan's 'big-name' country. People say that the whole of Howard Island is Wobulkarra, meaning in its substance 'inside', but about six clans of both moieties possess areas of a few hundred hectares each along its coast. Such
Table 2.1: The approximate area of ten clan-countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Topography</th>
<th>Approximate area in hectares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manharrŋu</td>
<td>Buraŋal'nura</td>
<td>estuarine plain</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrungun</td>
<td>Barŋambarrŋura</td>
<td>plains forest and river</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrungun</td>
<td>Nangaŋala</td>
<td>swamp, plains and river</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manharrŋu</td>
<td>Dhámala</td>
<td>freshwater springs, saltflats, estuary</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bālmauy</td>
<td>Wurrallŋura</td>
<td>forest and mangrove</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bālmauy</td>
<td>Yathalamarra</td>
<td>swamp lakes and forest</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liyagalawumiri</td>
<td>Ḑetjirimá</td>
<td>plains estuary and forest</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildjiŋi</td>
<td>Malwanatharra</td>
<td>saltflats, mangroves and plains</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildjiŋi</td>
<td>Garanydjirrŋura</td>
<td>plains forest and tidal river</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamalanga</td>
<td>Galkübiringri</td>
<td>forest and mangrove</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>37,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average:</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: To show the approximate total areas of four clans' countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Approximate area in hectares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coastal and estuarine plain</td>
<td>Murrungun Wolkpuy 4,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manharrŋu 4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>include large areas of forest</td>
<td>Bālmauy 18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gamalanga 15,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map 2.1: The countries of four clans.
enclaves are called ringitj. Many, perhaps all, clans have isolated 'small-name' places within other clans' 'big-name' countries.¹

Not all countries have land-owning groups with living members. People say that a country belongs to such and such a clan, but that the people are all dead. Of the countries known to me, excluding ringitj places, about a quarter are without members and I suspect the proportion to be actually higher than this.

LIKAN – THE CONNECTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP TO THE LAND

The concept luku links the land to the waŋarr; the concept likan links groups and individuals to the waŋarr and land.

The word likan denotes an entity in which two linear elements are joined to form an angle or crescent; thus elbow joint, knee joint, a bay, a corner and the crescent moon are all likan. Each country and the group which owns it have a set of likan names or bundurr and a set of likan designs. Likan names called out in ceremonies, and designs, connect the landowning group to the waŋarr and to the raŋga, as the elbow connects the upper and lower arms.²

Men relate likan names primarily to countries. Dhathaqua, the Liyagalawumirri clan leader, explained how the likan names he called at a mortuary ceremony pertain to two of his clan countries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Likan-name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guruwaŋa</td>
<td>Dhurrurruga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dhapinmarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wagarrdhula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bininyigala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirarrmiŋa</td>
<td>Walkuwaluκu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banbarraparra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maymayŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liliplyaŋa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dhathaqua said that the first name in each list is the 'leader' or 'boss' of each country, meaning the one most used to characterize the country and group.

¹See Peterson 1971:229 for a detailed account of the inclusion of ringitj areas within a larger country.

²I am indebted to Howard Morphy for his observation that likan contains the notion of connection (Morphy 1977a:188).
Dhathaqu explained that the Iikan name Walkuwalku signified the Carpet Python waqarr and also the bäpurru (land-owning group in this context but see below). It used to be called out in fights for 'Walkuwalku bred us'.

Another man asserted that each clan has but one Iikan name: Daygurrgurr at all its three countries was 'Gaydamańu'; one clan with one bundurr. Even so, when he told me other clans' Iikan names he attached them to countries. Dhathaqu's account is more consistent with usages I have observed. The other man's account reflects the fact that the Daygurrgurr clan does not neatly subdivide into land-owning groups.

The concept of Iikan is related to ideas about the powers of the waqarr. Iikan designs can be imbued with power, and the raqga itself certainly is.

Only certain men call out the Iikan names in ceremonies. These men are termed đalkarramirri (Yirritja) or djirrikaymirri (Dhuwa) — 'power men'.

Warner's translation of Iikan-name as 'power-name' was apt (1937:357). As I said just now, two of the senses of Iikan are elbow and knee joint. In the account by Djäwa the Daygurrgurr clan leader of the significance of the concept, the notions of power, knee and elbow are conjoined. He explained the Iikan names he called at a circumcision ceremony:

The big paperbark tree fell down at Djiliwirri. I called that. It is my knee or elbow bone for the young people lying down with blood on them. They lay down, so I called the Iikan name — the joint for every one — of paperbark falling. The Iikan name is the elbow or knee bone. Đalkarra is power from the maɟayin. This, the knee or elbow, is power. I have a lot of power, no one gets the better of me, white or black. I have the law for everyone. I am the elbow. I have the đalkarra, the power.

Djäwa's explanation for the Iikan name he called pertains to a particular maɟayin — Paperbark Tree falling into the waterhole. Iikan

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1The word I translate as 'signified' here is mayali, which means among other things a significant pattern of sound or visible marks, a relation or relations between equivalent words or sentences in different languages, and between exoteric and esoteric interpretation, and an indexical relation.

2Đalkarramirri, i.e. đalkarra-POS . may be related etymologically to the word đał which means strength or power.
is the elbow or knee bone and 'is' power. Dalkarra too is power. Djäwa 'is' the ikan and 'has' the power. A dalkarramirri then is someone who is identified with the ikan names, has the right to call them, and who thereby possesses power (-mirri is the possessive suffix).

As I show in Chapters 6 and 7, the ranga sacred objects are modelled both on the notion of a tree, and the bone and flesh of the wanjarr being. Ikan appears to connote both the branches of that tree, for the word means the junction of branch to trunk, and the connection of the bones of the limbs to the body. The ikan names thus link the individual and the group to the ranga and its power, as branches are linked to the tree, and limbs to the body. It is significant that paperbark forms the core or 'bone' of many ranga. Djäwa called the ikan of paperbark falling into the water, signifying the ranga lying in the water, for the initiation of the new member of the clan.

People have ikan names also. A man whose country is Barigura has the name Banydj which is the ikan name of that place. It is also true then, as Warner suggests (1937:26) that the names are of the human ancestors, since individuals are named after the ikan names of their country.

THE INDIVIDUAL, THE LAND AND THE MADAYIN

The individual is connected with places in three main ways; through his membership of a land-owning group and clan, through his kinship relation to other clans and places, and through a direct spiritual link with a place. Individuals identify with the madayin of their countries.

A person can say that his or her father's country, and any country of his or her clan, is 'his own'; and as I showed in Chapter 1 a person takes 'half' membership in the clan of the man who raised him, if that clan is different from his own.

The men of such a clan may give to the individual rights over their ceremonies and madayin. There might be an agreement that an individual's spiritual conception took place at a certain country; he is then allowed to be 'of the water' of that place, even though it might not be his father's clan country. It becomes his own. Wuluulu told me the following:
His parents were sitting on the shore at Malwanatharra, which is Mildjipi clan country, when they saw a strange jet of water come up from Djupupura, the rock where Dog lies. Later his father saw Wululu's spirit in a dream and his mother reported symptoms of pregnancy. Eventually, after consulting with the Liyagalawumirri clan-members for whom Mildjipi country is 'mother', it was agreed that Wululu was 'of the water' of Malwanatharra. He is Daygurrurr by birth, but his country is Mildjipi. 'Maybe I am Stingray, or Dog, or Bailer Shell — something!' he said. (See also Warner 1937:21) for accounts of spiritual impregnation.

Wululu appears to identify himself with the waŋarr of that country.

Djäwa told me about the relation between the waŋarr, the maḏayin objects including ceremonies, and present men:

Here am I, at the beginning, a man, a man; and at the beginning I am an animal. I turned from being Honeybee: here am I a man — that is my maḏayin now.

I am a Possum too, in the beginning a long time ago, a Possum. Later I turned, and I am a man. Here I sit, a man, like this.

I turned each time: Honeybee, Possum, Catfish; I turned and I am a man who speaks the Dhuwala tongue. That is the story: here I am a man, just the same; here I sit, a man. That is all. From this animal, that animal, that animal, that fish, that animal, whatever animal — I am a man.

I have Emu, perhaps I have Catfish, Possum, Darter; there is the design and here is the waterhole. From there — from the Catfish, Possum, Honeybee. I have the maḏayin now, everything; I am a man.

I have a song there, I have a song there, a song there and a song there because we come from there, I am from there, I am a man. That is all.

Djäwa here identifies with the waŋarr of his clan, which are both animals and persons. Each 'turned' and now there are men and maḏayin. Djäwa as a man possesses the maḏayin; both he and it came from the waŋarr.

Nancy Munn describes similar relations of transformation between ancestral beings, the object world and people among the Walbiri (Munn 1970). (See also the Murinbata concept of 'turning', Stanner 1966:78.)

Individuals are also affiliated to places in that they hold that their spirits will return to the waters, perhaps to the sea at their mother's mother's country, or to the waters of their clan country.

As far as individual claims to ownership of land or maḏayin are concerned, the various types of relationship bear a different weight according to circumstances. Where a clan becomes extinct both secondary paternity and spiritual conception are two of the means to find new members for the memberless clan. There is one Dhuwa clan that has only
two women and a male mental defective left. A man of another clan is 'of the water' of that clan, his father and mother 'made him there'. He is boss of the madoyn but does not sing, according to my informant, because 'he is only of the water'. Another man's mother married one of the last male members of a certain clan. This man gave his wife's son the ceremonies. He can perform them and make the madoyn.

Spiritual conception appears to be a means whereby one clan may take over a memberless clan. It may also legitimatize domination of one clan by another. A Daygurrgurr man whose country 'of the water' is Barigura, the extinct Wora clan's country, says that the country is now Gupapuygu (his clan-aggregate and language). The Daygurrgurr clan leader's country 'of the water' is Birrkili clan country, and he is boss of both Birrkili and Daygurrgurr clan madoyn.

Social paternity and spiritual conception are thus the basis of an individual's ownership of land and membership of a clan.

STORIES — THE GROUNDS FOR OWNERSHIP

Stories account for the origin of clans and ceremonies. They describe events which are the grounds for the clans' ownership of madoyn and land. In Yolŋu practical reason there is no problem in deriving 'ought' from 'is' (Mackie 1977:65). It owns a ceremony, design, song etc., and a place. What counts is that a community should publicly subscribe to the truth of a story, willingly or unwillingly, and allow the claim which the story justifies.

Because Yolŋu clans endure even beyond the extinction of their members, stories have the appearance of permanence and immutability. A comparison of my own and Warner's data shows that a clan's stories are indeed stable. More than one clan has a story about the same madoyn and place, so that it is the differences in the two versions which count in rival claims to land.

All the men of the Daygurrgurr clan tend to tell the same set of stories; this is the basis or 'body' (rumbal) of the clan law (rom). Each story pertains to a particular ceremony or element of a ceremony such as a song, and to places belonging to the clan. Men and women tell them not only in the context of a ceremony, but as autonomous entities, fundamental truths and as enjoyable tales. Men and women of clans which are divided into land-owning groups with living members tend
to tell only those linking stories which are common to all their countries and the stories about their own country — unless they have the permission of members of another land-owning group to tell the latter's stories. Disputes may arise from the breach of such rights.

People also have the right to tell the story, make the designs and see the ceremonies belonging to their mother's and mother's mother's clan and land-owning group.

Some stories, especially those describing the details of the clan's creation by the waqarr, are sacred (dhuyu), officially known only to adult men. Women may tell public ma'dayin stories.

The word dhäwu denotes not only formal stories. Any account or piece of news is a dhäwu. Stories are classified as hunting stories, ghost stories, stories about fights and 'women-trouble', as well as ma'dayin stories. The person who first tells it or the main protagonist is the owner of a story. The owners of ma'dayin stories are members of clans owning the ma'dayin in question. People defer to the owners in both cases by refraining from telling the story in the owner's presence, unless to assert themselves.

People evaluate stories as true (yuwalk) or false (nyäl), right (dhunupa, 'straight') or wrong (djarrpi, 'crooked'). A teller will often end a story with the strong assertion that it was a true story, and the teller knows it to be true because his father and other clan elders taught him, as their fathers had taught them. Men claim that their versions are right because they had listened to their fathers. The truth and correctness of stories is an important matter, for a great deal rests on them.

Stories may tell of an encounter between supernatural Beings, or some other actions by them such as making a ceremony, hunting, gathering vegetable food, creating waters and so on. Such events in the story have tangible and permanent results in the form of topographical features, types of ceremonial objects instituted by the Beings and left in the ground, types of practices such as dance, songs, and designs. Some actions instituted a social relationship. Present practice 'follows' these results; 'we copy from there' as several men put it.

The important point I want to make is that the stories explain and state the grounds for present practice. I will summarize one clan's practices in order to demonstrate this.
DAYGURRGURR CLAN STORIES — THE INTEGRATION OF A CLAN'S LAW

Daygurrgurr clan stories explain the origin of its ceremonies and the social relations they entail. They state the nature of the relationship between a ceremony and a place — both are the outcome of the actions of supernatural Beings. They link a clan's separate countries together, and each one to other clans and their countries. They integrate a clan's law by relating the Beings associated with each country one to another. Nevertheless a clan's law is a compound entity with no inherent unity. It consists of the sum of ceremonies associated with the countries the clan happens to own. Since, as we shall see, one clan can take over another clan's country, this whole may change.

The Daygurrgurr Gupapuyŋu clan of the Yirritja moiety owns three countries, separated from each other by other clans' countries: an area at Lake Evella called Gapuyakŋura, partly shared with the Birrkili, the other clan of the Gupapuyŋu clan-aggregate; an area on the west side of Buckingham Bay called Djiliwirri; and a small area on the east end of Howard Island called Gambuŋŋura. It probably has several other small places also (Map 2.1).

The clan also owns and uses several song-series and ceremonies. It does not however possess exclusive rights over these; several other clans of the moiety share each one. One clan is the true owner of each, although the Daygurrgurr clan can use them (Table 2.3). Each song-series and ceremony, its dances and designs, connect with several places belonging to various clans of the same moiety. Each place has a similar story about the supernatural Beings of the songs and ceremonies, and thus 'the same song' or 'the same ceremony'. People say 'There's a song for this place and 'It is the same song' as the one for another place.

Stories describe the connections between such places in terms of journeys made by supernatural Beings. As Figure 2.1 shows, a clan is connected to different sets of clans by the ceremonies and elements of each of its countries; it shows that not all elements run parallel but can diverge. Consequently the clan is linked to a different set of clans through each ceremony or element, but these sets overlap.

The Figure shows too the clear division between the songs, ceremonies and clans of land and sea (cf. Warner 1937:418). People emphasize
Figure 2.1: Daygurrgurr clan's connections through public ceremonies. Note that Daygurrgurr clan's three countries are shown. Lake Evella is shared with Birrkili.
a contrast between groups of ceremonies pertaining to sea or saltwater, and those of the land; or simply saltwater as against freshwater.

Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceremonies and elements used by Daygurrgurr clan</th>
<th>The 'true' owning clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest songs, dances and designs including Murayana Ghost and Emu</td>
<td>Wora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swamp songs etc. including Leech</td>
<td>Wobulkarra and Wora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macassan men songs etc.</td>
<td>Daygurrgurr, Birrkili and many others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea songs etc. including Mundukul Python</td>
<td>Birrkili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djalumbu Hollow Log second-burial ceremony, songs etc. of the lakes and tidal rivers</td>
<td>Daygurrgurr, Birrkili, Wora, Bal'mawuy, Ritharrq and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garayurru (Stringybark) Exchange ceremony, including the Marradjirri pole and Forest songs etc.</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honeybee Närra ceremony, its dances and invocations</td>
<td>Daygurrgurr, Gumatj, Birrkili, Dhalwaŋu.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each story in the Daygurrgurr body of law accounts for one ceremony or element of a ceremony. I discuss public ceremonies first. Forest song-series are in part about a named malevolent Ghost named Murayana. He collects honey, hunts kangaroo, eats its raw flesh, spits out blood which becomes the sunset and 'is power'. Murayana (or a Ghost which is 'the same' but differently named) roams the forest of all the clans having these songs.

Other songs of the Forest series accompany dances for public ceremonies. They represent the actions of the supernatural Beings. 'Emu' is the most prominent Daygurrgurr clan dance of the forest. Here are summaries of two stories about Emu:

Emu made a nest at Djiliwirri, then went hunting with his chicks. He walked back along the track from time to time to stop the Python from eating the eggs in the nest.

A Djambarr buoyu clan being, Jabiru, went fishing. He caught several and ate all the fat himself. He gave some fish to his mother's brother, Emu, who noticed that all the fat was eaten — and stingray without fat is inedible. A fight ensued in which Emu hit Jabiru with a stone like an egg, saying that it was a sacred object which Jabiru must look after. Jabiru flew off and Emu speared him. Jabiru fell making rings in the water at the public ceremony place (Garma'nura) at Bawuy'pawuy (cf. Warner 1937:543).
The events in the first of these stories are re-enacted in a Daygurrgurr dance. The second story is shared by the Daygurrgurr and Djambarrpuyŋu clans. It explains both the duty of the 'sisters' son' clan to look after the sacred objects of the 'mother' clan; and also the presence of a certain topographical feature, which a Djambarrpuyŋu ground-sculpture used in purification ceremonies 'follows' or copies, (Figure 2.2).

Stories about the Marsupial Mouse whose gossiping provoked a fight at Ganygarrqura, a Wobulkarra clan place on Howard Island, relate to the swamp songs used by the Daygurrgurr clan.

Three linked stories about the Macassan called Nowa and other wawarr relate to the Macassan song-series and ground-sculpture designs. They link two of the clan's countries which are not contiguous. They also link different kinds of ceremony, since Honeybee is connected with the secret Närра ceremony, whereas the Macassan songs are for public ceremonies. To summarize the three stories:

Nowa the Macassan arrived at Djiliwirri by boat. There he met Honeybee and told him he was going to build houses to make a big town. Honeybee told him to go back to his own country. When Nowa refused, Honeybee and his companions stung him.¹ Nowa brushed the honeybees off in a cauldron of boiling water.²

Nowa met the Dog Djuranydjura at Djiliwirri and offered him matches, blankets and houses, and to make him jointly king of the country. The Dog, presenting a wild unkempt appearance, refused the offers on the grounds that he had firesticks, paperbark and bark houses, and he owned the country anyway.

Djuranydjura the Dog travelled by canoe from Djiliwirri to Gambuŋ-gura on Howard Island, the 'top' Daygurrgurr country. There he and his wife and children attempted to set off for Galiwin'ku (Elcho Island) in the bark canoe. He pushed and pulled the canoe to get it off the bank, but it sank.

Stones now stand where the canoe and stone anchor sank, and where Djuranydjura went up and down grieving for his wife and children (cf. Warner 1937:536-7).

¹Yolŋu substantives are not always marked for number, so that Birrkudja denotes one Bee or many. Consequently, in stories the actor can change from singular to plural in one sentence.

²The Macassans used to visit Arnhem Land to collect trepang which they cooked on the beaches in cauldrons placed in rows of three or four (MacKnight 1976:51).
Figure 2.2: A Djambarrpuyŋu clan ground-sculpture representing the rings made in the water by Jabiru's fall from the sky at Bawuy'pawuy.

Figure 2.3: A Daygurrgurr ground-sculpture representing the fire place and track made by Nowa, the Macassan man Wąŋarr Being at Djiliwirri. The circles also represent three freshwater springs.

Figure 2.4: A Daygurrgurr ground-sculpture representing the bark canoe which sank at Gambuŋguna with the Dog Djuranydjura and his wife and children.
Plate 2.1 Preparing a fire for the Smoke purification. The ground-sculpture represents the track and fire-places of Nowa the Macassan.

Plate 2.2 Leaves singed in the fire will be used to brush people and their belongings in order to purify them.
The first of these three stories is the basis for a ground-sculpture representing Nowa's tracks and the fireplace where the cauldron stood. It is used in a Fire purification ceremony after a death (Figure 2.3, Plate 2.1). At the ceremony a dancer mimes Nowa's actions of cutting the firewood and lighting the fire, while lighting a real fire in the ground-sculpture to make smoke (Plate 2.2).

The second story illustrates an ethos of independence from outsiders, but probably does not relate directly to any ceremonies. The third story connects two of the clan's countries by Dog's journey. It is the basis for the ground-sculpture design of the bark canoe and stone anchor used in Washing purification ceremonies after an injury or death (Figure 2.4).

Each story lends coherence to different kinds of action and object: the dances mime the actions described in the stories; the songs describe the subjects and their actions; the ground-sculptures represent the subsequent objects and places.

The clan, in owning the country which holds these specific locales, thereby owns the ceremony. Conversely, men may use the fact that their song or ceremony is related to a country as grounds for using that country, even if it is not their own.

Stories for Djalumbu Hollow Log secondary burial ceremony also have these general features but they differ in describing specifically the origin of a named ceremony. Hollow Log ceremonies are conglomerations of elements owned by several clans, and are related to more than one place.

Djalumbu Hollow Log ceremony consists of the Log itself and its designs; the Inland Saltwater series of songs and related dances; the Bullroarer dance associated with Darter; the Murayana Ghost dances and Forest songs. But as I showed above, these elements pertain to several clans. Each also corresponds to a different supernatural Being (Table 2.4). (I have omitted the clans which share the elements but see above).

The stories tell how these Beings of different clans cooperated to create the first Djalumbu ceremony. Djäwa, the Daygurrgurr clan leader, began a story with a remark which reveals that the stories are indeed the basis of the law:
Law, law, rom; long ago there were forerunners whom neither we nor our fathers knew. The sea and lakes were dry then.

At Lake Evella, which was dry, three big-men called Manydjiliyirri, Gururrwiluwuy and Rarrkmunu mumu put Hollow Log in the ground for the sacred law. Then there was water.

Murayana Ghost danced, and the others sang the public songs, ate Manbiri Catfish and wrapped the bones in paperbark. They said 'What shall we do? Let us put the bones in Djalumbu Hollow Log', and they sang there in the middle of Lake Evella.

Thunder clouds found the image of Djalumbu there, where it was dry before. Catfish danced — but they were men.

According to Daygurrgurr tradition, Djalumbu Hollow Log stands there still in the middle of the lake. Djawa also tells a story in which he stresses that long ago the seas and lakes were dry, until the warr men made the Hollow Log.1

Table 2.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceremonial element</th>
<th>Being</th>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest songs</td>
<td>Murayana Ghost</td>
<td>Wora Clan</td>
<td>Bariŋŋura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djalumbu Hollow Log and songs</td>
<td>Manydjiliyirri and other Men</td>
<td>Daygurrgurr</td>
<td>Gapuyakŋura (Lake Evella)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullroarer dance</td>
<td>Darter</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another Daygurrgurr clan leader stressed the roles of the various beings: Manydjiliyirri and Gururrwiluwuy are bosses of the Hollow Log: Murayana Ghost is boss of Ganiny digging-stick, the paperbark 'un-circumcised penis', the drone-pipe, and many designs of flowers and plants which he put on the Hollow Log; 'For he is Wora (spear-grass) clan, the clan of many seaside and freshwater grasses and plants'.

This occult division of labour springs from the fact that the songs used by the Daygurrgurr clan are Wora clan songs, which accompany Circumcision and mortuary ceremonies as well as the Hollow Log. Murayana is the Being of these songs. The Hollow Log itself is on the other hand specific to one ceremony and has its own distinct Beings.

1The impression given by Warner (1937:385) that only Wititj or Yuŋŋur made the wet-season rain in Yolŋu belief seems to be incorrect. Many supernatural Beings and men are credited with the ability to make rain.
The cooperation of Murayana with the other Beings in the stories follows from the use of the Forest songs with the Hollow Log. Other clans with Djalombu Hollow Log can use different songs.

The story of Murayana Ghost waŋarr, with the forest songs, forms the basis of the Marradjirri Exchange ceremony. The marradjirri is a pole and string presented to another clan as a gift. The Daygurrgurr clan uses the Wora clan pole called Garayurru (Stringybark) which the Ritharrŋu clan, whose country is up-river from Wora country, also uses. The following story about this ceremony shows that two clans with 'the same' ceremony-element do maintain a differentiation. It also states the grounds for two clans having the same songs:

Murayana went from Wora clan country to Ritharrŋu clan country called Dhuduthuqunbiya and found the Ritharrŋu men making Djalombu Hollow Log and the Garayurru pole. They called him over to see and he said 'Mine is pointed, yours is blunt'. Murayana was covered with painted designs of flowers and plants, and he said, 'I carry all the designs to Lake Evella, and so we have the same ceremony'. He went off laughing.

In another version Murayana was angry because he was jealous, crying 'Why have you used my pointed pole? Cut it! Yours is the blunt one!' and he called out his clan names. The clans' poles are indeed distinct in this way.

Honeybee is the 'big' Daygurrgurr clan waŋarr who in Daygurrgurr tradition made the clan's first rapga sacred objects. These represent Honeybee's nest, the entrance to the hive and related objects. Honeybee's country is Djiliwirri. Stories and statements describe his journeys from Gambuppura to Djiliwirri; also from the countries of other clans with Honeybee madayin — such as Gumatj, Maďarrpa and Dhaļwaŋu — to Lake Evella and Djiliwirri.

I was told that Honeybee is moreover the creator of the Daygurrgurr clan. Accounts of clan creation vary but most men of the clan agreed that Honeybee was responsible (see Chapter 7). The songs and some of the dances of the Nārra ceremony describe Honeybee mixing saltwater foam with freshwater and with nectar of flowers; returning to the nest

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1Either the object or design is equated with the supernatural Being, using the copula ga, or it simply has the name of the Being as in 'This (object) Honeybee'. The word may also be used to denote the relation between object and name.
and laying eggs. (One senior member of the clan strongly asserted to
me however that the Djan'kawu sisters, who are Dhuwa moiety wagarr
and 'mother' to Daygurrgurr, created all the clans, Dhuwa and Yirritja.)

Honeybee and Fire are major Njarr ceremony dances for this clan.

Fire is danced in all Njarr ceremonies and is also a rangga.

This brings me to consider how the Daygurrgurr clan's stories for
the important Njarr ceremony fit with the others in the clan's body of
law. I will first summarize these stories:

Long ago five men including Quail and Honeybee walked at night,
made a fire, and carried it along a track to make the Njarr


This story explains and justifies the separateness of public and
Njarr ceremonies, and shows that each genre relates the public songs
to Bariqura, the Njarr to Djiliwirri. One clan leader asserted that
Djiliwirri had no songs, it was only 'of the invocation and Honeybee'.
Gambun-ura and Lake Evella are public ceremony places. In Chapter 6
I will be discussing the variety of traditions pertaining to the
Yirritja moiety Njarr ceremony.

All the stories summarized so far make up a major part of the
Daygurrgurr clan's traditions. The clan also has Sea songs and ceremonies.
I never learned the stories of these the 'true' Gupapuyŋu songs which, as
a member of the clan-aggregate, the clan has the right to use. For
reasons made clear in Chapter 8 it usually omits them from its repertoire
(but see Morphy 1977b on Yiqapuŋapu). Nevertheless the known stories

1 Other related clans' stories tell how Quail flew with Fire from Gumatj
country to Daygurrgurr country, after a fire burnt every thing down
on the Njarr ground (Gröger-Wurm 1973:85).

2 As Warner noted, public and Njarr 'wells' are distinct (1937:20).
do link the clan's three countries, and do create links with other clans' countries. They form the body of the clan's law, but although integrated in various ways, they are a compound rather than a tightly-knit unity. This reflects the fact that a clan is a body which possesses several countries, and a clan's law is the sum of the stories and ceremonies belonging to all its places.

A clan's law is integrated nonetheless. Gäniny, Murayana Ghost's digging-stick, is a ranga object which also represents the entrance to Honeybee's nest; Murayana cooperates with other Beings to make the Hollow Log; Nowa the Macassan has an exchange with both Djuranydjura Dog and Honeybee. Chapters 5 to 7 show the integration of a clan's law in greater detail.

DÄMBUGAWUMIRRI CLAN STORIES — GROUNDS FOR THE OWNERSHIP OF LAND AND CEREMONY

The stories connected with the Närra ceremony concern the creation of the clan. In Dämbugawumirri clan stories to which we turn now, the waŋarr created the clan and their language at the country which they named and where they left the ranga. A permanent topographical feature (e.g. a rock) is itself equivalent to a ranga, implying that the ranga is a permanent feature of the land. In holding the ranga a group has evidence that it is indeed descended from the original group created by the waŋarr, and has rights in the country and to its ceremonies. The take-over of one clan's country by another is incompatible with the creation ideology. Liyan names help to bridge reality and ideology.

Further on in this chapter I will be commenting briefly on the variation in the types of ceremony owned by a number of clans. A brief discussion of Dämbugawumirri ceremonies is required here.

This Dhuwa moiety clan owns but one maŋayin tradition and one song-series. Their stories are about the Djaŋ'kawu sisters and their ceremonies consist of the songs about the sisters, the corresponding public dances used for Washing Purification, the Wake, circumcision, singing for the sick and the Närra ceremony. The clan own no manikay songs suitable for a Fire Purification ceremony, no Hollow Log ceremony, nor an Exchange ceremony. It is unique in owning no manikay songs and uses for all its ceremonies bilma songs which have no drone-pipe
accompaniment. Most clans reserve this type of song for the Närre and for solemn parts of public ceremonies.

The stories about the Djæŋ'kawu bear upon all the clan's ceremonies and elements. From a regional point of view the stories form the basis of the Närre ceremony for many clans. All Dhuwa moiety clans with places deemed to have been created by the two sisters have rights in the Närre.¹

Dümbugawumirri ceremonies 'follow' the events in and results of the stories in the same way as the Daygurrgurr examples given earlier in this chapter.

People characterize the Djæŋ'kawu as two sisters, a mature woman who has born children (goŋman) and a nubile girl (wirrku|). In the stories and songs they travelled from west to east on a bark canoe or raft made of a roll of paperbark (djutu) through the sea and on foot overland. Each carried two digging-sticks called Gaŋinyiḏi with which they gathered food, speared the ground to make freshwater springs and paddled the canoe. They carried dilly-bags called Guwilirri frilled with waŋa feathered cords, (a species of raŋga or maŋayin sacred object). As they travelled they saw and named places, animals, birds, fish and other creatures and plants. The sisters bore the first clanspeople, named them and gave them their languages. At each clan's country they created freshwater springs in the saltflats and mangroves and on the beaches along the coast.

They met other waŋarr beings on the way. They met men, who stole their dilly-bag and maŋayin, forever depriving them and all women of the right to control the maŋayin, including the ceremonies.

The following summarises the story as told to me by Bäriya, the Dümbugawumirri clan leader, and one of his brother's sons (see Map 2.2):

1. The Djæŋ'kawu travelled from Burralku, an island towards the sunrise, to Muwalangal.
2. There they created the Rirratjigu clan.
3. They carried maŋayin to give to all the Dhuwa moiety clans.
4. These two sisters created Djarrawak, Galpu, Ņaymil and DataTaskiuy clans who have Red Kangaroo.

¹See Berndt R.M. 1952 for the Rirratjigu clan version of the stories and songs.
Map 2.2: Part of the Dambugawumirri clan version of the Djang'kawu sisters' journey.
5. They created Djambarrpuyu clan at Naŋmarraŋur,
6. then they went to Gurala where Shark went on the other side (to another Djambarrpuyu clan).
7. The two sisters travelled inland to make the forest;
8. carrying the maŋayin, giving languages, making groups, and leaving songs.
9. They put the maŋayin objects into the ground at Dhämiyarrka and made springwater (Guyula clan place).
10. Then on they went to Marapay, made places and people and put in the maŋayin, but they carried the maŋayin still (to another Guyula clan place).
11. The two sisters created clans at Gobiyaŋarra and other places (still Guyula clan),
12. then on to Gärriyakōra, Baŋayawa (Đämbugawumirri clan).
13. At Gärriyakōra the Djaŋ'kawu hung up the dilly-bag and went to gather crabs and mangrove-worms.
14. Afterwards they returned and looked for the dilly-bag but men had stolen it and were dancing at the Inside ground; the Djaŋ'kawu could not get it back.
15. They remained at Gärriyakōra and made springwaters, created the Đämbugawumirri (Mätjarra) people and collected food.
16. The Djaŋ'kawu — well it was really someone called Garrawurra — heard their märi (MM/MMB) singing at Elcho Island,
17. and went there to Gunuwaŋa (Guŋbirridji clan) and said 'sing like this märi — slowly'.
18. Then they asked märi if they had water, and made springs with Ganinyidi digging-stick.
19. Gunuwaŋa and Gärriyakōra are märi'manydji ('MM/MMB':'ZDCh') and Đämbugawumirri clan holds the Närra ceremony.
20. The Djaŋ'kawu left all the maŋayin at Gärriyakōra and went towards Miliŋinbi just carrying digging-sticks.
21. They made water and left maŋayin at Ḏetjirima (Liyaŋgalawumirri clan),
22. and went on to Dhāmala (Manharrŋu clan) and Rāpuma (Gorryindi clan).
23. At Bandi the Djaŋ'kawu gave the ɲammarra Mat and Lorikeet to the Gorryindi clan,
24. and went on to Mewinbi, Balpanarra, Mayoupam, Buwarriŋa and Oenpelli.¹

Common to all episodes of the story is that the two sisters arrived at a named place, named the clan, put the maŋayin objects in the ground,

¹Other stories about the journey bring out different points entirely, in order for example to relate the Närra songs to the journey.
and created the group. The central episode in the story consists of the clauses in the A brackets, numbers 12-15. These describe events at Gärriyakŋura, Đambilgawumirri clan country.

This episode describes how men, forerunners of the clan, stole the maḏayin from the sisters, with the result that the men had charge of the Njarra ceremony and the women became the workers, gathering food for the men (14, 15). In the following episodes (16-24) there are contradictory statements; that the sisters placed no more maḏayin because they had left them all at Gärriyakŋura; and that they gave this or that maḏayin to the clans. People cover this contradiction by saying that they just took the digging-sticks, which were transformed into the maḏayin in some clans' traditions (see Berndt R.M. 1952 passim).

This Djaŋ'kawu story accounts for the creation of many Dhuwa moiety clans. It explains why these clans use the Njarra ceremony and their relationship of common ancestry. It accounts for the identity of clans and languages and clans' ownership of maḏayin objects. It is also a justification for the control of ceremonies by men. 'If the men had not stolen the dilly-bag', Bäriya remarked to me at his Njarra ceremony, 'the women would be dancing here and we would be sitting at the fire!'

Other stories describe the creation of ranga in detail. Banhdharrawuy, a mature man of the clan, explained his painting depicting a ranga of which he is 'boss'. (This story fits in to the epic between clauses 19 and 20 if the reference to Garrawurra (16) is ignored. The ambiguous identity of the traveller is discussed below):

The two Djaŋ'kawu sisters went in the bark canoe from Elcho Island to Gärriyakŋura. They arrived at Ganydjalamirri, then walked to Gärriyakŋura. The canoe sank at Ganydjalamirri; it turned, and it was a maḏayin (a ranga and a rock) whose 'outside' name is Bärrtha.

The younger sister, who was behind the elder, heard the noise of the canoe sinking, 'luk, luk, luk'. 'What's happening to our canoe?' she said. 'That is Mułułu maḏayin' the elder sister replied.

The canoe had changed into a hollow log, and the water going into the ends of it made the noise. (We sometimes make the ranga hollow, and sometimes take the old one out of the water and refurbish it.) The sandbank and dead leaves covered the log and oysters stuck to it, as they do to rocks. The 'outside' name of the maḏayin is Rock.
This story postulates the fusing of identity between a sacred object which is the transformation of an everyday object, and a feature of the land — a rock. The Rock is both the transformation of the canoe and the ränga. Man-made ränga 'follow' this transformation. In this way the ränga demonstrates its connection, maintained by its owners and makers, with a particular place, with the wängarr being who created them and with a ceremony in which the ränga is displayed.

Yolŋu stories state on what grounds a particular group owns the land and 'holds' the ränga. They tell how a wängarr created each group and language at each country, and men assert that present clans are descended from these ancestral groups. This dogma would probably be given as an exclusionary reason (Raz 1975:35) for ownership in a dispute. One reason I have heard given for the Djambarrpuyŋu's joint ownership of Ngangalŋaŋa is that Shark made that country, and Shark is their maŋaylin. Thus the identification of a group with a wängarr seems to be adequate grounds for ownership of land in Yolŋu practical reason. As we saw in Chapter 1, clans are identified with their wängarr.

Secret stories tell just how the Djaŋ'kawu did create the groups. Bāriya denied the truth of the Rirratjingu clan secret story of the Djaŋ'kawu sisters, in which a Djaŋ'kawu brother is said to have inseminated his sisters, who then bore each Dhuwa clan at its respective country. He insisted that the sisters did it themselves — 'They played with themselves, with their fingers'; they inserted one finger joint for each clan (cf. Berndt R.M. 1952:33). In the version of the story that Warner (1937:336) recorded, men tried to copulate with the sisters but failed and the semen went all over the sisters' bodies.

The usual name of the whole Dhuwa group of people created by the Djaŋ'kawu is Mätjarra, another is Buqunbugun (cf. Berndt R.M. 1952:86). One name of the group created at Gärriyakgura is Garrawurra (see below). The putative descendants of this group form the present Dämbugawumirri clan. This name and others are the clan's likan names. Likan names have a currency beyond the clan name which can change; in the thirties the Dämbugawumirri clan was known often as Mayarr'mayarr (Peterson 1976:102). As we saw above, one clan can incorporate the
country of a memberless clan. Such incorporation is not compatible on the face of it with the stories about the creation of clans at particular places, but the use of the iikan name to denote the group created by the waŋarr enables ideology to be matched with reality. The land-owning group is identified with this group, but referred to by the clan name.

The notion of spiritual conception and the institution of secondary paternity enable new members to be found on the basis of descent — spiritual or social — from the ancestors created by the waŋarr. Individuals in some areas have clear theories about the recycling of spirits (cf. Morphy 1977a:140).

We have seen that the Đambugawumirri clan waŋarr both created the clan and left the raŋga and that this established the clan's rights. The same may not be true of all clans' waŋarr; all raŋga however show the holders to be associated with a place. For example, one clan leader who took me for a representative of the Government showed me his raŋga so that I would know that the country of that maŋayin was his.

ĐAMBUGAWUMIRRI CLAN STORIES — THE RELATIVITY OF TRUTH

Valid claims to ownership of maŋayin and places rest on agreement as to the truth of the stories which underpin them. That is why the tellers insist on their truth and utter statements to warrant it, such as 'I know it to be true because my father (etc.) told it to me'. Stories in which an irreversible event at a particular place is described, such as the stealing of the Djaŋ'kawu sisters' dilly-bag, present a problem of veracity when more than one clan has the same stories about its country. When one clan takes over another's country, the accepted version about that country changes in its details to account for and justify the new ownership.

Members of each clan with the Djaŋ'kawu story place the central episode at their own clan country because it explains the ceremony which each clan owns. In the Liyadhalinmirri clan version the men steal the dilly-bag at Marapay, southwest of Gärriyakôura. Djurrpum, a leader of that clan, told me this version when he, Bariya and I were visiting Gärriyakôura, Đambugawumirri clan country. Bariya, who is
pämbugawumirri, chuckled and said 'It is the same as our story'. The Manharrŋu clan version differs in a similar way.¹

People do not give others the lie in their presence, but they do insist on the truth of their own versions, and perhaps point out in private that the other person gets the stories twisted. It is known of course that other clans hold other beliefs. It is worth noting that clause 10 in Bṛiya's version of the Djan'kawu story explicitly asserts that the Djan'kawu 'carried the maḏayin still', implicitly denying that they lost them. The Pămbugawumirri men insist that they are the leaders for the Nurrra ceremony. That Garrawurra men of their country stole the dilly-bag is perhaps the justification for this assertion. Members of other clans assert that their clan is the leader.

The problem of reconciling the irreconcilable then is dealt with partly by etiquette and partly by insisting on the truth of one's own clan's stories when it is politic to do so. Chapter 4 shows the way in which incompatible truths are dealt with in ceremonies.

One other episode in the Djan'kawu story provides an example of the way in which one clan may present a story in order to make a claim. The Pămbugawumirri clan version of the story is quite irreconcilable with stories recorded by R.M. Berndt (1976b:152) connected with Elcho Island and the islands to the northeast; according to the people of those places — including the Gunbirridji — the Djan'kawu travelled southwest along the island, then to the mainland. Berndt (ibid.) has recorded many sites belonging to the Gunbirridji clan and associated specifically with the Djan'kawu. The last members of this clan died within living memory and, according to the Pămbugawumirri and their sisters' sons, asked the latter clan to look after the maḏayin and the country which is in a 'mother's mother' relation to the clan (see Chapter 3). As often as not nowadays Pămbugawumirri refer to the Gunbirridji clan countries as their own. The episode of the Djan'kawu story in the B bracket above is interesting in the light of these facts. It states that the creator of the springs, sacred places

¹The Rirratjingu clan version however centres the events at Marapay also. This clan's own country is at Gove Peninsula, about one hundred kilometres east of Marapay (Berndt R.M. 1952).
and mađayin at these places was not the Djaŋ'kawu, but a human forerunner from Gärriyakŋura called Garrawurra. Garrawurra is a ikan name for Gärriyakŋura, and the name of the people created by the Djaŋ'kawu at that place. Garrawurra in the story was one person or several, and of indeterminate sex. In this episode the Đambilugawumirri would seem to be denying independent status to these places, and incorporating them into its own body of property. Many of the clan live at these places, on which Galiwin'ku town partly stands.

On one occasion there was considerable beating about the bush when one man was telling me the story in the presence of another man with strong affiliations to Elcho Island, before they settled on whether the traveller was the Djaŋ'kawu or Garrawurra. They agreed upon the latter. In the Manharrgu clan version the Djaŋ'kawu and not Garrawurra visited Elcho Island.

Despite their differences people in the Woollen River area agree on the general lines of the events in the Djaŋ'kawu stories. Outside the lower Woollen River area differences begin to appear. The Rirratjigu clan of Gove Peninsula hold that the Djaŋ'kawu consisted of two sisters and a brother and accounts for the sisters' creative acts by the incestuous union between them and their brother (Berndt R.M. 1952:37). The Đambilugawumirri hold as a most secret truth that the sisters simply played with themselves with their fingers. People west of the Glyde River say that leeches were responsible.

It would probably be incorrect to claim, however, that any clearly bounded regions exist, marked by traits of mythology and ceremonial. The illusion of such a region can be created by close association with one or two related clans whose members project their own views.

One feature of the Garrawurra episode serves to justify the relation of 'boss' to worker within the Nārra ceremony. The Đambilugawumirri clan controls the Nārra ceremony of the Mülarra/Gunbirridji clans. This is the incident where Garrawurra told his märî (MM/MMB) singers to

1Bärinya integrated the story into the Djaŋ'kawu sequence on several occasions by using the third person singular pronoun nayi to refer to the Djaŋ'kawu, instead of the dual form maŋđa. There was thus a smooth transition from referring to 'Djaŋ'kawu nayi', to an unspecified nayi (implying Garrawurra) who travelled to Elcho Island.
sing with a slow clapstick beat (to conform to the normal bījma songs). The Mālarra/Gunbirridji singers said 'Very well gutharra, (ZDCh) you are boss of the ḅāra ceremony, we will work'. This relation would stand whether or not the travellers from Gārriyakūrara were the Djaŋ'kawu or someone called Garrawurra.

Finally, the Djaŋ'kawu stories illustrate another important institution: the marking of a clan's identity. A particular incident, object, or substance which features in the story typifies each clan.

The Manharrụ clan version is distinguished by the incident of the wrong sort of firewood; one sister mistakenly cooked Dhuwa shellfish with Dhuwa moiety mangrove wood called manyarr, with the result that the shell was found to be full of mud.¹ The name Manharrụ is the Dhuwal language version of the clan's name Manyarr-ŋu, 'the mangrove-wood people'. In several episodes of the stories clans are similarly typified by a specific element in the narrative: Ɲaymil and Ɗaṭiwy clan have Red Kangaroo, Djambarrpuyŋu of Gurala have Shark (which meets the Djaŋ'kawu in one version); Gorryindi have the qaŋmarra Mat and Rainbow Lorikeet used and seen by the sisters. These attributes have what Grace Harris (1976:304) recently called a 'marking function', and are 'distinguishing markers':

Distinguishing markers are OUTWARD LOOKING SYMBOLS. Their representativeness comes into play in the contraposing of social units in thought and action.

The selection of one or two units from a shared set of dances or song-series as a marker of clan identity is a feature of the public ceremonies, as Chapter 5 shows.

So far in this chapter, I have presented stories related to the public and revelatory genre of ceremonies, in the traditions of one Yirritja and one Dhuwa clan. The stories associated with the third genre, that of regional ceremonies, display some important differences from the former connected with the mode of their ownership.

A STORY FOR A REGIONAL CEREMONY — REGIONAL CONSENSUS

Each clan has its own ḅāra; the regional ceremonies on the other hand are owned by the ɭiyagalawumirri clan of the Dhuwa moiety, according to

¹For a discussion on the significance of this episode see Chapter 7.
clans in the area, but are nonetheless 'for everyone' and 'meaningful' (mayali'mirri) for people of both moieties. Agreement in the region about the location of the events which the ceremony re-enacts reflects this pattern of ownership.

The stories for the regional ceremonies in the Woollen River area include a long epic about two women, the Wāgilak sisters, similar to the Djaŋ'kawu story. Warner (1937:250), R.M. Berndt (1951:19) and C.H. Berndt (1970:1307) have recorded the story, so I will not reproduce it in detail. An outline will suffice:

A mature woman and a pregnant young woman journeyed from the south along Annie Creek, down the Goyder River to Mirarrmina on the upper Woollen River, Liyagalawumirri clan country. They camped there and built a bark hut. They tried to cook the plants and animals they had gathered on the way, but each one jumped up and went into the waterhole, becoming maŋayin.

The younger sister bore a child and allowed birth-blood to enter the creek where lay the giant Carpet Python Wititj (secret name Yulungur or Miwatj). The Giant Snake rose out of the water and made a cloud, thunder, lightning and rain.

The sisters tried to stop the rain by singing all the songs for the regional ceremonies, but in vain. The Snake coiled himself around the hut, ate the sisters, their children, and all their belongings, then regurgitated and swallowed them again.

Other Giant Snakes at other Dhuwa moiety places in the region stood up high in the sky and asked Carpet Python what he had eaten; he told them about the two women.

Men who had been listening to the women sing, saw what happened. People now follow these events and sing those songs in the regional ceremonies.

Both the Djaŋ'kawu and the Wāgilak stories end with a catastrophe which causes the women to lose the ceremonies and the men to take them over. In one the men steal the sacred objects and the women cannot retrieve them because they may not enter the men's secret ground; in the other the snake swallows them and men take the songs and re-enact the events. Both stories set forth the reasons for male control of the ceremonies.

All the Dhuwa clans in the area have rights to the Nārra ceremony because they all own a place on the Djaŋ'kawu track. Inland clans each own one such country or maybe just a small site in another clan's country.

In the case of the regional ceremonies it is not just those clans whose countries lie on the track of the Wāgilak which have the right to perform the ceremony. The criterion for this is whether or not the
Being and sacred object-type Yuľŋur lies in a clan's country. Many Dhuwa clans all over the area can claim this.

Yuľŋur counts as the 'shadow' (mali) of either King Brown Snake or Carpet Python; some Dhuwa clans have one, some the other. (Yirritja clans also claim to have a giant Water Python lying in their waters.)

Since the ceremonies are not specifically clan ceremonies and since the right to use the ceremonies does not depend upon a position on the Wägilak track, all the Dhuwa clans in the region seem to subscribe to the truth of the story that the Wägilak were eaten by a Giant Snake at Mirarrmiŋa. Each clan has a version which differs in a significant way from others. Marranu clan agrees that the Giant Snake swallowed the Wägilak at Mirarrmiŋa but substitutes its own giant King Brown Snake for Carpet Python (Mirritji 1976:62).

In addition to the Giant Snakes other maŋayin are deemed to lie or stand at the Dhuwa clans' countries. These include Fish-trap, Forked Uprights and Rails, and Cabbage Palm. All these maŋayin correspond to elements in the regional ceremonies. Besides Yuľŋur the two Yarrmalanydji poles in the Gunapipi are 'shadows' of both King Brown Snake and Carpet Python. The ceremonies thus accommodate most of the traditions of the Dhuwa clans in the region.

The range of subscription to the Wägilak story is limited. Djinaŋ-speaking clans on the east bank of the Glyde River associate the regional ceremonies with the Djaŋ'kawu sisters. The Manhdhalpuynu clan southeast of the Arafura swamp may hold that the snake swallowed the Wägilak at their waterhole called Marwuyu (Gröger Wurm 1973:43; Reser 1977:216). The Ranybarrŋa, further south, associate the Gunapipi with the Nagorrku men (Peterson n.d.). People to the east of the Mitchell Ranges associate the regional ceremonies with various local tradition and with local versions of the Wägilak story.

The evidence suggests, then, that each clan on the Wägilak track centres the main events at its own country. In the Woollen River area the Dhuwa clans not on the Wägilak track subscribe to the Liyagalawumirri version. Outside this area different traditions prevail (see Chapter 4 on the ownership of regional ceremonies).

A YIRRITJA CLAN COUNTRY AND ITS MAŊAYIN

A close examination of the maŋayin significance of two countries will reveal in what a clan's country consists, and the way in which stories
link one country and clan to another. I show that each element of ceremony, such as the Forest song-series, is related to one ecologically discrete place. A clan's country is a cluster of such places having no inherent unity. Stories about each element and place link the country to neighbouring clans of the same moiety in a comprehensive network. Such connections may be exploited or denied.

The Daygurrgurr clanspeople seldom visit their country these days and so I have had no opportunity to record the places and stories. I have visited and recorded the stories of Bālmawuy clan country. This clan has several public ceremonies in common with Daygurrgurr clan, which gives the latter a strong affiliation to some of the places of the former clan. Some Daygurrgurr people have a close kinship connection with Bālmawuy clan and country also.

Bālmawuy clan has two countries, Wurralqura on the west bank of the Woollen River estuary and Yathalamarra west of the Glyde River.

Yathalamarra consists of several 'big-name' places. Map 2.3 shows that most of the maḏayin associated with Yathalamarra lake and its environs are related to Djaḻumbu Hollow Log ceremony, including Djaḻumbu itself and Catfish (A) (Letters refer to Map 2.3). Nearby is the small lake Bilimarr (B) where Darter (associated with the Bullroarer dance) appeared in the story, and a little further south is the clearing that Emu made in the forest.

Emu is a maḏayin of the Forest songs and dances. Other maḏayin of the Forest such as Koel, Possum, Sand Monitor and Murayana Ghost are associated with the forest near the lake. The creek south of the lake is where the giant Water Python is believed to lie (E). Water Python is a major waṉarr of the clan, especially associated with Wurralqura — the clan's other country.

The area of swamp, wet-season lakes and paperbark to the north and northeast of Yathalamarra lake, still I believe within the 'big-name' area of Yathalamarra, is where the Long-necked Turtle waṉarr 'lies inside' (G). The area is also the place of the Swamp songs, in which the Two Women who lie beneath the camp-mound by the lake (on which the present camp stands) gather lilybulbs in the song. (See Berndt R.M. 1948:19-20 for a Wangurri clan version of the songs featuring the Moon maḏayin, which is also related to Djaḏuwaitji clan country to the east of Yathalamarra.)
Map 2.3: Balmawuy clan country and its magayin (see Table 2.5).
Table 2.5: Summary of stories about Yathalamarra and neighbouring places.

(Letters refer to Map 2.3)

1. Catfish danced 'rrr, rrr, rrr' pulling Djalumbu Hollow Log along, and made this creek. It was Binđanu Wulanwarri Catfish, a freshwater fish, but the same as Manbiri who joins fresh and saltwater at Milinydji (Lake Evella), where Hollow Log lies in the lake (A).

2. Emu danced at Bilimarr (B). He came from the country of the Daygurrgurr Gupapuyugu clan. They are both Bunugu group.

3. Darter came from Milinydji under the ground, came out at Bilimarr, looked back and said, 'Why has Emu closed up my place?' He went on to Nungurr (C) and said, 'I will make the bullroarer and paint it', and got the bullroarer called Bilparr. He tied the bullroarer with grass (i.e. its string) at Garrrgura.

The Balmawuy Darter had painted his body too, but he could not understand the Gupapuyugu tongue which the other spoke. He made the long lake called Djarrtjarrgu or Gurrapudu.

4. Under the camp (a mound) by Yathalamarra the two Gerrwar Women with the big breasts live. They cooked lilybulbs in ant-bed (D).

5. Mundukulu Python of the Dhámala clan came from Warrkũra (Djaqowitji clan country), crawled and made the creek (E). It is a snake but it means water. He said 'I am Dhawupu' (the clan ḫikan name) and sat on the southeast, which is the Djalkgura side, this side from Dhámala.

6. At Gutitjŋura, Koel (a bird related to the Cuckoo) called in the jungle. He flew up, and another came from the east (Miwatŋuru), from the Wessel Islands, and they met and each said he was Dhawupu (Ḫikan name). Then one went to Bunbuwa, Gamal clan country on Cape Stewart, and to Maŋaritj clan country, and called out 'guwak' (Koel is guwak in Dhuwala language). He was welcomed by his mâri at Bunbuwa who sang for him and said 'call me clansman'. And Bunbuwa Koel usually comes here too, and also from Rrimbitja. He has Wunybul String (possum-fur string), which is used in the circumcision, to say goodbye and to send mâri and gutharra (F).

7. Dilkam Goanna dug (for yellow ochre) near Bilimarr. He came from Rrimbitja.

8. Freshwater Long-necked Turtle with the broken hand lies at Wulgir, at Yathalamarra (G). The male and female danced from Garralŋura where they lie, and they lie here too.

9. Dog travelled at Maŋbirri (I) and Oxye Herring came from Gattji to Djeldjarri nearby.

At Ginimbilimarr, Goose lies, a Gagalbinu clan maḏayin.

There are two small Dhuwa clan places nearby, one associated with King Brown Snake.

10. Maŋbirri danced round the rocks at Ċirrawalirr billabong (J). Two men called Ganaŋal and Gunuŋ made the Hollow Log Djalumbu, and Catfish made the dance. Catfish is at Lake Evella and at Bariŋura too.

11. Balmawuy clan Dog quarrelled at Malwanatjarra with the Mildjini clan Dog. 'Where are you going?' he said; 'I had better go to the seaside' said the Mildjini Dog, and he went there and smelt the whale meat (I). The Balmawuy Dog returned to his country, looking back as he went; he made Rarr'tjalwaŋorri where he defecated and where white clay (K) lies now.

12. At Djaltji-ganirrbimirri (L) Dog hunted for Marsupial Mouse, dug in the ground but could not find him.

13. Possum made Wulingari (M); the country belongs to Balmawuy and Mildjini because they have the same 'mother'.
To the northeast of Balmawuy country lies a cluster of lakes rich in fish, geese, pelicans and other game, and in plants. One of the lakes, Maŋbirri, gives its name to the whole area (I). Two important waŋarr with rangga sacred objects for the Närra ceremony — Dog and Oxeye Herring — belong to this area which is a former ceremonial centre and Närra place. Some parts are Dhuwa ringitj places. Many maḏayin of both moieties lie there still (J).

To the east of Maŋbirri is a lake called Lirrawalirr. I am not sure if this name serves as a 'big-name' or not. Be that as it may, tradition has it that a Rock maḏayin lies in the lake, and Maŋbirri Catfish swims around and around in it. Daygurrgurr men perform the corresponding dance for the Hollow Log ceremony and in circumcisions (see Chapter 5).

At Burrudilpam, the saltflats to the north shared with the Mildjiŋi clan, Balmawuy and Mildjiŋi clan Dog waŋarr quarrelled and agreed to go different ways (K). Dog is a creator Being of the clan (see Thomson 1939) associated with the Närra ceremony.

The above analysis, in conjunction with Map 2.3, shows clearly that each ceremony-element is related to one ecologically discrete place:

- the Hollow Log maḏayin to Yathalamarra lake,
- The Forest maḏayin to the area of forest nearby,
- Long-necked Turtle waŋarr to the swamp,
- Dog and Oxeye Herring maḏayin to the Närra place Maŋbirri, and so on.

The clan's country Yathalamarra consists of a cluster of such places which have no inherent unity, except contiguity and the fact that they are all of the Yirritja moiety. The combination does give the clan the full range of types of Yirritja ceremonies.

The stories people tell at places tend to be more cryptic than the formal narratives told in the camp; they include details which are relevant to the incorporation of the land into the realm of the maḏayin, but irrelevant in the context of a story told away from the country and focusing on the travels and actions of the Beings.

Wululu, a Daygurrgurr clansman whose mother's mother was of that clan and country, showed me the above places and, in the company of other men, told me the stories which have the following forms (shown by strings of connected circles, each denoting a kind of incident):
A Being came from another clan's place
came from another clan's place
went inside the ground, lake etc.
danced, made a ceremony
made a place, e.g. a creek,
met another Being
went to another clan's place
met another Being there.

More than half the above stories create connections with other places and clans.

They also describe how the waŋarr made ceremonies at the clan's country and left traces on the land. Darter in the story made the Bullroarer and String for the Djalumbu Hollow Log ceremony:

Darter came under the ground from Milinydji at Lake Evella, came out at Bilimarr and said, 'I will make the Bullroarer and paint it'. He got a Bullroarer called Biŋparr and tied it with grass (i.e. its string) at Gararrgura.

The Balmawuy clan Darter had painted himself as well and could not understand the language of the first Darter. He made the long lake called Djarrdjarrŋu or Gurrupudu.

Catfish is another dance and design for the same ceremony:

Catfish danced 'rrr,rrr-rrr' pulling Djalumbu Hollow Log along and making the creek. It was Biŋdaŋu Catfish which is the same as Maŋbiri Catfish at Lake Evella, Daygurrngurr country.

Some Beings called the ŋikan name or bundurr of the place and land-owning group. Water Python came from Djamuwitji country and called 'I am Dhawupu', which is the ŋikan name for Yathalamarra. Another went to other countries to the west and said 'Call me clansman'. Dog met Mildjini clan Dog, quarrelled and agreed to part. Balmawuy Dog defecated, and white clay now lies at Rarr'tjalwaŋgurri ('dog-faeces-lie'). The stories are listed in detail in Table 2.5.

All the maŋayin of Yathalamarra and the other nearby places are associated too with places belonging to neighbouring Yirritja moiety clans and some more distant ones with the same songs and ceremonies.

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1Some stories explain the absence of a maŋayin from a set which usually belong together: Dog hunted for Marsupial Mouse but did not find him.
Figure 2.5 summarizes the known connections between the 'big-name' countries of clans in the area. The connections are conceived as journeys or simply as relationships of similarity. The Figure shows that the stories create a very comprehensive network; see for example how Yathalamarra connects with most neighbouring Yirritja places.

Figure 2.6 shows how the above and neighbouring countries cluster into clans, and clans into clans-aggregate.

Yathalamarra and Wurrarlqura are both Bal&mawuy clan countries. People told me that Bal&mawuy clan was Wora bwapuru — having the same ceremonies and elements as Wora clan of Woollen River: Djalumbu, Garayurru, Koel, Wunybul String. The two clans form the Wora clan-aggregate. Mildjiqi clan has two countries, Malwanatharra and Garanydjirrura, and Djaqwutji clan also has two.

Other groups in the area correspond consistently with this analysis.

Figure 2.7 shows the same connections as shown in Figure 2.5, but between clans. Each circle represents one clan. Each clan relates to its neighbours through rather different maqayin but to all of them in some way. When people talk about relations between clans they say that two have the same or different language, songs, tune, maqayin or ceremony. Figure 2.7 shows that Wora and Bal&mawuy have the same Hollow Log ceremony, and Bal&mawuy and Wu&aki the same Swamp songs.

I discuss these relations more fully in Chapter 5. Here I will simply note that Wu&ulu said, as he showed me Yathalamarra, 'This place is really half Gupapuynu (his clan-aggregate). You know Lake Evella (his clan country), well; the two places are friends; both have Djalumbu Hollow Log, Darter and Emu — one tune, one law, and one design'.

Such connections are potentially present in the objective content of the stories. Both Mildjiqi and Ganalbi& clan have Dog maqayin but Mildjiqi clan is dominated by Daygurrurr; (many young men of the latter clan have country of the former as their own 'of the water'). The Ganalbi& leader told me that the two clans' Dog warr are not the same but distinct. Possible connections are realized as the social situation demands (see Chapter 5).

DÄMBUGAWUMIRRI COUNTRY AND MAQAYIN

Dämbugawumirri clan law is more homogeneous than that of the Daygurrurr or Bal&mawuy clans. It centres on Gärriyakuru, the adjacent place on
Figure 2.5: Madayin links between Yathalamarra, Balmawuy clan country, and countries of neighbouring Yirritja moiety clans. The links consist in having the 'same' madayin, usually conceived of as a journey of the waŋarr Being from place to place.
Figure 2.6: Countries, clans and clans-aggregate related to Yathalamarra. The two Wora and Balmawuy constitute the Wora extended clan linked by Wumybul string and Koel, the Hollow Log ceremony and the marradjirri ceremony (see Figure 2.5). The 'ceremony' (bungul) is called Wora, one man said. The languages of each constituent clan is different. Balmawuy language is Djinaŋ, whereas Wora was probably Dhuwalá. Wobulkarra and Wora clans are said to have spoken the same (Wora) language.
Figure 2.7: Links between Balmawuy clan and neighbouring Yirritja moiety clans.
Howard Island called Ganydjalamirri, and the country of the Gunbirridji clan on Elcho Island which the Đąmbugawumirri clan is in the process of taking over. The whole clan appears to belong to Gärriyakqura. The clan has another country to the east, but all the people from that place have died, and it is seldom mentioned. I examine now the relationship of their country to the Djaŋ’kawu story.

Gärriyakqura is centred on a dendritic pattern of mangrove-lined tidal creeks, draining the surrounding saltflats, freshwater plains and upland forest on the mainland adjacent to the western end of Howard Island (Map 2.4). To the west of the dendritic pattern of creeks lies Liyagalawumirri clan country called Guruwana, Djambarrpuyu clan country lies to the east through the forest, and the Daygurrurr clan country to the north and south. The eastern and southern borders of Gärriyakqura are not known to me, but the total area is probably in the region of 5,000 hectares.

The significant maŋayin places are located near the plains and saltflats. Ganydjalamirri is a small area of Howard Island over the narrow strait to the north of Gärriyakqura. Bāriya and Djurrpum, the leaders of the Đąmbugawumirri and Liyadhalinmirri clans respectively, pointed out places at Gärriyakqura as the locations and results of these events in the central episode in the Djaŋ’kawu story (clauses 13-15 in the story above). The following account summarizes and orders the comments of the two men (letters refer to Map 2.4):

A tree called Bathiŋgal'maranaŋala ('hung-up the dilly-bag') by Garrmun lake is the one in which the sisters hung up Guwiŋirri dilly-bag, full of maŋayin objects. (A)

They collected crabs, shellfish and mangrove-worms at the nearby mangroves. On returning to the tree they found the bag gone and heard the men playing the clapsticks and performing the invocation.

They deduced that the men had taken the bag, but could not retrieve it because they could not go to the Inside ground called Djäpuŋ in the nearby forest. (B)

So they said 'Never mind, we will do the work and the men can do the ceremonies'.

Then they went to the lake (C) to collect blackbeetle larvae which live in the rush-corms.

The Djaŋ’kawu speared springwaters in the mangroves with their digging-sticks called Gâŋñinyidji, at Waŋñinydjunaŋura (D) (Plate 2.3), and wells called Galwagalwa (E), Dhâmiyarrka (F) and Maŋburqura (G).

They made the well at Guruwana (H) and said the Liyagalawumirri clan could use it.
Map 2.4: Gärriyakurra, Dāmbugawumirri clan country.
Plate 2.3 A freshwater spring which the Djaŋ'kawu are said to have made with their digging-sticks, in the mangroves at Gärriyakŋura. The water runs underground from the place shown above and comes up again in the saltwater creek.
Ganydjalamirri mudbanks and landing connect Howard Island with Gärriyakýura. There the Djaŋ'kawu or Garrawurra (depending on the version of the story) landed on their return from Elcho Island. It is located approximately at (H) on the map. Here the canoe sank and became a ranga and a rock.

Other significant places and features do not appear in the main story, either because their significance is secret, or because the details are irrelevant in the context of the story. Thus the secret name of the Njarra ground is Djâpul, and it is a secret that Flying Fox made it and said to men 'You may use it' (see Chapter 7). One tree is a 'shadow' of the digging-stick Gâñinyidi and is called Djota, Muļulu and Dhurrtji (J).1

An unusually tall cycad-palm tree on the trail to Ganydjalamirri is also the 'shadow' of Gâñinyidi digging-stick. The sisters placed this one in the ground and carried others with them (K) (Plate 2.4).

The men told me that the two sisters sat at Manburñura; menstrual blood and stones fell from their vaginas into the water. The stones now lie in the water; the same thing happened at Liyadhalimmirri country. The sisters planted three trees nearby, two of them again called Djota and Muļulu (G).

In the Dhapinmarra swamp (location uncertain) the sisters planted a Djota tree and put in the ranga.

Some trees represent the spirits of the dead. The trees near the Njarra ground represent the Buqunjunjung group (see below). Paper-bark trees around Dhämiyarrrka waterhole represent the Mätjarra group (which includes all the clans made by the Djan'kawu) because when people die their spirits return to the water.

One spring and a well at Gärriyakyura are subject to restrictions. Only big-men may visit and drink from a spring which is actually in the saltwater creek in the mangroves at Wāñinydjunaqura. A stream runs from the public spring under the mud to the restricted one. Ground-sculptures and painted designs represent these springs (see Plate 7.1).

The Galwagalwa well is restricted also. The others are unrestricted, because according to Dümbugawumirri traditions, the Djan'kawu said they were to be for washing.

1Djota or Muļulu is *Exoocarpus latifolia*, related to the Native Cherry. The names here are used as proper names and do not refer to the species. See Chapter 7.
Plate 2.4 Būriya and Djurrpum stand beneath a tall cycad-palm at Gārriyakŋura; this is the 'shadow' of the Djan'kawu sisters' digging-stick.
The significance of other places is rather more contingent — the spirit of Bāriya's dead 'son' made a hole in the scum on the water; two clearings were old Nārra grounds used by Bāriya's grandfathers; nearby were the women's camp where they had danced Kingfisher and the Djota tree in which the leader had called the invocation at those Nārras.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have shown that the ownership of the maḏayin and of land is a matter of law, grounded on stories about the actions of supernatural Beings — waŋarr — long ago. These actions resulted in traces in the land and in objects and practices which men follow. Łuku denotes the traces which are the foundation; Ŧikan denotes their connection with men.

Stories account for a clan's ceremonies and elements and for the relations between them. They also relate these to places, so that in owning the land a group also owns the ceremonies belonging to the land.

Stories show the nature of the connections between countries and clans which share a ceremony or element. The journeys of the supernatural Beings explain the fact that several clans can share in this way, because ceremonies are believed to be a result of the actions of those Beings.

Other stories describe the creation of the clans and languages of each country. Since the clan's forebears were created at a particular place, and the waŋarr created the rangga at that place, possession of the rangga is evidence of ownership.

People insist on the truth of their clan stories because the constitution of a clan in its ownership of ceremonies and their elements, and also of land, rests upon them. Changes occur in agreed truths when a change in ownership occurs.

Ţikan names or bundurr and the notions of spiritual conception and secondary paternity, reconcile the contradiction between two facts; that waŋarr created each clan at a particular place, and that clans can take over other clans' countries.

A clan's property consists of a composite bundle of ceremonies and elements, each related to a 'small-name' place. It is thus the sum of
the clan's places and ma'dayin.  

A clan's property has an objective existence. It belongs to what Popper (1972:154) has called the 'world of intelligibles, or of ideas in the objective sense'. The property is objective in relation to human action, transcending the subjective knowledge and experience of any one individual. In so far as individuals hold the key to the interpretation of physical marks which encode objective knowledge, then that knowledge endures in a physical sense.

People over a wide area agree (within limits) about the content of a clan's law; that they have Emu ma'dayin or that they dance Catfish. A large measure of agreement exists about which moiety and clan owns what country.

True, only people familiar with a country know the exact location of many places, and only adult men know the location of the most sacred places; but the fact that such and such a ma'dayin lies at that named place is widely known. Provided that some part of the population which holds the knowledge continues, whatever their clan, much of the knowledge will remain in existence as a body of law relating to a particular country and clan.

It follows that a clan's countries and body of law continues after the members have died out. I call such an entity a memberless clan; it has properties similar to what Stoljar (1973) calls a corporate entity. The body of law and land continues to exist and to be referred to as such and such a clan, and is 'looked after' (djäga) by members of other clans. Its property may continue to be used by clans who have the right to do so, as the Daygurrgurr clan uses Wora clan songs and dances. Change in clan ownership of any country and body of law is necessarily a lengthy process (Warner 1937:17).

The ma'dayin related to any place need not change radically when one clan identity succeeds another; details of the stories which account for the creation of those ma'dayin and the connections they make between countries and clan may change however.

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1Darwin fringe-camp groups are very much more fluid entities than the clan, but the basis of their constitution has similarities to that of clans, being grounded in accepted truths about past events. Sansom writes 'a mob is the sum of its current and unsuperceded determinations' (in press).
It is worth considering whether the nature of the maḏayin may also change. The story about Djuranydjura Dog at Gambuŋŋura is similar to that of the sinking of the Djaŋ'kawu sisters' canoe, yet so far as I know there is no raŋga related to it. It is quite conceivable that at some time there was.

Rapid change occurs in the interpretation of songs and the identity of the Beings in them. Songs about the Macassans are now interpreted as being about the missionaries arriving by boat and bringing rice. It is possible that the Macassan songs and stories themselves are reinterpretations of existing songs and stories.

Changes also occur in the status of a clan's maḏayin. Thomson (unpublished field notes 23.2.1937) records how a Walamaŋŋu man 'found' the raŋga made by Rock waŋarr, but other owners of Rock questioned the legitimacy of this claim. People now assert that other owners gave that maḏayin to the clan which did not have it before.

There is no reason to suppose that one set of countries need remain united as one clan's property, nor that borders need not change nor 'big-name' countries divide. The analysis of countries showed that one country consists of a cluster of small sites each associated with a ceremony-element. The ceremonies themselves are compounds of elements put together in many different ways. As clans grow, split, and segments of clans migrate, the clusters of places that make up countries, and of countries that make up a clan's land, split and re-form.

A clan's law is the sum of maḏayin at its countries, but there is no reason to suppose that a clan may not 'find' its maḏayin at a new place. The isolated Shark place up the Glyde River many kilometres west of other Shark places strongly suggests such a process.

Members of one clan may establish themselves at a place where their own maḏayin resides. In this way the Daygurrgurr settled on the mainland opposite Milingimbi near the Maŋbiri Catfish place of Liŋrawalirr (see Webb 1933:411), on Bajmawuy country. As I will show in Chapter 3, members of the fast-growing Daygurrgurr clan have now attached themselves to the Yirritja country of this area.

The movement of clans has much to do with their growth, fission and decline. To understand these processes it is essential to analyse the Yolŋu systems of kinship and marriage.
CHAPTER 3

KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Big clan, big trouble.

Bāriya
INTRODUCTION

Part of the argument proposed in Chapter 1 was that the system of clans and moieties makes it possible for the Yolngu to act according to complicated rules of promised marriage. Through this institution most old men have more wives than most young men; some old men accumulate as many as ten. One reason for doing so is to beget a large group of sons and daughters, to gain the support and gifts of potential and actual sons-in-law (see Warner 1937:78), and the support of sons.

In this chapter I show how people marry, and how marriage affects clan growth and inter-relations. Finally I examine the argument that the form of religious organisation is a condition for the constitution and operation of the marriage system.

Since I present new data on Yolngu kinship and marriage in this chapter, the opportunity should not be missed to clarify some of the issues raised in discussions of the 'Murngin problem'. I discuss the relevance of my own data and analysis in Appendix 2.

MARRIAGE AND AGE

In a population with a balanced sex ratio, polygynous marriage entails a tendency for wives to be younger than their husbands (Rose 1968:205; Peterson 1971:174). Where older men marry polygynously younger men must marry late.

Many societies control the allocation of wives by stipulating the accumulation of goods (such as cattle) as a prerequisite for marriage. The Yolngu, like other Aborigines, have no such goods to accumulate. Instead they control access to wives by specifying the category of kin which a man may marry, and by delaying the event through the bestowal of female infants on young men in the institution of promised marriage. Later chapters show how older men delay the young men; here I describe the system of marriage.

Men may marry as early as twenty-five, but the majority do not obtain their first wives until after the age of thirty (cf. Warner
Girls used to go to their husband before the onset of menses (Warner 1937:76), now it is usually later. The average number of wives of each age-cohort of men gradually increases (Table 3.1).  

As Table 3.2 indicates, a number of men have wives older than themselves; these represent cases of widow inheritance. A number of men begin their married life in this way, some get no other wives. The Table shows two peaks: nearly 20 per cent of the men have wives between eleven and fifteen years younger than themselves; a significant proportion of older men have wives between thirty-one and fifty years younger than themselves.  

Data on the extent to which wives live with their husbands are not quantifiable. Three examples illustrate the degree of variation: one man in his fifties has ten wives, all of whom live in his camp, and he often takes eight with him hunting or visiting. Another man in his early sixties, notably mild-mannered, has one wife who is devoted to him and two inherited wives who do nothing for him. One mature man's wives have all left him. The majority of men with several wives live with at least two and have one favourite, usually a younger woman. Other men have discreet liaisons with the other men's wives. The men do not, I believe, try to maintain a firm hold over all their wives. It is more important to beget a large group of sons and daughters, to have in one's household both knowledgeable and comely women, and to have at least one strong wife to look after one's old age.

The Yolŋu refer to the woman of a man as 'wife' in English; in their tongue as 'the woman whom he has and holds' (ŋgayathama vb.). The fact that a woman cooks for the man and feeds him and his children is the sign of a union. Parties to an illegitimate relationship are unable to settle and establish a hearth in their own communities. When a de jure union is no longer current the woman leaves the man's camp and 'sits apart' to live with a female relative or in the single women's camp.

The norms governing marriage stipulate that a man must marry a woman of the opposite moiety who is his galay ('MBD', 'MMBDD'). Liaisons between people of the same moiety are unthinkable, except possibly in the context of the Gunapipi ceremony. Men are not required to marry

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1 Warner (1937:77) states that the average number of wives for 'middle-aged' men was three and a half, and one man had seventeen. Since he provides no statistical data it is not possible to evaluate his generalisation.
a genealogical MBD, and since the category galay includes a large number of people of several degrees of kinship, the rules are flexible enough to be practicable.

The society holds its members to the rules.

Table 3.1: The relation between the ages of men and the number of wives they have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-cohort of men</th>
<th>Number of wives</th>
<th>Totals M</th>
<th>Totals F</th>
<th>Av. no. of wives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 60</td>
<td>1 2 1 1 1 1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>2 4 7 1 1 2 1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>1 13 7 2 3 1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>7 15 6 2 3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>38 9 1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marriage with a 'ZCh' is strongly discouraged. Some men manage to set up a household with their 'FZD' (dhuway) but their success depends on their clan and personal prestige. It is easier for a young man to marry someone who is not promised to him if she is his galay.

Brothers and mothers' brothers punish women who run off with men to whom they are not promised, and sanctions including force are brought to bear on young men.

Members of smaller and weaker clans are least able to apply sanctions to enforce their bestowals. I have recorded a number of cases in which members of stronger clans successfully abscond with women promised to members of weaker clans.

In the next section I describe the categories, prescriptions and actions which go together to make the systems of kinship and marriage, and to develop a model of the system. In later sections of the chapter I show how the model is consistent with patterns of marriage between groups.
Table 3.2: The relative ages of men and their wives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age difference in years</th>
<th>Number of cases in the sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 98

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF KINSHIP

I translate the word gurrutu as 'kinship'. A person's relations are his gurrutumirri mala — 'kinship-possessing group'.

Siblings hold an equivalent position in the kinship network: a woman refers to her child as waku and so does her brother. Conversely, a person refers to and addresses both his mother's mother and her brother as märi. I represent such a position as $\delta\Delta$ in the figures. Several terms are marked for gender, but where this does occur the reciprocal is not marked: both male EGO's qändi (M) and qapipi ('MB') call him and his sisters waku ('ZCh'). I have heard a man address another man as qändi 'mother'.

I do not here distinguish categories of reference and of address, but discuss the system only with reference categories, some of which may be used for address also. Categories in a separate set denote indirect relationship, such as 'your sister's child' or 'your father'.
Subsection names are used for several purposes: for teaching the rudiments of kinship to the young; as terms of address especially among young men; as a means of determining relationships between people whose kinship relationship is unknown or non-existent as in the case of Europeans. Subsections do not determine marriage, although a wrong marriage may be justified in terms of subsection relationship. Nor is the subsection system an 'extension' of the kinship system as Warner believed (1937:117). Indeed the two systems are barely compatible (see below).

The 'totems' which Webb (1933:407) ascribed to subsections have importance only in the context of the regional ceremonies. Polygynous and serial marriages produce varieties of kinship relations which the Yolngu delineate with phrases 'the same (or different) mother' and 'the same (or different) father'. (See also Warner 1937:60, 67). Figure 3.1 illustrates these distinctions:

![Figure 3.1](image)

Man B in Figure 3.1 married A and C. When B died C married D. E, F, G and H are all siblings. E and F are siblings with the same father and mother; F and G are siblings having the same father but a different mother; G and H are siblings having the same mother but a different father. The descendants of E, F, G and H can mark these facts in their relationships one with another, such as having the same mother's mother, but different mother's fathers.

People trace a core of matrilineal relations. One way in which people deduce their relationship to other people is by deriving the category matrilineally from this core of relations. As Figure 3.2 shows, such a rule yields a wide spread of 'classificatory' kin.

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1This may be one reason why European investigators have placed so much emphasis on the subsection system: it is the first thing they are told about.

2Kinship glosses without inverted commas denote genealogical kin; kinship glosses with inverted commas denote classificatory kin.
Figure 3.2

Figure 3.3: Three matrilineal sequences of kin relative to EGO.

glosses:

1  
mumu  
ŋathi  
mukul bëpa  
dhuway  
gurrug  
dhumungur  
mukul rumaru

2  
mari  
ŋandi  
waku  
gutharræ  
ŋandi  
mukul rumaru

3  
mumalkur  
mukul rumaru  
galay  
gathu  
gaminyarr  
mukul bëpa  
mukul rumaru  
ŋandi  
mukul bëpa

all 'MM'/MMB'  
all 'MM'/MMB'  
all 'M'/MMB'  
all 'B', 'Z'
Figure 3.4: Djäwa's representation of the three matrilineal sequences.

Figure 3.5: Ideal marriage relations between categories relative to EGO.
A person may specify his biological mother and mother's mother by referring to them as 'my very own'.

People at Milingimbi explained kinship in terms of three matrilineal sequences (yarrata) of categories. Warren Shapiro (1969:52) found a similar form of explanation at Elcho Island. The sentences they use to do so have the form 'mukul bëpa bears dhuway'. Figure 3.3 shows the three matrilineal sequences.

Sequence 1 'comes back to the front' or 'returns', feeding into sequence 3 since the children of both female dhumungur and mumalkur are mukul rumaru ('WM') and maralkur ('WMB'). One man drew the three sequences as a line of circles connected by parallel lines, in a classical Aboriginal 'site-path' configuration (Figure 3.4).

Some informants classified certain categories together. Dhumungur ('ZDDH') and gaathiwalkur ('WMMB') are both 'kinds of waku' (the latter comes from the 'waku' ('WMM') clan and country and can be called waku). People often address garninyarr ('ZSCh', 'DCh') as waku-garninyarr. These classes are the same as the term EGO uses for the country and clan of those kin, as I will show later.

Other statements define ideal relations between the categories relative to EGO — such as 'from gaathi and mëri, come ṇāndi and ɲapipi'. The second pair of categories are, ideally, the offspring of the former (Figure 3.5).

These matrilineal sequences contain the categories of kin which are parties to a man's and a woman's promised marriage.

PROMISED MARRIAGE

A man should marry a woman he calls galay; he is her dhuway. A marriage between people of any other relation is 'not straight', although men sometimes marry a distant ṇāndi ('M') or a 'little mother' ('MMBSDD') legitimately.

---

1 Radcliffe-Brown saw that the three matrilineal sequences formed the core of the terminology (1951:48). Shapiro represents them as two.

2 In the event of a wrong marriage members of the new nuclear family adjust the kinship terms; the husband calls his wife 'galay', his children call her 'ɲāndi'. The spouses' siblings continue to use the terms they used before. Warner (1937:26) found that people inside the clan adjusted terms. I did not find this.
The community firmly discourages matches between a man and his 'ZCh' or 'ZSD'. People say that marriage is sometimes allowed between a man and 'ZDDW' these days. I know of at least two cases of a man living with his dhuway ('ZH2'), but whereas the community has come to tolerate the arrangement people deny that they are marriages.

Men can acquire wives legitimately in several ways. Promising (wöwunguma, wöwun-ührirrpan, 'to promise a wife') is the arrangement whereby one set of people agree to give a woman (who may not yet be born) to a man some time in the future. Formerly the parties to the contract participated in a munyuk ceremony in which the prospective husband wiped sweat from the nose on the belly of his prospective mother-in-law. I heard that one man painted his clan design on the belly of his prospective mother-in-law at a Närra ceremony.

Accounts from Yolnu people of the promise system vary in complexity. The simplest is that a man's nähip ("MB/WF") and mukul rumaru ("WM/MMBD") give him their daughter. A slightly more complex one is that 'WMMB' and 'WMM', 'WM', 'WF/MB' and 'WMB' all 'work' and give 'W' to a man. Male mài ("MMB") begets a daughter called mukul ("WM'/"MMBD") who gives her daughter as a wife (Figure 3.6).

![Diagram of Parties to wife bestowal]

Figure 3.6: Parties to wife bestowal.

To make the practice of bestowal clearer, the system can be represented as three extended families — setting aside for the time being the exact genealogical relationship between the prospective husband and the bestowers. Warner (1937:55) refers to EGO's elementary families of orientation and procreation in a similar analysis.
Each extended family in Figure 3.7 includes a man, his wife and her brother; brothers-in-law frequently live nearby and cooperate in economic ventures, including the bestowal of the daughter. The men are 'friends' (\text{undu'manydji}). The husband, wife and wife's brother in family 1 have already given a daughter to the man in family 2. EGO, the potential husband in family 3, should be 'ZCh' (waku) to the husband of family 2 and must be 'FZDCh/HZCh' (gurruq) to the wife in family 2.

Families 1 and 2 jointly bestow the infant or unborn daughter of family 2 on the prospective husband EGO. If all goes well, families 2 or 3 will later bestow daughters of family 3 on another man, and so on.

The three matrilineal sequences contain the categories of kin who bestow wives on male EGO and who bestow female EGO, and in whose marriages both are agents.

Figure 3.7 The relationship between the core kinship terms and the parties to wife-bestowal involving a male EGO.
Families 1 and 2 bestow galay on a male EGO to form his own family 3. He is instrumental in bestowing his ZD (waku) from family 8 and his ZDD (gutharra) from family 9.

He is also involved in bestowing his D and his DD. From a female EGO's point of view (Figure 3.8), families 6 and 7 bestow her on her dhuway, making family 8. Her brother, if adult, will also be involved in her bestowal. He is an agent in bestowing her ZCh (waku) on gurrung to make family 9, and her DD (gutharra) to make family 10.

Figure 3.8: The relationship between the core kinship terms and the parties to wife-bestowal involving a female EGO.
With the exception of the above analysis I have followed closely the way in which the Yolŋu explained the system of marriage to me; always in terms of the categories of kin without specifying precise genealogical relationships.

No prescriptions rank marriage with MBD over MMBDD or vice versa. Few men marry a MMBDD; more marry some variety of MBD. As a rule men marry a woman of their mother's clan who is their galay, and/or the daughter of a mukul rumaru of their mother's mother's clan or a classificatory mother's mother's clan. The preferred marriage is one which 'follows the ranga' (see below).

Only case studies following the course of several bestowals would shed clear light on which categories of kin are most actively involved. People's depictions of the process of bestowal suggest that 'WF/MB', 'WM', 'WMB', 'MB/WMF', 'MM', 'MMD' and 'MMMMD' - the wife's matrilineal kin - may all take part in negotiations.

To represent Yolŋu marriage as wife bestowal or mother-in-law bestowal, or sister's daughter's daughter exchange is to oversimplify the case. All such actions are possible.

Each individual refers to clans, countries and madayin other than his own with the kinship term of a matrilineally related member. He calls the country, clan and madayin of his mother's clan 'mother' and so on. People 'follow the ranga' by marrying a woman of a 'mother' clan, who is the daughter of a woman of a 'mother's mother' clan. One man put it this way:

We get different groups and kinship by following the ranga - märi ('MM') people, place and madayin; ngängi people, place and madayin.

Märi married nathi and made ngängi and napipi. Napipi married mukul and made galay.

(See also Berndt R.M. 1962:75).

The next step in this exposition then must be to show how people map kinship categories onto countries, clans and the madayin. Putting it in this way inverts Yolŋu reasoning; they say that current relations follow from the relations between the ranga and of individuals to the ranga; thereby to the country and clan.

**KIN, CLAN AND COUNTRY**

As I showed in Chapters 1 and 2, Yolŋu clans and land-owning groups are patrilineal and exogamous. Patrilineal relations are never traced
beyond the clan; kinship relations between clans are necessarily traced through women.

As we saw, individuals extend a kin category in any of the three matrilineal sequences to the clan, country and ma'dayin of that category of relative. Most frequently employed are categories in EGO's own matrilineal sequence, but I have heard others employed as follows (terms in EGO's matriline are underlined):

\[ \text{gàthu ('FMM/MMM')} \quad \text{waku ('MMM/MMMB')} \]
\[ \text{màri ('MM/MMMB')} \]
\[ \text{màri ('MM/MMMB')} \]
\[ \text{dhuway ('FZ')} \quad \text{yàpu ('M')} \]
\[ \text{gàthu ('FZ')} \quad \text{waku ('M')} \]
\[ \text{gàharrà ('ZDH/ZDHZ')} \]
\[ \text{guhàppu ('ZDH/ZDHZ')} \]
\[ \text{bàppu ('ZDH/ZDHZ')} \]

A set of terms derived from kinship categories denote a person's relationship with other clans, countries and ma'dayin:

- gulukulu: EGO's own clan, country and ma'dayin
- yindipulu: M's...
- màripulu: MM's...
- wakupulu: MMM's...
- barrkimiri: ZH's, ZCh's...
- gutharrapulu: ZDH's...

Men conceive of countries as the source of wives or as the source of a group. One man explained that

Gàttji (country) is my waku ('MMM'). Yathalamarra (country) is my màri ('MM'). All my elder and younger brothers, àppi ('MB') and màri ('MM/MMMB') are from Gàttji.

In this statement he maps his matriline onto the countries of the clans in it.

Another man explained that two places are both his màri ('MM/MMMB') countries: 'I marry from both places' he said, meaning that his mothers-in-law were from clans of those countries.

Predications of kinship relations between clans, countries and places follow from the relationships of their members: one man explained that

Djamharrpyuyû (clan), its ceremonies and ma'dayin are Gupapuyû (clan-aggregate) waku.
Figure 3.9 The three matrilineal sequences mapped on to countries and patrilineal columns.
Djambarrpuyu call Gupapuyu 'gängí, and Marraŋu clan märi. Marráŋu call Djambarrpuyu gutharra.

These inter-group relations which appear to follow repeated marriages between the same clans, are as follows:

- waku: gängí
- märi: gutharra
- gängí: waku
- dhuway' manydji
- yapa' manydji
- wäwa' manydji

In Figure 3.9 each column is a patrilineal sequence of terms standing in a clan's country. The category in capitals denotes the relation of the group, country and maḏayin to EGO. The diagonal line traces his or her matrilineal kinship categories from column to column. Alternate columns are of the same moiety; adjacent columns are of opposite moieties. The categories at the base of each column also show its relation to EGO's clan. The model assumes that EGO's kin-relations follow the inter-group relations, thus categories of clan and country will coincide.

Gutharra ('ZDCh') is a distinct category from märi ('MM'). No two clans are classified as märi to each other. It does occur however that some or most marriages run counter to the categorization, so that members of a clan which is categorically 'MM' to another, are as individuals 'ZDH/ZDI1Z' and 'ZDD' to its members.

This fact may account for Shapiro's belief that clans are in a reciprocal märi relationship. On this belief, which does not conform to my own findings in the area, rests his ascription of un-named semi-moieties (1969:143).

The Yolŋu distinguish at least five distinct categories of clan relative to and including the clan of reference. Waku category, which is repeated, means both 'ZCh' and 'MMM/MMMB'.

THE EXCHANGE OF SISTERS' DAUGHTERS' DAUGHTERS

The above model showing the relationship between the core of the kinship terminology and country/clan prepared the way for a description of a more complex marriage arrangement: the exchange of sister's daughter's daughters first described by Shapiro (1968).

1For convenience, from now on I will use the word märi in preference to 'mother's mother' or 'MM/MMB', since the märi relationship will be referred to frequently.
Two men explained, independently, that male EGO and his nathiwalkur ('WMMB') exchange ZZDs. Nathiwalkur and dhumungur are wife-giver (milmarra) one to another. The former has already bestowed his ZDD (gutharra) on EGO, and asks EGO for his ZDD in return (Figure 3.10).

![Figure 3.10](image)

From nathiwalkur's point of view it looks like this: Figure 3.11

![Figure 3.11](image)

Now it makes sense that matrilineal sequence 1 should 'come back' to matrilineal sequence 3 in that dhumungur's daughter as well as mumalkur's is called mukul rumaru. She is a potential mother-in-law, thus making

---

1 Gutharra gurrupanmirri, ZDD exchange.
this exchange theoretically possible.

Another man described the system in this way:

Dhumungur bears mukul; mumalkur bears mukul.
Gurruŋ bears mumalkur who bears mukul who bears galay.
The promise comes from gurruŋ who tells my mukul and maralkur
to give me their waku.

This specification directly returns matrilineal sequence 1 onto 3
a generation further back, and equates dhumungur with mumalkur and
gathiwalkur.

---

Figure 3.12 ZDD exchange between male EGO and dhumungur.

Dhumungur has married EGO's ZDD (gutharra). He bestows his ZDD, EGO's
galay, on to EGO.
Female dhumungur and mumalkur are both WMM to EGO.
(The figure assumes both EGO's WMs to be in the same clan. This need
not be so.)
Figure 3.12 shows these arrangements on a three dimensional schema. Column L3 is in a structurally equivalent position to column R3. The daughter of dhumungur is mukul rumaru, the child of the lower male märl in column R2. The dotted lines represent 'ZDD' exchange between EGO and dhumungur (EGO-nathilwalkur exchange is omitted). It is clear that to close the system of marriage requires six distinct columns (patrilineal sequences). I show later how these patrilineal sequences relate to lineages, land-owning groups and clans. First there is more to say about the acquisition of wives.

FURTHER ASPECTS OF MARRIAGE — THE CRUCIAL RELATION OF MÄRL:GUTHARRA

Men do not obtain wives only through bestowals. Leviratic marriage is common, as one would expect where old men marry young women. A man's first wife is commonly a widow. The norm is for junior brothers within the clan or outside it to share the widows of a dead man.

For many women marriage is serial, either because they go to a new husband as each dies, or less frequently because they are not disposed to stay with one man for long.

Young men frequently run off with women not promised to them and sometimes who are in a wrong relationship for marriage. The Yolŋu call such a practice 'stealing' or 'cadging' (djaw'yun). Such young couples run off into the bush or to another community where they wait to see if there is any chance of the match being accepted in their own community. Their union is most likely to be accepted if it is 'straight'. Young men are obtaining wives of distant tribes in increasing numbers from towns such as Katherine and Darwin.

A prospective son-in-law owes gifts and payments to the prospective wife's matrilineal kin from the time the contract is made. After taking the woman she is 'his woman' whom he 'holds'. Then he continues to make payments to the wife's kin, except 'WF/MB' to whom he should make gifts on demand. Bäriya remarked that this continuing obligation 'kills you'. In return he can claim hospitality and support; sons-in-law often live in their wife's father's camp. The husband should also accede to the requests of his wife's brothers. Through such obligations a man gains security, support and influence through the marriage of his daughters and sisters.

Such obligations may also lead to conflict. It is not uncommon for a girl to be promised to more than one man, so that a man may find that
after years of investment in gifts to potential in-laws he has no new wife to show for it.

Two relationships are particularly important in marriage: a man's relation to his mother's brothers (his potential wife's fathers) and to his mothers' mothers' brothers (the fathers of his potential mothers-in-law). Galay is by definition 'MBD' and 'MMBD'. Mukul rumaru is 'MMBD' (or 'ZDDDDDD'). As one man explained:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Male Category</th>
<th>Female Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ńathl begets ŋapipi</td>
<td>MF begets MB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>märi begets mukul</td>
<td>MMB begets WM'/MMBD'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>märi gives to ŋapipi</td>
<td>MMB gives to MB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋapipi begets galay</td>
<td>MB begets W'/MMBDD'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mukul gives to me</td>
<td>WM gives to EGO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A man has potential wives through these two relations which link him to these women's matriline.

Both are important in the ownership and organisation of ceremonies and religious knowledge, for men have the right to know and the duty to look after the maḏayin and country of their mother's clans, and the right to know their märi clan's maḏayin. Men make ceremonial objects for their mother's clan, and exchange ceremonial objects with their märi.

In Warner's (1937:100,113) view märi is gutharra's ally in marriage since märi can put pressure on his daughter and on his sister's son (his daughter's husband) to give gutharra a wife. Because a man is beholden to his ŋapipi, and märi is gutharra's ŋapipi's ŋapipi, märi can use his strong position to help gutharra.

The average age-difference between men and their wives means that few adult men have a living MMB, yet mature men continue their attempts to arrange to marry young women with the help of a märi. They are able to do so not only because of the wide variation in age within any large group of siblings, but also because people call their MMBSS, as well as MMB, märi.

THE COMPLETE TERMINOLOGY, AND SUBSECTIONS

So far in this chapter I have discussed matrilineally-related categories of kin, and have only implied the patrilineal relations within them. The people who explained kinship to me defined other categories. Some of these were core categories repeated patrilineally: maralkur's son is märi, male galay's children are ǧiŋdi and ŋapipi and so on.

The complete terminology (Figure 3.13) has features which invite comment. Different informants gave conflicting opinions about the
categories in some positions at the periphery of the schema (starred in Figure 3.13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>additional glosses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gathu 'FFF/FZZ'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mari'mu 'FF/FZZ'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bapa 'F'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wikuva EB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yapa Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yakuwata YB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marratja Sch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mukul bapa SSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bapa SSS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R1</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>R3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>gathu</td>
<td>wiku</td>
<td>gathu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gathu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>gathu</td>
<td>wiku</td>
<td>gathu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gathu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>gathu</td>
<td>wiku</td>
<td>gathu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gathu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>gathu</td>
<td>wiku</td>
<td>gathu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gathu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

derived from F term above

Figure 3.13 The complete kinship terminology.

*Starred terms are alternatives or represent incompatible information.
With a few exceptions the categories at either end of the patrilineal sequences do not display the discriminations made in the core of the terminology. They discriminate only EGO's own moiety from that of his mother and sister's child, and between adjacent generations (i.e. rather as a Kariera terminology does; see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gēthu</th>
<th>waku</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'FFFZ' 'FFF'</td>
<td>'ZCH'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'MMFZ' 'MMF'</td>
<td>'MMM' 'MMMB'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'ZDFFZ' 'ZDFF'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'ZDDFZ' 'ZDDF'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mukul-būpa, būpa</th>
<th>nāndī, nāpīpi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'FZ' 'F'</td>
<td>'F'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'SSD' 'SSS'</td>
<td>'MB'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'DSD' 'DDD'</td>
<td>'WBS'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'ZDDS'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The exceptions — gurrup in patrilineal sequence L2, dhumungur in sequence L3 — are both important categories in wife-bestowal, as we have seen. The form of the terminology is therefore directly related to the business of promised marriage. A person is likely to use the peripheral categories for people long dead, or who are unlikely to be adults during his or her lifetime. It is therefore unnecessary to make discriminations other than those basic to the social system.

It is fitting that the general and peripheral categories invert the generations of the nuclear family, for the spirits of children are thought to come from the waters where the spirits of the dead reside; child and great-grandparent become categorically identified.

The repetition of dhumungur to denote 'ZDDHFF' and 'ZDDHFFZ' (a man's father's father's dhumungur), māri as 'MMBSS', and nāpīpi as 'WBS'/ 'MBSS' enables men to marry women of more than one generation. Djāwa's first wife is the 'FFZ' of a younger wife of the same clan. It also means that a man can in theory exchange with a dhumungur or nāthiwalkur of his own generation. If the circle of marriage closes, a man's nāthiwalkur and dhumungur could be the same person or brothers. People agreed that this could occur.

The skewing of the terminological schema is related no doubt to the tendency for men to be older than their wives. Figure 3.14 shows the complete terminology on the three dimensional schema. Warner (1937:59) appears to have extrapolated the patrilineal sequences to square off the diagram. This error led to subsequent commentators speculating upon
Figure 3.14: The complete terminology on a three-dimensional schema.
the existence of an eighth patriline to close the circle between 1 and 7 (Lawrence and Murdock 1949:58, 64). It is clear now that patrilineal sequence L3 and R3 may be joined together.

With the complete terminology established, I now look at its relationship to the subsection system (Figure 3.15). People derive their subsection from their mother, thus the children of women whose subsection is Wämut/Wämutjan are Ñarritj/Ñarritjan.

Barnes (1967:13) notes that Warner (1937:119, 120) presented the subsection system in two ways; once with alternative marriages between pairs of subsections, once with prescribed marriages. Webb (1933:407) presented the system as one of alternative but preferential marriage. Webb's version conforms with Yolnu ideology. People say that Ñarritj should marry Bilinydjjan, but for all that Ñarritj may also marry Galiyan. In practice, some men marry women of three or possibly four subsections.

The alternative subsection-marriage renders the system logically compatible with the kinship system as Figure 3.16 indicates. Male EGO's 'MBD' is B2; and 'MBSSD', also a potential wife, is B1. These 'W's belong to the two alternative subsections for A1. If A1 marries both B1 and B2, his sons may expect to have potential wives of both Cl and C2 subsections. Warner was therefore apparently correct in treating the system as one of four sections.

A man's marriage with his 'little mother' (MBSD) destroys any regular articulation between kinship and subsection systems.

ONE MAN'S KIN

So far in this chapter I have offered only a model, some norms and generalisations. I will however proffer evidence to support the validity of the model, and to show how the patrilineal sequences relate to lineages, land-owning groups and clans.

I asked a man called Maraguy to tell me in which clans he found the various categories of his kin. He named his own or his wife's matrilineal kin, then named the patrilineal descendants of those people: X and Y (men) are his ĕapi ('MB'). Their children are his galay ('W'/'WB'). Ba. is his waku ('ZS'), and Ba's children are the speaker's gaminyarr ('ZSCh'). Male gaminyarr's yet-to-be-born children will be his ĕapi ('MB' etc.) and ĕandi ('M' etc.). The speaker traced no more than one generation of living patrilineal descendants from each matrilineal relative.
Figure 3.15: The subsection system.

Figure 3.16: Subsection categories and kinship terms. The preferred subsection marriages are shown.
In his exposition Marangguy classified with a kinship category some of the clans in which he finds close kin:

- Liyagalawumirri is his 'true, full waku' ('MMM') clan;
- Daygurrurr is his märi ('MM') clan;
- Djambarrpuynu is his qändi ('M') clan.

Figure 3.17 shows these categories, and the kin he mentioned in his statement, mapped onto a plan of the three-dimensional schema.

Each patrilineal sequence (of two or three categories) pertains to a different clan. Marangguy's dhumungur and qathiwalkur are not in the same clan, indeed they are members of clans whose countries are widely separated.

The wives and wives' brothers of his 'MMM' clan Liyagalawumirri are of a clan which he referred to as his 'full märi' but which is not his MM's clan. He referred to members of another clan as 'half märi' and to another as 'half qathiwalkur'. These classifications appear to follow from the one clan's 'mother' status to Liyagalawumirri, the other clan's 'mother' status to Daygurrurr (Figure 3.17).

From Marangguy's exposition it seems clear that 'full' (dhaqaq) kin are a person's matrilineal kin and their patrilineal descendants, and probably a person's own patrilineal kin.¹

To classify people outside the range of direct and 'half' relationships, Marangguy invoked two rules: first that he must refer to someone by a term because he called that person's father by another term; secondly, by deriving a kinship category from a subsection category. He addresses Ba. as gäthu ('S') because Ba.'s father was his (Marangguy's) wäwa ('EB'); Ganalbiŋu clansmen are his märi, because their subsection is his märi.

At this point Marangguy's kin network appears to be open-ended, with WMMM in a Glyde River clan, and ZDDH in an Arnhem Bay clan. The marriage of one of his märi, his MMBSS, closed the circle, for this man married Marangguy's dhumungur ('ZDDHZ') instead of Marangguy's mumalkur ('WMMM'); placing Nyamil clan (from the point of view of this marriage) in a structurally equivalent position to Liyagalawumirri clan. Marangguy said that this marriage was wrong.

¹Kinship distance is expressed also by the terms 'distant' (barrku) and 'rather distant' (mär-r-barrku); it is a relative matter. According to Shapiro (1969:51), full dhuway, waku, gaminyarr, gurruŋ and gutharra are those descended from EGO's own land-owning group ('sib').
Figure 3.17: Maranguy's close kin. Full kin are underlined. L3 etc. refer to patrilineal sequences.
His is one of several cases of 'marrying in a circle' which I have found in my genealogical data. All occur between clans whose countries are at Buckingham and Arnhem Bays, and whose members live at Milingimbi.

The kinship networks of the clans to the west of the Buckingham Bay plains and saltflats are open-ended. Marriages link coastal clans and clans of the hinterland from west to east. In the Gove area marriages frequently cycle between six or more clans (Morphy II, 1977a:58), probably because of their peninsular location. I have already shown that the form of the kinship terminology can accommodate cycles between lineages.  

As Figure 3.17 indicates, Maraguy refers to some members of Dambugawumirri clan as waku ('ZCh') and dhuway ('III/ZII'), and others as galay ('W'/ 'WB') and ṣeřiwi ('MB/WF'). As I showed in Chapter 1, the clan consists of several lineages. The L lineage members and the lower generations of the B lineage are Maraguy's 'MB' and 'W'; but his 'ZCh' and 'ZDCh' are all members of the G lineage. These variations reflect the difference between these lineages' marriage relations with other clans. The B lineage consists of husbands and sisters' children of the Daygurrgurr clan, mothers and wives of the Birrkili clan. The G lineage are husbands and sisters' children of the Birrkili clan; another consists of mothers and wives of the Daygurrgurr — Maraguy's 'half' waku, mumalkur, and ọathiwalkur.

These facts make it clear that although each patrilineal sequence is to be found in a different clan in Maraguy's network of close kin, several sequences of categories denoting more distant kin are found in the same clan. Lineages of a large clan like Dambugawumirri may marry in different ways. A complex state of affairs appears to exist, then, which the model cannot cannot for. To clarify matters it is necessary to examine the marriage relations between clans.

MARRIAGE AND THE CLAN

The problem of the marriage relations between clans and land-owning groups has two sides: the question of how kinship categories relate to the internal structure of clans, and the pattern of marriages between them. The two sides are inter-related because kinship categories mediate

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1Webb's informants affirmed that cycles of marriage could occur (Lawrence and Murdock 1949:64).
marriage. I present data on inter-clan marriages below but first some preliminary remarks are necessary.

I suggested that the crucial sub-division of the lineage is the group of full brothers by the same mother and their offspring. The sublineages formed by the descendants of different women are divided in a homologous way.

Figure 3.18 shows two sublineages springing from a man's two wives. If the two wives are of different clans and have different mothers' clans, the offspring of each will have different 'mother' and märi clans. According to the norms each group of full brothers should marry rather differently, marrying either women of their mothers' clans, or daughters of women of their märi clans (who may be in clans other than their own mothers').

In the data on clan intermarriage it appears that the lineage springing from a man will tend to marry into the same clans in so far as a man and his sons marry from their märi and mother clans. When a man marries into different clans, the men of each uterine sublineage springing from his marriages tend to marry into different clans.

This is so because the sons by each wife will tend to marry into their mother's clan and/or from mothers-in-law of their 'märi' clan (Figure 3.18).
Where all the marriages in a lineage are regular from EGO's point of view, EGO calls all the members of the lineage by terms consistent with a patrilineal sequence. But if the marriages are not straight from EGO's point of view, then he may use different categories for each set of full siblings with the same father and different mothers, and he may use terms for a man's sons' sons which are not 'SS' terms in relation to the father's category. In short, the long patrilineal sequences of categories need not fit patrilineal lineages. The practice of tracing kinship through women bypasses such anomalies (see Warner 1937:26).

It is not surprising then that Maranguy moved only one generation patrilineally from each matrilineal kinsman when describing his network of relations. The patrilineal sequences on his network did however separate according to lineage.

The men of one clan do not usually marry women of only one other clan but of several, and the women of most clans marry men of several other clans. Most clans have märi etc. in more than one other clan. An individual may marry a woman of his mother's clan, whose mother is of his märi clan; or he may marry a woman who is of neither of these clans. Figure 3.19 shows some of the possible variations.

EGO has primary rights in women of his mother's clan whose mothers are of his märi clan, but men also try to obtain mothers-in-law from 'märi' clans.

Because men have rights to galay of their mother's clan, and to

---

1Either he picked out only the 'straight' relations or he disregarded anomalies.
daughters of mukul of their märi clan, it follows that a son may have different mother and märi clans from his father even if his father followed the norm, or he may have the same.

Full brothers with the same mother necessarily have the same märi clan; full brothers of different mothers may have. Brothers with the same märi clan are in competition for wives. Ideally the eldest brother has preferential rights over his brothers to their potential wives and this is normally the case. As Warner (1937:61) reports, full brothers should aid each other with marriage payments, and the eldest should give wives to younger brothers. When a man dies his uterine brothers of the same or of different clans inherit the widow. The widow's brother has control over her re-allocation if his parents are dead or infirm.

It follows from these points that the crucial links between an individual and other clans exist through his matriline. But marriages do not simply follow genealogical relations, they follow clan relations. A marriage between a man of clan A to a woman of clan B creates a specific line of relationship. The effect in the next generation is that of a flow from the mothers' and märi clans to the man's sons.

The marriage network will separate out according to lineages and sublineages if the mothers of their members are of different clans. The marriages in one generation will guide those in the next.

Putting together the various points I have made so far in this section: when the actual patterns of marriage between clans is examined, one should expect to find certain trends. Men of each lineage or sublineage whose mothers are of one clan will receive most women from several lineages of the mothers' clan, giving a pattern as shown in Figure 3.20.

![Figure 3.20](image-url)
Where the founder of the lineage marries women of several clans the pattern will be more complex, but should simplify at the sublineage level.

If the several lineages of one clan all spring from women of the same clan then the 'fans' of marriages will tend to overlap (Figure 3.21):

![Figure 3.21](image)

I collected genealogies of twenty-three clans and traced all the marriages connecting the lineages, land-owning groups and clans. Figure 3.22 shows the marriages between land-owning groups over three generations, as total movements of women from one lineage or sublineage to another.

The marriage patterns conform to the expectations. For example, the Dhurrubathu lineage (Dh on the diagram) of the Daygurrngurr clan gets women from two Liyagalawumirri lineages, and gives to Dambugawumirri and Djamarrpuyguy clans. At the levels of land-owning group and clan, these 'fans' of marriages often overlap to form 'bundles' between two clans.

Each clan obtains wives from one or more clans. Each clan tends to have one gutharra ('ZDCh') clan, but more than one 'mari' clan. Members of one clan are therefore likely to bestow its women as mothers-in-law on men of only one other clan.

Figure 3.23 shows a simplified network. The division of clans into land-owning groups gives the figure its diamond pattern.

![Figure 3.23](image)

*I am greatly indebted to Mrs Sue Harris of Milingimbi who contributed a wealth of genealogical data.
Figure 3.22: Marriages over three generations between clans in the Woollen River area.
Some unexpected movements are found to the right of Figure 3.22. Several land-owning groups appear to reciprocate in marriage giving rise to apparent cycles of marriage between four land-owning groups and clans.

At the lineage and sublineage levels reciprocal marriages and cycles between four groups do not occur, if we disregard the occasional wrong marriage (e.g. to 'FZD'). Relations traced from lineage to lineage form open chains, and closed cycles involving six or more lineages.

At this level the actual network of marriages conforms closely to the model developed earlier in the chapter. It should be apparent why this is so from earlier remarks in this section. It is at this level that groups of full brothers marry, constrained by kinship categories traced through previous links. The marriages from sublineage to sublineage will only contradict the model where people have married the wrong category of kin.

Figure 3.22 showed at least two cycles of marriage involving six lineages, as follows (Table 3.4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Lineage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dëmbugawumirri</td>
<td>Gúliwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangurri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Naymil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Daygurrurr</td>
<td>Garrawarrpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dëmbugawumirri</td>
<td>Lamutha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Birrkili</td>
<td>C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Dëmbugawumirri</td>
<td>Gúliwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangurri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Naymil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Daygurrurr</td>
<td>Garrawarrpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Djambarrpuynu</td>
<td>Djärpuł</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Birrkili</td>
<td>B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cycle described by Shapiro (1968:350) involves some of the above clans.

Two lineages of the Dëmbugawumirri clan are in a märi:gutharra relation, making the marriages of one of them flow in the opposite direction to the others. These and some of the marriages of one other lineage of the clan make some members the 'mothers' etc. of Daygurrurr people, and make others into 'sisters' children' etc.

The two Warramiri land-owning groups are in a märi:gutharra relationship. Nevertheless Warner (1937:113) perhaps overstated the case in
saying that people often find their märi in their own clan. This occurs mostly in large clans (see below).

One of the six-lineage cycles mentioned previously involves only five clans. In such a case one clan necessarily includes members who are both märi and gutharra to members of another clan. The categorical relationship between the clans however, applies in one direction only (see also Morphy 1977a:62).

This section of the chapter shows that clans are essential in Yolŋu marriage; not as units which act together to make every bestowal, but as units in which men have rights. To summarize:

A man can marry a woman of his mother's clan, whom he calls galay.
A man can marry the daughter of a woman of his märi clan, whom he calls galay.
A man can marry the daughter of a woman of a 'märi' clan which is not that of his mother's mother, whom he calls galay.

Kinship categories are equally essential, for a man should marry his galay; and has the strongest claim on his MMBDDs as mothers-in-law and on his MBDDs as wives.

Rights in women of one clan are dispersed through marriage among men of several other clans. Figure 3.22 shows that there is some tendency for the women of two lineages of a clan to marry men of different clans. In other words men in rival clans could take women from different subgroups of the 'mother' clan. Within the clan, lineage and sublineage however, seniority and personality affect the outcome of competition.

The next section demonstrates this more clearly.

CONFORMITY TO THE NORMS

The analysis in the previous section suggests that people do conform to the marriage rules to a great degree. Far more anomalies would be found in the pattern of inter-lineage marriages if they did not.

Table 3.5: Relationships between men's mothers and their wives' fathers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Same M &amp; F</th>
<th>Same M diff. F</th>
<th>Same F diff. M</th>
<th>Same FF only</th>
<th>Same clan only</th>
<th>WM = FM 'W' = 'M'</th>
<th>Not closely related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'M'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.6: Relationships between men's māris and wives' mothers, and between men's WMMs and MMMs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WM = MMBD</th>
<th>WM &amp; MM in same 1-o. g.</th>
<th>WM* &amp; MM in same clan but not 1-o. g.</th>
<th>WM in a classif. 'MM' clan</th>
<th>WMM &amp; MMM in same clan</th>
<th>WM in a 'MMM' clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[In 7 cases out of 9, where the wife's father was not a close MB, the WM was in a 'māri' clan.]

Note that the total is more than 100% since several conditions occur at once.

A sample of the marriages of fifty women to twenty-nine men indicates that most people do indeed conform to the norms.

Table 3.5 shows that in nearly three-quarters of all the marriages the wife's father was a member of the man's mother's clan, or was EGO's MMS. In 18% of the cases the WF was not closely related to the husband's M. In most of these cases (seven out of nine) the WM was a member of a 'māri' clan, though not that of the actual MM.

Table 3.6 shows that in two-thirds of all cases, the husband's WM was a member of a 'māri' clan, and in half of all cases, this was the husband's own MMM clan. In only two cases were both the WMM not in the MMM clan and the WM not in a 'māri' clan.

Only a third of all wives were their husbands' MBD, and only one was a MMBDD (Maraŋguy's wife Lethŋawuy in the case below). This figure is probably low since the genealogies may have missed many connections through women by which a husband's MMM and his WMF were siblings; some wives may be their husbands' MMMBDDD.

Different clans appear to employ different strategies in acquiring wives for their men. Đąmbugawumirri men tend to marry their male māri's DDs. Their wives are not in general MBDs, although they usually are of the mother clan. Most of their WMs (75%) were however in their MMM's clans.
Half of the Djambarrpuygu clansmen married full MBD, and in half of these marriages the WM was in a different clan from that of the MM. These differences reflect the relationship between the Djambarrpuygu clan and the Daygurrgurr, for the former gets virtually all its wives from the latter. The Djambarrpuygu men no doubt arrange marriages with their MBs, whereas the Dumbugawumirri are more likely to negotiate with their märi.

These data help to support my explanation of why lineages of the same land-owning group and clan tend to marry the same way. Although many men marry women of their mothers' lineages, many men marry women of their mothers' clans, but of a different lineage. Few men marry women whose mothers are in their (the husband's) MM's lineage, but marry women of a 'mother' clan whose mothers are in a 'märi' clan, most often that of their own MM.

STRUCTURE AND FORTUNE

A number of case studies may help exemplify how the normative and statistical framework presented so far operates in practice. I examine first one man's marriage to his second wife, and the marriage of his märi; in order to show how some of the principles apply in an actual case. Then I examine the contrasting fortunes of several men in one land-owning group. Figure 3.24 shows the genealogy relevant to the following case.

Maranguy is a middle-aged Birrkili clansman whose mother was Djambarrpuygu (A on the Figure). His first wife is of the latter clan also and from the same land-owning group as his mother, but she is not his MBD. His second wife is of the same clan again, but of a different land-owning group. She is his 'MMBDD', and his MMB'B' DDD. His MM and MMB were siblings with the same mother and their fathers were brothers.

Maranguy's MMM married two brothers one after the other. A son by the first became Maranguy's MMB, and a daughter by the second became his MM. Maranguy's second wife is the DD of the MMB.

The men in Maranguy's märi clan shown in the genealogy married in a variety of ways. His WMB (B on the Figure) married his father's junior wife, the father's MBSD ('little mother'). The father had handed the woman on to his son. One of Maranguy's MMBSS's (märi) (C on the Figure) married a MBD.

Another märi (D on the Figure) married wrongly. He should have married a woman of his mother's clan, Maranguy's waku ('MMM') clan, but he married a woman of a more distant 'mother' clan. The woman was Maranguy's dhumungur.

From the husband's point of view he married the DD of a dhumungur (or possibly dhuway) of his own generation. Put in another way, his FF's dhumungur (ZDDHIZ) became his WMM. The marriage closed a circle between six land-owning groups (Figure 3.24).
Figure 3.24: Maranguy's marriages, and his märi's marriage.
Maranguy is at A. His märi D married his (Maranguy's) dhumungur.
This example illustrates some of the possible Yolŋu marriages — marriage to a MMBDD who is not MBD, marriage to a woman of a man's 'mother' clan who is neither MBD nor MMBDD, leviratic marriage, marriage to a son's wife, and marriage closing the circle of clan affinal relations. All these forms indicate a continued alliance between clans such that men marry women of their 'mother' clan, from mothers-in-law of their māri clan and WMM of their MMM clan. It illustrates too the potential for closure between six lineages.

The question that arises from the above case is why Maranguy's māri married the way he did. The probable reason was that his elder brother (who stole his first wife) married the only mature MBD of the two brothers.

Their other four MBDs are all under ten years of age at the time of writing; therefore he did not have a wife in the right relationship and of a marriageable age.

The marital fortunes of the other male members of Maranguy's māri's sublineage are illuminating. Two Daygurrurr clan brothers married twenty-four wives between them beginning in about 1920. The present lineage of about two hundred members is descended from these two men and their wives, and is of four generations in depth including their own.

The elder brother married six wives who bore him children. Table 3.6 shows their clans and mothers' clans, their sons, potential WMs' and WFs' clans.

The sons A-H are aged between about forty and seventy years. Several other sons died before marrying. The eldest son of wife 1 married four women of his mother's clan; his younger brother got only one, passed on from his father. The son of wife 4 was in competition for women with his elder brothers, despite having a different māri clan, and he got only one wife. His brother, the son of wife 5, has the same 'mother' and 'māri' clan, but did rather better with three. The son of wife 2 had no competitors since he was the only son of the mother and had a different mother and māri clan from his brothers. (He may have been in competition with Wangurri and Birrkili clan sisters' sons of his mother clan, but men of these clans married women of different lineages.) He married two MBDs; two wives from his mother's lineage; two of his mother's clan but from different lineages; one (not from his mother's clan) whose M was his māri clan; and one whose mother was of his own clan.
The son of wife 3 is in competition with older brothers in the other sublineage who have the same mother and märi clans. He has two wives, one stolen. One of his competitors in the other sublineage has ten. The son of wife 6 whose mother clan produced four women is an unaggressive man; men in the other lineage took the women leaving him only an elderly widow.

The fortunes of the next generation of men in their late thirties and early forties are also relevant. The adult sons of A or B in Table 3.7 have Liyagalawumirri mothers as did their fathers, but their MBDs and other girls of the mother's clan are mainly too young to marry. The
elder son of B took the only woman who was of age. The other sons have stolen wives, married Walbiri and Groote Eylandt women, and as we saw above, one married his chumungur's DD.

The sons of C have done rather better, for one mother clan in particular has produced many women, and four of the adult sons have married women of their mothers' clan. One son, Boŋwuŋuy II, was fortunate in that his MB bore several daughters; two married Warramiri clansmen and two went to Boŋwuŋuy. Both the other men died and Boŋwuŋuy inherited their wives. So at the age of twenty-three he has four wives, and is on the way to becoming a 'big-man'.

It is significant that Daygurrgrurr clan is the 'mother' clan of four mothers of this generation. That is, a number of this generation have their own clan as märi. This state of affairs is typical of large clans such as Daygurrgrurr, Đambugawumirri and Warramiri.

CLANS IN FLUX

A clan needs wives in order to remain strong in numbers. Clans which do not reproduce fail as a source of wives for their sisters' sons, and of mothers-in-law for their sisters' daughters' sons. The lower Glyde River clans are severely depleted; Mildjiñi clan has only four members, Bałmawuy twelve, Djaqwuńiti five. They are providing no wives for the Manharrŋu clan. The youngest generation of the latter consists of twenty-two girls and women and thirteen boys and men. Daygurrgrurr men have married Manharrŋu women, but unless the Manharrŋu men marry there will be no daughters for the next generation of Daygurrgrurr men to marry.

Young men of the Wobulkarra clan are similarly lacking in wives, which bodes ill for the young Đambugawumirri men who look to that clan for promised wives.

Other clans are growing. Ganalbiŋu has plenty of young married men; it is possible that they will give their daughters to Liyagalawumirri and become märi to Daygurrgrurr. For this to occur the agreement of their 'mother' clans would be necessary.

The ascendancy of large clans such as Daygurrgrurr hastens the decline of weaker ones. Of the few women available to the lower Glyde River Yirritja moiety clans, Daygurrgrurr men took two Murrŋuŋ, two Malagaŋarrgaŋarr, two Wurrkiganydjarr, and about eighteen Manharrŋu clan women who may under different circumstances have gone to Mildjiñi men. A Daygurrgrurr leader
told me that Manharrŋu and Mildjiŋi clan countries, which are adjacent, are in a relation of husband to wife: 'Really I should be Mildjiŋi' he said, for he has married six Manharrŋu women and his brothers have married a number also.

I discuss the implications of the rapid growth and decline of clans for the ownership of land and maŋayin in the conclusion to this chapter.

The larger clans have increased their size in two ways. One is by fusion: numbers of lineages and land-owning groups may come together and assume a corporate identity. The present Djambarrpuyŋu clan seems to have done this. When Thomson and Warner were working in Arnhem Land the groups of Gurala and Djarraya countries were called Ḍaladharrr and Djambarrpuyŋu (or Djirin) (see also Webb 1933:409). Nowadays they deny any separate identity except of country and some maŋayin: 'We are all one, only Djambarrpuyŋu' they assert.

Another way in which clans grow is by natural increase. The large numbers of marriages of the two Dāygurrungurr brothers and five of their sons, have produced a very large lineage which shows signs of splitting. Members of one sublineage live largely on the mainland, the other at Milingimbi. Sheer numbers enable the clan members to dominate the religious and secular affairs of both communities (see Chapter 8), and cause incipient fission between the two sublineages.

The leaders of these two sublineages, Boŋuwuy and Djāwa, are powerful men who have the most wives in the area. They are 'powerful' (ŋalkarramirri). Neither is the oldest brother in the sublineage. Djāwa's elder brother is senile; Boŋuwuy's elder brother is less assertive and has fewer wives. (Warner 1937:61) notes the same phenomenon. Members regard both elder brothers as leaders or 'bosses' of the maŋayin but recognize that Djāwa and Boŋuwuy have most actual power.

It would be naive to suggest that the two men have this power simply because they were able to get many wives. The social rules allow older men in general to obtain several wives. The few men who manage to obtain nine or more do so by a combination of luck, skill and self-assertion. Both Boŋuwuy and Djāwa were fortunate — one in that he had no full brothers as competitors, the other in that he was the eldest of a group of brothers with the same mother. The 'mother' clan produced many eligible girls. Warner (1937:77) found:

A close correlation of having many wives with fighting strength, or with being the son of a man powerful in war who had thereby acquired
a large number of women whose brothers would be gawels (i.e. qapipi) to the son. (Parenthesis is mine.)

The two men were fortunate also in that both had a large group of full brothers as a support group. In addition they had a number of sisters and so could rely on the support of brothers-in-law. The alliance with the Djambarrpyuyu clans, the clan of their ZHs and ZCh, is an important aspect of the Daygurrgurr clan's power.

According to Warner (1937:77, kin glosses added):

A man likes many wives because he tires of cohabiting with one and because such multiplicity creates more sons and daughters, so that he will have more waku ('ZCh') dūe ('ZH'), and galle ('W/WB'), with strong bonds between him and them.

Not all of Djäwa's and Boquwuy's wives were from their mother or märi clans. Both have a sprinkling of rather distantly related spouses. Boquwuy seems to have first established himself with eight MBs. He then inherited another from a deceased brother, and next applied his strong position and personality to the acquisition of three others; one from the clan which owns the land nearby, and another through a remote 'märi' clan. Djäwa has seven wives from his mother's clan, one from a 'mother' clan but whose mother was of his märi clan, and two others more remotely connected.

CONCLUSION

Personal power of the kind just described can be vested in the control of religious affairs. One implication of the great difference in size between clans is that members of the larger clan can control the religious affairs of a smaller one. These matters will be taken up more fully in later chapters. Here I want to refer back to Chapter 2 and to inquire into the implications of clan growth and decline on the ownership of land and maŋayin.

An ascendant clan can claim the land of its extinct märi clans, or can establish right to a country whose owning clans are depleted and which it now occupies.

As I showed in the previous chapter, the Dämbugawumirri clan — a large and flourishing group — seem to be establishing a claim to the country of the extinct Gunbirridji, their märi clan, where many of them live.

Daygurrgurr clan members are all of Djiliwirri country by patrifiliation. A number of senior members own Gambuŋ-qura, another of the clan's countries,
through spiritual conception or because they were named after it, so the clan is not a land-owning group attached to one country.

The affiliations of its younger members render it even less so attached. One young man told me that Milingimbi, where most of the Daygurrgurr clan members live, is their country; another said that he does not think of Djiliwiirri as his country despite the fact that they sing about it — Ngangalala and the country nearby on the Glyde River is his country. Many younger members of the clan have Yirritja places near the lower Glyde as their conception places, and even younger people have Milingimbi itself as their country 'of the water'. Daygurrgurr have also staked a claim to Barijura, the country of Wora, their extinct märi clan.

As Warner noted (1937:18), old identities become forgotten in time. Gunuwanga is as often as not referred to as Dambugawumirri not Gunbirridji clan country. It is not hard to imagine how, in the past, lineages or sublineages of one growing clan became attached to different countries and eventually became separate entities.

The rapid growth of Yolŋu clans is as we have seen partly a product of their particular system of marriage.1 A comparison with the Gidjiŋali system will support this theory.

It is not immediately obvious how some Yolŋu men are able to acquire so many wives by comparison with their neighbours the Gidjiŋali. I believe that the Yolŋu system of marriage makes this possible whereas the Gidjiŋali system does not. To show why this should be so it is necessary to characterize the essence of the Yolŋu (or 'Murngin') system.

The assymetrical form of the Yolŋu system rests on the differentiation of 'MM/MMB' (märi) from ZDCh (gutharra), and of 'WM/WMB' as 'MMBD' and 'MMBDS'. This distinction excludes exchange between groups which are MM:ZDCh one to another, and sets up chains of marriage involving at least five land-owning groups.

The Gidjiŋali have an Aranda type of terminology, and a man is expected to exchange 'ZDs' with his WMB (Hiatt 1965:41). The Yolŋu are excluded from exchanging ZDs.

The Yolŋu specification of 'WM/MM/MM' and their reciprocals as distinct categories, and of ZDDDZHDD as a 'W', force marriages to form

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1Other factors include the support of siblings, the rights an elder brother has in women, etc.
chains of at least six lineages and enables them to close the system in a circle of marriages between six groups. (West of Buckingham Bay open chains are more common.)

Gidjiŋali men can look to either their MM group or to their ZDCh group for potential mothers-in-law (Hiatt 1965:38). The Yolŋu can only look to their MM groups. These facts suggest that perhaps twice the number of Gidjiŋali men compete for any group's women, who are therefore more equitably shared. Among the Yolŋu only a clan's ZDS have prior claims to its women as mothers-in-law, and to all their daughters as wives. An older brother with few competitors in other clans has access to many potential mothers-in-law and wives.

The concentration of marriages between pairs of clans boosts the number of potential wives one man can acquire, for he competes only with his clan brothers, where seniority counts. The Gidjiŋali system tends to diffuse the marriages. The concentration of Yolŋu marriages is a product of the relation between clan organisation and marriage rules. I shall now look more closely at this relationship.

I believe that clans and moieties are necessary for the operation of the system of marriage for the following reasons. The essence of Yolŋu marriage is that men are promised women much younger than themselves; marriage is a contract which binds members of different clans for a period of many years. In order to make the contract a matter of public law, not individual whim, the Yolŋu define categories of marriageable and unmarrriageable kin.

The Yolŋu marriage contracts form chains of bestowal-relations. To be workable at all the chains of relations centred on different individuals should mesh. They do so by virtue of the fact that all members of the society, the clans, their maŋayin and countries have a kinship relation one to another. This provides an inter-group system of categories. Certain egocentric categories may only be found in conjunction with certain inter-group relations. EGO will not find a 'father' in a clan of the opposite moiety, or in a 'mother' clan.

To show that the system requires unambiguous inter-group relations: people in clan A in Figure 3.25 have made contracts with people of clan B as potential WF and W; with clan C as potential WM and with clan D as potential MMM. Suppose a man of clan B marries a woman of clan D, men of
clan A are no longer sure whether D are WMM or WM, or whether clan B are W or WM. Men of B and C suddenly find themselves in competition for wives.

Moiet y exogamy prevents this potentially disruptive move. Each clan belongs to one of the two moieties and individuals belong to the opposite moiety from their mothers. By this rule the kinship categories map themselves on to moieties. A person finds his F/FZB, MM, WM, ZDCh etc. in his own moiety; and his W, M, WMM, ZD, ZH etc. in the opposite moiety. Moiety exogamy prevents men of clan B in the diagram marrying women of clan D.

The crucial distinction between mārī and gutharra ('MM/MMB' : 'ZDCh') sustains the chains of marriage; without it men could exchange with their MMB or ZDS, producing an Aranda type of system like that of the Gidji ngali (Figure 3.26).

Many clans consist of clusters of lineages. Since people categorize the core of their kin according to kinship relations and not from the clan category, members of different lineages in one clan may be of different categories. It is for these reasons that the chains and cycles of marriage occur at the level of the lineage, not of the clan. The clan
relations control these chains and cycles nonetheless, for the rules are ordered. A man must marry galøy, preferably from a 'mother' clan, whose mother is in a 'märi' clan. A man of A may marry B or C women but not D or E. Several chains of relations conform to these rules (Figure 3.27).

Figure 3.27

Two kinds of anomaly can occur. With a six-lineage cycle involving only five clans, two of the clans are apparently in a reciprocally märi:gutharra relation (Figure 3.28). And where two clans reciprocate in marriage they are apparently in a reciprocal jāndi:waku relation (Figure 3.29).

Figure 3.28

 clans A and B are in an apparently reciprocal märi:gutharra relation

Figure 3.29

 clans A and B are in an apparently reciprocal jāndi:waku relation

Such relations occur between large clans with several lineages. Perhaps clan-fission resolves these anomalies in time. People deal with the anomalies by referring to the given relation between the maḏayin or people give varying accounts of the relation according to their perspective.

Of course shifts in inter-group relations must occur as clans grow and die out. The moiety system keeps such changes within workable limits.
I return now to the original problem — that the form of the religious organisation is one prerequisite for the operation of the marriage system. The inter-group categories and relations are predicated on clans and their property, on madayin and land. Individuals extend their close kinship relations to the clan, land and madayin. I have argued that these categories are indispensable to the system of marriage.

Individuals predicate these categories on to countries and madayin, and on to land-owning clans or groups. Two land-owning groups of one clan may or may not be in an identical structural relation vis-à-vis another clan or individual. Both are clearly bounded entities.

Clans and land-owning groups are corporations in the ownership of religious property and land. We saw in Chapter 2 that the property defines the clan. In so far as the constitution of such groups is a prerequisite for the operation of the marriage system, it is true to say that the form of religious organisation is a prerequisite.

This is true in another sense too. The Yolu dogma embeds the rules of marriage in the structure, powers and genesis of the cosmos: 'marriage follows the ranga'. People cite such a dogma as a powerful reason for holding others to the rules. It appears to be in the very nature of things that a ranga and wañarr is 'mother' to one and māri to another. A man ought, by the very nature of things, to marry a woman of his 'mother' clan and ranga. By the very nature of things he ought not to marry a woman of his māri or 'sister' clan and ranga.

Such a system works nonetheless more in the interests of some than others. Relations of power and authority are required to sustain it. In the chapters that follow I show how adult men exclude women and control young men through ceremonies and religious knowledge, and how moieties, clans and landowning groups exercise the ownership of religious property. In other words, we see how the conditions for operating the system are met.
CHAPTER 4

REGIONAL CEREMONIES
INTRODUCTION

Four ceremonies, Mandayala, Gunapipi, Djunguwan and Nulmarrk, form a set which I call regional ceremonies. In them men take boys and youths into the men's group and into the esoteric parts of the ceremonies, from which they exclude women.¹

In this chapter I first describe and discuss the ceremonies and their purposes. The following discussion has two main concerns: the first is with the regional basis of ownership and participation. I show that people of all clans of both moieties participate fully and that there are no closed congregations: all clans are able to fit the ceremonies into their own systems of knowledge. The second concern is the way in which senior men derive their authority from the ceremonies and prevent women from acquiring such authority. Older men use this authority, I suggest, to keep young men under their control.

There are several reasons for calling the ceremonies 'regional'. They do constitute a distinct genre: clans own them as a set, they have a stylistic family resemblance one to another and a common aetiology. They are regional because although a number of clans of the Dhuwa moiety own them, people say that they are 'for everyone' and that they have significance for both Dhuwa and Yirritja. People from a wide area attend performances, particularly of the Gunapipi.

I concentrate in this chapter on inclusion and exclusion from esoteric knowledge gained by participation. Chapter 7 concentrates more on knowledge transmitted by formal teaching; on information imparted verbally about Närra songs, designs and dances.² This distinction is partly a product of the analysis, for there is a great deal of functional overlap.

¹Warner (1937:452-3) and R.M. Berndt (1951:14-15) state their views about the possibly recent diffusion of the Gunapipi, Mandayala and Nulmarrk.
²Marngi is not a verb like 'to know'. It is rather a dispositional adjective like 'knowledgeable'; and it connotes powers which have social, not simply intellectual, conditions. To teach is 'to make knowledgeable' (marngi-kuma) and to learn is 'to become knowledgeable' (marngi-thirri).
between the regional and the Närра genres. Owning clans incorporate the regional ceremonies into their systems of knowledge just as they do the Närра. Men exclude women from the Inside Närра ground just as they do in the regional ceremonies, and a joint Yirritja and Dhuwa Närра has a degree of community involvement very like the Gunapipi.

The data I have collected makes it more convenient to treat the exoteric and esoteric meanings of the Närра songs, dances, designs and objects (Chapter 7), and only to touch on some aspects of the symbolism of regional ceremonies. (See Munn 1969 for an analysis of the symbolism of the Gunapipi and Wägilak story.) This is not to say that the two genres are isomorphic. Both moieties have equally essential though different roles in the regional ceremonies; the Närра focuses on the inter-dependence of clans of the same moiety.

Each regional ceremony has a purpose and a character. Djunguwan and Mandayala are circumcision ceremonies, 'for foreskins', Djunguwan is also 'for the dead'. Gunapipi is described as playful, a game; the Yolŋu say it makes people laugh and feel happy. I do not know the purpose of the tjulmarrk, no longer performed in the area.

The four ceremonies stand in kinship relations: Djunguwan is the 'FF' of tjulmarrk, which is 'F' to Gunapipi and Mandayala. These ascribed relationships suggest that the Yolŋu evaluate the Djunguwan as the most important. Such an evaluation is consistent with the ceremonies' styles and other characteristics.

Mandayala is a public or Outside ceremony; men only decorate their bodies in seclusion. Djunguwan, Gunapipi and tjulmarrk are 'of the madayin side'; they are exclusively secret and men perform them 'far off'.

The descriptions of the ceremonies below show that the esoteric ceremonies are not wholly secret; all include public phases. Men do not exclude women altogether; the latter have an important part to play in all the public phases of the regional ceremonies. Nevertheless they may not approach the esoteric areas of the ceremony, whereas their own performance is open to the men. Men should not in theory see the women's part of Gunapipi, but they already have as children. On one occasion women sang their Gunapipi songs in public at Milingimbi as a farewell to a European, with one man directing what they should sing. The reverse does not occur.

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1R.M. Berndt's informants (1951:34) at Yirrkala ascribed different relations to the ceremonies: tjulmarrk 'F', Djunguwan 'S', Gunapipi 'MMB'.

All the ceremonies are experienced in youth. Not only circumcision initiands but other young men in their middle teens see the Djunguwan. Young men or even boys participate in the esoteric part of the Gunapipi, although novices are often older because it is so infrequently performed. Only young men in their late teens and early twenties see the more important parts of the Njurrara.

I preface my analysis with brief descriptions of the three regional ceremonies currently performed. More detailed descriptions are to be found elsewhere (Warner 1937; Berndt R.M. 1951).²

THE CEREMONIES — MANĐAYALA

Manđayala is a circumcision ceremony performed during the dry season. Initiands are of either moiety and are usually between the ages of about eight and fifteen years.

A Murruqun Wolkpuy clansman (Dhuwa), the father of two such boys, requested (djugu'yun) the ceremony which I witnessed from the Liyagalawumirri clan leader (Dhuwa).

A Ganalbiŋu clan leader (Yirritja), the senior sisters' son of the Liyagalawumirri clan, holds the essential paraphernalia (duttji): four sticks with tufts of brolga feathers on one end which are the armatures of tall paperbark hats and a string to make the feather 'paws' for the Dog dance. The men who requested the ceremony and the owner had to secure this man's agreement before the ceremony could be performed. The main acts were as follows:

One afternoon some of the men painted the bodies (gupa-bidji'yun) of the two boys with red ochre and fixed rainbow lorikeet feather wanga (arm) cords to their arms, while others sang Murruqun and Liyagalawumirri clan songs. During this part the boys' female relations circled around and sang a single high note. The two boys went to visit relatives in distant communities.

On several evenings while the boys were away, the Liyagalawumirri leader and the fathers sang Manđayala songs. These consist of many verses each of which has a set text sung several times in unison, accompanied by two boomerangs struck together.

¹By 'initiand' I mean a boy or young man undergoing circumcision initiation. A 'novice' is anyone formally entering an exclusive ceremony for the first time, or first few times, and is designated as yuţa (new, young).

²Berndt includes texts and translations of songs of the Yirrkala Gunapipi and related ceremonies.
When the initiands returned from their tour the men painted them again and decorated them with feather cords, arm-rings and women's breast-girdles to make them sacred (dhuyu).\(^1\) On this occasion some of the women relatives circled around and sang out as before. They also insulted the men, threw spears near them, and 'cadged' (djaw'yun) food, money and tobacco from other peoples' camps. Women have such licence in all circumcision ceremonies. After being made dhuyu the initiands were segregated from their female kin and looked after by a 'father'.

The final acts occupied the community for three days in succession. One afternoon the men decorated and painted the boys in a secluded patch of jungle (Plate 4.1). Then the men and boys danced out towards the crowd of women and onlookers in the camp. The men allowed the boys to run forward towards the women only to be caught again. The men told me they 'tricked' the boys in this way. Following this dance the two initiands painted white crosses on the backs of the men.

The next day the men went to a secluded patch of jungle where they decorated their bodies with human blood and cottonwool, prepared the four hats, four Dogs' paws, and bunches of ironwood leaves for the dances that night. Meanwhile two women decorated the boys with honey and cottonwool\(^2\) in the camp.

When all were ready most of the decorated men danced out in a line into a grassy area, zig-zagged across it to where the two boys lay under blankets with two 'mothers', circled around the four and made a U-formation (Plate 4.2). Two men then danced as Dog from out of the jungle up to the boys and pawed at the blanket, whereupon the boys sat up to reveal their decorations.

That evening the decorated young men began to dance in the camp accompanied by the Manḍayala songs sung by old and mature men. The dances, in which the young men strenuously quiver their thighs to applause and ribaldry, shaking the bundles of leaves attached to their shins, continued through the night. At dawn the dancers burnt the leaves for the final dance, two 'doctors' circumcized the boys in the dance arena, and the boys' father and his brother distributed gifts of tobacco and damper to the owners of the ceremony and to the circumcizers (Warner's informants gave spears and maŋayin strings, 1937:261).

The men forbade the boys to eat certain game or to drink water for twenty-four hours, telling them that all the water in the universe was now salt. They also forbade them to touch the earth with their bodies. A short water ceremony next day removed the prohibition on drinking, and a short smoke ceremony removed the other restrictions a week or so later when the wounds had healed. The initiates were

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1 People, ceremonies and objects may be dhuyu by being connected with the maŋayin and subject to restrictions. Dhuyu ceremonies may not be seen by women or children. Initiands made dhuyu by undergoing a ceremony may not participate in normal social intercourse.

2 People use cottonwool nowadays. Formerly wild kapok and white birds' down were used. All are called raman.
Plate 4.1 The two circumcision initiates painted with red ochre and wearing wāŋa cords and headbands, ready to be shown to the women in the Maŋayala ceremony.

Plate 4.2 The men dance in a line towards the initiates. They represent the Giant Snake which ate the Wāgilak sisters.
Gunapipi

I witnessed a Gunapipi in full at Balpanarra, a lake and swamp some 40 km. west of the Glyde River in the Gunadba language area, well outside the Yolgu region. The ceremony was different in its details from the one Warner describes (1937:290-311), although it is essentially the same ceremony. The Gunapipi is performed about every seven years nowadays at and near Milingimbi. I have seen only the beginning of the Milingimbi version; it is very similar to the one which Warner saw.

Young men from about twelve to twenty years of age are initiated into the Gunapipi in the Woollen River area which includes Milingimbi. Further west, in the Balpanarra region, people perform it yearly, and most of the initiands are about twelve to fifteen years of age.

Two Dhuwa moiety owners of the ceremony arranged a performance with the agreement of members of their own and of other owning clans, and their sisters' sons (Yirritja). Previous organisers of a performance handed on the paraphernalia to the sisters' sons.2 The ceremony went as follows:

The ceremonial ground consisted of two camps situated in open country away from permanent settlements. The public camp stood in open country. In the centre lay a Molk ground-sculture of two parallel trenches about three metres long and half a metre deep, with a mound between them.

The men's ceremonial ground was in the forest about four hundred metres from the public camp. The focal point of it was the Ganala pit, some three metres square and one metre deep, with a mound on each side, engraved with King Brown Snake and Carpet Python on two walls. Novices and other young men remained at the Inside ground day and night.

The main active roles in the ceremony were these: mature and old men of both moieties sang Gudjika3 songs, accompanied by boomerangs. These songs consist of a series of many repeated verses sung in unison. Dhuwa moiety mature and old men decorated themselves with blood and cottonwool and danced into the pit. Mature and old Yirritja men were the workers or helpers who prepared the ground and paraphernalia, and

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1Avoidance relations are enforced after circumcision. Avoidance of 'ZH' and 'ZH' ceases at maturity.

2Hiatt (1965:63-67) describes the groups and relations of those who organised a Gunapipi at the same location in 1960. Many of the actors took part again in 1976.

3Gudjika songs are similar to Mancjayala songs, with some verses in common, but with a different tune. Women and children may not hear them.
organised the course of the performance. The sacred (dhuyu) group of young men of both moiety groups sang unaccompanied Djämalup songs, which consist of one verse repeated over and over again. The older bachelors and the mature men had control over the novices who were onlookers for most of the ceremony, but took part in the final dances. Mature and old women of the owning clans and their daughters (of Yirritja clans) sang women's Gudjika songs and danced at the Moŋk in the public camp.

Male Gakawarr messengers (young mature men) took the news that the ceremony was to take place to nearby communities.

Every day for about two months men decorated themselves with blood and cottonwool during the day on the Inside ground and also at various outstations in the area; sounded the bullroarer at dawn and dusk, and called in falsetto voices to the women who ululated in reply from the camp.

Each day at sunset the Dhuwa men wearing blood and cottonwool designs representing various local maŋayin, especially those associated with the place and the ceremony, danced as those maŋayin into the pit.

Then after sunset mature and old men sang Gudjika songs over the prostrate novices, and revealed to them the dance of Possums, waving their great (wooden) penes and simulating copulation. Performers and onlookers found this dance hilarious. The alternation of Gudjika songs and Possum dance continued each night until the moon was low in the sky.

The rising and setting of the moon guides the timing of the performance. Men agree to come to the ground from other places when the moon stands high in the sky at sunset. Each night the moon rises and sets later, until on the final day it sets at dawn.

Meanwhile after sunset the women performed their own secret songs and dances at the Moŋk calling 'gay'pa gay'pa'.

As full moon approached during the final week, people arrived from communities within a radius of about eighty km. Mature men 'captured' novices at each of these communities and made them sacred by taking them into seclusion and painting them with red ochre.

On the penultimate day Yirritja moiety workers made another ground-sculpture called Buwa, at the Inside ground about twenty metres from the Ganala pit. It consisted of a crescent-shaped pit with a mound to one side. They also made two cigar-shaped Yarrmalanydjji poles about four metres tall, decorated with blood and cottonwool — 'shadows' of King Brown Snake and Carpet Python.

During the day the Yirritja men revealed the Buwa pit and the poles to the Dhuwa men and youths. The dancers prepared their body decorations.

At sunset a man sounded the bullroarer at the Inside ground and the cottonwool-decorated men danced into the Ganala pit.

The novices gathered in the pit, the men covered them with blankets and showered them with sparks. Then men and youths decorated only with painted designs danced Possum into the pit; 'Two Bush Birds

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1Gakawarr refers to Gunapipi adepts in general.
copulating' (Willy Wagtail according to the Liyagalawumirri); 'Two Women libidinously moaning for their husband' (danced with the same sounds and movements as 'Two Bush Birds').

The company moved to the Buwa trench and the men danced 'Bluetongue Lizard', entering the trench; 'Possum', digging earth into the trench and entering it; 'Women', digging earth into the pit and entering it (with the same movements as for the previous Possum dance).

Finally, mature and old men sang Gudjika songs standing on the mound and around the trench. Other men carried the two Yarrmalanydji poles upright, shaking them towards the trench where others showered them with sparks. At this the poles fell across the trench to rest on the mound.

During the performance several groups of men from different regions sang Gudjika songs in different styles but with similar texts. After the poles had fallen the men continued to sing until dawn, as the moon gradually set.

The women danced and sang all night also in the same way as before. Two lines of women, Yirritja and Dhuwa, jumped through the vulva-shaped trench slapping their thighs together. Mature women sang and beat an improvised drum. The women frequently ululated in reply to the calls from the distant men's camp.

On the morning of the final day the Yirritja workers made a large wooden Djapanban trestle of two forked poles and a cross-piece and erected it at the edge of the forest between the Inside ground and the public camp.

All the men and youths brushed the Yarrmalanydji poles with leaves wiped with under-arm sweat. The sacred group painted their bodies with blood and red ochre and danced Green Ant through the Buwa trench.

One or two workers ushered the group of women and young boys, led by two women beating the ground with digging-sticks, from the camp to the Djapanban trestle where the sacred group were lined up. Two men sat on top of the trestle. The group danced around the women and young boys (who were to be the novices in a later Gunapipi) and took the boys from the women.

The sacred group and men then came out from the Inside ground. The final act was to return the Gakambarr headbands worn by the sacred group and the other paraphernalia, to the sisters' sons who were to hand them on for another ceremony.

According to Warner (1937:306) and R.M. Berndt (1951:17) ritual intercourse took place between members of the same moiety. It is not clear from Warner's description whether he witnessed it or just heard about it. It did not apparently occur at Balpanarra.

Djunguwan

Djunguwan is a ceremony which, like Mandayala, precedes the circumcision operation. The performance I saw was itself preceded by a Bukubuň ceremony in which men presented the bones of a dead man to female relatives to look after until the Hollow-Log second burial.
As with Man dağıala, the fathers of the initiands, one of each moiety, requested the Djunguwan from the owners; and it took place at the end of the dry season.

The fathers of the initiands included members of a Djinaŋ-speaking clan which owns Djunguwan, and sisters' sons of the clan. Nevertheless they asked the Liyagalawumirri leader to participate in and to direct the ceremony, so the sisters' sons of his clan were also involved. The ceremony proceeded as follows:

The Djinaŋ men brought the maŋayin drone-pipe Yulungur from the place where it had been used before, to Gamidi outstation on the east bank of the Glyde River. Here they refurbished it and built a brushwood shade to house it on the edge of the camp. The women and children dared not approach that side of the camp.

The men also made an object about two metres high like a small tree, called Maŋutji Wangarrtja ('round' Wangarrtja) consisting of sticks painted with red ochre and having a sphere of leaves at the top. They stood it in the clearing in the middle of the public camp.

One afternoon the Liyagalawumirri leader travelled to the outstation with two of his 'sons'. He sang while the Djinaŋ men painted the three initiands and decorated them with feather waŋa cords. The men tricked the boys by first performing a Smoke purification ceremony using Liyagalawumirri clan songs, and suddenly grabbing them. Female relatives circled around them and sang out during the painting. Afterwards one of the boys went to visit kin at Ngangalaŋa.

About a week later the Liyagalawumirri men arrived back at the outstation and performed the Bukubuŋ ceremony with the local men by the shade at the edge of the camp. At the climax of this ceremony men who were painted on the chest with Goanna designs crawled out of the brushwood shade carrying Yulungur, while an old Yirritja man sounded it — a low reverberating note. They carried it to a round ground-sculpture near the shade representing the Giant Snake's waterhole, in which lay the dead man's bones. The men washed and ochred the bones, carried them and gave them to the women by means of a Liyagalawumirri clan public dance. Only men saw and performed the part involving Yulungur.

That evening the Djunguwan continued. The local men had made an Inside dance ground about four by six metres and about three hundred metres north of the camp, and constructed a Wangarrtja brushwood shade at one end.

The men carried the Maŋutji Wangarrtja and took the initiands to the Inside ground by means of a dance.

The men of both moieties sang songs called Birrpirr and called out, subsection by subsection, maŋayin names, some genuine and some facetious puns and howlers, while the novices and initiands sat quietly.

Moyle (1974:15) points out that the pitch of the instruments used in secret ceremonies is lower in general to those used in public ceremonies and that they therefore have greater carrying power.
After this the men of both moieties danced Chicken Hawk, burnt the Maŋutji Wangarrtja and danced Kangaroo on the dance-ground. They turned the initiands and novices to see each dance.

Some men told the initiands and several of the novices not to reveal what they had seen nor to joke about it, or they would die by sorcery or the spear.

The following day about two dozen people arrived from nearby communities. Men of both moieties (unlike Gunapipi) decorated themselves with cottonwool at the Inside ground, and the women painted their own bodies at the camp. The men’s designs were of various maŋayin associated with the Wägilak story and belonging to local clans of both moieties (see Table 4.3).

In the afternoon the decorated men danced these maŋayin one by one from the forest onto the dance-ground. Each ended with the dancers staring wide-eyed at the line of novices and initiands. Finally, the Goanna dancers crawled out of the Wangarrtja Shade with Yulgungur as one man sounded it, crawling with it along the ground up to the novices and initiands who had to try to sound it. They were then told not to eat any important game.¹

During the whole course of the ceremony one or two Dhuwa men sang Djuŋguwan songs from time to time, accompanied by the sound of Yulgungur and large clapsticks.

The Liyagalawumirri leader sang a different type of song over the men as they decorated themselves with cottonwool.

The dances over, the men marched with the initiands to the camp and laid them in the middle of a tight ring of men and youths, where two men circumcized them. The fathers stayed away from this part.

A few days later mature and old men painted the novices with the Goanna design (like the designs on Yulgungur and on the Goanna dancers) to release them from prohibitions.

The men who had requested the ceremony paid Dhätaŋu, the Liyagalawumirri leader, for his services in cans of beer.

¹'Game of renown' (yäkumirri warrakan, 'name-possessing game') includes emu, kangaroo, brolga and jabiru meat. All these are large animals and birds which move upright on the ground and are important maŋayin creatures.
is called Wubarr.

Lorrkun is a Hollow-Log second-burial ceremony with songs 'borrowed' from Gunapipi. Djinaŋ and Burarra people of the area near the Cadell River and Ranybarrŋu to the south perform it currently, but Dhäthaŋu, the Liyagalawumirri leader, said that he also owns it.¹

OWNERSHIP OF THE REGIONAL CEREMONIES

Dhäthaŋu maintains that all the above ceremonies are his 'dreaming' (maŋgayin), and that he is the boss of them though there are still many bosses. Another man told me that the regional ceremonies are 'for everyone', but that the Liyagalawumirri clan looks after them all. Yet another said that the Liyagalawumirri own the ceremonies. A man of the Wurrkigany-djarr clan was a prominent performer in the Djuqguwan described above, and he organised a Gunapipi in 1976 with Dhäthaŋu's agreement. Both men thus appear to own the ceremony. An examination of the basis of ownership may clarify these apparent contradictions.

In this section I show that whereas the 'true' ownership of the regional ceremonies in the Woollen River area rests with the Liyagalawumirri clan on the basis of the events described in the Wägilak story, other Dhuwa clans also own the ceremonies by virtue of possessing certain sacred objects conceived of as Beings. Other Dhuwa clans have an interest in the ceremonies and they are significant also to the Yirritja moiety.

As I showed in Chapter 2 stories describe the acts of supernatural Beings which are the grounds of present ownership and use. In the Woollen River area stories about the Wägilak sisters explain the origin and ownership of the regional ceremonies.

Djäwa, the Daygurrgurr leader, said when discussing the Djuŋguwan ceremony:

The Snake came to the water (at Mirarrmina) and ate the sisters. Then it stood right up near the clouds and said 'I will strike'.

Down he fell and said 'This is the law: big-men will make the ground-sculpture'.

This cryptic account captures the essential relations between stories,

¹Larrkan is the name of the Cape Stewart Gidjiŋali Hollow Log, and Lorgun is the name of a Western Arnhem Land Gunwingu ceremony (Hiatt 1965:54, 1977; R.M. and C.H. Berndt 1970:133-5).
places and ceremonies. Another man's comment on the Gunapipi starts
where Djäwa's ends:

There is a track where the Snake fell at Mirarrmina, and a kapok
tree stands where the sisters made their house. The Snake is a
wanarr now.

Men and women dance outside as the Wägilak. Inside where it is
sacred, the Snake eats and regurgitates the novices.

The combined stories state that a supernatural Being did something with
a certain intention, and the act resulted in the creation of a topographical
configuration. The Being laid down a rule, way or practice (rom) which
includes the category of person who should follow the rule: 'big-men will
make the ground-sculpture' which represents the track the Snake had made
(Plate 4.3). The ground-sculpture is the dance-ground in the Djuqguwan,
Gunapipi and Njulmarrk, representing both the track and the waterhole.

The ceremonies follow the primordial events; men and women sing the
songs the Wägilak sang to stop the rain made by the Snake. Men dance
as the Snake 'swallowing' and 'regurgitating' the novices (the final
phase of Gunapipi).

As Warner (1937:371ff.) found, the story of the Wägilak sisters informs
the acts of all the regional ceremonies. People say quite explicitly that
the dancers surrounding the boys and their mothers, the Yarrmalanydji
poles approaching and falling over the trench in the Gunapipi, the sacred
group taking the boys from the women at the end of the Gunapipi, and the
Yulungur Drone-pipe coming out of the shade, all represent the actions
of the Snake and the sisters. The various Beings entering the pit and
trench in the Gunapipi and the dance-ground in Djuqguwan are the animals
entering the waterhole in the story. Warner (ibid) gives a detailed
account of the story and its relation to the four ceremonies which I will
not reiterate here (see also Berndt R.M. 1951:31, 45ff.).

Key actions in the ceremonies correspond to an episode in the Wägilak
story. Other acts and objects were set down by them (see Warner 1937:250).
The Ganala pit in the Gunapipi represents a lake at Djinba country made
by Yarrmalanydji. The songs follow those which the Wägilak sang to try
to stop the rain made by the Carpet Python. Dhäthaqu explained:

One sister got up; 'What is happening?' — 'I don't know' — 'What
shall we do sister?' So they danced. The first dances follow in
the Njulmarrk; they held digging-sticks and spears — 'Gay'pa, gay'pa'
they went. But one said 'It's no use, you try, I'm cold'. So they
changed over and tried the Mañdayala, and the Walbiri one, the
Djarrada. Then they tried the Njulmarrk one.

(See also Warner 1937:249; Berndt R.M. 1951:20-23).
Plate 4.3 The Giant Snake stands erect, next to the track and water-holes which he made as he fell to the ground. On the left are the forked posts and rail of the Wägilak sisters’ house.
This pattern — that the songs follow those the supernatural Beings sang, and certain key acts follow crucial events long ago — is common to all the ceremonies. Men affirm time and again that they 'copy from there', the ceremonies are 'from the beginning'. Dhūthaŋu said that wherever the Gunapipi is performed they copy their 'big father' Carpet Python.

Topographical features at Mirarrmiŋa, Liyagalawumirri clan country — the track the Snake made, the Snake's waterhole, a tree which 'stands for ever' where the Wägilak sisters' house stood — are seen as evidence that the events followed in the ceremony occurred there, and so the Liyagalawumirri prove their ownership of the country and the ceremony.

In the Yolŋu area most Dhuwa clans appear to agree that the Wägilak travelled to Mirarrmiŋa where the Snake swallowed them. The Rirratjingu and Marrakulu of eastern northeast Arnhem Land (Berndt R.M. 1951; Morphy H. 1977a:133) and members of clans closely related to the Liyagalawumirri subscribe to the general outline of the Liyagalawumirri story. As we saw in Chapter 2, clans agree with the general outline of the story, but project their own maŋayin onto it: in the Wurrkiganydjarr version King Brown Snake, not Carpet Python, swallows the sisters.

It is possible that other clans on the Wägilak track — Yukul, Wägilak, and Manhdhalpuyŋu in Dhūthaŋu's version of the story — whose countries lie along Annie Creek and the Goyder River to the upper Woollen River, centre the final events in the story at their own countries.

Ownership of the ceremonies does not necessarily relate to the track of the Wägilak sisters however. It derives rather from possession of two maŋayin; Yuŋungur drone-pipe and the Yarrmalanydjji poles used in the Gunapipi.

Dhūthaŋu and his brother-in-law (for whom the ceremonies and maŋayin are 'mother') explained the distribution of ownership according to the journeys of Yuŋungur and Yarrmalanydjji; the names denote both sacred objects and wagarr.

These names are appropriate in discussions about the ownership of regional ceremonies because they are ambiguous. For one clan they mean Carpet Python, for another King Brown Snake, for another a Hollow Log Man.1 The clans are divided as follows:

1It is not clear whether all clans identify Yuŋungur drone-pipe with a Snake. The Gidjiŋali Djin-ngorla Hollow Log is a Being/Hollow Log in which Brown Snake lives (Clunies-Ross and Hiatt 1977:136).
Either way, the objects Yarrmalanydj and Yuñgur represent one or other Snake.

It is necessary to possess a right in such an object, grounded in a story of its genesis, in order legitimately to own the ceremony. Clans with different Giant Snakes and other mañyin can agree that Yuñgur is a mañyin and the transformation of a Being with the same name. By refraining from specifying their own beliefs about its origin in each other's presence and to what particular Being Yuñgur and Yarrmalayndji are equivalent to, clans from a wide region can agree that Yuñgur is a type of which all their individual Yuñgur are tokens, and hence they have one mañyin and one ceremony. The following schema illustrates the relations between particular Beings, the general Beings and the object:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Being</th>
<th>Being</th>
<th>Sacred object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpet Python,</td>
<td>Yuñgur</td>
<td>Yuñgur drone-pipe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Brown, or</td>
<td>Yarrmalanydj</td>
<td>Yarrmalanydj poles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other Snake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Dhintsu some of the clans in the Woollen River area possess Yuñgur and some do not:

- **Clans which possess Yuñgur**
  - Liyagalawumirri
  - Wurrkiganydjarr (Marrañu)
  - Malagañarrkañarr
  - Manhdhalpuñu

- **Clans which do not**
  - Murruguñ Wolkpuy
  - Djambarrpuñu
  - 'Burarra'

One Murruguñ Wolkpuy man however, privately claimed that Yuñgur lay in his country.

Those clans which do not possess the mañyin may not initiate a regional ceremony. Three of the qualified clans did so in my fieldwork period—Liyagalawumirri, Wurrkiganydjarr and Murruguñ of Mewinbi (who began the Djuqguwan described above with Dhintsu's help). It is possible that ownership changes over time, especially as one clan dies out and another takes over its country and mañyin. The distinction between true owners of the ceremonies and those who may use them is one to be found in connection with public and regional ceremonies alike. The ceremonies are nonetheless regional; they are 'for everyone', despite the fact that only some Dhuwa clans own them.
Many Dhuwa clans which do not possess Yuluŋgur or Yarrmalanydjii do possess other maŋayin relevant to the regional ceremonies, some of which are equivalent in meaning to Yuluŋgur and Yarrmalanydjii: Fish-trap which is equated with the Djapanban trestle and the Wägilak sisters' house, Cabbage Palm equated with the Giant Snake and Yarrmalanydjii (Plate 4.4), Two Women, and especially Giant Snakes¹ lying in their waters.

The Wägilak story explains how such objects became maŋayin. The Snake swallowed the women and all they possessed; house, dog, stone knives, dilly-bag, everything. The animals which went into the water became waŋarr belonging to clans in the area and which occur as dances in the ceremonies.

The interest of all Dhuwa clans finds its expression in the Wägilak story; all the Dhuwa clan Giant Snakes stand up from their waterholes and question Carpet Python about what he has eaten. In the version of the story recorded by R.M. Berndt (1951:24), the Snake affirms that all have the same ceremonies and share the maŋayin. Yuluŋgur says:

> Although our languages are slightly different, we all share the marelin, and have the same ceremonies.

In versions of the story recorded by both Warner (1937:248-258) and myself the Snakes which stand and question Carpet Python are those of most Dhuwa clans in the Woollen River region and to the east.

People outside the Yolŋu area do not subscribe to the Wägilak stories. Some Murruŋun people of the east bank of the upper Blyth River attending the Balpanarra Gunapipi said that the ceremony followed events in which warriors chased the Djaŋ'kawu sisters from their house. In the Mära version the Old Woman killed and ate the men who copulated with her daughters (Berndt R.M. 1951:145ff.).

Dhäthaŋu gave legitimacy to the Balpanarra Gunapipi in his explanation to his brother-in-law that the Djaŋ'kawu, not the Wägilak, made Balpanarra but that Yarrmalanydjii travelled there from the east. (The Snake related to Balpanarra is King Brown, although a place nearby has Carpet Python). Dhäthaŋu went on to refer to other places where Yarrmalanydjii stands (the Cabbage Palm 'shadow' of the Snake) and whose groups have ceremonies

¹The category motj properly includes crocodiles, but the translation 'Giant Snake' is more appropriate here than 'Giant Reptile'.
Plate 4.4 Three cabbage-palm trees at Đetjirima, Liyagalawumirri clan country. They are said to be the 'shadows' of the Giant Python.
similar to the Gunapipi.¹

Not only do the regional ceremonies transcend differences between local maḏayin but they also unite the moieties. Dhāthaŋu’s brother-in-law said that the Giant Snakes in Gunapipi are meaningful (mayall'mirri) for both Yirritja and Dhuwa. This remark can be interpreted in several ways: that the Snake 'swallows' initiands of both moieties in the Gunapipi; that Yirritja people can think of their Giant Snakes when they see the Yarrmalanydji poles;² or he may have been referring to the fact that subsections of both moieties are ascribed to the poles (see below).

To sum up: most, perhaps all clans in the Yolŋu area subscribe to the same general story. So far as they and their close kin are concerned Liyagalawumirri are the true owners of the ceremonies, but there are many others who have rights of ownership and use. Owning clans possess Yuŋangur and Yarrmalanydji. Possession of these objects extends beyond the Yolŋu area making possible the co-operation of peoples with different maḏayin. The ceremonies are meaningful to members of both moieties. The ceremonies are regional because they are instruments of more than local concern. Their enactment separates women from men and boys and youths from women.

SISTERS’ SONS: THE HELPERS

All the owning clans are Dhuwa. Yirritja people for whom the maḏayin and ceremonies are 'mother', that is whose mothers are of clans which own the ceremonies, are the workers and helpers. The senior of these sisters' ¹Dhāthaŋu mentioned Warrabri and Roper River where the Gadjari, similar to the Gunapipi, is performed.

The names of key elements in the Walbiri Gadjari ceremony, while similar to those used in northeast Arnhem Land, apply often to different objects; djapanba is the bullroarer not the trestle; gaŋala is the clearing not a trench (Meggitt 1966:182, 287). The two poles represent a vine and Carpet Snake. The names of objects in the Gunwinggu Gunapipi and Wubarr are similar to those in the northeast Arnhem Land Gunapipi and Njumarrk (Berndt R.M. and C.H. 1970:128, 141; also Berndt R.M. 1951:58).

sons (as I shall refer to men whose mothers belong to the owning clans) hold and look after the paraphernalia.\(^1\) This gives them influence in the organisation and leading roles in performance.

Each ceremony requires particular sets of objects (duttji):

- **Mandayala** — sticks and brolga-feather tufts, string, Gakambarr head-bands.
- **Gunapipi** — sticks and brolga-feather tufts, Gakambarr head-bands, Marralpiŋidi bullroarer.
- **Djuŋguwan** — Yuŋgur drone-pipe.
- **Njulmarrk** — Wubarr drum, other objects.

As the objects are essential to the performance of a ceremony, so the holder plays an important part in the preliminary decision-making.

The senior sisters' son of the Liyagalawumirri clan is also Dhäthaŋu's ZH. His clan is also in a sisters' child relation to another owning clan, the Wurrkiganydjarr; some of his sons' mothers are of this clan. This man and his sons hold feathers and bullroarer for the Mandayala and Gunapipi.

Dhäthaŋu consulted this man about performing the Mandayala. At one point the man refused to agree to perform the ceremony at a suggested time, whereupon Dhäthaŋu said angrily that it was his ceremony, he was the boss and he would go and fetch the feathers — but he did not.

A Wurrkiganydjarr clansman initiated a performance of the Gunapipi in 1976, and Dhäthaŋu's ZH and his son provided the bullroarer and other paraphernalia. After the ceremony these men handed the objects on to a Daygurrgurr man, also a sisters' son of the Liyagalawumirri clan, ready for the next occasion.

The sisters' son of the clan owning the Yuŋgur drone-pipe used in the Djuŋguwan ceremony described above, brought it from another outstation where it had been used previously and looked after it at Gamidi, keeping it wrapped in a clean cotton cloth in the brushwood shade.\(^2\)

The descriptions of the ceremonies showed that sisters' sons also take a leading part in singing and dancing, and make the paraphernalia.

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\(^1\)The terms waku (ZCh), qamini'waŋu ('boss of the breast') or gunga'yunamirri ('helper') all denote this role.

\(^2\)Gamidi is a Yirritja place belonging to people for whom the drone-pipe and its country are 'mother'.
The regional ceremonies enable people of both moieties from a wide area and with a variety of mañayin to co-operate on an even footing. People of many Dhuwa and Yirritja clans find an important mañayin among the dances and designs used in the ceremonies. People also relate to elements of a ceremony according to subsection and moiety, and this enables them to relate to one another and to have common relations in the ceremonies.1

Table 4.1 shows the names of the cottonwool-decorated designs and dances of the three ceremonies and their moiety and subsection affiliations where known. Table 4.2 shows the conventional mañayin associations of the subsections. Giant Snakes of both moieties are represented. Others include the cloud, thunder and lightning that the Giant Snake made; Cabbage Palm which is equivalent to the Snakes, and the Yarrmalanyndji poles in Gunapipi; also various animal waqarr which the Wágilak collected on their journey and which entered the waterhole (see story Chapter 2).

Most clans (perhaps all) have one important mañayin represented. In practice, dancers may perform their own, their 'M's' or their 'MM's' clan dance and wear that design. At the Mañayala for example, one of the two sisters' sons of the requester of the ceremony danced Dog because it is his clan waqarr. The other Dog dancer was of a different clan which has the same waqarr.

Various elements of the ceremonies are assigned to subsections. Each of the two Giant Snakes in the form of Yarrmalanyndji poles and engravings on the pit walls belongs to one of four subsections, two of each moiety. Hence they are 'meaningful' in Wujulu's words, to both Yirritja and Dhuwa. The Djapanban trestle belongs to two subsections of each moiety; the Djuqguwan songs and all the cottonwool designs and related dances belong to subsections.

People express the owner/helper relations in subsection terms also; Njarritj and Banađi (Yirritja) help Gamarran and Balanq (Dhuwa); Gadjak and Bulany (Yirritja) help Wämut and Burralaŋ (Dhuwa). As we have seen, moiety roles are distinct especially in the Gunapipi.

1Warner's informant (1937:284) said that they dance Kangaroo many times in the Djuqguwan in order to include all the countries where it is a mañayin ('has totems').
Table 4.1: Cottonwool body-designs used at four ceremonies.

| Design                  | Moiety | Subsection | Gunpipi at Balparra | Gunpipi in Woollen River area | Marayala at Mangala | Djungwan at Gami
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpet Python</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Brown Snake</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File Snake</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crocodile</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snake faeces</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snake eggs</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunder cloud</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightning</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycad Palm</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage Palm</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Knife</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brolga</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egret</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>{ Balarq</td>
<td>Gamarranq</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catfish</td>
<td></td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-nosed Honeybee</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willy Wagtail</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>Gadjak X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyster</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>{ Narritj</td>
<td>Balarq</td>
<td>X X X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leech</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallaby</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>Burralaq X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghost</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Cherry</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish-trap</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breasts</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilly-bag</td>
<td>Dh</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duţtjij</td>
<td></td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Subsections and their cottonwool designs and dances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moiety</th>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Species/design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narritj</td>
<td>Narritjjan</td>
<td>kangaroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gadjak</td>
<td>Gutjan</td>
<td>chicken hawk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lizzard sp.</td>
<td>willy wagtail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Djirribidjirribi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bañadi</td>
<td>Bañaditjan</td>
<td>emu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulany</td>
<td>Bulanydj an</td>
<td>'cooked' kangaroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balarq</td>
<td>Bilindjan</td>
<td>white-breasted sea-eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wàmut</td>
<td>Wàmutjan</td>
<td>black-breasted buzzard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>black-nosed kangaroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>agile wallaby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>rock wallaby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamarranq</td>
<td>Gamandjan</td>
<td>wedge-tailed eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many maŋayin in the regional ceremonies are common to the versions of different areas, as we see from the cottonwool design and related dances used at the Balpanararra and at the Gàŋtiŋ Gunapipi performances (Table 4.1). Giant Reptiles, Cabbage Palm, Stone Knife and Brolga are held in common; Fish-trap is significant to both. Other designs are of more local concern.

All who attend Gunapipi do not however agree on the meaning and origin of the ceremony, as we have seen. There would appear to be a problem where people with different beliefs need to co-operate to perform a ceremony.

The problem is resolved by the suppression in public of specific interpretations. Men refer only to 'the Giant Snake', not to Carpet Python or King-Brown; to 'those two women' not to the Wàgilak or Djaŋ'kawu. The dances represent Dog, Cabbage Palm etc. but do not specify a precise location.

Men from different areas can sing together in all the regional ceremonies. Djäwa said that one may hear the same songs from Mainoru to Croker Island. The songs are in no Yolŋu language, indeed they are in no language at all. Some song-words resemble Yolŋu words, some are the names of objects used in the ceremony whose meaning varies in any case. The songs are thus capable of a multiplicity of interpretations (see Keen 1977b).

The people from the east bank of upper Blyth River told me that the ceremony followed the events in which warriors chased the Djaŋ'kawu from their house. For Dhäţhaŋu it all came from the Wàgilak; for the Ranybarrŋu present it came from Nagurrku (Peterson n.d., and see also Chapter 2).

At the Balpanararra Gunapipi three styles of Gudjika songs were in evidence.¹ The texts were similar, allowing for phonemic differences; the tunes were distinct. The non-specificity of their meaning, except for those naming other elements such as Yarrmalanydji, allowed co-operation on a regional scale.

As R.M. Berndt notes (1951:17) the songs are unlike other Yolŋu songs, constituting what he describes as 'key patterns'. Meggitt also shows

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¹Niniru, which Dhäţhaŋu and some Cape Stewart people sang; Nagurrku which the Ranybarrŋu sang; and Malgarrigarri which Gunadba and other groups from the Balpanararra area sang.
(1966:200) that the meaning of Gadjari songs, which are similar to Gunapipi songs and not anchored in ordinary language, are liable to reinterpretation.

According to the Yolŋu the Gunapipi has the effect of uniting the population of the region. A woman wrote to me after a Gunapipi at Gaŋtji saying that everyone was very happy that they had got together to make the old law. Warner's informant told him (1937:296-297):

The making of one mob in a dance is all the same as making one people out of all those people from Gunabibi.

THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN AND ADMISSION OF BOYS

Men of the region unite to exclude women from and admit boys and youths into the esoteric parts of the ceremonies. They protect the exclusiveness of the esoteric aspects with mystical and physical sanctions. Women are thereby excluded from gaining the knowledge and mystical powers which lend older men authority. The early induction of youths and the modes in which knowledge is transmitted prevent young men combining to rebel against the authority of the older men.

Women and children do not participate in men's business nor do they observe it. The men's ceremonial ground is set apart from the main camp and the boundary is imbued with danger for the women. This separation allows the women and children to hear and observe only what the men intend.

Men tell the women that the sound of the bullroarer, drone-pipe or drum that they hear is the noise of the Giant Snake. The men's call and the women's ululated reply maintain contact but allows little information to pass. The women see the men's body decorations as they emerge from the ground, but are not supposed to know their meaning.

Men protect the exclusiveness of the Inside domain by applying two main sanctions, the threats of sorcery and of violence, both of which may result in death. The men earnestly tell the novices in all the regional ceremonies that what they see is not a game, they must not reproduce in play what they see and hear, nor tell women and younger people about these things. If they do, they will die by sorcery or the spear.

¹Morphy H. (1977a:143) notes that women know much of what goes on at the men's ground. This knowledge accentuates their lack of control of events, which women (the Wāgilak) once had.
Women show great fear of approaching the Inside ground. They left the public camp altogether while the Inside dances of the Djunguwan were under way, towards evening sending a boy from time to time to see if it was safe to return.

The men formally and deliberately take novices to the regional ceremonies and impart knowledge to them. Novices 'enter' the Inside ground.

Age is one criterion for a male's admission; kinship relationship to the ceremonies is another. Although people say that anyone in the area can participate, in practice the major participants have a close kinship relation to the ceremonies which belong to their own clan or that of their M, MM or MMM.

I do not know what proportion of the appropriate age group became novices in the regional ceremonies. Certainly the sons of men who led the Gunapipi, that is boys whose clans are its owners and who are related in the above ways, were the first to enter the ceremony at Milingimbi in 1977. The attendance figures suggest that the majority generally enter the Gunapipi. According to Warner (1937:291) all boys eventually would enter.

I have distinguished between novices and initiands for circumcision. There were at least two of each in the Manidayala described above. The initiands did not enter the Inside place; the women decorated them. The men decorated the two novices of about fifteen or sixteen who came with close male relatives and then participated in the Snake dance. The ceremony was 'MM' to one of them.

Circumcision initiates are also novices in the Djunguwan. They witness the Inside phases of the ceremony along with other novices. The men line them up at the end of the dance-ground and turn them around to see each dance in turn. A Djunguwan initiate may take the name Djiwađa.

As the Gunapipi ceremony occurs only every seven years or so in the Woollen River area most novices (called wari or ronjai) are aged between twelve and twenty. Gakawarr messengers capture them at the settlements and outstations; they take them to the main Inside ground or to the Inside ground at another settlement or outstation where a parallel preparatory performance might be under way. There the men paint them with red ochre, making them sacred (dhuyu). The sacred group may not
leave the Inside ground until the ceremony is over, except to move to the main ground from a satellite ground.

Once inside the novices are subjected to peremptory and curt instructions by the mature men — to refrain from laughing, to hide under blankets, to get up and watch. One middle aged man said that it was a very bad ceremony for this reason.

Dhāthaṉu explained that the novices hear Gudjika songs first, later Djūmaluŋ songs. On the last day they are 'cooked', that is showered with sparks, to 'make them good' or 'finish them off' (gupa-ŋamathama).1

The novices join the rest of the sacred group for the Ant and Snake dance. Young boys are taken by the Snake dancers from their mothers at the Djapanban Trestle; they will later be inducted as novices into the ceremony. At their second ceremony the novices will be allowed to join the sacred group in singing the Djūmaluŋ songs around the pit (older novices may do so at their first ceremony); and after three ceremonies or so a man may wear cottonwool designs and dance.2

Many prospective Gunapipi novices are unwilling. Rumour has it that several boys escaped to Elcho Island dressed as girls to avoid the Gāṭtji Gunapipi in 1977.

Circumcision initiands and novices are subjected to all sorts of tricks and curt orders. Yolŋu children are very independent before initiation; initiation shows them that they are at the very bottom in a hierarchy of knowledge.

Young men who have been admitted to the ceremonies gradually acquire the knowledge and abilities requisite for higher roles. Leaders of the ceremonies — owners, ZSs, ZDSs — teach their own and each others' sons about the ceremonies and the songs. Dhāthaṉu often told his fourteen year-old 'son' that he must learn all the ceremonies so that he could take over when his 'father' died. Dhāthaṉu took him into the Djunguwan described above and the Gunapipi the following year.

A senior sisters' son was in the process of teaching his twenty year-old son the Mandayala songs (this ceremony occurs frequently). The young

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1The verb denotes in addition the effect achieved by painting the chests of circumcision initiands, or the dead, with ḟikan designs (see Chapter 5). Yolŋu often translate it as 'say goodbye'.

2An elder must first rub under-arm sweat on the person's knees. Similar actions are the common prelude to an assumption of powers.
A man was a novice in the 1977 Gunapipi but joined in singing the Djamaļuŋ songs a few days after he entered. He and other young men sang with their fathers during various phases of the Maŋdayala.

In Maŋdayala the bachelors dance through the night. Older bachelors learn the songs and pass out of the dancers' role. Mature men lead the singing when the old men are tired in the middle of the night. Old men who are leaders direct the proceedings, call the Ḑikan names, and lead the singing in the crucial phases.

In each of the ceremonies the leading roles in singing and dancing fall to those who know the songs and dances adequately. Since the Gunapipi is infrequent only those in their middle twenties and beyond have such knowledge, reinforced by participation in performances in other areas.

Age-related roles are similar in the Maŋdayala and Gunapipi but in Djuŋguwan the mature and old men sing and the old men direct.

The hierarchy of roles then is stratified by age and knowledge; the oldest men have the most influence and the greatest authority. Levels of competence and authority in general are related to age.

It is the oldest men of owning clans who have the greatest rights to organise the ceremonies and to reveal information about them. These rights are jealously guarded. Men with lesser rights are reluctant to discuss a ceremony in the presence of those with stronger rights by virtue of age or relationship to the ceremony. When the men who requested the Maŋdayala began to tell me about it Dhathaŋqu was offended, saying that it was his ceremony and he would tell me himself.

Women are not permitted to obtain the knowledge necessary to attain controlling roles. The Wāgilak story explains how women lost the ceremonies to men. They 'sat in the wrong place' as Dhathaŋqu put it, the Snake swallowed them and men took over the songs and dances which the Wāgilak had performed to stop the Snake and the rain.¹

The regional ceremonies and the Jārra do not constitute a rigid system of initiation stages. A young man does not have to go through one before seeing another, except that all have to be circumcised. Some see the

¹In Warner's version of the story (1937:259) the sisters appeared to the men in a dream and taught them the ceremonies.
Gunapipi before the Nārra, others see the Nārra first. Others especially at Milingimbi go into the Gunapipi never having seen Manḍayala, which is regularly performed at Nāngalala but not at Milingimbi.

The early induction of young men into the religious life, in which such a clear hierarchy of authority prevails, is one of the conditions which prevent young men from uniting in rebellion against the authority of the old. The 'vertical' transmission of knowledge by a young man's father or other close older kinsman (e.g. MB, MMB, FB) rather than by the peer-group is another. Yet another is the age difference between siblings with the same father and the authority of older siblings. This range of age difference comes from the wide difference in ages between the first and last wives of a man with several wives. The older brothers may be mature even elderly adults when the youngest are infants. All these conditions militate against the formation of rebellious peer groups of young men. I recorded only one case of young men striking a venerable old man; they were drunk and the incident provoked considerable outrage.

Young men are unable to escape the old men's authority by turning to an alternative way of life. On the contrary, disadvantages attend exclusion from the religious life.

I do not have direct evidence of total exclusion from a regional ceremony, but I did see the old men prevent a young man from performing the Dog dance in Manḍayala, despite the fact that it was his maḍayin and that he was the requester's sisters' son. He had persisted in a liaison with a girl who was not only in the wrong relation to him (his waku, 'ZCh') but who was promised to a member of the most powerful clan in the area. The senior sisters' son for the ceremony gave the task to his own son and the above young man's brother. This case illustrates the way in which a man's rights can be curtailed and advancement through the hierarchy of role closed, if he fails to toe the line. One case of complete exclusion occurred during a Nārra (see Chapter 8).

Exclusion from normal participation then is a form of punishment which may have lifelong consequences. I conjecture that a man excluded from one or more major ceremonies has less chance of being allocated wives.

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1European towns provide an alternative for some, but the disadvantages are such that few choose to live there permanently, though many visit towns regularly.
or of becoming a religious leader.¹

A CLOSED SOCIETY

In this section I will try to show that young men cannot seek alternative ways of life among adjacent communities in order to escape the older men's authority, since the religious community has no clearly defined border; it extends beyond the individual's normal range of social relationships. People can move and seek opportunities in other communities, but conditions there would be very similar to those in their own.

A comparison of estimated attendances with population figures gives some indication of the proportion of the community involved in the regional ceremonies, and the area upon which a performance draws. The results show that the ceremonies are indeed regional and admit no radical alternatives.

Attendance varies with the prestige of the organiser, the length of the performance and the type of ceremony.

To estimate the proportion of the adult population engaged in the regional ceremonies, I have compared in Table 4.3 the estimated attendance figures with approximate adult populations of the areas upon which each performance drew. Although the figures should be treated with a great deal of caution, they do indicate that Manidayala and Djuqguwan are of concern mainly to the relatives of the initiands and the main owners of the ceremony. The largest funerals draw a slightly higher proportion of the local population than the Manidayala and Djuqguwan, but Gunapipi clearly involves nearly the whole adult population.²

Figure 4.1 shows the main participants in the Manidayala according to clan. They include members of the several owning clans, their ZCh and ZDCh, besides the requesters and their ZCh. Because of the regional basis for ownership of the ceremony it involves more people than just the kin of the initiands.

The catchment area for each ceremony overlapped. Many of the people at the Balpanarra Gunapipi went to the one at Gaṭṭji

¹Mūri (MN/MMB) is the person who exercises some degree of control over a child rather than mother or father. In later life male mūri is a young man's ally in obtaining wives.

²The largest funeral I have witnessed drew a little less than 30 per cent of the adult population.
near Milingimbi. Many of those who attended the Manjangala went to the Djuunguwan.

Table 4.3: Estimated proportion of local adult population attending regional ceremonies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceremony and location</th>
<th>Djuunguwan at Gamidi</th>
<th>Manjangala at Nangaala</th>
<th>Gunapipi at Balpanarra</th>
<th>Gunapipi at Gattji</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approx. adult population (over 16 years) within 50 km of location of ceremony.</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. adult attendance.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of population attending</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The religious community does not therefore consist of closed congregations, but extends beyond the limits of any individual's possible social range. The individual could join no alternative system to escape the obligations of, nor to compensate for exclusion from his own system.¹

THE BASIS OF OLD MEN'S AUTHORITY

The early induction of young boys into the religious life and the absence of alternatives does not explain why young and mature men continue to engage in it and to recognise the authority of older men. Since old men do not command physical power the basis for their authority has to be examined.

I suggest that this basis lies in the ceremonies' association with cosmic powers. They are not concerned with trivial matters. People emphasize that men did not think up the ceremonies; they came from the supernatural Beings and people simply follow what was laid down.

Supernatural Beings have, in Yolngu belief, essentially creative as well as dangerous powers. They are the source of powers both human and

¹Christianity does not appear to offer an alternative. Most Yolngu Christians adhere to both systems. Men who have been brought up by missionaries and adopted a Christian ethic are often placed in a situation of great conflict, even when they abandon their whole culture and leave the area.
Figure 4.1: Clans of the main participants in the Man dayala ceremony.
cosmic. People hold that ceremonies are not simply re-enactments of past events but are the means of operating with supernatural powers for good or ill. Supernatural Beings are believed to be present at them.

The powers of the supernatural Beings reside moreover in the sacred objects used in ceremonies. The sacred drone-pipe Yułuŋgur used in the Djuŋguwan and Bukubuŋ ceremonies is the 'shadow' of the supernatural Being. Therein lies its importance. Men treat it with due care and reverence and guard it at night. Mature and old men handle and dance with the object, reveal it formally to novices and allow them to touch it. As an instrument in dances it carries a heavy emotional load.¹

For the Liyagalawumirri clan Yułuŋgur is the secret name of the Carpet Python which travelled from place to place and which lies in the deep waters at Mirrarrmina. The place is considered to be so dangerous that people will not camp nearby. The spirits of the dead may inhabit Yułuŋgur drone-pipe; when the men at the Djuŋguwan were having difficulties in sounding it they treated the pipe with under-arm sweat and smoking leaves, to drive out the spirit of a deceased father who they thought was jealously holding it to himself.²

According to some men the spirits of the Giant Snakes inhabit the Yarrmalanydji poles in Gunapipi and return to the waters when the poles are broken up. At the end of the ceremony the male participants wipe the poles with their hands 'to receive power' (cf. Berndt R.M. 1951:33; Meggitt 1966:210; Warner 1937:264).³

People attribute creative and destructive powers to the Carpet Python waŋarr. Dh'athaug told me that Carpet Python is his 'father' and 'father's father' who created the Liyagalawumirri clan and country, and who bore the Daygurrgurr Gupapuyŋu clan. As we saw in Chapter 2 waŋarr are the ultimate agents in spiritual impregnation.

According to the women, all but older women must sit with their knees

¹The slow clapstick rhythm, the continuous rumbling of the drone-pipe itself, the solemn falling tune of the songs; combine with the gradual emergence of the crawling dancers from the shade, holding the object as a precious thing, to produce a highly charged emotional effect.

²Warner's informants told him that Yułuŋgur's spirit entered the blood which men let in the ceremonies after they had sounded the drone-pipe over it. The blood makes men strong, and is equated with the menstrual blood of the Wägilak (1937:277, 278).

³According to Warner men attributed the Inside ground itself, especially the old men's camp, with power (döl).
together during the nightly singing and dancing at the Gunapipi to prevent impregnation by supernatural agencies, which they believe to be present at the Inside ground.

Serious violations of the rules of proper conduct during a ceremony may result in a display of the destructive powers of the Giant Snake. After a fight at the Gunapipi described above, Dhäthaqu wept and demanded that I take him away from the ground to the outstation several kilometres away, because he feared that the Giant Snake would cause a torrential downpour of rain. He had chased one of the malefactors who ran into the nearby lake right up to his knees. It is likely that because the man was in some sort of polluted state from fighting, or because he was 'sacred' as a participant at the Inside ground, Dhäthaqu believed the Giant Snake in the water would detect his presence just as the Carpet Python detected the birth-blood of the Wägilak.

Dhäthaqu returned only when other leaders said the place was good again. The malefactors had 'paid back the earth' to the tune of twenty-five tins of tobacco, which were probably shared among the leaders.

Similarly, men hold that circumcision initiates may not touch the ground with their bodies until the wounds heal or the Giant Snake will cause it to rain. Boys have to sit on blankets and touch the ground only with pointed sticks held in each hand.

Since the supernatural Beings are the source of the social and moral order, and since objects representing their transformations are imbued with their power, the authority of older men derives, I suggest, from their control of affairs in which these powers and these objects are believed to be present. They are able to receive the power in a way unavailable to women or anyone else who is excluded, by handling the sacred objects and formerly by eating sacred food.¹

The threat of force and of ensorcellment protects the good order of the ceremonies themselves and the monopoly of older men over supernatural power. Leaders told the men who got drunk and fought at the Gunapipi that they would ensorcell them; a month or so later I heard that one of the offenders was ill in hospital with pneumonia, which some attributed to the punishment.

¹Grey hair is thought to be caused by a man's contact with the power of the warrarr at a sacred waterhole.
The fundamental nature of the powers and the structure of the cosmic order is similar for both the adept and the uninitiated. Their relative position vis-à-vis the supernatural Beings is different but this difference does not undermine belief. From the men's point of view the Snake is present at the ceremony in spirit and the old men are close to it, being closer to death and to the realm of the waŋarr. Men and boys have access to this power in varying degrees (see Munn 1969:193).

The public version of the events at the Inside ground in the Gunapipi is that the Giant Snake swallows and regurgitates the novices (see Warner 1937:285, 292); therefore the women wail when their sons are taken into the ceremony. I do not know how literally most women take the public version. It is certain that some mature women know what really happens, for their husbands have told them.¹

Learning that the Snake is not actually present does not apparently undermine credence, for the appearance of the dancers and objects lends substance to belief. Wuļuļu described his reactions on first seeing Yarrmalanydjji poles in the Gunapipi:

The first time I saw them I was frightened and I wanted to run away. My father said 'If you run away he will eat you'. I thought it was Carpet Python walking upright on his feet. 'Don't run away, that is our mother whose custom it is to eat us' my father said.² So I believe in that Being which ate the women; and the Djunguwan is true too (cf. Warner 1937:305).

The dances present a pantheon of waŋarr, as men which act as animals, birds etc. In the Gunapipi the novices see the waŋarr going into the ground (entering the pit). In Djunguwan the dancers approach the novices and stare fiercely at them — a sign of anger and dangerous power (maŋakarr̃itj). The dances show men as kangaroos scratching and hopping, Ghosts searching for honey, dogs hunting and so on. These enactments tally with Yolŋu conceptions of the nature of the supernatural Beings. As Djäwa said (see Chapter 2) the waŋarr were animals but men.³

¹ I am indebted to Mrs Trudi Gröneberg for this information. In any case the women refer to the men at Gunapipi as 'snakes' and see them dance Snake in the public phase.

² Wuļuļu is Daygurrgurr; his mother and wife are Liyagalawumirri; the latter clan thus 'eats' (i.e. 'mates with') Daygurrgurr.

³ A woman's description of a waŋarr spirit closely corresponds to the appearance of the regional ceremony dancers.
THEME AND FUNCTION

The themes of the ceremonies reflect the region-wide concern with separation of the moieties, moiety exogamy, the exclusion of women and the induction of boys. I would argue that the embedding of the categories and norms in the supernatural lends them authority and weight. Each ceremony has a distinct theme and a distinct character.¹

Ma nga la has a certain levity. The main dances portray the Snake swallowing the Wägilak and boys, and Dog sniffing the regurgitated bodies. In the longest section the young men display their endurance by dancing all night as the songs follow the journey of the Wägilak.

Djuŋguwan is serious, like the När ra to which it bears a close resemblance. Yuḷuŋgur connects the incorporation of the dead into the domain of the waŋarr, with the incorporation of boys into manhood (see also Chapter 7). In the view of people in eastern northeast Arnhem Land the spirits of the dead come to the ceremony, reside in the sacred objects (djuwany posts) and enter the novices. Some designs equate waŋarr and human fertility; in the Marrakulu story the Wägilak (Wawilak) leave spirit children on their journey, represented in designs as white dots (Morphy H. 1977a:136-138).

People at Nanga la did not make such an explicit connection between waŋarr spirits or spirits of the dead and novices, nor did they emphasise fertility. One of Warner's informants (1937:280-281) did state that the spirits of the dead who return to the ceremony send spirit children to the women. It is perhaps significant that this was probably a Warramiri man, and the Djuŋguwan of his area is like that of the east, in which djuwany posts are used.

The Milingimbi version of the Gunapi ceremony is not concerned with species increase or with ensuring human fertility, themes which R.M. Berndt (1951:14, 33)² considers are common to the Gunapi irrespective of region.

¹Munn (1969) has made a sophisticated interpretation of the relation between the meaning of the myth and ceremonies, the exclusion of women and the induction of boys.

²As R.M. Berndt (1951:15) notes, the Wägilak are not associated with fertility. Nevertheless his informants (1951:39) stressed fertility, increase and continuity of the seasons in a way which people at Milingimbi did not. The Walbiri Gadjari has the purpose of increase (Meggitt 1966:292).
Neither is there any evidence that the Yolŋu seek to ensure the continuity of the seasons as Warner argues (1937:395-6). Rather it seems to be concerned with proper marriage and legitimate reproduction as well as masculine power and authority. Warner's informant told him (1937:385):

Black men walk about single, and by and by catch a mate belong him and by and by yoto (children).

If the Wägilak had not done wrong everyone and all the animals and plants would have stayed single — the Wägilak 'made this new law for everyone' (1937:297).

Representatives and analogues of copulation recur, and sexual roles are mapped onto the moieties. Possum is Yirritja and the dance portrays male Possums (both sexes in Warner's version (1937:296)). The (libidinous) Women are Dhuwa, their mate is not shown. Only the 'Willy Wagtails copulating' dance shows both partners but the actions are identical to the Women dance. Dhuwa men dance on the Inside ground, Yirritja men are the workers. The women divide into moieties in their dance at the Mołk, a vulva-shaped trench.

The story also stresses the sexual roles of the moieties. According to Wułuwu, the reason why the Snake became sick and regurgitated the women and their children was because both eater and eaten were 'one body', Dhuwa. 'If they had been Yirritja it would have been alright' (see also Warner 1937:257).

The dancers who portray the Snake are predominantly the warrior (miriŋu) group of young men. Maćakarrirrj (fierce danger), is the quality of fighting men and of some waŋarr, especially the Giant Snakes. The Snakes then may also be an analogue of the power and danger of men as fighters (cf. Munn 1969:193). The purpose of all the ceremonies is the making and subjugating of young men. Figuratively, the Snake swallows boys and young men and regurgitates them as initiate and adepts. Women may not be 'swallowed', for the Wägilak have already been swallowed and women have lost the possibility of gaining power (Munn ibid.:133). The

1I discuss Warner's interpretation of the Snake as an aspect of nature-symbolism in Chapter 9.

2C.H. Berndt (1970:1324) points out that in the women's versions of the story which she has recorded it is the Snake rather than the Wägilak which commits incest.
Giant Snakes are ubiquitous because making young men and separating them from the women is of concern to all clans (see Hiatt 1971).

INTEGRATION OF A CLAN'S LAW

For the Liyagalawumirri clan itself the Gunapipi ceremony has particular significance. The Carpet Python is the clan's 'big father' and so was the bullroarer which comes from the Snake. The bullroarer is 'the ashes of the fathers who bred' the Liyagalawumirri clan. Carpet Python created the clan.

For the Liyagalawumirri and related clans the ceremonies' elements are woven into one system of meaning. Yarrmalanydji is the Carpet Python; the bullroarer and digging-sticks come from it (see also Berndt R.M. 1951: 44); both are the clan's 'big father'. The trestle is the Wägilak sisters' house; the Fish-trap is the one they made at the 'bottom country' Dëtjirima.1 The Buwa trench is the creek the sisters followed on their journey, and the Gañala is a waterhole made by Yarrmalanydji. The fire thrown at the novices and at the poles is the lightning made by the Snake. The Yarrmalanydji poles themselves are equivalent to Cabbage Palms which the Snake first made. The women's Molk ground-sculpture represents the house of the Wägilak (see Berndt R.M. 1955:38-9).

The Liyagalawumirri clan integrates the regional ceremonies with its public ceremonies and rænga. I can do no more than hint at the way this is achieved. Many of the clan's public songs are of ma càyin significance in the regional ceremonies. The ground-sculptures represent Carpet Python's waterhole and the track made where he fell. Rænga represent the forked-sticks and rail of the Wägilak sisters' house.

Quite distinct Liyagalawumirri ceremonies are integrated. The public songs tell how Mewal the Ghost hunts for honey in the hollow stringybark tree; Long-nosed Honeybee gathers nectar from stringybark-tree flowers; stringybark is used for the house and rails of the Wägilak; the

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1 Warner's informants (1937:310) equated the ridge-pole with the Snake. Both Ridge-pole and Uprights are, like Yulungur, Liyagalawumirri clan rænga (see Reser 1977).
CONCLUSION

I have suggested in this chapter that men's authority rests on the importance granted to the ceremonies which they control. The ceremonies are important because of their supposed source in the supernatural Beings and because in performing them people feel themselves to be in direct contact with the Beings' power. The division of the ceremonies into esoteric and exoteric aspects and the exclusion of women from the former, restricts access to power and authority largely to men.

Men in charge of the store, senior school teachers and councillors do not derive any comparable authority from these positions; on the contrary, people tend to belittle such roles.

Warner (1937:394) has framed a similar argument: that male superordination is made a 'mystery' by its connection with a sanction to control 'the profane and less sacred elements of society'.

Most young men have no alternative but to engage in religious activities. The threat of exclusion is a sanction against deviant behaviour because failure to enter the ceremonies may affect a person's chances in all aspects of his life.

The imposition of these sanctions is in the hands of the mature and old men in consultation with older women, who can apply them for infractions in any sphere. In this way the authority of the men extends from the religious sphere to secular affairs.¹

¹Milgram's study (1974) of authority and obedience suggests that people are strongly disposed to obey people they consider by their demeanour and the total setting to be in authoritative positions.
Offences against these very men who are a young man's allies and benefactors in promised marriage are likely to seriously disadvantage him in his search for wives.

I have suggested also that because young men enter the religious life so young and are taught by their older kin, they are unlikely to combine to rebel against the older men. They do not combine to prevent old men from acquiring young wives,\(^1\) thus satisfying one of the conditions for age-related polygyny.

By embedding the moiety division in the supernatural domain,\(^2\) the organisation and ideology of the ceremonies reinforce the separation of moieties and the rule of moiety exogamy which, I have argued, are necessary for the Yolŋu system of betrothal.

A statement by one of Warner's informants concerning the Djuŋguwan (1937:280) supports this hypothesis:

No man made these songs. Those two women made them to keep the two lines (Yirritja and Dua moieties) sacred — to keep marriage straight.

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\(^1\)In the Darwin fringe camp Sansom studied (1978) the young men did combine to prevent an old man keeping a young promise. Here the old men do not apparently control the young through esoteric initiation ceremonies.

\(^2\)The Walbiri Gadjari is organised on moiety lines also whereas other ceremonies are on a cult lodge basis (Meggitt 1966:203).
Chapter 5

PUBLIC CEREMONIES
INTRODUCTION

The ceremonies discussed in the previous chapter seem to deal with matters affecting the whole region: the basis of men's authority, the exclusion of women from access to power and knowledge, control over young men. I found that the principles of organisation are on a regional rather than a clan basis; sex, moiety and subsection are the prominent principles of role allocation. The regional ceremonies do not serve to define any clan; a number of clans own them, their content is general, their form relatively invariant. The public ceremonies which are the concern of this chapter do define clans and also proclaim the clan identity of individual people. Clans form many cross-cutting relationships through the public ceremonies; their identity remains clear none the less.

An act called gupa-ŋamathama forms the core of Circumcision and mortuary ceremonies. In it men adorn the body of the initiand or the body or coffin of the deceased with red ochre, a painting of the ranga, and waŋa feathered cords. The phrase gupa-ŋamathama is difficult to translate; it has a meaning something like 'make good' or 'do up'. The act demonstrates the individual's connection to his clan ranga, waŋarr and country or to those of his māri. The person is in fact decorated like the ranga. We shall see that songs and dances also serve to reiterate the individual's clan membership and his relation to particular places.

Each clan owns a body of songs, dances, designs and objects which, through joint ownership, forms a connection with several sets of clans. I show in this chapter that through joint ownership not all clans have control over their ceremonial life. The men of one clan may control the ceremonial affairs of several others. Power and high status also find their expression in the size and elaboration of public ceremonies.

1Nàmathama on its own means 'make right', 'make good'; ŋamakurrru is 'good', 'excellent'. The addition of gupa- shows that the verb applies to a particular person as in gupa-biŋi'yun, 'to paint-up' — but biŋi'yun 'paint'.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mortuary ceremonies</th>
<th>See text.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circumcision initiation</td>
<td>Brief description:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cry and Wake</td>
<td>Women wail and hit their heads with sharp objects. Men display aggression and desire to avenge death. Close female relatives sit or lie by the body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gupa-djuyun, gupa-yänguma (say goodbye)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body-painting</td>
<td>Male relatives paint a jikanbuy design on the chest, unless the person is of no account; the hair is pulled out to be made into hair belts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gupa-ŋamathama (make good)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purification (see below)</td>
<td>Those who have handled the dead purify themselves with ochre, smoke and water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial</td>
<td>The body is placed in a shallow grave or on a platform or tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke Purification</td>
<td>After songs, a smoky fire is lit in a ground-sculpture to chase away the spirit. People are patted with smoky leaves. The place where death occurred may be put under restriction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daŋa, man'tjarr (mangrove leaves)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rag (modern name)</td>
<td>Small pieces of the dead person's belongings are burnt in a fire after songs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yindi man'tjarr (big leaf-ceremony)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing Purification</td>
<td>Songs, then ritual washing in a large ground-sculpture in which leaves are placed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buku-łup liya-łupthun</td>
<td>A brief ceremony, sometimes with songs and dances. The body is exhumed and the flesh cleaned off the bones; followed by purifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(head-wash). wannaŋirr (leaf)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhumation bukubut</td>
<td>To songs and dances the men red-ochre the bones and give them to female relatives to look after and carry. The skull was often painted with a jikanbuy design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation bukubut</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollow Log dupun (hollow-log) Djaŋumbu, Daymirri etc.</td>
<td>An elaborate ceremony with songs and dances, at which the men crush the bones and place them in a decorated hollow cylinder, placed upright and abandoned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange ceremonies marradjirri (ceremonial string, pole) Banđarra, Garayurrwu, Djurrpung, Baŋumbirr etc.</td>
<td>After a child makes its first 'gift' a group sends a string to a distant group requesting an Exchange ceremony. The requesters make a tall pole with strings attached and present it in song and dance, using particular song-series and dances (Morning Star, Evening Star), at an agreed place to those who requested it. The latter break up the pole later and incorporate the string in arm-bands and madayin dilly-bags. The Morning Star and Mast ceremonies were used in mortuary ceremonies also.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE GENRE

The genre described in this chapter consists of garma or 'public' ceremonies. All have the same basic constituents; the many garma series of songs and their related designs and objects (see Warner 1937:417). Table 5.1 shows the categories of public ceremonies, using Yolgu terms with English translation, and includes a brief description of each one.

Just as ceremonies which the Yolgu classify as 'of the secret side' are not entirely secret, so the public or 'outside' ceremonies are not held entirely in public. The major difference lies in the construction for the secret ceremonies of a men's dance ground far from the camp. The men perform some parts of the public ceremonies in the camp but away from the women and children; they prepare the Exchange ceremony pole or Hollow Log coffin in a secluded shade, later to reveal it in public. They decorate circumcision initiands some yards from where the women sit. The Maŋgayala ceremony is similar in these respects; the preparation takes place in seclusion, the performance in public. It does not belong to the garma genre however; its songs, dances and designs are similar to the Gunapipi.

The name of an object which is a prominent feature of a ceremony, the root of a verb denoting a key action in it, or an epithet describing what it accomplishes; all these indicate categories of public ceremony. Djaļumbu and Ŋaymirri are the names of two Hollow Log coffins and the ceremonies in which they feature. Banumburr (Morning Star) and Djurrpün (Evening Star) are the names of two Exchange ceremonies, the poles which are given in each, and the natural objects the poles represent.

Table 5.2 shows some typical reasons given for performing public ceremonies, where known, and brief descriptions given by Yolgu people. Some ceremonies are performed for a formal reason such as a request; others follow an unpredicated event such as a death. When a death occurs people grieve (warguguyun) and 'want to cry', and certain relatives of the deceased enter a state called wukini, which entails avoidance. One man explained the motives of people who went to the funeral of a Dämbugawumirri clan leader:

Daygurrurr and Liyagalawumirri accompany us to visit (the dead). The dead man is a kinsman of Dhawaŋgugulili's group and of the Larrkan people (Liyagalawumirri clan), who thought 'he is a man of renown as his father, grandfather and great-grandfather were. We derive the maŋgayin from the Dämbugawumirri'. (The first people gave the Python Yuluggur to the Liyagalawumirri; we hold the bîma songs.)
Many people visited and entered the place. Various Yirritja and Dhuwa groups sang. Later we came near our friend, and we cried because we were very sad. We cry a lot and dance and sing all the time for one or two weeks. We stand for our law which is at the foundation.

Table 5.2: Brief Yolŋu descriptions of four ceremonies, and stated reasons for performing them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceremony</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wake</td>
<td>People go in, visit, sing and dance a great deal, come near the body and cry. Because we are overcome with grief, we want to mourn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purification</td>
<td>We purify with smoke to get rid of the smell, and wash to purge ourselves, put on red ochre and forget the death. We are wukindi after a death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukubuŋi</td>
<td>He carried his brother. We danced and cried. He looks after the bones and gives them to his mother or his märi. We grieve and want to have the person back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange ceremony</td>
<td>We sing and dance, and show it. Sing, dance, carry the pole and give it to the requester. The person who requested the ceremony asks us to carry the pole (i.e. perform the ceremony and give the pole to that person).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This account is a general description of what the people did; they visited, cried, sang and danced. It also includes their reasons for doing so — because of their grief and the fact that the deceased was a man of renown. Each one of the set of public ceremony-types has its own general description and conventional effect.

The central effect of each ceremony, such as cleansing with smoky leaves in the Smoke ceremony, is similar in all performances. The accompanying elements in the ceremonies vary. They include songs, dances, invocations and choruses, setting and designs. These variants belong to particular groups; they provide the lines along which clans combine to form larger groups.

1I use the term 'effect' here in Austin's sense of 'conventional effect': what is necessarily achieved by the performance of an act (Austin 1975:14). One sense of 'function' has a similar meaning.
Regional ceremonies have, as we have seen, invariant broad programmes of songs and dances which the actors may elaborate or curtail. Public ceremonies, although their programmes are invariant in broad outline, consist of elements which can be combined in many different ways. I describe those elements in the next section, beginning with songs.

THE ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC CEREMONIES

By 'element' I mean a song, design or object which can exist alone or in combination with other elements.

Manikay denotes song and song-series. There are two types of public song; manikay denotes those with clapsticks and drone-pipe in particular; songs with clapstick alone are bi لما (clapstick). Most clans use the former for their public ceremonies. The Đambilgawumirri are alone in having no manikay, they use bi لما songs for their public ceremonies.

Song-series consisting of a dozen or more named songs are designated according to a toponographical category, to a constituent song or to a character of the series. There are Forest, Plains, Saltflat, Beach, Sea and other song-series. One Sea series is called Bridle Tern after one of its songs; a Dhuwa Forest song-series is called Stringybark Tree. People tend to group these series together into Sea and Land series.

Clans own songs and song-series, but several clans of the same moiety share each one. Men sing songs of their own moiety, in an order which is variable but subject to constraints, and they may string together several series or parts of a series. Singers realize a song into an indefinite number of verses which may be repeated. They may thereby extend or compress the performance as the occasion demands. Women sing only mourning songs in the context of public ceremonies. Men can sing the songs of their own clan and of their māri clan, or of a clan which has the same song-series.

The language of the garma songs is similar to spoken language. The Yolngu classify it according to dialect and tongue; but it includes archaisms, special song-words and names not in common use, place-names and likan names

1According to C.H. Berndt (1950:315) women know their own, their 'mother' clan and often their husband's clan's song-series. They sing the whole series under some circumstances. What these circumstances are is not clear.
(see Berndt R.M. 1948:21). Songs consist of simple clauses, descriptive phrases and lists of names. Singers clapstick in unison but vocalize somewhat independently, each rendering the clan tune and the meaning in his own way — 'following his own head' and 'singing with his own throat'.

Dances, which are named and are relevant to the songs, also belong to clans, clans-aggregate and moieties. Women dance individually to the men's singing, standing on one spot. Men can dance to the same songs individually or in groups, in an arena in front of the singers.

Men also have 'big dances' which are peregrinatory. They perform these alone or in a group, sometimes with women, with or without sung accompaniments.

The acts which I call choruses are neither song nor dance but ritualized calls which a group of men performs in unison. They occur alone or as an accompaniment to the invocation of ikan names of clan and country and of the names of maqayin (Warner 1937:357).

Each moiety has its own chorus and style of invocation. The Dhuwa precede the ikan names with the word gunbur; for example:

Gunbur — Dhurrurruga, Dhapinmarca, Waqarrdhula ...

The Yirritja precede the ikan names with the word birkarr. The invocations are called gunbur'yun and birkarr'yun respectively.

Each moiety has a different chorus which accompanies the invocation. The Dhuwa chorus is called marrawinydjun and begins

Aaaa ... ay bbb bbb bbb bbb
Aaaa ... ay a gitpu yay!

The Yirritja chorus mum'mumdhun begins

Gaaa ... aw wah! Gaaa ... aw wah!
Mmm mmm mmm mmm.

Some Yirritja clans use a chorus called mingathun as well.

The choruses have meanings; mum'mumdhun represents the noise of honeybees leaving the nest and of the sea or rivers in flood. Marrawinydjun is associated with the tide coming in and going out. The Yirritja moiety has at least two styles of chorus and as far as I know the Dhuwa in the Woollen River area have only one. The invocation and chorus is a focal act in Circumcision and mortuary ceremonies and in the Närära.

Painting body designs is another important act. Coarse designs (Larr) are paintings applied to objects and to the body for dances. Adults and
children of either sex may wear them and anyone may see them (see Thomson 1939:2). Cross-hatched infilling is the mark of the category of abstract designs linked to the ranga sacred objects and to places where the ranga lie, and are called likanbuy ('of the likan'). Thomson's informants told him (1939:2) that they were imbued with the power of the waŋarr. (For a complete analysis of categories of painting see Morphy H. 1977a:217).

In acts of 'making good' (gupa-gamathama) the men paint likanbuy designs on the chests of circumcision initiates, Nharr novices, older male dancers in some public ceremonies, on coffin lids and on some ranga. Formerly likanbuy designs were also painted on the disinterred skulls of the dead (see Thomson 1939:1).

Each land-owning group and clan owns a set of likanbuy designs related to its ranga and places. Each design relates to a different Being and to a different set of clans. The designs of clans in the same set are similar but distinct, and each clan's constellation of designs is unique (Morphy H. 1977a:200; see also Thomson 1939:2).

All likanbuy designs are subject to rules and restrictions on who may paint or see them and in what contexts. In some contexts women and uninitiated males may not see the designs — those painted on initiands and novices may be smeared to obscure the cross-hatching — but this is not always done. Men sometimes say that it does not matter if women see them as they do not know what the designs mean.

Only mature or old men or young men under their direction may paint the likanbuy designs of their own, 'mother' or märi clan. Within the clan, each member of a land-owning group has primary rights in the designs of his group's country. Rights are further divided in some clans, some men having rights inherited from their fathers in the paintings and sacred objects belonging to a particular 'small-name' place.

The simplest use of paint is seen when dancers and mourners at a mortuary ceremony cover their bodies and also paint objects with white clay or red or yellow ochre. Dancers use many objects in ceremonies including dilly-bags, biting bags and spears. Maďayin objects belong to clans.

Each clan owns a maďayin dilly-bag representing the one used by a waŋarr, some own digging-stick maďayin, and all own many types of messenger-strings.

Ranga are the most important sacred objects. Marradjirri poles for the Exchange ceremony and Hollow Log coffins are 'half' ranga and are displayed
in public. Ranga proper are not normally displayed in public (but see Berndt R.M. 1962); they are formally revealed to men in the restricted Nurrara ceremony. Wanya feathered cords (about 50 cm in length) are the public equivalent of the ranga. They are used to decorate initiands, the sick, the dead, some women dancers and the ranga itself.

The settings for some ceremonies are formalised. Munatha (earth, sand) are ground-sculptures made with ridges of sand or earth, sometimes incorporating holes, leaves, stones and objects such as digging-sticks. Men make them in the camp for purification ceremonies, as repositories for scraps of food discarded by those who are in a state of avoidance, and over graves. In purification ceremonies some dances and the final act of washing or lighting the fire take place in the ground-sculpture. Some dances focus simply on a rock put in the ground or on a tree.

All these elements carry meanings. Furthermore, ceremonies and their elements are marked by features of colour, design, tune and sound. It is on the basis of these features that clans and clans-aggregate own the elements and ceremonies.

Major changes in the mortuary rites have occurred in the last forty years. The exhumation and Hollow Log coffin second-burial have lapsed on the larger settlements, although they have been revived to some extent on outstations. In consequence mourning and burial procedures have become more elaborate, judging by a comparison with Thomson's descriptions (Peterson 1976) and the observations of Milingimbi Mission staff. Dances formerly used in the Bukubuţ and Hollow Log ceremonies are now included in the Wake (the mourning and burial ceremony).

THREE PUBLIC CEREMONIES

There are too many types of public ceremony for all to be described and analysed in one chapter. Therefore I restrict myself here to three ceremonies belonging to the Daygurrurr (Yirritja) and Đūmbugawumirri (Dhuwa) clans—a Circumcision, a Wake and a Washing purification—and append other data in the form of Tables. I have omitted many details of behaviour which Warner (1937:412-442) and Thomson (Peterson 1976) have already described.
A Daygurrgurr clan Circumcision

The Daygurrgurr Gupapuyu clan of the Yirritja moiety held Circumcision ceremonies in three successive years during the period of my research, for as we have seen the Daygurrgurr clan is large and prolific. In 1976 Djäwa, the Daygurrgurr clan leader and 'headman' of Milingimbi, organised the circumcision of two of his sons, his brother's son, and a Wobulkarra clan boy whose father was dead and whom Daygurrgurr people 'look after'. Wobulkarra do not perform their own ceremonies as they have no singers; Daygurrgurr clan looks after this their märi clan's ceremonies (see Chapter 8).

The ceremony took place in Djäwa's camp at Milingimbi over the course of two weekends in the dry season. The first painting of the boys coincided with the final joint Đambugawumirri and Djambarrpuyu clan (Dhuwa moiety) Circumcision. Daygurrgurr frequently co-operate with Djambarrpuyu, their sister's child clan, in this way. The Đambugawumirri and Djambarrpuyu began their ceremony on the final day of a Gorryindi clan Circumcision. So the three ceremonies formed a series involving four clans as main participants. It had taken more than a year to arrange.

The main participating clans are closely related. Gorryindi is märi to Đambugawumirri who are 'mother' to Daygurrgurr, and the latter are 'mother' to Djambarrpuyu. Thus Đambugawumirri are märi to Djambarrpuyu. As the two clans are 'conjoint' (dhä-manapanmirri) (see below) they customarily co-operate to perform ceremonies.

The ceremony was similar in form on all four days.

While singers performed Gupapuyu and Wobulkarra songs, other men painted the boys with red ochre and put Yirritja moiety waña cords on their arms. On all days but the first the men danced with the boys to the cutting place, the 'place of blood', some fifty yards from where they prepared and sang. (The 'place of blood' is simply a chosen spot where later the women prepare a grass mattress for the circumcision). On the final day three men circumcized the boys. As in the Mançayala and Djunguwan, female relatives of the boys circled the men throughout, calling in a high voice and insulting the men. They had licence to snatch money, food and tobacco from the camp.

The songs, dances and body painting increased in elaboration from day to day. On the first day the Daygurrgurr men simply sang, and their sisters' sons and sisters' husbands smeared the boys with red ochre and put the waña tassels on them.

Djäwa then took a major role in the final stages of the Đambugawumirri/Djambarrpuyu Circumcision. A week later the men sang Freshwater and Inland Saltwater songs which pertain to the Hollow-Log
ceremony: Grass, Freshwater, Catfish, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Wild Plum and Red Goshawk.

While the Daygurrgurr men sang their ZSs and ZHs (Djambarrpuyŋu and D.HashMapugawumirri clans) decorated the boys, and women circled around. Meanwhile four men had their chests painted with 'Rock at Lirrawalirr' (Balmawuy clan country) design, and thirty-three men painted Manbiri Catfish on each other's chests and thighs (Plate 5.1). All the designs were public and coarse in style.

When all were ready the men danced in peregrinatory fashion to the 'place of blood', where a rock stood in the sand, and danced 'Catfish speared Rock at Lirrawalirr'. Next the men danced Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Goshawk, Ghost, Cyclone, Emu and Water, in an arena by the 'place of blood' and facing the singers who sang the corresponding songs. Women danced at the edge of the arena.

Next day (the third) the singers sang through the Forest song-series to Freshwater, and danced 'Manbiri Catfish eaten by Shark'. Djambarrpuyŋu men danced as Shark, which is their waŋarr; feathers on a long string carried by the Daygurrgurr men represented the eaten Catfish 'children'. Many of the paintings on the Daygurrgurr men represented the half-eaten Catfish which pertains to Daygurrgurr clan country at Djiliwirri and the seaside of Lake Evella, as well as to Balmawuy clan country near Milingimbi.

Two senior Djambarrpuyŋu men wore Iikanbuy paintings of a Rock at Lake Evella which Catfish spears in the dance, and of Catfish eggs. The two men danced up to the rock set in the ground by the 'place of blood', speared it and stared fiercely in imitation of the fierce Catfish waŋarr.

Over the two days the dancers thus travelled figuratively from Balmawuy clan country (marri for Daygurrgurr) near Milingimbi to the initiands' own clan countries (see the stories in Chapter 2 about Catfish and Honeybee).

A week later the men painted public Iikanbuy designs depicting the ranga on the initiands' chests to make them sacred (dhuyu). Djāwa said they were 'to say goodbye' because the boys would have injured penes. The sons of Djāwa and his brothers wore designs of Honeybee Nest with Jungle Fowl footprints, and Honeybee Nest with Ganiny diggin-stick ranga. The Wobulkarra boy wore a design of his clan's version of the Manydjikay clan-aggregate Rock waŋarr (Plate 5.2). During the painting the singers sang Gupapuyŋu Swamp songs, Wobulkarra Freshwater songs with Wobulkarra tune, and Gupapuyŋu Forest songs ending with the song Sunset. They then sang Frog with the Guyamirrilili tune and Fire, ready for the Fire dance (the significance of these choices will become apparent below). The dances on this occasion were taken from the public side of the Ṣārrra ceremony. First the men of

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1 Inland Saltwater songs refer to inland lakes and tidal creeks which are either fresh or salt according the state of the tide and the wet-season rains. Catfish, which tolerate both salt and fresh water, feature in these song-series.
Plate 5.1 Preparing body-paintings of Manbiri Catfish and the Rock around which he swims, for a dance at the Daygurrgurr clan Circumcision.

Plate 5.2 The Wobulkarra initiate (nearest to the camera) and three Daygurrgurr clan initiates ready for circumcision. The Daygurrgurr boy on the far side holds the Dambugawumirri clan Guwilirri dilly-bag; it is his 'mother'. 
both moieties danced Quail and Fire to the 'place of blood'. Here the men circumcized the boys as their affines held them down and a wall of young men stood around them. Djäwa invoked his clan wanjarr Quail, Fire and Honeybee during the Fire dance, and invoked 'Paperbark falls over' at the 'place of blood' before the circumcision.

I shall discuss the ceremony later in the chapter and make only a brief comment here.

Not only is the Circumcision ceremony a rite de passage in which boys become young men, but also it affirms their membership of a particular clan and connection with a particular wanjarr. This is achieved in the gupagamathama and the journey in song and dance to the clan country. We find similar features in the Wake.

A Dämbugawumirri Wake

The large Dämbugawumirri clan (Dhuwa) held a Wake for its leader who died in mid-1975 at Elcho Island. Many people belonging to a large number of clans attended the Wake in order, as Bopani said (see above) to 'cry and say goodbye'. Many Dämbugawumirri clan members live at Elcho Island and a number were living at Howard Island at the time. The death precipitated a crisis in the clan leadership and emphasised the clan's potential for fission. The events were as follows:

Before the man died, his 'father' Bäriya sang at his house while others went to watch at the sick-bed. From Yirrkala to Maningrida ringithirri songs announced the death when it occurred.

At the dead man's house, where some two hundred people had gathered, the body lay wrapped in blankets in a shade next to the coffin. Bäriya sat at one side of the coffin and the dead man's märi, a Gamalanga (Dhuwa) clansman who was märi also to Bäriya, sat with three of his brothers by the dead man's head (Figure 5.1).

The Gamalanga man sang from time to time throughout the ceremony, sleeping only a few hours each night. Four Dämbugawumirri men including Bäriya and his son also sang, especially at dusk and dawn. Members of other Dhuwa and Yirritja clans sang separately, often concurrently, but less frequently than the Gamalanga.

During the first three days of the Wake various clans danced during and after their arrival to 'visit' the dead man and to 'say goodbye'; and according to one commentator, to cherish and thank him because he was a man of renown and had looked after the ragga. They then sat down and sang.

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1Djambarrpuynu, Galpu, Rirratjiŋu and Malarra clans (all Dhuwa); and Warramiri, Gumatj, Dhaḷwaŋu and Daygurrurr (Yirritja).
The group with whom I travelled by boat announced its approach by raising a flag, and a Dänbugawumirri man greeted us with Pygmy Goose dance, signifying his clan. This same group together with some other Dänbugawumirri people and their relatives performed the Djambarrpuyru dance called Fighting, across the clearing to the coffin. The women followed to one side of the men dancers. The Dänbugawumirri are able to perform this dance because the two clans are 'conjoint'. In the Fighting dance the men carried spears and ran forward to form a circle, speared the ground, and repeated the forward movement, spearing several times until they reached the dead body which they made as if to spear. According to people present this dance means 'the trouble is finished'.

After the men had finally jabbed spears at the coffin the women ran forward and threw themselves down beside the body, some banging stones against their heads, some wounding their scalps with knives, and all wailing in a combination of singing and weeping (see Berndt C.H. 1950:307). A younger brother of the dead man also made as if to cut himself with a bush-knife but others restrained him.

It was explained on another occasion that the men did all that spearing in the dances so that they would not spear each other; for

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Figure 5.1: Setting of the Dänbugawumirri Wake.

Progressive forward movement and spearing in a circle is the most common form of men's peregrinatory dance. Variants represent the Djaj'kawu sisters digging the ground with digging-sticks, Jabiru spearing with its beak/spear, and other Beings performing similar actions.
feelings run high after some deaths as people seek to apportion blame and to exact revenge.¹

Other clans present danced to visit the dead man.

On the second day a Đambilgawumirri elder proposed that, because the dead man was the leader and a man of renown, the women and children should leave the camp while the men performed a secret Dhuwa Ñärra dance. Đambilgawumirri men and a few from other Dhuwa clans with their Warramiri, Daygurrgurr and Birrkili sisters' sons and husbands, assembled in front of the shade after sunset, formed an oblong arena and performed 'the Tide comes in and goes out' dance from the Dhuwa Ñärra (see Chapter 6). The women and children returned when the dance was over.

On the third day the Đambilgawumirri and their sisters' sons and husbands performed a public dance from the Ñärra. The men and women prepared themselves at a nearby house; the men painted their own and the women's bodies with the Kingfisher design of white, yellow and red ochre horizontal stripes, except for three mature men who painted-up with the Bustard design, the meaning of which women and children should not know. Some women wore waŋa arm cords, and each man and woman carried a pair of sticks painted with red ochre as walking sticks, one in each hand.

Most of the dancers were Đambilgawumirri but a few were their 'ZDCh', 'ZCh' and 'MBCh/W/WB'.

Two senior sisters' sons of the clan, Dja'wa of the Daygurrgurr Gupapuyŋu, an old Warramiri man and a mature Đambilgawumirri man, all instructed and directed the dancers while Báriya and a Rirratjiŋu elder played the clapsticks.

The two lines of men and women walked by a circuitous route towards the dead man's house, each dancer using the sticks as walking sticks. They formed concentric circles facing inwards, then 'speared' the ground with the sticks and moved them back and forth as the men called the marrawinydjun chorus (Plate 5.3).

The dancers repeated this movement of walking, circling and spearing five times, until they reached the shade where the dead man lay. They then encircled the house and shade, finally speared the ground and called the chorus by the coffin, whereupon the women and some men threw themselves to the ground and wailed.

In the dance the men represented their group called Mätjarra or Buqunbuqun, names which define all the clans which the Djaq'kawu created. Here the dance represented one of those clans in particular, the Đambilgawumirri. The women represented the Djan'kawu sisters walking along from country to country making springs with their walking/digging sticks,

¹Men held a post-mortem at a Djambarrpuyŋu Wake the same year. On the basis of marks on the body and the position of the fingers, they deduced not only that sorcery was the cause of death but also the identity of the sorcerers.
Plate 5.3 Men and women perform the Kingfisher dance at the Đumberawumirri clan funeral at Elcho Island. They walk with sticks in imitation of the Djaŋ'kawu.

Plate 5.4 The Đumberawumirri clan Guwilirri dilly-bag and wapa cords hang on a digging-stick at the head of a ground-sculpture, during a Washing ceremony.
collecting shellfish and grubs and creating groups. The places 'visited' in the dance included Manharrŋu, Guṉbirridji and Liyadhalinmirri clan countries, ending at Dāmbugawumirri clan country. The Kingfisher design signifies the Mätjarra group and its 'inside' meaning (which women and children should not know) of Flying Fox. The dancers 'followed' the Djaŋ'kawu with their digging-sticks, dilly-bag and the wana cords which the sisters left as maŋayin for each clan.1

That afternoon members of the dead man's own māri clan and mother clans put the body into the coffin as Djurrpum, a leader of the Liyadhalinmirri clan, sang 'Djota Tree' which signifies all the ranga. Men of both moieties called the marrawinydjun chorus and Bāriya invoked Rainbow Lorikeet, Djota ranga, and the ḫikan names of their country Gārriyakura. During the invocation several men lifted the body into the coffin and several women danced 'Black-beetle Larvae'. As Rainbow Lorikeet was invoked the men put some wana cords made of this bird's feathers into the coffin.

The Warramiri 'Flag' and 'Tobacco' dances followed; at the end of each one the gift of flags and tobacco was placed inside the coffin. The Dāmbugawumirri and Gupapuyŋu men performed Liyagalawumirri and Galpu dances, their 'māri' and 'mother' dances respectively.

Meanwhile in the house out of sight of women and children, Djurrpum and a Daygurrgurr man painted the coffin lid with Dāmbugawumirri clan ḫikan designs of springs which lie at Dāmbugawumirri, Liyadhalinmirri and Guṉbirridji clan countries. Warramiri (Yirritja) men painted on it the Octopus designs of their clan, the dead man's 'mother'.

When the painting was complete the men in the house performed Warramiri and Dāmbugawumirri clan invocations over it, wrapped it in cloth and carried it to the men at the coffin, performing Octopus dance on the way, as a Gumatj man sang Warramiri songs (his māri). Two men then nailed on the coffin lid to the Warramiri and Gumatj Macassan song-series 'Building a Boat', 'Knife', etc.

That evening Dāmbugawumirri and Daygurrgurr Gupapuyŋu men sang Maŋayala songs, their 'mother' and māri songs respectively, in the shade where the coffin lay.

The following morning the dead man's close women relatives wailed for the last time. Bāriya invoked Djota ranga and ḫikan names of the clan country as other men called the marrawinydjun chorus and lifted the coffin into the back of a station-wagon. Others drove with it to the burial ground where the Christian minister held a short service; they had 'given the body to the Mission'.

In the Wake people 'say goodbye' to the dead or 'send them on their way' (gupa-djuv'yun, gupa-yänguma). The people at Milingimbi did not say as they did to Warner (1937:444), that the purpose of the ceremony

1See Chapter 7 for an analysis of the meaning of the dance, invocation and designs.
was to guide or transfer the soul to the clan waterhole. Some dances do however represent the examination of the corpse by the warr by to see if it is of the correct affiliation (cf. Warner 1937:414, 446). Many songs and invocations are analogues of the incorporation of the individual with the ma'dayin.

People did say that the mokuy spirit of the dead man damaged a boat during the ceremony. Some months afterwards Bäriya said that a small hole in the scum on top of a waterhole at his clan country had been made by the dead man's spirit, which suggests that the return of the spirit is the expected aftermath of the ceremony.

The Wake is similar to the Circumcision in two important respects: in that the gupa-gamathama painting, the invocation and the Inside Jarrra dance demonstrated the deceased's connection with the ranga and country; and in that the Kingfisher dance, like the songs in the Circumcision, traced a journey to his clan country.

A Dumbugawumirri Purification ceremony

A death has effects which call for purification. Relatives of the dead person are wukinds. Purifying with smoke gets rid of the smell of death and chases away the spirits from a Wake; purifying with water and red ochre releases people from prohibitions. They say it 'makes them clear'.

The Dumbugawumirri clan has no Smoke ceremony since it has no manikay songs and no Fire song. If they need such a ceremony they must ask another clan — often their märi clan Gamalanga — to perform it. A Smoke ceremony usually follows immediately on the burial, but on this occasion Gamalanga and Mälarra people performed a Washing ceremony a few days after the burial at the dead man's camp where the Wake had been held. Mälarra have the same song and ma'dayin as the Gunbirridji clan, on whose country the ceremony took place. Gamalanga, Gunbirridji and Mälarra are 'company' with the same language, Yänang. Members of seven clans took part, some people from Yirrkala and Lake Evella having already left.

Five days after the Elcho Island Washing, the Dumbugawumirri who usually live at Milingimbi performed a Washing ceremony there at Djawa's

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1The verb rebal'yun signifies to clean a house, burn off the bush, tidy up, or turn over the page of a book. The Yolgu also use the English word 'clear' to denote the effects of a mortuary ceremony.

2For a brief description of the ceremony and its ground-sculptures see Keen 1977a:172-4).
Two mature Dümbugawumirri men began to sing, seated in the shade of a tamarind tree. Bäriya joined them and led most of the song items after he and his sister's son (i.e. Djäwa's son) had made the ground-sculpture of ridges, holes, leaves and clean sand (Figure 5.2, Plate 5.5). The ground-sculpture represented springs which the Djäŋ'kawu made with their digging-sticks at Gärriyakqura (see notes to Figure and Chapter 7).

The singers continued all day, making the journey in song through the forest and plains to the mangroves, then back to the forest and lakes on the plains, and ending with the song of the Djäŋ'kawu travelling along digging up grubs and making springs at Gärriyakqura (see Table 5.9 below).

After helping with the ground-sculpture, Bäriya's sister's son made a wooden trestle at its head and draped lengths of cloth upon it. Beside it he stood spears, suitcases full of clothes and blankets. He erected a digging-stick by the large circle of the ground-sculpture and hung the clan dilly-bag Guwilirri and several wäŋa tassels on it, and three tassels on another stick in the small circle (Plate 5.4).

By the end of the afternoon about fifty people had gathered. Women collected water and men prepared sticks for the dance. After the Butterfish song, men and women performed the Kingfisher dance. As Bäriya sang 'the Djäŋ'kawu travel' two young Dümbugawumirri women danced, standing then kneeling in the ground-sculpture, working their sticks back and forth as the men and other women danced from the tamarind trees with their sticks, encircled the two young women, speared and dug the ground and called the marrawinydjun chorus (Plate 5.5, and see Plate 5.3). This chorus had also featured several times in the songs leading up to the dance.

After the dance the men formed a group around the small circle and called the marrawinydjun chorus as Bäriya and Bopani called the invocation to accompany the washing. A group of five or six sat in the circle of the ground-sculpture as young men poured water all over them. This chorus, invocation and pouring was repeated for eight groups of people and at the end several people rubbed red or purple ochre onto their wet skin. In the invocation Bäriya and Bopani called the ŋikan names of the ranga, 'the Tide comes in', the ŋikan names of the Dümbugawumirri clan and country and those of several other closely related Dhuwa clans for all of whom the Djäŋ'kawu are wäŋarr (Plate 5.6).

At the end of many Washing ceremonies close relatives of the dead make gifts of damper (formerly cycad-palm nut bread) to the main singers (see Warner 1937:430).

1Djambarrpuyŋu, Liyadhalinmirri, Manharrŋu and Liyagalawumirri.
Plate 5.5 Two women dance with digging-sticks as the Djaŋ'kawu spearing the spring waters at Garriyaknura. The ground-sculpture represents the springs in the mangroves (see Plate 2.3 and Figure 5.2).

Plate 5.6 Washing in the ground-sculpture. A group of women sit in the circle as the men wait for more water to be fetched. The circle represents the waterhole in the tidal creek, the parallel ridges represent the underground stream.
The song creates an imaginary journey to the waterhole. It also alludes to the creative acts of the Djaŋ'kawu sisters — making waterholes and springs, putting in the raŋga and creating the group. The dance too re-enacts both the journey and the creative acts in a representation of the waterhole, viz. ground-sculpture. A digging stick placed in the ground-sculpture represents the tree where the Djaŋ'kawu hung their dilly-bag — represented by the clan's Guwiilirri dilly-bag.

The act of washing therefore apparently connects people conceptually with the powers of the waŋarr.

Once more the very use of certain songs, designs and invocations restates and defines the identity of a clan, through the relation of its individual members to country, ceremony and supernatural Beings.

Clans are not however isolated groups. Each clan has multiple connections with others as I suggested at the beginning of the chapter. In the following sections I discuss the nature and bases of these connections. First I shall examine the ways in which the ceremonies and their elements are owned.

**SONG, CLAN AND COUNTRY**

The ownership of public ceremonies is not a simple matter, for the ceremonies do not in general have invariant programmes but are combinations
of elements. There is a very large number of possible ways of performing the same ceremony. Groups and individuals own these ways of doing things. In this section I show that clans use some elements of their own and others not strictly their own. These elements are intimately connected with places.

A song-series with its related stories, objects, dances and designs forms a complex which is owned as a unit. Clans, sets of clans and individuals as members of clans own these complexes. Each clan owns several complexes appropriate to the topography of its country, and may use complexes not strictly its own. Daygurrgurr Gupapuyŋu people say for example that the Forest songs they use are truly Wora clan songs and are their own märl. True Gupapuyŋu songs, theirs through their membership of the clan-aggregate, are Birrkili clan Sea songs about the Ghost at Everett Island. Each clan relates to several other sets of clans which have the same song-series etc. as each of its own. But each clan's song-series is slightly different from others in the same set; and as with designs, each clan's total constellation of songs is unique.

Some of the song-series and dances go hand-in-hand with an important object such as the Hollow Log coffin or marradjirri pole and string, so that the complex is the core of a named Hollow Log or Exchange ceremony. Other songs and dances are combined with those at the core to make up a performance. It follows that clans are related in having the same or different Hollow Log and Exchange ceremonies.

The elements of ceremonies must be particularized in order to be owned. If one tune contrasts with another, and one song is about Emu but another is about Jabiru, then it is possible to say that one song or tune is this clan's and another song or tune is that clan's.

Both musical and semantic dimensions of song are important in matters of ownership. The Yolŋu differentiate tunes (mayaḻi, rirrakay) and clapstick rhythms (biḻma); they name songs and song-series and give significance to semantic differences. They assign tunes, rhythms, songs and song-series to clans.

---

1The possessive case shows a person's relation to a song. Clan or clan-aggregate and moiety names do not usually take the possessive case, they are simply predicated of 'song' as in 'Gupapuyŋu manikay' or 'Yirritja manikay'. Such a phrase shows the affiliation of the song and implies certain rights of people who are related to the clan.
People can recognize the moiety and clan affiliations of a song from details of the melodic line and from the clapstick rhythm. Each of a clan's song-series has its own particular tune or tunes, although singers may use other clans' tunes for some songs; so in owning or using several song-series one clan may use several tunes. Each tune is used by several clans and so relates the clans to each other.

As for what the song says it is difficult to define the entity that a group owns. It certainly is not a set text, for each singer renders each song in his own way, drawing on a stock of names, phrases and clauses, as 'Sulphur-crested Cockatoo' exemplifies (Table 5.3). One might say that it is the semantic structure, which individuals realize in different ways, which is owned.

Each complex is connected to a topographical category such as forest, swamp, sea etc. The songs are about some of the contents of such an environment. As I showed in Chapter 2, each of the complexes relates to a distinct 'small-name' country although some individual items of the complex such as Emu may have its own particular associated place. The design of such an item refers to that place (Morphy H. 1977a: 210). Here I shall concentrate on the songs.

Each song-series focuses on the activities of a named Ghost of long ago; one such is Murrayana, others are the Djan'kawu sisters who are both Ghosts and wawarr/creator Beings. The objects, designs and dances represent or portray some aspect or activity of the Being.

The Yolŋu represent each song-series as a journey made by Ghost or wawarr through the country, and as a passage of time from sunrise to sunset. References to the sun's position or to a known association between the time of day and the subject of the song, mark the passing of time.

Stories account for the relation of a song to a place and to a supernatural Being. Several songs have stories associated with them, namely those stories examined in Chapter 2. The man who explained the songs would say, 'There is a story for this song', and then tell it. Thus Emu song is associated with the story of Emu and Jabiru; Leech and Turtle songs have the story about the fight that Marsupial Mouse provoked at Howard Island; Nowa and other songs of the Macassan series go with the stories about Darter, Djalumbu Hollow Log and Catfish.

1 Singers strike the clapsticks in unison but sing polyphonically while conforming to the general melodic contour of the song.
Table 5.3: The first two verses of Sulphur-crested Cockatoo rendered by two different Daygurrgurr singers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singer A</th>
<th>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dangi Gunbuma Dangi</td>
<td>flying, crying, Cockatoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangi Gunbuma Dangi</td>
<td>calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nathji marrtji lurrpu Marrbuma</td>
<td>(fly) powerfully to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mitili mitili</td>
<td>Gunanydju, Milawululuwululu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ganydjarr manya Gunananydjulili</td>
<td>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunbuma Dangi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nathji marrtji lurrpu</td>
<td>he cries out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>djikidigdhun</td>
<td>the north wind blows his feathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunbuma Dangi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njirriti Lungurrmay Mirrarray</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Singer B                                       |                                        |
| gupiI gupiI gupiI                             | calling calling,                      |
| Marrbuma Dangi                                | Sulphur-crested Cockatoo              |
| Marrayalyal                                   | breeze from the forest                |
| Marrayalyal                                   | (makes him happy)                     |
| djikidigdhun                                  | calling loudly                        |
| Galumaluma                                    | Happy Cockatoo                        |
| Gunbuma Dangi                                 |                                        |
| Marrayalyal                                   | breeze from the forest                |
| Balthawugura                                  | in the large paperbark                |
| Butja bumara Djalatang                        | South wind blows on him               |
| Lungurrmay NjendiriGindir                     | North wind blows                      |

Stories create the world of past events and present states of affairs to which the songs refer. They create the coherent 'reality' by virtue of which people can state a necessary relationship between song, place, design and object, for in that reality the supernatural Being created the song at a particular place, and the Being and the objects which it created lie there. Thus the stories summarized in Chapter 2 describe the origin of Djalumbu Hollow-Log ceremony at Lake Evella and people say that the Log stands now in the middle of the lake. The songs about all those Beings in the story refer to that place.

1For an example of the relationship between stories and a song-series, including a transcription and translation of the songs, see Berndt R.M. 1948.
Table 5.4: Brief descriptions of Daygurrgurr Forest songs given by several men.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cicada</td>
<td>He calls in the cycad-palm. The nut is his own 'law'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycad palm</td>
<td>Guđitjpal Ghost makes cycad-palm nut bread. The thunderclouds stand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Plum</td>
<td>A little bird saw wild plums in a tree at Gurrundul, Galkiya; flew up, ate them and spat out the seeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Bird</td>
<td>The birds call incessantly in Wora language from the vine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur-crested</td>
<td>The north wind, his māri, blows his yellow crest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockatoo</td>
<td>He flies around and cries out at Wora clan places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emu</td>
<td>Emu searches for water and finds it at Lake Evella and at Gumatj clan places. He has places at Balmawuy and Wobulkarra clan countries too. He makes his war spear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Emu washes in the water because he has walked a long way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koel</td>
<td>He calls at night 'guwak, guwak, guwak'. A man at Elcho Island hears his; it means there is some trouble or sickness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo</td>
<td>He says 'Which way shall I go? I will follow the track called Balambala to māri country at Gangān (Dhalwańu clan) and Ñurrmili.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frog</td>
<td>He calls from his dry place Bultjam, 'Wu! Wu! Wu! We must go, it's going to rain'. The rain came from Lātitjŋu (Guyamirrilili clan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass</td>
<td>Frog says 'My country is at Bunbuwa' (Gamal clan country at Cape Stewart).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>The rain came from Guyamirrilili clan country and fell into the creek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vine</td>
<td>It grows near the stringybark tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murayana Ghost</td>
<td>He runs quietly, this way and that. 'Here is some honey!' he says, and laughs aloud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'There is honey in this Gañbułala tree'. He taps it to see if it is hollow. He paints himself with yellow ochre from Blue Mud Bay, and points to Djalumbu (Hollow Log) tree; 'There may be honey in this one'. Djalumbu is at Lake Evella.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset</td>
<td>The Ghost painted himself yellow and ran to a place near Donydji called Burrawanydjji (Ritharrŋu clan). He wanted the Sunset as his power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo</td>
<td>The Ghost hunted and killed Kangaroo, ate the raw flesh, and spat out the blood which became the sunset.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Songs and stories convey rather different information about supernatural Beings and places. Whereas stories recount the actions of the Beings at particular places, songs project in simple clauses and with lists of names and place-names, images of the actions, attributes and locations of things and creatures identified with supernatural Beings. Stories extend the literal meaning of the songs; as a result, songs are about everyday things at one level and about their supernatural counterparts at another.

The subject of the song, its topographical associations, place-names mentioned in it, and also tune and clapstick rhythm indicate the affiliation of the song to a country. People mention particular places when they explain the songs, and refer to places in the stories relating to them. In ceremony, people use the attachment of song to country to mark the affiliation of people to places. I discuss this later. First I shall show how a clan's songs relate to its own country and to countries of other clans also.

The Wora clan Forest songs which the Daygurrgurr clan uses exemplify this. The songs are listed in Table 5.4 together with brief descriptions given to me by two men.

The songs truly belong to the extinct Wora clan and one or two of the songs refer to Wora clan country. Many of them refer to countries of several clans of the Yirritja moiety; Emu for example looks for water at Daygurrgurr, Gumatj, Mangalili, Balmawuy and Wobulkarra clan countries.

These clans all have a similar set of Forest songs, albeit with different tunes and perhaps a different dialect. We saw in Chapter 2 how specific places at Yathalamarra relate to Balmawuy clan Forest songs — Emu's place, Koel's place, the forest where the Ghost roams. The same songs also relate to Daygurrgurr clan places, Gumatj clan places and so on.

As Figure 5.3 illustrates, each clan's song-series has a number of songs in common with the others. The series as a whole and each song individually all relate to the owning clan's country. Each song may also refer to the countries of clans with the same song; Emu 'washes' at four places to which it is related. The stories in Chapter 2 expressed this relationship as a journey made by the Beings from one place to another. Song-series A, B and C in the Figure are 'the same song' in Yolŋu theory, and the three countries and clans have 'the same song'.
Table 5.5 compares Daygurrgurr and Gumatj Forest songs.

If the songs are also connected to a ceremony such as the Exchange ceremony, the countries and clans have 'the same ceremony' also.

Two places with the same song may also have the same related stories and the same name. Thus a plain by the middle Glyde River called Ganygarrpura ('place of the big fight') is associated with a story about Marsupial Mouse who provoked a battle by her gossip. The same story and the related songs allude also to Ganygarrqura at Howard Island and to Wangurri clan country in Arnhem Bay (see Berndt R.M. 1948). The man who showed me the place on the Glyde River said, 'It has the same song as Howard Island too', and sang a verse from it.

To add a further complication, the Wora Forest songs seem to show that though they are Wora and Daygurrgurr use them, one or two refer primarily to other clan countries; Frog says his country is at Cape Stewart; the rain which falls on Frog comes from Guyamirrilili country; Kangaroo goes to Ritharrqu country to the south. Each song has this focus because the main story about the Being is centred on that clan's country; the Being is a major madayin for the clan (Figure 5.4).

Each clan owns several complexes. Daygurrgurr clan for example possesses Forest, Sea, Macassan and Inland Saltwater songs, each with its related elements — but not all these are strictly its own. The
Forest songs are märri to the clan, and belong to the extinct Wora clan. The Sea song-series truly belongs to the Birrkili clan but Daygurrgurr own them also as co-members with Birrkili of the Gupapuyŋu clan-aggregate. The Sea songs are the 'true' Gupapuyŋu songs. Thus the Yolŋu distinguish between true ownership and mere rights of use.

People explicitly and repeatedly deny that maḏayin songs and ceremonies are the product of human thought; supernatural Beings created them, or revealed them to men in dreams or reverie. They are owned or held by the descendants of the groups that own the land that the Being created. Rights pass from father to child. Djäwa said that Honeybee and Catfish are his law, as they were his father's and father's father's before him.

Because the clan uses complexes not strictly its own, the songs can refer to a very wide range of places — the places to which they primarily belong by virtue of their true ownership, and the places with the same complex. Figure 5.5 shows the countries mainly referred to in Daygurrgurr songs and the stories about them. This mode of reference to place makes it possible to create conceptual journeys in songs, as I show later.

---

1R.M. Berndt (1948:18) rightly remarks that 'the great song-men add a touch of new mastery to the old rhythms, and extend or abbreviate the original versions as the mood seizes him'. Clunies Ross and Hiatt (1977:22) show that ground-sculpture designs too may be innovative.
Figure 5.5: Gupapuyku Clan-aggregate songs, and the places mentioned in them.
Table 5.5: Gumatj and Daygurrgurr forest songs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gumatj: sung by a Warramiri man</th>
<th>Daygurrgurr: sung by Daygurrgurr men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</td>
<td>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Wind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigeon</td>
<td>Pigeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snail</td>
<td>Snail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yukuwa Root Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangaroo</td>
<td>Kangaroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red-winged Parrot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emu</td>
<td>Emu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Murayana Ghost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset</td>
<td>Sunset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE SAME SONG, THE SAME CEREMONY

One clan joins with others to form larger groups partly on the basis of the same song and ceremony. I examine these aggregations in this section. A clan belongs to several other sets of close clans of the same moiety and may redefine its position as the occasion demands. More distant clans are related through sharing the Hollow Log and Exchange ceremonies. Warner's picture (1937) of solidary and rather exclusive clans is somewhat distorted. Clans-aggregate, which he calls phratries (1937:33-35) and which he suggests are of little importance, are very relevant to the control and performance of public ceremonies.

The following are the most commonly expressed modes of clan relationships.

Any two clans can have the same, 'close' or different song-series, tune, ceremony or dance, maŋayin (waŋarr and ranga), other object, design, tongue and sometimes 'big-country'. These relations vary independently.

Conjoint (dhä-manapanmirri) clans must co-operate in performing ceremonies but do not necessarily have a common tongue, song, tune or maŋayin. Clans which are 'company' have the same tongue, song and tune, but this term is rare. Where two clans have a common song, maŋayin or ceremony they constitute one bāpurru.
One clan may also be 'boss' of another, holding rights over its ceremonies. As we have seen, more commonly one clan may 'look after' (djūga) the country, ceremonies and objects of an extinct or declining mär clan of the same moiety. Looking after a mär clan's property follows from individual rights in mär country and ceremonies and implies the possibility of incorporating it.

Table 5.6 compares the song-series of a number of Dhuwa clans. Two clans with 'the same' song have only about half the songs of any one series in common. Figure 5.6 shows that a clan's two song-series may each resemble the song-series of a different set of clans. A single song-series may link a clan with more than one set of clans. This is so because song-series which are 'the same' form a polythetic group with only two or three core songs in common. Apart from the core songs, one clan's series shares somewhat different songs with different clans.

![Diagram showing song-series comparison between clans](image)

---

Figure 5.6: The same song (Dhuwa clans).
Table 5.6: The same song.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gidjiqali group</th>
<th>Malarra clan</th>
<th>Gamalangga clan</th>
<th>Djamarrpuynu clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sea series</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawfish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>menqga</em> Fish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope, Line</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaweed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying fish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bark canoe</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seawater</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guđiḡi Bird</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forest series</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuckoo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Squirrel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Stringybark</em> tree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-nosed Honeybee</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wurray Ghost</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurruwiŋut Bird</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gecko</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frogmouth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: 0 —— 0 Circles signify songs. Lines join songs which have the same or synonymous names.

Tune clapstick rhythm allow even greater flexibility. Galpu songs for example have the same clapstick rhythm as Djamarrpuynu, but the subjects of their songs resemble those of Liyagalawumirri.¹

¹Warner (1937:417) unfortunately missed the importance of the differences between clans' songs; he believed that 'clan variation is very slight'; consequently he presents lists of songs consisting of selections from clans to the east and west of the area. There is a 60 per cent concordance between the present Djamarrpuynu songs and Warner's list of 'Eastern Dua' songs.
Clans with the same song and tune can sit together and sing and members of one may take the place of members of another in a ceremony. Figures 5.7 and 5.8 show the known distribution of the various song-series. (Figures 5.7-5.11 do not indicate residence patterns.)

Briefly, the Figures show that the sets of clans with the same song-series overlap to some extent, but also that while there is an obvious division between coastal clans with Sea series and inland clans without, some series cross-cut these divisions. Sets of clans with the same song divide into sub-sets having the same tune or clapstick rhythm. Dialect groups do not coincide with these divisions.

'Sameness' is often qualified; people say that Liyagalawumirri and Djambarrpuyuŋu Forest songs have 'the same' Ghost, but that each clan's Ghost has a different name. One Ghost is called Wanydjuk, the other Wurray, but they are 'the same' or equivalent to each other.

Clans may also share Hollow Log and Exchange ceremonies. The data on these are incomplete but suggestive. Figures 5.9 and 5.10 show that widely separated clans share Hollow Log ceremonies. Clans which share the Hollow Log also have similar song-series; but they do not necessarily have the same tune or language.

The Exchange ceremonies are even more widely shared (Figure 5.11). The Dhuwa ceremonies link clans such as Murrurun and Djambarrpuyuŋu which have rather different song-series (although they are all about the Morning Star). The Yirritja Exchange ceremonies Evening Star, Mast and Garuyurru are intimately connected with certain song-series.

Having established a picture of the distribution of song-series and ceremonies I now examine the attributes of clans-aggregate. The clan-aggregate names in current use at and around Milingimbi are shown in Table 5.7.

Membership of a clan-aggregate is not exclusive; people may define a clan as a member of one or another clan-aggregate according to context. Galpu for example defines itself with Liyagalawumirri clan as Galbanuk clan-aggregate; but Liyagalawumirri clan groups itself with Manharrqu and Gamalaŋga in the Liyagalawumirri clan-aggregate.

Possession of the same song and tune is an attribute of some but not all clans-aggregate. The whole Djambarrpuyuŋu clan-aggregate uses the same song, tune and language. The same is true of the Gupapuyuŋu.
Figure 5.7: Yiritja clans with song-series said to be the same. The lines connect clans with 'the same song'.
Figure 5.8: Dhuwa clans with song-series and tunes said to be the same.
Figure 5.9: Known distribution of Yirritja Hollow-log coffin types.
Figure 5.10: Known distribution of Dhuwa Hollow-log coffin types.
Figure 5.11: Known distribution of Dhuwa exchange ceremonies.
Liyagalawumirri clans have the same songs and one tune in common but different languages. Manydjikay clans have different songs, tunes and languages. Not all clans with the same song form a clan-aggregate but people do refer to a set of clans with the same song as one bäpurru.

The clans-aggregate then cohere along various lines. Some have the same song and tune (Djambarrpuyŋu), others have the same waŋarr such as Rock (Mandjikay), the same Hollow Log ceremony and song (Liyagalawumirri). The Gupapuyŋu clans have the same songs, tune, Hollow Log ceremony, Exchange ceremony and Honeybee waŋarr.

Of the clans-aggregate shown in Table 5.7, Liyagalawumirri and Manharrŋu members sing together, but not with Gamalaŋga. People simply say that Gamalaŋga are Liyagalawumirri. Some Liyadhalinmirri members identify themselves as Djambarrpuyŋu and sing and dance with members of the Djambarrpuyŋu clan. Mandjikay members go to one another's ceremonies where each clan performs its own songs and dances.

Gupapuyŋu is the most cohesive clan-aggregate. Daygurrgurr entirely dominate the ceremonial life of the Birrkili. It is perhaps significant that the two clans have so much in common. Birrkili has a distinct identity in that it has Mundukuŋ Python waŋarr but it is at present unable to lead an independent ceremonial life.

Table 5.7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moiety</th>
<th>Clan-aggregate</th>
<th>Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhuwa</td>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
<td>Liyagalawumirri, Manharrŋu, Gamalaŋga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Djambarrpuyŋu</td>
<td>Djambarrpuyŋu, Liyadhalinmirri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yirritja</td>
<td>Manydjikay</td>
<td>Gamalaŋga, Walamanja, Wobulkarra, Guyamirri, Wangurri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gupapuyŋu</td>
<td>Daygurrgurr, Birrkili</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given all the possible dimensions for alliance, aggregation is relative to context and changes in time. To judge by Webb's analysis (1933:409) the Birrkili dominated the Daygurrgurr in the late twenties and
early thirties. Two previously separate clans of the Djambarrpuynu clan-aggregate, Djiriny and Naladharr, are now one clan called simply Djambarrpuynu.

Despite these formal divisions many pairs of clans from different clans-aggregate are 'conjoint'. Such pairs may combine to perform a ceremony — they wash together or, like the Yumbugawumirri and the Djambarrpuynu, perform the Circumcision together. Clans join in this way with several others depending on the kinship relations relevant to that performance.

CLAN IDENTITY

In spite of its multiple connections with other clans, a clan's identity and that of its members remains clear. It is manifested in several ways. In the songs and dances, in the act of 'making good' and the invocations and the coherence of the clan's body of law.

Which way shall we sing?

People's choices of song, dance and design depends upon the relationships between co-operating clans and the identity of the initiand or dead person.

It is not possible to examine here the complex rules governing the ways in which elements may be selected and combined for different purposes. But a clan's songs and other elements provide a stock upon which it can draw for various purposes, in an infinitely varied manner. We have seen that each song-series has a related Being or Beings and a set of objects and designs. Table 5.8 shows the relation of some Daygurrrgurr songs to other ceremonial elements. Innovations of songs and designs compound the possible variations.

A number of reasons govern people's choices within the rules. One is to mark the status of the organizer or the dead person; another is to mark affiliations to clan and country.

The Daygurrrgurr Circumcision ceremony moved in dances and design from near Milingimbi to one of the clan countries of the initiands. The songs on the last day linked the countries of all the initiands. Figure 5.5 shows the relationship between places and songs which the Daygurrrgurr clan uses.
Table 5.8: Daygurrgurr Gupapuygu songs and their ceremonial associations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forest:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycad palm</td>
<td>ceremonial food, staple at end of dry season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cicada</td>
<td>cycad nuts are its 'law' and food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</td>
<td>men's and women's dance; its cries indicate a death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snail in dead wood</td>
<td>sung while handling dead body, an analogue of decay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukuwa root food</td>
<td>messenger string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree</td>
<td>represents Stringybark Exchange ceremony, women's dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bepi Bush Bird</td>
<td>speaks the Wora song language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-winged parrot</td>
<td>flies from Djalumbu Hollow Log to owning clans' places in song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emu</td>
<td>men's and women's dance, peregrinatory dance; characterizes the clan, most often performed public dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murayana Ghost</td>
<td>men's and women's dance, Hollow Log ceremony dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand Monitor (Goanna)</td>
<td>sung when ground-sculpture is made; associated with yellow ochre mines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshwater</td>
<td>water for washing; the waterhole where the waŋarr lies and to which the spirit returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomerang</td>
<td>traded in Exchange ceremonies, held at 'place of blood' in Circumcision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigeon</td>
<td>men's and women's dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honeybee</td>
<td>men's and women's dance, men's dance for Njarra and Circumcision ceremonies, clan waŋarr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swamp:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass</td>
<td>men's and women's dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frog</td>
<td>men's dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-necked Turtle</td>
<td>men's dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heron</td>
<td>washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>public analogue of ranga, wrapping of dead, core of ranga sacred object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhulgu paperbark</td>
<td>peace-making ceremony dance; a Wobulkarra clan waŋarr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshwater, Lake and Inland Saltwater</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djalumbu Hollow-log</td>
<td>Hollow Log coffin, Honeybee nests in it in the song</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
I said that Daygurrgurr Forest songs belong to the Wora clan, (märi to Daygurrgurr) and its country Bariqura on the middle reaches of the Woollen River. Freshwater songs relate to the Wobulkarra clan, to its country Ganygarrgurra and to the nearby swamp at Howard Island. Daygurrgurr use the Wora tunes for these, for Wora and Wobulkarra clans have the same song (see Figure 5.5 above).

Pigeon and Kangaroo songs relate to Guyamirrilili clan country, for these are the wanjarr of that clan.

The Macassan songs relate to Daygurrgurr clan countries Djiliwirri and Gambun-gura, Honeybee and Fire songs to Djiliwirri.

The Hollow Log songs are related to Lake Evella and Djiliwirri, as we have seen.

The Sea series is associated with Everett Island, Birrkili clan country.

By the choice of songs and the order in which they sing them men can create figurative journeys through other clans' countries as well as their own. Through their rights to sing the tunes of clans with the same song as their own, Daygurrgurr singers created the following journey from one initiand's clan country to another, through Wora, Wobulkarra, Wora, Guyamirrilili and Daygurrgurr countries:

Wora swamp songs, with Wora tune relating to Bariqura.
Wobulkarra Freshwater songs, with Wobulkarra tune relating to Howard Island.
Wora Forest songs, with Wora tune relating to Bariqura.
Guyamirrilili Frog song, with Guyamirrilili tune relating to Lütitjou.
Daygurrgurr Fire song, with Gupapuyu tune relating to Djiliwirri.

The final dances in the ceremony were of the big wanjarr Beings Fire and Honeybee which belong to the latter country (see stories, Chapter 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.8 continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Goshawk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The songs and dances in the Circumcision demonstrated both the individual nature of each clan and also the interconnections between clans.

Dances in the Wake have a similar structure. Kingfisher dance at the Dämbugawumirri Wake also moved through Dhuwa clan countries, ending with the country of the dead man.

Each visiting clan selects dances at a Wake to 'visit' the dead person, which demonstrates its identity. Table 5.9, which compares three Wakes, indicates that each clan performed a distinctive set of dances, although clan members joined with others to sing.

This does not mean that only the members of a clan can perform its dances. People dance their own, their 'mother', märi and sometimes waku ('MMM') dances. The dances themselves indicate the clan; a person shows his affiliation to the clan by performing the dance.

'Making good' and calling the names

The acts of 'making good' and invocation bind the individual to the clan. Thomson (1939:2) called the former 'rites of aggregation' which are 'the affirmation of the bond between the members of the group and the mali wangarr' ('shadow' of the waŋarr).

Each initiand in the Circumcision described above wore a ĭikanbuy design depicting his own ranga, even though one clan organized another clan's ceremony. The ĭikan names that Djäwa called were of 'Paperbark tree (the public counterpart of the ranga) falling into the waterhole'. This indicated the boys' connection with the ranga. Djäwa said that he called the ĭikan for everyone (see Chapter 2).

Each of the ĭikanbuy paintings used in the Wake described above is associated with a particular clan, ranga and country. They represented the dead man's own clan, the Liyadhalinmirri clan which is 'one' with the former in ceremony, and the dead man's 'mother' clan. The invocation proclaimed the names of the dead man's clan ranga and his own country.

Both ĭikan names and ĭikanbuy paintings represent in different ways the clan country, ranga and waŋarr. H. Morphy notes (1977a:187) that the ĭikan names are frequently given as the meanings of the designs. The designs are representations and components of the ranga.

The initiands and the dead man were decorated like ranga with red ochre, ĭikanbuy painting and waŋa cords. The dead man's position in
Table 5.9: Dances to 'visit the dead' at three Wakes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan Dance Clan Wake at Elcho for clan leader</th>
<th>Clan Dance Clan Wake at Nangalala for line-age leader's daughter</th>
<th>Clan Dance Clan Wake at Nangalala for Mildjiŋi leader's wife</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dämb.</td>
<td>Pygmy Geese Fighting King-fish</td>
<td>Ganal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rirr.</td>
<td>Djaŋ'kawu paddle</td>
<td>Murr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liya.</td>
<td>Stick Insect Djunguwan dance</td>
<td>Liya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhaŋ.</td>
<td>Fish-spear</td>
<td>Marr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warr.</td>
<td>Flag Tobacco</td>
<td>Warr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clans:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clans:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhuwa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yirritja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dämb.</td>
<td>Dämbugawumirri</td>
<td>Dayg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rirr.</td>
<td>Rirratjingu</td>
<td>Dhaŋ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liya.</td>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
<td>Ganal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djam.</td>
<td>Djambarpuŋu</td>
<td>Baŋ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murr.</td>
<td>Murrupun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liya.</td>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mala.</td>
<td>Malaganarryanarr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the shade was similar to that of the rangga in the Inside Närre dance. The orientation of the dance towards the shade where the body lay and towards the shade where the rangga lay, was the same.

Some ceremonies associate new clan members and new life with the spirits of the dead. As we saw in Chapter 4 the Djunguwan is both for the dead and for circumcision. In some areas spirits of the dead and spirit babies are associated with the ceremony. A similar correspondence is found in the public ceremonies. The Daygurrgurr selected for the Circumcision, dances from the Närre in which expressions of fertility combine with the return of spirits of the dead (see Chapters 6 and 7). Such conceptions give an extra dimension to the continuity of the clan.

The coherence of one clan's elements

Despite the fact that clans use songs and other elements not strictly their own, the meanings of all that they use cohere as a set. Here I shall show very briefly how the Daygurrgurr elements are united. (A detailed examination of the meaning of Dämbugawumirri songs and ceremonies is to be found in Chapter 7). The set of songs, designs etc. and their meanings forms the body of the clan's law. Both songs and designs describe and encode all that is significant in the clan's religious life; but again I shall be concentrating on the songs.

There are three modes of integration to be considered.

First, each ceremonial complex of song, dance etc. has an internal coherence which derives from its ecological relations, the association between the elements which stories make, and the associated use of the elements in ceremonies.

Chapter 2 showed that the Daygurrgurr clan Hollow Log complex is centred on inland lakes and tidal creeks. Its main elements are the Hollow Log, Prawn, Darter, Goshawk and Catfish. Stories such as the one that describes how the Men ate Catfish and put the bones in Djalumbu Hollow Log, and the one that describes how Darter made the Bullroarer, relate the elements to each other.

Common names unite the elements in different modalities of the same complex and each is an analogue or description of a focal object. As Table 5.8 shows, Yukuwa root food song describes the plant. A messenger string of the same name is an analogical representation of the plant. Similarly a dance, song and design may each represent features
of the same Being and its everyday equivalent such as Red Goshawk Being and the red goshawk. The songs describe the actions the dancers perform.

Song-series have their own external coherence; each song progresses smoothly from the one before it through thematic links. Some parts of song-series also have a narrative continuity; in Gupapuyŋu Forest songs for example Murayana Ghost hunts kangaroo, eats the raw flesh, spits out the blood and thus brings about the sunset.

Secondly, I consider the integration of separate complexes. This is achieved through images that unite elements from distinct complexes, and also through polysemy. The Forest songs describe for example the Ghost Murayana, who searches for signs of Honeybee's nest in the hollow tree. The tree in the song has the name of and is equivalent to Djalumbu Hollow Log coffin. The images which the songs project thus link the Forest songs and dances about the Ghost to the Hollow Log complex and the Being associated with the ranga and Nurrara ceremony.

The ground-sculpture design in Figure 5.12 provides an example of integration through polysemy. The rectangular body represents a waterhole at the clan country Djiliwirri and Honeybee's nest. The projection at the top represents the 'nose' entrance to the hive and Ganiny digging-stick. The latter is both a ranga and the digging-stick which Murayana carried.

A third mode of integration lies in the combination of elements from different complexes in the one ceremony. In the Circumcision ceremony described in this chapter Honeybee and Fire dances from the Nurrara led up to the final act of circumcision. The Fire dance performed in a Daygurrgurr purification ceremony also related to the Nurrara dance because, whereas the dance represented the Macassan making a fire, the accompanying song described Quail carrying Fire, as in the Nurrara dance. In a slightly different vein, the same designs occur as ground-sculptures and as likanbuy paintings (Figure 5.13).

An element which two clans share has a different significance for each because of the internal coherence of each clan's body of law. In Daygurrgurr tradition Quail carries Fire, but in Madarrpa stories Crocodile carries Fire (see Morphy H. 1977a:195).

The clan's law is divided into esoteric and exoteric aspects. Only adult men have access to knowledge of all the meanings. Chapters 7 and 8 include a closer examination of these matters. I show there that the
Figure 5.12: Daygurrgurr ground-sculpture for a Washing ceremony. A represents the 'nose' entrance of the nest, and the Ganiny digging-stick ranga. B represents the body of the nest; C a waterhole at Djiliwirri.

Figure 5.13: Daygurrgurr likanbuy design painted on a circumcision initiate's chest. A represents Ganiny digging-stick ranga, and B the body of Honeybee's nest.
acquisition of knowledge is prerequisite to ascending the hierarchy of male authority. Now I shall examine that hierarchy in the context of public ceremonies.

PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC CEREMONIES

People participate in the public ceremonies and take particular roles because of their sex, age, competence of kinship relation to the clan of the initiand, the dead person or to the organizing clan. The number of people attending a ceremony, as well as its elaboration, is a mark of prestige of the subject or the organiser.

Most of the participants in the Circumcision ceremony were members of the initiands' clans, and ZCh of these clans. Members of three other closely related Birrkili, Nyaymil and Liyagalawumirri clans also attended.

People participated in the Wake for two main reasons; firstly their own kinship relation to the dead man, secondly because of the ceremonial relationship between their clan and that of the dead man. Kinship relations hold as a relationship between persons and between clans as we saw in Chapter 3. For brevity I refer only to the latter relation in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Kinship relation of deceased Đâmbugawumirri leader and his clan to other clans present at the Wake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Kinship Relation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Đâmbugawumirri</td>
<td>the dead man's own clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warramiri</td>
<td>the dead man's 'M' clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamalaŋga</td>
<td>the dead man's 'MM' clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daygurrurrurr</td>
<td>the dead man's 'ZCh' clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birrkili</td>
<td>the dead man's more distant 'M' clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumatj</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhaɭwaŋu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galpu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djambarppuyŋu</td>
<td>mörri to Đâmbugawumirri clan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ceremonial relations between deceased man's clan and certain other clans present at the Wake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Djambarppuyŋu</td>
<td>is 'conjoint'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liyadhalinmirri</td>
<td>has same song, tune, colours, ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rirratjįŋu</td>
<td>has same ceremony, different tune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mālarra</td>
<td>Närра ceremony is looked after by Đâmbugawumirri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of clans represented was a measure of the dead man's prestige. Most people present belonged to his own clan, the other clans being represented by a few members only.

People have important rights and duties in the affairs of their 'mother' and māri clans. Each clan has a group of sisters' children in various clans who take the role of 'helper', as we have seen.

At the Circumcision the senior men of the initiands' own 'ZCh' clans took the most prominent roles in singing, dancing and painting. The sisters' sons helped to paint the boys, to play the drone-pipe, and to perform their own and 'mother' clan dances. The leading Rock dancer who wore the ikanbuy design was the senior sisters' son of the Daygurrgurr clan. The Wobulkarra ikanbuy design is Bāriya's son's 'mother'; Djāwa taught him how to paint it on the Wobulkarra initiand's chest.

Participants of other clans danced Djambarrpuyŋu and Daygurrgurr dances either because these were like their own or because they were their 'mother', māri or wakú ('ZCh'/"M˚M˚") dances.

The most prominent roles at the Wake and Purification were taken by members of the dead man's māri clan, who looked after the body; and by members of his own, his 'mother' and 'ZCh' clans.

Certain aspects of the dances appear to symbolize the relations between participants, such as the use of Warramiri dances to move and nail the coffin lid in the Wake, and the dance representing Shark (Djambarrpuyŋu) eating Catfish (Daygurrgurr) in the Circumcision.

Kinship is one main basis for role allocation; another is sex and age-related competence. Men move up through a hierarchy of authority and knowledge from which women are largely excluded.

Young bachelors have a limited role; they are expected to dance, participate in purification ceremonies and form a screen around circumcision initiands. But young bachelors and married men of some clans may take a prominent role in singing. As the Daygurrgurr clan has many old and mature men and an authoritarian leader, its young men only come into their own as singers when their seniors are resting, particularly at night.

Mature men defer to power-men, their elders, and take an executive role — one which requires both authority and energy. Mature men are seldom power-men but one or two are song-men of great renown and take a leading role in the technical aspects of performance. They and some active old men dance solo at Wakes, which young men seldom do.
The older Daygurrgurr, Djambarrpuyunu, Dambugawumirri men and one Birrkili man directed or executed the Ikanbuy paintings and the dances in the Circumcision and also sang. Djäwa as power-man called the invocations. Younger men may also paint, but refer to old men for guidance.

In the Milingimbi area all the power-men are grey-haired 'big-man'. Younger men can occupy the position of power-man in other parts of Arnhem Land. Such men have considerable influence in all clan affairs. One man does not hold the position exclusively in a large clan; Bäriya and Bopani are both Dambugawumirri power-men, though Bäriya is now regarded as the leader (nurrudawalangu, first, first-born).

Older women play a part in decision making, secular and religious, although they are precluded from taking the positions djirrikaymirri (power-man, Dhuwa) or dalkarramirri (power-man, Yirritja). In the public ceremonies women are expected to wail and take part in some big dances. Occasionally a woman will perform a man's dance to 'visit the dead'.

As C.H. Berndt points out (1950:306) women are expected to know these roles, to make the proper displays of grief and to know the songs of their own and closely related clans.

Knowledge of the esoteric aspects of the clan law is prerequisite for the position of power-man. Yolnu see the acquisition of that knowledge as a long and arduous process (see Chapter 8). Women are excluded from legitimately attaining that knowledge.

In the Circumcision women danced for some song-items but they sat away from the group of men who were painting the boys; at no time did they join that group although some circled near it. Women certainly did not participate in singing or in painting. Men will admit that certain old women, particularly the first-born of a clan, are leaders and have great knowledge. The fact remains however that such women do not participate in the esoteric aspects of the ceremonies.

POWER AND PRESTIGE

A senior power-man like Djäwa has a measure of control over several clans' ceremonial life. He included a Wobulkarra boy in the Daygurrgurr Circumcision because the Wobulkarra clan, having no elders, is unable to perform its own ceremonies — given the precedence of age-related authority over clan-based authority. Djäwa told me that the Wobulkarra young men paint under his direction, and that he teaches them only a few of their songs (see Chapter 8).
The selection of important dances from the Njärra and the Hollow Log ceremony for his sons' circumcision was a measure of Djüwa's personal power and prestige. He also painted a representation of the Ganiny rāŋgā on one boy because he was his own son.

The number of people attending a Wake and the variety of dances indicates the importance of a dead person, and his or her father or brother. Table 5.9 above compares the Wake described here with a Daygurrurgurr and Malagaŋarrgaŋarr clan Wake. Members of five clans attended the latter ceremony as against thirteen at the one above, and men performed only one dance to 'visit the dead'. The deceased woman was a member of a well-nigh extinct clan and the wife of the leader of a very small clan.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have shown that clans share all the elements of ceremonies in overlapping sets; that such co-ownership provides a basis for co-operation between a person and any of his close or distant kin; and that it also provides a basis for domination. Yet clan identity is never lost within the larger aggregation; several clans have 'the same' song-series but each series is unique in its detail. Clans sing together but each performs distinctive dances. Despite a clan having rights to a multiplicity of elements, each clan's elements are integrated into one system of meaning, a discrete semantic field, having a distinctive coherence.

The two key actions in all the public Circumcision and mortuary ceremonies are the 'making good' with the Đikanbuy design and the invocation of Đikan names. Both designs and names connect the individual, particularly males, and the group with the rāŋgā and with the country where it lies. Only males undergo the 'making good', until death when both men and women are treated in a similar way. These acts, the notions of the journey of the spirit of the dead to the clan or mōrri clan waters, and the return of these spirits in certain ceremonies, create a sense of the clan's continuity (see Warner 1937:25; Thomson 1939:2). The waŋarr are also the agents in spiritual conception.

The belief that conception spirits may come from any waters of the correct moiety shows that there is no simple idea of reincarnation. The system allows for flexibility and change.

The 'rites of aggregation' also allow for change. The identity and boundaries of a clan must be constantly stated and restated, for they
constantly change. Lineages belonging to one country die as others proliferate, split, and forget their common origin. One clan burgeons and divides as another dies out.

A clan may be likened to a loosely spun yarn of short and long fibres. The fibres are like lines of membership from father to child, some of which branch and spread out. The twist that unites the separate fibres is like the corporate right in land, ceremonies and knowledge. If the yarn or the clan gets too dense for the space available it splits and requires more space. As two separate yarns may be twisted together, so two clans may combine to become one. Nevertheless each retains its own country and body of knowledge.

As long as a land-owning group and clan and its neighbours remain fairly constant, one would imagine that the painting and invocations in the act of 'making good' would simply affirm each new and old member's relationship to the waqarr and ranga at the heart of the clan property. One would expect also that the source of most members' conception spirits would be at their own country.

As soon as one clan begins to grow and others to die out, one would expect to find this dynamic reflected in the 'rites of aggregation'. We have seen that a Đambugawumirri boy wore at his circumcision the ḳikanbuy design of the Gunbirridji clan whose country the Đambugawumirri are taking over. The ostensible reason for choosing this design was that the sisters' son wanted to put his 'mother' design on the boy. The approval of the ZCh is necessary for it to be used; thus the sisters' son in this case gave his tacit approval for the Đambugawumirri clan to use the design. Since people now refer to Gunbirridji country as Đambugawumirri clan country, this use in the 'making good' would help to establish a new definition of the clan, incorporating Gunbirridji country, and would mark the individual as a member of the clan so defined.

The public ceremonies then reflect the dynamics of clan growth in several ways. Powerful leaders of large clans put on or have put on for them elaborate ceremonies. Such men may control other clans' ceremonies. The ceremonies establish changing relations to land as a clan seeks room for its members.

The creation of the clan and the condition for its successful perpetuation are the themes of the Järra ceremony which I examine in the two following chapters.¹

¹For a brief analysis of the relation between public and regional ceremonies see Appendix 3.
Chapter 6

THE NÄRRA
INTRODUCTION

The public ceremonies place the individual at his circumcision, at his death and during his life firmly within the clan. The ḣikan names and designs connect him to his country, waŋarr and ranga. The Ṣarrra too stresses clan identity but it also emphasizes the connections between clans of the same moiety — connections through women necessary for a clan's reproduction.

The putative origin of these connections lies in the journeys of the waŋarr. For the Đambugawumirri and its Dhuwa relations everything was created by the Djaŋ'kawu sisters, who named their countries and languages; created the clans and waterholes; put in the sacred objects and certain trees and sang the Ṣarrra songs as they travelled across the land. The clans continue to be connected through women and by common ownership of the Ṣarrra ceremony which re-enacts the Djaŋ'kawu sisters' journey and the events which befell them.

In the Dhuwa Ṣarrra and possibly in the Yirritja Ṣarrra also, the relations of the clans are generalized into that of märi: gutharra (‘MM/ ZDCh). Märi clans provide mothers-in-law for their gutharra clans. Their women bear the wives and mothers of the other (see Chapter 3). The ceremony thus focuses on the three essential features of Yolŋu kinship and aggregation: the constitution of clans, the separateness of the moieties, and the dependance of gutharra clans upon märi for their perpetuation. The waŋarr instituted this law in Yolŋu belief, created the first clanspeople and put in the powers upon which reproduction depends. The Ṣarrra is about the creation of the groups and about the powers and the law which ensure their reproduction in the same mould. It is also the most important revelatory ceremony. In it men display the ranga, the focal points of a clan's system of knowledge.

In this chapter I examine the character of the Ṣarrra genre of revelatory ceremony, the way in which it is owned, and on what basis clans cooperate to organise and perform it. I describe the course of one Dhuwa ceremony in detail. In chapter 7 I examine the significance of what was done and place it in relation to the Đambugawumirri clan public ceremonies and body of knowledge.
THE GENRE

The Ṣārra ceremony, like the Djuŋguwan, Gunapipi and Ṣulmarrk, is 'of the secret side' but with public aspects. Some men regard it as the leading ceremony, as do the Rirratjiŋu to the east (Berndt R.M. 1952:14). 'Ṣārra' is the name of the Inside ground and should not be uttered in front of women or children. The public name of the ceremony as of the sacred objects is simply 'Madayin'.

The most commonly expressed purpose of the Ṣārra is to show the young men the maḍayin, i.e. the ranga. An old man may ask for a performance so that he himself may see the maḍayin before he dies. Bāriya organised one to 'say goodbye' to his sick elderly sister. Dhāthaŋu told me that as he is getting old he will want to hold one to teach his son the ceremony and show him his clan maḍayin.

Early in my fieldwork a mature man gave me the following account of the ceremony:

When I was thirteen or maybe sixteen the old people wanted to take me to the sacred place and tell me the stories. They told me not to tell other young people or women.

When a boy comes back to camp from the sacred place he must not talk for several days, except to old people, until the maḍayin design is painted on him and arm-sweat is put on his mouth.

Like the Djuŋguwan ceremony, only the oldest men can dance the Ṣārra. Djuŋguwan is owned by Liyagalawumirri clan, but each group holds its own Ṣārra. Gupapuyŋu group has its Ṣārra, although all Yirritja people can dance at it, and Djambarrpuyŋu clan and other Dhuwa moiety people are helpers.

In former times, if young people heard (or saw) the Ṣārra in the forest they were speared. The law today is the same, except that we have given up fighting.

This account describes the main features of the Ṣārra from a man's point of view. It is restricted and its secrecy is guarded by injunctions and by the threat and use of force. Older men reveal the performance and the maḍayin to young men.

There is considerable variation between different clans' versions of the ceremony even within the moiety, although some features unite the different versions. The ceremony can be put on by one or two clans of

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1 Warner (1937:340-370) has described the Ṣārra ceremonies of the Woollen River area. Elkin (1972:47-98), R.M. Berndt (1952) and R.M. and C.H. Berndt (1970:135-138) have described the ceremony as performed in other parts of Arnhem Land.
one moiety; members of the opposite moiety are the helpers. The same
man's account went on:

Sometimes Dhuwa and Yirritja perform the Närra together. The
bough-shades are separate but each moiety can see the others'
dances and mağayin. People can travel to different places to see
the mağayin.

Some old men travel far and wide to see other clans' Närra ceremonies,
thereby accumulating knowledge of the mağayin and concomitant prestige.

OWNERSHIP OF THE CEREMONY AND ITS ELEMENTS

There are some differences between the two moieties in ownership and
organisation of the ceremony and its elements; the Dhuwa moiety appears
to have a rather more unified system of ownership than the Yirritja. The
pattern of ownership binds each clan as a member of several sets according
to various criteria, yet each clan retains its particular identity both
in the total configuration of its property, and in the detailed specifica­
tion of each thing it owns. The most important objects represent some
aspect of the creator Being of the clan.

The owned elements most relevant here are coarse (lärr) designs or
'colours', bilma songs, the invocation and chorus and the ranga sacred
objects. Each clan's Närra will vary according to what it owns. Coarse
painted designs in the Yirritja Närra represent a variety of mağayin (see
Warner 1937:364; Thomson, unpublished field notes 9.1.37, 1939). In the
Dhuwa Närra they represent Goanna, Kingfisher, Shark and Bustard. Djäwa
explained rights in Yirritja designs solely in terms of the pigments used:

I would say 'You Warramiri clan have both (colours); you Ganalbiŋu
have white; Walamangu, white; Birrkili, white and yellow; Maďarrpa,
yellow; Djalwaŋu, yellow; Daygurrgurr, yellow; Mangalili, white;
Ritharŋu, white. Yellow has the name Galaŋarr and Daygurrgurr clan
is the leader'.

The distribution of rights in colours in Djäwa's statement corresponds
closely to the distribution of certain other rights. Clans with yellow
ochre have Honeybee waŋarr, the Gaŋiny digging-stick ranga and the use
of ironwood for the body of the ranga (see Table 6.1). The clans with
white clay are associated with a variety of other mağayin.¹

¹The set of clans which own white clay includes those of the Manydjikay
clan-aggregate with Rock, Barramundi and Mangrove-wood mağayin; the
clans with Whale and Black Dog; and the clans with Dog and Long-necked
Turtle.
Table 6.1: The distribution of rights in certain Yirritja Nārra elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yirritja clan</th>
<th>Nārra song</th>
<th>Lanydjung wagarr</th>
<th>White clay</th>
<th>Yellow ochre</th>
<th>Honeybee wagarr</th>
<th>Gāniny ranga</th>
<th>Ironwood (for ranga)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wuḷaki</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildjinji</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walamaŋu</td>
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<td>Ganalbiŋu</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wora</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wobulkarra</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ritharrŋu</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Daygurrgurr</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warramiri</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulalay</td>
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<td>Lamamirri</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Maḏakarrk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golpa</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Birrkili</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dhaḷwanu</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangurri</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maḏarrrpa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumatj</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangalili</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranybarrŋa</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Dhuwa moiety appears to have less diversified rights in colours. People say that all Dhuwa clans have Kingfisher colours consisting of horizontal stripes of red or purple ochre, yellow ochre and white clay (used by the Dämhugawumirri in the Wake described in Chapter 5); and one invocation chorus, the marrawinydjun. Within this uniformity there are differences; Rirratjiŋu clan has only white clay because it is of the seaside; Liyadhalinmirri and Dämbugawumirri have red and yellow ochre and white clay because they are of the saltflats and plains; Guṇbirridji has purple\(^1\) and yellow ochre and white clay.

\(^1\) I describe as 'purple ochre' ratjpa, which has a purplish red colour with a metallic sheen. It is normally interchangeable with red ochre (miku).
The Yirritja moiety is also divided in the ownership of songs. A Daygurrgurr clan leader said that his clan owns no bi لما songs; when they perform the ناررا they have to ask Gumatj, دهالوانع or another clan (see Table 6.1) to sing for them.

People agree that the Dhuwa clans in the area all possess the دjanكاۋ bi لما songs which 'follow the sun' like the sisters' journey, but that the Rirratجینا clan has a different tune.

Clans of the Yirritja moiety use at least two invocation choruses. The 'yellow' set of clans possess and use the chorus called مم'mumdhun which imitates the sound of honeybees and freshwater floods; Warramiri, Birrkili and Mildjigi also perform the مینگاثون chorus related to the act of spearing Oxeye Herring. Thomson (unpublished field notes, 9.1.37) refers to a Mildjiqi clan میرمیرمurryun chorus in his field notes also. As we have seen the Dhuwa moiety have one chorus, the مارراًدج٣. This is a verb which in the context of songs describes the powerful flow of the incoming tide.

Daygurrgurr men claim that they own the invocation chorus because this clan is 'very much the leader'. دامبگاۋوميرري men claim to own the Dhuwa ناررا because the دjanكاۋ left all the مادًاْي in at their country. If another clan wants the ناررا they must ask the دامبگاۋوميرري and لييادها٣لمرري who are 'one'.

All the Dhuwa clans which the دjanكاۋ created and which possess the Kingfisher colours and dance are one بپرار called ماتج٣ررا (and other names), as we saw in Chapter 2. The Kingfisher design signifies this group.

I suspect that clans other than the two mentioned above would make similar claims to ownership or leadership on similar grounds, for as I showed in Chapter 2, several clans claim that the دjanكاۋ lost the مادًاْي at their country; several clans own Honeybee مادًاْي also.

Despite the apparent concordance of the two sets of Yirritja clans and the Dhuwa clans, each clan possesses different range and واñرر from others in the set. باريييا explained that this is because the دjanكاۋ gave each Dhuwa clan somewhat different sacred objects although all join for the ناررا ceremony.

One purpose of the ceremony is to show these sacred objects, the clan بپرر٣, to men. The sacred objects do not have only this function for in practice few are so displayed, and then seldom. People regard them as the signs of a clan's relation to واñرر, to the land and to
other groups with the same waŋarr and raŋga.

A raŋga (the public name is maḏayin) is an object up to about a metre long, made of wood, stone, paperbark or wax, incorporating string, fur, feather and painted decoration. It is sacred (dhuyu), described as very important, and imbued with the power of the waŋarr. Rules govern what objects are accepted as raŋga, how they are handled, who may make and display them, who may disclose and talk about them and to whom.

A man may claim to find a new raŋga in the ground and debate might ensue over its authenticity.

The raŋga represents some aspect of a waŋarr left or put in the mud or water at some specific place. The waŋarr are believed to have travelled across the land leaving raŋga at several clans' countries. Clans which possess related raŋga are connected by the journey of the waŋarr.

Clans with the same waŋarr may have different raŋga representing different aspects of the Being. To take Honeybee waŋarr as an example — Daygurrgurr clan possess raŋga representing the entrance to Honeybee's nest, the nest itself, Honeybee eggs, and a stick found in the nest. Other clans with Honeybee probably have a somewhat different set of raŋga. Where two clans do have the same raŋga the two objects will differ in some detail such as width or contour.

Ranga are ranked as 'big' or 'small' ('high' or 'low' according to Warner, 1937:41-51). The big raŋga of one clan may be the small one of another, and two clans with several in common may put different values on them. Birrkili and Daygurrgurr share several, but for the latter Honeybee is the prominent maḏayin and waŋarr, whereas for the Birrkili Water Python is the most important.

In such ways clans find connections with others yet retain their individuality. As with ownership of the public ceremonies a clan's set of objects connects it with several other sets of clans.

It is easiest to discuss the distribution of raŋga in terms of waŋarr or other maḏayin since the existing data on the actual sacred objects is so incomplete. Warner's lists (loc. cit.) are probably taken from a Galpu man's perspective and do not represent an objective account. It is not possible to form a final and complete picture since raŋga may be exchanged, lost, found, given, renewed or forgotten.

During my fieldwork I did learn in detail about the existing sacred objects of two clans and gained piecemeal knowledge of those of some
other clans. To form a picture of the regional distribution of the raŋgga I have collated my own data with those of R.M. Berndt (1962), Elkin, C.H. and R.M. Berndt (1950), Gröger-Wurm (1973), Warner (1937) and Thomson (unpublished field notes 1935-37). The result is a tentative guide to their modes of distribution and interconnection.

Figure 6.1 shows the distribution of Yirritja maŋayin which have associated raŋgga.

Each of the widely distributed maŋayin is owned by three to six clans in the area. The distribution of any two maŋayin together usually overlaps only one or two clans. But the distribution of some maŋayin closely coincides; Ganiny digging-sticks usually accompany Honeybee, Kangaroo usually accompanies Freshwater Crocodile. The distribution of each maŋayin overlaps that of up to four others. Each clan has a unique set of about five widely distributed maŋayin (to generalise from the most complete part of the Figure) which connect it with about seven other clans. Because each maŋayin has a limited distribution the mixture changes gradually across the country.

The distribution of the main maŋayin appears to be as follows: we find Rock and Barramundi around the coastal islands, Whale and Black Duck in the Inglis Islands area; Turtle inland, distributed in a line parallel to the coast; Freshwater Crocodile and Kangaroo high inland; Dog along the Glyde and Goyder Rivers; and the Honeybee maŋayin is distributed from Caledon Bay northwest to Buckingham Bay.

Figure 6.2 shows the distribution of Dhuwa moiety maŋayin. Like those of the Yirritja moiety, each has a limited spatial distribution, so the variety gradually changes. Some maŋayin have a wide distribution; clans along the coast and islands from east to west possess those of the Djaŋ'kawu sisters; clans from south to north up the Goyder and Woollen Rivers to Howard Island possess those of the Wägilak sisters; Goanna is widely found on the mainland and larger islands, and inland clans from east to west possess Long-nosed Honeybee. Other maŋayin such as Shark and King Brown Snake have a more limited provenance.

Because of the wide distribution of the Djaŋ'kawu and Wägilak (or sisters by other names), the Dhuwa raŋga represent many of their attributes as well as the sisters themselves — Mature Woman and Nubile Girl. Raŋga can represent their body-parts and excuviae such as clitoris, prolapsed vagina, menstrual blood; and their tools such as digging-stick, fish-trap,
Figure 6.1: The distribution of some major Yirritja maqayin.
Figure 6.2: The distribution of some major Dhua maçáyin.
canoe, ɲaŋmarra mat, dilly-bag and clapsticks. Other raŋga related to the Djaŋ'kawu sisters occur in the stories, such as the Sun which they followed, Black Cockatoo who followed them and Crab which they hunted.

As with the Yirritja moiety, so too do different Dhuwa clans raise different maŋayin to important and diacritical status. Đumbugawumirri is known as the clan with the Djaŋ'kawu maŋayin; but King Brown Snake and Shark mark the Djambarrpuyŋu clan, which also has the Djaŋ'kawu.

Clans which own the regional ceremonies integrate their elements with those of the Närra ceremony. Liyagalawumirri clan has Carpet Python, Goanna, Green Ant, Cabbage Palm and House-posts and Rails raŋga. All these maŋayin are, as we have seen, important elements of the regional ceremonies. Other clans with elements related to the regional ceremonies, such as Fish-trap (equivalent to House-posts and Rails) may also have these as raŋga.

Goanna maŋayin is important both in the Dhuwa Närra and in the regional ceremonies. It links the clans in the Närra ceremony, dancing at each country; and Goanna dancers everywhere carry the Yuluŋgur drone-pipe in the Djuguguwan ceremony. Rirratjingu clan dances with Yuluŋgur in their Närra (Berndt R.M. 1952:161).

Some raŋga represent the waŋarr which members of the owning clan regard as their creator. Đumbugawumirri clanspeople, and probably others with the same maŋayin, regard the Djaŋ'kawu as the creators of their clans, languages and ceremonies. One Daygurrgurr man said that the Djaŋ'kawu (his 'mother' maŋayin) created everything, Yirritja and Dhuwa; while another said that it was the same as kinship now — the female waŋarr of one moiety and the male waŋarr of the other moiety made the clans of the latter.

The evidence suggests that these three notions are current among different clans. Freshwater Turtle probably is a female creator Being of several Yirritja inland clans (J. Reser, personal communication). The Liyagalawumirri leader said that Carpet Python bred his (Dhuwa) clan and bore the Daygurrgurr (Yirritja) clan.1

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1The Yirritja Maŋgalili clan of eastern Arnhem Land stress parthenogenesis (Morphy H. 1977a). In the Mïldjiŋi (Yirritja) Dog Närra the puppies were danced by Dhuwa men (Thomson, unpublished field notes 9.1.37, 1939); the embryo of Dhuwa Shark is Yirritja, according to some (Berndt C.H. 1950:307).
All the waqarr are held responsible for creating some topographical feature, one or more raqga and some ceremony or element. People justify their claims to land and ceremonies in terms of the waqarr and the raqga.

As Chapter 2 showed, Quail and Honeybee made the first Yirritja Daygurrgurr Närра according to men of that clan; the Djаŋ'kawu made the first Dhuwa Närра according to the Đumbugawumirri. Dhuwa clans outside the Woollen River area attribute the ceremony to other Beings (see Elkin 1972:86). In the Woollen River area, clans on the Djаŋ'kawu track, following the coast, own the ceremony. Clans such as Murruŋun Wolkpuy whose countries are not on the track have 'small-name' places embedded in the countries of clans which are said to have been created by the sisters; by this device they gain rights to the Närра.

Both the Dhuni, a shortened form of the ceremony, and the full Närра have a similar structure. First the men make an Inside ground to which women and children and men without rights in the ceremony must not go. In the public camp a riyawarra tree is planted or selected as the focus for dances there. The ceremony itself consists of variations on a basic sequence of dances. Each day the men paint their bodies and dance at the Inside ground, dance or march to the tree at the camp, invoke a clan's country, dance alone, and dance with the women. The sequence is elaborated on the final three days.

The ceremony distinguishes by means of dances and designs between the moieties at one level and between sets of clans and single clans at other levels.

Dances have names, and some detail of the dance such as the position of the hands and the posture of the body is an analogue of some characteristic of the Being with the same name. In 'King Brown Snake' the dancers carry a spear bent into a curve.

Some named dances are common to the ceremonies of all clans of both moieties; all dance 'the Tide comes in and goes out'. Others are moiety-specific; all Yirritja dance Black Duck to the water for the Washing ceremony, whereas Dhuwa dance Pygmy Goose. Possibly all Yirritja dance Bandicoot after 'The Tide' dance; all Dhuwa perform Goanna dance (see Elkin 1972:60-61; Warner 1937:357). As Warner's informants (1937:360) put it, 'Our Yirritja Närра is different, but all the same'.

Another duality lies between saltwater and freshwater. Warner reports that Yirritja people split into two groups of inland or freshwater
people and the sea people (or 'top' and 'bottom'), for some dances and for the Inside dances and invocation. Thomson's field notes (9.1.37) imply the same thing; the Mildjigi performed Sea dances in the Njarra unless an inland clan joined the performance when they added Freshwater dances.

The sea/freshwater distinction is apparent in the Dhuwa moiety Njarra also; Warner's description includes an Inside Freshwater dance though this was absent from the one I saw. The interplay between tidal flow and freshwater springs is a consistent theme (see Chapter 7).

Most Dhuwa Njarra dances and invocations are common to versions recorded by Warner and myself, reinforcing the impression of moiety uniformity. Other dances are specific to sets of clans.

THE YIRRITJA NÄRRRA

In the Njarra people of a set of clans having the same madayin and ranga, and who are ideally in a mărì:gutharra relation one to another (according to some accounts), join with the sisters' sons of each clan in the set to perform a ceremony.

The dances in the Yirritja Njarra distinguish each set of clans with a common ranga.

Table 6.2 compares four versions of the Yirritja Njarra: the Dhuni and the complete Njarra described by Warner (1937:356-70);¹ the Mildjigi clan Dog Njarra described by Thomson (unpublished field notes 9.1.37, 1939), and data from my Daygurrgurr informants. The Table shows the dances which varied between the versions (the letter R against a dance shows that there is a ranga of the same name belonging to the performing clan).

Eleven out of these twenty dances are related to each clan's ranga. They are distributed evenly among the four ceremonies. The dances in the Dhuni (Warner A in the Table) are madayin for both Warramiri and Manydjikay clans, according to Warner's list of 'totems' (1937:39-51); Honeybee, Dog and Whale are each the madayin of a distinct set of clans.

Dances at the riyawarra tree in the camp also mark the sets of clans as the ceremony reaches the country of each member of the set.

¹The two Yirritja Njarra which Warner describes probably pertain to both Warramiri and Wangurri clans, since the leader of the latter was also leader of the former, after a great fight between the clans (1937:28).
Table 6.2: Yirritja Järrra dances that distinguish between clans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daygurrgurr</th>
<th>Mildjini</th>
<th>?Warramiri &amp;?Wangurri</th>
<th>?Warramiri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Thomson)</td>
<td>(Warner A)</td>
<td>(Warner B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R* Quail</td>
<td>R Globe Fish</td>
<td>R Rock</td>
<td>?Diamond Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R Cloud</td>
<td>Sea Foam</td>
<td>Lightning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Honeybee</td>
<td>Darter</td>
<td>R Barramundi</td>
<td>Low tide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Ochre</td>
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<td>(invocation &amp;</td>
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<tr>
<td>body painting)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R Dog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R Long-Tom Fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*R against the dance indicates an associated ragga.

Ground-sculptures reflect the identity of the main set of clans involved. That used in the Mildjini Dog Järrra had the shape of a dog's head (Thomson, unpublished field notes 9.1.37). Daygurrgurr make one of Honeybee nest. Manydjikay clans use Rock/Cloud design (Thomson ibid. 8.10.35). Birrkili clan uses Water Python (ibid. 7.10.35).

People attend the Järrra on the following basis. One clan or pair of clans organises the ceremony; other clans of the same moiety with the same major maḏayin (including ragga) also attend in some force. People of other clans of the same moiety with different maḏayin also attend, especially if their märi clansmen are the organisers.

Sisters' children of the organising clans, who are of the opposite moiety to that of the organising clan, take an indispensable role.

A Daygurrgurr clan leader said that the following relations prevail among five clans:

| Gupapuyŋu (i.e. Daygurrgurr & Birrkili) | Gumatj | 'close together' |
| Gupapuyŋu | Dhaḻwaŋu | 'close' |
| Gupapuyŋu | Maḏarrpa | 'a bit far off' |
| Gupapuyŋu | Manŋalili | 'not close but share Yellow Ochre' |

Gupapuyŋu and Gumatj are 'one' for the Järrra and 'close' to Dhaḻwaŋu (all have Honeybee maḏayin), but the other clans above and also Warramiri
and Manydjikay clans would come to the Gupapuyŋu Njarr and vice versa. Indeed Daygurrurr leaders travelled to Yirrkala for a Gumatj clan Njarr in 1975, and for a Dhalwaŋu ceremony in 1977. This man suggested that clans from the Glyde River and west were in a separate set.

A Birrkili man explained that Birrkili and Daygurrurr Gupapuyŋu, having Honeybee in common, perform the Njarr together. They are mārl: gutharra clans, and one is the 'top' (inland) and the other the 'bottom' (seaside) group. He said that they ask and grant each other permission to perform the ceremony. I suspect that this permission is a token affair, since the Daygurrurr clan dominate the ceremonial life of the two clans.

The Daygurrurr leaders organised a Njarr every few years at Milingimbi until recently. Present rivalry between the leaders prevents them from performing it now. As far as I know no other Yirritja clans at that settlement do perform it. At least one of the Yirritja clans on the mainland near Milingimbi does so regularly.

I asked a Liyagalawumirri clansman, whose father was the senior sisters' son for the Mildjigi clan Dog Njarr which Thomson (9.1.37, 1939) recorded, to identify the people in Thomson's photographs of the ceremony. According to him the following clans were represented. After each clan I show its main madayin:

Yirritja: Mildjiŋi (main organiser) Dog, Kangaroo
    Djadjwitji
    Ganalbiŋu
    Dhābi
    Birrkili
    Balmawuy

Dhuwa: Liyagalawumirri (helper) Carpet Python
    Djambarrpuyŋu ('ZS') King Brown Snake
    Water Python

This information exemplifies the generalisation I made earlier, for most of the participating clans share the Dog madayin. A number of them were also in mārl: gutharra relations according to my genealogies. The organisation of the Dhuwa Njarr is on similar lines.

THE DHUWA NJARR

In the rest of this chapter I describe in detail a Dhuwa Njarr performed in 1976 and organised by the Dämbugawumirri clan. The political circumstances of the performance and the unfolding of people's relations during the ceremony are examined in Chapter 8.

The Dämbugawumirri clan previously put on the Njarr at Milingimbi in 1970. In 1975 the clan members living at Milingimbi and Howard Island
had planned another but during that year the leader whose funeral was discussed in Chapter 5, died at Elcho Island. The leadership was placed on Bariya's reluctant shoulders and the ceremony was postponed.

At the end of 1976 Bariya and his 'sons', including his actual son, decided to mount a Njarrn to 'say goodbye' to his sick elderly sister. This woman was the first wife of Djawa, the Daygurrgurr clan leader and 'headman' of Milingimbi. She witnessed the public parts of the ceremony, which took place at their camp. The ceremony was also to be for Bariya's actual son, a man of about twenty-two, so that he might paint the ranga and wind it with feathered string for the first time. He had been urging his father to hold the ceremony for two years or more.

The organisers timed the ceremony to begin at the very end of the dry season when the thunder-clouds were beginning to build up, but before the onset of the north-west monsoon. Initially the majority of the performers were of those Dambugawumirri people who lived at Milingimbi and their ZIlS and ZCh. Members of other Dhuwa clans living at Milingimbi gradually became involved.

As the end of the ceremony drew near the organisers sent messages to Elcho Island and elsewhere informing other members of the Dambugawumirri and Liyadhalinmirri clans that the climax would soon be reached. People arrived from Elcho for the final three days.

The proposed course of the ceremony was linked to the health of the old lady. The leaders said that if she recovered from her illness they would go ahead and finish the ceremony. If not, they would cut it short.

The course of the ceremony connects many Dhuwa clans through the notional movements of Goanna and of the Tide which comes in at each clan's country in dances, and in periodic changes in dances and designs. Men exclude women, trick them 'to make them believe' and admit the young men to the Inside ground. The final act of bathing demonstrates the unity of all people of the Dhuwa clans.1

One may separate descriptions of the formal parts of the ceremony from descriptions of parallel actions such as a quarrel over how adequately people are performing it. Whatever parallel events occur during the performance the form and content of the ceremony itself are relatively

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1The course of the ceremony was very similar to the one described by Warner (1937:341-67), although he does not show the day by day progression.
autonomous. This does not mean that the way the formal elements of a ceremony are put together is not affected by other events; it means rather that they are distinctive acts — the ceremony is a type with a conventional programme.

In this description I keep to the formal ceremonial acts and ignore the parallel actions. Chapter 8 is concerned with some of the latter.

As in the Djuunguwan ceremony the Inside men's dance-ground was situated several hundred metres from the public dance arena in the camp where the forked riyawarra tree stood. The name Närra refers to the Inside ground, to which the Dämbugawumirri and Liyadhalinmirri clans also give the secret name of Djäpuł. The ground consisted of a rectangular dance arena about twelve by five metres, marked by a low ridge of sand or earth the same shape as the likanbuy ground-sculpture designs and paintings. At the south end of the rectangle stood a brushwood shade made especially for the ranga. The Närra ground, on sand-dunes behind the mangroves, was a few hundred metres to the north of the 'top' beach camp at Milingimbi; the public arena was at the other end of the camp by Djäwa's house, because he and his sons were the sisters' sons for this particular performance through their close relationship with Bäriya and his sister. The ceremony had taken place four years previously at the same Inside ground but on that occasion the riyawarra tree stood near the house of a Wangurri man who was sisters' son for that ceremony.

Men guarded access to the Inside ground, watchful of children or interlopers. An owner or a sisters' son might escort an authorised newcomer to the ground, approaching slowly until welcomed by the men near the shade. A man who wished to dance but who was not Dämbugawumirri might say on arriving 'Is it alright if I paint-up?'

Men not initiated into the Dhuwa Närra did not come unless invited, and their initiation entailed formal revelation of the dances. Women and children stayed right away from this dangerous area. Nearly all the men over 16 of the main participating clans took part.

The ranga lay in the brushwood shade. Warner (1937:354-55), Elkin (1972:80) and R.M. Berndt (1952:17) all record that several ranga were displayed at each Närra. The Dämbugawumirri displayed only one, which had been buried after the previous performance at the Närra ground. The
first tasks before any dancing could begin were to dig it up and refurbish it, to make the ground and the special brushwood shade. I do not know why more were not displayed on this occasion. It may reflect the difficulties of making ranga on a large settlement. The ranga was Mature Woman, the elder Djaŋ'kawu sister called Dhalkurrŋawuy (a name also given to Bäriya's sister). All the Dhuwa clans involved in the ceremony are linked by the fact that the Djaŋ'kawu is their common waŋarr which created them.

Men usually referred to the object as Mature Woman. It consisted of a mangrove driftwood log forked at one end and roughly carved at the other with a head and breasts, the fork representing the thighs. Bäriya referred to it as yuṯungurr ranga; yuṯungurr means both 'thigh' and 'tree root'. The whole was repainted with purple ochre at a Dhuwa moiety place on the island before being carried back to the Inside ground. The Dümbugawumirri clan also owns several other ranga which different men 'hold'. I look at the distribution of rights within the clan in Chapter 7.

Before the ceremony can begin it is also necessary to have enough waŋa cords, which are also ranga. Two years before this performance took place a Dümbugawumirri man told me that all the men of the clan must make the cords, and this ceremony was held up because some people had been slow. Some men and women dancers wear the cords hanging from their arms. They also hang on the Guwilirri dilly-bag and on the Mature Woman ranga. Hair and banyan-fibre string and plenty of rainbow lorikeet and red-collared lorikeet feathers are needed to make the cords and to wind around the ranga (see also Warner 1937:342).

A few days after dancing began, the men brought the ranga to the Inside ground and placed it in the brushwood shade. During the day Bäriya, his son Galiwirri and later his sister's son Boquwuy Jnr. (one of Djäwa's sons) would wind the body of the ranga with string, catching feathers under the windings to impart an orange fluffy appearance. According to Bäriya the time it took to wind the ranga would determine the length of the ceremony. In practice they only worked on it for a few hours each morning for the first week or two of the ceremony.

The ceremony lasted for thirty-three days (I arrived on the fourth day after the preparations were completed). On three separate days no dancing took place. Bäriya gave me this explanation of the course of
the ceremony, which refers to both the daily sequence of dances and the variations from day to day:

The tide comes in at each (Dhuwa) clan's country, and as it does so Black Butcherbird calls. Goanna must reach all the Dhuwa clan countries — he comes out of the sea at each place, then the tide comes in.

I hope to show how this cryptically describes the sequence of the daily Inside dances (Tables 6.3-6.10). Each day at the riyawarra tree the power-man (Bäriya) invoked the likan names of one Dhuwa country, changing the country every two days or so to include the majority of them. In this way the ceremony traced a journey from west to east across northeast Arnhem Land from Boucaut Bay to Gove, then back again along the coast. Whereas the Djaŋ'kawu follow the sun in story and song, the ceremony initially goes the other way. It then follows the Đaṃbugawumirri version of the journey from Rirratjingu country to Đaṃbugawumirri country at Howard Island and the mainland near it, through the countries of the closely-related Djambarrpuyu and Liyadhalinmirri clans.

Bäriya expressed the relationship of Dhuwa clans as märi:ğutharra ("MM":"ZCh") in the context of the ceremony, although some are in fact in a 'sibling' relationship. He commented one day during preparation:

Whatever bāpurru, all are together. Whatever märi clan — this märi clan, that märi clan, the other märi clan — all are together.

This remark emphasises the connection through women — that is the relation of dependence of ğutharra upon märi for wives. The dances of Goanna and the Tide coming in connect these Dhuwa clans.

The set of Dhuwa clans with the Djaŋ'kawu as common creator is called the Mätjarra or Buqunbuqun bāpurru. Each clan's likan names distinguish it from other clans in the set; so Đaṃbugawumirri clan is Mätjarra, but Garrawurra:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Djepala } & \text{Dhurrurrunŋa } & \text{Garrawurra } \\
\text{Gamalanga clan} & \text{Liyagalawumirri clan} & \text{Đaṃbugawumirri clan}
\end{array}
\]

The daily sequence

Days 1-18. At the Inside ground: the men dancers painted their bodies each day during the afternoon, and began the dance at about 5 or 5.30 p.m. at the dance ground. On some occasions Bäriya sang 'Bustard' as the men
painted—only women's dances have sung accompaniment. After the Inside dances the Dhuwa men marched through the camp to the riyawarra tree; there the men and women danced. Table 6.3 shows the daily sequence of dances.

At the Inside ground about a dozen Dhuwa men mainly Dämbugawumirri, painted their bodies with Goanna design while Bäriya sang from time to time. When all were ready the painted men danced 'the Tide comes in', running up and down trailing sticks or spear-throwers and calling 'mmmm', then sometimes sweeping the sticks around in an arc to represent the strongly swirling water. Bäriya or another mature man played the clapsticks, which accompany and co-ordinate all the dances and choruses. On days when the ceremony visited seaside places two Yirritja men stood at the side of the ground; one called 'gawu, gawu-gawu' to represent Black Butcherbird who calls as he sees the tide come in, and the other whistled 'wer, wer' as Mangrove Robin who calls as the tide goes out. This was the Inside Närra dance performed at the Dämbugawumirri Wake (Chapter 5).

During the dance 'Goanna comes out of the water' a mature man called the names of Goanna (see Warner 1937:348) and the men started hopping from one leg to another calling 'binbir'. They stood, raised their hands and stared wide-eyed and fierce at novices, other watchers, or sometimes at the thunder-clouds in the east. A variant of this dance was for men to stand and stare 'paddling' with their arms, as the Djaŋ'kawu.

In the Goanna dance the men crawled from one end towards the shade, where the raqga lay, calling 'gulululu' then humming the rhythm

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| ..| ..| ..| | ..| ..| ..| ..| ..| ..|
```

to the rhythm of the crawling. At the shade they knelt up, held up their hands and stared at it. The dance was then repeated standing. If novices were present they were told that they must not eat goanna meat. On days 12-18 the men danced 'Goanna' crawling on their backs in a diamond pattern. A repeat of the 'Tide' ended the sequence.

Through the camp: all the Dhuwa men lined up with spears and spear-throwers, accompanied by Yirritja sisters' sons. They marched tapping their spears as a Yirritja man called in a falsetto voice 'garrarara', and the men replied 'yay! rrr'. The dance re-enacts the scene in the
Table 6.3: The Dhuwa Nyarra, days 1-18.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Country of the day</th>
<th>Clans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Balpanarra¹</td>
<td>Gurawurru, Matjikarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Balwarrarra</td>
<td>Guwawuru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rápuma</td>
<td>Gamalaŋga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Müŋidi</td>
<td>Malagaŋarngaŋarr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>Dhāmala</td>
<td>Damburrtsamburr, (Manharrŋu language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Banambarrŋuru</td>
<td>Murrunjun Wolkpuy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Murrurrurrk</td>
<td>Dhalparri, (Djinpar language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ŋetjirima</td>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>Ċilipidjí</td>
<td>Wāgilak, (Djinba language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>Bulukman</td>
<td>Bilpilyarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Muwalaŋgal</td>
<td>Rirratjiŋu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Afternoon:

At the Inside ground:

- dances: The Tide comes in and goes out as Black Butcherbird and Mangrove Robin call
- Goanna comes out of the water
- Goanna crawls and digs
- The Tide comes in and goes out

Through the camp:

- dance: warrarr Men walking.

At the riyawarra tree:

- invocation: The country of the day.
- dances: Spangled Perch
  - Butterfish
  - Kingfisher dips in the water

¹Location of the Gunapipi described in Chapter 4.
Djan'kawu story where Men emerge from the forest to steal the dilly-bag full of sacred objects.

At the riyawarra tree: Several Dhuwa women (mainly Djambugawumirri) stood with their children and their brothers' children of the Yirritja and Dhuwa moieties respectively. Some women were smeared with red ochre and wore waŋa tassles and a dilly-bag to represent the Djan'kawu's Guwilirri dilly-bag. As the men approached the tree the women also called 'garrarra' and the men ran to the tree going 'mmm'. The women ran to one side and lined up as the men formed a circle around it. This sequence recalls the actions of the Men as they stole the dilly-bag hung in the Djota tree.

Bāriya climbed the tree and, as the other men called the marrawinydjunj chorus, he called the ĭkan names of the country and clan of the day. Then he climbed down and called the invocation again. The whole invocation had the following form:

chorus: Aaaa . . . . y bbb bbb bbb bbb bbb bbb
      Aaaa . . . . y a gitpu yay!
      (with clapsticks and handclapping) bbb bbb bbb bbb bbb bbb
      bbb bbb a gitpu yay!
      rrrr rrrr rrrr
      mmmm mmmm

power-man: gunbur (îkan names of country) chorus: yay
chorus: yay!
      aaaa . . . . aaay ga yay! ga yay!
      bbb bbb bbb bbb bbb ay.
      bbb bbb a b-burrum baa-a
      a b-burrum baa-a
      a gitpu yay!

The Dhuwa men danced Spangled Perch in two pairs starting together by the tree after the chorus went 'rrrrrr, rrr-rrr, rrr-rrr, waaa'. The pairs danced in opposite directions in a circle, crossing over to the chorus 'waaa!', around again, crossing over and this time forward away from the tree to kneel down as the chorus ran after them and surrounded
them to 'gooo yay! Waaa!' Butterfish had a similar movement but each dancer held a spearthrower behind the back.

The Dhuwa women and men then danced Kingfisher in a group by the tree, accompanied by a Yirritja man playing a drone-pipe called Guļuwurru. The movement combined a flapping of the elbows with a Charleston-like step done on the spot. This dance provoked a lot of laughter from both performers and onlookers.

On two evenings the Đambilgawumirri men sang biŋma songs in Djūwa's camp near the riyawarra tree, singing a journey from Rirratjingu country to their own.

The body design worn by male dancers from days 1-32, except on day 28, was 'Goanna Tail', but the form of the design changed as the ceremony progressed as Figure 6.3 shows. Crossed stripes mean 'the ceremony is nearly finished'.

Variations

Days 19-37 showed some major variations in dances. Table 6.4 shows that King Brown Snake was added to the set of Outside dances. The Table lists the countries visited through this dance, which is similar to the Fish dances except that the dancers carry bent spears to represent the Snake. King Brown Snake is the main waŋarr of the Djambarrpuypuŋu clan at Napier Peninsula and of the Murru clan of the Wessel Islands. It is likely that this Snake is predominantly the one which people believe to lie in deep waters, and which is relevant to the regional ceremonies for the clans of the Napier and Flinders Peninsulæ.

The dancers were still mainly Đambilgawumirri clansmen, but on day 21, when the ceremony was at Đatiwuy clan country, two senior Djambarrpuyŋu men attended the Inside dances and one took part. During this period two Manharrŋu men also joined the ceremony. Two Gamalanga men, mārl to the organising clan, had been participating from near the beginning. Few people of the other Dhuwa clans came until day 24, when Djambarrpuyŋu clan country was visited. Then, ten men of this clan including two clan leaders, two young novices and several of their sisters' sons (Birrkili clan), joined in. At the riyawarra tree that day six Djambarrpuyŋu men joined the others in the dancing.

On day 28 the ceremony reached the Djambarrpuyŋu country called Gurala on Napier Peninsula. This country is associated with the Djan'kawu
Figure 6.3: 'Coarse' body designs for the Dambugawumirri Närra.
and with Shark who travelled from Djapu clan country at Blue Mud Bay to the southeast, according to the stories. One man's version of the Djaŋ'kawu story included Shark's meeting with the sisters at that place.

Table 6.4: The Dhuwa Nhärра, days 19-27.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Countries of the day</th>
<th>Clans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Buliyan</td>
<td>Djarrwark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Gujayma</td>
<td>Nyamil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Nupurray</td>
<td>Dtiwuy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Milminydjarrkŋura</td>
<td>Djambarrpuŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Njammarraŋura</td>
<td>Djambarrpuŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Raymaŋgirr</td>
<td>Marraŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Djarraya</td>
<td>Djambarrpuŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Djjirrikarri</td>
<td>Gurrkabawu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Afternoon:

At the inside ground:

dances: The Tide comes and goes out
Goanna comes out of the water
Goanna crawls and digs
The Tide comes in and goes out

Through the camp:

dance: waŋarr Men walk

At the riyawarra tree:

invocation: The country of the day
dances: King Brown Snake
Spangled Perch
Butterfish
King Brown Snake
Kingfisher dips in the water

Instead of Goanna design the dancers wore Shark-Fat design. The Inside and Outside dances were as shown in Table 6.5. The reason why Shark-Fat and not Shark himself is depicted is to hide the meaning from women (Figure 6.3).

Three Djambarrpuŋu men took part in the dance. Four novices were introduced for whom Shark is 'mother'; they were sisters' sons of the Gurala Djambarrpuŋu land-owning group. I have no information about
Table 6.5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Gurala</td>
<td>Djambarrpuyŋu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Afternoon*

*At the Inside ground:*

* dances: * The Tide comes in and goes out as Black Butcherbird and Mangrove Robin call

Shark swims through the deep and stares [Substituted]

Cuckoo makes a road [Substituted]

The Tide comes in and goes out

*Through the camp:*

waŋarr Men walk

*At the riyawarra tree:*

Shark

Spangled Perch

Butterfish

Kingfisher dips in the water

Table 6.6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Balwarrarra</td>
<td>Djambarrpuyŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Burarrgapu</td>
<td>Gunbirridji</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Afternoon*

*At the Inside ground:*

* dances: * The Tide comes in and goes out as Black Butcherbird and Mangrove Robin call

Goanna comes out of the water

Goanna digs and crawls

The Tide comes in and goes out

*Through the camp:*

waŋarr Men walk

*At the riyawarra tree:*

* invocation: * The country of the day

* dances: * Spangled Perch

Butterfish

Lesser Salmon Catfish [added]

Kingfisher dips in the water
whether Djambarrpuyu women danced on that occasion.

The dances on days 29-30 were the same as those on days 1-18 except that 'Lesser Salmon Catfish' was added to the dances at the riyawarra tree (Table 6.6).

Feeding the supernatural Beings

A distinct sequence of the ceremony took place after dark on the evenings of days 11 and 14; this was 'the feeding of the supernatural Beings'.

Three young and mature Dhuwa men of the Đâmbugawumirri clan and a Yirritja sisters' son met on the plain west of the camp, and hit the ground rhythmically with two rolls of paperbark. One roll was called Baŋatja (the name of the Yirritja Barramundi Fish waŋarr), the other Guḏumurru (Dhuwa). The noise resonated through the whole settlement. The Yirritja man walked through the camps collecting flour, tobacco, sugar etc. 'to feed the supernatural Beings and spirits'.

Mature men told the women and children that spirits of Đâmbugawumirri and Daygurrgurr clan ancestors were making this noise by stamping on the ground with one foot. One man said laughingly to me 'The men are liars!'

The day after the first time this happened the children were very excited about the 'great monster which came out of the sea'. Women gave a different account.

One or two mature women were eagerly looking forward to the spirits' arrival. A Liyadhalinmirri clanswoman of about fifty asked that some food for the spirits be put close to the camp so that she might hear their voices, for only men are supposed to see the spirits. Next day she said that her father had visited the ceremony.

One man told her that the ceremony would last a long time because the spirits of the dead had to come from many places, and that moreover a spirit of a dead relative had made waŋa cords for her to wear. This woman was one of the two who danced as the Djaŋ'kawu on the last day of the ceremony; she wore the waŋa cords on that occasion.

She described the spirits of her dead fathers to the Mission linguist; they looked like barramundi fish with characteristic nose and tail, because they lived in the clan waterhole. But they could take of this apparel and appear as men.

A man told his women relatives that a deceased clansman wanted to see Bûriya's sister (for whom the ceremony was put on), who should
therefore sit with a sheet over her so that the spirit could speak to her.

I asked two of the senior men why they told the women these things and they replied that it was to make them believe and follow the law. They, the men, did not know if the spirits of the dead really came to the ceremony but the Djan'kawu had said that men must tell women that it was so.

This deceit does not imply that the men are sceptics. They most certainly believe the spirits of the dead to exist, and some men have stated the view that the raŋa is imbued with the power of the waŋarr. Rather the men have a more abstract view of the way in which the ceremony links the clans. Their imposition of a more literal view upon the women and young people is an expression of domination.

One may guess that the ceremony would have a considerable impact on those women and young people who do believe that the spirits of their clan progenitors return.

The final three days

On day 31 daytime and late evening dances were added to the afternoon sequence (Table 6.7).

During the morning four Dāmbugawumirri men painted themselves with the Kingfisher design (Figure 6.3) and prepared sticks; they put on waŋa cords and carried their own maŋayin dilly-bags behind their heads. At about 2 p.m. they danced Kingfisher towards the Inside ground as described in Chapter 5, making the movements of spearing the ground, kneeling face to face (two men could not make a circle) and moving the spears back and forth. This was done at fourteen places at the two seaside camps. Meanwhile, two Dāmbugawumirri sisters' sons collected food, tobacco etc. from the women in the camps and took it to the Inside ground for the men. As the dancers approached some women wailed 'because it is their law'. The dance was analogous to 'feeding the supernatural Beings'. The men said that it meant that the ceremony was nearly finished.

On day 31 at the Inside ground, Liyadhalinmirri clan country was 'visited' as the country of the day. Djurrpum, the leader of this clan, arrived from Elcho Island the day before, and he and six other old and mature men (four Dāmbugawumirri, one Gamalanga, one Djambarrpuyŋu) painted their bodies with the Bustard design (Figure 6.3). The other dancers
painted their bodies with Goanna while Bäriya sang 'Bustard'. It was called the day of 'Raw Bustard'. The term 'raw' (díkuŋu) is used also in the Gunapipi to denote the first of the final days.

Table 6.7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Marapay</td>
<td>Liyadhalinmirri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Braw Bustard'

**Mid-day**

*dance:* 'Raw' Kingfisher (to collect gifts for the men)

**Afternoon**

*At the Inside ground:*

*invocation:* Bustard

*dances:* Bustard sees the plains burnt off

The Tide comes in and goes out as Black Butcherbird and Mangrove Robin call

Goanna comes out of the water; Djaŋ'kawu paddle

Goanna crawls and digs

Frilled Lizard crawls

The Tide comes in and goes out

*Through the camp:*

waŋarr Men walk

*At the riyawarra tree:*

*invocation:* Marapay country

*dances:* Butterfish

Kingfisher dips in the water

Bustard is an important Inside dance, Bustard itself being a 'bird of renown' (yökumirri, name-possessing) like Emu, Brolga and Jabiru. Three fires were lit in a line along the east side of the ground. Bäriya began by invoking Bustard's names. The Bustard dancers proceeded in a line from the trees beyond the end of the dance-ground, flapping their elbows and holding dilly-bags or waŋa cords in their mouths; into and along the east side of the dance-ground from fire to fire towards the shade to clapping and clapsticks (sounding three beats, resting on one). At each fire they paused, clapped fast and called 'brrr — yay!' The young Goanna dancers who had not seen the dance before stood facing the
shade and were turned to see the dance after it had begun. Djäwa commented, 'This is our law, Dhuwa and Yirritja; it is the foundation ([uku]).'

The subsequent dances (see Table 6.7) followed the same pattern except that the Bustard dancers 'drew' the Tide dancers along with their spear-throwers. Djurrpum led the dancers and Bäriya beat the clapsticks. 'Frilled Lizard' was similar to the kneeling Goanna dance except that only two men danced, crossing over several times, rising up as they crossed and rising again at the shade (Figure 6.4).

![Figure 6.4](image)

The men danced only Butterfish at the riyawarra tree, balancing a dilly-bag on one side of their heads, followed by Kingfisher dance.

On day 32, the day of 'Cooked Bustard', the ceremony reached the Dämbugawumirri clan country Gärriyakqura (Table 6.8). The dances were similar to those of day 31 but Frilled Lizard was left out. The men decorated the ranga. The Kingfisher dancers went the other way through the camp.

At the Inside ground: four Dämbugawumirri men stood the finished ranga, as if at the clan country. Djurrpum and Bäriya then invoked the ranga. Four white people present were shown the complete ranga after another invocation and chorus.

The Bustard dancers prepared themselves in the shade. Two men shaved, put red-ochre over their faces and stuck 'beards' of short wana cords onto their chins.

The Bustard dance was similar to the one the day before but the four fires were ranged along the centre-line of the ground. The dancers led

1'Cooked' indicates the final stage of the ceremony before the last day's dances.
by Djurrpum and two mature men started at the shade, danced to the end of the ground and back again from fire to fire, ending by staring at the line of Goanna dancers who stood near the shade. Again two novices in this line were turned to see the dance.

'Lesser Salmon Catfish', in which the dancers put their fingers in their ears, was added to the dances through the camp and at the riyawarra tree (Plate 6.1).

Table 6.8:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Gärriyakoura</td>
<td>Dümbugawumirri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Cooked Bustard'

**Mid-day**

dance: 'Cooked' Kingfisher (to collect gifts for the men)

**Afternoon**

At the Inside ground:

invocation: the rangga
dances: Bustard sees the plain burnt off

The Tide comes in and goes out as Black Butcherbird and Mangrove Robin call

Goanna comes out of the water

Goanna crawls

The Tide comes in and goes out

invocation: the rangga [added]

Through the camp:

wagarr Men walk

At the riyawarra tree:

invocation: Gärriyakoura
dances: Spangled Perch

Butterfish

Lesser Salmon Catfish

Kingfisher

Up to this point the only evening activities were singing on two (possibly three) occasions, and 'feeding the supernatural Beings'. On the evening of day 32 the men and women performed a sequence of both Inside and Outside dances which differed from the daily dances (Table 6.9).
Plate 6.1 Men dance Lesser Salmon Catfish at the riyawarra tree in the Đümbugawumirri clan Nürra ceremony.

Plate 6.2 Men painted with Kingfisher design spear the ground and call the marrawinydjun chorus on their way to the riyawarra tree on the final day of the Nürra.
Table 6.9:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Clans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Gürriyakqura</td>
<td>Đumbugawumirri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dhümala</td>
<td>Manharrq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guruwaŋa</td>
<td>Ċiyagalawumirri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evening**

*At the Inside ground:*

- **songs:** Thunder-Clouds [with chorus]
- **dance:** Flying Fox
  - Flying Foxes in Djota tree
- **invocation:** Djota tree/ranga
- **dance:** The Tide comes in

**Through the camp:**

- **Fire carried**
- **invocation:** Fire, Sea, Djota tree/ranga

*At the riyawarra tree:*

- **Fire cast over women**
- **invocation:** Fire; four countries
- **dance:** Black-beetle Larvae emerge and fly

**Night**

- Bilma songs until dawn
- Women's dance — Djan'kawu walking [to some songs]

*At the Inside ground:* the men gathered at about 8 p.m.; Djurrpum sang Thunder-Clouds and Flying Fox. The other men present, Yirritja and Dhuwa, called the marrawinydjun chorus. The young and mature Dhuwa men climbed a tree at the end of the ground away from the shade as Bäriya and several mature men sang Flying Fox. Djurrpum and Bäriya in turn invoked Djota tree/ranga; the men up the tree made noises as Flying Foxes. This was followed by the Tide dance.

*Through the camp:* instead of marching straight to the camp the men first prepared stringybark brands. The Dhuwa men lit these and each carrying one they formed a line and walked through the camp to the beat of clapsticks. They stopped at eleven family camps on the way to the riyawarra tree; at each place Bäriya and Djurrpum called the likan names of Fire, Sea, and Djota tree/ranga.
At the riyawarra tree: a number of Dhuwa women lay covered by blankets (formerly these would have been conical Ḷaŋmarra mats). The men formed a U-shape around them facing the sea, cast the brands over the women and towards the sea, and Bāriya again invoked Fire as the men of both moieties performed the chorus. The men then encircled the women, Durrpum sang Black-beetle Larvae, the men called the chorus and Bāriya invoked the clan names of Dhāmala, Gārirriyakura and Guruwaŋa, the countries of Manharrŋu, Dāmbugawumirri and Liyagalawumirri countries respectively.

The women were grouped in those clans, and during each invocation the group of women whose clan was invoked wriggled about under the blankets to represent Black-beetle Larvae in the rush-corms. After each invocation the respective group rose and danced as 'Black-beetles flying'. The movements of this dance were exactly the same as for 'Kingfisher dipping in the water'.

Later the men sat in a group and sang bilma songs through the night until dawn. Several of the young Dāmbugawumirri women representing the Djan'kawu walking along with their digging-sticks, danced to the songs.

Day 33 was the last day of the ceremony. Its dances were related to those of the previous evening. The way they relate is discussed fully in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that Kingfisher dance replaced Flying Fox and that Black-beetle was followed by other dances and by the washing in the sea (Table 6.10).

Men painted their own and women's bodies at the Inside ground and at the camp from early in the morning. Durrpum sang Kingfisher for the painting-up. All the men and all but two of the women wore Kingfisher design. Two senior women wore Bustard design but according to the men they do not know that this is its meaning.

At the Inside ground: at 9 a.m. mature men lined-up the older novices in front of the shade, facing the dance-ground, and removed the side of the shade. The mature men turned the novices around to see the raŋga, revealed and fully adorned. The other men danced 'the Tide' and invoked the Djota tree/raŋga. After the dance two mature men instructed the novices, explained the raŋga to them, and enjoined them not to reveal what they had seen, nor to lie or steal other men's wives (cf. Warner 1937:356).
Through the camp: by mid-afternoon the painting-up was finished and the camp between the Inside ground and the riyawarra tree was emptied of people. The men Kingfisher dancers lined-up at the end of the dance-ground, Böriya invoked the Djaŋ'kawu and the Mätjarra group (i.e. all Dhuwa clans made by the Djaŋ'kawu waŋarr). The Kingfisher dance began; the dancers walked with their sticks towards the shade, encircled it, speared the ground and called the chorus. Then they proceeded through the camp, pausing for a shower to pass, circling and digging and calling at four family camps on the way to the riyawarra tree (Plate 6.2).

Table 6.10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Clans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Gäriyakoura</td>
<td>Dämbugawumirri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dhömala</td>
<td>Manharrŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guruwaŋa</td>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gurala</td>
<td>Djambarrpuyŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mirarrmiŋa</td>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guŋayma</td>
<td>Ḃaymil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Morning

At the Inside ground:

The rangga revealed to the neophytes
Teaching the neophytes

dance: The Tide comes in and goes out as Black Butcherbird and Mangrove Robin call

 invocation: Djota tree/rangga

Afternoon

At the Inside ground:

 invocation: The Djaŋ'kawu sisters and Mätjarra group

dance: Kingfisher

Through the camp:

 Kingfisher

At the riyawarra tree:

 invocation: each country

dance: Black-beetles emerge and fly

To the water: Pied Goose and Pygmy Goose are disturbed and fly

In the water:

 invocation: each country

dance: Black-beetles emerge and fly

Coming out of the water: Butterfish
At the riyawarra tree: the Dhuwa women painted with Kingfisher design lay under blankets as they had on the previous night, but in six clan groups. Two mature women painted with Bustard design and equipped with two digging-sticks each, waŋa cords and dilly-bags, acted as the Djan'kawu; they knelt at the tree working their digging-sticks back and forth.

The men Kingfisher dancers circled the houses at Djäwa's camp, then circled the women. They called the marrawinydjun chorus and the two Djan'kawu dancers knelt, dug and moved their sticks at the same time.

The men formed two concentric circles closer around the women, called the chorus and danced. The two women danced as the Djan'kawu to clapsticks and hand-clapping while the other women under the blankets wriggled about as 'Black-beetle Larvae in the rush-corns'. Djurrpum sang Black-beetle Larvae, Bäriya invoked the ikan names of one group's clan and country and those women then rose and danced 'Black-beetles flying' to the marrawinydjun chorus. The whole was repeated for each group of women (Plate 6.3). Yirritja leaders joined in the chorus during the above sequence.

The dances to the water and the washing were as follows: the Dhuwa men lined-up facing the sea with the Dhuwa women behind them. Djurrpum stood in front of the men. Accompanied by Bäriya's clapsticks the group advanced, crouching, to the water as 'Pygmy Geese disturbed and flying', with Djurrpum crouching as Pied Goose (Yirritja), leading them on then beating them back by hitting the ground with Baŋatja (Barramundi, Yirritja) paperbark roll. The group proceeded in this way until it reached the water.

In the water each group of women in turn danced Black-beetle to the invocation and chorus; they then entered the water and washed off the paint, all the ochres mixing together in the sea (Plate 6.4).

The washing completed, the whole group danced Butterfish up the beach to the riyawarra tree as Bäriya invoked the Mätjarra group at three places on the way. After a final 'gaaa yay!' everyone dispersed.

1The six clans were those related Dhuwa clans with enough representative women: Dámbugawumirri, Liyagalawumirri of Guruwaŋa, Manharrŋu, Djambarrpuyŋu, Liyagalawumirri of Mirarrmiŋa, and Ñaymil.
Plate 6.3 Men painted with Kingfisher design spear the ground and call the marrawinydjun chorus. The women lying under blankets represent Blackbeetle Larvae in the rush-corms.

Plate 6.4 Washing in the sea at the end of the Njärra ceremony.
Sequel

Formerly, Dhuwa and Yirritja leaders together invoked the raŋga over cycad-palm nut bread and ate it at the Inside ground (Warner 1937:355).

Bāriya told me:

Djāwa and I will eat damper and smoke tobacco. The money (collected at night) is for Djurrpum, Djāwa and me — for the 'big men'.

Thomson (1975:5) records that young men and others seeing the ceremony and raŋga for the first time had to give presents to the leaders. The young men on this occasion said that Bāriya was 'easy' and 'good' in this respect. Bāriya himself said,

I think we should set aside gift-giving because they should learn our law and forget European law.

In other words, young people should not let European goods and ideas distract them from learning their own law.

Djāwa's eldest son however, for whom the ceremony is 'mother', was pressed to give a large bolt of cotton cloth to the Dhuwa leaders, possibly because he had missed much of the ceremony.

Several days after the ceremony mature and old men of both moieties painted Đāmbugawumirri and Gűnbirridji clan ĭkanbuy designs on the novices' chests; this released the latter from prohibitions on talking to any but old people, and on eating goanna meat or large game-birds ('of renown') and shellfish.

I did not investigate fully the ways in which people assessed the effects of the ceremony. There were conventional effects in that those who were ignorant (dhuŋa) before were now 'knowledgeable' (marŋi), for they had seen the Inside dances and the raŋga (cf. Stanner 1966:3). There were also emotional effects; Bāriya told me that

Everybody was very happy. They all weep for it and want to learn more so that white people and black people can talk about it together and be equal, level. Everyone is overcome with happiness and keeps asking me when we will do it again.

Bāriya also told me that he and Djurrpum, the Ėiyadhālinmirri clan leader, were now equal (rrambarŋi, together, level, even, equal). He had affirmed his position as clan leader.

ROLES AND RIGHTS

As in the regional and public ceremonies, men work their way up a hierarchy of age-related roles and some gain increasing power and authority. Although women are excluded from the most powerful positions, they
have a similar age-based hierarchy in their own sphere (Figure 6.5).

Men conceive of movement through the age-related hierarchy as a process in which the younger take the place of the old. In this ceremony novices were introduced, Bāriya's son joined the 'leaders to make the ranga', a mature man called out the ḫikan names in place of the power-man on one occasion, and Bāriya confirmed his new position as clan leader following the death of the former leader. He constantly reiterated that he had gathered up the whole clan and all the maḥayin. But he also constantly talked about which of the mature men would replace him in due course.

The power-man (djarrikiyimirri) called the ḫikan names, played clap-sticks to co-ordinate the dances and had the final word on matters of organisation. One man explained that

Bāriya looks after the maḥayin. If there is trouble he finishes the ceremony.

Djurrpum, the Liyadhalinimirri clan leader, joined Bāriya for the final three days, when they shared the leadership of the ceremony. He did so because his clan and Bāriya's are 'one', joint owners of the ceremony.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-related position</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power-man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(djarrikiyimirri, ḫalkarramirri)</td>
<td>big-man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaders for the ranga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mature man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>song-man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dancer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>old bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>most novices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>young bachelor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.5: Age-related position in the Nārāra.

Leaders of other Dhuwa clans present did not take organising roles, but simply observed, and were shown the ranga. Bāriya remained as power-man. Djurrpum led the dances and took certain key decisions (see Chapter 8).

The mature men of the Đāmbugawumirri clan, while deferring to the old men, took the leading executive roles. They instructed the novices, led the dances, sang and made the appropriate calls. They discussed what should be done when problems arose. The mature men could go at will into the shade where the ranga lay and one or two took over the work of the old men from time to time.
Young bachelors did most of the dancing and they obeyed the mature men at the Inside ground. Most were D’ambugawumirri but several other Dhuwa clans of the area were represented (see below, Table 6.12). Six of the D’ambugawumirri bachelors 'knew' the ranga and ceremony. One of them, Bariya's son, joined the mature men as 'leaders to make the ma’dayin' (gong-rangamirri). In Chapter 8 I show what happened when he abused his position.

The novices, called simply 'young; (yuţa) as opposed to 'mature' or 'big' people (dilak) were mostly adolescent boys. A few were middle-aged men. According to R.M. Berndt (1952:14) males at Yirrkala see their first Narrra well past adolescence. Altogether I counted fifteen Dhuwa and six Yirritja boys introduced to the ceremony.

Children first see the Närre as they stand at the riyawarra tree with their mothers and fathers' sisters. This introduction parallels the part of the Gunapi which takes place at the Djapanban trestle.

The men bring circumcized boys to see the dances but 'They do not know and must not see the ma’dayin (the ranga)', said Bariya.

The novices stood with Yirritja men facing the shade, their backs to the dancers. The older men put underarm sweat on the boys' eyes, turned them around and told them what the dance was. They then enjoined them not to eat the animal represented by the dance until released from the prohibition.

The Goanna dancers stared wide-eyed at the novices, provoking giggles and wry comments from older men in the vein of 'Oh, very fierce!' Young boys recount the experience in very different terms. One told the Mission linguist that the wagarr had stared and thrown spears at him; but that as he had not flinched he too was fierce.

For a number of novices this Närre was their second. They began to participate in the dancing a few days after they entered the ceremony, and all novices joined in the final Kingfisher dance.

Eight Dhuwa youths all in their late teens saw the ranga for the first time on the last day of the ceremony. The ɪkanbuy painting on the chest released each novice from the dietary prohibitions about three days after the end of the ceremony.

Men introduced a total of twenty-five novices steadily throughout

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1One Birrkili man of especially low status and two Gamalanga men.
the ceremony (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11: Novices introduced to the Inside dances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>No of novices introduced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-33</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bōriya's sisters' children are Daygurrγurr (Yirritja). The Daygurrγurr clan leader Djāwa was the senior sisters' son for the ceremony but he took little active part except at the end. A younger son of his took the most prominent role in winding the ranga with string and feathers. This came about because Bōriya's son, who was taking a most active role and winding the ranga for the first time, left for Darwin after a dispute (see Chapter 8).

Other sisters' sons called out as Black Butcherbird and Mangrove Robin in the Tide dance, looked after the novices, played the drone-pipe at the riyawarra tree and collected money and food to 'feed the supernatural Beings'. Djāwa and his brother Boŋuwuy and other sisters' sons helped to organise the painting of the women for the final day's dances and led the marrawinydjun chorus in the final Black-beetle Larvae dances at the riyawarra tree.

The women's roles were organised in a similar way to those of the men. Three older Đąmbugawumirri women in particular took leading roles, as did two Liyagalawumirri women on the last day. A prominent Liyadhalinmirri woman and a Đąmbugawumirri woman took the role of the Djan'kawu on the last day. Some younger unmarried women of the Đąmbugawumirri clan danced through the night.

Three Yirritja moiety women took leading roles in organising the women for the last day's dances at the riyawarra tree.

The attendance figures show the ceremony to be an affair mainly involving a few closely related clans of the same moiety, with their sisters' sons in the opposite moiety (Table 6.12).
All the leading and organising male roles were taken by Dümbugawumirri and Liyadhalinmirri men and their clan sisters' husbands and sons. The one exception was a Djambarrpuynu man, a renowned singer and dancer (but not djirrikaymirri) who led the dances at the riyawarra tree everyday. Members of eight other Dhuwa moiety clans attended and the majority of them painted-up and danced. Djambarrpuynu clan, gutharra to Dümbugawumirri, was the most strongly represented.

Table 6.12: Dhuwa and Yirritja males attending the Närma.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan (Dhuwa)</th>
<th>Novices</th>
<th>Dancers</th>
<th>Total number attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dümbugawumirri</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liyadhalinmirri</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djambarrpuynu</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manharrgu</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamalangga</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorryindi</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murruqun</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marraqu</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dañtiwuy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malarra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan (Yirritja)</th>
<th>Novices</th>
<th>Total number attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daygurrgrurr</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birrkili</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangurri</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wobulkarra</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Yirritja moiety men who took part were all sisters' sons of the main participating Dhuwa clans. The Yirritja people attended not on a clan but on a kinship basis.

Data on women's participation is less complete, but the proportions of clans represented was similar to those of the men (Table 6.13).
Table 6.13: Known women participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhuwa</th>
<th>Yirritja</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Đämbugawumirri</td>
<td>Daygurrgrurr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liyadhalinmirri</td>
<td>Birrkili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djambarrpuyŋu</td>
<td>Wobulkarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manharrŋu</td>
<td>Wangurri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamalänga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liyagalawumirri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorryindji</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murruŋun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrąŋu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Đathiwuy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Målarrra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that the Nähra ceremony and its organisation is separate but isomorphic for the two moieties; it has demonstrated that each clan has a separate identity but that it is linked to others of the moiety through the maďayin, by its very genesis. The relationship of māri:ɡutharra between the linked clans is stressed. We have seen that upon this relationship rests a clan's ability to obtain wives and so perpetuate itself.

The day by day changes in the dances and invocations proclaimed each clan's separate existence. The ceremony ended notionally at the country of the organising clan. The notion, and for some the fact, of the spirits returning to the ceremony demonstrated the perpetuity of the clan in a way similar to the public ceremonies and the Djuŋguwan. As the next chapter shows, the dances and songs represented the creation and reproduction of the linked clans, and the relations upon which reproduction depends.

A clan is not a member of one set exclusively. The distribution of the raŋga and the dances show that most are in multilateral relations. The Djambarrpuyŋu for example join with the others through the Djaŋ'kawu, but its Shark dances and designs relate the clan to another set. Such
flexibility undoubtedly relates to necessary shifts of alliance in the competition for wives. Djambarrpuyŋu and Dāmbugawumirri clans are closely entwined because one provides mothers-in-law for the other.¹

The ceremony as a statement of moiety unity goes beyond even the most widely distributed waparr. Goanna and the Tide united all Dhuwa clans which the ceremony visited.

I suggested that on occasions when clans of the two moieties combine to perform a joint Närra the effect would be not unlike that of the Gunapipi, since about half the population of Milingimbi were involved in this one, and most watched on the last day. There are major differences however; the Gunapipi propounds the interdependence of the two moieties for legitimate reproduction; the Närra propounds the interdependence of clans for the same end. Warner's informants (1937:346) however, stressed the relation of moieties to marriage.

The ceremony is similar to the regional ceremonies in its exclusion of women, emphasized by the trickery element, and admission of men into a hierarchy of knowledge and power. The Djan'kawu story describes the origin of women's role as gatherers and providers of food and bearers of children. We saw that for men admission into the esoteric side is gradual and structured. Knowledge and powers relate to age.

The Närra provides the framework for the revelation of the most sacred objects. The continued existence of a clan's system of knowledge does not rely on the ranga being made, however, since paintings represent them and stories describe their genesis. It is possible to learn all about the complete set through the paintings, without the objects themselves being made. Nevertheless, the older men control the manufacture of the ranga and the paintings, and reserve knowledge about the full set to themselves. As R.M. Berndt remarks (1952:15), many years may pass before a man has seen all the ranga. Many men never do so.

The meanings of the Närra ceremony and its songs and designs are part of a clan's body of knowledge, its law. The next chapter examines the Dāmbugawumirri clan law and explores further how the Närra represents the genesis and perpetuation of the clan.

¹Ideally Dāmbugawumirri clan and country are māri to Djambarrpuyŋu. Some individuals of each clan are māri to individuals of the other.
CHAPTER 7

FLESH, BLOOD AND BONE

'Rainbow Lorikeet is the law, like a heavy rock for all, for gutharra and märi.'
In the previous chapter I described the ownership of the Närna, the course of one ceremony and roles within it. We saw that the ceremony makes increasingly specific discriminations between the moieties, sets of clans and individual clans. In the context of the ceremony the ceremonial leader conceived of clans within the moiety as related māri: gutharra. The predominant participating clans were indeed in that relationship.

This chapter is concerned with the meanings which people invest in the Dhuwa ceremony and its elements. The ceremony re-enacts the creation of closely related clans of the same moiety, and represents the processes and relations necessary for their perpetuation. I suggest that it depicts the creative acts of the waŋarr, the spiritual powers and conception spirits which they left in the waters, and the relation of dependence between 'mother' and 'child' and māri and gutharra clans necessary for successful reproduction. Above all men dramatize their appropriation of powers from the waŋarr, and their control of male and female sexuality.

Bariya explained the daily public dance to the riyawarra tree with a story which is an elaboration of the central episode of the Djaŋ'kawu story (see Chapter 2). This story captures the essence of the ceremony.

The Djaŋ'kawu went to get nerite and telescope-shellfish and crabs, having hung the dilly-bag (Gwilirri) in the tree (Djota). The men came and stole the dilly-bag full of ranga.

'Hey, where is the dilly-bag?' said the sisters. Then they heard 'binbir!' — the men dancing at the Närna ground.

'Maybe our elder brothers have it'. They put their fingers in their ears and went to see.

'They stole it and now they are dancing' they said; 'we will go back, work and get food — the men can do the dancing.'

If men had not stolen Gwilirri dilly-bag the women would still dance and we men would have to cook! The men said 'we had better get it'.

The men appropriated the sacred objects and with them the rights to perform and control the Närра ceremony. We shall see that the story also connotes the appropriation by men of sexual powers.

As R.M. Berndt (1952:61) remarks, the meanings of the songs are closely connected with all the other elements; they shed light on the whole of the clan law.

Most of this chapter is based on the Dāmbugawumirri leader Bāriya's interpretation of the clan songs and the Dhuwa Närра ceremony. Since I found a high degree of consistency between Bāriya's interpretations and those of other men of the clan, they are representative depictions of explicit meanings. The interpretations of implicit meaning is more difficult; here I can only draw attention to possible interconnections and connotations, and make tentative suggestions in the light of what is known of Yolŋu thought in general.

I recorded a song-series which Bāriya helped me to translate and which he commented upon at a Washing ceremony. It consists of thirty songs, a number of them repeated several times, and each song having about six verses (Table 7.1). People construe the songs as a journey through various topographical categories of country; through the sea to the mangroves, onto the saltflats, into the forest, back to the plains, swamps and lakes. They also conceive of the songs as a westward journey equivalent to that of the Djaŋ'kawu from Burralku in the east, following the sun; or from Elcho Island to the clan country at Gärriyakurgura, just as in the stories about the Djaŋ'kawu and Gārrawurra (Chapter 2). We saw in Chapter 6 that the ceremony also depicts a journey which partly overlaps that of the Djaŋ'kawu from one Dhuwa clan country to another. Through their journeys the Djaŋ'kawu and Goanna are two examples of what I shall refer to as interlinking elements: they link up localized elements which have inherent connections with particular places.

Localized elements are parallel to the relationship between patri­lineal land-owning groups and clans to their country; interlinking elements are parallel to matrilateral relations between them (Figure 7.1). Most of the elements of the ceremony are both localized and interlinking. A certain clan design, for example, may refer to one particular locality, but it is the same as another clan's design referring to a different locality and therefore links the two clans and localities. Most
Table 7.1: Jämbugawumirri bilma songs recorded at a Washing ceremony

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garfish</td>
<td>Pygmy Goose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea water</td>
<td>Black-winged Stilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Tom</td>
<td>The Djaŋ'kawu sisters travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Butcherbird</td>
<td>Black-beetle Larvae in the rush-corms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying Fox</td>
<td>Bustard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomuru Shellfish</td>
<td>Black Cockatoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Cockatoo</td>
<td>Rainbow Lorikeet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mätjarra group</td>
<td>Guwilirri dilly-bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh and Saltwater mix</td>
<td>The Djaŋ'kawu sisters travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesser Salmon Catfish</td>
<td>Wild Pea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Butcherbird</td>
<td>The Djaŋ'kawu sisters travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spangled Gudgeon (?)</td>
<td>Honeybee (Yirritja)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crabs and Shellfish</td>
<td>Frilled Lizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-beetle Larvae</td>
<td>The Djaŋ'kawu sisters travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Pea</td>
<td>Black-beetle Larvae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying Fox</td>
<td>Thunderclouds and Rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-beetle Larvaeac</td>
<td>Bush Bird (Yirritja)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Djaŋ'kawu sisters travel</td>
<td>Spring waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfish</td>
<td>Djota tree, Lilies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Ibis</td>
<td>Black Butcherbird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masked Plover</td>
<td>Flying Fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brolga</td>
<td>The Mätjarra group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pied Goose</td>
<td>Water — the Tide comes in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
elements, however, can be sorted into those which are predominantly localized and those which are predominantly interlinking.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 7.1**

**PREDOMINANTLY LOCALIZED ELEMENTS**

The elements that are predominantly localized include the clan country and the ceremonial ground which represents that country; the trees and rocks that the waŋarr left and the raŋga that they put into the ground and into the water. Some of these elements are secret, some public. The dominant image of the tree embodies the connection of waŋarr to land, and of people through the land to the waŋarr.

The description in the previous chapter showed that the ceremony takes place at a restricted Inside ground and at the public camp where the riyawarra tree stands. The two owning clans of this particular performance, Đëmbugawumirri and Liyadhalinmirri, call the Inside ground Djëpuļ (a restricted name); the riyawarra tree and a tree at the Inside ground are called Djota.

The setting has its equivalent at each clan's country (see Chapter 2). At Đëmbugawumirri clan country the Djëpuļ ground stands in the forest. Bariya commented on Flying Fox song:

Djëpuļ is Flying Fox's place. The Djaŋ'kawu put in the raŋga as Flying Fox's law and said 'You are Flying Fox. You make the Närра place. I make the Djota raŋga. You sit in the Djota tree at Djëpuļ. It is a male secret that Flying Fox is the boss of the Inside ground.

The Djota tree at Djëpuļ and the tree in which the Djaŋ'kawu are said to have hung up their dilly-bag correspond to the Djota and riyawarra
trees in the Nārra. The lake at Gārriyakoura has its equivalent in
the sea by the riyawarra tree. People bathe in the sea at the end of
the ceremony, just as they used to bathe in the lake when the ceremony
was held at the clan country.

The setting is therefore a representation of Dîmbugawumirri clan
country, and of the countries of all owning clans.

The image of the tree unites the Inside and the Outside grounds,
the setting and the clan country, the esoteric and exoteric. The proper
name Djota and its synonym Mulułu apply to all the significant trees at
the clan country and at the ceremonial grounds. They also apply to all
the ranga and the Ganinyidi digging-stick.

The Djota tree is the public, visible and permanent sign of
the relationship between the waŋarr (who planted it) and the country;
the Djota ranga is the esoteric sign which lies in the ground or
the mud. Both are indissolubly linked to the country in Yolṉu thought.
People insist that a tree planted by the waŋarr stands there eternally
dhb'rranhaynu). If they find such a tree to have fallen they point out a
sapling and say that it is replacing the tree.

Djota and mululu are common names of Exocarpus latifolia (Rudder
1976), a species related to the native cherry. People use the names as
proper names for other trees and ranga. Bāriya said about a song that
'Flying Foxes hang in any tree, but whatever the species of tree, it is
called Djota'. He explained that the Djaŋ'kawu said that, people did
not make it up.

The song about Djota tree has public and secret meanings. It
includes synonyms of Djota which men also call in the invocation:

Djota tree, Gaymananqala, Lululwaŋan,
Bānda, young Mulułu tree,
young shoots, Mulułu, you Yirrpunbaŋala tree,
those two (Djaŋ'kawu) sat and collected lily-roots, vegetable food,
in the mud, in the cloudy water,
Bānda tree stands in the mud, young shoots,
power lies there, the tree stands for the Garrawurra group,
you Mulułu, Gaymananqala tree,
of the Ikan for the Garrawurra group,
you noisy, feathered and fluffy tree, full of game.

Warner's informants also equate the riyawarra tree, the ranga and the
tree at the clan country (1937:350). The Rirratjingu focus also on the
Djota (djuda) tree. In their story and songs the Djaŋ'kawu (Djanggawul)
planted a mauwalan stick at many places, and it became a tree. Their
riyawarra and ranga are also djuda (Berndt R.M. 1952:5, 50, 98, 114, 207).
At the foot (luku) at Ganydjalamirri Mululu lies in the mud, full of game, noisy, feathered and fluffy with Lorikeet, Yirriyirrigalapanjal, Djota, Balirrina tree.

Bāriya commented:

The Djaŋ'kawu put in Djota tree and raŋga at many places. In the song they collected lilies, took them to the tree and prepared them with a stone-knife. They dug a waterhole in the mud, the shape of a canoe, the 'shadow' of the Djota tree.

That means they put Djota in (tree and raŋga) as the īikan for the Garrawurra people. They made the maŋayin (raŋga) and put it in at Gārriyakqura. Djota also lies at Ganydjalamirri in the cloudy water (the Canoe raŋga). We make the raŋga because they put it in.

The patent meaning of the song is that the Djaŋ'kawu sisters collected vegetable food, dug a waterhole and planted a tree which stands as the īikan of the Garrawurra (i.e. Đāmbugawumirri) group. An esoteric meaning is that the plant-names refer to the raŋga which lies in the swamp and in the mud at Ganydjalamirri, and that the waterhole is an image of the raŋga.

Another esoteric meaning is that the phrase 'full of game,1 noisy, feathered and fluffy' which describes Djota tree, refers to the tree at the Nārra ground. Bāriya said

It means Flying Foxes sat in the Djota tree and made the Djāpuŋ place. It means the Djāpuŋ Nārra ground.

The adjective guŋikuŋmirr (feathered and fluffy) refers specifically to the feathers of the rainbow lorikeet, so the phrase may also connote the Djota raŋga covered with feathers, or the birds themselves in the tree.

Bāriya's comments on the song imply that the waŋarr put each raŋga in the ground at a particular place, and that each is complementary to the tree.

The raŋga displayed at the Nārra described in Chapter 6 was a 'tree-root' or 'thigh' (yuŋgurr) raŋga. It was the leading raŋga representing Mature Woman, the elder Djaŋ'kawu sister, and was made of a piece of mangrove driftwood. People hold that the Djaŋ'kawu first made this and other types of raŋga. Banhdharrawuy's story about Mululu canoe raŋga illustrates the aetiology of raŋga (Chapter 2); it is a token of the transformation of an object which the sisters used and

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1I translate as 'game' the category warrakan which includes edible species of land-animals, birds and flying mammals.
left at a particular place. Some have a rock as an equivalent to the original, others have a tree. The names Rock or Djota and the word 'tree' unite the ranga with its permanent equivalent in the country. Figure 7.2 shows a drawing of the Canoe ranga, wound with rainbow lorikeet feathers. The top signifies the Dhämbala landing at Gürriyakůrura. Other Dämbugawumirri clan ranga are listed in Table 7.2. Dämbugawumirri clan ranga are all Djota trees. Other Dhuwa clan ranga are probably not all classified in this way.

All ranga are modelled on the durable and perishable parts of the body. The red ochre painted wood, paperbark, stone or wax core is the bone (ŋaraka) and the string and rainbow lorikeet feather windings are the flesh (ŋanak). Many ranga specifically represent the bone of the waŋarr such as Whale Rib (Warner 1937:41). The ranga 'bone' is buried in mud or soil at the end of the ceremony without the 'flesh'. Some are buried with the human dead — waŋa cord ranga usually are. Thus the ranga as a trace of the supernatural Beings is modelled on the remains of the human dead; durable bone, impermanent flesh and fat (see Berndt R.M. 1952:7). The traces of some waŋarr such as rock represent their bones, and places where the ranga lie are 'bone' countries.

The Djota tree and ranga are localized in that they represent entities, one of which is literally attached to a clan's country, and another of which refers to a particular place, and which is classified with a feature of that place. Both have the interlinking component of similarity and joint ownership. The Djaŋ'kawu planted Djota trees at each country: Mature Woman is a type of ranga owned by probably all Dhuwa clans on the Djaŋ'kawu track. According to Warner (1937:338) the Liyadhalinmirri (Guyula) clan also has the Canoe/Rock ranga. That particular Mature Woman ranga displayed at the Järra belonged to the Dämbugawumirri clan.

In the song, the Djota tree stands in the muddy swamp. Many representations of the tree show it standing by a waterhole or spring. The springs which the Djaŋ'kawu made with their digging-sticks and the stone and menstrual blood they let fall, are important localized components which receive attention at the end of the Järra ceremony. In the songs the springs bubble up in the mangroves to be covered by high tides; salt and freshwater mix (see Chapter 2, Plate 2.3). Liikanbuy designs focus on the springs and on the ranga.
Figure 7.2: Dāmbugawumirri clan ranga.

1 and 2 are from drawings by Bopani and Banhdharrawuy of the Canoe ranga. 3 is the Mature Woman ranga used in the Nārra ceremony. 4 is a wâna cord ranga attached to a feathered ɲanybâk arm-ring.

The painted ends of the ranga, and the break in the feathering on the wâna cord, represent the landing at Gārrilyakura. All forms consist of a core of wood, paper-bark or hair, wound with banyan fibre string and rainbow lorikeet feathers (13). Ranga 1 and 2 are shown with wâna cords attached.

Table 7.2: Dāmbugawumirri clan ranga.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mature Woman</th>
<th>Guwilirri Dilly-bag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nubile Girl</td>
<td>Wuduku Goanna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrtha Canoe</td>
<td>Mayawudu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The men painted Đambilgawumirri and Gunbirridji clan Iikanbuy designs on the novices to release them from dietary and speech prohibitions. They are similar to those painted on the chests of initiands, the chests and skulls of the dead, coffin lids, and some ranga. Related designs occur as ground-sculptures in the purification ceremonies.

Iikanbuy designs are connected with the ranga. Their meanings condense many of the themes in the Nurrara and in the songs. The design in Figure 7.3 combines three components: the circles represent springs in the mangroves made by the Djan'kawu with their digging-sticks; the horizontal band is the Muulu (Canoe) ranga (see above) with live and dead rock oysters adhering to it, the vertical bands represent the mangroves with surface paths and streams through them, coloured red by the fallen mangrove leaves. This may connote the blood of the Djan'kawu.

The design superimposes ranga and waterhole just as the Kingfisher dance condenses the creation of both into the one movement of digging. The design also depicts seawater, and the Oyster maqayin which is owned both by Đambilgawumirri and their mūri clan Liyagalawumirri.

The design in Figure 7.4 and the ground-sculpture design in Figure 7.5 show related designs which have more specific references to places. Triangles represent sandbanks in the creek at Ganydjalamirri where the ranga lies, and the tide coming in at that place. One shows the creek made by the Carpet Python of the mūri clan Liyagalawumirri warr at the adjacent country.

Figures 7.6 and 7.7 show simpler versions of the above designs which the painter maintained were all that two of his brothers had the right to paint. In the ground-sculpture designs in Figure 7.8 the central elements recur but show a particular conjunction of small public springs and larger restricted springs in the salt creek.

In the design depicting Burarrgapu, the Gunbirridji clan country which the Đambilgawumirri are taking over (Figure 7.9), the Djota tree, Goanna, and Spangled Perch are included among elements similar to those in the previous designs. Figure 7.10 shows the equivalent ground-sculpture.

The designs are both localized and interlinking elements. Like the ranga and tree they refer to specific places, and indeed represent the

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1 Rock oysters adhere both to rocks and to the roots and trunks of the mangrove (Meehan 1975:107). The Canoe is a Rock in its public manifestation.
Figure 7.3: Springs at Gärriyakŋura.

A Ƙikanbuy design from a painting by Banhdharrawuy, similar to those painted on the chests of novices. The circles represent springs in the mangroves at Gärriyakŋura. The horizontal band is Rock, the Outside name of the Canoe raŋga; the top row of semicircles represent live Oysters and the bottom row dead Oysters. Oyster is a Liyagala-wumirri clan waŋarr.

The design is a representation of the raŋga which, in the story, was the transformation of the Barrtha Canoe which sank at Ganydjalamirri.
Figure 7.4: The design of a painting by Banhdharrawuy. The circles represent springs in the mangroves at Gärriyakóurai; the horizontal bands are creeks running inside the ground from the springs at Ganydjalamirr; the vertical bands are paths through the mangroves leading to the springs. The triangles are sandbanks in the creek, and the cross-hatching infill (not shown) is the pattern on the sand left by the water when the tide goes out. The diagonal lines are water which bubbles up from the springs and runs through the mangroves.

A different story pertains to this painting:

Two Dogs called Dhukuray and Barrtha sit at Barala sandbank and usually go over the sand and leave their footprints.

Dhukuray is the name of a shellfish which the Djaŋ'kawu gathered and Barrtha is the name of the Canoe which became a ranga.
Figure 7.5: A ground-sculpture design used in a Washing ceremony, similar to the paintings. Bāriya explained that the circles are springs in the mangroves and A is one near an island of mangroves. The horizontal band B is the underground stream linking the springs, and the vertical bands C are surface streams from the springs. The triangle D is a little landing in the mangroves, and F points to the landing. The triangles at G are the sandbanks 'pulled' by the tide coming in at Ganydjalamirri.

The rectangles at H are Barala sandbanks (where the Dogs sit) and the vertical bands I are the creeks cut by Carpet Python, the Liyagalawumirri waŋarr. Guruwaŋa is Liyagalawumirri clan country immediately to the east of Gārriyakura (Chapter 2).

A digging-stick was stuck in the ground at J and the Guwilirri dilly-bag and waŋa cords hung up on it when the ground-sculpture was made. At K a digging-stick stood hung with waŋa cords only.
Figure 7.6: A simpler version of the designs shown in Figures 7.3 and 7.4.

Figure 7.7: A simpler version of the designs shown in Figures 7.3 and 7.4.

Figure 7.8: A ground-sculpture design of springs in the mangroves at Garriyakoura, used at a Washing ceremony (Chapter 5). The design is similar in meaning to the horizontal bands of the designs in Figure 7.4. Four leaf-filled holes at A represent springs covered with scum (gababu). The small circle is a well, dug out around the spring, and the horizontal band is the underground stream which leads to a restricted pool in the mud of the saltwater creek in the mangroves; only old men may drink there.

Plate 2. shows the spring at Garriyakoura. (See also Keen 1977a).
The small circle at A represents Djota tree standing near the water. Goanna dives into the water to drink, or into the salt creek when he is disturbed. If men see him, he climbs the mangrove trees or goes into the waterhole.

The circles B, C and D are springs made by the Djan'kawu; the water runs into the hole at D and up out of E. The large circle is a big waterhole; the bands are the streams of water running from the well and the springs. The Spangled Gudgeon on the left live in the well. The Djan'kawu saw them and sang about them.

A similar design was painted onto Bāriya's son's chest at his circumcision.

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raŋga and Djota tree as well as springs. These and the designs themselves are interlinking in so far as they have counterparts elsewhere. We have seen that different clans' Djota trees and raŋga are similar; the presence of springs in the mangroves at different places is the sign that all those places were created by the Djaŋ'kawu. The circles and pairs of parallel lines in the designs are typical of clans that own the Djaŋ'kawu maŋayin (see Morphy H. 1977a:11). The seawater represented in the designs is itself an interlinking element.

Feathered wana cords are the public equivalents of the raŋga as portable objects. Circumcision initiands, and men and women at the Närra ceremony, wear the cords hanging from their elbows. The raŋga too is decorated with wana, as the drawing in Figure 7.2 shows. Báriya referred to them as raŋga wana — 'raŋga arms'.

The structure of the cords is similar to that of the raŋga; people refer to both as maŋayin in public. The core consists of a thick cord of human hair (considered like bone a durable part of the human body), bound like the raŋga with string and rainbow lorikeet feathers to impart a thick fluffy appearance. A black, waxed break in the feathers halfway along the cord signifies the landing-place at Gāririyakura, the top of the Canoe raŋga.1

Cords and raŋga have similar aetiology. The Wild Pea2 song describes the fluffy roots of the vine; they point towards the countries of neighbouring Dhūwa clans, the main participants in the Närra described above (Djambarrpuyŋu and Liyadhalinmirri). In the song the Djaŋ'kawu dig up the roots for food (cf. Berndt R.M. 1952:202). Báriya explained that the secret meaning of the song is that the Djaŋ'kawu made the wana cords. The songs describe the plant as feathered, fluffy or hairy

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1The Rirratjiŋu have a clearly parallel notion. They call the notches on the Djaŋ'kawu brother's elongated penis the bugalil — i.e. the Jikan, the localized component par excellence. Thus the penis is of a structure similar to the wana and raŋga. Berndt's informants (1952:10, 25) suggested that the raŋga may have derived from the brother's penis.

2A plant which the Yolŋu call yuluk. Ethnobotanists have identified three species: *Galactia tenuiflora* (Rudder 1976), *Glycine tormentella* and *Smithia conferta* (Reeves n.d.). All are species of the order *Papilionaceae*. Bentham describes the vine of *Galactia tenuiflora* as 'glabrous or pubescent with spreading hairs' (1864:255).
(guııkulıimirr). The word guııkulıı refers specifically to rainbow lorikeet feathers; thus the phrase 'fluffy arms' in the song fits the roots, stems and feathered wana cords alike (cf. Berndt R.M. 1952:100). The songs also describe dilly-bag and Flying Foxes hanging in Djota tree as 'feathered and fluffy'.

The Yolŋu classify the wild pea vine as dharpa (tree, wood, plant) like the Djota tree, and both are vegetable food (ŋaθa). They are therefore more similar than English categories would suggest.

The wana cords are localized in the sense that they are equivalent to plants growing in the clan country, and in that the break in the feathers represents the landing—the threshold between the interconnecting sea and the clan country. The cords are interlinking elements since all Dhuwa clans have similar wana cords. Features such as thickness or the absence of the break distinguish one clan's wana from another's. The stories explain the similarities and connection: the Djaŋ'kawu sisters carried the wana in their Guwilirri dilly-bag and gave them to each Dhuwa clan.

Each clan's country, raŋga, ıikan names and designs are unique; they typify the clan which possesses them. Yet all but the ıikan names are similar to those of other clans and have names in common with them. The names Mätjarra and Buŋunbuŋun denote the whole set of clans with the same waŋarr and related places and other elements.

The predominant images are tree, bone and roots, spring waters and the landing. The concepts ıikan and ıuku unite these images and link people to them. As we saw in Chapter 2 ıuku denotes the trace of the waŋarr. It refers also to the roots of the tree and the raŋga, the ochre lying in the ground (e.g. at Elcho Island) and the mud at the bottom of the creeks and swamps in which the roots of the tree and the raŋga lie. ıikan connotes both a connection between bones— as in the elbow and knee bone—and the connection between the branch and the tree. ıikanbuy names and designs connect the individual to the waŋarr as branches of a tree to the trunk or elbow and knee bones to the body. In the Hollow Log ceremony the bones of the dead were placed in the hollow log. The Đambugawumirri Hollow Log was Mululu tree. In this final burial bones and tree were united.
We have seen that according to the Yolŋu the spirits of the dead return to the clan waters, and conception spirits come from them. The former have their 'shadows' in the form of trees at the waterhole. Bāriya said that trees by the wells at Gārriyakura were the Garrawurra group (Chapter 2). Some people believe that these spirits visit the Nārra ceremony; it is possible that men believe the spirits to enter the rānga, for it was stated explicitly that a spirit had entered the Yuŋgur rānga at the Djunguwan.

All these concepts, images and beliefs imply an enduring bond between waŋarr, place and people. The setting and objects in the ceremony represent these bonds.

PREDOMINANTLY INTERLINKING ELEMENTS

The interlinking components imply that the connection between localized components is one of flesh, fat and blood, in contrast to the bone. Bone connotes patrilineal relations; flesh, fat and blood connote relations through women (see Hiatt 1967:473). The journey of the Djan'kawu, following the sun, is the primordial connection in Dambilgawumirri thought: Dhuwa clans are connected through women and through common genesis.

In the story the sisters travel from country to country. They name and create clans and languages, make spring waters, hunt and name birds, animals and plants, and meet other waŋarr. They travel by sea — paddling their paperbark raft or canoe with digging-sticks — and by land. According to Bāriya Rainbow Lorikeet and Black Cockatoo followed them. In the ceremony Goanna makes the journey, and the tide comes in at each country in dance. These interlinking elements connect the Djota tree, rānga and freshwater springs at each country.

The first of the daily dances at the Inside ground is 'the Tide comes in and goes out'; Bāriya gave me this explanation of the version in which Black Butcherbird and Mangrove Robin call:

The birds heard many warriors, and they heard the tide come in through the mangroves. One bird, Mangrove Robin, whistles 'wer, wer' as the tide goes out and the other, Black Butcherbird, calls 'gawu' as it comes in. One man stands as each bird and calls, the other men go 'mmm' and run forward as Water. When they dance round and round that means the tide is powerful.

The song about the tide describes the rough sea; the tide comes in at märi clan countries — the adjacent Liyagalawumirri clan country to
the west, and Gunbirridji clan country at Elcho Island. There the water mixes purple ochre and white clay. Mother and child seas run together and separate at the point. The tide comes in at Ganydjalamirri, the place of the Canoe ranga, where the saltwater mixes with the freshwater springs on the beaches and in the mangroves.

The song about Black Butcherbird tells how the Djaŋ'kawu saw and named this bird, who sits in the Djota or Mululu tree at Ganydjalamirri and calls as the tide comes in. Garrawurra (Đambiğawumirri) and märi clan (Liyagalawumirri) people see the bird also.

The sea thus links clans of the opposite moiety and of the same moiety; märi and gutharra clans are connected because the tide comes in at both their places. The sea is also the medium of communication; the Djaŋ'kawu paddle through the sea in the story just as people travel from country to country by sea.

The Inside Goanna dance comes after the Tide. Bariya explained the dance:

After water, land. Goanna paint means the flesh, fat and blood of its tail. They dance going 'binbir' and 'rrrt'; stand and stare at Rainbow Lorikeet or sometimes at thunder clouds or the shade where the ranga is. Goanna came out of the sea, and I call the names Guypidi, Djandamala, Maninymunuk.

The second Goanna dance includes crawling or digging motions, figuratively taking place at the clan country of the day.

In Bopani's painting of springs at Elcho Island (Burarrgapu), Goanna climbs Djota tree and dives into the waterhole (cf. Berndt R.M. 1952:127). The dance ground and Djota ranga are in relative positions corresponding to sea or waterhole and Djota tree, as the dancers move along the ground and posture in front of the shade. Some ranga depict Goanna on the Djota tree (see Berndt R.M. 1962:44). Goanna therefore links up the predominantly localized components, through its implied journey via the sea and tidal rivers. The dance 'Djaŋ'kawu paddling' may replace Goanna.

In the version of the ceremony described by Warner (1937:348) the dance represents the Djaŋ'kawu who go ashore and see Rainbow Lorikeet and the ranga. Shark, which connects the Djambarrpuyŋu with other clans, replaces the Goanna dance on days when Flinders Peninsular is visited in the ceremony.

The Kingfisher and various Fish dances at the riyawarra tree are the public equivalents of the Tide and Goanna dances. Kingfisher 'plays'
at the tree as the name of each clan's country is proclaimed day by day. As we shall see, a number of the fish which are represented in dance are tolerant of both fresh and saltwater, some travelling far inland up the rivers. Like Goanna, these fish unite inland and seaside Dhuwa clans.

Rainbow Lorikeet, which Goanna stares at in the dance, is not a dance, but its feathers are the major element of Dhuwa sacred objects. The orange breast-feathers decorate the maḏayin dilly-bags, the waṅa cords, and long marradjirri string, ḋanybak arm-rings which all the male dancers wear, and the ḋanga. The Yirritja equivalent is possum-fur.

In story and song the Rainbow Lorikeet is connected with the journey of the Djaŋ'kawu. Bärinya said that the bird followed the sisters. It is also associated with the sun whose course the sisters' journey followed (see also Berndt R.M. 1952:97). The song describes Rainbow Lorikeet as the 'leader' sitting up high in Djota tree warming his feathers in the sun at many Dhuwa clans' places; Bärinya's version of the song mentions ten Dhuwa clans of the Woollen River area, and groups far to the east and west.¹

Bärinya explained that the Djaŋ'kawu said 'Rainbow Lorikeet is the law, like a heavy rock for all, for gutharra and māri'. He (Bärinya) dances the Närra for gutharra and gurruq ('FZDCh') countries from where the sun sets to where it rises, through the sea to Gārriyaknura where the ceremony finishes and where they bathe.² As I pointed out above, lorikeet feathers form the 'flesh' of the ḡanga. It is significant that Bärinya specified matrilineal relations between the clans visited by Rainbow Lorikeet.

The Dāmbugawumirri clan maḏayin dilly-bag named Guwilirri is fluffy with lorikeet feathers. It is the equivalent to that which the Djaŋ'kawu carried, filled with waṅa cords and the food they collected. Male and female dancers carry the dilly-bag in the Närra ceremony: men when they dance Bustard, women when they dance as the Djaŋ'kawu.

¹Liyadhalinmirri, Djambarrpuyŋu, Liyagalawumirri, Dāmbugawumirri, Ůaymil, Đatiwuy, Gunbirridji, Djarrrwark, Manharrŋu and Manhdhalpuy are the local clans he mentioned. All are Dhuwa.

²Many of the clans which Bärinya mentioned classify Dāmbugawumirri clan and country as māri, although Ůaymil and Đatiwuy are in a 'sister' relation to the former.
In the song the feathered and fluffy dilly-bag hangs in Djota tree, just as it hangs on the Djota ranga (cf. Berndt R.M. 1952:106). Bariya explained that the Djan'kawu killed rainbow lorikeets, made the dilly-bag and said 'It is of the story's end', referring to the fact that the men stole it and ended the Djan'kawu episode at their country.

The feathered objects make real as well as conceptual connections, for the men send feathered strings, cords and dilly-bags as messages to inform other clans about the performance. Message-strings are named Wild Pea like the wanja. Dhuwa men give strings to Yirritja men and Dhuwa men in a märigutharra relation exchange strings (see also Warner 1937:341, 344).

The course of the ceremony is ostensibly governed by the process of winding the ranga with string and lorikeet feathers. At the end the Mature Woman ranga stood covered with feathers and hung with the feathered wanja cords and dilly-bag.

The jikanbuy designs represent predominantly localized elements. The coarse designs with which the dancers decorated their bodies during the ceremony are predominantly interlinking elements. As we have seen, the stripes of Goanna design represent the flesh, blood and fat of Goanna Tail. Changes in the position and direction of the stripes signify the progress of the ceremony. Several men said that crossed stripes mean that the end of the ceremony is near (Figure 7.11).

The Bustard design, worn by the women who dance as the Djan'kawu and by the mature and old men as Bustard, changes also. The leading male dancers paint their faces red on day 32, the day of 'cooked Bustard', and wear feather cord 'beards'. Bariya explained that the beards signify that Bustard is a leader and an old person like the Djan'kawu. The latter took the white paint for the design, painted it and said, 'Use this for public and secret dances'.

All the Dhuwa participants wear the Kingfisher design on the final day. This consists of stripes like Goanna, but placed horizontally. When the design relates to Gunbirridji clan country purple ochre is used. This may connote the menstrual blood of the Djan'kawu (Berndt R.M. 1952:44), certainly the red stripes in Goanna design represent blood. Djurrpum referred to the Kingfisher design as 'flesh' during the painting process: the white stripe in Goanna design is the flesh of its tail.¹ We shall

¹Only white stripes were worn at the ceremony Warner (1937:343) witnessed. It represented the semen of the men who tried to copulate with the younger Djan'kawu sister. The organizing clan is not known, but it was possibly Galpu.
Figure 7.11: 'Coarse' body designs for the Dambugawumirri Njarr.

- red or purple ochre
- yellow ochre
- white
see later that the Kingfisher designs can also represent the lorikeet-feather windings — the flesh — of the raŋga.

The predominantly interlinking elements reviewed above not only make symbolic connections between groups and localized elements but also are generally owned. The Tide, Goanna and Bustard are danced in every Dhuwa ɲ̄arra, all clans own a sacred dilly-bag, rainbow lorikeet feathers decorate all Dhuwa sacred objects. Nevertheless certain features of the designs and dances distinguish between clans: the use of purple ochre as against red, or the thickness of the waŋa cords. Several interlinking elements are also localized as raŋga; Mature Woman is a raŋga for many Dhuwa clans, Goanna Tail is a raŋga for several clans, Rainbow Lorikeet is a Gorryindi clan raŋga.

The elements of the ceremony then clearly mark each clan and country, yet demonstrate their unity. The ceremony dramatizes the events that resulted in both the formation of each clan's identity and also in their interconnections. The setting and sacred object represent the permanent signs which the waŋarr left at each country, the Inside dances represent the intervening links that unite them. I express here in abstract and general terms what the Yolŋu state explicitly.

I next consider the themes of creation and procreation in the ceremony and related songs.

IMAGES OF CREATION AND PROCREATION

If my interpretation of the ceremony is correct, the final day's dances represent the waŋarr creating the clans and sacred objects, and the powers and resources which ensure the clan's continuity. They also represent the social relations and spiritual and physical processes of conception and reproduction necessary for the perpetuation of the clan.

The Djaŋ'kawu story describes the historical relationship between creation and perpetuation. The sisters created spring waters and, without the aid of men, bore the first humans. According to one man they put conception spirits into the waters 'like planting seeds'. They also had the power to create and give sacred objects. The loss of the dilly-bag to the men signalled the end of all their powers at each place where the loss occurred. They had begun the clan which, through marrying, could now perpetuate itself.
The Djaŋ'kawu did not require men for their creative acts in the D'ambugawumirri version of the story. They left conception spirits in the waters, but now men are also necessary for procreation. The ceremony suggests that men, with their appropriation of the dilly-bag, gained not only a role in procreation, but control of the ceremony and control over female fertility too. The daily dances appear to represent the provision and appropriation of powers. The dance to the riyañwarra tree corresponds explicitly to the men stealing the dilly-bag. The dances that follow seem to represent the conception powers, human and spiritual, that the Djaŋ'kawu provided. The final Kingfisher dance signifies both the birth of new members to the clan and the Mätjarra group of clans itself. Before looking more closely at the daily dances and those of the final three days, I shall review notions of conception and pregnancy (summarized in Table 7.3) held by the Yolŋu of the Woollen River area and their neighbours, which support my suggestion.

The Yolŋu and their neighbours recognize that the onset of menstruation is a sign that pregnancy is possible. But they believe, further, that copulation is a prerequisite for menstruation and therefore for pregnancy (Hamilton 1970:20; Warner 1937:75).

People at Maningrida attributed pregnancy to one or more causes. Spirit children which reside especially in freshwater seek out and enter a woman through her vagina, especially when she is menstruating (Hamilton 1970:22). Warner (1937:22) records a similar view; his informant said 'I won't menstruate any longer now because that baby fish is inside me'. A woman may eat a spirit child in the form of game or fish killed by her husband; or the disappearance of fish, crab or small game when she tries to catch it may signal the entry of a spirit child (Hamilton 1970:23). Ingestion of spirit children is thought to cause pregnancy because they reach the heart blood; heart and uterus are believed to be connected (op. cit.:22). A father dreams that the spirit child has entered or is about to enter the mother, or he may have some strange experience when hunting (see Warner 1937:22, and see Chapter 2).

People recognize that copulation is a cause of pregnancy but women never give it as a primary cause (Hamilton 1970:23; Warner 1937:24). Men told me that the waŋarr preserves the child as a gift; the semen forms the body, arms and legs. R.M. Berndt's informants (1952:271) at Yirrkala
told him that the penis forces menstrual blood to flow up into the uterus where it coagulates to form a foetus.

Eating 'strong' foods during menstruation, especially honey and fish, increases the likelihood of conception. Honey contains eggs and therefore spirit children\(^1\) (Hamilton 1970:25; and see Cawte et al. 1972). Copulation during menstruation also increases the likelihood of conception (Hamilton *ibid.*).

The Yolŋu classify both semen and menstrual blood as salty or unpalatable (mọŋuk) though the Dëmbugawumirri Djan'kawu stories associate menstrual blood with both freshwater springs and tidal creeks, and according to R.M. Berndt (1952:17) the Rirratjingu associate freshwater springs with the ejaculation of semen. The mixing of semen and blood, fresh and saltwater, clear and cloudy water are all powerful images of creative processes but there is no simple equivalence between menstrual blood, freshwater and cloudy water; or semen, saltwater and clear water.

Table 7.3: Yolŋu conception beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copulation</th>
<th>opens the vagina</th>
<th>blood flow begins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirit children with</td>
<td>enter the vagina</td>
<td>blood flow ceases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appearance of fish, crabs or small game</td>
<td></td>
<td>(clots); child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>copulation; semen</td>
<td></td>
<td>grows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spirit children in/as</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fish or game</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fish, honey or other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'strong' foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I shall now examine the Outside daily dances and their associated songs in the light of the above. Once more I look to Bārinya's comments on the songs for illumination.

After the Inside dances the men dance, walking to the camp, and chase the women away from the riyawarra tree. Bārinya elaborated the central episode of the Djan'kawu story to explain this part of the ceremony (see

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\(^1\)H. Morphy (1977a:138) records that the design of Stringybark Flowers also represents spirit children. Songs and designs represent honeybees feeding on these flowers.
above). The dance represents the men (Flying Fox in one version) who came from the Djäpuḷ Inside ground and stole the dilly-bag. The ceremony re-enacts this event daily for each country which it visits for, as Chapter 2 showed, in the Woollen River area each clan with the Djaŋ'kawu story centres the events at its own country.

The country of the day is signified by the likan names which the power-man calls from the tree as the other men call the marrawinydjun chorus. We shall see that the chorus connotes the incoming tide and accompanies representations of the creative acts of the waŋarr and the reproduction of the clan. The likan names proclaim as it were the result of those creative acts — the existence and identity of a clan and country.

Next the men dance Spangled Perch, Butterfish and towards the end of the ceremony, Lesser Salmon Catfish, then men and women join for the final daily dance of 'Kingfisher'. Būriya gave this interpretation:

Kingfisher dives down and digs inside the anthills with his beak, to get Blackbeetle Larvae. We dance it because the Djaŋ'kawu said he plays at the tree.

The Djaŋ'kawu also collect Blackbeetle Larvae from anthills in the song.1 The dance is identical in form to the dance of 'Blackbeetles Flying' at the end of the ceremony. We shall see that Kingfisher denotes the group of people created by the Djaŋ'kawu and that 'Blackbeetles Flying' represent the birth of new members.

Although people did not make such an interpretation, the daily sequence appears to potentially represent the loss of powers by the female waŋarr, the reproductive powers gained by the living, and the connection of powers and groups to particular places. The final three days' dances appear to represent the creative and reproductive acts which the daily sequence omits. The imagery of the songs supports this suggestion.

The song-series begins with the journey of the Djaŋ'kawu sisters through the sea. They see and catch various species of fish. The song about Garfish describes the shoal of fish with their sharp spines, 'turning' their spears (spines) as in a dance. They carry white paint on their bodies from Muwalanglejgal and other Dhuwa places and the water becomes cloudy. The tide comes in powerfully, and clear and muddy water mix. The Djaŋ'kawu catch the fish with their qanmarra conical mats.

1Wood-boring blackbeetle larvae colonize termite mounds, which are often formed around the bases of dead trees.
Next, the Djaŋ'kawu catch Long Tom fish. The songs then follow the Djaŋ'kawu to the mangroves. Black Butcherbird calls as he sees the tide come in. Up in the Djota tree Flying Fox sees the tide come in. Then the sisters collect various shellfish with their digging-sticks. The songs describe clear and muddy waters mixing together. The sisters walk round and round with their digging-sticks.

The next song describes how the Djaŋ'kawu set down or 'placed' the Mätjarra group of clans:

Djaŋ'kawu set down the Nakinaki, Mätjarra, Buunjumun group; pierced the ground with Gaŋinyidi digging-stick at Guŋawaŋa, walked around with Mayawalpatja digging-stick, speared the wet ground with Gaŋinyidi.

The Djaŋ'kawu set down the Gunbirridji and Burarra clans. Later in the song-series they create the Dümbugawumirri clan. Bāriya said that they half walked, half danced at Burarrgapu, made large and small waters, put in the maŋayin for the Närra and public ceremonies.

The same song describes the piercing motion which represents the creation of group, ranga and waterholes in the dance. In the men's secret story the Djaŋ'kawu inserted a finger into the vagina to bring about the birth of each clan. Djurrpum remarked that they had but one finger on each hand — like a stick, spear or penis.

In the next song the sisters spear springs at Dümbugawumirri country and the adjacent Liyagalamirri country which is märi to the former. The song again describes the Djaŋ'kawu piercing the ground with the sticks. Märi and gutharra tides come in strongly. The verb in the song which denotes the power of the running tide is marrawinydjun, which also signifies the chorus. Bāriya said that saltwater mixes with the freshwater springs at every place, right up to Gärriyakŋura. Liyagalawumirri and Dümbugawumirri have one country; their waters join together.

The next song describes Lesser Salmon Catfish as a waaŋarr and as märi. The fish carry their white colours from Rirratjingu country, following the same journey as the Djaŋ'kawu and dance with their spears (spines). The Djaŋ'kawu catch the fish with their ŋaanmarra mats. (The men perform the dance carrying spears and making fierce noises.) The song also says 'We all catch fish'. Clear and muddy waters mix. The fish are heard in the waters of Dümbugawumirri clan country, and resting at places on the way from Rirratjingu country.
Bariya said that the Djan'kawu caught the fish and named places at Garriyakqura. The Djan'kawu said 'I myself saw the fish and sang the song because I am the boss'. Men follow them; that is why the song says 'We all catch fish'.

These images of catching fish and of mixing clear and cloudy water, salt and fresh, purple ochre and white clay, appear to be analogous of the conditions necessary for the conception and growth of the foetus. This is clearest in a Yirritja song which the Dambugawumirri include in their series:

Mother Honeybee gathered up saltwater, mixed it up in the grass, went to get flowers of the stringybark tree.

Bariya's comment was

The Djan'kawu saw and heard Yirritja Honeybee. The bees went to the flowers and back to their tree to make honey. To make the young bees grow they got white foam left by the tide and mixed it with water from the tree (see also Chapter 2).

A comparison of the images in the songs examined above, with Yolngu notions of conception and pregnancy reveals a close relationship between the two. To take the image of the fish:

song: 'Fish enter the nganmarra mat'.

conception belief: Spirit children (often conceived of as fish-like) enter the vagina; fish enter the mouth.

A later song implies an analogy between nganmarra mat and womb from which the children emerge. According to R.M. Berndt (1952:135) the Rirratjingu equate the nganmarra with the uterus of the Djan'kawu.

Another parallel is as follows:

song: 'Clear water mixes with muddy water'.

conception belief: Semen mixes with blood.

Muddy water is gabubu in the songs; so is the red scum on top of the freshwater springs which the Djan'kawu made, and into one of which they menstruated (see Djurrpum's story in Chapter 2, and cf. Berndt R.M. 1952:271). According to a Rirratjingu song they menstruated into a well which they covered with mud. In a later song the Blackbeetle Larvae, analogues of the foetus, lie in mud in the nganmarra mat. Warner's

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1The first person plural inclusive pronoun nilimurrnu is used in the phrase — inappropriate for two sisters, appropriate for the group that follows them.
informants (1937:36) equated mud with red ochre, which itself signifies blood.

A similar parallel is the following:

song: 'Mother and child waters run together'.

'Seemen mixes with purple ochre'.

conception belief: Semen mixes with blood.

The water meets and separates off Nurrunhinana point at Elcho Island where the sisters sat according to some stories. A body of purple ochre there is the 'trace' (juku) of the waqarr. R.M. Berndt (1952:44) writes that the ochre at that place is 'symbolic of the afterbirth blood shed by the Two Sisters', and of the red sun and orange lorikeet feathers. The Rirratjigu equate white clay with semen (Berndt R.M. 1952:115). Warner's informants (1937:344) told him that white paint represents semen.

The fish in the songs carry white clay on their bodies. Būriya told me that this comes from Rirratjigu country. Analogues of conception-spirits and of semen therefore coalesce in the one image of the fish. These particular fish possess moreover the masculine attributes of ferocity and aggressiveness, and have spears, suggesting also the male sexual role.2

The next parallel I draw is as follows:

song: 'Saltwater mixes with freshwater springs'.

'White sea-foam mixes with freshwater'.

conception belief: Semen mixes with menstrual blood.

As I said above, freshwater springs have associations with the menstrual blood of the Djaŋ'kawu. The Yolŋu at Yirrkala refer to menstruating women as 'spring women' (Berndt R.M. 1951:26). In the Yirritja song the Bees mix salty foam and freshwater specifically in order to nurture their offspring. The Yirrijtja honey nguyuŋa is sour. We have seen that honey and the eggs in honey are thought to be powerful agents in conception.

As I said above there is no simple equivalence of freshwater with menstrual blood, and semen with saltwater; rather the Yolŋu seem to regard the admixture of contrasting qualities as potent. As Munn (1971:

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1This clan is associated especially with white clay. Its body design is white; its songs are full of allusions to the white sea-foam and salt spray (Berndt R.M. 1952).

2The Rirratjigu equate the fish with the penis, and catching fish with coitus (Berndt R.M. 1952:211).
185-6) has pointed out, the Wadjilak story recounts a similar process:

In the myth, the mingling of blood and water is therefore a sexual image of generation, the women's sexuality creates the natural cycle of generation and decay.

The final parallel I draw is as follows:

song: 'Dig out shellfish with the digging-stick, put into the dilly-bag'.

conception belief: Conception spirits enter the vagina, penis enters the vagina.

In the Shellfish song the images appear of clear and cloudy waters mixing. Bāriya also associated the mixture of salt and freshwater with the gathering of shellfish. They are also associated with other images which occur in the songs: the Gidjinjali regard the presence of froth on top of the boiling water as a sign that boiled Telescope shellfish are cooked (Meehan 1975:163).

The evidence seems clear that these songs present potential analogues of the spiritual and physical processes necessary for conception. The Lesser Salmon Catfish is a particularly rich analogue. The song describes it as painted white, and in nature the male incubates the yellow eggs in its mouth (Lake 1971:23). White paint is associated with semen, fish are in general images of conception spirits, and the ingestion of eggs is regarded as increasing the likelihood of conception.

Later songs present analogies with birth. The image of shellfish bridges the two processes, for shellfish provide analogies of both conception and birth and a taxonomic bridge between images of conception and birth. Shellfish provide a bridge between analogues of conception and of birth, for shellfish present images of both processes, and they form a taxonomic link. Shellfish and crabs are members of the taxon maypāl which consists of edible invertebrates (Rudder 1976). I show later that another kind of maypāl, the wood-boring larva of the black-beetle (gāmurug) provides an analogue of children being born.

Bāriya's comments on one song show clearly that shellfish are equated with the clan. The song goes as follows:

They walked round and round, collected Nerite, Telescope and Angular-ear shellfish.

They got all muddy, put them in the dilly-bag.

Clear and muddy water mixed,

Djirrirra, Nalawurrpa, Garrawurra (all jikan names for the Dāmbugawumirri clan);

(They) put them in the dilly-bag,

Powerful name Garrawurra, Djirrirra, Garrawurrpa.
Bāriya commented:

The shellfish lay at the foot of the tree. When the tide comes in the shellfish climb up it. The Djan'kawu gave the names Garrawurra, Djirrirra, Ḵalawurrpa to the clan; who, through marrying and bearing children made a group. The whole group is Māṯjarra, but the ones at Garriyakura are called Garrawurra. Bāriya here explicitly links together the naming of the group, the shellfish, and the creation of the group by sexual reproduction.

In his commentary the shellfish climb the tree, a major localized component signifying the relation between group and country; and that they take the Ḵikan names of the clan in the song.1 Indeed the pattern on Nerite, the shells mentioned in the song, is very similar to the Kingfisher design which represents the Māṯjarra group and its constituent clans.

Shellfish are here associated with images which, I have suggested, are analogues of conception. The action of putting shellfish into the dilly-bag is itself a likely analogy. Other actions associated with shellfish are potential analogues of birth: the Djan'kawu dig out the shells with their sticks, and in order to eat Nerite shellfish people dig out the meat with a pointed stick (Meehan 1975:165).

The images in the next songs are analogues of birth. The sisters dig out Blackbeetle Larvae from the mangrove trees, then the songs move via the forest (Wild Pea, Flying Fox) to the plains and lakes, where in the Blackbeetle Larvae song the sisters dig these grubs out from rush-corms in the lake:

(They) speared larvae, larvae of the digging-stick point, Larvae of the Ḵanmarra mat, Made a hole, dug them out, put them in the dilly-bag, Those two (women) got the larvae, the larvae moved, Get ready gutharra to change, gutharra will fly. Gnawing the Ḵanmarra mat, Garrawurra since time immemorial, the larvae got ready, flew to the west at sunset. Where did they fly? Did they get ready? Gnawing in the soil, Liyayawurryawurr larvae, Djawalkarraŋu larvae.

Bāriya's commentary was:

Larvae lie in the mud inside the rush-corms, which they eat. The two women got them out with Gaṇinyidi digging-sticks and put them in the Guwilirri sacred dilly-bag; the larvae lay also in the Ḵanmarra mat.

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1Nerite shellfish characteristically cling to mangrove trunks (Meehan: 1975:107).
The larvae grew arms (wings) and feet, and flew. All the Dhuwa clans from the cast up to here have the same song.

Larvae are gutharra (ZDCh), and people — so said the Djaŋ'kawu. We follow the old men and the forerunners. Son follows father, father and older brother die, and we copy them. But everything is the thought of the Djaŋ'kawu; the Djaŋ'kawu gave the meaning to Larvae.

A repeat of the song later in the series describes the Blackbeetles which emerge as a 'group of brothers flying west' towards the sunset. Bāriya said

The Larvae change their bodies and grow wings (waŋa, arms). They 'turn', that is to say they are born like children.

In the version of the song Garrawurra people also collect the Larvae.

The song is preceded by the one that describes how the Djaŋ'kawu walk around digging in their sticks setting down the clans and māŋayln. Immediately before the Blackbeetle Larvae song the men called the marrawinydjun chorus. This also accompanies the song describing the incoming tide and another which proclaims the names of the Mūtjarra group of clans. The tide is associated with abundance of shellfish. Meehan (1975:110) reports that Gidjiŋali women were able to collect most fish after strong tides, and at king tides at the end of the dry season (the time when the Nūrra ceremony is performed). It is most appropriate therefore that if members of the taxon maypaI connote conception and birth, a representation of the incoming tide should accompany images of conception and birth. We have seen that Bāriya associated the mixing of seawater and freshwater as the tide covers the springs, with the gathering of shellfish. Women also gather shellfish abundantly when it is raining (Meehan 1975:131).

The following song describes the Djaŋ'kawu making thunder-clouds and rain by spearing at the larvae:

Those two going along saw thunder-clouds heavy with rain, spreading, filling the sky; thunder-clouds from those two stood, clouds, belonging to the point of Gaŋinyidi digging-stick.1

The clouds stand at Dāmbugawumirri and Liyadhalimirri clan places, then the rain falls on the people of those groups. Bāriya commented

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1The originative suffix to the pronoun signifies that the Djaŋ'kawu were the source of the clouds: māŋâŋguŋ — third person dual-infix-ORI. The relational suffix signifies that the clouds pertained to the digging-stick: gaŋinyiŋiwiŋ, gaŋinyiŋi-REL.
They turn and see thunder-clouds fill the sky. They sing 'Clouds come heavy with rain at Gärriyakjura'. They dig larvae with Ganinyidi digging-stick, then it is ready for thunder-clouds — they turn and see the clouds. The rain falls on the paperbark trees and on all the Matjarra group.

It is a widely held belief among the Yolŋu that conception spirits fall with the rain (Morphy H.: personal communication).

The act of piercing (dharpuma, to spear, pierce, dig) characterizes all the creative acts: making springs in the earlier song, creating clans, putting in the ranga and Djota tree, digging out larvae which become the children of the clan.

Catching fish, shellfish and larvae is both a creative and a destructive act; in hunting and gathering a thing is destroyed in order to provide nourishment. The verb buma denotes both creative and destructive acts: kill, hit, collect; create, make, bear and beget.

We shall see that digging or spearing movements performed in dance by men and women represent all the creative acts, which may be summarized as follows:

**conception belief:** Copulation causes onset of menstruation. Copulation causes pregnancy.

**song and story:** 'Dig in the digging-stick to make freshwater springs'.

'Insert the finger in the vagina to create clans'.

'Dig in the digging-stick and take shellfish and grubs, put (them) in the dilly-bag and ɲaŋmarra mat'.

'Dig in the digging-stick, put in the ranga and Djota tree'.

The image 'Blackbeetles emerge and fly' is an explicit analogy of the birth of children to the group. In the song, the Larvae lie in the mud in the ɲaŋmarra mat and dilly-bag. Mud is associated with blood, the mat and dilly-bag are potential analogues of the vagina or uterus (see also Berndt R.M. 1952:153). Rush-corms and dilly-bag are made equivalent in one ranga (Thomson, unpublished field-notes). The Larvae which change and grow arms are people, 'ZDCh', a group of brothers and children. The marrawinydjun chorus connoting the incoming tide, accompanies the songs and dances that describe the creative acts and birth of children. The act of digging up larvae causes the formation
of thunder-clouds and rain, which falls on the created group. Fresh-water is the bearer of spirit children, created also as springwaters by the act of piercing with the digging-sticks.

The following summarizes the creative transformations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foetus lies in the uterus</th>
<th>Foetus grows</th>
<th>Child is born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larvae lie in mud rush-corns dilly-bag ganmarra mat</td>
<td>Larvae grow wings</td>
<td>Blackbeatles fly west</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The later songs about Blackbeetles flying describe the Djaŋ'kawu as tired and heavy-laden, 'old women', who see the red sky of the late-afternoon. The Larvae grow wings and fly west towards the sunset. In many Yirritja and Dhuwa songs the red or yellow sky is equated with blood and with red and yellow ochres. Djäwa described the red sky as 'having power'. This image may connote birth-blood, and the powers of the living which are associated with blood (see Chapter 8).

Certain details of the above images are related to parthenogenesis; the Yirritja Honeybee who mixes Yirritja sea-foam with Dhuwa freshwater contrasts with the Djaŋ'kawu (Dhuwa) who catch Dhuwa fish. In the song the Honeybee collects freshwater from the Stringybark tree; the Liyagalawumirri (among others) own this Stringybark maŋayin and are 'mother' to Daygurrgurr. Both these clans hold that the male waŋarr of one clan and moiety and the female of another created the clan of the male: Carpet Python is the 'big father' of the Liyagalawumirri clan; Đämbugawumirri however hold that a Dhuwa female created the Dhuwa clans. Consistent with this belief, the Djaŋ'kawu make freshwater springs at the clan country and menstruate into one of them. A stone falls from the vagina of one of them and stands there now. The women catch and eat Dhuwa fish and shellfish. Dhuwa Larvae are born as Dhuwa children. Dhuwa purple ochre lies at the country they made.

The songs also contain analogues of normal kinship relations; Yirritja waku (ZCh) water flows past Gärriyakqura; 'mother' and 'child' waters run together.

The songs stress two kinship relations: mother:child and märi: gutharra ('MM':'ZDCCh'). The tide comes in at the countries of several clans which are märi to Đämbugawumirri — Liyagalawumirri, Gunbirridji and Burarra groups — and it mixes with freshwater at these places.
Rainbow Lorikeet flies to 'ZDCh' countries belonging to the Djambarrpuygu clan, as well as to märi and 'M' countries. Lesser Salmon Catfish is described as märi fish in the song.

Bäriya said that the Djaŋ'kawu named the clan which, through marrying and bearing children, made a group. The 'M':'ZCh' and 'MM':'ZDCh' clan relations are equally essential to the continuation of the clan, as Chapter 3 showed. The songs and stories show the common genesis of märi:gutharra clans. The imagery of the interlinking components suggests that they are united by blood and flesh. All spring from the blood of the Djaŋ'kawu.

Significantly the Black beetle Larvae are gutharra in the songs. Gutharra is the most apt term for the offspring of linked märi and gutharra clans, for märi clans provide women to be the mothers of their gutharra. The term can denote SCh as well as ZDCh; gutha is a term for siblings (Shapiro 1969:39), (Figure 7.12). Conversely the fish in the songs — analogues of conception spirits, penis and semen — are classified as märi ('MM'/'MMB'). There is no contradiction with the links of flesh and blood between märi and gutharra, for male märi begets the women who will bear mothers for the gutharra group, and beget the next generation of the märi clan.

The images in the songs therefore convey the processes of creation of the Dhuwa clans. The creators are the Djaŋ'kawu; the images of creation are those commonly associated with female fertility. The songs also appear to represent the creation by the Djaŋ'kawu of the powers necessary to perpetuate the clans: they saw, caught and named the fish and shellfish, speared the springs and brought about the rain which bears conception spirits, and created the first people.

The images however are multivalent. The Djaŋ'kawu catching fish in the ɲaŋmarra mat is as apt an analogue for the return of the spirit to the realm of the waŋarr as it is of conception. The image of rain falling on the Mûtjarra group is apt for purifying with water in the Washing ceremony. Just as the imagery of the songs expresses a concern with reproduction and creation, the dances dramatize the processes and relations of creation and reproduction.

THE DRAMATIZATION OF CREATION AND REPRODUCTION

I have already discussed the meaning of the daily Inside dances and the dance to the riyawarrra. Here I examine occurrences outside the daily
sequence, then the events of the final three days, after which I return to the daily dance.

Two events outside the daily dances occur: feeding the waŋarr spirits (twice) and the dances 'Raw' and then 'Cooked' Kingfisher, through the camp to collect food and gifts. This dance represents the creative acts of the Djaŋ'kawu, and represents the Mâtjarra group.

The addition on day 31 of 'Raw Bustard' to the Inside dances introduces the themes of Fire and Thunder-clouds to the ceremony. Bustard has many attributes in common with the Djaŋ'kawu; according to Bäriya both are 'old people' in the songs because they are waŋarr (cf. Warner 1937:337). The Djaŋ'kawu carried dilly-bags behind their heads, Bustard of the dance carries one in the mouth. The songs describe both collecting vegetable food. Women who dance as the Djaŋ'kawu wear the Bustard design, without officially knowing its meaning.

The men dance as Bustards from fire to fire at the Inside ground. Bäriya commented that when people burn off the grass-plains to hunt goanna, bustards see the fire and say, 'Ah! someone has made a fire'. The Djaŋ'kawu fired the grass, saw Bustard, danced it, and set down the law (see also Warner 1937:352).

![Diagram](Figure 7.12)
Thunder-clouds are linked with fire in Yolŋu thought and ceremony: smoke rises to become clouds. Similarly fire in the Gunapipi represents lightning. Frilled Lizard dance brings in the theme of Thunder-clouds. The song about Frilled Lizard describes how the Djaŋ'kawu saw 'thunder man' Lizard dancing above in Djota tree, looking from side to side, wearyl clutching the tree and looking at the sunset (cf. Berndt R.M. 1952:101). Bäriya said that the dance means the ceremony is nearly over. Sunset signals the approaching end of the song-series, the ceremony, and the creative tasks of the Djaŋ'kawu.

Frilled Lizard also links dances of the ground such as Goanna to the subsequent dances of the trees — Flying Fox and Kingfisher — and it carries through the themes of thunder and fire.

On the evening of day 32 the men danced 'Flying Fox in Djota tree' at the Inside ground. They then danced 'the Tide comes in' and carried fire-brands to the camp, while Bäriya invoked Djota tree/raqga, Fire and Flying Fox. The men cast the brands over the recumbent women in the direction of the sea as the women wriggled as 'Blackbeetle Larvae in the rush-corms'. Then the women rose to dance 'Blackbeetles grow wings and fly' representing the children of the group. Bäriya explained that Fire is a waŋarr which lies in the water at Gärriyaknura.

In the songs, Flying Foxes are both 'thunder men' (like Frilled Lizard), and 'old people' (like Bustard and the Djaŋ'kawu). Flying Foxes hear the tide come in (like Black Butcherbird) from where they hang in Djota tree. In the words of the song the tree is 'full of game, noisy, feathered and fluffy'. The songs also describe how thunder-clouds stand in the sky and release rain. The Flying Foxes are the source of this event; the rain is from them, just as the Djaŋ'kawu are the source of thunder and rain, and Gajinyidi digging-sticks are the instruments.

All the Inside dances — Bustard, Frilled Lizard and Flying Fox — are secret. We have seen that only men should know the meaning of Bustard design. Bäriya said that women know the meaning of the Blackbeetle dance, but they do not know that the men have previously danced as Flying Foxes. The equivalent songs are heard by all. The whole theme of creation and reproduction is therefore an open one, except that according to the men only they know precisely how the Djaŋ'kawu created people.

The last day's dances appear to signify the completion of the creative and reproductive processes. Kingfisher dance represents all the
creative acts of the Djaŋ'kawu sisters condensed into the one action of spearing the ground and working the sticks back and forth (see also Warner 1937:350). The dance also appears to embody the male and female human reproductive roles.

Formerly women would crouch and bear down upon two sticks when giving birth (Warner 1937:337). The thrusting into the ground of the stick or spear suggests the male role. The men portray the wagurr and both the male and female human roles in the dance; two women portray the Djaŋ'kawu creators, other women enact the birth of children to the group. The completion of the creative and reproductive process is shown by the dance of Pygmy Goose to the water, signifying the whole group. I now summarize the dances and present Bariya's interpretation of them.

On the final day of the ceremony all the Dhuwa men, women and children decorate as Kingfisher, except for two women who wear the Bustard design. The men dance Kingfisher to the camp. They walk with spears or sticks to represent the digging-sticks, form a circle, dig in the ground working both sticks back and forth with an alternate motion in the hole, and call the marrawinydjun chorus. They repeat this movement at several family camps on the way to the riyawarra tree.

Bariya explained the similar dance at the funeral at Elcho Island, in which men and women danced together, as follows:

The men are the group called Mätjarra and Buŋunbuŋun (all the clans with the Djaŋ'kawu) and Djūmbugawumirri. The women are the Djaŋ'kawu. The sisters went along, disturbed and saw Bustard, Goanna, Black Butcherbird and Rainbow Lorikeet. When the dancers make the circle that means the Djaŋ'kawu created groups, all different ones right up to Gärriyakqura, the first place for Outside and Inside ceremonies. The two sisters walked and danced and saw all the animals and fish, speared with the digging-sticks and went on. Others said that the dance represents the sisters making the springs at each country.

The final part of the dance dramatizes the creation of the group in detail, continuing the sequence enacted the night before after the Fire dance. The men dancers and the two women as the Djaŋ'kawu dig by the recumbent women, who wriggle about once again under blankets or qaŋmarra mats as Blackbeetle Larvae in the rush-corms. Then as the power-man calls the likan names the men call the marrawinydjun chorus (associated with the incoming tide) the women rise clan by clan to dance 'Blackbeetles flying'(the birth of children).
All the Dhuwa people dance to the water as Pied Goose (Yirritja) and Pygmy Goose (Dhuwa). The latter represent the Mütjarra group (see also Berndt R.M. 1952:133). In the Warner version (1937:43) the people danced as Goose (?Pygmy Goose, Dhuwa) and Black Duck (Yirritja).

The songs tell how Pied Geese eat the rush-corms at Gärriyakura and stir when they hear the Djaŋ'kawu first pass by; then the Garrawurra (Dämbugawumirri) people (Pygmy Geese) see the thunder-clouds heavy with rain, and accompanied by Black-winged Stilt they fly powerfully away. The Garrawurra people cut up the birds they have caught.

Bäriya commented about the Pygmy Goose songs:

The group has grown from all the fathers here and at Elcho Island. Dämbugawumirri and Liyadhalinmirri are 'thunder people'. We sing Pygmy Goose at the Washing ceremony and Närra because it means the group.¹

Flying Fox, Frilled Lizard and the group are all 'thunder people'.

Washing together signifies the unity of the group which the Djaŋ'kawu created. Bäriya said:

All the clans (malä) right up to Gärriyakura join together with their gutharra clans. Any clan can do so because the Djaŋ'kawu are the boss. Any clan can come and paint up, mürri and gutharra together.

The paint is all mixed (in the water) and all are joined together. No-one can break the old law; all are one in Kingfisher.

Washing in the sea means we finish at Gärriyakura.

In the Goanna design the ochres represent the blood, flesh and fat of its tail. The Kingfisher design also is referred to as 'flesh'. These interlinking elements mix with another, the sea, to signify the unity of clans of the same moiety, related through women and connoting the creative processes which unite them. In the version recorded by Warner (1937:353) the washing meant that the people were removing the white paint which was the semen of the man who tried to have intercourse with the Djaŋ'kawu.

The Butterfish dance takes the group back on to land. This species is tolerant of both fresh and saltwater. I suggest that this dance reiterates the theme of mixing distinct substances, connotes the conception spirits left by the waŋarr, and connotes also the power and ferocity of the living group.

The above dances and their meanings are all public, except for the Inside meaning of Kingfisher design.

¹Liyaωumamirri (head-thunder-POS) is a name for the two clans.
The dances whose meanings I have reviewed above form four sequences with a similar form. The theme appears to be the loss of powers by the waŋarr, and the acquisition of powers by men. Table 7.4 summarizes the four sequences.

At night the spirits of the dead return and make a (thunderous) noise. The women give food and tobacco for them. In the day the men dance Kingfisher, as the Djaŋ'kawu performing their creative acts. The women give food, tobacco and money, and weep for their law. The story tells how women are consigned to the fireside for ever because the men appropriated the dilly-bag from the Djaŋ'kawu who said 'We will work', meaning 'we will bear children and provide food'. The two dances appear to represent that loss for which the women weep, and that relationship.

At night the men dance Flying Fox, which call out and see the tide come in from Djota tree. They dance to the riyawarra tree and cast Fire over the women, who rise and dance as the children born to the group. This dance is parallel to the feeding of the spirits of the male dead. Flying Fox makes thunder in the songs and casts Fire in the dance; the spirits make a thunderous noise on the plain. Flying Fox also has associations with the spirits of the dead; like cockatoos these animals are 'friends' of the Ghosts (see Warner 1937:424; Berndt R.M. 1952:19). In the interpretation of Warner's informants fire was also the instrument the men used to trick the Djaŋ'kawu into believing their dilly-bag to be destroyed, whereas the men had in fact stolen it. Tricking the women and children with noise has its parallel in tricking the Djaŋ'kawu with fire. In the dance the trickery — casting fire — is followed by increase — the birth of children to the group in Blackbeetle dance.

Fire has other connotations also. With the digging-stick and spear it used to be the primary means of converting energy. We have seen that the digging/walking stick of the Djaŋ'kawu is an instrument of genesis in the imagery of the songs. Fire too is an instrument of conversion. In a Manharraŋ clan story about the Djaŋ'kawu, one sister cooked Dhuwa telescope shellfish with Dhuwa firewood, and found it to be full of mud. The other sister pointed out that if she had used Yirritja firewood the shellfish would have been good. As we saw above, shellfish can connote the foetus (cf. Berndt R.M. 1952:175-6).
Table 7.4: Analogous creative acts in the Ngarrra ceremony.

**NIGHT** Feeding the supernatural Beings.

| The supernatural Beings/ spirits of the dead make a noise at night (have the appearance of barramundi) | stamping on the ground | women give food etc. for spirits |

**DAY** 'Raw' Kingfisher

| Men dance Kingfisher which signifies the Djaŋ'kawu/ the group performing creative acts | digging with Ganinyidi sticks | women give food etc. to men and weep for their law |

Bustard and Frilled Lizard

| Men dance 'Bustard sees Fire' (Djaŋ'kawu gave the design) Frilled Lizard makes thunder |

**NIGHT** Flying Fox and Blackbeetle Larvae

| Flying Fox calls in Djota tree makes thunder (song) casts fire over women (dance) |

**DAY** 'Cooked' Kingfisher

| Men dance Kingfisher which signifies the group, performing creative acts. The women dance as Djaŋ'kawu, performing creative acts. | digging with Ganinyidi sticks (Djaŋ'kawu make thunder by digging larvae) |

Fire too is associated with thunder-clouds. The Yolŋu believe that the smoke from bush fires rises to become clouds, and fire in the Gunapipi signifies Lightning and the Snake's tongue. The casting of fire in the dance is analogous therefore, in the songs, to Flying Fox making thunder-clouds and rain which the Djaŋ'kawu had made by digging.

The following summarizes the above associations:

- Spirits of the dead make a noise at night the women are tricked
- Flying Foxes cast fire at night the Djaŋ'kawu were tricked children are born to the group
- Flying Fox makes thunder-clouds it rains

Flying Fox also has qualities like Bustard, Frilled Lizard, the Djaŋ'kawu and Black Butcherbird: he is a waŋarrr, an old person, a thunder-man, and he sees the tide come in from Djota tree.
I suggest that Flying Fox represents the precursor of men and of the powers they appropriated. Flying Fox is 'boss of the Inside ground and the ranga'. Men became so when they stole the dilly-bag, indeed in one version of the story the men who stole it were 'Flying Fox men'. Flying Foxes link the Djadjikawu and living men, for they have powers like the wanga yet are associated with spirits of the human dead. Flying Fox is the Inside meaning of Kingfisher which signifies the group of clans. Men stole the dilly-bag from the wanga, became boss of the Inside ground and ranga, and acquired the most important reproductive role. This acquisition is shown in the dance in which men (Flying Fox) cast fire over the women, after which children are born to the group.

This view is supported by the song which describes the Garrawurra group (gender unspecified) also digging up Blackbeetle Larvae which grow wings and fly, and the songs which describe how both the Djadjikawu and Flying Fox have the power to make thunder-clouds. The Gumbugawumirri story also describes how someone called Garrawurra, of unspecified gender, created springs and put in sacred objects at Elcho Island (see Chapter 2). These songs represent humans and the precursors of men with some powers akin to those of the Djadjikawu.

The men and women re-enact the creative acts of the Djadjikawu on the final day, and they specifically represent the group of humans. The Inside meaning of the Kingfisher design they wear is Flying Fox which, I have suggested, represents the precursor of the male role and powers. I suggest too that the men's actions in the dance represent the male and female roles in reproduction. The men use spears in place of digging-sticks; the act of piercing and moving the sticks or spears has obvious similarities to copulation. In the interpretation given by Warner's informant (1937:346-7) the dance represented 'those Wongar yolno, and the two old women with their yam-sticks at the same time ... Those Kingfishers are proper men the same as men now, and they are looking for food and for sexual intercourse'.¹ The men also grasp the sticks in the same way as women formerly did in childbirth. Women do not

¹In the Rirratjingu version of the ceremony (Berndt R.M. 1952:18) the men represent the Djadjikawu brother having coitus. The women represent the children of the sisters, wriggling like children in the womb. The removal of the mat and the emergence of the women represents birth.
represent their own reproductive role in the ceremony; their part is portrayed by the qaŋmarra mats and blankets, the dilly-bag, and the holes which the men make with their sticks and spears. Two mature women standing at the riyawarra tree dance as the Djaŋ'kawu, the tree represents the place where the sisters lost their powers. The other women dance as Blackbeetles — the children born to the group.

The ceremony ends with dances signifying the unity of clans of the same moiety which are interdependent in marriage. The dances also include elements of the opposite moiety, for relations between the moieties are essential to marriage and reproduction.

In the Kingfisher dance the men demonstrate symbolically their control of reproduction, and demonstrate in fact their control of the ceremony and their access to the powers believed to lie in the raŋga. The meaning of the songs and dances make it appear that the men's power has a supernatural basis; that the waŋarr created humans and their powers and that men control the ceremony and human fertility because they stole the dilly-bag (which represents the locus of female fertility), and with it the reproductive powers of women.

Human fertility is associated with cosmic powers and processes, especially the powerful tide, the eternal springs and wet-season rains. The Djaŋ'kawu created the unceasing spring waters and made rain at the same time as they created the clans, and with a similar action of piercing.

The songs describe the transfer of powers. The Djaŋ'kawu are tired from their work, walk heavy-laden and look at the sunset; Frilled Lizard clings wearily to the tree. Yet the Blackbeetle Larvae gnaw vigorously in the rush-corms; Pygmy Geese fly powerfully away. The stories describe how the Djaŋ'kawu menstruated into the tidal creeks and springs which are the source of conception spirits; designs symbolize this blood. One man told me that the Djaŋ'kawu instituted menstruation, another that they left conception powers of spirits like seeds in the waters. The waŋarr then created the first humans and human fertility, but men assert that they have the dominant role in reproduction, and control it.

Yolŋu men do indeed have predominant control over reproduction. The ceremonies and religious knowledge that men control are the basis of the system of clans and marriage which give the relations of reproduction their present form. The songs and ceremonies represent this fact as the result of historical events and substantive powers. The performance of the ceremony sustains men's power for through it they control young men, and exclude women.
The ceremony has some of the characteristics of those which Hiatt (1971:77ff) has classified as 'phallic' and 'uterine' rites. The purpose is certainly to extend 'male mastery' over fertility but not quite in the way that he means. Hiatt suggests that men compensate for an uncertain contribution to human reproduction (ibid.:77). This may be true, but I suggest that the men assert that they have real control over female fertility, and have access to supernatural powers. Older men do indeed control relations of reproduction through the system of religious knowledge and practice. This system both gives them authority over younger men and women, and underpins the marriage rules.

The imagery of the Närra ceremony depicts men's control of female fertility. The Djaŋ'kawu were bisexual, their fingers were their penes; men believe that the women are ignorant of this, and keep it a secret. Perhaps this implies that if women knew the secret they would be independent of men. The ceremony shows that men acquired a role in reproduction, but further they stole the dilly-bag from the Djaŋ'kawu, which is equivalent to the uterus or vagina in the imagery. This implies that by acquiring control of the ceremonies they also acquired control over female fertility. In the ceremony the men portray both female and male roles. Indeed the belief that copulation is a cause of menstruation suggests that men create female fertility.

The daily dance represents in condensed form the loss of the madayin, the birth and the continuity of the group, and the conception powers left at each clan country. The daily Kingfisher dance is identical to the Blackbeetle Larvae dance of the birth of children. Kingfisher design explicitly signifies the complete group itself.

The fish dances may connote the spirit conception powers which remain after the creative acts of the Djaŋ'kawu. They do connote ferocity (madakarritj) the characteristic of a powerful group of warriors. The characteristics of the species make them apt analogues of these powers; Spangled Perch is a freshwater fish which can aestivate, reappearing from the dried mud after rain (Lake 1971:35). Butterfish is fierce and is found in both salt and freshwater. Lesser Salmon Catfish, danced on the thirtieth day, is also seen as fierce because it is spiny. It too tolerates salt and freshwater and the male incubates the bright yellow eggs in its mouth. We saw that fish and eggs figure largely in conception beliefs. The Djaŋ'kawu catch the fish in the qanmarra mat in the songs, providing a likely analogue both of copulation and spirit conception.
Unity — the tree full of game

The ceremony ends with dances which signify unity and completion — the birth and existence of the group of Dhuwa clans, and the relations necessary for procreation between clans of opposite and same moieties.

The winding of the raŋga with feathered string follows the course of the ceremony, and the complete raŋga displays the unification of the localized component — the 'bone' of the raŋga — and the interlinking component — the 'flesh'. These components correspond to the localized patrilineal clan and the matrilateral relations between clans. Indeed there may be a connection between semen and bone in Yolŋu thought; the Rirratjingu believe that semen forms the bones of the foetus (Berndt R.M. 1952:271). Hiatt (1967:473) has pointed out that it is common among Aborigines for links through women to be conceived of as ties of flesh and blood.

The movement towards completion is echoed also in the change from 'raw' Kingfisher and Bustard to 'cooked' Kingfisher and Bustard (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1970). In 'cooked' Bustard red ochre face paint is added to the predominantly white design. Since red connotes blood, this addition parallels the addition of 'flesh' to the raŋga, for both blood and flesh are aspects of interlinking elements and matrilineal relations.

All the birds that represent the major waŋarr and the completed human group are pied: bustard, pygmy goose, black-winged stilt, kingfisher, and the Yirritja pied goose. The creatures that represent localized spirits of the dead and the new-born are black (mol): black butcherbird, flying fox, black cockatoo, the flesh of telescope-shellfish, black-beetle. The interlinking elements that connote flesh, blood and fat, are predominantly red, yellow and white: rainbow lorikeet feathers, the colours of Goanna design. Flesh, blood and fat are unified in Yolŋu thought. Flesh is regarded as inedible without its complement of fat, and fat may take the place of blood in ceremonies such as the Ḃulmarrk.

Kingfisher design, with its Inside meaning of Flying Fox, represents the final unification of elements and of clans. Bāriya painted the design in Plate 7.1 soon after the Ḃurrara ceremony. It combines many components; the circles and triangles represent springs at Dāmbugawumirri country and the Gunbirridji country at Elcho Island. The Djota raŋga
Plate 7.1 Bāriya's painting which represents Djota ranga, and springs at Gārriyakgura and Burarrgapu.
lies through the centre of the design, decorated with the Kingfisher/Flying Fox design; it represents here the Rainbow Lorikeet feather 'flesh' of the raŋga. The stripes are also a transformation of the Goanna Tail design of blood, fat and flesh, as we have seen.

One multivocal song-phrase appears to be equivalent to the image of the raŋga: 'Hanging there above in Djota tree, Mululu tree; feathered and fluffy, noisy, full of game'. The phrase signifies the Djota tree on the Inside ground Djapul in which Flying Foxes hang. It applies also to the Rainbow Lorikeet feathered dilly-bag hanging in the Djota tree and probably to the Rainbow Lorikeet in the tree. 'Feathered and fluffy' applies also the the waŋa cords/Wild Pea roots and vine. Djota or mululu species itself has those very qualities and is the public equivalent to the raŋga. It is the focal analogue in Qambilgawumirri iconography. The edible nuts in their swollen red-brown stems have the appearance of a mass of flying foxes hanging with folded wings. Flying foxes resemble dilly-bags hanging in a tree; the swollen stems also resemble dilly-bags from which the nuts fall when ripe. The roots tend to join on to other plants, attaching the tree firmly to the land. Flocks of rainbow lorikeets feed on the nuts (Berndt R.M. 1952:117). Table 7.5 summarizes the significance of Djota tree and raŋga.

Table 7.5: Connotations of Djota.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beings and their actions</th>
<th>All things named Djota, Mululu etc.</th>
<th>Freshwater</th>
<th>Saltwater</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Djaŋ'kawu created with</td>
<td>Gaŋinyidi digging-sticks</td>
<td>waterholes</td>
<td>in the creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djaŋ'kawu put</td>
<td>Bärṛtha Canoe raŋga</td>
<td>and springs</td>
<td>see the Tide come in, märi sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nerite shell climbs up</td>
<td>Djota tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Butcherbird and</td>
<td>Djota tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangrove Robin call in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying Fox hangs in</td>
<td>Djota tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goanna climbs</td>
<td>Djota tree</td>
<td>goes in waterhole</td>
<td>emerges from sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorikeets sit and warm</td>
<td>Djota tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in sun in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guwiḻirri dilly-bag hangs in</td>
<td>Djota tree</td>
<td>by the water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djaŋ'kawu make image of</td>
<td>Djota tree</td>
<td></td>
<td>in the mud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSIDE AND OUTSIDE KNOWLEDGE

Throughout the above analysis of the meaning of the Ngirma ceremony I have indicated the elements whose meanings are officially known to men and to women. We have seen that men control knowledge about the Inside dances and the ranga by guarding physical access to the ground and by attempting to restrict the transmission of information about Inside events and objects. They control information about the songs, designs and invocations. Men exclude women from legitimate knowledge of esoteric meanings and admit boys and young men by degrees.

A woman's experience of the ceremony is rather different therefore from that of a man. I suggest however that the essential message of the ceremony is similar for both. The Inside dances and Inside meaning of the coarse designs are largely esoteric equivalents of public elements.

Most secret designs, dances and aspects have public equivalents. The public Kingfisher dance and design connects all the Dhuwa clan countries and designs in the same way as the secret Goanna and the Tide dances; for just as Goanna touches each clan's country, so Kingfisher plays at the tree at each place. Both Goanna and Kingfisher design are generally owned. The secret Bustard design denotes the Djang'kawu in public; Bustard and the Djang'kawu are both old people and wanga, and mature old men and women perform the respective dances. The public equivalent of Flying Fox in Djota tree is Kingfisher in the riyawarra tree. The Djota tree and wanga cords are the public equivalents of the ranga.

The meanings of the important final dances and the public daily dances, which represent the appropriation by men of powers from the wanga, the creation and unity of the group and the powers of spiritual conception left by the wanga, are open to all.

The public nature of the basic message of the ceremony in no way devalues esoteric knowledge. I argued in Chapter 4 that this is so because people believe that the men have proximity to and some control over supernatural powers through the regional ceremonies. This is no less true of the Ngirma. In the view of some men the ranga and likanbuy paintings both represent and embody the powers of the wanga Beings. In the light of their importance in the society, secret knowledge about the wanga and about representations of them is highly valued.
Dances remain secret simply because they are performed away from the public camp. Men sing Nurrá songs in public; they have esoteric meanings by virtue of their ambiguity.

There are four songs with esoteric significance for the Dambugawumirri clan. 'Flying Fox in the tree' means that Flying Fox is boss of the Nurrá ground; djo tata species of tree is Djota tree at the Inside ground. 'The Djan'kawu digging Wild Pea' means that they made the wana cords. The action described in 'Djota tree' song represents the sisters putting in the ranga. This song simply describes the sisters collecting djota nuts and digging up lily-roots from the lake. The Inside meaning is about a reverse action — that they make a mud 'shadow' of the ranga, and put the ranga into the ground.

Non-specificity of the likanbuy designs hides their esoteric meanings. The designs are often iconic (Munn 1966) — waterholes are round, ranga are long and rectangular — but it is iconicity at a very general level; the designs do not specify the identity of what is represented. By such means the designs both carry many meanings for those who know them (see Morphy 1972:180), and remain obscure to the uninitiated.

Knowledge of the Inside meanings of songs and designs then can only be imparted verbally and gained by inference from basic knowledge. Men control knowledge of what occurs on the Inside ground by guarding physical access; women and children are absolutely denied sight or hearing of what occurs on the Inside ground or of the ranga. Boys and men go there only after circumcision initiation and ideally only when the moustache begins to grow. Only young men in their late teens see the ranga, for it is housed in a closed shade during the ceremony, and opened only to reveal the sacred object. Men of low prestige or distant relationship to the owners of the ceremony often enter for the first time as adults. Admission to see the Inside dances and the ranga is formalized; it includes such markers as wiping the eyes with under-arm sweat.

Designs with esoteric meanings are displayed in public in the 'making good', and after the Nurrá. The 'making good' is necessarily a public act for the identity of the individual and the clan is a matter of public concern. The designs demonstrate the identity of the novice and make him sacred, or release him from prohibitions. The designs may be smeared to obliterate the cross-hatching; this removes their strong connection with the 'madaylin side'. Esoteric knowledge takes the form of possible interpretations of the designs. As men get older they release
the designs to younger men, teach their sons to paint them and tell them their significance. Through participation in the frequent performances of the clan songs, young men gradually increase their repertoire of phrases and learn their significance from their elders, who comment on the songs between verses, and teach them the esoteric meanings away from women.

Different Đāmbugawumirri men hold rights in different designs and raŋa. One man claims rights in the designs in Figures 7.3 and 7.4, and maintains that certain men of another lineage may only paint those in Figures 7.6 and 7.7. All relate to Gārriyaknura. Another man has rights in the design in Figure 7.9 which relates to Gunbirridji clan country. Bāriya holds the design in Plate 7.1 which refers to both countries.

I do not know how formalised the revelation of the designs is; Đāmbugawumirri men learn a good deal by a process of inference and intuition, which they conceive of as a revelation by the ancestral spirits in a kind of dream. Two men told me how the meanings of the maŋayin came into their minds in a kind of waking dream. Senior men to whom they reported this expressed their approval.

The raŋa are divided among the men of the clan according to lineage and seniority. Bāriya as the leader holds the three most important ones. A man of a different lineage holds the Canoe raŋa, and a group of men of Bāriya's lineage hold several of the smaller raŋa.

The designs and the raŋa are divided between lineages because sons take the place of their fathers (i.e. F, FB etc.). When one lineage or sublineage dies out another takes over the designs. Such relatively strictly controlled rights ensure that the media of esoteric knowledge are controlled. As long as the clan has members and knowledgeable old men among them, the clan controls its law. A clan with no old men does not control its law: as we saw in Chapter 5 Djāwa holds the paintings and songs of the Wobulkarra clan.

THE SECRET IN THE PUBLIC

I now return briefly to the Đāmbugawumirri public ceremonies, two of which I described in Chapter 5. Like the Nārrra, all are concerned with
the relation of members of the clan to the clan, ranga, waŋarr and country. The public ceremonies encapsulate the whole of the clan law.

In the action of 'making good' at a Đungbugawumirri Circumcision the men painted Bāriya's son with the ɨikanbuy design of springs at Burarrgapu, Gumbirridji clan country, and decorated him with waŋa cords and the Guwilirri dilly-bag. From the analysis of the significance of these elements it is clear how the wearing of them conceptually places an individual in close contact with the waŋarr, ranga and country. The waŋa are the public version of ranga, the painting represents the ranga and the waterhole which is the spiritual abode created by the waŋarr. The dilly-bag represents the womb-like symbolic locus of the creation of the group. Indeed the initiand stands adorned as the waŋarr and like the ranga that represents her.

The men called the marrawinydjun chorus for the boy as the power-man called clan ɨikan names. The names proclaim his connection with country, ranga and waŋarr. The chorus connotes the creative processes which resulted in that particular nexus, as we have seen. The initiand is born as it were like the children of the clan.

The invocation and chorus accompany any act that makes a direct connection with the ranga: the completion and display of the ranga; the dance of Flying Fox who is boss of the ranga; the performance of the Kingfisher dance which re-enacts the creation of ranga, clan and country; the performance of Blackbeetle which represents the birth of the clan; 'making good' a new member of the clan; 'making good' a deceased member of the clan whose spirit is to join the waŋarr in the waters depicted by the ɨikanbuy painting. In the Washing purification ceremony members of the clan and their relatives wash in the nearest equivalent to the clan waters to which people attribute powers, that is in a representation of those waters, while men call the invocation and chorus. A ceremony is the only means to remove the wukindi state caused by a death.

In the Circumcision ceremony the men danced Pygmy Geese to carry Bāriya's son to the 'place of blood'. The dance represented the clan of which the boy became a full male member. The Garawurra group cuts up the birds in the song — an apt image for circumcision, and it is an apt image also for former mortuary ceremonies in which the flesh was cleaned off the bones.

The Kingfisher dance is also suitable both for incorporating the dead into the domain of the waŋarr and representing its creation of the
clan. At the Ŋurrara the dance represents the creative and reproductive acts of the waŋarr and the group they created, and ends with an enactment of the birth of the Dhuwa clans. In the Wake described in Chapter 5 the dancers surrounded and speared the ground by the body of the dead in place of the women who dance as Blackbeetles flying. Here the dance appeared to enact the incorporation of the dead. Wood-boring Blackbeetle Larvae are here a symbol of decay.

As I pointed out in Chapter 5, when the men danced the Tide dance from the Ŋurrara ceremony the Wake, the dead man lay in the shade in the position the raŋga takes in the Ŋurrara. Like the circumcision initiand the dead body is identified with the raŋga. It too has ılıkenbuy painting on it or on the coffin, and waŋa cords are placed on it.

An image of the public equivalent to the raŋga stood in the ground-sculpture of the springs at the clan country for the Washing ceremony. The Guwilirri dilly-bag and waŋa cords hung upon a Ganinyidi digging-stick by the 'spring' (see Chapter 5, Plate 5.4). This construction clearly represents the tree in which the Djaŋ'kawu sisters hung the dilly-bag, all the related images of various Beings sitting, hanging or crawling in Djota tree by the waters, and the feathered raŋga.

In the Washing ceremony described the men and women re-enacted creation in the Kingfisher dance. Even when the dances are omitted, the clan members re-state in the public ceremonies the processes and conditions of the creation, reproduction and death of its members, and the bases of the identity of the clan and its individual members. The public ceremonies present both the images which represent these processes and conditions, and the framework for the body of esoteric knowledge. All are encoded in the long public song-series which has provided some of the material for this chapter, and in the paintings, ground-sculptures and maḏayin objects of the Đambugawumirri clan.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have argued that the Đambugawumirri Ŋurrara ceremony re-enacts the creation of related Dhuwa clans; that the ceremony and its songs project images of the processes, powers and relations set down by the waŋarr and necessary for reproduction. The men dramatize their appropriation of control of the ceremony, of human fertility and access to supernatural powers.
The ceremony presents the images upon which clan identity and continuity rest: representations of places, trees and objects and names connected with places which each clan owns and which define the clan. Dances and the meaning of designs and objects represent various orders of connections between the clans, indicating their common genesis, connoting their links through women and echoing their connectedness through communication by sea and social transactions.

Ranga and cords are the most important objects that indicate a clan's connection to a particular place and waŋarr, and its links with other clans. The rangga is an object which has some degree of permanence; men can spend time making it, reveal it formally to novices and hide it in a way that requires strongly guarded rules. They can store it in such a way that its connection to a trace of the supernatural Being seems readily apparent.

Paintings and waŋa cords can have a similar meaning to the rangga but can be applied to an individual, thereby transforming the individual into a likeness of the rangga and connecting him or her to the waŋarr (cf. Morphy H. 1977a:188).

The songs are about things of everyday relevance and concern, and the subjects of everyday experience - journeys by sea, the catching of fish and gathering of shellfish, the creatures of plains or forest, and so on. At the same time they associate images of the creative acts of the waŋarr with analogues of the normal processes of reproduction. I suggest that the songs link statements about the creative acts of waŋarr to everyday experience and so reinforce the credibility of these statements.

The songs and Būriya's statements about the ceremony also specify kin relations. Lorikeet is like a 'heavy rock' for māri and gutharra, Lesser Salmon Catfish is māri, Blackbeetle Larvae are gutharra and so on. Perhaps the association of kin categories and analogues of the relation between kin with the realm of the supernatural Beings lends them a degree of legitimacy, inevitability and immutability which otherwise they would not have.

The social categories and kin relations stressed in the Nārra are those which I showed in Chapter 3 to be at the heart of the Yolŋu system: the separation of the two moieties, relations between 'M' and 'ZCh', māri and gutharra clans. Māri and gutharra clans unite in the ceremony
both symbolically and literally. The women represent the birth of
gutharra, thus the children of each clan are conceived of as the
descendants of a co-operating clan. Indeed the co-operation and the
fertility of mārī clans is essential for satisfactory growth and
perpetuation. It is fitting that women dance as the children of the
group for a mārī clan must provide women as mothers for its male
gutharra. The final daily dances and the final dance of the ceremony signify among
other things ferocity, the attribute of a strong clan. The setting,
objects, songs, dances and designs of the Nārra and the public ceremonies
create and recreate with the associated stories a complete world of the
madayin, and link it and the rules grounded upon it to everyday experience
and action.

I have shown in this chapter and in Chapters 2 and 6 that Puimbusawumiri clan law forms a coherent whole with public and secret aspects.
That law is under the control of the clan's members and their sisters'
sons (of Daygurrargurr, Warramiri, Birrkili and other Yirritja clans).
Bāriya is, as one man put it, the luku ('foundation') of the clan madayin.
Bāriya himself said when the previous leader died, 'I have gathered up the
whole clan, I am the leader'. The mature members of the clan own the law,
but defer to the leader as the ultimate custodian. Individuals learn the
law from their fathers, and their identity lies in the clan. The promise
of gradual revelation of the Inside law during early manhood further binds
the individual to the clan and vests authority in the old men. In the
next chapter I examine this process in which the young 'take the place'
of the old.
Chapter 8

KNOWLEDGE AND POWER
INTRODUCTION

In the Närra ceremony men dramatize their control of human reproduction, and demonstrate their command of the ceremony itself and the ranga. The ceremony daily re-enacts the historical basis of their power — the theft of the dilly-bag from the Djaŋ'kawu sisters. The central argument of this thesis is that the men's control of the ceremonies does indeed make possible the pattern of reproduction if not reproduction itself. Thus the way the Yolŋu represent the basis of men's power and its connection with reproduction closely matches the anthropological explanation proposed here. If this is true then one must agree with Durkheim (1967:421) that for the Yolŋu at least the religion is in this particular way a true reflection of the society.

What is known of the Yolŋu theory of power suggests a similar relationship with an anthropological explanation. The Yolŋu hold that power emanates from the waŋarr and ranga. People who control the ranga have the most power. I argued in Chapter 4 that men's authority does indeed derive from their apparent control of supernatural powers. People submit to the authority of older men because they believe in the nature and importance of the supernatural Beings, sacred objects and ceremonies. The men sustain the grounds for this belief through continuing with the secret ceremonies.

In this chapter I examine first the Yolŋu theory of power and the principles which govern religious leadership. Then I discuss the processes in which men succeed to and compete for positions of authority within the clan, and relations of power and authority between clans of the same moiety. Finally I examine the relationship between power and authority in the religious and secular spheres.

POWER

The meaning of the Yolŋu words märr and ganydjarr is broader than most anthropological definitions of power but is close to that of the English word 'power' — the ability to do something which the actor intends to do;
the ability to act upon some thing or person; possession of control, command, or dominion over others; legal authority to act (S.O.E.D.).

Ganydjarr denotes physical powers in particular such as that of a bird in flight or an outboard motor. Mörr has this sense also, but is particularly appropriate in discourse about the supposed source of physical powers, the ranga. Mörr is thought of as an attribute of things or beings but with an independent existence. It can pass from one thing or being to another; it is the condition of an ability to act. Djäwa explained that it has its source in the ranga:

If children want to go somewhere they have the power (mörr) because the ranga lies there. The power is not just wild.¹

Men say that this essence of power can pass from the sacred objects to men in ceremonies. They rubbed the Yarmalanydji poles in the Gunapipi to acquire power. Thomson (1939:3) records that men called likan names over human blood and sacred food in order to transfer the power of the waqarr to them. The blood, the sacred object, or even the dust from the dance-ground transmits the power.

Supernatural Beings which are still active have power. Dhäthanu said he became sick after visiting a particular place because he failed to make a gift of fish to the female Ghost there. She made him sick by means of her power.

The heart blood is the source or condition of human vitality which Djäwa attributed ultimately to the ranga:

The power of blood is from the mađayin, from the ranga. A child runs; it is from the ranga.

When the blood leaves the body through injury or sorcery the spirit also leaves and life ceases (Warner 1937:195).

The blood, flesh and fat of the dead are a source of power in themselves. People are not likely to refer to this power as mörr but as qål (strength) and mađakarritj (danger, ferocity). Men used to wrap dried human blood and rub it on the forehead, and carry packages of human flesh and fat to impart success (djambatj) in hunting and fighting (Thomson 1948:414). The various techniques attributed to sorcerers are largely based on the powers of human blood and spirits of the dead (see Warner 1937:236-239).²

¹The word I translate as 'wild' is wakinju which means illegitimate, un-owned, uninhabited, wild and unkempt.

²Warner (1937 passim.) refers to all the powers as 'dal' and 'derpal'. The word dharrpal is now synonymous with dhuyu (sacred).
People's physical powers thus derive directly from the ranga. Their powers are connected to the ranga in two other ways also; through the hair and string, and through knowledge and thought. These two modes are inter-linked.

The hair of the dead and living makes up the core of wana cords. In this way hair makes a direct connection between people and the ranga, manifested in the use of wana cords to decorate the ranga, novices and dancers. Women as well as men have the right to wear them and are connected in this way to the ranga also.

Knowledge and thought make a parallel connection between the individual and the ranga. The process of thought is located in the head. Men obtain knowledge of the maayin and ranga from their fathers and other elders, or in a kind of reverie in which the spirits of dead ancestors, such as märi'mu (FF) reveal the maayin to them. One Dämbugawumirri man said that he 'found the maayin in his mind' in that way:

I showed the painting to the clan leader who said 'That is sacred, some man must have shown you'; I said 'No, I found it in my mind'.

The leader said, 'Good, I like that kind of man'.

Manifestations of knowledge of the maayin proceed from the head; the same man said that he and his brothers have 'good ideas for the maayin'.

Djäwa said that the maayin are 'from' the head and that is the reason why hair has power (Figure 8.1). One of Thomson's informants (1975:6) also linked power, thought and the maayin:

This one marr only for mardai'in and thinking too much.

String belts which impart ability in ceremonies, fights and hunting are made from the hair of the dead. Hair is thus a secondary source of power like blood, flesh and fat.

![Figure 8.1](image)

The 'flesh' of the ranga is not made from human hair string but from banyan tree fibre. There is therefore no transfer of power from the human being to the ranga itself, only to the wana cords.

Whereas power has its source in the ranga in YolNU ideology, ferocity and danger (maayakarritj) do not (cf. Thomson 1975:6). There appears to
be a contradiction in Yolŋu ideology however, for ferocity is a quality of many waŋarr, especially the Giant Snakes, and the dangerous aspects of clan power are expressed in dances of the fierce waŋarr such as Catfish.

Djäwa said that maŋakarriritj comes from trouble or fighting (mārl) and from the sea, because the tide carries warriors down the rivers. The signs of ferocity are staring eyes and the hard and loud words that indicate the state of affairs called 'trouble' (mārl). But some action signifies the waŋarr, for in the Njārra and other ceremonies the dancers posture with staring eyes to show the power and ferocity of the Beings. Formerly warriors used the same dances during fights as they use for the daily dances at the riyawarra tree in the Njārra ceremony. The waŋarr and rāŋa are implicitly the ultimate source of this aggressive power. This is also shown in the belief that dried blood and flesh impart fighting prowess.

The Yolŋu then appear to distinguish between the power (mārr) which underlies legitimate authority and vitality, and destructive, dangerous power (maŋakarriritj) which only implicitly has its source in the waŋarr. Dangerous powers are necessary to guard the secrecy of the ceremonies and men's monopoly in the control of the rāŋa,¹ and are the outcome of a clan's strength. A successful clan is an aggressive clan. Yolŋu theory gives implicit recognition to the aggressive aspects of power.

KNOWLEDGE

I showed above that power from the rāŋa is related to knowledge about the rāŋa in Yolŋu thought. People express differences in authority and rights in terms of differences in knowledge. People explain a person's lack of power as due to his lack of knowledge. The conditions under which a person may admit to possessing knowledge and display that knowledge are not solely intellectual, they are also social. Knowledge passes ideally from 'father' (i.e. F, FB etc.) to son. The usual explanation for a man's lack of ability at something is that his father

¹According to Djäwa, axillary sweat is a product of ferocity. Like aggressive acts it is an instrument of human control over the ceremonies when men wipe it over novices' eyes and mouths to allow them to see the sacred object or sing the songs.
did not teach him. The term 'knowledgeable' (marŋgi) is an idiom of deference to another man's prior rights.

Banhdharrawuy said that he has only partial knowledge of the maŋayin; his 'father' Bärinya knows everything. In practice when the two were together the former told me much more than the latter, though often through leading questions addressed to Bärinya. On one other occasion Banhdharrawuy asked two elder brothers to be present when he wanted to tell me about the Djaŋ'kawu. But when he told me about the jikanbuy design over which he has primary rights (the Canoe ranga described in Chapters 2 and 7) he did not ask other men to be present. Bärinya's son Galiwirri, on the other hand, said that he knew everything but needed Bärinya's permission to talk about it. He qualified his claim by saying that Bärinya still had not told him several words and names. Banhdharrawuy thus required Bärinya's permission and presence and that of his brothers to tell me the stories, except those about a ranga over which he himself has prior rights. Intellectual powers are nevertheless a condition for holding positions of authority. Lack of ability may negate the prerogatives due to age.

LEADERSHIP

The Yolŋu describe men in senior positions as very knowledgeable of the maŋayin. Age is an important determinant of seniority: the word first-born (ŋurrudawalŋu) also means 'leader'. The first-born of a group of full siblings with the same mother is the senior, and as I showed in Chapter 3 the first-born male has primary rights in women. The first-born by different mothers but of the same father is the leader of his set of siblings. Age appears to take precedence over generation as a basis for succession to positions of leadership within the clan, but power derived from personal characteristics and from multiple marriages may take precedence over age.

The position is complicated because the first-born of a uterine set of siblings is likely to have power from the support of affines through multiple marriages. Thus it is quite common for the first-born of a set of uterine siblings to be the de facto leader, whereas his older brother — the first-born of the agnatic set of siblings — is the leader in name only.
Age also takes precedence over lineality in matters of succession. A leader often wants the leadership to pass to his own or to his close brother's son, but such a desire seldom seems to be gratified.

The precedence of age over generation is illustrated by the change in Đumbugawumirri clan leadership. Bäriya was the late clan leader's 'father', though a younger man; the leadership had not therefore passed from brother to brother of Bäriya's generation. After the clan leader died the leadership passed to him as the oldest man of the clan and sole male representative of his generation. He described his older sister as the true leader.

Daygurrgurr clan leadership illustrates the precedence taken by personal power over age. The present leader of the Daygurrgurr clan is the eldest of his set of uterine siblings, and the second eldest man of the clan. His elder brother, by a different mother, is the nominal clan leader. The de facto leader of the other sublineage of the clan is also the second eldest of the agnatic set of siblings, but the eldest of his uterine set. This man is contending for the leadership, as I show later.

More than one man in each clan may hold the position of power-man. Djäwa is the leading Daygurrgurr man, but two of his younger brothers, both senior men, also call the invocations. The word bungawa (boss) expresses a relative difference in status between men in equivalent positions. Djäwa is a 'big' boss, the leading power-man.

Clan members assess the relative positions of mature men as 'number two' or 'number three'. Before Bäriya unequivocally assumed the position of Đumbugawumirri leader, members ranked him with Bopani as leader; they ranked two mature men as 'number two' and two slightly younger mature men as 'number three'. The number two and three men would be contenders for the leader's position when he died.

Positions of authority in Yolŋu society are manifested in control of the raQA. In Yolŋu theory the powers of men with such authority, derive in a substantial sense from the raQA. I reported in Chapter 2 that Djäwa equated the position of power-man with power itself. He is đalkarramirri (đalkarra-POS), đalkarra 'is' power; and the Iłkan names that he calls 'are' power. The power of the power-man lies partly in the right to call out the Iłkan names and to 'hold' the maŋayin. These acts connect him intimately with the raQA which are the source of power. Indeed one man called Bäriya the juku, equating him with the raQA. The
senior power-man claims to be the leader of the clan. He 'holds' the members, the country and the maqayin. He is the ultimate authority in the clan's religious life and has influence in secular affairs also. Where there is a difference between a nominal and de facto leader both men may claim to 'hold' the clan and maqayin.

In the next section I illustrate the movement of men up the hierarchy of knowledge and authority. I describe how Bäriya became the leader, how his son violated the hierarchical rules, and how the authority of the clan is vested in the leader.

BEING LEVEL

The Dämbugawumirri clan Närra (Chapters 6 and 7) was long in the planning. At the beginning of 1975 members of the clan who lived at Milingimbi and Howard Island had it in mind to perform the ceremony later that year for two reasons: to say goodbye to Bäriya's elder sister and for Bäriya's son Galiwirri to wind the raŋga. Bäriya's dying sister had been the first-born of the clan and Djäwa's senior wife. They were also trying to arrange to perform part of it for the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation, and wanted me to have it filmed.

There appeared to be difficulties in getting the ceremony under way. It was necessary to have many waŋa cords made. Banhdharrawuy said that his and Bäriya's side of the clan planned ahead, but the leader's group was slow. They were also jealous of Bäriya and his people, for the leader was getting old and Bäriya was the new leader. A leader is the person who can say 'Let us begin the ceremony' and is the boss of the maqayin.

I described the structure of the clan in Chapter 1. The leader was a member of L lineage (Figure 8.2). He lived his last years with his sons and daughters at his māri clan country at Elcho Island to be near his wife's people. Most of B lineage lived there too. Some G and D lineage members moved between Howard Island outstation and Milingimbi, while others lived permanently at Milingimbi; a few lived at Elcho too for some periods. These differences in residence reflect matrilateral affiliations. Most of those with Warramiri mothers and wives lived at Elcho Island; those with Wobulkarra wives and mothers lived at Howard Island or Milingimbi, and those with Daygurrgurr and Batjimurruru clan mothers lived at Milingimbi.
Figure 8.2: Dāmbugawumirri clan genealogy.
Most of the clan was present at the leader's funeral at Elcho Island (see Chapter 5) and all lineages were represented. Bäriya took a leading role and although he shared the duties of power-man with Bopani, Bäriya called the likan names most often, and sang and played clapsticks for the big dances. He told me that he was now the leader, and had gathered up the whole clan.

Members of B lineage including Bopani were not altogether happy with this state of affairs. Bopani's younger brother told me that Bopani rather than Bäriya should show me the clan country. Banhdharrawuy had said before the leader's death that Bopani was a big boss followed by one of Bäriya's sons in D lineage, then by Banhdharrawuy. He did not mention Bäriya, yet he had referred to him as boss of the mañayin a few months before.

Bäriya himself assumed the role of leader uneasily, for he is rather modest and shy. After the former leader's death he asserted time and time again, 'I am the leader of the whole Dümbugawumirri clan. I have gathered all the people, songs, dances and mañayin'. He said it too often to give the impression of confidence. He cited the words of Europeans as grounds for his position. In the presence of Djurrpum, the Liyadhalin-mirri clan leader, he said that he and Djurrpum were leaders together. A few months later he said that Djurrpum would come as boss of the mañayin at the next Närра ceremony, and Bopani would help because the ceremony involved a great deal of work. When his brother's son was dying Bäriya said he wanted Djurrpum to come; he (Bäriya) knew the songs well enough but Djurrpum and the dead leader were really big men. Bopani however admitted to me at that time that Bäriya was now the clan leader, the boss of the ranga.

Bäriya attempted to evade the duties attached to his position. At a Dhuwa funeral he tried to step back to allow a 'son', ranked just below him, to call the likan names. He told me later that his brother-in-law Djäwa told him to lead himself because his clapsticks and invocation were strong. This was at the end of 1975. By the end of 1976 Bäriya was more secure in his position.

The leader's death delayed the projected Närра. Djurrpum suggested that they should hold a small one to commemorate the dead man. The other leaders thought it was too soon. Bopani told me they would have to wait until they had forgotten the death.
I had little contact with the clan between the end of 1975 and the end of 1976. During that period Bāriya and a number of his sons had split with a member of B lineage who was the owner of the Howard Island outstation where they lived for part of the year. The owner had returned permanently to Elcho Island and Bāriya established a new outstation at the west end of the island.

In October 1976 when his elder sister became very ill, Bāriya and other clan members at Milingimbi decided to hold the Nārra to 'say goodbye' to her, and for Galiwirri to become a leader for the ranga (goŋ-raŋamirri, hand-ranga-POS). Neither the dead leader's sons nor members of B lineage seemed to be involved in the decision, and none were present at the beginning of the ceremony. Bopani was not living at Milingimbi at that time and did not come to the ceremony at all. Djāwa's formal consent was required as he was the senior ZS. He may have been instrumental in the decision to hold the ceremony.

Bāriya's leadership of the clan was secure by the end of the Nārra ceremony. His 'sons' supported his authority in the context of a dispute during the ceremony about his son Galiwirri, who had violated the norms governing men's movement up the hierarchy of knowledge and authority. I now show how that came about.

Galiwirri as goŋ-raŋamirri had the task of winding the ranga with string and rainbow lorikeet feathers, a little each day. During the first two weeks of the ceremony he sat for an hour or two each morning at the Inside ground before the dancers came to prepare. He performed this task adequately but his behaviour in other ways was not acceptable.

Galiwirri is very different from his father in all ways except physique. Bāriya is unassertive but knowledgeable; his son is brash but inexperienced. Galiwirri's offences were these: he took the prerogatives of a mature man in leading the dances, and he violated the norms of body-painting in order to draw attention to himself. He 'made himself large', went his own way, and he abandoned the ceremony half way through.

On day 7 Galiwirri led the Inside dances in spite of the presence of men senior to himself. On the following day and numerous other occasions he led the run forward at the end of each Fish dance calling 'gaaa yay! This was the prerogative of a widely acclaimed song-man.
Galiwirri persuaded a mature man to play the clapsticks on day 9 for the Inside dances when the older men were at a meeting, and to lead the dancers to the riyawarra tree. The following day he did not paint his body and was less assertive. It seemed the mature men must have reproved him for his behaviour.

The day after that he told one of the school teachers that he was sulking and would not dance.

Galiwirri was not completely subdued. The next day he painted Goanna stripes half as wide again as anyone else's. He did not lead the Inside dances however, his father and a mature man did so.

On day 14 the other men matched Galiwirri's body-painting by adding an extra white stripe to each side. He harangued the men as they prepared the body-paintings: 'You should be quiet at the dance ground, not laughing and giggling all the time!' That day and the next he danced the Goanna solo after the Tide dance. On day 18 he bullied the younger men and took it upon himself to call the names of Goanna. Later he took the clapsticks from a mature man and played them for the last Tide dance.

The next day Galiwirri forsook the wide stripes and the mature man from whom he had taken the clapsticks the day before painted himself with wide stripes. At the riyawarra tree however Galiwirri led the run forward. The man who should have done it talked to him afterwards.

Matters came to a head on the 21st day. During the preparations at the Inside ground Galiwirri stood and harangued his brothers accusing them of losing the wanga cords which the dead leader had left after the previous Närra ceremony. He said that the older men should teach the young; the Närra was for the young men to take over; the older men should not just think about women and grog. His elder brother retorted that he was getting above himself; a power-man must know the iikan names. Bariya intervened to say, 'Let us simply follow the ceremony through to the end. I just want my sister to see the ceremony and wash in the sea'. Another man began to sing the Mätjarra group song very loudly. Galiwirri ended by saying that they should cut the ceremony short.

Galiwirri did not lead the dances that day, but during one of them he asked his father Bariya, 'Where are your strong clapsticks for our sister?' The other men laughed at him. He did not dance at the riyawarra tree and the next day he went to Darwin on the plane. Djawa's son Bojwuy Jnr. took over winding the ranga.
A week later Galiwirri telephoned from Darwin asking for money to be sent for his fare back. Bäriya and two of his 'sons', all members of D lineage, discussed the request at the Inside ground in the presence of a number of other men. Galiwirri had borrowed $100 from a white teacher in order to fly to Darwin. A clan sister's son offered to repay that money, and to help with the fare back. Bäriya wanted Galiwirri left in Darwin to punish him. 'He is my son, but leave him there, he quarrelled here on the Njärra ground'. Bäriya complained that his eyes were bad; he had needed his son to help wind the rąga. He was punishing him for leaving the rąga half wound.

The man ranked third to Bäriya is Galiwirri's elder brother Buwa'nandu (who has the same FF). He opposed this judgement. He had complained that the rąga did not just belong to Galiwirri, he himself had got it from his father also, nevertheless he insisted: 'Do not tell him to stay away; he is our beloved rąga man (goŋ-rągamirri)'. He took a spear in his hand and walked up and down to show his opposition.

Buwa'nandu's brother Minyipirriwuy criticized him for opposing their 'father': 'How old are you? You ought to believe. For how many years have you been learning?' Bäriya told them to stop the argument. Minyipirriwuy repeated to Buwa'nandu, 'You are not a believer'. The latter declared that it was bad to argue there by the rąga and replied 'Not at all, I am a believer. This kind of talk is bad. I am a believer in two things, in all of you here, and in this rąga - all are one together'.

The argument was complicated by the fact that Minyipirriwuy's teen-aged son was so shocked by the argument at this his first Njärra that he started to run off back to the camp. The men called him back telling him he must not leave the ground painted like that; the paint would 'bite' him; he should not be afraid, this was the men's argument.

Buwa'nandu continued to support Galiwirri; they should let him return since he knew the island well but was afraid of sorcerers in Darwin. Minyipirriwuy continued to support Bäriya and persuaded Buwa'nandu with the remark, 'You lot! The waku and dhuway group will see all this going on'. Buwa'nandu replied, 'We are bad. I do not talk through the rąga; father (Bäriya) talks through the rąga'.

Bäriya said 'I hold this (rąga) and proclaim the law for it. Whatever the problem, the decision proceeds from me to you. I hold my son Galiwirri'.
Minyipirriwuy asked 'Did our father's fathers and fathers go on this way? We behave badly because of Galiwirri — because of his previous bad action. That ranga lies by Bäriya. The punishment is from us all'. He used the same grounds to chastise his son: 'Why did you do that (i.e. run off)? Did our fathers' fathers (naming them) follow that path? Restrain yourself'.

Bäriya was scathing about Galiwirri throughout the argument calling him 'he who talks all the time', 'the runaway', and 'mad'.

Galiwirri remained in Darwin. He did not return to see the finale of the ceremony. Bäriya felt abandoned. He said that he was sick, that he would just sit alone with the ranga, that he was the last one; and that his brothers were all dead. A few days later he announced that his ZS Boguwuy Jnr. was making the ranga for him and for everyone.

Next day Minyipirriwuy commented to me that a leader must know all the likan names; Galiwirri knew how to wind the ranga but so did they all. A power-man must know the likan and dances of all the Dhuwa clans. He himself was still learning. Whoever was to take Bäriya's place must know all these things, and Bäriya was a good man to teach them. He said that Bäriya was punishing Galiwirri because he made too much noise while he was working. He should not have left the ranga half wound and gone to Darwin.

I had not witnessed the interaction between Galiwirri and his clanmates during the late evenings, so it is not clear what kinds of pressure they brought to bear upon him. Whatever it was its effect was short-lived; Galiwirri refused to conform to the model of self-restraint and deference to his elders. In the end his own exasperation led him to commit his worst offence, to abandon the ceremony and his duties.

The men most closely involved in the decision not to allow Galiwirri to return were all three members of the one lineage (see Figure 8.2): Galiwirri's own father Bäriya and his two elder brothers with a common FF, who were the two eldest men of their generation. Buwa'nandu, the senior, defended his younger brother; Minyipirriwuy, the next most senior, upheld Bäriya's authority.

Minyipirriwuy castigated his brother for not 'believing'. The word märr-yyuwalkthirri ('believe') implies not only acceptance of a truth but also acceptance and obedience of authority. Buwa'nandu said he 'believed' (submitted to) the clan and the ranga together.
A person in authority talks 'through the ranga'. When Buwa'nandu retreated from his opposition he said that he did not talk through the ranga but that Bäriya did. Bäriya himself claimed to 'hold' the ranga and proclaim (Jakarama) the law in relation to it. This telling proceeded from him to the group. He expressed his authority in matters relating to Galiwirri by saying that he 'held' him.

Bäriya's position of authority presupposed that he held the ranga. The ranga in turn is the focus of clan unity. The clan was therefore ideally united in its acceptance of Bäriya's authority. This is shown in Minyipirriwuy's remark that the ranga lay at Bäriya's side, but the punishment proceeded from them all; and by Buwa'nandu's remark that he believed in/accepted the group and the ranga which are united.

Both brothers appealed to precedent to support the norms: they asked if their fathers' fathers, the ancestors of the clan, would have behaved in such a way.

Minyipirriwuy's support for Bäriya's desire to leave his son in Darwin seems to have been crucial to the outcome, for Bäriya only stated the basis for his authority when the matter was resolved. It is difficult to say what Bäriya's status would have been in the absence of that support. He would have remained nominal leader, possibly without the personal authority that this incident surely demonstrated, and which may have set a precedent for dealing with future disputes.

The previous year Bäriya had compared himself unfavourably with Djurrpum, who was a big-man. After the Närra ceremony he was able to say that he and Djurrpum were 'level' (rrambañi).

Djurrpum travelled from Elcho to the ceremony for the final three days. As leader of the Liyadhalinmirri clan he was joint leader of the ceremony with Bäriya, for his clan and Dämbugawumirri are conjoint and united for the ceremony. The two leaders' poles in the ceremony were complementary. Djurrpum led the dancing and made decisions about the designs, Bäriya retained his prerogative to call most of the ikan names. Djurrpum arrived on day 30. He and Bäriya played the clapsticks together for the Inside dances, but Djurrpum called the ikan names of his own country at the ryawarra tree. Next day Bäriya remained unpainted as usual, called the names and carried the Guwilirri dilly-bag; Djurrpum who was painted led the dances.
On day 32 Bäriya said he had 'knocked off' and Djurrpum was the clapstick man. Bäriya invoked Bustard and sang for the preparation and did in fact play clapsticks for Bustard dance.

On the last day Djurrpum gave instructions about how the Kingfisher design should be painted and he asked Bäriya to go to the public camp with a pattern painted on a piece of cardboard. Bäriya joined the Daygurrgurr clan leader at the riyawarra tree to play clapsticks for the marrawinydjun chorus as the Kingfisher dancers approached. He called the jikan names in the invocation at the tree and in the sea. Djurrpum led the male dancers and sang Black-beetle Larvae during the invocation.

Bäriya's position as leader of the Dämbugawumirri clan was clear; the Närrra was primarily for his clan, and he was the power man. His relation to Djurrpum was nonetheless deferential to some degree. This relation derived, I suggest, from his evaluation of Djurrpum as an important leader and very knowledgeable man. It may have also derived in part from the traditional rights of the Liyadhalinmirri clan over the Närrra ceremony. The clan country Marapay features in the Rirratjingu clan story and was invoked at the Roper River ceremony which Elkin observed (1972:56). Warner (1937:347) notes that members of the clan (called Guyula clan in his book) were unwilling to perform the ceremony anywhere but on their clan country.

Only one or two of the deceased leader's sons went to the ceremony. Bopani, Bäriya's main rival within the clan, did not attend the ceremony, but two of his sons and two brothers did so. However, when a mature man called for the young men to go to the shade to prepare it for the revelation of the ranga to the novices he omitted to call Bopani's sons.

The leadership of the clan therefore had passed unequivocally to the D lineage. Apart from Bäriya's rivals the clan remained united for the ceremony, for members of all the lineages were present at the climax.

The men constantly discussed the question of succession during 1975 and 1976. Bäriya listed two men of B lineage, one man of G lineage and three of D lineage as leaders. He included Minyipirriwuy, who he often said would take his place because he was clever; Buwa'nandu, who in practice takes the most active role among his peers; and Bopani who ought to succeed him on the basis of age.

The Daygurrgurr clan too was concerned with the question of succession not because the leader had died but because one man was very anxious for...
two of his older brothers to die so that he would succeed to the leadership. Whereas the Dämbugawumirri Närra confirmed Bäriya's position as leader, the rivalry of the Daygurrgurr men prevented their Närra from taking place.

RIVALRY FOR POWER

Boquwuy, the power-man of the Waltjimirri sublineage of the Daygurrgurr clan, lives at Nangaľaňa, the country of some of his wives and wives' brothers. He visits Milingimbi regularly to participate in Daygurrgurr clan public ceremonies; Djăwa, the de facto leader of the Garrawarrpa lineage, never seems to visit Nangaľaňa now. When he visits Milingimbi Boquwuy takes almost as prominent a role in the ceremonies as Djăwa, and shares the duties of power-man, calling some likan names. Djăwa's elder brother is the nominal leader of the clan, Boquwuy's elder brother by the same father is the nominal leader of his sublineage.

Boquwuy sees himself as the next leader of the clan after Djăwa's and his elder brother's death. Both are in their seventies. He says that everyone will sing with his tune then. He finds it increasingly irksome that Milingimbi is the centre of major clan affairs such as Circumcision ceremonies.

Several Daygurrgurr men planned to circumcise their sons in 1976. In October 1 returned to Nangaľaňa from a visit to Milingimbi with news that Djăwa had begun the ceremony described in Chapter 5. Boquwuy said that if Djăwa and another brother performed the Circumcision separately from two other brothers he would not go. Why did the others never come to Nangaľaňa and help his own group? He was always going to Milingimbi; he would perform a Circumcision for his son separately.

Boquwuy did in fact go to Milingimbi for the final two days of Djăwa's sons' Circumcision. He later expressed the intention of circumcizing his own sons at Nangaľaňa. Djăwa told me that Boquwuy and his lineage at Nangaľaňa were 'rubbish'.

The rivalry between the two leaders prevented them from performing a Närra which was also planned for 1976. The clan had left one unfinished in 1974, and Djăwa's elder brother wanted to see it completed before he died. I asked Djăwa about their plans and was told:

Someone (Boquwuy) is very jealous; he is trying to emulate me. But my father was the true power-man, the leader for every ceremony.
My elder brother and I have finished, we've dropped it—we say 'No more Närра ceremonies'. Circumcision is alright, or calling the invocation; but we have finished as far as the Närра is concerned.

If Boŋuwuy's mob wants to do the ceremony we will say 'No! You can't do it there at Nängalala because our father was the law-man'.

He is trying to be the leader, but it might be one of my sons or my elder brother's sons.

If some person wants to fetch the ranga, and call the invocation, it will be here, not at Nängalala, no fear!

The clan did not perform the ceremony in 1976, but Boŋuwuy demonstrated that he was indeed the likely successor to Djäwa. He did so by his behaviour at the Đāmbugawumirri Närра, which he attended on the last three days. Boŋuwuy sat at the Inside ground for the Flying Fox dance where he cracked jokes and led the marrawinydjun chorus. He also was most prominent in the marrawinydjun chorus at the riyawarra tree for the final part of the Kingfisher dance. Djäwa stood there looking old and tired; eclipsed by his younger and more vigorous brother.

This case displays the conflict between lineality, age and power as principles of succession, with age and power likely to take precedence. Djäwa's refusal to agree to the Närра performance prevented Boŋuwuy from having an arena in which to upstage his older brother. He will have to wait until his brother's death. If Boŋuwuy does become the de facto leader the principle of age and birth-order will have been violated to the extent that his elder brother by the same father will have been passed over. Nevertheless lineal succession will not have occurred.

LOOKING AFTER

So far I have been mainly concerned with leadership within the clan, but here I shall examine the domination of one clan's affairs by another. The relation of domination is expressed by the word djäga which means 'to look after'. People 'look after' other people's children, the country of absent clansmen, the country and ceremonies of memberless clans and clans without knowledgeable leaders.

In Chapters 1 and 5 I showed that Daygurrgurr and Birrkili are separate clans of the Gupapuyŋu clan-aggregate. Each has a distinct wagarr, but they share many ranga, songs and public ceremonies. Warner's (1937:44)
and Webb's (1933:409) data suggest that before mid-century the Birrkili clan was independent and possibly even dominant, for Warner gives as much information about Birrkili as about Daygurrgurr, and Webb gives Daygurrgurr as a sub-group of the Birrkili mala. Thomson (unpublished field notes) recorded many Birrkili ground-sculptures, stories and ceremonies.

By the 1970s the position of the two clans was assymetrical. The Birrkili clan conduct no ceremonies of their own. They have no song-men and no power-men and they are largely dependent at Milingimbi upon the Daygurrgurr clan to conduct their ceremonies although they do paint their own bark-paintings. Birrkili men explained that their fathers had died young without teaching them songs. The Daygurrgurr leader was their leader also; his country 'of the water' was their clan country Lupgutja. If they wanted a Birrkili ground-sculpture or ceremony they had to ask the Daygurrgurr leader, who was the boss of their country, and he customarily agreed.

The Birrkili clan does have two leaders of its own. The older one lives at Elcho Island but reputedly does not know the songs; the other who lives at Milingimbi, is something of an outcast through his former close involvement with the Mission.

The Birrkili clan is not entirely dependent upon the Daygurrgurr clan. One Birrkili man and his Daygurrgurr märi asked the Dhalwaŋu clan to perform a Circumcision ceremony for their sons. Gumatj, Warramiri and Wangurri people joined the Dhalwaŋu to perform the Sea songs and dances which the Birrkili also own. Daygurrgurr clan members joined in for the invocation and chorus. The Birrkili man danced with the Dhalwaŋu.

Birrkili Sea songs and dances are 'truly' Gupapuyŋu (Chapter 5). Djäwa and other Daygurrgurr and Birrkili men asserted that only Djäwa and two of his brothers have knowledge of the Sea songs. Djäwa said that they never performed them because the young people did not know them. I have only seen a Daygurrgurr leader perform the Sea songs at Ņangalala where no Birrkili people live. It is true that Birrkili and younger Daygurrgurr men deny that they are knowledgeable of the songs, because the older Daygurrgurr men retain sole rights to sing them. It may also be true that they do not know them in an intellectual sense, since they are so seldom performed. I suggest that the Daygurrgurr leaders ensure the subjugation of the Birrkili clan by so seldom performing their songs. They dominate the Wobulkarra clan in a similar way.
Members of the Wobulkarra clan live mainly at Milingimbi. None of the men of the clan is over about thirty-five, and Djäwa said that he himself looks after the Wobulkarra maŋayin. As we saw in Chapter 5, Djäwa organised a Circumcision ceremony for a Wobulkarra boy and sang Wobulkarra songs. He told me that he never sings many of these. I have never seen the young Wobulkarra men sing and they would seem to have no opportunity to learn their songs, since people learn through participation. It is possible however that the young men could reconstruct their songs from those of clans with similar songs.

Wobulkarra clan is a member of the Manydjikay clan-aggregate. The small Walamaŋu clan is Manydjikay also. Most of its members lived about 70 km. west of Milingimbi at Maningrida, until some returned recently to their own country Milingimbi.

The clan performs its ceremonies independently of the Daygurrgurr except for the invocation. At the Walamaŋu funeral in 1975 three men called the invocation: Djäwa, one of his younger brothers and a Gumatj clan power-man. The Walamaŋu clan is märi for both Djäwa and his brother. The prerogative of Djäwa and his brother, and probably also of the Gumatj leader, came from their ownership of the invocation.

Owning the invocation does not of itself imply control of another clan's ceremonial life. The Dämbugawumirri clan owns the Dhuwa invocation, and its members call it at, for example, Djambarrpuypuŋu and Mälarra mortuary ceremonies. The clan's ownership is a social norm which may be the outcome of a previous political situation, and is sustained by the clan's continuing strength. But Djäwa's position goes beyond mere specialisation for, according to Bäriya, Djäwa is the boss of the Yirritja Närra. If Walamaŋu or any other Yirritja clan wants the ceremony they must ask him, in spite of the fact that Manydjikay clans and Daygurrgurr have distinct waŋarr. Djäwa seems to have effective control of the Närra of all the Yirritja clans in that his permission is not simply nominal. The other clans do not perform on their own initiative.

Djäwa and his brother have personal rights in Walamaŋu ceremonies because they are märi to them. Wobulkarra ceremonies are their märi too because Walamaŋu and Wobulkarra have the same maŋayin. This relationship and Djäwa's status as the leading power-man gives him only a specialist role in Walamaŋu public ceremonies, but it gives him control of Wobulkarra ceremonies because Wobulkarra have no old men. Were his clan less
powerful I suggest that they might retain nominal ownership of the invocation and Närre but no effective control. This is precisely the position of the Liyagalawumirri clan in respect of the regional ceremonies.

This conclusion is supported by Warner's and Thomson's data. The Yirritja Närre which Warner observed was Wangurri and Warramiri, judging by the dances (Warner 1937:356-70). The leader of the joint clans was Makarrwala, apparently the dominant personality at Milingimbi at that time, Warner's main informant and the first Yolŋu missionary according to current traditions. The Närre observed by Thomson (unpublished fieldnotes) was organised by a dominant Mildjiŋi clan leader Rraywala, who has the reputation of having been very fierce. His clan was linked by marriage to the then powerful Liyagalawumirri clan.

TAKING OVER

The senior men of the second sublineage of Djëwa's lineage held similar sway over the ceremonial and secular affairs of the Nangalaŋa community. The Daygurrurrurr men dominate the ceremonial life of its märi clan Balmawuy, and the now very small Mildjiŋi clan. These relationships are due largely to the Daygurrurrurr clan's demographic success at the expense of the other two.

Boŋwuy, the Daygurrurrurr power-man at Nangalaŋa, told me that Mildjiŋi (Yirritja) and Murruŋun Wolkpuy (Dhuwa) clan countries are related as 'husband' to 'wife'. A number of his own wives are Murruŋun. 'Really I ought to be Mildjiŋi' he said, 'because I marry Murruŋun women'. In fact the Mildjiŋi clan has recently acquired two wives from two other Dhuwa clans. One of these clans is doomed to extinction since it has no men left. A Daygurrurrurr man ran off with a Dhuwa woman who was promised to one of the only two young Mildjiŋi men; and the wife of one of them left him. The theft leaves the clan little chance of flourishing, for its three men now have only one wife between them.

The Balmawuy clan has been a prime source of wives' mothers for the Daygurrurrurr at Nangalaŋa, but the next generation will produce few women, for there is only one man in the clan and he has only one wife. If this clan or the Mildjiŋi dies out the Daygurrurrurr may 'look after' its land and ceremonies and eventually take them over.

There are three bases for men of one clan taking over the land and ceremonies of another: a man may look after his märi clan country, and a
clan may take over a märi clan's country; a man who was spiritually conceived at a country can say it is his own country; and a man has rights in his clan by secondary paternity. The conception country of many young Daygurrgurr men is Mildjiqi, and one of the Mildjiqi land-owning groups and places is märi to Daygurrgurr. If (as seems quite likely) the clan soon dies out, the Daygurrgurr clan will undoubtedly 'look after' and eventually incorporate the country and ceremonies to which so many of its own members are now strongly affiliated. The same could also happen to the Balmawuy clan.

I have already shown that the Dämbugawumirri clan is in the process of incorporating Gunbirridji clan country at Elcho Island, and the Daygurrgurr clan looks after its märi Wora clan country and ceremonies. Members of the Djambarrpuyŋu clan have established an outstation on its märi clan country, in this case that of an extinct branch of the Liyagalawumirri clan-aggregate. Spiritual conception confirms the attachment of the clan's members to the newly acquired country.

Secondary paternity may take precedence over spiritual conception in the ownership of a country. The ceremonies and country of the nearly extinct Malaganarrgaŋarr clan I mentioned above are looked after by a man of another clan who was raised by a Malaganarrgaŋarr man. A Djambarrpuyŋu man who is simply 'of the water' does not perform the ceremonies.

So far in this chapter I have examined the Yolŋu ideology of power and knowledge, the bases of leadership, succession to positions of authority and leadership, relations of domination between clans, and the process by which one clan may take over another's ceremonies and land. The latter topic brings me to consider the relationship between power and authority in the religious and secular spheres.

RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR POWER

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine Yolŋu politics in detail. To indicate the relationship between religion and secular power I shall try to show that the power of large clans and their leaders extends beyond ceremonial affairs, and that it would be incorrect to represent this Aboriginal society as lacking politics or government. Anthropologists are not in agreement over this question.
R.M. and C.H. Berndt (1964:304) take the view that politics do exist in Aboriginal society. Principles of self-help and retaliation are predominant, and while an authority system was stronger than is sometimes thought it could not impose sanctions. Leaders are unable to enforce their decisions on the basis of their position, and they rely largely on the degree of support they can muster.

Hiatt (1965:141) supports Meggitt's view that there existed no formal apparatus of government, no enduring hierarchy of authority, and no recognised political leaders in Aboriginal societies. He concludes (ibid.:146) that among the Gidjinjali there were no governmental institutions. In regard to disputes over women he concludes that there was no institution with authority to deal with such disputes; but there was a community of people with a set of common values and a system of formally defined rights and obligations.

Sharp (1958) represents the Yir'yoront as a 'people without politics'. Legal sanctions are simply an aspect of kinship roles in his view; and a M.B may take a 'malevolent' role in relation to his ZS where appropriate (ibid.:6). All males stand in superordinate relations towards some, and subordinate relations toward others. There are no head men or chiefs (ibid.:5).

Maddock (1970:42) is of the opinion that if political authority ever existed among Aborigines it is a thing of the past. Some men 'exercised local and personal authority in the conduct of religious life' but 'every man's religious standing increased with age if he was in full possession of his faculties' (ibid.:43). Some men achieved position of greater influence with age, but none was sovereign (ibid.:44). The outraged party and his supporters rectified broken norms (ibid.:43).

Bern (1974) is one of the few to have analysed the politics of religion, as Barker notes (1976:237). Roper River men compete for the control of rites based on the custody of ritual estates. Success in this competition offers prestige in the ritual sphere in Bern's view (op. cit.:217). He argues that the allocation of women and control of land are quite distinct. Women are allocated as wives through kinship, whereas land is controlled through totemic geography.

Hiatt and Meggitt, Sharp and Maddock, variously reserve the terms 'governmental institution', 'politics' and 'political authority' for specialized and formal political and governmental institutions. But as Smith (1956:47) points out, government as process is distinct from government as a structure.
If government is the direction and control of the actions and affairs of a people, and politics is 'the conduct of affairs' (S.O.E.D.) then all societies practice government and have politics. The Yolŋu, like other Aboriginal societies, clearly do not have specialized governmental or political institutions or specialized political leaders. I shall argue in Chapter 9 that certain Yolŋu institutions constitute governmental institutions, albeit non-specialized ones. Here I shall argue that the Yolŋu do indeed engage in politics and political competition, i.e. competition to influence the conduct of affairs.

Others have described politics within limited spheres: Hiatt (1965:81) writes of the politics of bestowal and Bern (1974) of the politics of ritual. Since the Yolŋu have no specialized political institutions they can have no political competition for the control of public affairs as a whole; politics within one institution however have radical effects on affairs within another. Discussions about the application of authority from the religious to the secular sphere have obscured this point.

I argued earlier that success in marriage has radical effects on interclan relations, the control of land and religious affairs. I will cite a case illustrating how the community and its leaders were able to prevent a young man marrying a woman who was in the wrong relationship, and who was promised to a member of a more powerful clan. I have already shown that the application of the marriage and other rules ensure that some men are greatly advantaged. Another case will illustrate the way in which a small clan is unable to prevent members of a more powerful clan taking women promised to its members.

The Dhūbi clan has only two male members. One of these, a man in his late twenties, had a liaison with a young Djamarrpuyŋu woman 'A' who was his waku ('2D'). After a child was born they ran off into the bush to set up a camp together.

The woman had been promised to a Daygurrgurr man who died, and was then promised to another Daygurrgurr man. Her father who lived at Ñŋangalala was related to the Daygurrgurr by marriage. The Daygurrgurr leaders at Ñŋangalala violently opposed the liaison on the grounds that the relationship was not 'straight' and that the woman was promised to their brother.

When the couple returned from the bush the community put pressure of various kinds on the young man; in particular they accused him of sorcery, for the whole community was suffering from an epidemic of influenza. The young man responded with increasing desperation, strewing the road with logs to prevent traffic from Ñŋangalala reaching his house, and eventually shooting himself through the shoulder.
He then came to an arrangement with one of the young woman's MBs, a Ganalbiçu man 'B', to exchange ZDs. That is, they arranged that the man could keep the woman if he allowed 'B' to have his ZD 'C'. This arrangement made, the pair settled at the Ganalbiçu outstation.

The woman's MF and senior MB (the Ganalbiçu leader and his eldest son) were opposed to this arrangement because it contravened the marriage norms. They and the Daygurrgurr leaders met and arranged that Ganalbiçu man 'B' should be given a girl 'D' who was promised to one of the Daygurrgurr leaders (who did not want her) instead of keeping 'C'. They returned the Djambarrpuyŋu woman 'A' to her father and she was taken to another settlement. The young man went to live at a settlement to the south. Another Ganalbiçu land-owning group were opposed to the Ganalbiçu man 'B' being given the girl 'D', and that aspect of the affair was unresolved when I left Ņangalala.

The community and its leaders had successfully prevented a marriage which contravened the norms; marriage between a man and his 'ZD' is especially abhorrent. The Daygurrgurr men had also protected the interests of one of their members.

Like the Dhābi the Mildjiŋi clan is too weak to protect its own interests, as the following case shows.

The Mildjiŋi clan has three male members, one old man and two men in their thirties. The old man lives at Ņangalala. One of the younger men married a Marraŋu woman, the other a Malaganaṟarrŋaŋarr woman. One of the wives left her husband but the brothers were also promised another Marraŋu woman.

The son of a Daygurrgurr man ran off to Maningrida with this Marraŋu woman. The old Mildjiŋi man complained about it but was unable to take any action to remedy the situation.

The correct application of the marriage rules results in some men obtaining several wives as I showed in Chapter 3. I also indicated that the later marriages of much-married men were not simply to the daughters of women of their own māri clan, but to less closely-related women. This suggests that once in a position of strength through their affinal network, such men are able to obtain women to whom other men are more closely related. Large clans result from the many marriages of such men. The second case above illustrates the ability of a strong clan to press home its advantage. Its members are able to keep women whom they have little right to marry, at the expense of weaker clans. I stated also in Chapter 3 that leaders of strong clans find it easier to break the marriage rules.

The marriage system tends to create conflict. If one clan dies out another clan who has relied upon it for wives must look elsewhere,
and thus compete with one or several other clans. In the past such a situation created severe conflict; Warner (1937:28) records that the Wangurri and Warramiri clans had a serious fight over women. Wangurri men killed many of the Warramiri and the Wangurri leader became leader of both clans.

The politics of marriage are not self-contained but have radical effects on all social affairs. I have also argued that the religious organisation is prerequisite to the very framing and operation of the marriage rules, and that religious authority enables older men to sustain their preferential rights over women. Religious authority is part and parcel of the very organisation of clans. Galiwirri's case showed that the unity of the clan centres on common acceptance of the authority of the leader, and on precepts against divisive quarrels. The clan is corporate only through its ownership of religious property and land. The unity of the body of religious knowledge and practice requires control over its transmission and performance through relations of authority.

The first case cited above suggests that clan leaders are able to co-operate to prevent an unacceptable marriage. However, the religious authority of older men is important to sustain the marriage system not so much through the enforcement of norms, but by ensuring that young men do not successfully rebel against the system in any significant numbers. Indeed religious leaders are very often unsuccessful in obtaining promised wives; Bāriya for example had no women available to him from his close MBs and had to look further afield. He first inherited one wife from a deceased brother, then obtained only one promised wife who died, and later inherited three other wives who do not live with him. He was unable to get another promise to come to him despite heavy investment of marriage payments. Nevertheless I would argue that young men do not combine to prevent an older man from acquiring young wives, and the reason they do not is because of the religious authority of the older men. As I said in Chapters 4 and 7 the latter control access to supernatural powers and religious knowledge, which the younger men have learnt to regard as necessary and desirable.

As I pointed out earlier in the chapter, the politics of marriage have radical effects on other social affairs. I have already shown that larger clans are able to dominate the ceremonial life of less successful clans and that members of a demographically successful clan are able to become affiliated to the country of some other clans, and eventually take it over.
Larger clans tend to dominate the secular affairs of a community. The Daygurrgurr clan members and their Djambarrpuyî sisters' sons and husbands dominate the Council at Naŋgaŋula. Three consecutive Council chairmen have been members of one or other clan. The Daygurrgurr clan also dominates settlement affairs at Milingimbi. Djäwa, the clan leader, is chairman of the Council. Other clan members were Town secretary, chief work supervisor, and community worker. Of all Council employees given work at a Town meeting at the end of 1976, 70 per cent were Daygurrgurr and Birrkîli Gupapuyî and ZSs, ZHs, ZDSs and MMBs of the Daygurrgurr clan. Members of Djäwa's lineage hold the majority of positions in the store, and his ZS/DH is the supervisor. Most teaching assistants at the school are members of the Dämbugawumirri clan which is large and closely related to the Daygurrgurr.

The proportion of Daygurrgurr men among the employed is greater than the proportion of Daygurrgurr members in the Milingimbi population as a whole. Members of this clan or their ZSs are supervisors of half the work teams. Members of minority clans hold fewer jobs in proportion to their size.

It seems clear then that relations of power and authority and action (including political action) in one sphere has effects on affairs and relations in another. Secular and religious power and relations are inextricably interwoven. Nevertheless there is no simple concordance between positions of authority in the religious sphere and secular authority.

Bojûwuy is the de facto Daygurrgurr leader at Naŋgaŋula but he has never been Council chairman. His elder brother who is the nominal leader has been chairman only once. People in this community tend to denigrate the Council's importance, but the leaders maintain some control over it through the son and brother-in-law of one of them, who have both been chairman.

Although most clan leaders in both communities remain uninvolved in Council affairs, Djäwa is both a religious leader and Council chairman at Milingimbi. His personal role is to listen and sum up a concensus of opinion in community and Council meetings, and sometimes to help in the settlement of disputes. He is able to take the top job in the community but this position gives him only a degree of influence for he is unable to enforce his personal wishes on the community as a whole. (I have seen
him openly harangue only his wives and his sisters' sons.) This is especially apparent in the conflict between the factions for and against alcohol: Djüwa is bitterly opposed to drinking but unable to prevent it.

The basic structure of Yolŋu society has a political dimension. Differential relations of power between men and women, old men and young men, large clans and small clans are structural features. Religious authority is at the very heart of the system, and so has strong political implications. The marriage system rests upon this religious authority, but the operations of the marriage system feed back upon actual relations of power between individuals and clans.

I do not wish to suggest that the Yolŋu are typical of all Aboriginal societies; their neighbours the Gidjiniŋali for example do not appear to form large powerful clans, nor to have powerful leaders with many wives. They appear to have a somewhat different ethos. Hiatt (1965:81) writes that

Although most adult males desired at least one spouse, many seemed more anxious to display their generosity than to acquire a second or third.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have shown that power proceeds from the ranga in Yolŋu thought, both directly and through knowledge about it. A person receives this knowledge ideally from his father or living or dead FF. The acquisition of religious knowledge is prerequisite to succeeding to positions of authority; differences in rights are expressed in terms of differences in knowledge.

People cite three principles governing succession to religious rights and positions of authority within the clan: age and birth order, lineality and actual power. These principles very often conflict in practice.

The leader of the clan speaks with authority 'through' the ranga. He holds the whole group, its land and ceremonies. The group is ideally united through the ranga and defers to and supports the leader. A junior brother who is the first born of a set of siblings with the same mother may take effective leadership over an older brother by a different mother who is less well placed.

Individuals also have rights in their māri clan ceremonies and country. Men may convert this relation into effective control over the
affairs of another clan of the same moiety. The power of numbers account for a lot in such a relationship which is expressed and justified in terms of the prerogatives due to age and knowledge. Through judicious marriages a clan may hasten the decline of a māri clan which fails to provide wives' mothers, and take over its land and maşayin. Finally I argued that political action and relations bind Yolŋu religious and secular institutions together.
Chapter 9

Conclusion
AN ECONOMY OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

In this chapter I analyse some of the basic features of those Yolŋu institutions and practices which have been the subject of this work. In the course of the analysis I review the argument set out in the Introduction concerning the relationships between Yolŋu marriage, religious organisation and power in the light of the material presented in Chapters 2-8.

First, since I have cited Warner's data to support and complement my own findings, but differ from him in matters of interpretation and in the range of data recorded, I shall present a critique of his picture of Yolŋu society.

THE MURNGIN

A Black Civilization is a remarkable work, rich in careful ethnographic description which on the whole rings true to one who has recently worked in Arnhem Land. Nevertheless I have presented here a picture of Yolŋu institutions and practice that differs in many respects from that of Warner. As I said in the Introduction, I have followed his attempt to explain the inter-relations of Yolŋu institutions. I shall compare my own explanation with his.

In his introduction to A Black Civilization, Lowie expresses admiration for Warner's attempt to 'correlate specific aspects of Murngin culture with one another' and asserts that 'he cannot be considered a servile follower of Durkheim' (1937:xvii). While it is true that Warner acknowledges that his work displays the influence of many, especially Lowie himself, the influence of Durkheim is paramount. Unlike Durkheim Warner appears to give priority to kinship, yet the priority of myth is implicit in his account.

Warner sees kinship as 'the fundamental form into which the rest of the social organization has been integrated (p.7), but fundamental

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1All page references in this section refer to Warner 1937.
myths 'organize the conceptual scheme of the social life and of the outside world which surrounds it' (p. 10). Clans are units composed of totems, sites, land, myths, rituals, names and spirits all given unity by myths. Clans give 'spatial form to the kinship system', this spatial aspect being emphasized by the Wawilak and Djunkgao (Djan'kawu) myths which relate the clans to the landscape (pp. 388-9). Clan members are usually dispersed, and hordes consist of the members of several clans. The land is 'an integral part' of the clan 'for it is of the clan and made such by the order of existence' (p. 389). Clan members are identified by the clan well of their conception spirit, to which their spirit returns at death.

The clans' sacred traditions and ritual are demonstrations of the beliefs: totemic objects which are 'concrete symbols of the totality of the sacred traditions, become symbols of group unity and symbolize the group' (p. 391). The 'totemic configuration' of the clan 'expresses' the unity of the clan, and ritual life centres on the clan well, the locus of the spiritual elements of the clan. The totemic object

becomes a tangible expression of python, barramundi, or some other totemic spirit. The infinite variety of ideas and feelings which are a part of the beliefs making up the totemic spirit can be symbolized and expressed in the concrete image of the totem (p. 392).

By handling the object in rituals, people express awe, respect and supplication.

The actions of the 'wongar' beings (waqarr) in myth explain the existence of things, and the statements of myth 'make absolute' the ownership of land. Warner writes:

The Murngin clan itself, then, is a membership group of a certain unilateral group of people whose unity is expressed by the possession of a totemic configuration and the practice of exogamy (p. 391).

Rites 'have their symbolic point of reference' in myth. The Wawilak myth/rituals are 'sacred dramas in which the mysteries of life are re-enacted' (p. 377). In the rituals connected with the Wawilak myth Warner infers that

The men's age-grade is a snake and purifying element, and the sociological women's group is the unclean group. The male snake-group in the act of swallowing the unclean group 'swallows' the initiates into the ritually pure masculine age grade, and at the same time the whole ritual purifies the whole group or tribe (p. 387).

These rituals impart a feeling of 'oneness' in participants' minds, and a consciousness of their relationship to the larger group (p. 392), and
extend the social horizon of the individual and clan. They are also needed to control nature and ensure continuity of the seasonal cycle.

Warner explains the place of the totemic system in the social organization in this way. Masculinity is 'inextricably woven' with ritual cleanliness and is sacred, and femininity is profane and bound up with uncleanness. The superordinate male group is made sacred through successive initiations, and 'maintained as a unit by continual participation in the rituals' (p. 394) subordinating the excluded female group. Male superiority is made a 'mystery' by its connection with sacredness and the seasonal reproductive cycle. Men get their power from ritual and use it to control the profane and less sacred elements of society, subordinating women, young children and some men. The totemic system provides 'the absolute sanctions' through which Murngin society finds its unity. It places pressure on all members of the society to conform to the rules of the social organization and provides a unified set of organizing concepts for group integration. The totemic emblem symbolizes the sanctions and the concepts (p. 395).

Political control is gerontocratic, and force is an important sanction, yet the clans are politically impotent and the ritual leaders have power only within the ritual sphere.

My own analysis is compatible with that of Warner at several points. The stories about the waŋarr do indeed explain the existence of many things (but not everything) and 'make absolute' the ownership of land. Ceremonies are closely related semantically to stories, but we saw that different groups may each interpret the same ceremony in its own way. I agree that men derive their power from ritual and use it to control others, and that ritual and the totemic system provide sanctions and a unified set of organizing concepts. I disagree with Warner on several matters of fact, interpretation and explanation.

Warner suggests that kinship is the fundamental form in which the rest of the social organization has been integrated. It is not clear whether Warner is referring here to the logical or the historical relations of institutions. Certainly social organization and kinship are integrated, and kinship is all pervasive. My analysis suggests however that clan organization is necessary for, and therefore probably historically prior to, the particular form the kinship system takes.
My own view of the constituents of a clan is close to that of Warner, but he overemphasizes the separateness of clans, and does not explain the complex network of clan inter-relations through joint rights in ceremonies. Concomitantly Warner represents the individual's spirit as invariably arising from and returning to his clan well. This static picture does not accord with his own data on how clans die out (1937:17). We have seen also that clans are not simple unitary bodies, but have internal divisions. Warner omits any analysis of the internal genealogical structure of clans and clear data on the relations of marriage between them.

On the one hand Warner asserts that myths organize the conceptual schemes of social life and 'make land-ownership absolute'. On the other hand he says that the totemic objects and totemic configurations 'symbolize' the group and 'express' clan unity. This suggests that the unity of the clan is logically prior, the totemic configuration simply represents it, or that the unity of the clan rests on truths established in myths, which is then represented in some way by the objects etc. The terms 'symbolize' and 'express' are too ambiguous for us to be sure of Warner's meaning here. I have attempted to show that clans exist solely as corporations in the ownership of a body of religious practice, knowledge and land. Stories provide the grounds for legitimate ownership. The clan is inconceivable as an entity except as a group which owns such a body of property. It is therefore not enough to say that the property 'expresses' the clan's unity, rather it makes it possible. The clan is a group only in its ownership of that property. Indeed the property can exist as a memberless clan looked after by members of other clans.

My conclusions concerning the differentiation of the population on the basis of age and sex are similar to Warner's, but I disagree profoundly with his interpretation of the relationship between the sexes and the symbolism of ceremonies. According to Warner the male section of society is equated with the wet season, the sacred, and the pure; the female section is unclean, profane and related to the dry season. He reaches this view in the following way:

The reproductive and 'food-giving' parts of nature are by inference — but not, so far as I could determine, in the consciousness of the Murngin — the dry season (p. 386).

The snake ... in this symbolism of nature, is the wet season, and his actions become significant because he swallows the dry season and regurgitates it, which brings a period of plenty (p. 387).
This would be significant if it came directly from Yolŋu people, but it does not. The exegetical statements that Warner records equate the snake with clouds and with the rainbow, the rain with the snake's spirit and lightning with its tongue. One commentator told him that 'the women tried to stop the snake because he was the flood and the wet season covering the earth' (p. 383).

Many wagarr are credited with the power to make rain, and the Yolŋu word for rain — waltjan — is also used to denote the wet season.¹ None of the Liyagalawumirri people with whom I worked said that the Giant Snake made or began the wet season, only that it made it rain. Warner provides no evidence for the equation of women and the dry season, or for the notion that the snake as the wet season swallows the dry.

Warner reaches the equation of males with the sacred and females with the profane in this way:

In all instances the male snake (Bapa Indi, Father Big) is a ritualization of the male section of society, and the Wawilak sisters who by their uncleanness have provoked the snake (men) into swallowing them are the unritualized or profane sections of the tribe, i.e. the women and uninitiated boys (p. 387).

Warner's argument that the male 'snake-group' is ritually pure and that the ceremony purifies the tribe rests on the categorization of the Wawilak sisters, and women in general, as 'unclean' and of the men as pure. Such attributes are not matters of physical fact but of social definition. It is not something that an observer can meaningfully impute, except as a translation of a native attribution. Warner provides no evidence that the Wāgilak (Wawilak) or women in general are regarded as unclean. The two Yolŋu concepts which could be translated as 'unclean' are wukindi, that state of pollution caused by death or injury, and yätjkurru which means bad, nasty, inedible etc. There is no question of women in general being regarded as wukindi or yätjkurru.²

Warner's use of the terms 'sacred' and 'profane' is open to criticism on similar grounds. Men and youths are dhuyu when at the Inside ceremonial ground and after being painted with red ochre and/or designs. The red-ochred and bloodied men in the Gunapipi are the dhuyu group, and a novice for circumcision is made dhuyu by being painted with red ochre and the

¹Guŋmuŋl denotes the wet season as such.
²See Munn (1969:201 note 7) on Warner's imputation of pollution to the Wāgilak.
ikanbuy designs. I have translated the word dhuyu as 'sacred'. Women are not, so far as I know, made 'sacred' in ceremonies; nevertheless I have never heard men as a category referred to as sacred, nor women as a category referred to as ordinary or profane (yaraçu). On the contrary, men are inclined to say that 'women are the real bosses'.

The use of the word 'purify' is less open to objections in relation to the Dhuwa Njarra which Warner describes. He quotes his informants as saying that the men had done a wrong thing in trying to have intercourse with the Djaŋ'kawu who was of the same moiety; washing at the end of the ceremony removed the semen. The Đumbugawumirri did not interpret their Njarra as a purification ceremony, nor did people interpret the Gunapipi in that way. Bariya associated bathing with unification, not purification.

Warner offers little evidence that the Yolŋu regard the regional ceremonies as a means of controlling nature and ensuring the continuity of the seasonal cycle. He is perhaps reflecting here the current view of the main function of totemism.

I have agreed with Warner that the religious sphere provides the basis for the power of older men and sanctions through which pressure is applied to members of the society to conform. But it appears that the political dimension of the ownership and control of ceremonies is completely absent from his account, and his views on gerontocracy are contradictory.

Warner makes statements about the relations between distinct institutions — myth, ritual, kinship etc. — which can be summarized as follows:

Myths organize the conceptual scheme of social life and the external world.

Myths recount actions of the waŋarr, explain things, and fix land-ownership.

Myths lend unity to the clan and its totems, sites, land, rituals, names and spirits.

Myths relate a clan to its land, which is of the clan by the very nature of things.

Rites demonstrate beliefs, having their symbolic points of reference in myth.

A clan's rites centre on the clan well which is the symbol of clan unity.
The totemic object expresses clan unity and is the focus of feelings of awe and respect.

Social organization is integrated into the kinship system.

Clans extend kinship spatially.

Myths emphasize the spatial extension of kinship.

Men derive their power to subordinate women and the young from ritual.

Men are superordinate because they are made sacred and pure through initiations.

Men obtain power by their associations with the seasonal cycle.

Totemic sanctions are used to make people conform to the norms.

My own data confirm and add to the initial part of this summary but diverge from much of the latter part. Warner explains the basis of men's power in terms of imputed beliefs and conceptions which do not seem to truly represent Yolŋu beliefs and conceptions. I shall furnish an explanation of a similar order but which I believe to be more soundly based. I shall also attempt to show the nature of the relations between institutions.

COMPONENTS OF YOLŊU RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Yolŋu religious institutions constitute what I have called an economy of religious knowledge. The word 'economy' seems to be appropriate since religious knowledge is given a high value; it is transmitted in transactions some of which are focal parts of major ceremonies, and its control forms the basis of power-relations within the society. This economy of religious knowledge therefore occupies an analogous position in Yolŋu society to the economy of production in our own.

The system of religious practice and knowledge is founded upon certain cosmological and cosmogonic axioms, and is composed of basic institutions and behaviours which are very general. The way in which the Yolŋu put these basic institutions together and relate them to those axioms makes the system what it is. I shall attempt to delineate the conceptions and the basic institutions and to show how they are combined. I begin with the conceptualization of time.

The Yolŋu discuss current events and the recent past in terms of today, tomorrow and yesterday and they enumerate seasons and years up to about five. They mark events within living memory in relation to major events such as the War, to important and memorable people, or to a living
person's age (i.e. size). The past is ŋāthili (before, formerly). The actions of the supernatural Beings took place very, very long ago (ŋāthili baman', baman' birr) beyond living memory or the knowledge of those who lived within living memory.

Yolŋu conceptions of cosmic powers are animistic and anthropomorphic (Chapter 2). They believe that some Beings of great power reside in the earth and deep under the waters. The most immediately dangerous and likely to manifest themselves are the Giant Snakes. The supernatural Beings who existed long ago all have a dual form: they have human characteristics and also those of Rock, Water, Hollow Log, Emu etc. They have extraordinary powers. Some link the long-ago with the present in an immediate way: Giant Snakes are believed likely to rise and create rain and flood if disturbed, and the malicious Ghosts are likely to be heard and encountered in the forests. The Yolŋu believe that some of the Beings created the first human beings, and brought about the existence of waters and certain other features of the landscape.

In common with other Aboriginal societies, the Yolŋu lend many of their supernatural Beings the particular character of having lived in or on the ground, and like the animals or objects on which they are modelled, of having left traces in the ground. Many entered the earth or the waters, and lie beneath eternally. The central importance of traces (ŋuku) in hunting and gathering provides the basis of one attribute of the supernatural Beings. Some features of the landscape are therefore interpreted as the traces of the actions long ago of supernatural Beings.

Like many people the Yolŋu believe that the personality of the individual exists before and after life. A person's corporal life begins when a conception spirit enters a woman. The Yolŋu give spirits of the dead two modes of being, one dangerous and one benign. The latter returns to the domain of the supernatural Beings.

The above components are conceptions of the nature of the world, man's place in it, and the relations between past events and present processes and states.

The next component to consider is the representation, image or symbol, i.e. the practice of making or selecting an object or configuration and placing it in the same class as something of a different order. In Yolŋu thought such a representation (mali) has a strong connection with its
object, so that a representation of a supernatural Being partakes of its power. A representation can be of a supernatural Being, some attribute of that Being or of its traces. Since the Yolŋu credit supernatural Beings with human powers, it follows that they can be credited with having made a representation as a trace, thus instituting a type denoted by a name. Some representations are of other representations (e.g. a representation in paint of the räŋŋa which 'is' Canoe).

Human beings in general also have the capacity to imitate or perform analogic actions.

The Yolŋu have a way of acting out any recent event which has caused intense feelings, such as a narrow escape from a snake. They likewise mime the actions of creatures, water etc. and say that these mimes represent the actions of supernatural Beings. Thus the mimed actions are a representation (maIl) of the Beings themselves and, like objects, are traces of the Beings whom they 'follow' (ŋuŋŋay). I have described many examples of these modes of representation being combined in ceremonies, and referring to particular Beings, events and places.

The world of long ago, the Beings and their actions, is framed in stories and statements such as 'I did not know them, my father did not know them, the forerunners long, long ago'. Stories and statements describe events which had effects on the landscape and which resulted in objective representations. People thus interpret representations and features of the landscape in terms of each other and of the actions of the wänŋarr (Chapter 3). All the above notions and the ways in which they are interrelated are very general to Australian Aborigines. The ways in which people own or are otherwise affiliated to places and representations, vary from one society to another.

The next components I am concerned with are social relations and the institution of ownership. The Yolŋu have a general concept of group (mala), but groups that are defined in relation to land and ceremonies are more specifically bəpurruru. It is possible that this word is derived from bəpa (father) and the pluralizing suffix -wurruru (Schebeck n.d.:42). Such a derivation would be appropriate since clans are bounded in part by patri-filiation.

The Yolŋu denote possession or ownership by the genitive case, and in regard to land, ceremonies and objects they distinguish true ownership
from mere rights of use. As I indicated in Chapter 3, a camp may be owned by a man who does not own the land itself; he may have constructed it on his 'mother' country. The camp is 'his' place, but the land beneath or 'inside' is not his own. Thus Yolŋu residence groups are distinct from groups of true owners.

Yolŋu residence groups are variable in composition and relatively open. Njangalala settlement, Gaṭtji and Yathalamarra outstations all have a core of more or less permanent residents. Membership changes over time, especially after a death when people may disperse. The core consists of families related by marriage, while other members of the group are related to the core in varying degrees. Such a group of residents may be known as the people of that place, or as the group belonging to a leading individual.

The basic rule governing true ownership is simple: a true owner is a person whose father was a true owner. Such a rule is not enough to bound Yolŋu land-owning groups since these may consist of more than one lineage and are not defined by descent from a common ancestor. The land-owning group and clan is defined rather by true ownership of one or more countries and the associated ceremonies, and closed by the patrifiliation recruitment rule. A group that owns a country also owns those features which are regarded as the traces of supernatural Beings, and all the representations of the Beings, their actions and traces.

Unilinear descent groups are demographically unstable; in the nature of things some will grow while others die out. The bounded areas of land which define the clans however, are relatively stable: a growing clan does not simply push out the borders of its territory to match its size. In any case all clan members do not and probably seldom did live exclusively on their own country. It is not immediately obvious why a clan should not grow to five-hundred, and remain a unitary group affiliated to one country, with its members scattered over a wide area.

One reason for clans to split and become attached to separate areas may be that a very large clan simply has too many leaders to maintain its unity. The maximum viable group under present conditions seems to be one of about one-hundred people. The two-hundred strong lineage of the Daygurrgurr clan has split effectively into two groups which live in separate communities and are unable to co-operate to perform the Njarra
ceremony, as we have seen. The Dämbugawumirri of about one-hundred and twenty members is showing some signs of strain and its members are divided in residence.

A second reason may be that it is axiomatic that the Yolŋu become spiritually attached primarily to places within their range. It is perfectly true that Djambarrpuyŋu and Daygurrgurr people still orientate their ceremonies to countries at Buckingham Bay while living at Milingimbi, yet the younger people say that they themselves are of the maŋayin of countries where they live, and that these are their real countries. Daygurrgurr people are also able to say that Bajmawuy clan country near which they live is 'really half Gupapuyŋu' and they use the Catfish and Rock designs related to that country (Chapter 5).

Another factor may be that, because control of ceremonies derives from ownership of land, a large clan is unlikely to rest content with control of the ceremonies related to just one place.

Certain rules provide the means for members of a growing clan to become affiliated to other countries. As we have seen, an individual may look after the empty country and its ceremonies which are his by secondary paternity, and individuals and clans look after their māri countries and ceremonies. Young members of a clan that has migrated become spiritually affiliated to a country through spiritual conception. Notions about the movement of the spirit after death are flexible enough to accommodate migration.

The dynamics of the control of group affairs also affect attachment to land. If my explanation of Yolŋu clan structure is correct, a clan may grow and divide and its members become affiliated to different places, yet it may maintain a common identity and common rights in religious property and land. Members of the clan may maintain their genealogical connections for one or two generations. It may be that other clans consisting of disconnected lineages maintain their unity in opposition to fast-growing clans, while other distinct clans merge.

I showed in Chapter 2 that inherent flexibility in the ideology of creation accommodates migration and new attachment. A clan's members may give as a reason for their ownership of a country and its ceremonies, the fact that the supernatural Being that left its traces in the country (including the ceremonies) was their creator. However, the name of the group which the Being created differs from the clan name; it is one of the
likan names which a clan owns along with the country, and with which it identifies. Thus the Đâmbugawumirri clan is Garrawurra — the group that the Djaŋk’awu created — yet were the clan to die out another clan would eventually become identified with the Garrawurra, or another one of the set of likan names belonging to the country Garriyakqura.

A clan member identifies his very being with the wagarr of his clan country (as Djäwa does) or his country of spiritual conception.

A clan therefore is defined in terms of those conceptions and representations discussed above. Stories and statements describe the actions of supernatural Beings which resulted in traces in the landscape including the presence of conception spirits. Representations which men make, follow or copy these events and traces. Groups which own the country containing the traces thereby own the representations. Furthermore stories tell how a supernatural Being created the clan's forefathers at that country, as well as the raqga which the clan holds as proof of its ownership. Clans cohere in the agreement of its members to hold common ownership of a set of countries and ceremonies.

Such are, in outline, the basic components of the Yolŋu religious institutions. I remarked above that certain conceptions are widespread in Aboriginal Australia. Components similar to these described so far are widespread in Arnhem Land. The Gunwingu of Western Arnhem Land and the Gidjiŋali of northern Arnhem Land have conceptions of supernatural Beings which lived long ago and left traces in the landscape and of representations which follow the actions and forms of the Beings (Berndt R.M. and C.H. 1970: passim; Hiatt 1965:14-17; Clunies Ross and Hiatt 1977). Land-owning groups are patrilineal but vary somewhat in form.

Many Yolŋu clans consist of several un-named land-owning groups. The land-owning group consists of one or more lineages and owns the likan names of its country as well as the representations. Clan members hold the clan's several countries in common. The Gidjiŋali name both the land-owning groups and the constituent patrilineal groups or lineages (Hiatt 1965:14-20) and do not appear to have groups equivalent to Yolŋu clans. The Gunwingu have large named land-owning groups which also have names called igurumu, equivalent to the Yolŋu likan names (Berndt R.M. and C.H. 1970:54-64).

The Yolŋu map the fundamental kinship categories onto the country and supernatural Beings, as we saw in Chapter 3. Marriage relations are
then represented as following from kinship relations between the supernatural Beings and their representations. Quite different kinship systems can, however, articulate with the religious organisation so far described; the Gidjiñali have patrilineal moieties and an Aranda-type system (Hiatt 1965:44), the Gunwingu have matrilineal moieties and an Aranda-type of kinship system (Berndt R.M. and C.H. 1970:83).

The analysis has moved therefore from axioms which are widespread, to a more localized mode of ownership and affiliation based on those axioms, and moved again to yet more localized kinship systems which are compatible with that mode of organization.

Marriage, power, and religious organisation

The analysis has reached the point at which this work began. I shall now review the initial argument concerning the Yolŋu system of marriage which, I have suggested, requires the above religious organisation for its operation.

The argument began as follows: age-related polygynous marriage entails that men tend to marry at a later age than women. Because older men are the main beneficiaries of the system at the expense of young men and women, they require some means of preventing the young men from taking the women of their own age. Chapter 3 indicated that most Yolŋu men do indeed marry later than women, and that some old men may accumulate as many as eleven wives. Marriage is regulated through a complex system of betrothal in which an individual's possible marriage partner is restricted to a particular category, and in which marriages are arranged soon after or even before the birth of the woman. I argued in Chapter 4 that older men's authority is based upon their imputed control of, and access to, supernatural powers in the regional ceremonies. I also suggested that the early induction of young men into the religious life, and the mode of transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next rather than through the peer group, inhibits the young men from combining to rebel against the old, and that the young men have no advantagious alternatives open to them.

The regional ceremonies do not provide the only means by which older men sustain relations of authority over younger men. As we saw in Chapter 6, the Närra is similar to the Gunapipi in that it can attract a similar proportion of the population. In it men are believed to have access
to supernatural powers, and the older men introduce novices and exclude women. Men sustain a hierarchy of authority not only through the admission of novices to secret ceremonies and to a series of roles with increasing status and responsibilities, but also through a system of esoteric knowledge based on elements of the public and secret ceremonies. Each clan possesses its own body of esoteric and exoteric knowledge; the older men gradually release esoteric information to boys and younger men.

Older men's authority over young men in the religious sphere does not extend automatically to other spheres. Not all older men have the power to dispose of women by their own actions and in their own interests (Chapter 8). Clan leaders are often unable to press their claims to women, and it is likely that at least some women have a strong say in the bestowal of their daughters, for Hiatt's data (1965:88, 92, 96) suggest that among the Gidjinjali and their neighbours a woman is very often the bestower of her daughter. Therefore I have suggested that older men's ritual authority has more of a preventative effect in matters of marriage. The young men do not in general actively stop old men from having young wives; an individual young man may try to oppose the system as we have seen (Chapter 8), but it does seem that he is unable to obtain support in his attempt to marry at the expense of an older man. More than this, a man with a lot of wives can claim the support of all his brothers-in-law, sons-in-law and potential sons-in-law for support in disputes. Further research on the politics of bestowal among the Yolŋu would show to what extent older men are in control of bestowal.

As I noted in the Introduction the above features of Yolŋu society do not explain the very large number of wives some men have. Unlike the Gidjinjali (Hiatt 1965:77), Wanindiljaugwa (Rose 1960:69) and the Warrabri Walbiri (Meggitt 1965:149), Yolŋu men acquire more wives as they get older. Marriage among the Walbiri of Warrabri is closer to that of the Yolŋu, but Tiwi marriage (Hart and Pilling 1960:64) takes the Yolŋu pattern to an even greater extreme (see Appendix 1). Some Yolŋu men acquire more wives than any men in the other societies with the exception of the Tiwi.

In Chapter 3 I argued that certain features of the Yolŋu kinship system and marriage rules account for the Yolŋu pattern of polygyny. The distinction between the māri and gutharra patrilineal sequences and the prohibition on marrying the DD of gutharra, tends to restrict rights
in the daughters of any particular group of women to the ZDS of the women's clan. The eldest man of each set of uterine siblings has prior rights in women. These features of the system enable one or two men to acquire as many as ten or eleven wives.

Yolŋu marriage rules require for their definition and operation the continuing existence of unambiguously defined groups. To ensure that the chains of bestowal-relations centred on different individuals are compatible with one another it is necessary to limit the possibilities through categories of inter-group relations. A man can find a wife only in a clan of the opposite moiety, and usually in a 'mother' clan. His 'WM' can only be of a clan in his moiety, preferably a märi clan.

Clans and moieties are units of the religious organisation. Clans are constituted through the ownership of land and a body of religious knowledge, moieties divide the clans, their land and religious practice, and are exogamous. Chapter 5 showed that clan identity is marked in public ceremonies despite the fact that all the elements of public ceremonies are shared by sets of clans. The dances which men perform in public ceremonies indicate clan identity; and songs and designs, though shared, possess features which are specific to the clan. A clan's total body of religious property is coherent and unique. We saw that the central act of many public ceremonies is the 'making good', in which men paint ŋikanbuy designs onto a person and call the ŋikan names. This act identifies an individual with his clan, country and rąga, and serves to publicly identify the clan property.

Kinship relations and marriage rules appear to apply to and proceed from the domain of the supernatural Beings. I suggest that this inhibits many from breaking the rules, and provides reasons for the mobilization of public opinion against those who do.

The waŋarr and the rąga are said to stand in kinship relations one to another, and individuals to them. These kinship relations appear to follow from those existing between waŋarr. People say that in marrying they follow the rąga. Indeed they say that the waŋarr originated the kinship and subsection systems. Kinship relations between clans and their rąga extend to all their mağayin and land. These relations are reiterated in songs and ceremonies, and are the subject of everyday discourse.

Ceremonies and stories show in dramatic form that the kinship categories and rules apply to the waŋarr. Thus according to Wuŋulu the Giant Snake
regurgitated the Wägilak because they were of his moiety. The ceremonies also dramatize the present separateness but interdependence of the sexes and the moieties (in the Gunapipi) and of märi:gutharra clans (in the Njarra). In these ways kinship relations and the marriage rules appear to inhere in the very origin and structure of the universe. At a more immediate level the ceremonies provide a setting in which older men impress the marriage norms on young men in the presence of the ranga.

The above proposes certain conditions for the operation of the marriage system. The next stage of the argument generalizes some of the effects of adhering to the rules.

As I showed in Chapter 3, some of the men who marry many women beget large clans and lineages. The consequent rapid growth of some clans may explain the peculiar features of Yolnu clans in general; clans grow quickly and split up into separate land-owning groups, the members of which acknowledge their common ancestry for one or two generations and retain common rights in ceremonies and land. The internal structure of certain clans may represent stages in the cycle of growth and decline. The Daygurrgurr clan has grown rapidly over the last fifty years, its largest lineage has split into two separate residence groups, and its members are dividing the ownership of clan and land and taking over the land of other clans. The Liyagalawumirri clan used to be very large and powerful, but it is now reduced to a few small lineages in two land-owning groups, and two of its countries are empty of members. The clan does, however, have the potential for growth, for there are a number of male children. The Mildjiqi clan is reduced to three men and two women and has little hope of increasing, while a number of other clans have recently died out and their land is being taken over by others.

Another effect of the marriage system is that some men who have many wives and head large and powerful lineages or clans are ceremonial leaders and have considerable influence on secular affairs. The data presented in Chapter 3 showed that such men were fortunate in being the first-born of a set of uterine siblings, and in having many women available to them at the right time. Chapters 5 and 8 indicated that one or two such men tend to dominate the ceremonial affairs of smaller clans of the same moiety, and that they and their clansmen tend also to dominate a community's Council and settlement administration.
Such clans grow at the expense of other clans of the same moiety. Many Daygurrgurr people are affiliated to country near Milingimbi which belongs to other Yirritja clans, some marry local women to the detriment of these groups. I showed too that the latter are the very clans whose ceremonial life the Daygurrgurr clan now controls.

The aspects of Yolŋu social arrangements that I have described serve the interests not of a class but of some members of a particular category. Polygynists in general are beneficiaries, and some old men benefit especially. It is in the interests of these men to maintain the system, and they have the power to do so, given that the conditions make it possible. The benefits are those directly resulting from having several wives and from the possession of power in itself. Djawa's statements suggest that he enjoys power and acts in opposition to his younger brother Boŋuwuy in order to keep it. He and others exercise power not only for their own sake but also in order to serve other interests, in particular that of getting young wives. Yolŋu religious institutions enable these men to serve their interests both in the exercise of power within the institutions, and to further those other ends.

Interests derive ultimately from personal dispositions and appetites, but are socially defined and rationally pursued (Finer 1966:49). I do not mean to imply that each individual Yolŋu man makes a conscious decision that he wants so many wives and thinks up the means by which he might obtain them. Rather individuals are born into a social system in which men do pursue such interests, and the means do exist for their pursuit. Those who find themselves able to exploit the opportunities that their structural position and other factors lend them may do so. Individuals act to sustain the conditions that make the pursuit of their interests possible (such as keeping up the ceremonies) and individuals are also able to change the rules and definitions of the system within limits, and respond to changing conditions. Some are also put under pressure to pursue socially defined interests: some Yolŋu men are urged by their kin to take more than one wife. Others occasionally act in accordance with a different ethic such as that of generosity – giving all but one wife to their brothers. Some men prefer a quiet life to the pursuit of power; others make disparaging remarks about those with many wives and comment upon the difficulties involved in having many wives. Yet approximately one-third of the men over 20 have more than one wife.
We have seen that religious axioms and institutions provide the conditions for defining the marriage system and acting according to its rules. People give the rules weight by making them appear to proceed from the supernatural Beings and to be inherent in the structure of society and the cosmos. The units of religious organisation enable people to act according to the rules. Men obtain power from the enactment of the marriage rules because they govern the conditions under which biological processes occur. A man is able to point to a group of children and define them as his sons and daughters. Other norms such as the right to claim gifts and support are based upon these definitions, so that success in marrying enables a person to make claims on many people. Older men do require authority over young men, and power over women, to make a polygynous regime at all possible. I shall examine the properties of ceremonial action and other factors which give them this authority and power.

Ceremonial action

I distinguish between instrumental or 'brute' action, in which means-end relations are matters of physical fact, such as spearing a fish or digging a hole (Seárlé 1969:50); non-semantic interpersonal action such as frightening someone, or attracting someone; semantic action (1) which is iconic, such as mimicry; and semantic action (2) which is communication by means of a system of arbitrary signs such as language (cf. Leach 1970:12). In any actions many of these types are combined. Making a sound or a painting involves matters of physical fact, and one may frighten someone or get someone to do something through what one says (semantic action (2)) as well as the way in which one says it (which may include non-semantic interpersonal action).

Yolŋu ceremonies are complex events. In them the Yolŋu sing about things, dance and mime things, and make physical representations; they perform simple instrumental acts and various other kinds of social action. They perform ceremonies for various reasons and the performance of ceremonies is a major aspect of public affairs. Some purposes are universal such as disposing of the dead, mourning, making gifts to other groups and settling disputes. Other ceremonies are more specific to the Yolŋu social system or to similar systems. In particular the various circumcision ceremonies
have the effect of transforming a boy into a bachelor, and the larger regional ceremonies and the Närra have the effect of admitting men to knowledge of the esoteric aspects and excluding, indeed deceiving women. The ceremonies are also arenas for political action, a point to which I shall return.

In the public and Närre genre, much of the semantic action is carried in an independent body of songs, dances and designs, which can be attached to the core action of each individual ceremony such as the act of purification or circumcision. Neither of these core actions is a semantic action (1) or (2). They are instrumental actions with conventional effects. One pours water over another under certain conditions, and that person becomes no longer wukiŋi but 'clear'. One cuts off a boy's foreskin and he is transformed into a 'bachelor'. Nevertheless to have these effects each action must be performed in conjunction with the appropriate semantic actions and objects.

The semantic content of Yolŋu song, dance and ritual representations connects the ceremonies to the supernatural Beings. Stories and songs describe the Beings, their actions, and the places where the events occurred; dances represent the Beings and their actions; designs and objects represent the Beings, places where the events occurred, and the traces of the Beings. Some representations are tokens of types that they left in the ground.

People are able to regard an object such as a piece of wood as imbued with powers in a similar way to relics of the human dead, by virtue of taking it to be a trace of a supernatural Being or a representation of the Being or its trace. Since groups own land, and the ceremonies and object are representations of supernatural Beings, clans own the ceremonies and objects. The converse is also true, for ownership of a ceremonial complex gives a person a secondary affiliation to places with the same complex.

The ceremonies can connect individuals and groups conceptually, and apparently spiritually, to the clan country, sacred Beings, rāŋga (the trace of the Beings), and the powers of the Beings. The connection seems to be of a dual order. First a person becomes a representation of the Being, and so connected to it as an image is to its referent, or a person puts himself into a representation such as a ground-sculpture. The
second order is identification with the Being /place/trace/group by putting a design or objects on to the person. Like a badge or a uniform, such a device places the person into a certain set. Once again the representations are believed to be imbued with power, and also carry a heavy affective load, not least because people conceive of themselves as of the Being in their very essence.

The polysemous iikan name is the verbal equivalent of the painted iikanbuy design. It refers at once to a Being, ranga, place and group, and so calling it out makes the connection between those things. A person can take the name as a personal name, just as he or she can wear the design. Little wonder that the act of painting the design on a person and calling the iikan names is 'making the person good', or endowing the person with wellbeing, for it shows him to be a legitimate member of society, and not 'wild' or illegitimate (wakinŋu).

Ranga are durable and portable representations of the Beings and their traces. Possession of them indicates that a clan owns the land and the ceremonies, and identifies the clan and its members.

Through the same semantic properties of ceremonies, people re-enact these events to present relations and processes. I shall return to this point later; first I consider the control of ceremonies.

Control of public affairs and knowledge

Ceremonies form one major aspect of Yolŋu public affairs. I have shown in Chapters 5-8 that men rather than women have control of public affairs. Initial conditions for this monopoly appear to be biological and economic; women are bound by their child-rearing function to a food-gathering role (see Sanday 1974, Peterson 1971).

Among Arnhem Land Aborigines men over forty-five have been virtually free from the food quest, whereas women of ten to sixty years are occupied with foraging. Young men used to be the warriors and still are hunters, mature men were and are hunters and are also active in ceremonies, older men spend most of their time in ceremonial activities.

Men use their advantageous position to exclude women from the secret ceremonies. This is necessary for several reasons. One is that the scale of polygynous marriage is not in the best interests of women in general, many are mere chattels, and are often violently abused. Were
women able to acquire authority in the public domain they might try to undermine the system. Another is that, were girls to be admitted to the ceremonies, religious knowledge would be devalued to some extent because it would be less secret, and a major part of the population could not be made to ascribe to the fiction that supernatural Beings are physically present at the Inside ground. Such a devaluation would undermine the older men's authority. Most important perhaps, young women and young men would be peers, and likely to form attachments. Attendance at the co-educational school is already having effects on the marriage system; girls delay their marriage until they leave school, and increasing numbers are refusing to go to old men.

Older men's freedom from economic pursuits does not explain their control of younger men. The main ingredient of that control is secrecy. All the representations as well as ceremonies are divided into secret and public. Men control the sacred side. This very secrecy gives what is kept secret its added value.

In Simmel's view (Wolff 1950:332) a shared secret creates a strong affiliation to the secret itself:

the strongly emphasized exclusion of all outsiders makes for a corresponding strong feeling of possession.

And secrecy lends high value to the property:

Inner property of the most heterogeneous kinds, thus, attains a characteristic value accent through the form of secrecy, in which the contentual significance of what is concealed recedes, often enough, before the simple fact that others know nothing about it (ibid.).

The greatest power is attained in the release of the secret:

The secret is full of the consciousness that it can be betrayed; that one holds the power of surprises, turns of fate, joy, destruction (ibid.).

We have seen that through the use of ambiguous language and non-representational designs, and several degrees of seclusion (going to Inside ground, facing away from dances, seeing dances, going into sacred shade) men control admission to secret knowledge; its acquisition is gradual and related to age.

Nevertheless I have argued (Chapter 4) that secrecy would avail the men nothing if what they kept secret had no intimate importance. By controlling the representations of the supernatural Beings the men also
believe themselves able to tap the powers of the Beings. Power-men have the most control, the closest connections and the most power.

Men do not only pass on secret knowledge from one to another verbally, but they control physical access to major parts of public ceremonies, which are large-scale public events. To do this some men require authority over their public. They also require control of sanctions to guard the secrecy of the ceremonies. Yolŋu ceremonies are so complex that expertise is necessarily a condition of authority.

The Yolŋu bind authority not to expertise alone, but also to age and knowledge. Expertise for the Yolŋu is a form of knowledge. By definition only those who participate in esoteric aspects of ceremonies are knowledgeable of them, and men exclude women from them. But men in authority also control a body of esoteric knowledge centred on paintings and songs together with knowledge of the esoteric aspects of ceremonies. As I showed in Chapter 7, men should proceed gradually up the hierarchy of ceremonial roles. Men conceive this process as one of gradually acquiring a large body of knowledge. Older men hold the most esoteric information.

The Yolŋu exploit particular properties of sign systems to order knowledge. One is ambiguity; the ability of a configuration, object or action to represent or connote many things. Another is schematization, in which a partially iconic or abstract configuration has a meaning only if one or more is ascribed to it through a statement or through association. Another device is the use of common names as proper names and the ambiguity of qualifying adjectives. By these and other means the Yolŋu build layers of esoteric knowledge.

I argued that such secrecy gives knowledge a value. This value gives those who control it power over others. They are able to get them to do what they want them to do, or to refrain from doing what they do not want them to do, by offering or withholding valued knowledge. Older men are able to control to some extent the behaviour of younger men through their authority in the religious sphere and their control of the body of religious knowledge, which young men want to acquire. Mature men recognize and support the authority of one of the oldest men of a clan as the leader, and support him in applying sanctions in respect of young men, and others who contravene the norms. Unity is expressed in terms of the ranga (Chapter 8).
The effects of ceremonies

I return now to the question of what properties of ceremonies make them both arenas for political action and a means of control.

A ceremony is a course of action which alters the state of affairs prevailing in a community. The enactment of the ceremony itself creates a state of affairs (a ceremony is on; it 'stands'), and ceremonies result in changed states of affairs: the Närra made all into one people (Warner 1937:356), the men had 'said goodbye' to Bāriya's sister after the Närra, and people said that everyone felt very happy.

A ceremony also has conventional effects in the form of changes of individual status. The Circumcision turns boys into bachelors, the Närra results in some novices becoming novitiates, they come to 'know' the ceremony and to have seen its Inside dances or the rānga. Galiwirri should have become goŋ-rangamirri — 'leader to make the rānga'. The division of the Närra and other major ceremonies into public and secret parts, as well as separation between bodies of knowledge, restricts the possibility of status change to a certain sector. Only a male can 'know' the rānga etc., and acquire enough knowledge and expertise to become a power-man. The ceremony entails such results if it is performed correctly. Other effects are contingent.

Conventional effects follow the correct performance of a programme of action — the relatively invariant part of the ceremony such as I described in Chapter 6. Parallel actions such as who did what, how often and how well, vary from one performance to another. Concurrent actions, such as the argument over Galiwirri, have effects of a different order. One effect of a parallel course of action in the Närra was that Bāriya became 'level' with Djurrpum in his own eyes. A probable effect of a concurrent action is that Galiwirri is now marked as a man who abandoned the Närra and was punished by the clan for it.

There is political competition for positions of authority within the ceremonies. Such competition is parallel to or outside the formal enactment of the ceremony, but it may of course affect that performance. By no means all positions are subject to competition. Most men who actively engage in the religious life gain positions of authority merely by growing older. We have seen, however, that men may compete for clan leadership.
Ceremonies are therefore the instruments of status change in the society both formally in their conventional effects and less formally as arenas for competition and disputes. They also have other kinds of effects.

A performance has cognitive effects on individuals; participants have undergone an experience of a certain kind. The experience I have in mind is that of the meaning of the ceremonies. Some of the semantic content of ceremonies, such as the public meaning of a song, is patent. Most dances on the other hand require interpretation since they are not very obvious analogues of their referents, and can be interpreted in various ways. Much interpretation is probably left implicit; that is, a person learns the story and the song and men learn the esoteric stories and meanings. On seeing the related Inside dance a man does not need to be told much about the specific dance except what Being it represents.

Stories, statements and songs constitute the world of the waŋarr, and link the acts of the ceremony to that world. In that way the ceremonies dramatize events in that world. The dramatization is not too explicit however, since many groups co-operate to perform one ceremony and each interprets the acts in its own way.

We saw in Chapter 7 that the Nurrra ceremony daily re-enacts the loss to the men by the Djan'kawu of their dilly-bag and maḏayin objects. This story accounts for present relations between men and women. Those imputed events are given as the reason for men's control of ceremonies and women's role as workers. I suggest that dramatizing these events lends them credibility first by making them seem real and impressing them on individual memory, and secondly by associating them with familiar places and things which are represented in the ceremony. The setting of the ceremony represents places with which people are familiar. The actions of the waŋarr become immediate and tangible. This effect is enhanced by the interpretation of the landscape as the results of those actions, the equation of the setting of the ceremony with those places, and the equation of objects in the ceremony with the waŋarr and objects left by them. The apparent reality of these events transforms man-made social relations into the apparently inevitable result of the actions of the creator (cf. Geertz 1966:4). Consistent with this, men constantly affirm that the waŋarr and not men instituted the elements of the Nurrra ceremony and
their meanings; the law is not apparently a human product. I have suggested that this appearance inhibits many, although not all, from challenging the prevailing relations of power and authority, and from breaking the social norms.

As we saw in Chapter 7, the Nārra ceremony and the related songs also seem to represent the transformations of waŋarr powers into powers available to human beings. The reproductive powers of the Djan’kawu become divided among men, women and conception spirits. Men alone take control of the sacred objects and ceremonies. It is implicit also in the way the ceremony is performed that men have control of reproduction, for they alone act as the fertile members of the clan in the ceremony. If the dilly-bag is seen as the vagina or uterus from which the children of the group are born, the stealing of this by the men seems in particular to imply that male control of reproduction derives from events long ago involving the Beings who created the social order, and so is inevitable.

Not only are male and female roles and relations portrayed in the Nārra, but relations between clans in reproduction. This is achieved in two ways; first the actual co-operation of distinct clans is associated with certain actions, secondly by the representation of clans and clan-relations. Mōri and gutharra clans really do co-operate in the performance, the final washing signifies their unity, and the Blackbeetle dance represents the children of clans in these relations, which are thereby associated with images of creation and reproduction. The elements of the ceremony represent clans in a mōri:gutharra relation: the localized elements and the ļikan names represent the clans, the interlinking elements their inter-relations through flesh, blood and fat. The meaning given to the ceremony by the stories and songs implies once again that these relations result from the creative acts of and relations between the supernatural Beings.

The men require a secret aspect of the ceremony from which to exclude women and control young men. But I suggested in Chapter 7 that the overall meaning of the ceremony is not radically different for men and women. All the esoteric elements are analogous to publicly known elements, although in the public view of the ceremony, there is perhaps more stress on the narrative form and the spirits are supposed literally to visit the ceremony. The men's view is more abstract, framed in terms
of clan relations and ownership. That the men trick the women by making a noise at night to make them believe or obey (märr-yuwalkhiri) is regarded as an important secret; only the somewhat older bachelors are admitted to it.

In the main public message of the ceremony the men account for and justify their power, and portray it as deriving irrevocably from primordial events.

In the above analysis I have attempted to delineate distinct but inter-related components and to show the nature of some of their inter-connections. Some are logically dependent on others, some are operational conditions for others, some are modes of action with certain kinds of effects. Yolŋu religious knowledge is founded upon the axioms of existence: there existed supernatural Beings who left traces and powers in the land; certain objects, designs and actions follow the Beings. The continued existence of particular kinds of groups, founded upon that knowledge and practice and controlling valued secret knowledge, makes possible the operation of the kinship system. But the Yolŋu kinship system is not the only one made possible in this way, for several kinds of system are compatible with a similar clan structure.

The secret part of clan knowledge presupposes the basic features of that knowledge. Secrecy creates valued information and activities. This is in turn a condition (necessary but not sufficient) for a particular set of social relations and the operation of a polygynous system of marriage. Male control of secret aspects of public ceremonies again appears to rest upon fundamental differences between the biological and economic functions of men and women. Secret knowledge and initiation ceremonies based upon similar axioms, but with different group structures and marriage rules, are widespread in Aboriginal Australia.

This method of analysis should make possible the systematic comparison of similar social systems. This is not possible here, but a brief comparison with one other Aboriginal society tends to support my analysis of the inter-relations of Yolŋu institutions.

A SIMILAR SYSTEM

The argument concerning the relationship between kinship system and clan structure is supported by Sharp's data on the Yir-Yoront (1934a) who
practised matrilateral cross-cousin marriage. Like the Yolŋu they distinguished categorically 'MM/MMB' from ZDCh and prohibited sister exchange. A man could also marry his WBSI like the Yolŋu, and there was a tendency to identify the SS of a WB as a 'WB' (ibid.:416). Men were subordinate to their WMB and MM and MMB; Sharp's informants told him:

I get my wife from that mother's mother's brother's group; I avoid them, give them presents, and take care of them when they are old (ibid.:418).

Men married women younger than themselves (ibid.:427) and marriage was polygynous (ibid.:428), but the Yir-Yiront, unlike the Yolŋu, did not have separate terms for 'WMM/WMMB'.

The patrilineal clans were divided into two moieties (ibid. 1934b:19) which were not however associated with the marriage rule, and one moiety was partly endogamous. Clans tended to be ranked according to the importance of their men, their size, and the relative 'strength' of their position in the kinship structure. One or more older men in each clan was a leader or 'headman'. Several clans would be grouped under a common 'ancestor' (supernatural Being) to form a simple exogamous unit (ibid.:20). Most clans' several countries were not contiguous; people did not hunt only on their own clan country (ibid.:23).

Each clan also possessed several 'ancestors', common totems and mythology which related the totem to the clan; and which formed a representation of the ancestral activities and totems by the adult men of the clan in the tribal ceremonies which serve ostensibly to introduce the young men of the tribe to their ancestral heritage (ibid.:21).

The lineages of a clan had rather distinct kinship links (ibid.).

The ancestral times are simply 'long ago' (ibid.). The ancestors created sites, delineated countries and 'totems' (ibid.:22). Each clan had 'one watery spirit centre' where the ancestor resided and sent out spirit children when people copulated (ibid.:24). Spirit children were sometimes 'found' in the clan country of a classificatory father; under those circumstances the child became a member of that clan (ibid.). It was explicitly stated that the purpose of this was to 'fill up the depleted membership of an associated clan' (ibid.). A child was given a 'big name' which is associated with a clan ancestor (ibid.:25).

A number of clans owned sacred grounds and the associated ceremonies. Several of these consisted simply of introductions to the sites, but one
was 'of general tribal significance', and whereas the clan that owned the site was in charge, members of other clans represented their own clan ancestor in the numerous episodes of the ceremony \(\text{ibid.}\):27). Group increase ceremonies were held at six other sites. The Yir-Yoront participated also in 'at least ten other group ceremonies' \(\text{ibid.}\):28). Most of these were increase ceremonies, but two were initiation ceremonies proper, held every three or four years. Women and children were excluded from them all \(\text{ibid.}\):29). Novices were shown episodes which dramatically reproduced events of ancestral times, or represented totems \(\text{ibid.}\):24).

The Yir-Yoront therefore display a similar constellation of social features to the Yolŋu: esoteric initiation ceremonies, polygyny, matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, corporate clans with several non-contiguous countries, differences in clan size and prestige, the filling up of weak clans by strong ones through spiritual conception. The moieties however were only exogamous for part of the Yir-Yoront group. Sharp does not say whether the moiety-endogamous clans are all closely associated in one area.

The co-occurrence of many institutions which are similar to those of the Yolŋu suggests that they are functionally inter-related, and Sharp's data does not invalidate my explanation of the nature of the inter-relations. The partial endogamy of one moiety does not entirely weaken my argument that moiety exogamy supports the articulation of long chains of bestowal, since the Yir-Yoront extended bestowal relations only two places from EGO to 'WM/WMB' whereas the Yolŋu extend them from EGO to 'WMM/WMMB'.

I have focused in my analysis on the interests of older men as the driving force behind the continuity of the Yolŋu system. It would be incorrect to attribute all the main features of Yolŋu religious organisation and marriage to these interests. The religious organisation allows older men to marry many women, and they help to perpetuate these features which enable them to do so. But many other factors contribute to the development and continuation of many features of the institutions.

Indeed a quite distinct set of social conditions may have played an important part in the development of esoteric initiation ceremonies in
Australia. The bachelors are the warriors. Relations of competition and posterity between adjacent groups in much of Australia would have fostered the conditions for developing a warrior age-grade. This state of affairs in turn made polygyny on a large scale possible although not inevitable.
APPENDIX 1

THE MURNGIN PROBLEM

In Chapter 3 I presented new data and a method of analysis which shed light on an anthropological problem of forty years standing. That anthropologists felt 'Murngin' kinship to be problematic at all resulted from the apparent formal untidiness of the system as reported by Warner. It lacked the neat fit between kinship and subsections systems characteristic of Kariera and Aranda-type systems.

Warner's account (1937) of Yolngu kinship and marriage is remarkably close to Yolngu theory and practice, and original in its description of the content of relations between categories of kin. However, Warner made two errors and a number of critical omissions. He appears to have 'tidied up' the kinship terminology to fit neatly into a rectangle, and represented the subsection system as closely related to the kinship system. He did not show in any detail how kinship categories extended to groups and land, neither did he describe the genealogical structure of clans and the marriage relations between them.

Warner's data gave rise to five problems: first, the lack of fit between the subsection system and the kinship terminology; second, the relationship of the kinship terminology to group structure and relations; third, the problem of the boundaries of the system; fourth, the precise nature of the marriage rules; fifth, (and rather late on the scene), the question whether marriages are made by groups or individuals.

(1) I showed in Chapter 3 that the kinship system is logically incompatible with the subsection system, and that people marry according to kin and clan relations. The solution offered by Lawrence and Murdock (1949), though ingenious, does not fit the facts.
Data presented in Chapter 3 showed how the kinship terminology fits the structure of groups. Patrilineal sequences apply to members of small lineages or sublineages, but a wrong marriage relative to EGO within a lineage or sublineage will disrupt the sequence. Leach (1961:71) was incorrect in assuming that mūri and mūri'mu are brothers if they are members of the same clan. Men of the same generation and clan are not necessarily siblings.

Barnes (1967:36) was puzzled by apparent inconsistencies in Warner's statements about the presence of mūri and gutharra 'lines' in the same clan. Warner (1937:113) said that the EGO finds his mūri in the same clan frequently, but EGO only rarely finds both his mūri and gutharra in his clan (1937:27n.). Barnes did not grasp the difference. The former arrangement requires that the women of three lineages or sublineages in one clan marry men in different clans or lineages. The latter requires only two lineages in the clan.

As Warner pointed out (ibid.) a mūri clan may develop a gutharra patrilineal sequence in the event of a wrong marriage, for the offspring of the wrongly married wife will often be of a different category relative to EGO than their half brothers.

The boundaries of EGO's kinship space vary according to the pattern of marriage. Warner probably over-generalized in asserting that R4 patriline is simply a repetition of R2 and L4 of L2. Maranguy did classify the wives of the men of his 'MMM' clan as mūri, but other people gave various answers about what term applied to the husbands of L3 women.

In the event of six lineages marrying in a circle, EGO's gathiwalkur would have married a woman of EGO's gutharra clan, not his mūri. It is possible that EGO's WMMBW is mūri by definition, but his gathiwalkur's SS, who is also gathiwalkur, would marry EGO's gutharra if the circle of marriages is closed in six lineages. In the event of six lineages belonging to five clans marrying in a circle, then EGO's R3 male relatives would marry his gutharra, but possibly of their mūri clan.

In any event, marrying in a circle closes the system of categories applied to many, but by no means all of EGO's kin. R4 terms become equivalent to L2, R5 to L1 and so on.

In the event of an open-ended network relative to EGO, the rules other than through direct kinship links apply outside the kin to whom R4 and L4 terms apply. Either relations of 'half' kinship are traced through
women (e.g. MMMZDDCh is EGO's 'sibling'), or categories are simply derived from the category applied by EGO's father or mother, or categories are derived from subsections.

(4) The argument about whether a man marries his 'MBD' or 'MMMMDD' is in my view misconceived (Warner 1937:75; Berndt R.M. 1976:26; Maddock 1970:85; Morphy H. 1977a:54). The argument assumes that one or other gloss captures the essence of the term for 'wife'. Galay is by definition the daughter of a woman EGO calls mumulrumaru, who is by definition the daughter of mumulkur, or female dhumungur. We have seen that the Yolngu man traces his relation to his potential wives through his MMM's (waku) clan, or his märi clan and indeed his M clan. If an extensionist position is adopted it could be argued that female galay is a man's 'MBD' or 'MMMMDD' and 'MMMMMBDDD'. But galay is also 'ZDDHDD' being the DD of dhumungur.

(5) Maddock (1976:85) predicted that 'further investigation among the Murngin would link marriage with clans'. The data presented in Chapter 3 show that Radcliffe-Brown's assertion (1951) that clans are irrelevant to marriages is incorrect.

I have shown that clans are essential in framing and applying the rules governing marriage, and in the definition of marriageable women. In norm and practice a man marries a woman whom he calls galay who is a member of his mother's clan and/or whose mother is a member of his mother's mother's clan or another märi clan. Kinship provides the essential link between the man and these clans and the criteria which define which women of these clans are marriageable.

The question of who makes and controls bestowals is one which my data does not answer fully. According to Shapiro, bestowal was traditionally the prerogative largely of the wife's matrilineal kin who bestowed a WM on to EGO. Warner's testimony, Hiatt's data and Shapiro's own data all show this to be unlikely. The Gidjinjali affirmed that a woman's M and MB should bestow her, but the father may try to influence the bestowal (Hiatt 1965:44). Shapiro's own data (1971) show that the majority of marriages at Elcho Island were arranged between a man and his MB. He represents this as a recent development, admitting that the 'traditional system' of WM bestowal has a low success rate (ibid.:75). This apparently recent development is precisely the arrangement which Warner (1937) stresses.
My data do tend to support Maddock's view of alliance. Hiatt (1967) argued that an alliance framework is not helpful in understanding Australian kinship. Maddock argues (1969) that this is to take a closer view of alliance. Alliance refers to a principle of exchange: 'Each transaction is understood as an episode initiating, sustaining and expressing a relation of exchange (ibid.:19). The groups which are limited in affinal and ritual alliance are descent groups much as Leach (1961) described, although the actual bestowers are various matrilineal and patrilineal lines of the bestowed (ibid.:24). Maddock also makes the important point that these alliances entail three relations: wife bestowers, wife yielders, and wife receivers (ibid.:21). This implies exchange within the moiety (ibid.:24; see also Morphy H. 1978).

My data show that Yolŋu clans do indeed stand in explicit affinal relations. Individual transactions are related to group relations in the sense that the latter limit and constrain the possible choices an individual makes. A man has a relationship with a particular set of clans through matrilineal kinship. These clans are the groups within which he has rights in women. I agree with Barnes (1967:37) that 'MBD' marriage as such does not entail enduring relations between groups.
APPENDIX 2

PUBLIC AND REGIONAL CEREMONIES

We saw in Chapter 4 that the regional ceremony songs and dances include major maḏayin of both moieties. The Daygurrgrurr clan’s Dog and Kangaroo maḏayin are both apt for the regional ceremonies, and the clan’s Sea songs and designs include the Mundukul Water Python, a maker of lightning and clouds, which echoes the Dhuwa equivalents.

According to R.M. Berndt, the Wangurri clan (Yirritja) used a sacred version of Moon-Bone in its songs in the Djuŋguwan ceremony alongside the Dhuwa (1948:18).

The public ceremonies of the Dhuwa moiety clans are intimately connected with the regional ceremonies. Table 5.3 which compares the song-series of several Dhuwa clans, shows that a number of subjects run through these songs. The following themes occur in the Forest songs of clans from Cape Stewart in the west to Trial Bay in the east:

- Stringybark tree and flowers
- Long-nosed Honeybee
- King Brown Snake or Carpet Python
- Lightning
- Crow
- Fire
- Ghost or Men
- Fish-trap (for seaside clans)

All the clans sing of Ghosts or Men also, under various names including Marawal, Wanydjuk, Wuyal, Wurray or Wudhal.

Chapter 4 showed how all these maḏayin except perhaps Crow have importance in the regional ceremonies. A few examples will suffice to show how widespread are these interconnected features. The painting on the Hollow Log Coffin at a Gidjingali ceremony, recently described by Clunies Ross and Hiatt (1977:135-6) included: the Hollow Log Djin-ŋorla (a creator waŋarr Being similar to the Wurrkiganydjarr clan Yuulongur), Brown Snake which lives...
inside the Hollow Log; the man Narapiya, who makes lightning; Crow, which was also the subject of a dance. The ground-sculptures included a design meaning Stringybark tree, and one incorporated a string representing Long-nosed Honeybee.

The men who performed this ceremony were the very men who organised the Gunapipi at Balpanarra which I attended with the Liyagalawumirri clan leader Dhatha. As we have seen, the latter traced his connection to these men and others related to them through the Forest song-series called Djambitj which includes most of the above subjects. I suggest that they, like the Liyagalawumirri, related the subjects of their public ceremonies with the Gunapipi. A Gamalanga man at the Hollow Log interpreted a design as the Wagilak sisters' footprints; the Gidjiŋali regarded it as Narapiya's footprints. Gamalanga are of the same clan-aggregate as Liyagalawumirri who have the Wagilak as their maḏayin (ibid.:136).

The Liyagalawumirri clan relates Crow to the origin of the Baḍurru Hollow Log Coffin (an alternative Gidjiŋali Hollow Log is Badura) and equate the Hollow Log with Stringybark tree and Yuŋgur. They also use the other maḏayin in their public ceremonies. Wurrkiganydjarr clan uses them too, with King Brown Snake instead of Carpet Python.

C. Berndt (1970) discusses the relationship of the Wagilak story to the Forest songs of the east of the Woollen River area and beyond, in which the Ghost is called Wudhal, a man who comes from the Roper River covered in cottonwool and with boomerang-shaped legs and carrying stone knives. The Liyagalawumirri, Golumala, Marraŋu and Galpu clan songs include Wudhal, Crow, Stringybark, Honey, Grass-fire, Kangaroo, djuwany post representing Women, Stone Spear, the Red Sky and the Leatherbird (ibid.:1311-3).

The songs have an 'elusive connection' with the Wagilak (Wawalag). Places in the songs are identical in names to places in the Wagilak story, some women say, and the waterhole at Mirarrmina is Wukhali, the place of the Wagilak and Crow. Moreover the house and moשק sculpture of the regional ceremonies also feature in the songs (ibid.:1314). Two women who accompany Wudhal are equated sometimes with the Wagilak, and Wudhal and the Wagilak women sometimes feature in the same stories (ibid.:1315). Morphy H. (1977a) shows how these subjects are interwoven in the eastern Djuŋguwan ceremony.

Throughout the region the Dhuwa Forest songs and related public ceremonies then have an intimate relationship with the regional ceremonies.
Where the Wügilak story is current, they are loosely connected with the protagonists of the public songs and stories. The Liyagalawumirri hold that both regional and public ceremonies are from the Wügilak sisters.
## APPENDIX 3

### A COMPARISON OF RATES OF POLYGNY

**Yuendumu Walbiri (Meggitt 1965:149)**

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<th>Total women</th>
<th>Mean wives per man</th>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>111 140 1.26</td>
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**Warrabri Walbiri (Meggitt 1965:149)**

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<th>Total men</th>
<th>Total women</th>
<th>Mean wives per man</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>7 4 1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>10 3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>23 2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>4 11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>56 12 1</td>
<td>89 83 0.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wanindiljaugwa (Rose 1960:69)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort of Males</th>
<th>Number of wives</th>
<th>Total men</th>
<th>Total women</th>
<th>Mean wives per man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>1 2 2 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>3 4 1 1 2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>5 11 5 1 2 1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>12 6 3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25 15 2 3 2 2</td>
<td>82 95 1.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Yolgu (see Chapter 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort of Males</th>
<th>Number of wives</th>
<th>Total men</th>
<th>Total women</th>
<th>Mean wives per man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>1 2 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 1 7</td>
<td>30 4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>2 4 7 1 1 2 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 19 19 51</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>1 13 7 2 3 1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>7 15 6 2 3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>38 9 1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>41 22 7 7 3 2 1 1 1 1 156 188 1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the case of the Warrabri Walbiri and the Wanindiljaugwa, the 41-50 year-old men have the most wives and their rates of polygyny are similar. Among the Yuendumu Walbiri the 51-60 year-olds have the most wives, but only one man has three wives, and no man has more. Yolŋu men over 60 have the most wives, and the average number of wives per man of that age-cohort is higher than in any of the other examples.
GLOSSARY OF MAĐAYIN NAMES TRANSLATED FROM THE YOLJU¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Name</th>
<th>Yolnpu Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Butcherbird</td>
<td>ɲawudalpuŋal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Cockatoo</td>
<td>ɲatili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Duck</td>
<td>ɲuṭhali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridle Tern</td>
<td>djarrak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-winged Stilt</td>
<td>djurtjur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brolga</td>
<td>guḍurrku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush Bird</td>
<td>djiŋay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bustard</td>
<td>buwaŋa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Hawk</td>
<td>garrkany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow</td>
<td>wäk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuckoo</td>
<td>gukuŋk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darter</td>
<td>burala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egret, Heron</td>
<td>djiŋuŋuŋuŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emu</td>
<td>wurrang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frogmouth</td>
<td>dhuŋuthuŋu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabiru</td>
<td>ganydji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jungle Fowl</td>
<td>djukutjuki, djiŋawurr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingfisher</td>
<td>djiŋridjiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koel</td>
<td>guwak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kookaburra</td>
<td>garrukaŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangrove Robin</td>
<td>djuŋmal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masked Plover</td>
<td>birrkpiŋk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pied Goose</td>
<td>gurrumaŋji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigeon</td>
<td>muykandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pygmy Goose</td>
<td>gudjidji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quail</td>
<td>djiŋirikitj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Lorikeet (Red-collared Lorikeet)</td>
<td>wurrutj, lindirritj, guḷiwan, gaŋbalatj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Goshawk</td>
<td>wopulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-winged Parrot</td>
<td>bilitjpiŋk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</td>
<td>ɲangi, ḫurrpu, nyerrk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie Wagtail</td>
<td>djiŋribidjirribi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Ibis</td>
<td>guṟarrala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹This list is not complete, as I have been unable to find the Yolnpu equivalent for some of the names quoted from other writers.
Blue-tongue Lizard dhapalan
Carpet Python wititj
Crocodile bœru
File Snake bulukminy
Frilled Lizard mirriwa
Frog garkman, wokara
Goanna (Dhuwa) djanda, djärrka
Goanna (Yirritja) gîlkam, beyay
King Brown Snake därrpa
Leech djaŋŋiny
Long-necked Turtle mînhal, nyaqura
Snail mënduŋ
Water Python mundukuŋ
Black-beetle Larva gâmuruŋ
Black-beetle garanyinyi
Cicada galkal
Green Ant yarrpany
Long-nosed Honeybee (Dhuwa) birrkuŋa, ñeyuŋa
Honeybee (Yirritja) milkmilk
Mosquito wanydjuk
Stick Insect gulixirri
Cabbage-Palm warraga
Cycad Palm muñmu
Grass maypiny
Ironwood gîrmpu
Lily-bulb djota, muñmu
Native Cherry dhulgu
Paperbark räkay
Rush-corm gadjayka (Dhuwa), garrayurr (Yirritja)
Stringybark yukuwa
Vine (of root food) yuŋuk
Wild Pea

1I learnt subsequent to the final draft that wititj is Olive Python, and mundukuŋ Black-headed Python (Rudder 1976).
Wild Plum
Bandicoot
Dog
Flying Fox
Marsupial Mouse
Possum
Red Kangaroo
Sugar Squirrel (Glider)
Wallaby
Dugong
Shark
Whale
Barramundi
Butterfish (freshwater)
Flying Fish
Garfish
Lesser Salmon Catfish
Long Tom
Octopus
Oxeye Herring
Sawfish
Spangled Perch
?Spangled Gudgeon
Angular Ear Shellfish
Baler Shell
Crab
Mangrove Worm
Nerite Shellfish
(Olined Nerite)
Oyster
Prawn
Telescope Shellfish

munydjutj
wan'kurra
waṭu, wuŋgan
warrnyu
marrawaŋa
marrŋu (f), rrupu
garrtjambal
wọraŋ
weŋi, djaŋdil
galaŋgamirr
buŋmanydji.
mirinyiŋu
ratjuk, baŋatja
gapila
dikarr
djuŋurrpi
weŋu
wulakitj, marawa
mọŋa
nyuŋala
larradja
remu
wandhuma
batjimurrŋu
daruma
nyoka
latjin
dhukuray
wayanaka
dakawa
ŋọŋda
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