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***Cross-Culturalizing History:
Journey to the Gurindji Way of Historical Practice***

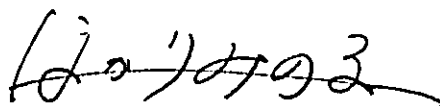
Minoru HOKARI

January 2001

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University.**

I certify that all parts of this thesis are my own original work, except where otherwise stated.

Minoru Hokari

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hokari Minoru', written over a horizontal dashed line.

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Abstract

My thesis questions the mainstream academic monopoly over Australian historical studies by validating the alternative historical practices of Indigenous Australians. The conventional practice of academic history, which is based on time-oriented chronology, teleology, and historicity, is only one mode of exploring the past. My thesis explores Aboriginal historians' narratives, which are characterised by space-oriented stories framed according to the logic of their own ontology and cosmology, or cultural mode of being.

Drawing upon field research with the Gurindji people of Daguragu in Northern Territory, this thesis explores the Gurindji analysis of Australian colonial history. This project represents an alternative framework, namely a 'place-oriented history', in which the very concept of 'history' becomes more spatial than temporal. For the Gurindji people, both body and place are invested with (in)visible memories of their own past. Historical knowledge has been created, and is maintained through the web of connection among people, their Dreaming and places. They use oral story telling techniques, body actions, visual iconography and diagrams rendered on the earth in order to explore and express their pasts.

This study explores the nature and structure of the Gurindji way of practising history in order to reveal the 'reality' of the Gurindji people's history. However, even though I aim to present Gurindji history based on the Gurindji mode of historical practice as closely as possible, I do not present my thesis as an example of Gurindji cultural practice – the Gurindji historians do not write theses.

Therefore, my purpose here is not to find a place for my speaking position within the Gurindji culture. Instead, my aim is to create the arena where both Aboriginal and academic historians can communicate with each other across the cultural gap between them and share multiple Australian pasts. In other words, to set up a dialogue and negotiation between two historical practices in order to share different ways of constructing the past.

I call this process, 'cross-culturalizing history'.

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Chapter 1

Yellowfella Visits Blackfella Country in Whitefella Nation

It was drizzling and mysterious at the beginning of our journey.
I could see that it was all going to be one big saga of the mist.
(Jack Kerouac 1957)

1.1. Way to the Gurindji Country

“Why am I majoring in Aboriginal History?”

“Why am I, a foreigner – a Japanese person – interested in Indigenous Australians?”

“Why, in fact, am I obsessed with the Gurindji people and their country?”

These are just some of the questions that people have repeatedly asked and implied since I began studying Indigenous Australian history in 1993. There is no simple answer to these questions because when I look back, it was just a sequence of related incidents that led me in this direction.

When I entered Hitotsubashi University as an undergraduate, my major was economics. At that time, I had a vague aspirations of becoming an economist or businessman. If I had continued studying economics, it was likely that I may never have heard the word ‘Aborigine’ – let alone ‘Gurindji’. However, after two years of studying economics, I got bored with it. I started reading literature in the fields of history, sociology, philosophy, and anthropology. I became increasingly interested in different cultures, and particularly interested in Indigenous Australians. For some reason, I was ‘captured’ by Aboriginal culture, and went on to do a master’s course to study Aboriginal history.

In 1995, I came to Australia to collect historical materials for my master’s thesis. My original plan was to do intensive research in Queensland. But Seiji Suzuki¹ suggested to me that I might also look at the Gurindji people in the

The citation and bibliographic format of this thesis is based on the style used by the journal *Aboriginal History*.

Northern Territory. He told me about the Wave Hill Walk-off and their land rights movement. At that time, I had not yet heard the name 'Gurindji'.

However, I could not get an air ticket to Queensland from Japan because they were all booked out. The travel agency said I could still buy a ticket to Darwin. Believe it or not, this is how I ended up writing a master's thesis about Gurindji history.²

By the time I completed my master's thesis, I had a dream of coming to Australia to do my PhD and undertake fieldwork in Aboriginal communities. I applied for the PhD course at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). I was fortunate enough to receive a scholarship to study abroad, and Ann McGrath kindly agreed to be my supervisor.

*

*

Before discussing my fieldwork experiences, I have to emphasise that it was not my original plan to focus exclusively on the Gurindji history in my PhD project. In November 1996, I submitted a summary of my research proposal to the *Postgraduate Abstract* (1997) which is distributed by the School of History, UNSW. In this paper, I stated that I would focus on the historical transition of Aboriginal 'moving lifestyles', and that this would then "provide the foundation for a further structural analysis of Aboriginal societies since movement and travelling patterns must have been reflected in the transition of their world of religion or thought, value system or cultural practice/s." I offered two areas of inquiry: 'the role and transition of environmental circumstances', and the 'Governmental policy on Aboriginal people and economic fluctuations of pastoral and mining industries'. Finally, I proposed that "the collection of oral histories will facilitate this research by helping to explain the aim, season, length, scale, destination and frequency of Aborigines' travelling patterns." My original fieldwork plan was to visit several Aboriginal communities in the Victoria River

¹ A Japanese anthropologist working on Australian Aboriginal studies. See Suzuki 1993, 1995. I acknowledge Seiji Suzuki for his suggestion that led me into the Gurindji history.

² Hokari 1996c.

district and the Central Desert area to undertake comparative studies.³

When I first arrived in Darwin in December 1996, my plan was to send letters and facsimiles to several Aboriginal communities asking for permission to visit. I was planning to stay in different communities for a short period of time in order to decide where I would like to conduct more extensive research in the future. For fieldworkers, asking Aboriginal communities for permission to visit is such a difficult task. In order to grant you permission, they expect that you personally know some of the community members. However, without visiting the community, how could one know the local people? Ann McGrath told me that I should be prepared for disappointment. Some other colleagues said it was a matter of luck.



Plate 1.1. On the way to the Gurindji country, 1997

³ Hokari 1996b.

I sent letters and facsimiles to ten different communities asking for permission. The result was: seven communities ignored my application, two sent me rejection messages, and only one approved my application; this was from the Gurindji country. I could not help feeling this was destiny. I applied to ten different communities but received only one positive answer from the Gurindji people whom I had studied even while I was in Japan.

I have no way to describe my excitement as well as extreme tension while riding a motorcycle to the Gurindji country. A lot of strange concerns came to my mind: what should I say when I first meet them, 'Hello', 'G'day', or something else? What if they cannot understand my weird English accent? Are Aboriginal people 'racist' towards Asians?

On 10th of January, 1997, I arrived in Gurindji country at last.

1.2. Major Themes

By validating the alternative historical practices of Indigenous Australians, my thesis questions the mainstream academic monopoly over Australian historical studies. Conventional academic history, which is based on time-oriented chronology, teleology, and historicity, is only one mode of exploring the past. Aboriginal historians' narratives are characterised by space-oriented stories framed according to the logic of their own ontology and cosmology, or cultural mode of being. Drawing upon field research with the Gurindji people of Daguragu in Northern Territory, this thesis explores the Gurindji analysis of Australian colonial history that will lead us to the framework, namely a 'place-oriented history' in which the very concept of 'history' becomes more spatial than temporal.⁴

However, my project is inevitably full of fundamental problems. How can I – a Japanese PhD candidate – perform Gurindji people's history within contemporary academic discourse? A Japanese person performing Gurindji history? Is it Gurindji history within an academic framework? My work is based

⁴ The term 'place-oriented history' is derived from Deborah B. Rose's conception of 'a place-centred study'. See Rose 2009.

on apparent contradictions. As I discuss at length later, Dipesh Chakrabarty's question, "Can the discipline of history speak for any kind of experience of the past?"⁵ highlights the fundamental problem I raise here. Chakrabarty answers 'no' because history as an academic discipline has limits to its historicizing.⁶ However, I am reluctant to abandon my project – to learn and share the Gurindji mode of historical practice as a cross-cultural historian.

Even though I want to present Gurindji history based on the Gurindji mode of historical practice as closely as possible, I do not present my thesis as an example of Gurindji cultural practice. The Gurindji historians do not write theses. Therefore, my aim is neither to find a place for my speaking position within the Gurindji culture, nor to dichotomise 'our history' and 'their history'. Instead, my aim is to reflect upon the arena where both Aboriginal and academic historians can communicate with each other and share the Australian pasts. In other words, to set up a dialogue and negotiation between two historical practices in order to share the ways of constructing the past. I call this process 'cross-culturalizing history'.

In order to practise history in a cross-cultural context, I seek the permission from both Gurindji and academic historians. First of all, I needed permission from Gurindji people to 'write' their histories. The most fundamental contradiction in this work is actually 'writing' Gurindji people's teachings. I cannot present their histories here as Gurindji people taught them to me because their teachings are not 'written' but spoken, drawn, sung, or enacted through bodily performance. Gurindji history is living and organic knowledge, which is developed and maintained through interaction among the Gurindji people and their country.

However, if this is the case, does it mean that their teachings are meaningful only to Gurindji people and not to anyone else? The Gurindji people's answer is 'no'. They encouraged me to record their teachings and share them with non-Gurindji or non-Aboriginal people. In a sense, their encouragement is ironic because the Gurindji elders also emphasise that using paper or a book is not

⁵ Chakrabarty 1997:25.

⁶ Chakrabarty 1997:30.

ngumpin [Aboriginal] way. They often problematised 'paper culture' and stressed to me that I should use my brain and body. However, they also clearly understand that one has to use paper and books to let *kartiya* [non-Aboriginals] know their stories. Therefore, the Gurindji people agreed with and supported my project. We – both the Gurindji and I – know and share the risk of this project.

Secondly, I also seek the support of academic historians in my project of expanding the boundaries of notions of 'historical practice'. The Gurindji people's historical narratives contain many 'mysterious' figures and stories which often contradict dominant notions of chronology, teleology, and 'historicity', which academic historians regard highly as the essence of historical practice, at least they used to. Therefore, you might respond by saying: "This is not history. You are talking about Aboriginal myths."

It is academics rather than the Gurindji themselves who categorise both colonial stories and Dreaming stories as myths. For the Gurindji people, there is no question of a story being a myth or history. The Gurindji people tell you that both Dreaming and colonial stories are 'real history'. Moreover, they interact with each other in the Gurindji people's historical narratives. The difference is that Dreaming often relates to the more sacred or moral dimensions of the history, and colonial stories are normally the stories of immoral colonisers. In my view, if we are to explore the Indigenous history of colonial Australia, we should take Aboriginal people's historical narratives as seriously as possible; we should consider the interaction of Dreaming and colonial stories as a part of Australian colonial history.⁷ Furthermore, thanks to postmodern and postcolonial historians who problematise conventional academic historical practice, I believe my attempt to cross-culturalize history is not so unusual. As I discuss later, many contemporary historians are suggesting we – academic historians – exist in an era in which the fundamental question "what is history?" is being asked again.

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⁷ See Chap.3 for further discussion.

1.3. First Fieldwork

After arriving in the Gurindji country, I did not do much other than spend time with the people for the first couple of days. I neither taped recordings, nor took photos or even took notes. I thought it was a little bit rude to do 'research' without knowing each other.

However, this attitude made people anxious about the purpose of my visit there. They told me that I should take notes. Mick Inverway, one of the Gurindji elders, was almost angry and said, "I bin tell you, you should take note. You can't remember what I tell you!" So, I started taking notes as instructed by the Gurindji people.

I shall now sketch some background details of the Gurindji country and the Daguragu and Kalkaringi communities within which my discussion of Gurindji history is situated. The Gurindji country is located in the upper reaches of the Victoria River. The landscape varies from hilly sandstone to grassland plains and scrubland. Although there are several large permanent water holes which provide year-round swimming and fishing, the climate keeps a seasonal wet-dry cycle.⁸ Today, the food supply comes mainly from the shop located within the community. However, the Gurindji people often go out hunting, fishing or collecting bush fruits, and the seasonal cycle determines the location of such activities.

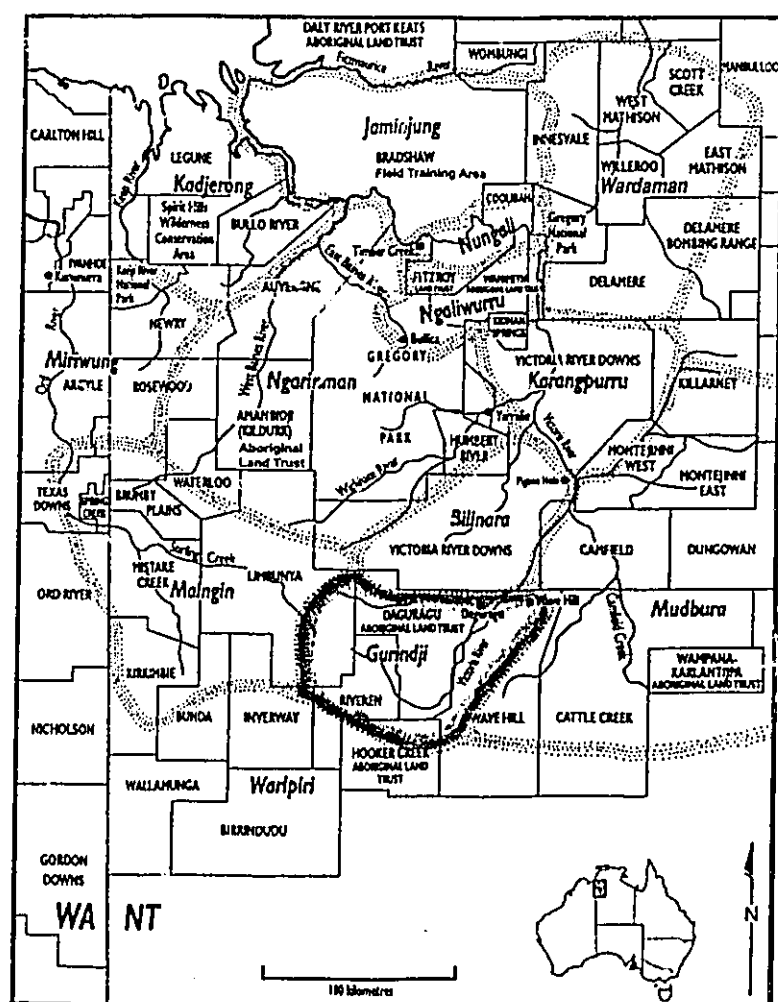
The term 'Gurindji' normally refers to the Gurindji language and to the speakers of the language. However, in the current view, Aboriginal people who live in Daguragu and Kalkaringi are 'all Gurindji'.⁹ The Daguragu community is located within the Gurindji country at the basin of Wattie Creek, a tributary of the Victoria River, and Kalkaringi community is about 10km south of Daguragu. The total population of the two Gurindji communities is about 600 people.

A close study of the social organisation and land ownership of Gurindji society is not the purpose of this thesis. Patrick McConvell and Rod Hagen have

⁸ Aboriginal Land Commissioner 1982:3.

⁹ This includes Malgin and Wanyjirra. The even broader context includes Mudburra and Ngarinman. However, Warlpiri people living in Daguragu and Kalkaringi often identify themselves as Warlpiri, not Gurindji.

already explored these issues in the context of the Daguragu Land Claim.¹⁰ However, in brief, as with most of the Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and the Kimberleys of Western Australia, the Gurindji have an eight subsection system of kinship-social categorisation: there are eight male and eight female subsections or 'skin names', and each person's 'skin' is based on a marriage rule. While there are many deviations, each subsection member is required to marry a certain subsection member. And their child's 'skin' is determined according to her/his gender and parents' subsections.



Map 1.1. Location of the Gurindji country

¹⁰ McConvell and Hagen 1981.

Like many other Aboriginal societies, the Gurindji country contains many defined areas/countries, and within each area there are related local descendant groups. They establish relationships along both paternal and maternal lines. The Gurindji person often calls such a defined area 'my country'.

After European colonisation, many Gurindji people worked at Wave Hill station as stockworkers. In 1966 the Gurindji people walked off the European property and in 1975 after years of struggle succeeded in having their country returned. Their inalienable freehold title was finally granted in 1986. This episode gained the public attention of contemporary Australia, and remains an event that is deeply engraved on the memories of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, particularly in terms of the Aboriginal land rights movement.¹¹

Today, the Daguragu Community Government Council is a body representing the interests of owners and people associated with the Daguragu Aboriginal Land Trust (the area 'legally' defined as the Gurindji country). The council members who are elected by the community members, mainly deal with funding Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) and other activities, which are more related to '*kartiya* [Whitefella] business'. Many middle-aged and younger people today are working on CDEP, which include road construction, making bread, arts and crafts, etc. Children attend a school located within the community.

'*Ngumpin* [Aboriginal] business' such as rituals or marriage arrangements are discussed and determined by gender-divided groups of elderly people. Like many other Aboriginal communities, the Gurindji socio-cultural space is highly gendered. Although I later found out that I was being over-sensitive, I was careful not to spend too much time with female groups – I did not want to give the impression of 'stealing women' or of 'not respecting elderly men' to my main teachers. Even though I often went hunting and fishing with the younger people or elderly women, I spent most of my time with a group of elderly males while staying in the community.

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¹¹ See Chap.5.

For a while, as I planned, I asked them questions that I had brought from Sydney. I received answers which were similar to what I had read in other academic accounts. Certainly the people were happy to answer my questions, but they seemed to be enjoying themselves more when they taught me their language. This is worthwhile emphasising: the first thing they wanted to teach me was their language. I thought they were 'testing' me. Was I just another interviewer like they had met a hundred times before, or was I ready to be involved in 'their way' in a deeper sense? I picked up as many words as possible. People laughed at my peculiar accent and pronunciation all the time.

They also gave me one of the subsection terms or 'skin name': I became 'japarta'. People started to refer to me using kinship terms: "I'm jumpin, I call you *jaju* [grand parent]", "I'm juluma, you're my son", "I'm nimarra, I'm your sister", and so on. I spent most of my first fieldwork days learning their language, both Gurindji and Creole.



Plate 1.2. Jimmy Mangayarri, 1997

On 15th of January, 1997, I met a very old man, Jimmy Mangayari, for the first time. Four days later, I had a long discussion with him. In fact, it was neither a 'discussion' nor an 'interview', but instead it was his teachings. Those two sessions with Old Jimmy completely changed my research project -- and probably my life as well.

I did not have to ask Old Jimmy any questions. He had his own agenda to teach. He had a talent for analysing Australian colonial history, the origin of the European people and what is the 'right way' or 'earth law' that we should follow. He is a great historian, political analyst and moral philosopher. And, for some reason, he was eager to teach me about all his ideas.

While learning from Old Jimmy, I began to doubt if we -- Gurindji people and I -- really shared a single concept of 'history'. In Gurindji language, there are two words which are relevant to 'history' in their Creole; *larrapa* and *ngarangarni*. *Larrapa* means 'olden time' or 'early days', and *ngarangarni* means 'Dreaming stories'. What is crucial here is that you cannot say *ngarangarni* is an older time than *larrapa*. As I will discuss in the following chapters, Dreaming consists of place-oriented stories which have been 'active' throughout history. Naturally, *larrapa* and *ngarangarni* co-exist and, more importantly, interact with each other. Or, it is more precise to say that *ngarangarni* is 'everywhere' and 'everywhen' which includes the space and time of *larrapa*. Therefore, the study of the colonial history of the Gurindji people and their country should be a study of *larrapa* which constantly interacts with *ngarangarni*.

In my master's thesis, I studied the Gurindji history in an academic historical sense, but I did not know anything about the Gurindji history *in their sense*. Old Jimmy told me that my brain was sleeping, and needed training to wake it up. He was right. I did not care about my original research project anymore. I decided to learn the Gurindji history and their law by following the way they wanted to teach me.

After spending ten days at Daguragu, I had to go back to the university, but I promised them I would return.

1.4. Aboriginal Historiography

Until postcolonial critique emerged, academic practice towards Aboriginal societies was more 'exploitative' than 'cross-cultural'. Here I am not just referring to anthropology which has been criticised as colonial practice,¹² but also to historical practice. Although the historians' aim was to challenge the stereotyped image that 'Aboriginal people had no history', most academic historians simply applied a very European notion of 'history' to Aboriginal pasts.¹³ They did not inquire about Aboriginal historical conceptions, and therefore they failed to effectively position their practice as 'cross-cultural'. This is what I mean when I state that academic historians have monopolised the Aboriginal pasts in academic and public discourses.

Development of an Aboriginal historiography can be summarised as a process of 'moving as close as possible to Aboriginal pasts'. Although Aboriginal societies had been placed as a part of Australian history in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' historiography,¹⁴ Aboriginal studies had been practised mostly by anthropologists until the 1970s. Today, there seems to be agreement that it was W. H. E. Stanner's public lecture in 1968 that first challenged 'The Great Australian Silence' and called for the historical study of Aboriginal (colonial) pasts.¹⁵

The first generation of Aboriginal historical studies appeared. Their aim can be summarised as moving towards Aboriginal pasts by challenging the public ignorance of Aboriginal history. C. D. Rowley's trilogy,¹⁶ Peter Biskup's *Not Slaves Not Citizens* (1973),¹⁷ and Raymond Evans' *Exclusion, Exploitation and*

¹² Classic examples of such studies are Fabian 1983; Clifford 1986, 1988; Fardon 1990. In the context of Australian anthropology, see Cowlishaw 1992.

¹³ Urry 1979, and on later debates, see Barker 1980; Urry 1980. See also, McGrath 1995a:362. Rose 1997:97-101.

¹⁴ Perheentupa 1998.

¹⁵ Stanner 1968. See also, McGrath 1995a:365-366.

¹⁶ Rowley 1970, 1971a, 1971b.

¹⁷ Biskup 1973.

Extermination (1975)¹⁸ are probably the best examples of important works from this first generation. The contributions of these studies of Aboriginal history should be summarised on two different levels: public and academic. First, they succeeded in making the public recognise the omission of Aboriginal pasts from Australian history. Australian colonial history was not as peaceful as they had thought. There was a history of 'exclusion, exploitation and extermination' of Indigenous Australians. These studies certainly reflected and reacted to public attention to the Aboriginal human rights and land rights movement at that time.¹⁹ Secondly, these works opened up a new field in academic discussions of Aboriginal studies. Applying an historical dynamic approach, historians had a different perspective from the anthropological static approach, which tended to construct precolonial or 'traditional' aspects of Aboriginal societies.²⁰ The emergence of an historical approach in the field of Aboriginal studies challenged the monopoly over Aboriginal studies previously held by anthropologists.²¹

Anticipation of the second generation of Aboriginal historical studies can be found in Henry Reynolds' groundbreaking work, *The Other Side of the Frontier* (1981).²² Claiming the importance of seeing events from the Aboriginal perspective, Reynolds described Aboriginal people not just as victims or 'passive objects', but also as activists or 'active agents' of the Australian colonial history. Although *The Other Side of the Frontier* and other related works emphasised violent conflict between the Indigenous people and the settlers,²³ historians also began to explore the ways Aboriginal people flexibly adopted the colonial regime, or their positive contribution to shaping of colonial histories.²⁴ The project of

¹⁸ Evans, Saunders, and Cronin 1975.

¹⁹ McGrath 1995a:367.

²⁰ Urry 1979; Cowlshaw 1992.

²¹ Major anthropological studies of 'ahistorical' 'traditional' Aboriginal societies are Spencer 1914; Spencer and Gillen 1938; Elkin 1945, 1964; Strehlow 1947, 1971; Thomson 1949; Stanner 1964; Meggitt 1965; Hiatt 1965.

²² Reynolds 1981.

²³ See, for example, Robinson and York 1977; Loos 1982.

²⁴ See, for example, McGrath 1987a; May 1983, 1994; Reynolds 1990, 2000; Ganter 1994; Grimshaw, et. al. 1994.

'moving as close as possible to Aboriginal pasts' opened up a new field in which Aboriginal people were considered as 'historical actors'.

The wave of the second generation became visible by the end of the 1980s. In terms of academic disciplines, they introduced two main new approaches: the oral historical approach and representation theory; the former aimed to be 'closer to Aboriginal pasts' and the latter began to cast doubt on the 'academic representation of Aboriginal pasts'.

Although the oral historical approach has never become 'mainstream' in general academic historiography, one may say that it has been a growing method of practising history in the second half of the twentieth century.²⁵ In terms of Aboriginal historiography, Bruce Shaw's *My Country of the Pelican Dreaming* (1981)²⁶ may have been one of the first triggers. After this, the 'booming' started from the late 1980s. In addition to Shaw's series of oral historical works,²⁷ Peter Read's *A Hundred Years War* (1988)²⁸ and other works²⁹ greatly contributed to convincing an academic and public audience of the value of the oral historical approach towards Aboriginal pasts. Among them, Ann McGrath's *Born in the Cattle* (1987)³⁰ probably received the strongest academic attention in the earlier stages of the development of oral historical disciplines.³¹ A decade later, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's report, *Bringing Them Home* (1997), which attracted enormous public attention to the Stolen Generation, is one of the most influential oral historical studies in Aboriginal historiography.³²

The project of 'moving as close as possible to Aboriginal pasts' was certainly encouraged by the method of directly interviewing Aboriginal people, as opposed to searching for historical documents written by non-Aboriginal people. However, the oral historical approach inevitably had to face the question of the

²⁵ Perks and Thomson 1998: ix.

²⁶ Ngabidj and Shaw 1981.

²⁷ See, for example, Sullivan and Shaw 1983; Shaw 1992.

²⁸ Read 1988.

²⁹ See, for example, Read and Read 1991; Read 1984, 1999.

³⁰ McGrath 1987a.

³¹ See, introduction of Chapters 6 & 7.

³² Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1997.

credibility of oral testimonies. Critiques of oral testimonies can be summarised by saying that Aboriginal oral evidence is not necessarily 'the reality of the past', but rather 'their present views of the past'.³³

The other wave of the second generation was mainly generated by Bain Attwood's works: *The Making of the Aborigines* (1989) and *Power Knowledge and Aborigines* (1992).³⁴ Following a trajectory from Michael Foucault to Edward Said, these studies about the 'European representation of non-Europe' also corresponded to the development of postcolonial studies in the general academic field of humanities. Attwood explored how European power and knowledge have constructed the 'Aboriginal subject', which was based on the essentialistic 'them-us' dichotomy. This historical study of the European representation of Indigenous Australians certainly problematised anthropological practice once again. Anthropologists' authority over the representation of Aboriginal societies as well as their appetite for constructing a nostalgic 'tradition' of precolonial Aboriginal 'Otherness' was historicized and criticised as modes of colonial practice.³⁵ However, even though these works criticised the essentialistic dichotomisation of 'Europe' and 'Aborigines', and called for 'effective cultural interchange, neither patronising or exploitative',³⁶ representation theory tended to emphasise the boundary between 'our representation of them' and 'them'. Thus, it did not provide any solutions for 'moving as close as possible to Aboriginal pasts'.

Public desire for 'moving closer to Aboriginal pasts' and the question of 'our representation of them' provided an arena for Aboriginal representations of their own pasts. Even though Aboriginal writers often take a (auto)biographical approach and – probably for this very reason – do not make a distinctive impact on academic historical studies, their works certainly had an effect in the public arena.³⁷ I would like to note here that Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1988) was translated into Japanese in 1992 and became one of the few Japanese publications

³³ Review articles on McGrath's *Born in the Cattle* highlight this issue. See, for example, Rowse 1988a, 1988b; Attwood 1988. McGrath's response is in McGrath 1988.

³⁴ Attwood 1989; Attwood and Arnold 1992. See also, Reece 1987.

³⁵ See, for example, Cowlishaw 1992.

³⁶ Quote from, Smith 1980, in Attwood 1992:xvi.

³⁷ See, for example, Perkins 1975; Barker and Mathews 1977; Morgan 1988; L. J. Ford 1988.

about Indigenous Australians.³⁸

In contrast, the academic desire for 'moving as close as possible to Aboriginal pasts' and the question of 'our representation of them' have not yet found their destination. There are, however, some Indigenous academics who began to contribute to academic historical discourses. Gordon Briscoe has been one of the pioneering Indigenous academic historians since the 1980s.³⁹ John Maynard⁴⁰, Jackie Huggins⁴¹ and Tony Birch⁴² are among those who have been greatly involved in Aboriginal historical studies since the 1990s. In addition to these Indigenous academic historians' works, there are studies which may give some hints as to a potential 'third generation' of Aboriginal historiography. For example, debates over 'memory and history' gave historians the opportunity to adopt an alternative approach to oral historical accounts. Heather Goodall, for instance, calls attention to the gap between the positivist historical approach and the understanding of Aboriginal community memories; she suggests 'a more sensitive approach to research, which recognises the power and role of a community's own history making.'⁴³ Furthermore, there are some examples of the possibilities of 'effective cultural interchange' between Aboriginal people and academic writers. In the field of cultural studies, Stephen Muecke's *Reading the Country* (1984) emphasises putting the 'theory of communication' into practice. Muecke's attempt to highlight the contrast between academic theories (of 'nomadology') and Aboriginal narratives is a unique experiment in communicating over the cultural difference.⁴⁴ To my knowledge, Deborah B. Rose's *Hidden Histories* (1991) was the first, and remains one of a few books, presenting Aboriginal oral historical accounts as 'analyses by Aboriginal historians'. In this book, Aboriginal people are not interviewees or informants, not

³⁸ Morgan 1992.

³⁹ See, for example, Briscoe 1986, 1989, 1993, 1994, 1996.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Maynard 1987, 1988.

⁴¹ See, for example, Huggins and Huggins 1994; McGrath et. al. 1994; Huggins et. al. 1997; Huggins 1998.

⁴² See, for example, Birch 1992, 1993, 1995.

⁴³ Goodall 1992:119. See also McGrath 1987b. Footnotes 63-66 provide further examples.

⁴⁴ Benterrak, Muecke, and Roe 1984.

even just story tellers; they are the historians who analyse the Australian pasts.⁴⁵ Unlike many other academic historians' works, Richard Baker's *Land is Life* (1999) from the field of geography applies the Yanyuwa people's own periodisation – such as 'wild times', 'cattle times' or 'land right times' – in order to explore the Indigenous notion of history and their cultural geography.⁴⁶

Furthermore, recently emerging topics in Aboriginal historiography such as historical studies of Aboriginal political activism,⁴⁷ Aboriginal and European visual expression of/in Australian history,⁴⁸ Aboriginal positioning in global history,⁴⁹ and bringing a third party (such as Asians) into the Australian racial history⁵⁰ are examples of new approaches gaining popularity since the 1990s.

The third generation of Aboriginal historiography is still emerging. In the same way that the second generation contained several different approaches towards Aboriginal history, the third generation will be diverse as well. Nevertheless, many of the above mentioned works, and new topics, tend to look into the complex cultural and social interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies. Thus, I would like to point out that 'cross-cultural history' may be a unifying theme among them. In these new styles of writing, historians often emphasise multiple voices from plural historical agents. Therefore, through the process of writing a cross-cultural history, Aboriginal history becomes less essentialistic and begins to interact with national history, non-Aboriginal ethnic history, or even global history.

I, too, claim my work to be a part of 'cross-cultural history'. However, my project is not simply a 'history of cross-cultural agents'. In my opinion, what needs to be 'cross-cultural' is not only historical subjects, but also *history itself* as

⁴⁵ Rose 1991.

⁴⁶ Baker 1999.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Read 1990; Goodall 1996; Attwood and Markus 1999.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Kleinert 1994; Lewis 1997; Lydon 2000.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Reynolds 1999b.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Curthoys 2000; Edwards and Yuan-fang 2000. The original work in this area can be found in *Aboriginal History* vol.5. (1981), a special issue for Aboriginal-Asian contact. See Urry 1981; Chase 1981; Anderson and Mitchell 1981; Hercus 1981; Murray and Austin 1981; Cooper and Urry 1981.

a discipline. The question I would like to raise now is this:

Can the very concept of 'history' be cross-cultural?

1.5. Second Fieldwork

I sold my motorbike in Sydney and got a car license. I went to a used 4WD car market and bought a second-hand NSW bushfire truck, an orange coloured Toyota Landcruiser Troopcarrier. After months of preparation, I left Sydney again in June 1997.

When I arrived in Daguragu on 19th June 1997, the Gurindji people warmly welcomed me, although the young people seemed to be a little disappointed by the fact that I did not ride a motorcycle anymore. At the same time, they certainly perceived me as a new resource – a troopcarrier can carry a lot of people. People started calling my car, '*japarta motika* [car]'.

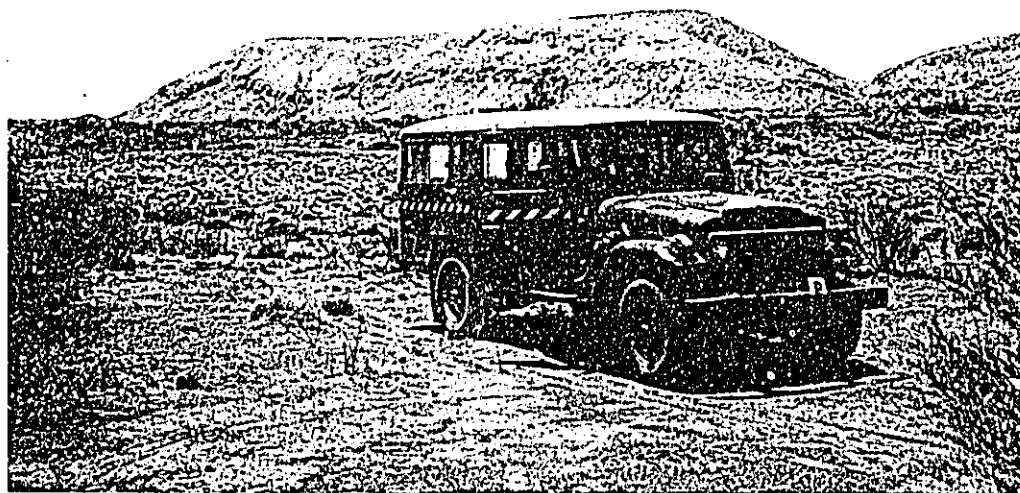


Plate 1.3. '*Japarta motika*', 1997

I explained to them that I wanted to learn *ngumpin* [Aboriginal] law and their colonial history. However, at the same time, I minimised asking 'my questions' and tried to follow whatever they wanted to teach me. I often just repeated what my teachers said. I found that this repeating technique was the best way to encourage them to keep talking without controlling their stories. This way of listening was also useful because I could confirm what I had heard since I sometimes misunderstood what they said.

I normally took notes while we were talking. I also often asked them for permission to record their teachings on tapes. Some people did not mind at all. Some said all right, but then became nervous about speaking. If so, I gave up recording; for me, to hear the stories was much more important than recording the stories. They told me what was secret and what was not. Some stories were not allowed to be recorded on tape, not because of who was speaking but because of the secrecy of the story. For the same reason, sometimes I was not allowed to even take notes. They instructed me to memorise it as they do all the time. They pointed to their heads and said, "Nomo [Don't] put down on paper, you must gotta put in your memory". So I did.

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Details of the Gurindji historians' teachings will be discussed at length in the following chapters. Here instead, I would like to explore the more personal experience of communication with the Gurindji people and their country.

Even though I talked a lot with many other people, I spent the most time with Jimmy Mangayarri. The people in Daguragu also regarded Old Jimmy as a good teacher for me. It is hard to explain, but after months of spending time with him, Old Jimmy became one of the very few people in the world whom I could fully trust. I cannot explain why, but beyond the huge cultural gap, I somehow completely trusted him.

Old Jimmy asked me if I knew why I came to Gurindji country. I said, "I wanted to learn *ngumpin* [Aboriginal] way". I knew I was doing research for my PhD thesis, but I also knew that, by that time, my motivation was more than

simply academic. Old Jimmy had a clear answer. He said Dreaming told me to visit this country: "He [Dreaming] bin talk'n to your memory – 'Come out this country!'" I replied, "But I don't remember..." Jimmy said my 'memory' was dead and 'he [memory] never think' so I needed training to wake it up – "Wake'im up. Just like you come out the bed. Get up!"⁵¹

In a sense, the Gurindji people's cultural reality gradually came to dwell in my being. Let me give you another example. One night, I had a dream about two snakes dancing together. One of them held a baby. When I told this story to Peter Raymond, one of the Gurindji elders, he said I would have a baby: it was *karu* [children] dreaming located in Gurindji country. Old Jimmy was happy to know that my 'memory' had started working.



Plate 1.4. Peter Raymond, 1997

They told me that *karu* dreaming would follow me all the way to Japan. It is worth emphasising: *the Gurindji Dreaming follows me all the way to Japan.*

⁵¹ To be fair, I want to emphasise that it was only Old Jimmy who said Dreaming told me to visit the Gurindji country.

Since then, I have been more careful about contraception!

What happened to me? The only way I can describe this is that it has been difficult for me to ignore the words from the Gurindji people. The question is not if I believe in Dreaming or not, but is probably more a question of 'trust' or 'rapport' between the Gurindji people and myself. When I have a baby in future, I am sure I will remember this *karu* dreaming story. Of course, my cultural reality – whether Japanese, scientific, academic, or 'Westernised' – is different from the Gurindji people's. I also know I am not into so-called New Age culture at all. However, through my fieldwork, I found the 'reality' of Dreaming gradually affected my life and being. I am sure many fieldworkers have had similar experiences. The problem is such experiences are so personal that you are not supposed to discuss them in an academic context.

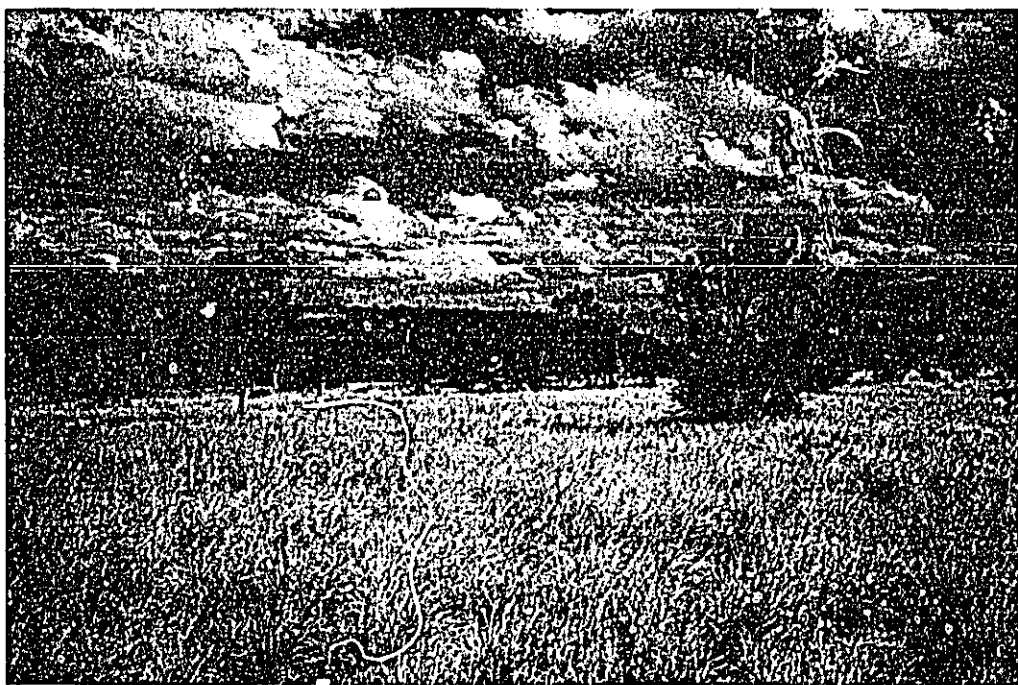


Plate 1.5. *Karu Dreaming Hill*, 1997

I am not saying here that I became spiritually Aboriginal, or anything like that. I know, and everyone in Gurindji country knows, that I am not a Gurindji – but a person from Japan. However, I learned from the Gurindji people that Dreaming could be 'cross-cultural'. In other words, Dreaming is not necessarily

ethno-centric.

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While staying in Daguragu, I was also eager to participate in and learn their *business* [ceremonies] even though I knew I had to keep most of what I learned secret. This was because I found learning their *business* was one of the most direct ways to know their law, or philosophy/cosmology. The Gurindji elders were pleased by the fact that I was serious about their *business*. We sang songs and danced all night from dusk till dawn. At daybreak, we stopped singing and celebrated each other as a 'winner'. I was exhausted, but I loved this moment. My body also learned something essential about *ngumpin* way.



Plate 1.6. On the way to Docker River, 1997

One day, the Gurindji elders were talking about attending a very big *business* in Docker River, about 200km west of Uluru [Ayers Rock], or 1,200km away from Daguragu. Warlpiri, Luritja, Pintupi, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara

people, as well as Gurindji, Ngarinman, Mudburra people were all invited to hold this ceremony. I was truly excited about this ceremonial journey. One of the reasons was that the Gurindji teachers told me how serious and big this ceremony would be. I was honoured that they allowed me to join. However, at the same time, I thought this would be the best opportunity to make a personal connection with the Western Desert people in order to look for the community for my comparative studies.

We left Daguragu on 27th of October 1997. The trip to the Docker River community was a series of disasters. I could not even count how many times we bogged and had to dig holes. Cars broke down. Water ran out. I was seriously worried about perishing somewhere in the desert. Everybody was exhausted, but we still sang Dreaming songs while driving.

When we arrived in the Docker River community on the 1st of November, I was introduced as a person belonging to the Gurindji mob. People expected me to behave as a member of the Gurindji. They taught me about what this ceremony was, but they did not allow me either to be just an observer or to join the non-Gurindji side. In the ceremony, I performed my obligation as a part of the Gurindji. After participating in the ceremonies for three days, we left there on 4th of November. I will never forget this great ceremonial journey with the Gurindji people.

On the way back, I told some of the Gurindji elders that I would like to live in Docker River sometime in the future and learn their history and country as well. However, the elders immediately rejected my idea: "No. Leave them, leave them." I asked them why. They said after a short interval, "Too far. I want to see you around."

Although I considered myself as a student of the Gurindji historians, I still thought I was free to choose a place and people for further learning. However, I finally understood my positioning among the Gurindji people. Until then, I did not notice that this was an ethical matter. The Gurindji people had put so much effort into teaching me about their country, law and history. They considered me a person who came to the Gurindji country to learn and practise their law. They treated me as a member of their community. Living in another community and

pretending to be a part of another people meant betraying the Gurindji teachers. I still visited other communities for a short period, but I gave up the idea of comparative studies.

I left the Gurindji country on 1st January, 1998. Before leaving the community, Billy Bunter, a very strong 'law man' in Daguragu, said to me, "You are one of us, you can come back any time." Mick Rangiari, one of the 'boss' of the Daguragu community, gave his kind regards to my family. Jimmy Mangayarri said, "Don't forget what I bin tell you."

1.6. History, Myths, and Memory

In the last few decades, postmodern and poststructuralist historians have discussed the conditions of history from a new perspective. It has been well argued by Michael Foucault, and many others, that a modern notion of 'history' based on linearity, teleology and historicity was the invention of nineteenth-century Europe.⁵² Through their works, history itself was 'historicized'.

E. H. Carr's *What is History?* (1961)⁵³ was often regarded as a classic example of the 'old perspective' of history and became a major target for postmodern historians. Since the late 1970s, historical theorists have been facing two seemingly contradictory situations: recognition of the 'crisis of history' and the over-production of new paradigms. As Richard Evans argues, it is a crisis because the question was not so much "What is history?", but rather "Is it possible to do history at all?". Under the pressure of the 'linguistic turn', historians began to have doubts about 'historical truth' and 'objectivity'. Naturally, historical practice now faces an epistemological crisis that questions a scientific model of history based on the rigorous investigation of primary sources.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Gérard Noiriel rallies that there has been no year, or even a half year that has passed in the last few decades without hearing of the birth of a new paradigm: 'linguistic turn', 'critical turn', 'new cultural history', 'new historicism', etc, etc.⁵⁵

⁵² Foucault 1970, 1976. See also, footnote 59.

⁵³ Carr 1961.

⁵⁴ Evans 1997:3-4.

⁵⁵ Noiriel 1997:110.

Among these new paradigms, however, the 'linguistic turn' is probably the key movement which has promoted both the 'crisis of history' and the 'paradigm rush' in the last few decades. Following the structuralists' and poststructuralists' arguments in linguistics, semiotics and 'deconstruction' – typically tracing the theorists from Ferdinand de Saussure to Jacques Derrida – the linguistic turn argues it is impossible for historians to construct the 'real past' because "history is never present to us in anything but a discursive form".⁵⁶ Therefore, postmodern historians conclude there is no clear distinction between fiction and non-fiction, or imagination and reality when we practice history. Gabrielle Spiegel summarises this perspective: "If we cannot reach 'life' through literature, we cannot reach 'the past' through document."⁵⁷ In such postmodern history, historians are asked to shift their focus from "'reality' to language as the constitutive agent of human conscious and the social production of meaning."⁵⁸

I do not intend to dip into the numerous debates over postmodern history. This is partly because there have already been so many publications on these issues,⁵⁹ and also because, my work is not directly influenced by linguistic theories. Nevertheless, I certainly share postmodern historians' questioning of the conditions of history as an academic discipline. What is debatable – and has been debated – is the degree; to what extent is this distinction between fiction and non-fiction clear or unclear when we practice history? The radical view is that there is no distinction at all, while the conservative view is that there is a clear distinction. As Ann Curthoys and John Docker argue, many historians today position themselves somewhere in between; there is a distinction between fiction and non-fiction, but the distinction is not as clear as we used to think.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Joyce 1997:247.

⁵⁷ Spiegel 1997a:184.

⁵⁸ Spiegel 1997a:181. However, it should be noted that she does not necessarily agree with this 'radical' view of postmodern history.

⁵⁹ For 'classics' of postmodern history, see, for example, White 1973; LaCapra 1985; Young 1990; Jenkins 1991; Iggers 1997. On debates and introduction, Keith Jenkins' *The Postmodern History Reader* (1997) would be one of the most useful references for postgraduate students.

⁶⁰ Curthoys and Docker 1996. The debate in *Past and Present* over Spiegel's article (Spiegel 1997a) was especially useful for my understanding of this point. See Stone 1997a; Joyce 1997;

Therefore, the project of 'deconstructing history' has already been intensively debated by postmodern historians. Accepting the idea that historical reality is *to some extent* not clearly different from historical imagination, I would like to shift our focus from the 'discourse of history' to the 'culture of history'.

In fact, it is nothing new to say that 'history' is just one of the many modes of understanding the past. One finds classic examples in Mircea Eliade's *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1954)⁶¹ or Claude Lévi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind* (1966).⁶² In their works, myth or the 'savage mind' was suggested as an alternative way of constructing the past. Therefore, 'history' finds its cultural and methodological position opposite to 'mythology'. According to their arguments, history is not superior to myths anymore; history and myths simply have different cultural and historical origins. Another heated discussion over 'memory and history' has been raging since the 1980s.⁶³ Here, the term 'memory' instead of 'history' has been suggested as an alternative way of approaching the past. Some suggest history and memory in an oppositional way,⁶⁴ others suggest history as one mode of memory,⁶⁵ and others suggest interdependence between history and memory.⁶⁶ In any sense, 'history' once again lost its universality.

Through the discussion over history, myths and memory, contemporary academic historical thinking has participated in the 'deconstruction of history'. After all the discussions about 'history of history', 'myths and history' and 'memory and history', one may safely say that (conventional academic) history has been culturally and historically specified as 'the Westernness of Western historical writing'.⁶⁷ To sum up, 'history' has been provincialized as 'Western',

Kelly 1997; Stone 1997b; Spiegel 1997b.

⁶¹ Eliade 1954.

⁶² Lévi-Strauss 1966.

⁶³ *Representations*' special issue on 'Memory and Counter-Memory' is one of the good examples of historians' attention to this topic. See Davis and Starn 1989; Nora 1989; Terdiman 1989; Roth 1989; Young 1989; Rosaldo 1989; Knapp 1989.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Nora 1989.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Hutton 1993.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Davis and Starn 1989; Le Goff 1992; Hamilton 1994.

⁶⁷ The term 'the Westernness of Western historical writing' is from Curthoys and Docker 1999:6. See also, Chakrabarty 1992.

historicized as nineteenth century, and has therefore lost its universality and been specified as just one of many modes of exploring the past.

1.7. Third Fieldwork

Back in Sydney, I started to structure the thesis and wrote the first drafts of three chapters.⁶⁸ I also made a couple of presentations at conferences in order to receive feedback from academics. Through this process, I found I needed to follow up several small questions to crystallise the issues and make my arguments clearer. Ann McGrath also suggested I make a legal agreement regarding copyright with the community members. Of course, I also knew learning the *ngumpin* way and their history is simply never ending work. I may be able to collect enough information to complete the thesis, but that is not the end of my journey to the Gurindji way of historical practice. In addition, I missed the people in Daguragu so much. There were enough reasons to do another fieldwork trip.

I arrived in the Daguragu community on 31st of December 1998, almost exactly one year since I had left there last time. I received a warm welcome from the Gurindji people again. When I met C'd Jimmy, he said to me, "I bin thinkin' longa you!"

Again I asked questions which I had brought from Sydney, but I learned more new stories from them as well. I also made an agreement with the Daguragu Community Government Council to share the copyright of the primary information – fieldnotes, tapes and photos – of my research. Helen Morris, one of the council members, complained that many researchers came there to study, but all the products had gone to Canberra. Accordingly, I added one more clause in our agreement saying I would submit my complete thesis to the community.⁶⁹

One day I showed them some newspaper clippings, lists of Aboriginal employment in cattle stations, and old photos.⁷⁰ Their reaction was more than I expected. They were excited to see those legal documents, newspapers, and

⁶⁸ Chapters 3, 4, 5.

⁶⁹ See Appendix 1.

⁷⁰ I acknowledge Erika Charola, a linguist living in Kalkaringi, who suggested that I show the archival documents to the Gurindji people.

especially photos of their own past. Therefore, I made another agreement with the Gurindji people. The Daguragu community government officially entrusted me with collecting the historical documents and photos related to the Gurindji history.

I believe our relationship has become more mutual: I learn the Gurindji people's history and take it to other places. At the same time, I bring the Gurindji history written by non-Aboriginal people back to their country. This process would make two-way communication between Gurindji and academic historians possible in a material sense. I believe these procedures balanced my legal as well as material practices as a cross-cultural historian.

However, I have not discussed my political and cross-cultural positioning as a Japanese scholar learning and exploring Gurindji history. In fact, in order to answer the question "why am I majoring in Aboriginal history?", I would like to claim that my Japanese cultural background will allow me to make a unique contribution to the field of Aboriginal studies. However, beforehand, I want to make clear that there are some pitfalls to avoid when asserting this point.

One such pitfall is claiming my 'objectivity' based on the fact that I am not an Australian. For example, Attwood adopted this strategy. He claimed he detached himself from political issues related to Aboriginal history because he was a New Zealander.⁷¹ If this is the case, I should be 'more objective' than him because I am not even a 'white' person. However, what is problematic here is academic historians' obsession with their 'objectivity'; the desire to take a politically neutral stance.⁷² As McGrath argues – and Attwood himself also admits – the practice of history itself is already involved with politics.⁷³ As I will discuss soon, my Japanese background may take me to a different political positioning with Indigenous or non-Indigenous Australians, but I do not intend to assert that I am taking a neutral political stance.

Another pitfall appears even more appealing: I may claim that aspects of my Japanese cultural-historical background such as Zen Buddhism, a community-based social environment, or Japan's continuous effort to integrate Eastern and

⁷¹ Attwood 1989:142-145.

⁷² Klaus Neuman makes a similar criticism of Richard Broome. See Neumann 1998:10-12.

⁷³ Attwood 1989:145; McGrath 1995a:385.

Western values, will bring new perspectives for understanding Aboriginal culture and their history. This may occur implicitly in my works, but not intentionally. In fact, an essentialistic notion of 'I, the Japanese' is rather problematic. Minoru Hokari as a 29 year-old middle-class, Japanese male is certainly a 'condition' of my thesis. However, if this condition forces me to present or 'theorize' Aboriginal/Gurindji history from a 'Japanese perspective', this is nothing but 'Japanese nativism', or replacing 'theory from the West' with 'theory from Japan'.⁷⁴ This does not solve any problems related to the postcolonial conditions of writing Aboriginal history.

Rejecting naive 'objectivism' as well as essentialistic 'nativism', I would like to set the positioning of my study in a more relational (i.e. cross-cultural) perspective. This work is the product of the Gurindji people's interaction with a Japanese person. I believe this 'relationship' itself is the very condition of my thesis. I want to explore this point here.

From the very beginning of my fieldwork, the Gurindji people saw me as a 'non-Aboriginal' as well as a 'non-white' person. They often asked me if I was a 'China-man', or if not, where I came from. In general everyday context, I was categorised as *kartiya*. However, if you ask them what *kartiya* means, they will instantly answer 'whitefella'. The Gurindji language has only two words for the general categorization of people – *kartiya* [whites] and *ngumpin* [Aboriginal]. Because I was obviously not *ngumpin*, I naturally fell into the category of *kartiya* – namely, 'non-Aboriginal'.

Nevertheless, my cultural positioning in the Daguragu community was not the same as whites. For example, they sometimes asked me what 'Japanese Dreaming' is like. The Gurindji people never ask this question to whites. Accordingly, they called me '*Japanee* [Japanese] *ngumpin*' when I talked about Japanese (relatively traditional) culture to them. They see Europeans as having no Dreaming.⁷⁵ However, there is a general understanding among the Gurindji people

⁷⁴ A similar point can be found in Ota 1996:301.

⁷⁵ Examination of the Gurindji understanding of Christianity requires another thesis. However, briefly speaking, most Gurindji *do not* regard Christianity or '*Ngaji* [Father/God] way' as European Dreaming; some say *Ngaji* way is for 'everybody', and others say *kartiya* [whites] do not know/understand the *Ngaji* way.

that Japanese, Chinese, Indians, 'Africans' and many other non-European people in the world all have their Dreaming or 'law'. When I told them that Japanese 'law' became more westernized, they sympathized with me and said, "*kartiya* way everywhere." My Asian background certainly created a particular dynamic between the Gurindji people and me. Here is another example: one day, a young man approached me and asked if I knew Pauline Hanson.⁷⁶ He explained that she does not like 'my mob' and 'your mob'. Then, he suggested that I sing sorcery songs with him to kill Hanson.

It is entirely fair to say that all fieldworkers establish their distinctive personal relationships with local people according to their distinctive personal backgrounds. In my case, being Japanese was certainly one of the essential factors in determining our relationship. As a result of such a relationship, I did not (have to) phrase the questions of colonial invasion as: "what did *we* do to your people and country?" Instead, our relationship implied my question was: "what did *they* do to your people and country?" I was not part of the colonised, but I was not part of the colonisers, either.

Furthermore, it also became a source of 'pride' for them that a person from overseas visited the Gurindji country to learn *ngumpin* way. The Gurindji elders often introduced me to the people from other communities by saying, "He nomo [not] from Sydney, nomo Melbourne. Him from Japan, oversea!" At the same time, my privileged position as an 'international student' also determined their request of me: they request that I circulate their stories not only in Australia, but also in Japan and many other countries all over the world.

These are the conditions which, without a doubt, shaped the structure and nature of my thesis.

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⁷⁶ A leader of the political party 'One Nation' which attacks multiculturalism, Aboriginal rights, and the 'Asianisation of Australia'.

1.8. Cross-Culturalizing History

Let us say that acknowledging the discovery of 'history as the product of the West' is our starting point today. Therefore, what needs to be done next is, I believe, the project of 'cross-culturalizing history'. Seeking a way of de-Westernising history, I would like to suggest the 're-expansion' of history in our academic and public practices. However, the re-expansion of history is never to be confused with the 're-universalising' of an Euro-academic notion of history, but rather 'cross-culturalizing' it.

For instance, I do not use the word 'myths' to describe the Gurindji way of historical practice not only because the word 'myths' still tends to indicate 'false history', but also because it often connotes sacredness to some degree. For example, Aboriginal Dreaming stories can be called myths as they are sacred stories, but the Aboriginal stories of colonial experiences which I mainly deal with in my thesis are not necessarily sacred. The common notion of myths is often incompatible with many different societies' practices of interaction of the past and present. I also do not use the word 'memory' because the Gurindji mode of history is neither simply the knowledge of the past nor the way of remembering (and forgetting) the past.

Greg Denning says, "history is not the past. It is a consciousness of the past for present purposes."⁷⁷ Following his suggestion, I would like to use the word 'history' as a mode of exploring and expressing the past. As I will discuss in the following chapters, the Gurindji cultural practice towards the past is intellectual (often analytical) as well as physical (often bodily and mobile). To describe the Gurindji people's cultural practice, I have yet to find a better word than 'history'. I want to suggest that there are non-Western cultural practices for exploring and expressing the past that cannot be categorised as myths or memory. I believe that one finds history everywhere if one does not stick to narrowly defined, 'stereotyped' Western concepts of history. In the same way as myths and memory can be found in all societies, history should be found in every society as well.

Curthoys and Docker express their doubts about non-Western modes of historical thinking by saying, "we cannot think without or beyond distinctions

⁷⁷ Denning 1996:72.

between future, present, and past, and such thinking is deep in the classical and Judeo-Christian heritage."⁷⁸ Given the fact that we are all inescapably influenced by the 'hyperreal Europe'⁷⁹ in the contemporary world, their pessimism may be well-founded, especially in the field of the very European-oriented institution called 'academia'.

Nevertheless, I hold some optimism, not necessarily because both Gurindji people and I are not part of the Judeo-Christian heritage, but because 'cultural diversities' have been widely recognised in the postcolonial academic and public domains. Furthermore, and more importantly, we do not need to deny the nineteenth century European concept of history, but simply allow it to interact with other styles of history. In the same way as Chakrabarty's project of provincializing Europe is not the project of denying 'Europe',⁸⁰ cross-culturalizing history does not deny the European concept of history either. The re-expansion of history should be a series of interactions and conversations between different cultural modes of historical practices. Cross-culturalizing history is the project of seeking a dialogue between conventional academic history and other modes of histories, both of which are inevitably culturally specific.

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Chakrabarty's project of provincializing Europe gives us an insight into the possibility of cross-culturalizing history. Facing the very postcolonial question of 'history and Europe', Chakrabarty suggests thinking in two seemingly contradictory directions: on one hand, emancipating histories of any kind from the West, and on the other hand, staying within 'universal' humanity and rationality which derived from the West. Therefore, instead of 'cultural relativism' or 'rejection of modernity', he suggests writing a history "that deliberately makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own representative

⁷⁸ Curthoys and Docker 1999:6.

⁷⁹ The term 'hyperreal Europe' is from Chakrabarty 1992.

⁸⁰ Chakrabarty 1992:20-23.

strategies and practices".⁸¹ Likewise, he claims the project of provincializing Europe acknowledges "the indispensability of European political thought to representations of non-European political modernity, and yet struggles with the problems of representations that this indispensability invariably creates."⁸²

In my understanding, Chakrabarty's project challenges the European notion of history (historicism) by using the European notion of history (academic historical practice); therefore this is an 'internal struggle' or a critique of the discipline from within the same discipline.⁸³ Chakrabarty explicitly makes a distinction between postcolonial critiques of historicism and those by postmodernists and poststructuralists of the West.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, as postmodern history does, the internal struggle towards the notion of history inevitably leads him to philosophising about the problem of history. *Provincializing Europe* is appropriately subtitled, 'Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference'. His philosophical tools for this project are drawn mainly from the analytic tradition found in Karl Marx's social science and the hermeneutic tradition found in Martin Heidegger's philosophy.⁸⁵ Therefore, Chakrabarty's project of provincializing Europe can be seen as a philosophical way of destabilising the European notion of history.⁸⁶

Instead of engaging in a philosophical inquiry, my project of cross-culturalizing history takes an ethnographic approach towards the problem of 'history and Europe'. I do, of course, accept Chakrabarty's argument that we – academic historians – all have to give positive answers to the following two questions: can the story be told/crafted? And does it allow for a rationally-

⁸¹ Chakrabarty 1992:23.

⁸² Chakrabarty 2000a:22.

⁸³ Chakrabarty writes, "This post-colonial writing of history in a country where 'history' came as a means of colonial and nationalist domination necessarily ends up suggesting ways of critiquing the discipline itself." See Chakrabarty 1991:111.

⁸⁴ Chakrabarty 2000a:6-7.

⁸⁵ Chakrabarty also emphasises the importance of Derrida, Lyotard and Levinas as philosophers of 'difference' and 'non-commensurability'. See Chakrabarty 1995:758.

⁸⁶ I would like to thank Dipesh Chakrabarty for permission to read the unpublished introduction of his new book. I ordered the book, but it has not arrived. Therefore, my discussion is based only on the introduction of the book.

defensible point of view or position from which tell the story?⁸⁷ Following these conditions for telling histories, we inevitably face the problem of 'pasts that cannot enter history ever as belonging to the historian's own position', which Chakrabarty calls, 'subaltern pasts'.⁸⁸ Giving an example of Ranajit Guha's study of the revolt of the Santal people who claimed that Thakur [god] was the main instigator of their rebellion, Chakrabarty argues the Santal's own non-secular supernatural understanding of the event needs to be reinterpreted in an anthropological manner. However, he continues by saying that the anthropological politeness of "I respect your beliefs but they are not mine" does not bridge the gap.⁸⁹ Therefore, there is inevitably "a hiatus separating two radically different experiences of historicity, a hiatus that cannot be bridged by an exercise that simply studies the Santal's statement as evidence for anthropology."⁹⁰

Therefore, Chakrabarty seems to disagree with anthropologizing 'subaltern pasts', for it does not solve the problems of the gap between 'our history' and 'their history'. Instead, he suggests recognising the 'limits of history' and staying within the gap between the differences that "signals an irreducible plurality in our own experiences of historicity".⁹¹ However, the ethnographic approach for cross-culturalizing history is not simply a process of anthropologizing 'subaltern pasts'. To explain this, I need to look briefly at the disciplines called 'historical anthropology' (or sometimes 'anthropological history') and 'ethnohistory' which have been influential among European and North American academic historians especially from the 1960s to the 1980s.

For instance, Chakrabarty emphasises the contrast between anthropological approaches of the British historians Edward P. Thompson or Keith Thomas with Guha's 'hermeneutic strategy' of reading historical documents.⁹² Furthermore, the so-called third generation of the *Annales* school,

⁸⁷ Chakrabarty 1997:18.

⁸⁸ Chakrabarty 1997:24.

⁸⁹ Chakrabarty 1997:23-24.

⁹⁰ Chakrabarty 1997:24.

⁹¹ Chakrabarty 1997:26.

⁹² Chakrabarty 2000b:22-23. For works of Thompson and Thomas, see, for example, Thompson 1963, 1978; Thomas 1963, 1971.

such as Jacques Le Goff⁹³ and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie,⁹⁴ were the leaders of historical anthropology in France.⁹⁵ In addition, Natalie Z. Davis,⁹⁶ Carlo Ginzburg,⁹⁷ Robert Darnton,⁹⁸ and Peter Burke⁹⁹ are some other key historians of this discipline. It is dreadful to generalise their diverse works and debates, however, it is probably safe to say historical anthropologists often share an interest in structural anthropology, interpretative anthropology, symbolism, or semiotic models which derived mainly from anthropological theorists such as Marcel Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Mary Douglas, Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz.¹⁰⁰ Applying contemporary anthropological frameworks, historians tried to interpret the historical events – often in medieval or modernising Europe¹⁰¹ – in an anthropological manner. Historical anthropology certainly succeeded in shifting historians' concern from political history to socio-cultural history in which ordinary people's everyday life and their mentality became the focus of historical studies.

However, critics of this approach have questioned the misapplication of anthropological concepts to historical cases. As Davis warns, "There is no way that a ritual in New Guinea or Zambia can be used to establish the meaning and uses of a ritual, say, in sixteenth-century Europe".¹⁰² From a postcolonial perspective, it is also problematic to claim cultural equivalents between the 'European past' and the 'primitive present'.

In North America, the term 'ethnohistory' is often used in an almost identical sense to historical anthropology, but it also implies study of a history of

⁹³ See, for example, Le Goff and Nora:1985; Le Goff 1992.

⁹⁴ See, for example, Le Roy Ladurie 1978, 1979, 1981a, 1981b.

⁹⁵ On the general description of historical anthropology in France, see, for example, Dosse 1994:Chap.5.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Davis 1975, 1982, 1983.

⁹⁷ See, for example, Ginzburg 1980.

⁹⁸ See, for example, Darnton 1985.

⁹⁹ See, for example, Burke 1987, 1990.

¹⁰⁰ Cohn 1982:242; Burke 1987:4; Dosse 1994:Chap.5; Spiegel 1997:185-189.

¹⁰¹ One of the interesting exceptions is the debate over Captain Cook's death. See Sahlins 1985, 1995; Obeyesekere 1992.

¹⁰² Davis 1982:2.3. See also, Adams 1982.

non-Western ethnic societies – typically the history of North American ‘natives’. Ethnohistorians call for writing a history from a ‘native’s own stand point’ and also emphasise the historical change in ‘authentic natives’ who were previously viewed as anthropological objects.¹⁰³ However, the problem we can see here is the dichotomisation of ‘normal history’ and ‘ethnohistory’. In his *Performances* (1996), Denning says, “‘ethno-’ does not mean ‘primitive’ any more than ‘anthro-’ does, and I have objections to being thought to do ethnohistory of the ‘primitives’ and history of the ‘civilised’.”¹⁰⁴

Cross-culturalizing history is not a project which is equivalent to these previous anthropological or ethnohistorical approaches towards history. I do not suggest an anthropological analysis of past events, and I strongly disagree with making a distinction between histories of the West and non-West. Instead, I suggest *anthropologizing a mode of history itself* by making it interact with Western/academic and non-Western/non-academic historical practices.

Returning to Chakrabarty’s doubts about anthropology and ‘subaltern pasts’, I believe an ethnographic approach for cross-culturalizing history is the appropriate way of ‘staying within the gap’ between different cultural modes of historical practices. It does reinterpret ‘subaltern pasts’ (as well as ‘subaltern presents’, ‘subaltern bodies’ and ‘subaltern places’), but this is neither for creating a third position which assimilates two different historical practices, nor for simply showing ‘anthropological politeness’. On the contrary, ethnographic interpretation needs to be done in order to create a space in which we are able to think through the difference. In other words, the ethnographic approach towards different historical practices is not a way of filling the gap between two different historical practices, but instead it is a process of making it visible and demonstrating *what this gap looks like*.

This is what I would like to call cross-cultural studies. Cross-cultural practice is not as optimistic as claiming “we can fully understand each other”. Nor

¹⁰³ See, for example, Cohen 1982:233-236. In Aboriginal historiography, there are some archaeologists and historians explicitly using the term ‘ethnohistory’. See, for example, Corris 1969; McBryde 1978, 1979, 1984; Kirkby 1980.

¹⁰⁴ Denning 1996:45

is it as pessimistic as claiming "there is no way of communication between us." Instead, this is a practice of searching for ways of making conversation over the gap, and from within it, destabilising the conventional notion of modern-Western-academic cultural practice. Chakrabarty himself implies this kind of communication by saying, "we have a pre-theoretical, everyday understanding of it [the supernatural] precisely because the supernatural or the divine, as principles, have not disappeared from the life of the modern."¹⁰⁵

Today, I believe that acknowledging the cultural gap but not abandoning the task of making conversation across the gap is at the very edge of our historical practices, 'moving as close as possible to Aboriginal pasts'.

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As discussed above, anthropological disciplines of Aboriginal studies have been criticised by historians twice; once when Aboriginal history emerged, and again when anthropological practice was historicized. Nevertheless, I take an alternative route; the project of cross-culturalizing history takes an ethnographic approach in order to criticise historical disciplines. In the same way that anthropology should not monopolise Aboriginal studies, academic history cannot monopolise them either. Anthropology was historicized, and now history needs to be anthropologized.

There are pioneering scholars in the area of anthropologizing history. To my knowledge, among the most important works (in both quality and quantity) are Denning's studies of Pacific history. Denning has explicitly called his discipline ethnographic history or ethnohistory since the 1960s.¹⁰⁶ However, as I discussed above, Denning disagrees with popular usage of the term 'ethnohistory', and has defined it in his own way: "Ethnohistory is the focused conversation we have about the ways in which historical consciousness is culturally distinct and socially specific and how, in whatever culture or social circumstance, the past constitutes

¹⁰⁵ Chakrabarty 1997:27. See also, Chakrabarty 2000a:16.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Denning 1966, 1988a, 1988b, 1992.

the present in being known."¹⁰⁷ He also calls for 'a poetic for histories' and suggests, "History is a human universal. Knowledge of the past is expressed by all human beings according to their different cultural and social systems. ... There are histories, like cultures, that need an ethnographic description for their forms and structures and functions. A poetic for histories is that ethnographic description."¹⁰⁸ Although his way of doing ethnohistory is based more on documentary evidence than conducting fieldwork for oral historical research, Denning's notion of history in every culture and its ethnographic description is certainly the path I wish to follow.

Klaus Neumann's *Not the Way It Really Was* (1992)¹⁰⁹ is another excellent example of ethnographic history. This is a work based on multiple voices from the past and present (Tolai people, missionaries, anthropologists, administrators, and historians) in order to construct the past (and present) of the Tolai people of Papua New Guinea. Although Neumann uses the Tolai people's oral accounts as the main structure, he also plays with multiple approaches towards the Tolai people's past. Naturally, Neumann rejects the conventional historical approach of discovering 'the way it really was', which he criticises as an academic obsession with the 'objective' 'chronological' 'factual' 'truth' of the past.¹¹⁰

Since I will exclusively use the Gurindji people's oral accounts and treat other accounts (mainly archival documents) only as supplementary sources, my project of learning the Gurindji history based on the Gurindji mode of historical practice is probably less of a multiple approach than Neumann's. Instead, I hope my work will effectively explore the nature and structure of the Gurindji way of practising history, and thus, show the 'reality' of the Gurindji people's history, and at the same time, make our (the Gurindji's and my) cross-cultural negotiation over history visible.

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¹⁰⁷ Denning 1996:44.

¹⁰⁸ Denning 1996:36-37. A similar point can be found in Cohen 1994.

¹⁰⁹ Neumann 1992a.

¹¹⁰ See, especially, Neumann 1992a:Chap.6. See also, Neumann 1992b, 1998.

1.9. Meeting Place

I would like to emphasise that during my fieldwork no Gurindji person ever asked me the question "why are you studying Gurindji history?" Instead, their question was:

"Why do *kartiya* [non-Aboriginals] never learn from us?"

"Why do they never listen to our stories?"

After my second fieldwork trip, I also began to realise the Gurindji people's purpose of teaching me their law and history. They often told me that non-Aboriginal people should know their stories. Old Jimmy said as follows:

"When you go back to your place, don't forget that you look story longa your book [fieldnotes]. ... Maybe your boss look that book (and says) 'Oh, he got good story. ... On the history, now that book.' They look, they gonna follow the book. What you bin learn'em on this country, on the history, they gotta follow that law. That's the way."

As I already discussed, they knew I was from a different country called Japan. They understood their stories would be carried not only around Australia, but also overseas. They seemed to be proud of this.

They also clearly understand their current political situation, or a recurrence of Australian racism.¹¹¹ After telling me what 'Captain Cook' had done in their country, Mick Rangiari showed his anger towards the governmental policy: "Government want us back to that time, live in humpy, nomo [no more] house, nomo *motika* [car] ... Government never listen, government try to change the law, hard for *mibala* [us]" He also told what I have to do: "Send books, spread out story all around. Send this cassette [tape recordings] your people. Let them know. ... Spread out Gurindji *jaru* [stories]!"

Why am I majoring in Aboriginal studies? One answer is that this Japanese person who used to study economics was coincidentally interested in

¹¹¹ On the resurgence of racism in Australia, See Gray and Winter 1997.

Dening advised us not to write a thesis for three examiners, but to write a book to change the world.¹¹⁴ This is probably what the Gurindji elders expect me to do. The Dreaming brought me there all the way from Japan in order to let people know about the teachings from Gurindji country.

Say someone, for example my thesis examiner asks me, "Do you believe Dreaming told you to write this?" I will instantly answer, "No, I don't believe it." However, if you ask, "Are you sure you don't believe it?" Then I will have to think carefully and will probably say, "No, I'm not sure." This is why I do not value the idea of belief. The notion of 'belief' brings us to cultural separatism. The concept of 'belief' cannot explain how the Dreaming dwells in me.

All I know is that the Gurindji people spent a lot of time with me – and this is not because they were dedicated to my PhD. They perceived me to be a person who could bring their stories to a wider audience.

So here you are...

¹¹⁴ I wish to express my gratitude to Ann McGrath, Ann Curthoys and all the participants of this Visiting Scholar Program held by the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, ANU in 1999. Without their encouragement, I would never have dared to write my thesis in such an experimental way.

Chapter 2

Practising Gurindji History: History Happening in/between Body and Place

I awakened here when the earth was new
There was emu, wombat, kangaroo
No other man of a different hue
I am this land
And this land is me
(Hyllus Haris 1988)

2.1. Preparation for the Journey to Gurindji History

As argued in the previous chapter, we cannot use the conventional academic sense of 'history' when referring to the Gurindji way of historical practice. That being said, what kind of preparation do we need before learning Gurindji history? This chapter explores this question, through a discussion of several aspects of the Gurindji cultural practices from which their history has been developed. I am hoping this foundation will make clear the nature of 'place-oriented history' or the conditions of the Gurindji way of historical practice.

2.1.1. How I write is not how they taught me

First, however, I should make it clear that it is not a Gurindji way of teaching to start with 'foundation work'. Rather, this is my personal approach. You may wonder why I do not present their teachings as they taught me. My first response has already been given in the previous chapter: unfortunately, you are not in the Gurindji country with the Gurindji people. This work is inevitably my interpretation of my experience in the Gurindji country. As long as 'I write' the Gurindji history, it is impossible to present their teachings 'as they taught me'.

However, another noteworthy point is that the Gurindji history has no authentic text which everyone can access. Their teachings have been situational and contained in dialogue between them and myself. If you are female, if you are 50 years old, if you are European, or if you were there in 1950s, their ways of teaching as well as the teachers would all be different. Therefore, even though I

present my fieldnotes and transcripts here, such words do not contain the exclusive authenticity of the Gurindji history at all. The Gurindji history is not 'there' like a textbook waiting for anonymous people to buy and read it. The Gurindji history is living knowledge and practice which has been developed and maintained through interaction between the Gurindji people and their country, other Aboriginal people, and sometimes even with fieldworkers such as myself.

Therefore, Gurindji history is situational, but this does not have to mean that Gurindji history has no general consensus. The Gurindji history has always been shared among the people. Thus, it is worth trying to present their history here and share their teachings with you. Furthermore, my relationship with readers is different from the Gurindji people's relationship with me. Since circumstances have changed, my way of telling Gurindji history should naturally be re-situated as well. I believe this foundation chapter is important because I and my readers are both, in most cases, non-Gurindji. Despite it being an unusual practice in academic writings, I will often use the second-person -- 'you' and 'your' -- especially in this chapter as part of my narrative strategy. This is because I would like to imply that the Gurindji mode of historical practice should not be treated just as 'their practice' but something we can learn and apply to our own practices.

While staying in the Daguragu/Kalkaringi community, I found there were certain aspects of history which were 'common sense' to the Gurindji people but not to me. Therefore, I realised the importance of discussing this 'implicit knowledge' as well as the explicit teachings of the Gurindji historians. Gurindji history is a cultural practice for the Gurindji people, but it is not always so cultural for non-Gurindji people. This is why I think we need a foundation work.

However, it is neither possible nor necessary in this chapter to explore every aspect of Gurindji cultural practices as a whole. The discussion will focus on the cultural and social conditions of the Gurindji way of historical practice. At the same time, metaphysical questions such as "what is the concept of history to Gurindji people?" are not the central issue here. Such questions will be examined in each of the following chapters.

Instead, I discuss here the more 'physical' conditions of the Gurindji

history, such as body, space or mobility, as well as their system of knowledge and their ways of maintaining history. I believe these are the key elements of the Gurindji history. Unlike the academic way of maintaining history, the reality of the Gurindji people's history is not located in archives, museums or publications. It dwells in their bodies and their land, as well as in their living knowledge and its interactions. Interaction between physical conditions and knowledge systems are fundamental for the process of learning the Gurindji way of historical practices.

Let us prepare for a journey into Gurindji history.

2.2. Body: Paying Attention to the History

2.2.1. Your body is for paying attention to the world

Let me start with how to use one's body to practise Gurindji history.

The Gurindji people, especially the elders, often sit on the ground and do nothing for a long time. *I thought* they were doing nothing. If there is no ceremony or urgent meeting, they will often spend all day apparently doing nothing. You may wake up early in the morning and sit down in the men's cultural area (men's boughshade) if you are a man. Women have women's boughshade. If you are hungry, you have breakfast at smoko time. You eat your tucker under the tree next to the shop and stay there for a while. You may go back to the men's or women's boughshade and, if you like, play cards with other people. Otherwise, you probably just sit there until you get hungry again.

What are the elders doing while sitting on the ground and being still?

It took me a while to realise that they were actually 'seeing', 'listening', and 'feeling'. If you want to know what is happening in this world, you should stay still and pay attention to the world. Be aware of what is happening around you. Do not make your own 'noise' which often fogs your senses.

The Gurindji elders did not teach me in the way I wrote above. Instead, when I sat with them they told me what they saw and heard. They told me, for example, that you could see the thick cloud over the hill so it would rain soon,

you could hear fighting happening on the other side of the community, maybe grog or jealous business, or you could feel the warm wind from the north, that's why it's very hot these days. If dogs started barking at each other, they pointed to the dogs and told me they were fighting or playing. You see an aeroplane coming in this direction, so it may be a mail plane or flying doctor plane.

Of course, I could see and hear as they did, but I did not 'pay attention' to such things. In the community, I certainly paid attention to the people who told me the stories, but I could not pay enough attention to the many other things around me. In fact, I am not only like this in the community. I am often preoccupied by my own work, thoughts, or schedule so that sitting down and being still meant doing nothing to me.

The concept I learned was: do not use your body and senses to look for something. Instead, something will come to you if you are quiet enough to take notice. Keeping your body still and using your senses is the way to know the world. The Gurindji elders pay attention to the clouds, the light, the wind, the dogs or the aeroplanes because this is the way to know the world around you. They even pay attention to the voice of Dreaming, which, unfortunately, may not be easy for us to follow because of our (the Gurindji and the non-Aboriginal) cultural gap. I usually try to understand the world by asking and searching. However, Gurindji people demonstrated to me how to know the world by simply being still and paying attention.¹

The art of knowing is not always the way of searching, but often the way of paying attention.

In fact, this way of using your senses not only applies when you are sitting, but also while moving your body. Paying attention to the world is even more acute while moving around the country. Furthermore, this does not just apply to the elders. Gurindji people – young or old, female or male – listen and see very carefully, and tell each other what is happening around them while they are moving. For instance, you see birds are flying over there, the bush fire down

¹ A similar point is made by Rose 1999.

south, crocodiles have moved to the other side of the river, many donkeys are here and braying too loudly, or the fire site is there, someone must have been there recently. They see and listen, then report and share their findings with each other.

You move your body not only for hunting or visiting other people, but also for knowing what is happening around you. Therefore, you do not always make your own 'noise'. I am using the word 'noise' here not in the sense of a loud sound, but as the preoccupation of your own thoughts which fog your senses. My attention was often so lost and scattered that I could not receive as much information from the world as the Gurindji people did.

Your body is the essential medium through which you know the world. It does not matter if you are sitting, standing, or moving. Pay more attention to the world around you and use your senses to receive the information from the world.

2.2.2. Your body for practising history

Paying attention is also essential when the Gurindji people practise their history. Paying attention to the world means not only knowing what is happening, but also remembering what happened here and there. The Gurindji people do not search for history as academic historians do. Instead, they *pay attention* to their history. History often comes to you if you are alert enough to notice it. While you are sitting or moving, you can see, listen and feel the history around yourself only if you are sensitive and knowledgeable enough to notice it.

When I say 'taking notice of the history around yourself', I am not mystifying or romanticising the Gurindji way of historical practice. I am simply emphasising that, for the Gurindji people, history is not a subject that you 'choose' to learn. Instead, history is happening everywhere in everyday life. For instance, you drive a car to visit your family in another community and see a hill, and you remember (or you hear the elders' teachings or discussion) that Aboriginal people were killed there by *kartiya* [whitefella] in the early days. While hunting, you remember (or are told) not to go into that cave because dead people's bones and spirits are in there. You are fishing in a waterhole and you remember (or are told) that this old man's father dived underwater here and asked the rainbow snake to make a big rain. That's how old Wave Hill station was

washed away in 'early days'. You see drunken people fighting each other and you remember (and discuss) how and why grog was introduced to the Gurindji country. When someone 'stole' an old man's promised wife, the elders are grumbling that *ngumpin* [Aboriginal] law was 'more hard' when they were young.

History should be listened to, seen and felt around oneself in everyday life. History is something your body can sense, remember and practise.

However, if you are too busy doing other things, or if you do not have much time to sit still and wait, the elders often do not mind telling you the history in response to your questions. I tried to avoid this way of learning history, but I have to admit that I sometimes asked my questions to elders because my schedule was restricted. After all, everybody knew that I was a visitor. The Gurindji people kindly understood and accepted my *kartiya* attitude.

The body is also essential in order to express history. Story telling is often communicated by your body actions. Body (action) is part of human memories of the past. How the *kartiya* shot the Aboriginal people, how the Aboriginal people speared the kangaroo before using rifles, how the people used to be chained at the police station. These stories were all performed through miming the physical actions. In addition, the Gurindji people often draw diagrams on the ground to explain their history. They also use stones, trees, seeds, fish, kangaroos, rivers, hills, billabongs, rain, clouds, sun, hands, heads, faces, spears, boomerangs, nulla-nulla, hats, cars, rifles and many other objects to express their history. For the Gurindji people, all bodies, objects and landscapes contain memories. Therefore, historical practice includes not only words, but also visual expression.

The body is essential for practising Gurindji history. Whoever you may be as an individual, you see the history. You listen to the history. Your body senses and feels the history. You remember history by listening, seeing, and sharing. And you practise history by remembering and performing. You use your body by listening, seeing, visiting, performing, sharing, sitting, moving, and interacting. The Gurindji historians demonstrated to me that historical practice is a bodily work. It is a lived experience.

2.3. The World: History of Maintenance

Let us shift our focus from the body to the 'space' in which our body is unavoidably located. I have already emphasised how to use one's body to pay attention to the world, but I have not yet explored what the world is like in the Gurindji cosmology.

2.3.1. What is in the world?

According to the Gurindji people, the world is full of life. In fact, it is not easy to find non-living beings in this world. Deborah B. Rose explains this idea by saying, "For many Aboriginal people, everything in the world is alive: animals, trees, rains, sun, moon, some rocks and hills, and people are all conscious. So too are other beings such as the Rainbow Snake, the Hairy People and the Stumpy Men. All have a right to exist, all have their own places of belonging, all have their own Law and culture."²

My experience in the Gurindji country was similar to what Rose describes. There are many living beings, especially in the bush. Apart from plants and animals, there are, for example, *kaya* [ghosts] living in the cave that come out at night and kill you and steal the meat from your campsite. *Mungamunga* in the bush and *kurrukang* in the water are both beautiful women who seduce men and sleep with them. *Munpa* [bush blackfella] are dangerous people. They live in the bush and envy the Aboriginal people living in the community. Bush blackfella often drive a black car and come to the community to steal food and women. Dead people's spirits are often around too. They may help and protect you, but you should be careful because they can also be *kaya*. As I will discuss soon, Dreaming or ancestral beings are all alive in the world too. They include stones, hills, rivers, waterholes, rainbows as well as animals, insects and plants.

What is probably more important is that the earth itself is alive too. Jimmy Mangayarri told me this. He picked up a handful of sand and taught me that you may think this *janyja* [soil] was just soil, but this was a 'man'. He also said the earth tells you the 'right way'. Furthermore, one of Old Jimmy's favourite sayings

² Rose 1996:23.

is, "Don't matter what it is, everything come out longa this earth."³ You may find similar explanations in other ethnographies. For example, an Aboriginal person in the Kimberley told Erich Kolig that the ground is like 'a huge battery' that maintains life. You can 're-charge' this battery by practising rituals.⁴ The world is full of life. Moreover, every living being comes from the earth which is also alive. In this sense, one may say the world is alive.

However, what is it really meant by 'the world is alive'? How is it possible? Up until this point, we understand that the world is alive, but we have not learned how and why. These questions cannot be answered without understanding the creation and maintenance of this world in Gurindji cosmology.

Welcome to the world of Dreaming.

2.3.2. Dreaming-1: origin of the world

When Old Jimmy says that everything comes from the earth, he means that everything was created and has been maintained by the earth. I understood this 'earth' as the most general or abstract idea of Dreaming.

The earth, or in a sense, 'place' is neither a conceptual nor non-organic space in which every being exists and lives. Instead, place is the origin, cause and reason of every life and its existence. To describe this, Old Jimmy often uses the following five different words: 'earth', 'Dreaming', 'law', 'right way' and 'history'.

At first glance, these words seem to explain the sequence of the world's creation. A naive understanding of Old Jimmy's teaching is that the earth was there first. Then, Dreaming came out to shape the place and other beings. Dreaming beings came out of the earth, travelled to other countries and made everything. Creatures are not just plants, animals and people, but the landscape itself is also a product of Dreaming. Dreaming also made the 'law' for this created world so that we can maintain the world by following and practising the law. Instead of 'law', Old Jimmy sometimes uses the word 'right way' referring to the

³ See Chap.3

⁴ Kolig 1987:128.

Dreaming 'track' as well as ethical behaviour. Eventually, this became the history of the maintained world.

However, Old Jimmy's teaching is not really as simple as this, because earth, Dreaming, law, 'right way' and history are also interchangeable with one another. For instance, when Dreaming shaped that hill and made law, the hill became the law itself. In general, the landscape is not just the product of Dreaming, but is itself Dreaming. In the same way, Dreaming did not just create the law – Dreaming is the law. Since Dreaming itself is law, a place becomes the law as well.

This concept of 'law' is of fundamental importance when one discusses the Gurindji moral philosophy. Billy Bunter, another elder of Daguragu, often told me that "Our law is this hill, that river" so that nobody can change the law. Law does not only come from the earth, but law is the earth. For the Gurindji people, law is tangible, visible and physical. Landscape is Dreaming, therefore, landscape is law. To sum up, Gurindji's landscape is earth, Dreaming, and law.

However, once again, what is the relationship between these three terms? How could it be possible that earth, Dreaming and law are identical? At this point, I would like to remind you of another of Old Jimmy's terms: 'right way'. Using this phrase, Old Jimmy teaches us there is an issue of morality. As I will discuss at length in Chapter 3, 'right way' is a geographical Dreaming track *as well as* ethical behaviour. In Gurindji moral philosophy, the 'right way' does not include the physical/metaphysical separation. 'Right way' is a geographical landscape as well as human (and non-human) behaviour. Morality is spatial as well as behavioural. The earth, Dreaming and law are identical because all of these have the same essential quality, namely, the 'right way' or the morality of the world.

Accordingly, another question arises: why is the Dreaming landscape moral? What is the ethical aspect? Or more generally, what does 'morality' mean in the Gurindji country? These new questions shift our attention from the origin of the world to the way of maintaining the world.

2.3.3. Dreaming-2: history of maintaining the world

Dreaming stories tell you not only about the origin of the world, but also how the

world has been maintained. The world has been moral because Dreaming came out of the earth not only for creating but also for maintaining the world.

Now it has become clearer why the earth or Dreaming is 'law'. This is because Dreaming teaches us how to look after this created world. The Gurindji people have been a part of moral history because they have been participating in sustaining the world by following the Dreaming, or the 'right way'. However, needless to say, maintaining the world is not like maintaining a car. You are a part of the world while you are not a part of your car. The world is not an object to be maintained. Instead, people can exist because the world is alive and keeps its morality, and the world exists because people are alive and keep their morality. It is significant in the Gurindji sense of morality: the world maintains you as you maintain the world.

Here, I am using the term 'morality' in the sense of the attitude as well as the visible evidence of the maintained world. Moral behaviour is an attitude which contributes to sustaining the world. Ritual practice is a typical example. Visiting your country and communicating with your country or ancestral beings is also an important practice for maintaining the world.

At the same time, you should find physical evidence – visible memories – that show the world is maintaining its morality. That hill is there, and this river is here. This Dreaming rock is here and that Dreaming waterhole is still there. Bush tucker is always around the country. The rainbow snake is active in making big rain during the seasonal cycle. These are all visible memories of the world's creation as well as the evidence that the morality of Dreaming has been maintained. In fact, such memories themselves are 'visible morality' because if these objects and landscape are broken, the world loses its morality. The 'right way' or law is morality. In the same way, the landscape is moral, and Dreaming is moral. You may still ask morality for what purpose? The answer is, however, now clear: for maintaining the living world, a part of which is the people themselves.

This is the 'history' of the moral world. This is history because this is how the world has been maintained. Landscape is history because it contains visible memories and evidence that the world has been maintained. The Gurindji people are also part of moral history because they hold their memories of world's

creation, and thus, they are the evidence that the world has been maintained.

Before moving to the next inquiry, I would like to note that, for the Gurindji people, history is not just a story of the past. The earth is always there. That hill has been there and should always be there. Dreaming is always active, and therefore this world should always be maintained. In short, the Gurindji world has been maintained by Gurindji practice, as it should be maintained. Therefore, Dreaming is not just a story of the past, it contains the present and the *potential* future at the same time. That hill was there, is there and will be there. So was/is/should be Dreaming, earth, law, 'right way' and history. Dreaming is a story of any time. More precisely, it *should be* in any time.

Earth, Dreaming, 'right way' and law are the origin of the world and the history of maintaining the world. Dreaming is the moral history. As long as the world is alive, moral history is happening there. Landscape is the history. Gurindji people are the history. You can see, listen, touch and feel the history through your physical interaction with memories of the places. In other words, history can always occur everywhere as long as both place and people are part of it.

By focusing on the world, we learn what the world looks like, where the world comes from and how the world has been maintained. Dreaming is the moral history because it tells us how and why the world has been alive and maintained. The Gurindji people are part of this moral world and history. What about us? Are we (non-Gurindji/non-Aboriginal) also a part of this moral history? This question is answered in the stories by Gurindji historians in the following chapters.

2.4. Movement: Its Function and Ethics

I need to shift focus once more. I have discussed the meaning and function of the body and the world, but I have not explored the relationship between them. I mentioned that people are a part of the living world. The relation between you and the world is not like subject and object. If so, then, what is it like?

I will explore two key issues: mobility and knowledge. At first glance, these seem to be totally different issues: movement is a physical matter and knowledge is a metaphysical issue. However, in my understanding, the relationship between mobility and epistemology is fundamental to exploring the

conditions of Gurindji historical practice. In my understanding of Gurindji philosophy, the relationship between their movement and their epistemology is a clue to answering the question:

How is 'self' related to the world?

2.4.1. Gurindji mobility

When I was at Daguragu, I was amazed by how frequently people moved. Some people were away for a couple of weeks visiting their relatives; some had gone to Darwin and nobody knew if they would ever come back. Visiting other communities for ceremony is as usual as doing ceremony in your own community. Even staying in the community, people love to go bush, hunting, fishing, swimming or even just moving around their country.

The simple explanation of Aboriginal mobility is commonly given: Aboriginal people are 'nomadic'. It is of no doubt that Gurindji people were and, in many aspects still are, 'nomadic'. But do we know why? Anthropologists used to explain Aboriginal mobility by economic necessity.⁵ A hunting and gathering economy is possible only by constantly moving your camping sites. However, contemporary Aboriginal mobility cannot be explained in this way, since today you can access enough food within the community. Today, most of the food eaten is from the shop located within the community. The Gurindji people often go hunting, fishing and gathering, but normally this is not because they are hungry.

In fact, I do not need to discuss 'why they move' as the answers are often very clear: because the Gurindji people like hunting, because they like bush tucker, because there is a ceremony in another community, because a relative is sick in Darwin, because they want to drink in town, because they get bored being in the community, and so on. However, the real question here is not the purpose of their movement, but the process. Our question 'why are they nomadic?' cannot be answered only by asking 'why do they move?' Instead, the real question should be 'how do they move?'

⁵ See, for example, Yengoyan 1968; Rose 1987.

2.4.2. Where is your 'home'?

For a while, I thought the Gurindji people liked travelling just as many non-Gurindji/non-Aboriginal do. I also thought the key to answering 'how do they move?' would be the way they travel. It is always exciting to get out of your home and travel around the world. I expected Aboriginal people would appreciate the value of travelling because they are 'nomadic'. I was influenced by Bruce Chatwin's popular book *Songlines* (1987), a typical example of a book exploring this idea. Chatwin sees nomadic lifestyle as the origin of his (settlers') desire for travelling.⁶ It is possible that this explanation is at least partly true. For example, our trip to Docker River for a ceremony was so special that the Gurindji people talked about this event repeatedly and remember it as a great journey.⁷ Such a trip is a special occasion for them. However, in discussing the Gurindji people's 'nomadic' 'lifestyle', I would like to explore the more common practice of everyday mobility in Gurindji society. In this sense, I realised that their movement is normally not travel at all. Their mobility is not for getting out of their home, but interestingly enough, for *living in their home*.

For the Gurindji people, 'home' is not a small box called a 'house' – which they call 'camp' in Creole. I found the Gurindji people use their house almost like a storeroom. They keep their rifle and perhaps a few other valuable things in the house, but they spend most of their time outside. They cook, eat, watch TV, play cards, and even often sleep outside their houses. Continuing with this analogy, the outside of a house within the community is a kind of 'living room' in which you can eat, play, talk and sleep. Since the community has been well developed in the last couple of decades, this 'living room' is now full of utilities. Technically, you can survive by staying in this outdoor living room without moving to any other places.

If a house is a 'storeroom' and the community is a 'living room', what is 'home' for the Gurindji people? By 'home', I mean a place where one lives with one's family – a place offering security and happiness. At this stage, my answer is that their home is their country itself. There are so many other 'rooms' you should

⁶ Chatwin 1987.

⁷ See Chap.1.

visit and stay in, such as 'fishing rooms', 'bush plum rooms', or 'ceremonial rooms'. There are also 'sacred rooms' which you should go to and stay in only with an old person who knows how to behave, and there are '*kaya* [ghosts] rooms' which you should never visit or stay in.

Therefore the Gurindji people naturally move around their country because they do not want to stay only in the storeroom or living room all the time. Furthermore, for some people, the community is not even a part of their country. Staying there for them is like visiting neighbours or relatives because their 'home' or country is away from the community. Even if visiting one's relative's country or a town like Katherine means leaving your 'home', it still cannot be called 'travel'. These trips are more or less like visiting your neighbour or going shopping. 'Travel' happens only when you go to a place far away such as Docker River or Adelaide, which you rarely visit and where you have few relatives. To sum up, for the Gurindji people, 'nomadic' life does not mean a travelling lifestyle or life without a home, but it means life in a massive home.

Here, for the time being, the answer is given: the Gurindji people move around a lot because their 'home' is too big. They move not because they are travellers by nature, but because their 'home' is a lot bigger than settlers' small boxes or houses.

Furthermore, we also should not forget that the world is alive and full of life in the Gurindji country. Therefore, their home is not only huge, but is also a shared space. That being said, the relationship between you and your 'home' cannot be like that between owners and their private property. The world and people maintain each other. You have the obligation of maintaining your living country as your country has the obligation of looking after you. When you move around your country, whatever your purposes are, you should always be aware that you are surrounded by your 'home' which is full of life. You are not the owner of your 'home', but a part of it.

Therefore, although I do not object to the usage of the word 'nomadism' when referring to Aboriginal mobility, it should be used in the broader sense of the term; Aboriginal nomadism never means an everyday-travelling lifestyle, but a life of communicating with the country, part of which is Aboriginal people

themselves.

This is the key to understanding the meaning of the Gurindji people's movement. As I mentioned before, the question is not "why do they move?" but "how do they move?". This is because "why are the Gurindji 'nomadic'?" can be answered only if we understand "how do they maintain their country?". What does movement mean for the relationship between the Gurindji people and their country? In order to explore this question, I would like to return to our focus on Dreaming once again. This time, the focus is 'Dreaming and mobility'.

2.4.3. Dreaming-3: ethics of spatial movement

I have already mentioned that morality in the Gurindji cosmology is related to the way the world is maintained. Ritual practice as well as visiting one's country and communicating with ancestral beings are fundamental activities enacted to sustain the world. This is moral behaviour. I would like to emphasise here that such moral behaviour is not possible without movement. In short, mobility is simply essential for people, as well as for the Dreaming, in order to maintain the world. I would like to discuss the meaning of movement in relation to three key themes: the origin, the history and the morality.

In the Gurindji cosmology, Dreaming created this world by moving around the country. Therefore, movement occurred at the first stage of creation. It may be interesting to compare this cosmology to the Bible – the Christian understanding of the creation of the world. It is well known that in John 1 it says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."⁸ Let me use these phrases to explore my understanding of the Gurindji cosmology: "In the beginning was the Movement, and the Movement was with the Dreaming, and the Movement was Dreaming. Movement was with Dreaming in the beginning. Through the Movement all things were made; without movement nothing was made that has been made."

While the Christian God created the world by word, Dreaming created the world

⁸ *Holy Bible: New International Version*, John 1:1-4.

by movement.

As we already know, this origin of the world also became the history of the world. The world has been maintained because Dreaming beings have been active in sacred sites as well as Dreaming tracks. Dreaming has been active all the time. Dreaming tracks that connect sacred sites are not 'roads' that Dreaming beings sometimes travel, but more like a 'river' or stream through which Dreaming beings continuously move. Therefore, the history of the maintained world can also mean the history of maintained mobility. The world is alive because Dreaming beings are always active and mobile.

As the Dreaming has maintained people through its movement, people maintain their Dreaming through their movement as well. In ritual, they follow the Dreaming track through their songs, dances and drawings. Songs, dances, paintings or objects following the movement of Dreaming 're-charge' the power of Dreaming and its mobility. Such movements are 'ethical' because these movements contribute to maintaining the world, its power and its morality. You should maintain the world through your 'ethical movement' as Dreaming does for you as well. Such 'ethics of spatial movement' occurs not only in ritual practice, but are applied in everyday activities as well. In everyday practice, you may not physically follow the Dreaming track, but it is essential to move around the country in order to relate and connect yourself to places. Your country or 'home' is alive. It needs your care as you need its care. Going fishing and singing out for the country is a symbolic mutual relationship between people and their country: people look after the country by visiting and communicating with it and the country looks after the people by giving them plenty of fish. When visiting somewhere, people often sing songs that are related to the country. While moving, people pay attention to the world.

It is your movement that connects you to the world and its moral history. Movement is the origin of the world, the history of the world, and the morality of the world. After all, it does not always matter what the purpose of one's movement is. Rather, the process (i.e. movement itself) is a necessary part of maintaining the Dreaming and the law, and is itself a reason for being 'nomadic'.

However, as I will discuss later, even though mobility is essential in the Gurindji cosmology, it does not mean every movement is ethical. There is movement which does not relate to the movements of Dreaming, or which is explicitly against the ethics of Dreaming.⁹ Nevertheless, I would like to emphasise once more that movement is essential in the Gurindji cosmology. Movement is the essence of life, world and history, and of the relationship between the world and your being.

Thus far, we have learned that mobility is the key to connecting the world and yourself. Without ethical movement, there is no maintenance of the world. People and Dreaming sustain the world together through their ethical movement. Having got to this point, let us move on to a new question: how are these ethics of movement reflected in the Gurindji knowledge system? In other words, what is the relationship between the Gurindji people's 'nomadic' lifestyle and their epistemology?

2.5. Knowledge: The Gurindji Epistemology

2.5.1. A web of connection without a centre

The idea that mobility is the essence of maintaining the world also means you do not have a 'central place' in the world. One of the reasons you have to move around your country is that Dreaming sites are scattered all over the country. As anthropological works show, there is no 'central sacred site' through which you can maintain the whole country. And there is no 'central ceremonial place' where you can 're-charge' the entire world. T. G. H. Strehlow explains that since the major totemic sites were "linked according to the nature of their totems with the totemic sites of other subgroups and even of other tribes, not one of them was fitted in any sense to act as a sort of central 'capital' site for a whole tribal subgroup or a whole tribe".¹⁰ Therefore, people and ceremonies should be shared and exchanged between different places, communities and countries.

In general, a sacred site or a community cannot claim itself as the centre of the world. I even wonder if there is any concept of 'centre' in the Gurindji

⁹ See Chap.3.

¹⁰ Strehlow 1970:129. See also, Rose 1996:35-47.

cosmology; 'centre' as a point of origin, as a site of influence, ideas, or actions. Sacred sites are the points where people's and Dreaming beings' movements are connected. Dreaming tracks are the lines which connect the sites and people rather than divide them. Therefore, movement is a fundamental function since the Gurindji cosmology is based on networking between many sites, countries and people without the concept of the 'centre'. The world is maintained through the web of connection between Dreaming beings, people and their countries and ceremonies.

This view of the Gurindji cosmology leads us to the unique positioning of 'self' in the world. In short, 'self' becomes remarkably relationalised. This happens at least on three different levels. First of all, 'self' as a living human cannot be the centre of the world. As already discussed, the Dreaming or ancestral beings are as alive as living human beings. Humans cannot exist if the Dreaming dies because humans are a part of this living world that is sustained by the Dreaming. Humans not only maintain the world but are also maintained by the world. In other words, your existence relies on Dreaming activities, and vice versa. Therefore, humans are not the central source of agency in the world. Instead, human activities are relationalised by Dreaming activities. Living people cannot claim them to be the central figures of the world.¹¹

Secondly, 'self' as a part of your country is not the centre of the world. Dreaming cannot be alive without maintaining its sacred sites and tracks, which are strongly connected with other people and their countries; the existence of you and your country is guaranteed only by interaction with other people and their countries. Naturally, your 'self' as well as your country cannot claim to be the centre, but they become parts of the web of connection. Therefore, you cannot maintain your country by yourself, but only by the connection with other people and their countries.

Thirdly, your personal 'self' cannot be the centre of your community. There is no one in the community who can be the 'central figure' of the community. It is true that the older and more knowledgeable you are, the more people respect your opinion. There are words such as 'boss', 'big man', or

¹¹ Rose describes it as 'a non-human being-centred cosmos'. See Rose 1992:105.

'*kanparijang* [leading/older person]' which may indicate authority in the community. However, I found such a 'boss' does not have any 'right' or 'power' to make decisions without consulting other community members. Furthermore, women have their own social life. As men have men's *business*, women have women's *business*. In addition, there are male-female joint ceremonies which are possible only if the two sexes cooperate with each other. Children and young people have their own social life as well. Certainly there is general agreement that the seniors maintain authority over the juniors, and the elders often try to 'control' them. However, it often does not work. It is common practice among young people to run away to the bush or a town (mobility!) when a ceremony starts. There is no one person, nor any institution which can control the whole community by her/his/their/its own will. Decision making is the process of negotiation with one another 'to build a 'connection' among the people in the community.

To sum up, there is no being which can be the centre of the living world. And, there is no country which can be the centre of all countries. Moreover, there is no person who can be the centre of a country or community either. In other words, 'self' finds its position in the web of connection: the connection with other beings, other countries, and other community members.¹²

2.5.2. An open and flexible system of knowledge

As 'self' is relationalised through the web of connection, knowledge is also relationalised. There is no person, as well as no place, that generates exclusive knowledge spreading it out, like radiation, from one place to all the other places. Instead, in the Gurindji information system, knowledge is created anywhere and mobility brings it everywhere in all directions.

At the same time, you should not overlook the 'relational authenticity' of story tellings. Stories have their 'belonging': belonging to certain person/s and belonging to certain place/s. Some people and places may generate more stories than others. A person who has more 'knowledge' and 'connection' to other people and places may assert 'more authenticity' over more stories than others. In

¹² Similar points are discussed in Myers 1986; Rose 1992.

addition, places such as towns, communities, ceremonial sites, or hunting-fishing points attract people (and Dreaming beings) and thus create a lot of stories to be carried and shared. It is, in a sense, like the Internet: some sites hold more information and attract more attention than others, but in the end, there is no 'central site': the knowledge or 'stories' are exchanged and shared through the web of connection.

The Gurindji information system is based on their mobility and connection to each other and their countries. This information system creates a particular manner of maintaining the Gurindji people's collective knowledge. Because there is no authentic centre that guarantees the validity of information, knowledge naturally gets many variations through the process of networking.

This can be quite a contrast to the academic way of maintaining knowledge. In academic culture, if there are two stories that contradict each other, they often compete with each other by claiming authenticity and accuracy: one story must be 'right' and the other must be 'wrong'. One should find out what is right, or if it ends up that both are wrong, an effort – such as research and discussion – should be made to find out what the right story really is. In any sense, two contradicting stories cannot peacefully coexist in our academic way of maintaining knowledge.

In contrast, in the Gurindji epistemology, two or more contradicting stories often coexist. The Gurindji people do not even regard it as a contradiction. The following serves as an example: while I was at Daguragu, a story arrived in the Daguragu community that a Gurindji person had just died in Katherine. There were two stories about the cause of death. One story was that a woman had died because she took an overdose of pharmaceuticals while she was drunk. Another story was that someone had killed her. I could not help trying to find the 'right' story and so I asked people which story they thought was true. However, a typical answer was "I don't know, maybe tablet, maybe she was killed." I need to assure you that people were not indifferent about the cause of her death. They exchanged the information and discussed why it had happened. However, the discussion was not for the purpose of finding a single 'right' story, but for exploring the several possible causes. In this case, maintaining the knowledge did not mean finding a

'right' story but widening the possibilities.

As I demonstrate in the following chapters, the Gurindji people's historical narratives have a similar way of accepting many different versions of events. Information running through the web of connection is rarely judged right or wrong by the people. Multiple variations of information are produced, pooled and maintained as a bundle of possibilities without judgement. On one level, you may think the Gurindji knowledge system is closed because there are many aspects of secrecy. However, on another level, as I discussed above, the Gurindji way of maintaining knowledge can be called highly open. It is an open system because wherever and to whomever stories belong, they are pooled without any urgent need for judgement and multiple variations are preferred.

The Gurindji knowledge system is not only open but also flexible. It is a flexible system because they choose a story from the pooled possibilities according to the context of their story tellings. For example, when the person died in Katherine, people said that you should not drink too much when you are under medication. Her death gave people an opportunity to reassert the 'grog problem'. At the same time, there were a couple of rumours about who killed her and why. People chose one of the stories to suit the context. Knowledge or pooled stories are always chosen and used according to the context of the story being told.

Up to this point, we have found one of the aspects of the relationship between a mobile lifestyle and the Gurindji epistemology. The Gurindji 'nomadic' lifestyle is sustained by the web of connection among countries, communities and people without a concept of the 'centre'. And this networking system maintains their open and flexible system of knowledge.

2.5.3. Temporality and the Gurindji epistemology

Before returning to our discussion about the conditions of Gurindji history, I would like to further explore the relationship between mobility and epistemology from another angle: the temporal aspects of this relationship. The importance of 'place' in the Gurindji cosmology should not be underestimated. However, it is certainly remiss to deny the concept of 'time' in Gurindji epistemology.¹³

¹³ Tony Swain's claim that temporality is irrelevant to 'precolonial' 'trans-continent' Aboriginal

Although the intricate relationship between history and place (i.e. time and space) will be discussed in following chapters, I would like to briefly explore three concepts (or functions) of temporality – those of 'right time', 'enduring time' and 'spontaneity' – in Gurindji cultural and social practices.

First of all, it cannot be overestimated that the seasonal sense of 'time' is fundamental in hunting and gathering activities. To be successful, you always need to know the 'right time' to hunt, fish and gather. The Gurindji people always 'pay attention' to their country, noticing if the bush plum is ripe, if bush turkeys are around and fat. When you notice rain comes, you know lots of fish come back to the river. Of course, their pooled knowledge also tells them the 'right time' to hunt what, and where to go and how. The idea of 'right time in right place' is crucial for Gurindji mobility in hunting and gathering. Furthermore, the 'right time' for their ceremony is also a major concern among the Gurindji people. This is not only the seasonal timing of conducting the ceremony. They also need to discuss and assess which children are in the 'right time' to go through initiation. In a ceremony there is a 'right time' to start singing, dancing, and also a 'right time' to stop the ceremony. Thus, the concept of 'right time' is essential for both their hunting and ceremonial activities. The Gurindji temporality needs a concept of 'right time' to perform a right action. The sense and the knowledge of 'right time' have always been integral to the Gurindji epistemology.

Secondly, in order to maintain their information system, it is important to spend an enormous amount of time discussing, learning, teaching and sharing. The open and flexible system of knowledge can function well only if people do not rush to make a decision. It was amazing to observe how long people could sit down, discuss and negotiate an issue in order to explore every possibility of their decisions. For example, the rumour that the Gurindji people were invited for the big *business* in Docker River had been talked around the community for a long time. When I heard the story for the first time they were talking as if this ceremonial trip would happen the next week. However, whenever I asked them when the departure was to be, they told me "maybe next week". And there had been discussion for a long time about which route to take, who was to go and

ontology, has been widely criticised by other academics. See Cap.3.

what would be done there, etc. One day, people from Yarralin visited and joined this discussion. On another day, there was discussion with Lajamanu people. The Daguragu people also went to Yarralin and Lajamanu to discuss this journey. When they finally decided to leave for Docker River, it had been nearly two months since I had first heard the rumour of this journey for ceremony. In order to keep the knowledge system functioning well, you should take as much time as you need. I do not think there is a concept of 'wasting time' in decision making.

In this sense, the Gurindji knowledge system can be called 'process-oriented' rather than 'outcome-oriented'. Knowledge procedure is as important as the product. People's mobility must be promoted, and then new stories must be exchanged again and again and again. Information should be pooled more and more and more. Discussion and negotiation goes on and on and on. This process of maintaining their knowledge requires 'enduring time'.

Thirdly, I also need to emphasise the importance of 'spontaneity' in the Gurindji temporal structure. Once a decision has been made, action follows immediately. I was often shocked by how quickly the Gurindji people made themselves ready, once they had decided to make a move. Hunting happens when they decide to go. People often came to my house and asked if I would like to go hunting with them. When I asked them 'when', the answer was normally 'now'. There is no delay. In fact, people often told me that they would take me to a certain place 'tomorrow' or 'next week'. However, my excitement was often dashed to find them the next morning saying "Oh, maybe tomorrow/next week". I finally got used to this manner of either immediate action or not knowing when it would be.

This 'spontaneity' happens not only in hunting activities. In many other cases, the time they decide to do something is the time they actually make a move. The time they decide to go swimming is the time they are leaving for a billabong. The time they decide to go to the town is the time they find a lift. As you may guess, such immediate action occurred when we started our ceremonial journey to Docker River as well. To be honest, I still do not know how the 'right time' to move was determined. After waiting for two months for the Docker River trip to happen, I became suspicious about the journey itself. I thought it would never

happen. However, when it happened, it happened ridiculously quickly. I felt it was almost like a joke: when they finally decided to leave the community, we were driving cars towards the south by the evening of the same day!

The reflections above make clear the temporal aspect of the relationship between the Gurindji epistemology and their mobility. Awareness of 'right time', 'enduring time' and 'spontaneity' is essential to maintaining their activities as well as their knowledge system.

2.6. What is Gurindji Historical Practice?

Let us now return to our original topic of the conditions of Gurindji history. I have already explored this question in terms of their physical practice (body and history) and the idea of a maintained world (Dreaming and history). Here, I would like to explore the meaning of (1) movement, (2) an open and flexible system of knowledge, and (3) the three temporal dimensions, in the Gurindji mode of historical practice.

Let me start by emphasising the importance of mobility in their historical practice. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, history is happening all over the country so that mobility is essential to physically access the places and to pay attention to history. Furthermore, as I also discussed, mobility creates the unique relationship between 'self' and the world. You find 'self' in relation to the web of connection: connection with other beings, other countries and other community members. Naturally, historical practice becomes relationalised into the web of connection as well. You are not the central figure of a practising history. Nor can you practise the history by yourself. Instead, your historical practice must 'connect' to the places, Dreaming, countries and people. History happens when you visit the hill which contains the memory of people killed by Europeans. History happens when you see the young people using a rifle instead of a spear while hunting. History happens when you realise that the rainbow snake recently rose up again and made floods around the country. Historical practice can be possible only through the interaction between the living world and yourself: history happens in/between body and place.

Let us now shift to historical knowledge in terms of the Gurindji's open

and flexible system. The Gurindji people maintain their historical knowledge based on its multiplicity. It is natural and preferable to maintain many different versions of a certain event. On one level, one can say that different variations of histories are pooled among the people as a warehouse maintains its stock. A story teller chooses a story from the pooled knowledge according to the context of where, what, and who she/he is relating it to and what she/he is trying to express.

However, on another level, you can also say that every historical narrative is a new version of the event because your positioning in the networking world is never the same. You are a part of the web of connection, and your mobility always brings you to a new position in this web. Therefore, places and your body connect with each other and create histories differently in particular contexts. This process means that history is always situated in time and space. Thus, the Gurindji way of historical practice reflects their open and flexible system on two different levels: (1) pooled and maintained historical knowledge, and (2) situationalised and contextualised historical knowledge.

With this in mind, let us turn to the third point, to observe that the above two aspects of historical knowledge are related to their temporal structure. First of all, the Gurindji way of historical practice requires a sense of 'right time' and 'spontaneity'. Historical knowledge is always relationalised and situationalised. Therefore, history only happens 'spontaneously' at the 'right time' in the 'right place'. Every historical narrative is a product of a certain connection among the story teller, listener, other beings or objects and places, so that a particular opportunity does not happen twice. You cannot postpone this opportunity of sharing the history with particular people and particular objects in a particular place. History happens 'spontaneously' when the 'right time' comes.

Secondly, you also need 'enduring time' in order to maintain historical knowledge. Since Gurindji history is not documentary cultural practice, you need the repetition of story telling in order to share, remember and maintain historical knowledge. In the same way, places need to be visited repeatedly to maintain the history. In short, historical knowledge can be pooled and maintained only by a never-ending repetition of story tellings and visiting places.

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To sum up, Gurindji history does not have a standard or official textbook which anyone can access equally at any time or in any place. Instead, Gurindji history happens to particular people, in particular places, at specific times. At the same time, this situated history occurs repeatedly for anyone, anywhere, at anytime. In other words, historical knowledge has been created, and is maintained through the web of connection among the people, Dreaming beings, and their countries.

The findings of my research do not represent an exception to the conditions of the Gurindji way of historical practice. This thesis is based on the Gurindji people's pool and maintained historical knowledge. At the same time, it is the product of my personal commitment to certain community members in particular places at specific times. That is the nature of 'place-oriented history'. There is no other way of practising and learning the Gurindji people's history

Chapter 3

Spatial Dimensions of Morality: The Interpretation of Colonial Landscape by Jimmy Mangayarri

It is important to remember that space-time is not supposed to be Euclidean. As far as the geodesics are concerned, this has the effect that space-time is like a hilly countryside. (Bertrand Russell 1958)

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. What is Aboriginal history?

The simple but difficult question: what is Aboriginal history?, may symbolise many current issues in Australian historiography.¹ To begin with, the very concept of 'Aboriginal history' seems to be of Western origin. Bain Attwood argues 'Aborigine' is an historical product of the Western consciousness.² The term 'history' itself is normally based on the Western linear notion of time as well.³ Therefore, the following questions have arisen: can non-Aboriginal settlers understand and write Aboriginal people's history? Who owns Aboriginal history? How can academic historians collaborate with Aboriginal historians?

Using Gurindji historians' teachings as primary sources, the project of cross-culturalizing history constantly embraces these questions. In this chapter, I seek to explore 'place-oriented history' within the dimensions of the Australian colonial landscape. I begin by situating Aboriginal landscape and history within anthropological and historiographical arguments. However, the main aim is not to present my investigation of Aboriginal history, but rather to introduce and reflect upon historical analysis by an Aboriginal historian, Jimmy Mangayarri of Daguragu.

¹ McGrath 1995a:Chap.10.

² Attwood 1989. See also, Reece 1987.

³ See Chap.1.

3.1.2. History and landscape

The issue of 'place' or 'landscape' has recently been brought to light by anthropologists. *Landscape* (1993),⁴ edited by Barbara Bender and *The Anthropology of Landscape* (1995)⁵ edited by Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon are examples of the most extensive studies on this subject. For instance, Hirsch writes: "Unlike 'exchange', 'ritual', 'history' and other concepts which have featured centrally in anthropological debates in recent years, landscape has received little overt anthropological treatment".⁶ To sum up the characteristics of landscape, Hirsch points to two related ways of understanding landscape: first, the 'objective' standpoint or anthropologist's view of landscape, and secondly, the 'subjective' standpoint or the meaning of landscape imputed by local people.⁷ Therefore, the word 'landscape' implies not only physical 'objective' features, but also local people's metaphysical meanings or images of their land. Although it is certainly problematic to assert that anthropologists' view of landscape is 'objective' and local people's is 'subjective', I would like to emphasise that the word 'landscape' implies both physical and metaphysical features of place.

The editors of *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (1995) suggest using the word 'place' instead of 'landscape' for the features in postcolonial discourse because "the idea of 'landscape' is predicated upon a particular philosophic tradition in which the objective world is separated from the viewing subject. Rather, 'place' in post-colonial societies is a complex interaction of language, history and environment".⁸ However, in this chapter, I will use the word 'landscape' as often as 'place'. This is because the word 'landscape' is appropriate to indicate the *placeable* features of both 'objective' and 'subjective' views. As I discuss later, the purpose of using 'landscape' is not to separate the 'subjective' view from the 'objective' world, but rather to show the desire to integrate the physical and metaphysical features of 'place'.

⁴ Bender 1993.

⁵ Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995.

⁶ Hirsch 1995: 1.

⁷ Hirsch 1995: 1.

⁸ Ashcroft, et al. 1995: 391.

Indigenous Australians' cultures are so strongly related to their land that numerous attempts have been made by scholars to understand the Aboriginal meaning of landscape, or 'mythological' Dreaming geography. In the anthropology of Australian Aboriginal societies, 'land relationships' have been at the centre of many debates.⁹ Nevertheless, most of the early studies have been devoted to the relationship between Aboriginal 'religion' or Dreaming and its geographical meaning, rather than to an attempt to explore the significance of the colonial landscape in Aboriginal societies. On the other hand, one of the features of recent arguments about Aboriginal landscape is discussion of the colonial landscape.¹⁰ These works help us understand the influence of colonisation on the Aboriginal landscape.

In contrast to many anthropological studies of Aboriginal landscape, it is only recently that historians became concerned with the cultural landscape. For instance, Simon Schama's *Landscape and Memory* (1995)¹¹ succeeded in gaining wide public attention. In the field of the Australian landscape, Paul Carter's *Road to Botany Bay* (1987)¹² is well known as one of the attempts to explore a spatial history of Australia. Ann McGrath asserts the validity of a colonial landscape history based on Aboriginal oral evidence.¹³ Richard Baker's study about Yanyuwa people's history and their cultural geography is certainly an example of such an attempt.¹⁴ Through these recent works of historians and anthropologists in Australian Aboriginal studies, we come to recognise that 'landscape and history' in a colonial context is certainly one of the major issues in Australian Aboriginal studies today. Therefore, in this chapter, I will attempt to explore this specific question:

⁹ See, for example, Strehlow 1947; Mountford 1965; Eliade 1973; Biernoff 1978; Myers 1983; Munn 1986; Morphy 1991, 1995; Layton 1995.

¹⁰ See, for example, Clarke 1991; Morphy 1993; Swain 1993; Rose 1996; Magowan 1997.

¹¹ Schama 1995.

¹² Carter 1987.

¹³ McGrath 1987b.

¹⁴ Baker 1999.

What is the relationship between colonial history and Aboriginal landscape?

3.1.3. Time and space, history and landscape

Before we discuss the relationship between colonial history and Aboriginal landscape in more detail, I would like to address the concept of 'history' and 'landscape' in more abstract terms, by asking: what are the Aboriginal concepts of 'time' and 'space'? If 'time' and 'space' have particular connotations in Aboriginal epistemology and ontology, the relationship between 'history' and 'landscape' must be based on Aboriginal time-space concepts.

Indigenous Australians' understanding of 'time' and 'space' is discussed at length in Tony Swain's controversial book, *A Place for Strangers* (1993).¹⁵ Through a comparative study of Aboriginal concepts of 'being' across the Australian continent, Swain denies the existence of a concept of 'time' in precolonial Aboriginal societies. Alternatively, he emphasises the ontological importance of place or space in 'original' Aboriginal worldviews. Swain also claims that the concept of 'time' and 'history' gradually infiltrated into Aboriginal worldviews through contact with external peoples, such as the Melanesians, Indonesians and Europeans. His argument is highly problematic due to his assumption of a 'precolonial' or 'original' Aboriginal ontology. How is it possible to know 'precolonial' Aboriginal ontology if anthropological data, by definition, has been collected since colonisation? Furthermore, Swain's notions of 'time' and 'history' are narrowly defined and based on Western conceptions of these terms. Accordingly, his denial of 'time' and 'history' in precolonial Aboriginal ontology is difficult to accept. As discussed in the previous chapter, I prefer to assert that Aboriginal ontology relies on a non-Western concept of 'time' and 'history' that exists every 'where' in their country.¹⁶

Despite these problems, my understanding of the Gurindji ontology certainly corresponds with Swain's emphasis on the importance of place in

¹⁵ Swain 1993.

¹⁶ Similar criticism of Swain's work is to be found in Keen 1993. A review symposium on *A Place for Strangers* is in *Social Analysis* no.40. See Austin-Brooks 1996; Beckett 1996; Lattas 1996; Morton 1996. Swain's reply is in Swain 1996.

Aboriginal being. In other works, for example, John Rudder uses terms such as 'temporal location' or 'temporal space' to describe the Yolngu concept of 'time'.¹⁷ Howard Morphy also points out the 'subordination of time to space' in the Aboriginal Dreaming landscape.¹⁸

These arguments present us with two different approaches toward the subject of colonial history and Aboriginal temporal-spatial structure. First, they arouse our interest in the historical change in Aboriginal ontology or their concepts of time and space. The Aboriginal mode of being is more grounded in spatial dimensions rather than temporal. Therefore, Martin Heidegger's ontology, that assumes 'time' to be the distinctive ontological function that can represent European modes of being, cannot represent Aboriginal modes of being.¹⁹ On the ontological level, Australian colonisation can be regarded as a conflict between space-oriented modes of being and time-oriented modes of being.

The second approach is to set the Australian colonial history within an Aboriginal time-space concept. Since the Aboriginal time-space concept is different from the Western temporal-spatial structure, the Aboriginal understanding of colonial history is likely to be different from the Western understanding. If, as Morphy says, 'time' is subordinated to 'space', it is possible that 'history' is subordinated to 'place' in Aboriginal cosmology. Instead of studying how colonial history changed Aboriginal cosmology, one may be motivated to study how colonial history was included in Aboriginal cosmology.

With these points in mind, we may apply two different approaches to the relationship between colonial history and Aboriginal landscape. The first approach can be called the 'history of landscape' whereby the Aboriginal view of landscape may have been altered through colonial history. Through the colonial conflict of different cultural concepts of time and space, Aboriginal landscape may have changed from a 'space-oriented' view to a 'time-oriented' view. For example, it is reasonable to assume that the physical transformation of the landscape, especially environmental changes, may affect the space-oriented

¹⁷ Rudder 1993:Chap.6.

¹⁸ Morphy 1995:188.

¹⁹ Swain 1993:2.

Aboriginal cosmology. Due to the intrusion of settlers and their industry, landscapes were visually altered over the years. Aboriginal people may have had to confront unexpected and uncontrollable changes to their view of landscape, which they could not accept without acknowledging or adopting a new temporal structure or 'time-oriented history'. It is also possible that due to Christian influence, Aboriginal landscape came to include the Western concept of 'history' or linear time. There should be studies of the historical change of the Aboriginal view of landscape. The 'colonial history of Aboriginal landscape' is a positive approach to exploring the question of history and landscape. It is clear that Swain takes this approach in his *A Place for Strangers*.

I would now like to introduce another approach to my discussion. This second approach can be referred to as the 'landscape of history'. If the Aboriginal time-space concept is more or less space-oriented, the colonial history may be interpreted by the Aboriginal landscape. Morphy suggests that the Aboriginal 'ancestral past' is reproduced in their Dreaming landscape.²⁰ In the same way, the 'colonial past' may also be reproduced in the Aboriginal landscape. However, this assumption must first confront the fundamental differences between Dreaming story and colonial invasion history: while Dreaming is sacred, stories of European invasion are not held to be sacred in Aboriginal cosmology and geography. That being said, what is the nature of Aboriginal narratives of their colonial histories? How can Aboriginal cosmology accept colonial history as a part of the landscape? Do Dreaming stories and colonial stories occur in different dimensions in Aboriginal cosmology?

3.1.4. Dreaming, colonisation and morality

To answer the questions above, it is worthwhile looking into the recent discussion devoted to the subject of the so-called 'myth as history, history as myth'.²¹ Although the aims and conclusions of these works are not consistent, their common theme is the intricate relationship between 'history' and 'myth' within

²⁰ Morphy 1995.

²¹ Sutton 1988.

Aboriginal narratives.²² One of the most famous examples of 'mythological' Aboriginal colonial stories is probably the Captain Cook history.²³ It is common knowledge in the Victoria River district, Northern Territory, that Captain Cook came to Darwin and invaded Aboriginal land. Deborah B. Rose argues that although Captain Cook never personally appeared in the area, the story accurately represents the local understandings of the 'immorality' of colonial invasion and colonial 'law'. White people's law, which allows them to go into another people's country, to start shooting people and stealing their land, represents a total lack of morality.²⁴ For Aboriginal people of many places in Australia, moral law comes from Dreaming geography. Land is the origin and evidence of the existing world. Invading another people's land and killing Indigenous people is fundamentally immoral.

There is a strong contrast between Aboriginal law with morality and European law without morality. From this Captain Cook history, one may infer that Aboriginal people make clear distinctions between Aboriginal law and European law in terms of its 'moral value'. Aboriginal stories of the European intrusion into the Australian continent are immoral histories. Consequently, most colonial stories are not Dreaming stories. One of the exceptions may be the story of Ned Kelly. Among the Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district, Ned Kelly is a moral European. It is important to note that Ned Kelly's story is a Dreaming story for local people. Ned Kelly is even located in a geographical space at Crawford knob in Karangpuru country.²⁵ Immoral Europeans, such as Captain Cook, cannot be Dreaming, but if he/she is regarded as a moral European, even a European can be Dreaming. Likewise, some Christian or Bible-oriented stories are also filtered into Dreaming in Aboriginal cosmology.²⁶

²² See, for example, Morphy and Morphy 1984; Beckett 1994; Rumsey 1994.

²³ Kolig 1980a; Rose 1984, 1989, 1991:Chap.3, 1992:Chap.11; Mackinoly and Wainburranga 1988.

²⁴ See especially, Rose 1984.

²⁵ Rose 1994.

²⁶ See, for example, Kolig 1978, 1980b; Swain 1988.

It is academics, not Indigenous Australians themselves, who categorise both Aboriginal colonial histories and their Dreaming stories as 'myths'. For Aboriginal people, it is not a question of a story being a myth or history, because these stories are all authentic and 'real'. Instead, there is a strict difference between sacred (Dreaming) and immoral (colonial) stories. As I discussed above, it must be understood that Dreaming stories and European invasion histories are not the same type of stories. If so, how can Dreaming stories interact with colonial history? Is it possible to consider the Aboriginal Dreaming landscape and invasion history within the same dimensions?

In searching for a key to this problem, let us consider how, or to what extent, Aboriginal people put these stories into different categories. In fact, we can see that Aboriginal people consider colonial histories within the same framework of thought as Dreaming stories when they examine and assess the moral ground of European law. Through the Captain Cook history, Aboriginal historians make a comparative study of two different laws. While Dreaming and colonial history are different types of stories, we can also say both stories are situated with a common 'moral dimension'. In the process of their examination, Aboriginal Dreaming stories (Aboriginal law) and their stories of European colonisation (European law) both fall within one dimension in terms of 'moral philosophy'.

Aboriginal Dreaming cosmology is characterised by place-oriented morality. In contrast, Captain Cook can never be Dreaming since his law is immoral. Consequently, Captain Cook cannot be placed within the Dreaming landscape. Dreaming stories and European invasion histories form different categories for Aboriginal people. However, we may also say that both the Dreaming and colonial stories are situated in the same horizon in terms of 'law': Aboriginal law has morality, but the Captain Cook law does not. Nevertheless both are still regarded as 'laws'.

Here again, I remind you of our original question: what is the relationship between colonial history and the Aboriginal landscape? Do colonial histories have spatial or geographical locations in Aboriginal landscape? Can the place-oriented Aboriginal cosmology assimilate (supposedly) time-oriented colonial 'history'? The key to answering this question is not that Dreaming stories and the colonial

narratives of Aboriginal people are both 'mythological'. This does not reflect Aboriginal views. For the Aboriginal people, the key issue is most probably the *spatial dimension of morality*, as they stem from two different laws. If one can see the moral value within the landscape, it may be possible to find the 'location' of colonial immorality in the same landscape. Are there any relationships between colonial history and the Aboriginal landscape? If so, how are they connected?

An Aboriginal historian must be the one to answer these questions.

3.2. Teachings of Jimmy Mangayarri

In the previous chapter, I have discussed aspects of Old Jimmy's notion of 'right way' in the general context of Gurindji cosmology. Here, I would like to explore Old Jimmy's moral philosophy in more specific terms. In fact, Old Jimmy's name and some of his stories are already published by Rose.²⁷ However, one of the significant features of his story telling has not been discussed yet. Using sand drawings, Old Jimmy can position Dreaming, morality, and colonial histories in the context of his country's landscape. In fact, the question of 'history and landscape' was inspired by the discussions with Old Jimmy.

The following discussion is based on Old Jimmy's teachings that I learnt during my fieldwork.

3.2.1. "Follow the right way"

Following my introduction to Jimmy Mangayarri of Daguragu, he was eager to teach me about the 'right way'. He often said to me, "you must follow the right way." Naturally, whenever I had a chance to talk with him, I focused on knowing what the 'right way' was. However, understanding the 'right way' was not an easy task because it was not clear to me if the 'right way' is a geographical track or a moral rule. One of our first conversations was as follows:

Minoru (M): So, old man, you tell me the right way. What is the right way?

²⁷ Rose 1991:39-42, 67-70, 103-104, 108, 265; 1992:53, 186, 194. See also, Lewis 1997:5.

Old Jimmy (J): You look round. Sun go down that way (west), sun get up that way (east), this is the right way.²⁸

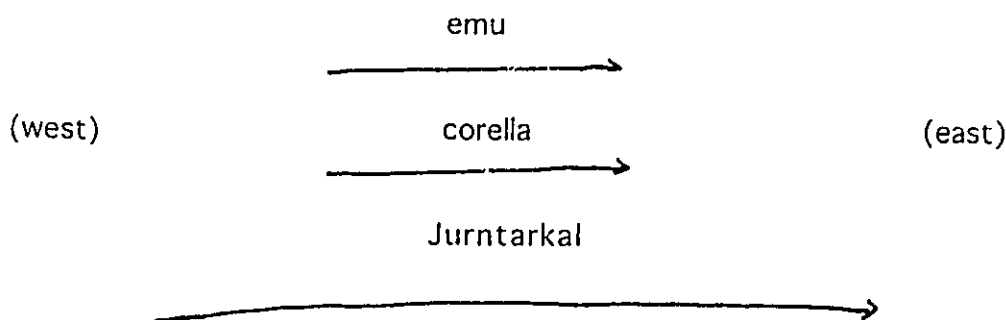


Figure 3.1. Three Dreaming tracks

He also drew three straight lines from the west to the east on the ground. Figure 3.1. represents the Dreaming tracks of the Gurindji people and their neighbour's cultural geography. Old Jimmy explained that the emu, corella, and *Jurntakal* travelled from the west sea to the east sea. Of the three, the most important Dreaming in this discussion is *Jurntakal*, a very powerful and dangerous snake. The general idea of *Jurntakal* is that it is a snake whose species is normally not specified. It is known to have originated from the sea near Wyndham (Western Australia) and then travelled to the west. There are many secret sites related to *Jurntakal*. Most *Jurntakal* sites are dangerous places that should be treated carefully. I heard many stories of people dying because of their mistreatment of *Jurntakal* Dreaming sites.²⁹

²⁸ Jimmy Mangayari, dictated 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

In anthropological writings, authors are not normally required to cite from their tape recordings or fieldnotes. However, when writing oral histories, authors are sometimes required to cite from their recordings. In my thesis, I take anthropological manner in Chapters 1, 2 and 8 in which I discuss more contemporary Gurindji societies. However, I take historical manner in other chapters in which discussion is more related to their pasts.

²⁹ See Chap.6. I am not permitted to discuss the specific *Jurntakal* stories here because many of these stories are men's secrets.

Old Jimmy often drew only a single line and explained it was *Jurntak*. I would like to emphasise that wherever he sat and whichever direction he faced, Old Jimmy drew a line from the west to the east, and then told me this was the 'right way'. To confirm this, I always brought a compass to check the directions of his sand drawings, and there were no deviations. Therefore, for the moment, we may conclude that the 'right way' is a geographical track of *Jurntakal* Dreaming. The 'right way' is not an ideological idea, but a track which has a spatial direction within a particular geography.

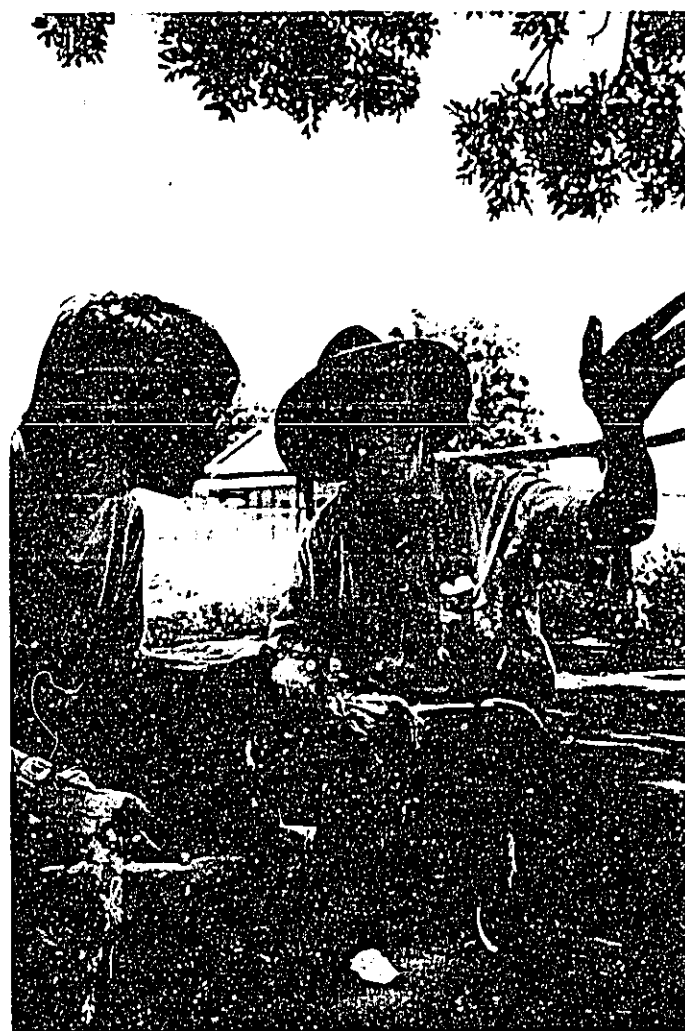


Plate 3.1. Old Jimmy showing the 'right way', 1999

3.2.2. Movement as the ontological origin of the world

However, the question remains: why is *Jurntakal* Dreaming track the 'right' way? We know this geographic track is a 'way', but we do not know how this track or 'spatial direction' can be right. Old Jimmy told me that *Jurntakal* rose from the earth and through his travelling, he shaped landscapes and created the people and law of each country:

"*Jurntakal* knows a lot. *Jurntakal* can tell you the right way. *Jurntakal* is the boss of people. He is the only one boss. You cannot run over the law. Law from him. He made all law, people, everything."³⁰

He also told me that the *Jurntakal* law is the earth law. *Jurntakal* rose from the earth, and furthermore, he said the earth itself is alive:

"*Yunmi* [we] come from this dirt, earth is alive just like you and me. Everything don't matter what it is, everything is from this earth, dirt. You born in the ground. Earth know. ... You don't know the earth, earth tell you, that's why you born."³¹

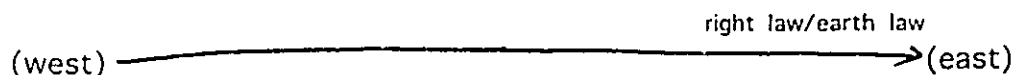


Figure 3.2. Right Way / Earth Law

One may interpret Old Jimmy's teaching in this way: in this living and conscious earth, motion occurred from within the earth to the surface, and across the surface. *Jurntakal* is 'right' because he rose from the earth and gave people the law. According to Old Jimmy's philosophy, this single line representing the 'movement from west to east' (Figure 3.2.) opens up the ontological and moral

³⁰ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

³¹ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No. 1.

dimensions of the world. This 'movement' is the fundamental moment that is shaping the world.

I said 'moment', but this 'moment', in fact, has endured: the creation of the world is not just the event which happened in the past but is also contemporary because *Jurntakal*'s (and many other Dreaming beings') movements are continuous. The movement of Dreaming is the 'ontological origin' and the creator of the beings in the world, as well as the original morality that sustains and maintains the existing world.

From Old Jimmy's perspective, spatial direction/movement and morality/law are undifferentiated. The earth, *Jurntakal* or his movement from west to east are all at once the historical, ontological and moral origin of beings in the world. We exist, live and die under the earth law. *Jurntakal* always shows us the 'right way' because his law comes from the earth through his great travels. Therefore, the 'right way' includes a geographical Dreaming track, *as well as* ethical behaviour. In Jimmy's philosophy, the 'right way' does not involve a separation of the physical and metaphysical. 'Right way' includes the geographical landscape *as well as* earth law. The earth, Dreaming, and law are inseparable from one another.

In Old Jimmy's country's geography, *Jurntakal* is the one who made the law, living beings and the world itself. Everything comes from *Jurntakal*'s movement. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, you can find similar expressions from other Aboriginal people as well. In addition to the Aboriginal expression of the earth as 'a huge battery',³² for instance, Hobbles Danayarri of Yarralin told Rose, "Everything come up out of ground – Language, people, emu, kangaroo, grass. That's Law."³³ Rose explains that "in many parts of Australia, the ultimate origin of the life of country is the earth itself."³⁴ In Old Jimmy's view, *Jurntakal* track is the 'right way' because through his travels, he has been making law or 'everything' that is coming from the earth.

³² See Chap.2.

³³ Rose 1992:57.

³⁴ Rose 1996:9. See also, Rose 1992:Chap.3.

3.2.3. How do you 'follow' the right way?

However, another question to solve is: what does he mean that we must 'follow' the right way? So far, we understand the 'right way' as a spatial and geographical track. Therefore, following the 'right way' may mean to physically follow the *Jurntakal* track of the Dreaming geography. In a ritual sense, this explanation may be correct. Nevertheless, this is not always what Old Jimmy means by "follow the right way". Rather, in many cases, his use of the word 'following' refers to our moral behaviour. In this sense, the 'right way' comes to mean the moral behaviour rather than the geographical track. According to Old Jimmy, *Jurntakal* teaches the 'right way' through dreams:

J: When I sleep, I never forget this. He [*Jurntakal*] tell me and I can speak with him. Just like a telephone.

M: You talk with *Jurntakal*?

J: Yes, just like telephone, that is just like a dream.

M: He tells you right way?

J: Yes, he teach you the right way. You wake up, you had dream, just like a telephone. You might study at school. You might write a paper, teacher tell you. Just like this. Same way.

M: So, can I have a right way? He tells me the right way?

J: Yes, that's why I tell you. Do the right thing. You study at school, high school. Just like this, you learn right way.³⁵

It is interesting to note Old Jimmy's use of 'telephone', a Western invention, as a simile. As we use a telephone in a Western way, *Jurntakal* uses a dream to tell him the 'right way'. He also said you needed 'training' to talk with *Jurntakal*, which was like learning at a school. In this explanation, it seems that 'way' means people's behaviour rather than a geographical track. He often said to me, "Do the right thing." From this viewpoint, one may conclude that Old Jimmy uses the word 'way' in two different senses: the 'way' as in the geographical track of *Jurntakal* Dreaming, and the 'way' as in the moral rule of the earth law.

³⁵ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 19-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

3.2.4. Aboriginal school, European school

However, Old Jimmy also told me another story which makes us realise that the conclusion is even more complex than stated above. Old Jimmy sometimes called the earth law 'high school' when he emphasised the educational aspect of Aboriginal law. Using sand drawing, Old Jimmy explained that there are differences between European school education and the 'Aboriginal school' or their way of training:

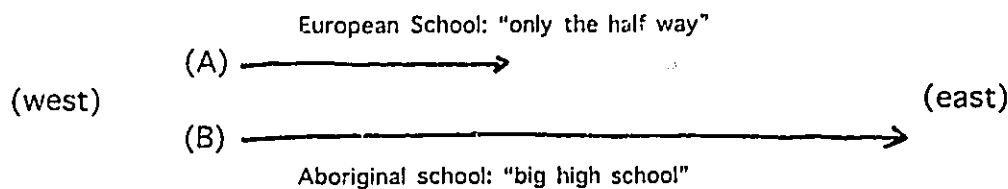


Figure 3.3. Aboriginal school, European school

Old Jimmy drew two lines from the west to the east. He explained line (A) is European schooling, and line (B) is Aboriginal schooling. He said he belonged to line (B), an Aboriginal school, or as he calls it, a 'big high school'. He told me that the European school is 'only the halfway'. Old Jimmy taught me why a European school is only the half way in several different aspects. This can be summarised into three main reasons:

- 1: A European school is based on books, but an Aboriginal school is based on the earth.
- 2: A European school requires only a decade to complete but an Aboriginal school takes a life-time to complete.
- 3: An Aboriginal school is 'physically' bigger than a European school.³⁶

³⁶ This summary is based on Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 14, 16-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

First of all, a European school is based on books and pencils. These have, according to Old Jimmy, nothing to do with the earth law. He said, "My book is on this earth. ... I never use pencil. I got more experience on this earth."³⁷ Even though you may be able to read and write, you are only 'half way' without knowing the earth law. For Old Jimmy, a European school is a place to learn how to read and write which may be useful skills but never as valuable as knowing the earth law. Without learning the earth law, education is incomplete.

This view brings him to his second reason: a European school finishes too early. From Old Jimmy's point of view, European education starts when a child reaches the age of five, and most pupils finish school by 15-17 years of age. If one compares this period to the process of being a fully initiated man in Aboriginal society, Aboriginal school is a life-time of education.³⁸ Billy Bunter, a middle aged community member, told me that he still had "thirty, forty years to go. For old people, I'm still child. Old people, they know every song and dance. I am blind."³⁹ From this viewpoint, it is reasonable to say that an Aboriginal school is a 'big school' and the European school is only a 'halfway school'.

Furthermore, according to Old Jimmy, an Aboriginal school is bigger than a European school not only because of the education period, but also in terms of its physical size. Old Jimmy said an Aboriginal school is much bigger than a European school because an Aboriginal school – *Jurntakal* track – is from the western sea to the eastern sea. Since Aboriginal law is the earth law, an Aboriginal 'school' itself is also the earth or Dreaming landscapes of their land. From Old Jimmy's point of view, the geographical Dreaming track is the Aboriginal school. In comparison to the physical length of the *Jurntakal* track, it is logical that a European schoolhouse is a lot smaller than an Aboriginal school.

Through these stories, we find that, for Old Jimmy, geography (place) and education (morality) are not discrete concepts.

³⁷ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 14, 16-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

³⁸ Old Jimmy's view of European education reflects the schooling program in the community. It is very rare for a person from the community to go to a high school or even higher education which is away from the community.

³⁹ Billy Bunter, dictated 12-11-97, Docker River, Fieldnote No.3.

3.2.5. Good 'way' and bad 'way'

I would like to provide another example of the spatial dimension of morality. Old Jimmy drew a line from west to east, and said, "We longa [belong to] this high rise. ... this is the good way." Then, he also drew other lines; one from south to north, and the other from north to south and said, "This way is down. Go down, no good that way. ... You go this way, you drown (losing the right way)"⁴⁰

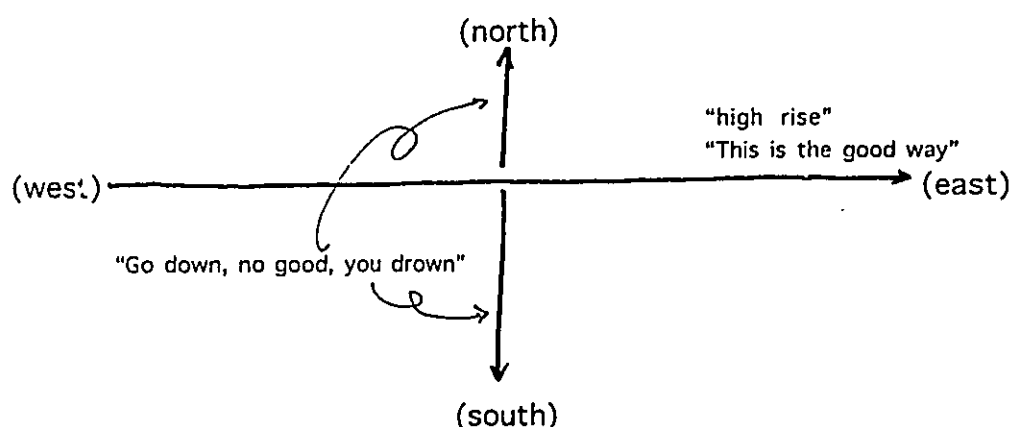


Figure 3.4. Good way, bad way

The way to the north as well as to the south is 'bad way' or he also said, 'bad move'.⁴¹ If you follow that way, you lose the right way. On another occasion, he drew Figure 3.5. and told me the way from the north to the south is to 'break the law'. If you break the law, you may follow the way (A) or the way (B). You do not know which way to go.⁴²

⁴⁰ Jimmy Mangayarra, Tape 2, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

⁴¹ Jimmy Mangayarra, dictated 12-11-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

⁴² Jimmy Mangayarra, Tape 22, 2-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.

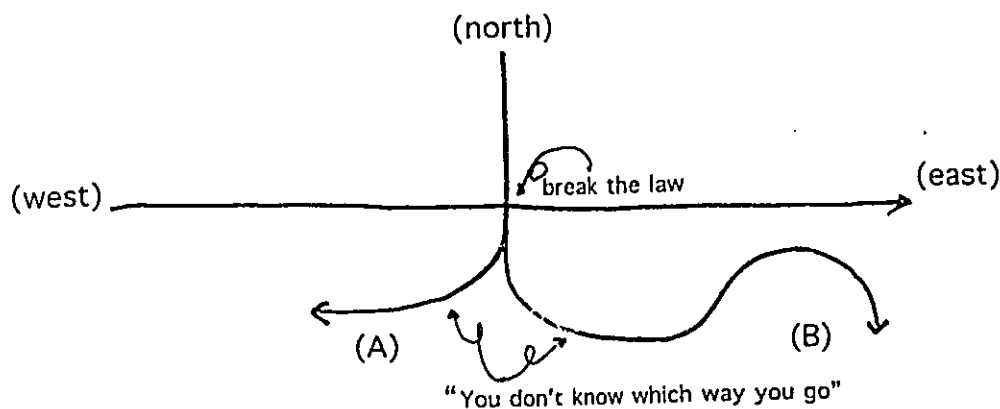


Figure 3.5. 'Break the law'

Old Jimmy also explained that the right law is like a twig. If you break it you can never join it again:

J: See this (a twig), only one way. When you broke it, can you join again?

M: No, no.

J: See, you throw away. You never do this. You must keep our way, never broke. If you broke the law, what can you do? That's why you do the right way to go.⁴³

Once you break the law, you can never follow the right way, you lose it. Using a twig to represent the earth law (because a twig comes from the earth), Old Jimmy explained that you should not break the law. The landscape itself represents the nature of Aboriginal law as well. Billy Bunter of Daguragu often told me that Aboriginal law is 'that hill and this river', so you cannot move that hill to another place. This means you cannot change the law.⁴⁴ A small portion of nature (a twig) or the landscape (hill and river) represent Aboriginal law.

⁴³ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 19-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0. Similar explanation is in Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 22, 2-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.

⁴⁴ Billy Bunter, dictated 2-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.

Before exploring Old Jimmy's analysis of colonial history, I would like to summarise his basic idea of the 'right way': from Old Jimmy's perspective, spatial direction and morality are undifferentiated. The earth, *Jurntakal* or his movement from west to east shows us the 'right way'. The 'right way' includes a geographical Dreaming track *as well as* moral behaviour. In Old Jimmy's philosophy, the 'right way' does not involve a dichotomisation of the physical and metaphysical. The 'right way' is spatial as well as behavioural; landscape includes a moral dimension.

3.2.6. Which 'way' did Captain Cook come?

In the above section, I have examined Old Jimmy's basic ideas of Aboriginal law, landscape, and the spatial directions of morality. We have learnt that Old Jimmy considered both morality and the landscape in the same dimension. The aim of following sections is to learn Old Jimmy's perspective on Australian colonial history. During my staying in Daguragu, Old Jimmy often taught me the nature of European people, their law, and colonisation. Old Jimmy explores the nature of colonisation from a spatial and a moral perspective. He also uses his method of sand drawings to analyse Australian colonialism.

Let us learn how Old Jimmy, as a historian, analyses Australian colonial history.

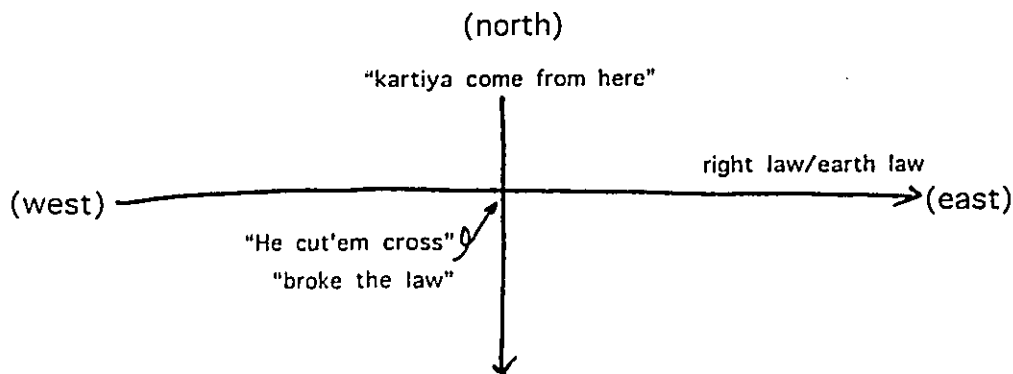


Figure 3.6. Captain Cook's movement



Plate 3.2. Old Jimmy drawing on the sand, 1999

When I asked Old Jimmy from which direction the English came, he drew a line from north to south, and said, "*Kartiya* [the English] bin come from here [the north]. ... He cut'em cross (the right way). ... He broke the law."⁴⁵ For Old Jimmy, the concept of morality-immorality is related to a spatial direction. As I already discussed, from the Gurindji people's perspective, Captain Cook came to Darwin and started to invade Aboriginal land. Captain Cook arrived in Darwin harbour and proceeded towards to the south. In his advance, Captain Cook cut across the *Jurntakal* Dreaming track. Captain Cook came from the wrong direction and moved in the wrong direction, and in doing so, he broke the 'right way' or the earth law. Here, colonisers' spatial movement accurately represents the immorality of Australian colonialism.

It seems that for Old Jimmy, directions, either north or south, are not important. The significant point is that England is not located on the 'right way';

⁴⁵ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 14, 16-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

the English came to Australia and cut across the 'right way'; they broke the earth law.

In Figure 3.7., Old Jimmy drew a circle (A) indicating England: "Maybe England here." He also drew another circle on the 'right way' or the 'earth law' and said, "This island for *yummi* [us]". While he drew a line (a) from south/England (A) to north/Australia (B) and said English people had broken the earth law, he also drew another line (b) from north to south and told me the English came this way.⁴⁶ Here, spatial direction clearly implies morality.

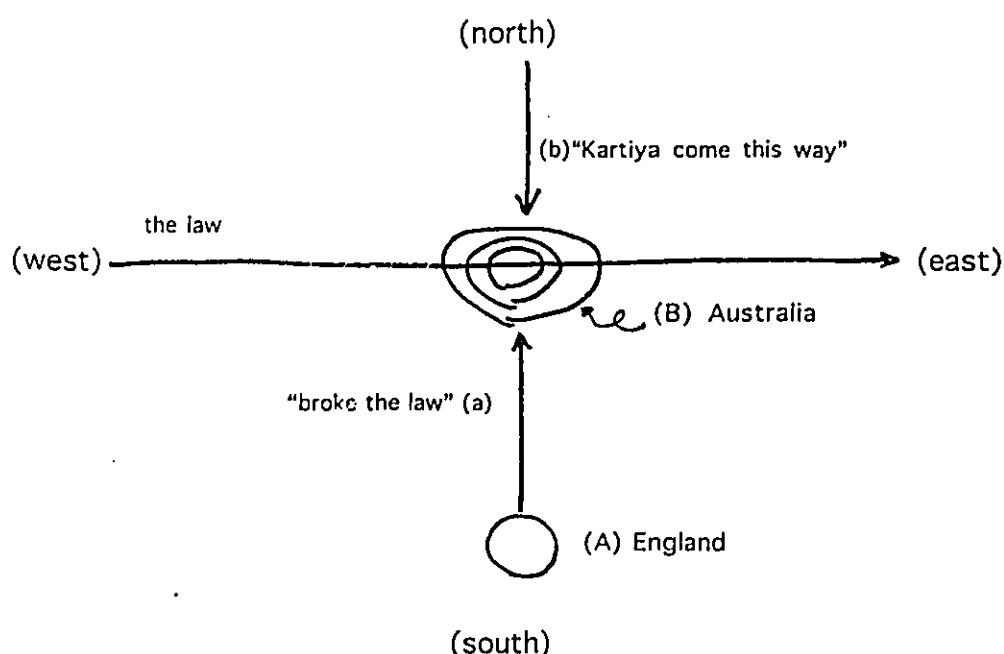


Figure 3.7. Location of 'England'

3.2.7. *Kartiya* never asked permission of *ng'impin*

The colonisers' behaviour and movement are both perceived as immoral and contradictory to the earth law. There is no separation between spatial and behavioural morality in Old Jimmy's analysis. Thus, the conditions of colonialism

⁴⁶ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 14, 16-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

are interpreted through the colonisers' spatial direction and movement. Old Jimmy repeatedly criticised the colonisers' immoral attitude:

"Captain Cook that fella come. He came to this country and put them [Europeans] everywhere. We never do it. It's no good. We live together. ... See, Captain Cook done wrong thing. He shoot the people, steal women. We never do it. Only whitefella did it. You should live together. ... They came here and do wrong thing but we never go England."⁴⁷

"*Kartiya* [the European] never understand. He maybe think *ngumpin* [Aboriginal people] stupid. He think he can do whatever he like. *Kuya, wankaj* [like this, very bad]. ... *Kartiya* never ask people. *Kartiya* must ask people. ... you know, all this idea from fuck'n Captain Cook..."⁴⁸

Aboriginal people never went to England, but Captain Cook came to Australia without permission. White people stole Aboriginal women without permission. In Old Jimmy's view, the core of the immorality of Australian colonisation is that Europeans never asked for permission to enter Aboriginal land. He even suggests an acceptable mode of co-habitation:

"Why he never say: 'Oh, come on mate, you and me live together. You and me living together, mates together Mate together. Live together. One *mangari* [food]. One table. Cart up wood together. No more fighting one another ... But you never do that. You decided to clean the people out from their own country. *Ngumpin* [Aboriginal] never went and kill you there longa England. He never made a big war longa you there, finish you there. No! You did the wrong thing, finishing up *ngumpin*. Like that now, no good that game. Well, you made it very hard."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 19-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

⁴⁸ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 11-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

⁴⁹ Rose 1991:265.

Old Jimmy explains this in the following sand drawing.

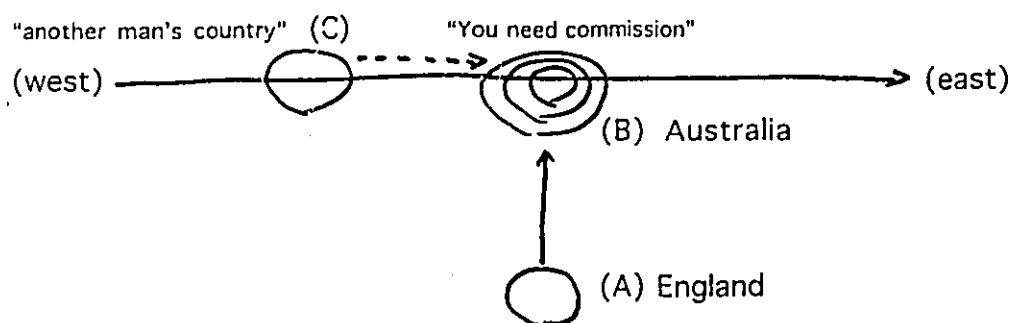


Figure 3.8. "You need permission."

Old Jimmy said that circle (C) is 'another man's country', and explained that whenever they come to our country, "you need commission [permission]"⁵⁰, which Captain Cook or the English never sought. 'Another man's country' is not necessarily located on the *Jurntakal* track in the geographical sense. As long as people maintain the morality, their land and behaviour are accepted as following the 'right way' in Old Jimmy's moral geography. In contrast, an immoral land (England) is located outside the line because their law does not come from the earth.

In the same manner, immoral attitudes should not be positioned on the 'right way' either. This is not just about European intrusion into the Aboriginal countries. Old Jimmy also criticises the fact that *kartiya* have even stolen the earth; Old Jimmy does not approve of the mining industry. However, he also said you needed at least the permission of the local people if you really want to do it: "He [Europeans] ask'em boss of this country. ... Maybe he say yes, maybe say no. .. They can't do what they like."⁵¹ To explain this to me, he also showed the moral geography of mining by drawing two circles outside of the 'right way'.

⁵⁰ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 14, 16-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

⁵¹ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 14, 16-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

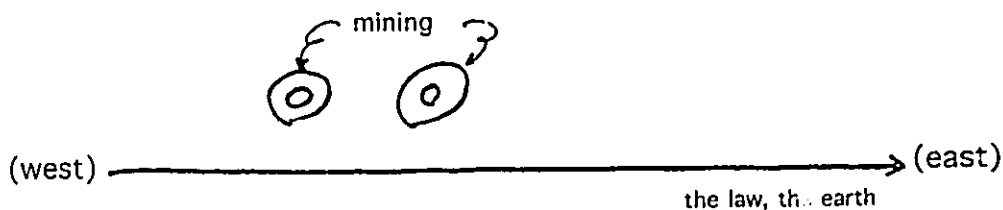


Figure 3.9. Moral geography of mining

He said as follows:

"You got a mining, gold mining. dig'im, dig'im the earth. He took that earth. He got money the people on this earth. What did you live on earth? What did you make? Here is this earth. That's why. You dig'im, just like stealing. He took earth, just like this. You got earth, mining took earth."⁵²

Through the above figures, Old Jimmy has made a clear distinction between moral and immoral disposition in his sand drawings which represent the landscape of his country. His country as well as 'another man's country' that is ethically acceptable is located on the 'right way' or the earth law. In contrast, an immoral country (England) and immoral attitude (mining) are located outside the line because their law does not come from the earth. The localities and attitudes of different people have their position in Old Jimmy's moral geography.

3.2.8. Old Jimmy's moral map of the world nations

It should be noted that for Old Jimmy, and also for other Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district, 'England' and the 'English' represent an immoral locality and people. That being said, if you are 'good *kartiya*', you are not from 'England'. Therefore, we should understand Old Jimmy's definition of 'English' as the immoral colonisers who invaded the Australian continent, and 'England' as the geographical origin of these colonisers. Old Jimmy explains this view as follows.

⁵² Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 19-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

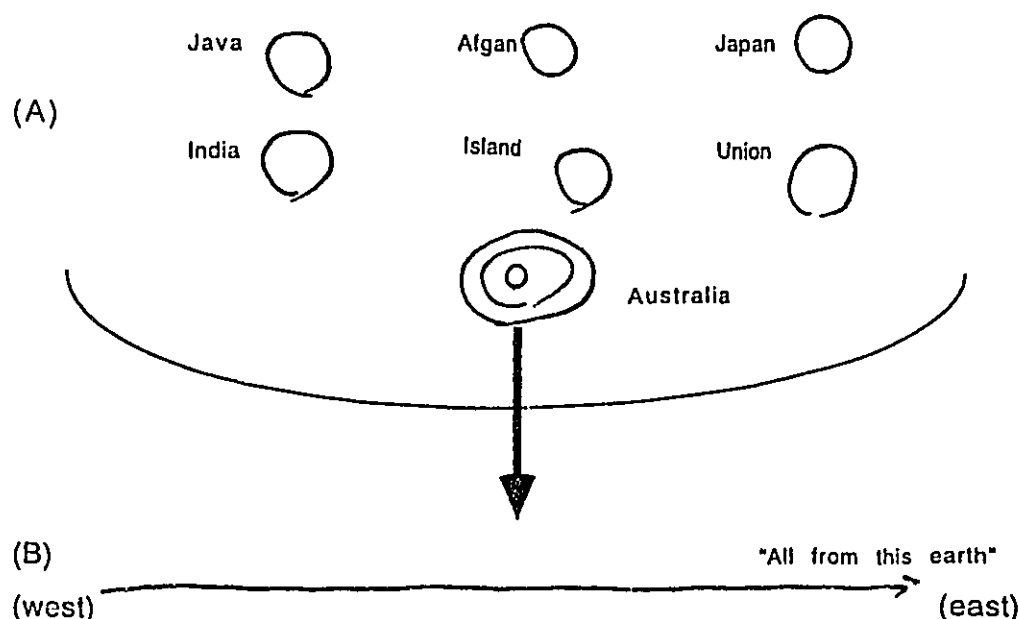


Figure 3.10. Moral map of the world

Drawing (A), he explained as follows:

J: Other thing I tell you. (Aboriginal) People there.

– drawing a big circle –

This one, this one, this one, this one, this one, this one, this one.

– drawing six small circles –

This is Japan, this is Afgan, this Java, this is India, this is (Labour) Union mob, this is (another) island⁵³.

– erasing the drawing (A) and drew one line (B) from west to east –

All from this earth (B). You are in the one law. But we don't know England. We don't know what made England.

⁵³ This word may be 'Ireland' instead of 'island' because they sound very similar. However, since I did not learn any stories about 'Ireland' from Gurindji 'storytellers', I do not have the necessary information to explore why Old Jimmy might have said 'Ireland' in this context.

— scooping sand —

You come out of on this earth. You come from earth.

M: *Yunmi* [you and me] came from earth?

J: Yes, *yunmi* came from earth but English is not from earth. We don't know him. I don't know him. We don't know what made him.

M: But you explained, this one, this one, this one, this one, but all come from the earth?

J: Yes, don't matter what land, it's same earth. You got different fruit and that land you gotta different fruit and different land, different land, different land. But we are on the same earth. You understand now. Different fruit, different fruit, different fruit, different fruit, different fruit, but we are (all) on one earth.⁵⁴

In Figure 3.10., it is clear that the earth or the line from west to east represents morality. Even though one might be living in a different country or island, all people are 'on the one earth law'. The exception is 'England' because, from Old Jimmy's viewpoint, 'England' or the place of Captain Cook's law cannot represent the earth law.

In contrast, the '(labour) union' is regarded as a country and, even though most union members are European in Australia, they are from the earth law. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, the labour union is highly regarded as 'good *kartiya*' among the Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district. This is because of their strong support for the Gurindji walk-off at Wave Hill station in 1966. The union members supported Indigenous Australians and fought against colonisers' dispossession of Aboriginal land. Therefore, it is logical for Old Jimmy that the union members did not come from immoral 'England' but from the moral earth:

"Union mob and Captain Cook different country. ... He [union members] help people. Put land back. ... Tommy Vincent,⁵⁵ union mob all right law. ... English man nomo [never] long *yunmi* [us]."⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 19-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

⁵⁵ Tommy Vincent Lingiari was a leader of the Gurindji 'Walk-off'. See Chap.5.

⁵⁶ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 14, 16-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

Every moral person comes from the earth, but an immoral person must have come from 'England' because his/her law is different and wrong. Old Jimmy also said to me, "English *kartiya* (is) different (from) other person *kartiya*."⁵⁷ Therefore, for example, even though 'Japan' is regarded as another moral land in Old Jimmy's sand drawing, we should understand that the Japanese who were oppressive and exploitative 'colonialists' could be regarded as the 'English'.

*

*

Old Jimmy knows and can draw spatial directions of morality. Through this process, colonialism is interpreted and assessed through his metaphysical *as well as* geographical sand drawings. By considering the geographical direction of morality that has been created by the great transcontinental travel of *Jurntakal* Dreaming, Old Jimmy found the immoral directions on the same geography. Using the image of moral-immoral geography, he succeeded in analysing and 'visualising' the history of Australian colonisation in the Dreaming landscape; the colonial history is transformed into the Aboriginal landscape.

3.3. Reflection

3.3.1. Colonial history and Aboriginal landscape

Jimmy Mangayarri of Daguragu demonstrated to me that Aboriginal history is within the moral-immoral landscape. As we have seen, a distinguishing characteristic of Old Jimmy's ideas is that he has a sense of 'locality' within the moral geography; he can find a spatial place, direction and movement for different people, countries, and attitudes. Through this process, historical events are interpreted, assessed and allocated certain geographical locations and directions in his metaphysical and geographical landscape.

However, it should be noted that my discussion in this chapter does not intend to generalise Aboriginal perspectives on Australian colonial history, instead it introduces a distinctive historical analysis made by an Aboriginal

⁵⁷ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 19, 2-9-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

historian, namely, Jimmy Mangayarri of Daguragu. It should also be emphasised that during my fieldwork, Old Jimmy was the only person who used sand drawings to explain Australian colonial history. Most of his methods of analysis and expression are attributed to his personal talent. As each academic historian has her/his own distinct approach, different Aboriginal historians have different forms of analysis. Even though Old Jimmy's story telling is highly original, his expression is widely accepted and appreciated among local people. I often heard people say to Old Jimmy, "That's very good story, *marluka* [o!a man]." Therefore, Old Jimmy's originality is *within the Gurindji mode of historical practice*. In other words, Old Jimmy's analysis of Australian colonisation is one of the examples of the Gurindji people's practice of 'place-oriented history'.

As an Aboriginal historian and a moral philosopher, Old Jimmy's consideration was not a 'history of landscape' but a 'landscape of history'. Morphy's argument about the 'subordination of time to space' may be applied to the Gurindji perspective of colonial history as well. From Old Jimmy's viewpoint, histories are more space-oriented events rather than time-oriented. Colonial events are understood through spatial directions of morality in Gurindji cultural geography. The colonial past is integrated into the landscape; history becomes landscape. Or in a stricter sense, for the Gurindji historians, *history is landscape*.

3.3.2. Earth law and paper law

I also want to briefly discuss the issue of the Gurindji sense of spatial direction. Broadly speaking, I found that the Gurindji people have a keen sense of geographical direction and location. For example, a standard *greeting* "*Wanji-kawu?*" in Gurindji means "which way are you going?". They first ask a person their direction and locality. Moreover, when driving and asking them to tell me the way, instead of saying "turn right (or left)", they normally replied "turn north (or south, east, west)". People were also eager to know 'which way' my country [Japan] was. In addition, whenever any person, not only Old Jimmy, drew a map of certain places on the earth, geographical directions were always accurate. For place-oriented culture, a spatial and geographical sense of direction may be significant aspects at both physical and metaphysical levels.

It is also worth noting that Old Jimmy never draws maps on paper or canvas. One reason may be that the Daguragu community itself is not productive in the arts and that Old Jimmy is not very interested in paintings. However, I want to make it clear that Old Jimmy once told me that paper is not from the earth:

"See, you got map like this.

— pointing to my fieldnote —

But we put on the earth. ... We see the country. We nomo [never] use paper. This is the way. You see the difference. You use paper, but we put on the earth."⁵⁸

If you draw a map on a paper, the drawing will lose direction because on paper, north is not always pointing to the geographical north. A map on paper lacks spatial direction.

This brings Old Jimmy to another analogy: European law lacks morality because their law is written on paper. Paper represents European law. Europeans write a law on paper, and then whenever they do not like their law, they just throw the paper away and write a new law on another paper. "*Kartiya* [European] law change every year."⁵⁹ But Aboriginal law never changes because their law is the earth law. "On the earth, never change.... (law) still there."⁶⁰

He also explained that *kartiya* law is like a fly, because, like the insect, it changes direction all the time. European law written on paper lacks spatial direction, and thus lacks morality. Because it is written on paper, you can change the law whenever you want to do so. As a result, *kartiya* law cannot set a fixed direction and morality. Until today, sometimes Australian settlers' society terribly abuses Aboriginal people and at other times supports them. Thus, Old Jimmy's analysis of European law accurately reflects Australian policy towards Aboriginal people that constantly changes direction.

⁵⁸ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 19-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

⁵⁹ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 14, 16-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

⁶⁰ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 14, 16-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

3.3.3. Where did the English law come from?

Before finishing this chapter, it may be worth mentioning that Old Jimmy once told me that he does not know the immoral source of *kartiya* or Captain Cook's law. I asked Old Jimmy, if the Europeans did not come from the moral earth, where did they come from? When I asked this question, his answer was, "I don't know.":

M: Do you know what is *kartiya* [the European]? Where is *kartiya* from?

J: I don't know what *kartiya* believe. We don't know (their) earth. We don't know nothing.

M: You don't know nothing...

J: We don't know nothing.

M: Nothing about *kartiya*?

J: I don't know why, what breed.

M: You don't know what breed *kartiya*.

J: Hmmm.

M: What do you reckon? Do you have any idea? What do you reckon? You don't know or...

J: I don't know nothing.

M: No idea...

J: Because we don't know all this idea.

M: You don't know all this idea. I see, I see.⁶¹

Old Jimmy knows that England was never located within the moral geography, and the English colonisers came to Australia from an immoral direction. However, he also said, "I don't know why, what breed (*kartiya* and their law)". Since Old Jimmy already confirmed that their immorality never came from the earth law, there exists two possibilities: either *kartiya* law is not from the earth or the English earth is different from the other countries' earth. However, instead of answering this, he often said, "I don't know." Therefore, I came to understand that his answer of "I don't know" is already the answer: as long as it

⁶¹ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 4, 25-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

does not come from this moral earth, there will never be a clue to revealing their origin. This is because, as Old Jimmy often said, "don't matter what it is, everything must come from the earth." If not, it is too alien to consider.

However, this was not the end of the story...

Spending more time with Old Jimmy, I began to realise that Old Jimmy's "I don't know" was actually the expression he used to emphasise how alien and immoral *kartiya* law is. To tell the truth, I later found out that Old Jimmy as well as other Gurindji elders actually had their historical knowledge as well as analysis to answer the question, "where did the *kartiya* and their law come from?" This was revealed to me about two months after I had the conversation above. I discuss this issue in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Jacky Pantamarra: The Origin of the European Colonialists

Broadbent:...I find the world quite good enough for me

- rather a jolly place, in fact.

Keegan (looking at him with quiet wonder): You are satisfied?

Broadbent: As a reasonable man, yes. I see no evils in the world

- except of course, natural evils - that cannot be remedied
by freedom, self-government and English institutions.

I think so, not because I am an Englishman, but as a matter
of common sense.

Keegan: You feel at home in the world then?

Broadbent: Of course, Don't you?

Keegan (from the very depths of his nature): No.

(Bernard Shaw *John Bull's Other Island*, ACT IV. Quote from Colin Wilson 1956)

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. Aboriginal analysis of European history

Most studies based on Aboriginal oral histories cover the period from their historical origin – Dreaming, where story tellers were born, or where their (grand)parents were born – to their colonial experiences. However, to my knowledge, there has been little attention given to the Aboriginal analysis and knowledge of European history. I suspect this is because academic historians tend to think that even though Indigenous Australians hold historical knowledge of their origin as well as their colonial pasts, they do not know much about the history of Europe. However, the Gurindji historians' interpretations of colonialism certainly elucidate their understandings of the historical and ontological origin of European colonialists.

“Where did the Europeans come from?”

“Why did they colonise Australia?”

“What was the moral (or immoral) foundation of their law?”

These questions have been examined by Gurindji historians through their cultural mode of practice, which I would like to call the ‘methodology of

Dreaming'. In this chapter, I seek to demonstrate the validity of Aboriginal analysis of European history as a counter-colonial discourse.

4.1.2. An Englishman in Australia before Captain Cook?

One may be surprised if I were to say that there was an Englishman who landed in Australia and encountered Aboriginal people *before* Captain Cook arrived. I am not talking about Macassans or Dutch explorers who visited the northern coast of Australia from the eighteenth century. He was from England. His name was Keen Lewis, or more commonly known by his Aboriginal name of 'Jacky Pantamarra'. When I heard this story from Jimmy Mangayarri, Thomas Mungka and Tommy Wajabungu, I could not help trying to confirm many times if this Englishman really came to Australia 'before Captain Cook'.

Following is the first session with Old Jimmy and Thomas about Jacky Pantamarra:

Jimmy (J): Australia, that why he start off. This Keen Lewis, Keen Lewis.

Minoru (M): Keen Lewis?

J: Keen Lewis.

M: What's that? Keen Lewis?

J: That fella bin come on this Australia-na.

M: *Yuwayi* [yes].

J: Keen Lewis.

M: Keen Lewis.

J: Yeah, *kartiya* call'im Keen Lewis we call'im Jacky Pantamarra.

M: You call Jacky Pantamarra?

J: Yeah, that the fella-na. That fella bin come longa this country. And he claim (Australia) belonga him. ... He come up this country, why he never pay'im people [ask permission to Aboriginal people]?

[...]

M: So, what time [when] he come here?

J: Oh, he bin come longa this country, where come out this country, what the *ngumpin* belonga this country, and him bin come longa this country, might be

from somewhere about England. English, England. Come to Australia, *ngumpin* country. Why he never pay'em people?

M: Never pay'em people.

J: Never pay'em.

M: Jacky Pantamarra never pay'em.

J: Never pay'em. What *yunmi* come longa this country, what *yunmi* claim on. (Jacky Pantamarra) claim(ed) on this my country (as his own land). Keen Lewis-na. Keen Lewis, Jacky Pantamarra. Yeah.

M: Jacky Pantamarra, *yuwayi*. So, he is the first *kartiya* to come here?

Thomas (T): Yeah.

J: First *kartiya*-na.

T: First *kartiya*.

[...]

J: Captain Cook come out on this country, alright, (then) he start shoot'em people.

M: How about Keen Lewis? Captain Cook, same?

J: Well, he come out, he is the first one. Keen Lewis is the first one.

M: Keen Lewis is the first one, *yuwayi*.

J: Captain Cook after.

M: Captain Cook, after, *yuwayi*... Oh! So, Keen Lewis come here first, after that, Captain Cook come here, and start kill'em people?

J: He shoot'em people-na.

M: Shoot'em people, *yuwayi*.

J: You know he bin here, he never like me. Even you, English never like you.¹

I had to learn about this mysterious figure of Jacky Pantamarra. Who was Jacky Pantamarra? What did he do in England and Australia? Furthermore, how can we share the history of Jacky Pantamarra with the Gurindji people? These are the questions to be explored in this chapter.

Although many Gurindji elders know Jacky Pantamarra as the first European who came to Australia, very few people can actually talk about him.

¹ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2. Similar conversation with Tommy Wajabungu is also in Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

Many of them often said Captain Cook was the first *kartiya* coming to Australia. However, when I asked about Jacky Pantamarra, they admitted he came to Australia before Captain Cook, but then they pointed to Old Jimmy and said, "Ask that *marluka* [old man], he know'im more". In addition, people regarded Old Jimmy as my main teacher. Therefore, I naturally learned most stories of Jacky Pantamarra from Old Jimmy. It should be noted that my discussion of Jacky Pantamarra is based mainly, but not exclusively, on Jimmy Mangayarri's historical analysis.

4.2. History of Jacky Pantamarra

Jacky Pantamarra has several unique characteristics as well as a geographical and genealogical background. I would like to introduce Old Jimmy's teachings about several distinctive aspects of Jacky Pantamarra. In this section, I will minimise my own analysis of these stories. However, I also have to categorise, summarise and add some information in order to let you (the readers) comprehend the stories more easily. I will discuss the stories after setting out Old Jimmy's dialogue with me. In addition, since Old Jimmy briefly told this story of Jacky Pantamarra to Deborah B. Rose in the 1980s as well, I will add her version when necessary. I do acknowledge that my manipulation of categorising and summarising Old Jimmy's narrative may twist his original ideas and our conversation, but this risk had to be taken otherwise readers may not grasp the picture of Jacky Pantamarra.

4.2.1. Jacky Pantamarra was bred from a 'monkey'

One of the most interesting stories for me was that an ancestor of Jacky Pantamarra was a monster-like animal which had four or five arms (or legs). Old Jimmy explained that through 'some sort of breed', Jacky Pantamarra came out from this animal called a 'monkey':

J: He [Jacky Pantamarra] come out this country. And breed'em, breed'em, breed'em, breed'em. Some sort of breed. Gotta, might be two arm here, two arm here...

— pointing his body —

You kinda breed.

M: *Yuwayi*, you breed'em, breed'em, breed'em.

J: Gotta two arm, four arm all together. That's why he use breed.

M: He breed'em here, he breed'em here.

J: Yeah, he breed all this country-na. Breed'em children long time-na. You can see what he do, see what he, he gotta, he gotta sort of, monkey, you know that monkey?

M: Monkey? Yeah. Monkey, he shoot'em monkey, too?

J: That's way he breed. That's the white men breed.

M: Oh, that's the way that white man breed. Monkey, *yuwayi*. So, Jacky Pantamarra breed'em monkey.

J: Some sort of man longa next one. Mightbe follow five fuck'n leg or four leg or allot some, him breed, some, some or big head and small body, allat, sort of a, sort of animal breed.²

It must be noted that Old Jimmy probably has never seen a monkey. For him a 'monkey' is a mysterious animal which could have four arms or four/five legs. This 'monkey' or 'sort of animal' bred itself many times until Jacky Pantamarra evolved in England. Later, Jacky Pantamarra also bred many *kartiya* or 'white men' even in 'this country' or Australia. In this dialogue, I could not figure out the relationship between Jacky Pantamarra and monkeys. Readers may have recognised that some of my comments such as "He [Jacky Pantamarra] shoot'em monkey", or "Jacky Pantamarra breed'em monkey" overstepped and did not follow Old Jimmy's story. However, the following story describes this relationship more clearly:

M: Jacky Pantamarra breed'em monkey, or Monkey breed'em Jacky Pantamarra?

J: Might be he breed'em out of the monkey-na.

M: *Yuwayi*.

J: Monkey, you can see all this bloody English people up the monkey. ...take that monkey.

² Jimmy Mangayati, Tape 21, 19-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

M: Take that monkey. English people take that monkey.

J: Yeah. Now every show you. See that monkey. Well that must be mate.

M: So monkey must be...

J: Same breed.

M: Same breed, might be mate.

J: That way, mate.³

This story confirmed for me that Jacky Pantamarra came out *from* a monkey. Old Jimmy explained both monkey and Jacky Pantamarra are the same blood and 'mate'. Therefore, it is clear that English people have some genealogical relationship to a 'monkey'. This brings us to the next point: Jacky Pantamarra came out of monkeys and then he became the first English person or 'white man'. As I mentioned in the beginning, Jacky Pantamarra is the first English person who came to Australia. However, in fact, he is also the origin of all English people and their history:

J: Ah, him from England.

M: From England.

J: See, you know what... That's why he breed *kartiya* [whites].

M: That's why he breed the *kartiya*.

J: By that one-na. Jacky Pantamarra.

M: Jacky Pantamarra.

J: That's why you now you go. You know he make that human all way...*kartiya*-na. See, that the way the *kartiya*, you see that in history belonga the *kartiya*, it's Jacky Pantamarra. That one bin born longa country.⁴

In the above discussion, it is clear that Old Jimmy said Jacky Pantamarra bred *kartiya*. This is a 'history belonga *kartiya*.' The story of Jacky Pantamarra represents the history of Europeans.

³ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

Old Jimmy also told Deborah Rose that Jacky Pantamarra later established London.⁵ Furthermore, it is important to know that Jacky Pantamarra wrote many books:

M: Is Keen Lewis finish [dead], or still alive?

J: Ha?

M: Is Keen Lewis, Jacky Pantamarra.

J: He finish.

M: He finish, yeah.

J: ... You know him book. Still I got'em the book, like this. Turn on another book. All that.

M: He wrote a book?

J: He gotta a lota book.

M: Oh, Jacky Pantamarra, he gotta a lot of books?

J: *Yuwayi*. Make it, make it...⁶

Jacky Pantamarra made many books. But why? The following is Old Jimmy's answer:

J: England him born there. He born and ... this old Jacky Pantamarra. That's why he had on the book-na. Allat [everything] put'em down on the book.

M: All put'em down on the book. What sort of? He made'm book?

J: You must got book, you know. You know, some sort of book him made, teach'em (white) fellas, allat, teach'em up. Did he get bad, did he get ... and allat, allat [all] silly idea.

M: All the silly idea, *yuwayi*.

J: That's all (from) Jacky Pantamarra.⁷

⁵ Rose 1992:186.

⁶ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

⁷ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 19, 2-9-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

By now, it became clear that Jacky Pantamarra created books which contain 'all silly ideas', and he taught these ideas to *kartiya* – his descendants. However, what are these 'silly ideas' which Jacky Pantamarra produced, wrote, taught and spread among *kartiya*?

4.2.2. Jacky Pantamarra let Captain Cook colonise Australia

Among 'all silly ideas' Jacky Pantamarra created, one of the silliest was probably the idea of colonisation. This idea is related to Jacky Pantamarra's development of the tools for colonisation.

At first, Jacky Pantamarra had no tools but only a shanghai:

J: That's why him bin breed breed. He had no anything one ... that Pantamarra. He had no rifle, he had a bit live on longa... you know that shanghai?

M: Shanghai.

J: Well you see, well, kids call'em shanghai. Kill'em *julak* [birds], he put the stone, he kill'em. Like that

– showing how to use shanghai –

M: So Jacky Pantamarra, never use rifle.

J: No.

M: He uses this, what'em call?

J: Shanghai.

M: Shanghai, *yuwayi*.

J: He gotta some ... You put'im like that, ... hit the man.

M: Oh, yes, oh yes. So he use'em this shanghai, and kill the animal and kill the man, too.

J: Yeah. He kill'em man, too. He kill'em man, too. Like what his Pantamarra way living.

M: That Jacky Pantamarra way of living.⁸

It is worthwhile emphasising that using the shanghai, Jacky Pantamarra killed animals as well as human beings. This was the 'Jacky Pantamarra way (of)

⁸ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

living'. Old Jimmy also said that Jacky Pantamarra used a bow and an arrow. Figure 4.1. is the sand drawing he used to explain what a bow looked like.

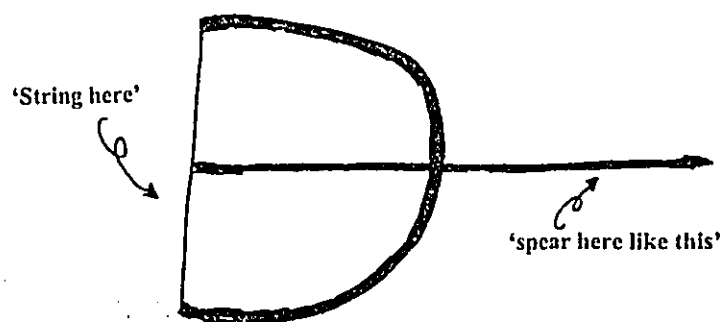


Figure 4.1. Jacky Pantamarra's bow

The fact that Jacky Pantamarra did not use a rifle but a shanghai and bow is worth considering. In fact, Old Jimmy told Rose that Jacky Pantamarra apparently visited America to learn new technologies and then invented the rifle.⁹ After inventing these tools, Jacky Pantamarra initiated the colonisation of Australia. Jacky Pantamarra eventually came to Australia and claimed it as his own country. He did not ask for permission from the local Aboriginal people. Instead, he commanded Captain Cook to colonise the land by killing the Indigenous people:

J: That the one. (Jacky Pantamarra thought) he is the boss of this country. That he reckon he is the boss. What he done? He never pay me. See? He never pay'em *ngumpin*. And he all up put people the Captain Cook.

M: He put the Captain Cook.

J: Captain Cook come out this country, Australia. He start shoot'em. Shoot'em allat people.¹⁰

⁹ Rose 1992:186.

¹⁰ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

Old Jimmy's historical analysis tells us that Jacky Pantamarra and Captain Cook are from the same family in England. Their relationship seems like that of a strategist and a militarist. Jacky Pantamarra claimed he was the boss of Australia and sent Captain Cook to invade and shoot the local people. Old Jimmy accused both Jacky Pantamarra and Captain Cook of starting the Australian colonisation. More detailed stories of Captain Cook in the Gurindji country will be examined in Chapter 6. In this chapter, instead, I would like to concentrate on the stories of Jacky Pantamarra.

4.2.3. Jacky Pantamarra's way of living

I have already mentioned killing animals and human beings was Jacky Pantamarra's way of living. I now want to explore his everyday practice.

Old Jimmy explained that Jacky Pantamarra killed animals, got their skin and then earned money. These animals included goannas, kangaroos, lizards, and dogs:

J: ... He [Jacky Pantamarra] had might be make out of the goanna, kangaroo, some lizard, all'em skin. That's why he make the money.

M: Oh, then you mak'em money. He get'em skin...

J: Skin, from dogs. See, that why what'bout *kartiya* bin come longa this country ... dog, and give it the policeman. Well, that's all, that get all the money. See, that all for money.¹¹

It seems that Jacky Pantamarra was probably a dingo and crocodile hunter and that was how he earned money. In another story about Jacky Pantamarra's personal life, Old Jimmy often emphasised that Jacky Pantamarra killed his wife. Old Jimmy saw it in the newspapers when he was a little child:

M: Jacky Pantamarra, Keen Lewis. Cheeky [dangerous] person, cheeky one.

J: Cheeky one. And you see on the newspaper.

M: You see on the newspaper?

¹¹ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

J: Jacky Pantamarra get his wife, ... fuck'n hand like that. Fuck'n make'em

– making a gesture of hitting a woman's head –

M: Kill'im?

T: Yeah, it's true.

M: Really? He kili'im wife?

J: Yeah, yeah. (I) see'im, band'im. That's way he do.

M: That's way he do. *Nyampawu* [why]?

J: I don't know *nyampawu*. You did see that book on newspaper on this country-na.

[...]

J: Yeah. That why what happen, you know... he bust his wife. Pull'em from hair, get fuck'in beat stick on it.

M: Kill'em..

J: That why.¹²

While showing me how Jacky Pantamarra hit and killed his wife, Old Jimmy explained that he saw such a photo (or drawing?) in the newspapers. He did not know why Jacky Pantamarra beat and killed his wife. However, on another occasion, he told me such wife-beating was common among *kartiya*:

M: You see, Jacky Pantamarra? You see him, or hear...

J: No. I see him when I was little boy. I see him on the newspaper.

M: Oh, when you were little boy, you see'im on the newspaper?

J: Yeah, I bin see. Well, ... see that one, I see'im on the news paper, he beat'em that woman belonga him, pull'em the hair, get his hand *karnti* [stick] – gesturing like hitting a woman's head with a stick on his hand –

That what all *kartiya* bin do-na.

M: Some early days...

J: Early days, that's what that all the history.¹³

¹² Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

¹³ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 19, 2-9-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

In the above discussion, Old Jimmy told me such wife beating had been 'that what all *kartiya* bin do'. I understood that Old Jimmy blamed Jacky Pantamarra for the origin of such wife-beating and domestic violence against women in general.

Furthermore, Old Jimmy claims white men's practice of sexual relations with Aboriginal women was Jacky Pantamarra's idea:

J: You got all idea from this old Jacky Pantamarra. Well (when) he was passed away, he had all his idea before he passed away. And he breed'em, breed'em, breed'em, breed'em all, all [...] all English *kartiya*, he mad'em marry with black woman-na.

M: English *kartiya* married with black women?

J: Yeah. black women, and breed all *yellowfella* [an Aboriginal person who has a non-Aboriginal parent].

M: Breed the *yellowfella*.

J: Well that's all that idea you had Jacky Pantamarra.

M: All belonga Jacky Pantamarra.

J: All idea longa him.¹⁴

4.2.4. All bad ideas come from Jacky Pantamarra

The historical role of Jacky Pantamarra has become clearer: the first English/European person is the origin of all bad ideas. For another example, Old Jimmy told me that Jacky Pantamarra also brought alcohol to Australia and he started the alcohol problem among Aboriginal people:

"All this bad idea is longa Keen Lewis [Jacky Pantamarra]. He breed'em all bad idea. Keen Lewis bring grog [alcohol] longa this earth. ... Drink grog mak'em fight everywhere, no good all together. ... Before Keen Lewis, we live good time. No grog, no fighting that time. ... People live on proper food. Bush fruits,

¹⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 19, 2-9-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

kangaroo. We never eat'em *buluki* [cattle], horse. We eat'em kangaroo, fruits. ... Today, we eat'em *kartiya* food."¹⁵

From Old Jimmy's point of view, all negative practices such as murder, wife-beating, drinking alcohol and colonisation started because of Jacky Pantamarra's ideas.

Stories of Jacky Pantamarra convinced me that the English people are totally different people from all other races because the English were bred by Jacky Pantamarra whose origin was not a moral Dreaming but 'some sort of animal' called 'monkey'. English people are morally wrong because they were taught by Jacky Pantamarra's book which was full of 'silly ideas'. Old Jimmy said, "All these bad idea longa Keen Lewis book"¹⁶ He also told me as follows:

J: Because (of) this one [Jacky Pantamarra], English different longa *yunmi* [us].

M: *Yuwayi* [Yes], English different longa *yunmi*, *yuwayi*.

J: Different to anybody.

M: Different to anybody. *Yuwayi*.

J: He breed by Jacky Pantamarra.

M: He is bred by Jacky Pantamarra. ...

J: Well, he [the English] get all idea out of the Jacky Pantamarra.¹⁷

This was the history of European colonisers that I learnt from the Gurindji historians.

4.3. Reflection

4.3.1. Approach

Old Jimmy's historical narratives may perplex academic historians who cannot simply accept or agree with his teachings. Jacky Pantamarra is definitely part of the historical knowledge of the people of Daguragu and other communities around

¹⁵ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 26-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.

¹⁶ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 26-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.

¹⁷ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 19, 2-9-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

the Victoria River district. However, for academic readers, the stories of Jacky Pantamarra are so mysterious that it is hard to believe such a person existed. At first glance, it seems to be impossible for academic historians to share the history of Jacky Pantamarra with the Gurindji people. If so, shall we ignore this story by saying, "This is the wrong history"?

What I emphatically reject is the polemic notions that "we know the right history" and "they are telling the wrong history". We – academic historians – are not in the position to judge if Gurindji historical narratives are right or wrong. This is because we do not know about the Gurindji mode of historical practice. It is increasingly common for academic historians to use Aboriginal oral histories in order to bring Indigenous voices into their narratives. However, to my knowledge, only a few attempts have been made to incorporate Aboriginal oral accounts in the culturally distinctive structure of their story tellings.

The point I want to make here is quite simple: Aboriginal oral history should not only be used as a supplementary source for the 'academic mode of history', but should also be understood within Aboriginal cultural modes of historical practice.

On the other hand, we also need to beware of over-emphasising the difference between academic and indigenous modes of history. This might entrap us into cultural separatism. We certainly might listen to Old Jimmy's stories. But if that is all we do, our conclusion will be: "Aboriginal histories totally contradict academic 'historicity', so there is no way to share history between academic and Aboriginal historians". Therefore, academic historians may categorise the story of Jacky Pantamarra as a 'myth' rather than a 'history', and claim histories should be analysed by historians, while myths are of interest to anthropologists. Shall we forward this story to anthropologists by saying, "Here is an Aboriginal myth for you"?

It is outside the scope of this thesis to discuss the problem of academic 'division of labour' in detail. However, I would like to make it clear here once again that for Old Jimmy, as well as for most of the Gurindji people, there is no such distinction between 'myths' and 'history'.¹⁸ As far as I have learned, both

¹⁸ See Chapters 1, 3.

Dreaming stories and colonial stories are real. If one still insists on making a division between the anthropologists and the historians, I believe the study of Dreaming stories may be for anthropologists and the study of colonial stories should be for historians.

After all, the purpose of my project, cross-culturalizing history, is to learn historical analysis from Aboriginal historians and to reflect upon communication between academic and Gurindji modes of historical practices. I believe this is the appropriate way of struggling towards a historical 'reality' which we – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people – may both be able to share.

Let me discuss this point in the context of the history of Jacky Pantamarra.

4.3.2. *Kartiya* from monkeys, *ngumpin* from Dreaming

First of all, it is reasonable to assume that Old Jimmy, and some other Gurindji people, are probably familiar with the basic idea of evolutionary theory.¹⁹ Considering the story about Jacky Pantamarra 'coming out of a monkey', we can assume that some settlers – perhaps school teachers – told the Gurindji people that human beings evolved from primates. Gurindji historians accepted this as the basis for understanding the origin of Europeans.

It is significant that the Gurindji historians did not apply evolutionary theory to themselves but only to European colonisers. Gurindji people are confident of their own origin. They have been created and maintained through the law of Dreaming. The Dreaming is the origin of their being. What they did not know was the historical and ontological origin of *kartiya*. Their analysis concluded that *ngumpin* originated from Dreaming, but *kartiya* have originated from 'monkeys'.

This idea of the genealogical difference between Aboriginal people and the European colonialists reinforces the belief that *kartiya* lack morality but *ngumpin* have ethical origins. In Gurindji cosmology, colonisers cannot come from the Dreaming since they lack morality, which Dreaming always holds. Old Jimmy thinks everything is from the earth except *kartiya* and their law.

¹⁹ Rose 1992:186.

Everything coming from the earth must have a certain morality which is founded by Dreaming. There is no monkey Dreaming in the Gurindji sacred geography. *Kartiya* whose origin is a 'monkey' cannot have Dreaming, morality, or the earth law. One should not picture the monkey as the animal that we know when considering Old Jimmy's image of a 'monkey' since he probably has never seen this animal. For Old Jimmy, a monkey is a mysterious creature which has four or five legs. Old Jimmy's idea that Jacky Pantamarra came out of a monster-like animal called 'monkey' supports the reasoning that *kartiya* are an immoral people. *Kartiya* are not from Dreaming, but were bred from a monkey.

4.3.3. Stories from the Top End?

The story of Jacky Pantamarra corresponds not only to evolutionary theory, but also with many other aspects of colonialists' activities in the early stages of Australian colonisation.

For example, Old Jimmy tells us Jacky Pantamarra started the idea of *kartiya* men stealing *ngumpin* women. This story corresponds to the history of sexual relations between *kartiya* stockworkers and *ngumpin* women which was widely practised in the Victoria River district and other regions.²⁰ Furthermore, we learned that Jacky Pantamarra killed animals (goannas, lizards or dogs), got their skins and sold them. This story not only has a connection to the dingo hunters' activities in Victoria River district, but probably also has connections to Macassan activity on the North Australian shores before European colonisation as well as crocodile hunters in the Top End of Australia in the early twentieth century.²¹

It is evident that the Gurindji people have kept their communication with northern Aboriginal people through their kinship and ceremonial networks. Before the Gurindji 'Walk-off' movement started in 1966, most of the Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district worked at cattle stations. Since there was not much

²⁰ Concerning the situation of such sexual relations at the Wave Hill station, see Hokari 1996c:72-74. McGrath argues that Aboriginal women hold different perspectives on this 'problem'. See McGrath 1987a:Chap.4.

²¹ About Macassans and Aboriginal interactions, see, for example, Macknight 1976; Cole 1975:8-9, 1979: Chap.6. About crocodile hunters, see, for example, Ronan 1966; Cole 1988.

work during the wet season, Aboriginal workers left stations and went for 'walkabout'. As I will discuss in Chapter 7, this walkabout season was important for maintaining activities such as hunting and ceremonies. This walkabout period gave Aboriginal people a chance to communicate with other groups living in other places. As Lyn Riddett says, it was the opportunity for them to meet other Aboriginal people and discuss the daily life of cattle stations.²² It is not difficult to imagine that they exchanged stories of settlers' activities and discussed the nature of *kartiya*, their law, country and origins.

One should not underestimate Aboriginal information networks. For example, as Ronald and Catherine Berndt point out in their fieldwork at Wave Hill station in 1944, almost all the Aborigines had at least one close relative in another area such as Mistake Creek, Limbunya, or various stations on Victoria River Downs.²³ Rose also emphasises that during this ceremonial season, information was exchanged most intensively, and these Aboriginal information networks criss-cross the continent and are probably thousands of years old.²⁴ These ceremonial and kinship chains of communication from the Gurindji country easily reach the Top End countries as well as the southern desert countries. When I was at Daguragu, the Gurindji people received bamboo spears from Timber Creek and Yarralin communities. According to Billy Bunter, these spears were made in the Top End and brought down through the Daly River country. While most of these spears would go further south to the desert countries, the Gurindji people also brought boomerangs and shields which came from southern Warlpiri country in order to trade on each other's products.²⁵

These trade routes were information routes as well. Through these ceremonial and kinship networks, the Aboriginal people in Victoria River district may have received 'early days' stories about Macassans and Dutch ships on the northern Australian coast, crocodile and buffalo hunters of the early twentieth century, and episodes of early explorers in different areas. Through the networks,

²² Riddett 1985:206.

²³ Berndt and Berndt 1987:58.

²⁴ Rose 1991:8. On Aboriginal ceremonial networks, see also, McCarthy 1939; Thomson 1949; Mulvaney 1976.

²⁵ Billy Bunter, dictated 5-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.

many of these stories may have evolved and developed into different versions. Accordingly, the history that *kartiya* explorers arrived in north Australia before the English started their colonisation of Australia – that is ‘before Captain Cook’ – could also be a source of Jacky Pantamarra stories.²⁶



Plate 4.1. Spears from the Top End, 1997

4.3.4. Why is he called ‘Jacky Pantamarra’?

The above discussion also brings us to speculate about where the name ‘Jacky Pantamarra’ comes from. For example, even though I admit it is not based on linguistic analysis, his name ‘Pantamarra’ makes us suspect that it may come from the word ‘Balanda’ meaning ‘European/whites’ in Indonesian as well as some Aboriginal languages in Arnhem Land.²⁷

Furthermore, it is worth considering why the first *kartiya* was called ‘Jacky’. In the same way that ‘Paddy’ denotes Irishness, ‘Jacky’ or ‘Jacky Jacky’

²⁶ On Dutch explorers, see, for example, Yarwood and Knowling 1982:Chap.2; Mulvaney 1990:2-7.

²⁷See Cole 1979:Chap.7.

generally denotes Aboriginality in colonial Australian societies. For example, an Aboriginal man, Galmahra, who guided Edward Kennedy's expedition as well as William Westwood who blackened his face to escape detection, were both called 'Jacky Jacky'.²⁸ It is safe to say that the word 'Jacky' has been used as a stereotyped and discriminatory term for Aboriginal males among settlers. By calling the first *kartiya* 'Jacky', Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district returned this term to the colonial settlers with great sarcasm.²⁹

The first *kartiya* who came out from 'monkey' in England had a European name: 'Keen Lewis'.³⁰ However, Aboriginal people created his *ngumpin* name 'Jacky Pantamarra'. 'Pantamarra' may have come from the story that there were *kartiya* who came to northern Australia before Captain Cook. Furthermore, the word 'Jacky' may have been given to this first European because of its discriminatory connotations.

4.3.4. A planner and an invader

It is also interesting to compare the stories of Jacky Pantamarra and Captain Cook in order to understand the Gurindji way of constructing European/English history.

There are the different roles of Jacky Pantamarra and Captain Cook: Jacky Pantamarra as a planner, Captain Cook as an invader. Even though people told me that Jacky Pantamarra was the first Englishman who came to Australia, most of the detailed invasion stories are attributed to Captain Cook rather than to Jacky Pantamarra. It is clear that Jacky Pantamarra's main role is more like that of a founder of all 'silly ideas'. According to Old Jimmy, Jacky Pantamarra was the one who bred all bad ideas and wrote the book [law]. Rose argues that although Aboriginal stories of Captain Cook are "at odds with Western Knowledge of Captain Cook's journeys, the more interesting point is that this difference is irrelevant. Invasion did happen, people did get shot, they did have their lands stolen."³¹ Likewise, even though the stories of Jacky Pantamarra sound strange to

²⁸ Davidson, et al. 355.

²⁹ Rose 1992:186.

³⁰ This name also can be spelt 'Kin Loos' or 'King Louis'. However, I do not have the substantial information necessary to further explore the origin of Jacky Pantamarra's English name.

³¹ Rose 1991:17.

academic historians, the significant point is that there certainly were European politicians and thinkers who justified their colonialism and claimed Australia as 'Terra Nullius'.³² Just as Captain Cook accurately symbolises European colonisers, Jacky Pantamarra clearly signifies European politicians or thinkers who justified the colonisation.

When the Gurindji people construct the colonial past, it is natural that they wonder about the unethical grounds of Captain Cook's attitude towards Indigenous Australians. Why did Captain Cook come to Australia without asking the Aboriginal people? Why is Captain Cook's law so unethical? Where did this law originally come from? *Kartiya* law cannot be from Dreaming. If so, what bred such silly ideas? Or, more generally, what was the origin of the European colonisers? In order to understand the Captain Cook's and settlers' unethical attitudes, Aboriginal people need to analyse the origin of their law, frame of mind, as well as the origin of themselves.

In this sense, the Gurindji way of applying evolutionary theory is remarkably successful. By adopting the European-oriented theory, but turning it around in a 'carnavalesque' way, the Gurindji people found the historical and ontological origin of colonial Europeans and their law.

4.3.5. Making of the Europeans

The Gurindji historians' analysis of European history clearly reflects their own experience of the colonial past.

Many Gurindji elders used to spend their lives in cattle stations. As I will discuss later, one needs further discussion to determine if Aboriginal stockworkers were simply exploited by settlers' enterprise, or whether they were proud of being stockmen and enjoyed their work.³³ However, it is clear that there was physical separation between Aboriginal workers and European workers in life on cattle stations. My previous work suggested that the Gurindji people's life on the Wave Hill station was a typical example of colonial separatism. I studied three different aspects of physical separation at Wave Hill station. First, in stockwork,

³² See, for example, Stephenson and Ratnapala 1993.

³³ See Chapters 6 & 7.

the higher positions such as manager and head stockman were dominated by European workers and the lower positions such as stockmen and unskilled labour were for Aboriginal workers. Secondly, in the daily life at the homestead, the living area was physically separated so that Europeans rarely visited Aboriginal camps. Thirdly, in the rainy season, this separation was even wider since most Aborigines left the cattle stations and went for their 'walkabout'.³⁴ It is debatable whether these physical separations made Aboriginal people comfortable or uncomfortable in their cattle station life, but this physical separation probably affected the Aboriginal analysis of Europeans.

Bain Attwood's *The Making of the Aborigines* (1989) gives us a Foucauldian insight into this racial separatism. Attwood argues that the notion of the 'Aborigine' is an historical invention of the dominant culture of white-Australian consciousness. Australian settlers observed, studied and exercised authority over Indigenous Australians.³⁵ The idea of this physical separation in the cattle station was clearly based on Eurocentric superiority.

It is not too difficult to imagine the settlers' racial separatism led the Aboriginal people to construct an Aboriginal mode of separatism as a counter action. Nevertheless, to my knowledge, few studies have been done on the process of the 'making of the Europeans' which had been happening within the Aboriginal counter-colonial practice. The Gurindji people have observed, studied and analysed the origin and nature of the colonialists and their land. In the same way that settlers' culture has constructed the notion of 'Aborigines', Aboriginal people have constructed the notion of immoral 'English' people. When the Gurindji people faced Eurocentric separatism, they accepted the racial separatism without adopting Eurocentrism.

'Aboriginal separatism' claims that Indigenous Australians are different from settlers; they are of different origin, use different tools, and have different law. However, in their understanding, Aboriginal people are never inferior to settlers. On the contrary, by analysing the nature of Jacky Pantamarra, a founding figure of European colonisers and their law, the Gurindji people justify *ngumpin*

³⁴ Hokari 1996a, 1996c.

³⁵ Attwood 1989. See also, Attwood and Arnold 1992; Reece 1987.

law as a moral law and despise *kartiya* law – Jacky Pantamarra's book – which contained pernicious ideas that allowed them to invade Australia.

It is ironic that while European societies regarded Australia as a 'convict country', Indigenous Australians understood England as an 'immoral country'. In the same way as 'Aborigine' was the invention of settlers' thought and practice, '*kartiya*' was the invention of Gurindji thought and practice; these identities are the dual product of Australian colonialism.

*

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So far, my discussion 'over the cultural gap' has been more academic history-oriented and has not extensively examined the Gurindji people's historical reality. In other words, my attempt so far has been to 'translate' the Gurindji people's history of Jacky Pantamarra into an academic historical context. From now on, my discussion is more 'interpretative' than 'translative'. The following sections are for understanding the Gurindji people's history *within* the Gurindji mode of historical practice. We need to explore the history of Jacky Pantamarra corresponding more closely to the Gurindji modes of temporal-spatial structure as well as their concept of morality.

4.3.6. Methodology of Dreaming-1: temporal structure

Since Old Jimmy admits that Jacky Pantamarra has already passed away, it is clear that Jacky Pantamarra is a story about the past. However, it is certainly problematic from an academic historical perspective to accept the 'fact' that Jacky Pantamarra is thought to have lived for an unusually long period of time. How could it be possible for one person to evolve from a 'monkey', breed Europeans as a progenitor, develop technologies from the bow to the rifle, encourage Captain Cook to colonise Australia, and then appear at the time of Old Jimmy's boyhood?

From these stories, one general point becomes clear: Jacky Pantamarra can appear at any time in the past. To understand the temporal nature of Jacky Pantamarra, it is worthwhile comparing it with the concept of time in Aboriginal Dreaming. As many scholars have noted, Dreaming is not based on the linear

concept of time. Rather, Dreaming events have been occurring all the time. Stanner's famous definition of the temporal structure of Dreaming is 'everywhen'.³⁶ A. P. Elkin explains that for Aboriginal people the "past [...] is present, here and now."³⁷ In more recent studies, Rose says "Dreamings all exist all the time", and thus Dreaming is "a synchronous set of events, those things which endure".³⁸ Tony Swain denies any temporal concept in Dreaming, and suggests calling it 'abiding events'.³⁹

The history of Jacky Pantamarra shares a similar temporal structure to Dreaming. Jacky Pantamarra is not confined to a particular temporal point. Jacky Pantamarra is the origin of Europeans, yet in the same way as Dreamings (the origin of Aboriginal people), Jacky Pantamarra also manifests and acts in any past time. Jacky Pantamarra was an 'abiding person' who 'endured' 'everywhen'. The Gurindji historians applied the Dreaming temporal structure in order to inquire into the origin of the European colonialists.

However, even though the way Gurindji people analyse the origin of Europeans reflects the structure of Dreaming cosmology, it must be noted that Jacky Pantamarra is never part of their Dreaming. First of all, Jacky Pantamarra was a person who is already dead. His life is separated from today's era. Therefore, Jacky Pantamarra does not exist in the present. He has 'abided' in every moment of the past, but he existed *only* in the past. In short, while Dreaming is an eternal event which is happening all the time, Jacky Pantamarra never exists in the present or the future. This probably implies the Aboriginal historians' desire: Australian 'colonialism' was – or should be – over by now. Colonial law should not "endure" anymore.

A similar point was made by Hobbles Danayarri in Rose's study:

"I'm speaking about now. We're friends together because we own Australia, every one of us no matter who – white and black. We (can) come together, join in

³⁶ Stanner 1979:24.

³⁷ Elkin 1964:234.

³⁸ Rose 1992:205.

³⁹ Swain 1993:22-28.

... That will be all right. That will make it better from that big trouble. You know before, Captain Cook made a lot of trouble, you know. Now these days, these days we'll be friendly, we'll be love each other, we'll be mates. That'll be better. Better than making that trouble. Now we'll come and join in, no matter who ...

...40

The other reason that Jacky Pantamarra is not part of Dreaming is because he does not have a place within the sacred geography. Let us now shift our focus from the temporal structure to the spatial aspects of Jacky Pantamarra.

4.3.7. Methodology of Dreaming-2: spatial structure

Dreaming must have its sacred and moral geography. Dreaming is comprised of spatial or geographic events rather than just temporal or historical events. Dreaming stories always have a connection with certain places or landscapes. Rose explains that Dreaming is "marked most powerfully by synchrony, and it, too, is located in real named space".⁴⁰ The Aboriginal mode of history has its ground in the spatial dimensions rather than the temporal dimensions: time is subordinated to space in Aboriginal cosmology.

Jacky Pantamarra lacks ontological ground in the sacred geography of Dreaming. According to Old Jimmy's analysis, Jacky Pantamarra's geographical origin is explained as 'England'. The Gurindji people do not accept 'England' as a part of the sacred geography because the English and their law lack morality. For Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district, 'England' is an island for immoral colonialists. In this sense, the immoral country called 'England' is a product of Aboriginal thought and their analysis of Australian colonisation. The Gurindji people create an ideological construct, 'England'.

However, this does not mean their understanding of the past is wrong. What I seek to do here is not to disprove the historical factuality of the Gurindji's understanding of 'England', but to explore their way of constructing the Gurindji 'reality' of England. Jacky Pantamarra, the origin of *kartiya*, is not a Dreaming

⁴⁰ Hobbies Danayarra, quote from Rose 1991:265.

⁴¹ Rose 1992:205.

being. The ontological ground of Jacky Pantamarra (or the English/Europeans) does not have roots in the Dreaming geography. Instead, Jacky Pantamarra is the first European who came out of a 'monkey' in 'England' and spread 'all bad ideas' there. This cursed country of 'England' is geographically *as well as* morally distant from the Aboriginal countries where the Gurindji people's Dreaming is generated.

4.3.8. Methodology of Dreaming-3: moral structure

In the same way as the ontological and geographical origin of *kartiya* is located in the immoral country called 'England', the nature of their colonial law is to be found in Jacky Pantamarra's teachings, especially his 'books'. This perspective certainly corresponds to the Gurindji moral philosophy.

It is not only Old Jimmy but also many other Gurindji elders who make a clear distinction between *ngumpin* law and *kartiya* law. They often point out *kartiya* law is immoral because it is not from the earth but is 'written' on paper. In Chapter 2, I mentioned Old Jimmy's idea of paper law and earth law as well as Billy Bunter's explanation of Aboriginal law as a river and a hill. A further example came from Jock Smiler of Yarralin who demonstrated to me how *ngumpin* law and *kartiya* law are different. Jock dropped a piece of paper, which was carried away by the wind. He told me this was *kartiya* law. White people write their law on paper, but you never know which way the paper goes. Then he dropped a stone, which fell straight down to the ground. He said this was Aboriginal law: "*ngumpin* law (is) stone law. Never change, stop here."⁴²

It would not be a coincidence that Jacky Pantamarra taught his 'silly ideas' to his descendants by writing 'books'. For the Gurindji people, it is clear that Jacky Pantamarra's teachings or *kartiya* law did not originate from the moral earth. I found it meaningless to ask which took precedence: Jacky Pantamarra's teachings were immoral because they were 'written', and they were written because they were immoral. Likewise, *kartiya* came from England because they were immoral, and *kartiya* were immoral because they came from 'England'.

⁴² Jock Smiler, dictated 2-11-97, Docker River, Fieldnote No.3.

The Gurindji historians' analysis of Jacky Pantamarra is bound up with their analysis of *kartiya*, the 'English' or European colonialists. The history of Jacky Pantamarra contributes to the idea of the fundamental differences between Aboriginal people and colonial settlers. It is also worth noting that Jacky Pantamarra used a shanghai, bow and arrow, and rifle; he never used Aboriginal tools such as a boomerang, spear and shield. The story of Jacky Pantamarra makes a clear distinction between the history of European tools and that of Indigenous Australians. In general, I found the Gurindji people usually emphasised the difference between *ngumpin* and *kartiya* rather than their similarity. Even though they admit *ngumpin* and *kartiya* are both 'human being', their analysis of settlers mostly explains the difference between the two 'races'; the fundamental differences of their origin, place, past and present.

4.3.9 Summary

Gurindji people maintain their own mode of analysing colonial history. Faced with the colonisation of their countries, Gurindji people have been practising their investigation of the nature of colonialism, the ontological origin of Europeans as well as their law. As the academic way of constructing the past reflects the contemporary Western system of knowledge, the Gurindji approach to the past is also situated within their system of knowledge and its practice. The 'methodology of Dreaming' provides the 'theoretical tools' the Gurindji historians use to explore the history of *kartiya*.

Since the 1970s, academic historians have challenged the 'The Great Australian Silence' and made efforts towards introducing an historical perspective in Aboriginal studies. It is indisputable that the historical dynamic approach towards Aboriginal societies succeeded in opening up a new field that is distinguished from static anthropological analysis. However, academic historians now face an even more fundamental methodological question: why do we apply the Western concept of 'history' to the Aboriginal past? Academic historians have begun to doubt the validity of historical analysis of Aboriginal pasts.⁴³

⁴³ McGrath 1995a:361-362, 386.

Ann McGrath argues that some scholars today tend to avoid discussing Aboriginal experiences of history, and "focus purely on critical studies of European representations of Aborigines, sometimes assuming that this topic relieves them of any obligation to include or co-operate with Aboriginal authors."⁴⁴ This approach certainly reveals the continuing nature of colonialism. However, as McGrath points out, "a retreat to studying 'our representations of them' can exaggerate the boundaries between 'us' and 'them', thus leading to a form of intellectual apartheid".⁴⁵ Being self-critical is essential within the dominant postcolonial paradigm, but should not be the final goal of our interrogation of colonialism. It is also crucial to practise mutual understanding, not only in a theoretical sense, but also in an empirical sense.

I would like to suggest that academic historians be 'humble'. Instead of forcing our historical practice on Aboriginal pasts, we must learn the Aboriginal way of constructing the past, and then interact with their mode of history. These works will bring us to understand the relation and positioning of academic history and Aboriginal people's history. I believe that this is the only way to open up communication between the two approaches toward the past. Thus, this is the way to share the reality of pasts amongst different cultures.

Listening to oral histories from different cultures is not an easy task. However, in order to respect and understand these voices, we must learn about the cultural background underpinning the speakers' narratives. Therefore, I believe this ethnographic approach towards oral history is the potential 'foundation' on which to create cross-cultural historical practice.

⁴⁴ McGrath 1995a:389.

⁴⁵ McGrath 1995a:389.

Chapter 5

The Gurindji Walk-off: From Wattie Creek to Wattie Creek

A brother of yours has took his stand
For no longer he's sick with shame
Come on let's shoot this old image down
Let's push away our pain
(Selwyn Hughes 1988)

5.1. Introduction: Re-thinking the Gurindji Walk-off

In learning the history of the Gurindji people and their country, it is crucial to explore the event of the walk-off from the Wave Hill station (Jimparrak) and the subsequent establishment of the Daguragu community at Wattie Creek. The Gurindji walk-off is an iconic historic event in Australian race relations, particularly in terms of the Aboriginal land rights movement. This episode succeeded in gaining the wide public attention of contemporary Australia, it has been spoken of at length among the Gurindji people, and has also been discussed by academic historians. It remains an event that is deeply engraved on the memories of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia.¹

My aim in this chapter is basically the same as in other chapters: to learn the meaning of their walk-off movement from the Gurindji historians; in other words, to understand the event within the Gurindji cultural mode of constructing the past. However, since this episode has been discussed by

¹ There are numerous articles related to this event. Here I select some articles from newspapers and magazines: On the news of the Gurindji walk-off, see, for example, *The Northern Territory Times* 26-8-1966; *Sydney Morning Herald* 27-8-1966; *The Age* 27-8-1966; *The Australian* 18-10-1966; *Tribune* 21-6-1967; *Smoke Signals* 1967. On the returning of their land, see, for example, *The Australian* 24-1-1972; *Canberra Times* 24-1-1972; *The Advertiser* 1-27-1972; *ABM Review* vol.63, no.3. 1973; *Northern Territory Newsletter* August 1975.

For a more historical or encyclopaedic retrospective, other than I discuss later, see, for example, Maddock 1972:7-27; Broome 1982:141, 177; Kijngayari 1986; Lingiari 1986; Read

many historians, I also want to engage with debates related to academic-oriented historical 'factuality'.

There are many questions to investigate in order to understand the Gurindji people's perspective on the walk-off event. I focus on three main questions. The first question relates to how the Gurindji people formulated the idea of the walk-off. Who invented or brought about the idea of the walk-off? This discussion will also examine the reason why the Wave Hill Aborigines, and not other stations, were able to begin the struggle towards regaining their country. Secondly, I will examine the Gurindji people's action, which has most often been referred to as a 'strike' in the popular sense of the term. The question here is: to what extent was the Gurindji walk-off a strike? The third question is: why did they choose Wattie Creek and move there to establish the new community? The simple answer has already been given by previous studies: Wattie Creek is a sacred place for the Gurindji people. But no one has explained why they did not move to another sacred place and specifically chose Wattie Creek. In accordance with the above three questions, three sequences must be examined: (1) before the walk-off, (2) the walk-off, and (3) the establishment of the Daguragu community.

To my knowledge, even though there are a number of studies and reports on the Gurindji walk-off episode, there have been no accounts exploring the questions raised above in a substantive manner. Nor has there been extensive study of the Gurindji people's oral accounts of their history prior to the walk-off, or their retrospective views. This chapter seeks to redress this gap. Applying an oral historical approach with new questions, I will explore the 'place-oriented history' that reveals the consistency of the Gurindji people's demand for regaining their country from the very beginning of this process. In the course of my analysis, I will show a Gurindji geography that is historically situated, that comes into being as a dimension of colonial residence within an existing Dreaming landscape.

5.2. Review

Before exploring the Gurindji people's historical narratives, I shall examine studies related to this event.

5.2.1. Hardy's *The Unlucky Australians*

Among written accounts of the Gurindji walk-off, the first and most significant report is probably Frank Hardy's *The Unlucky Australians* (1968).² As a writer, Hardy was personally involved in this event and supported the Gurindji people. Encountering the Aboriginal struggle with white pastoralists, Hardy decided to help Aboriginal people in his own way: writing articles, seeking a way to raise funds for their survival during the 'strike', writing a petition to the Governor-General of Australia for the return of their land, and so on. His standpoint is clear: he actively assisted Aboriginal 'strikers', but did not initiate their movement.

Even though there is no doubt Hardy's commitment to the cause greatly encouraged the Gurindji elders' decision making, his 'restraint' in terms of respecting Aboriginal initiative is admirable. Hardy conscientiously resisted paternalism in his relationship with the Gurindji people. My discussion does not intend to dismiss the extremely important role of Hardy as a supportive participant in the event. Nevertheless, I want to make it clear that Hardy's role was not to explore and interpret the background of the walk-off, but to immediately respond to the Gurindji people's requests in an appropriate way. He played his role effectively, and thus, the Gurindji people respected him greatly. *The Unlucky Australians* is the product of his actual experience at that time.

However, when readers aspire to understand the Gurindji people's view of the walk-off, Hardy's book gives us a limited perspective. For instance, readers are not privy to the actual process involved in the development of the Gurindji's demands and decisions. Hardy simply presents the chronological order he experienced. In *The Unlucky Australians*, the Gurindji people at first demanded (1) equal wages, then (2) social justice in

² Hardy 1968.

every aspect, until finally they wanted (3) the return their land. If you read this book without supplementary information, you would probably accept this as the chronological order in which the Gurindji people developed their ideas. However, it is crucial to emphasise that this was the order *in which the Gurindji people told their story to Hardy*, and was reflected in what he and others were able to observe at the time.

Most of the research literature follows Hardy's chronology. This order often describes the Gurindji walk-off episode as moving 'from a strike to a land claim'. For instance, Stuart Macintyre says, "What had begun as a strike had become a land claim".³ Similarly, Lyn A. Riddett titled her article "The Strike That Became a Land Rights Movement".⁴ However, my research has convinced me that the Gurindji walk-off was never principally a 'strike', but rather their main purpose was consistently 'to get their land back' from the very beginning. I explore this point as one of the keys to developing an understanding of what the walk-off means to the Gurindji people. Despite these problems, *The Unlucky Australians* contains a lot of oral accounts. In later discussion, I use Hardy's book as one of the primary contemporary sources.

5.2.2. Other academic studies

In other more academic studies, there are broadly speaking two different approaches towards the Gurindji walk-off: economic historical and socio-historical. Hannah Middleton was probably the first person to explore the economic historical view. As a Marxist anthropologist, she sees the class conflict between the Gurindji stockworkers and white pastoralists.⁵ Gordon Briscoe also asserts the importance of class analysis based on Marx's theory of the mode of production.⁶ Tina Jowett applies the theory of 'internal

³ Macintyre 1985:127.

⁴ Riddett 1997:50.

⁵ Middleton 1972, 1978, 1979.

⁶ Briscoe 1986:Chap.5.

colonialism'⁷ to explain the process of exploitation of the Aboriginal workers at Wave Hill station.⁸ My previous work rejected theories such as 'internal colonialism' or 'articulation of mode of production'⁹ because these theories cannot adequately describe the active participation of the colonised Aboriginal economy. Alternatively, I have emphasised the Gurindji people's continuous struggle to maintain economic autonomy not only during, but also before the walk-off.¹⁰ These economic historical analyses are necessary for understanding the economic status of Aboriginal people living on stations and for explaining the economic aspects of their motivation for the walk-off. However, at the same time, economic considerations are just one of the many issues involved in understanding this event.

Socio-historical approaches emphasise racial conflict and its social complexity. Jack K. Doolan's report clearly points out that the Aborigines' struggle was not for wages but for an equal relationship between two races.¹¹ The land claim book written by Patrick McConvell and Rod Hagen shows a good integration of both economic and sociological perspectives.¹² The Aboriginal Land Commissioner's report on the Daguragu claim is also based on this land claim book.¹³ Using *The Unlucky Australians*, Ann McGrath emphasises "white men's unfair sexual monopolisation of Aboriginal women" as one of the key reasons for the walk-off.¹⁴ Riddett reflects on aspects of non-Aboriginal support, including her personal commitment.¹⁵ These socio-historical approaches certainly give us a wider view of the walk-

⁷ On the theory of internal colonialism, see, for example Wolpe 1980b. For applying the theory to Aboriginal history, see for example, Beckett 1977; Hartwig 1978.

⁸ Jowett 1990.

⁹ On the theory of articulation of mode of production, see for example, Clammer 1975; Foster-Carter 1978; Wolpe 1980a. For applying the theory to Aboriginal history, see, for example, May 1994:3-4; McConvell 1989.

¹⁰ Hokari 1996a, 1996c.

¹¹ Doolan 1977.

¹² McConvell and Hagen 1981:81-127.

¹³ Aboriginal Land Commissioner 1982:3-7.

¹⁴ McGrath 1985:44.

¹⁵ Riddett 1985.

off episode than the economic historical approach. However, we still do not know much about what the walk-off meant to the Gurindji people, a question to which I believe only an oral historical approach can provide an answer.

5.2.3. Oral historical approach

Jowett and Riddett used oral historical accounts from Daguragu, yet these were not presented as a major source in the construct of the history of the walk-off, but were treated more as supplementary sources.¹⁶ McConvell and Hargen's work and a number of other reports were based heavily on the Gurindji people's oral accounts.¹⁷ The Aboriginal Land Commissioner's report especially dealt with the Gurindji people's oral testimonies to justify the Aboriginal ownership of the claimed area and its historical background.¹⁸ However the questions I seek to address – Who invented the idea of walk-off? Was the walk-off a strike in the European sense of the term? Why did they choose Wattie Creek as their new community? – were not discussed at length in these oral historical works. Deborah B. Rose's *Hidden Histories* (1991) includes a chapter on this 'strike' movement, in which she argues that the Aboriginal people's primary demand was the return of their land.¹⁹ In 1982, Hobbles Danayarri, a Mudbura man of Yarralin, said to Rose, "Tommy Vincent (Lingiari) told Lord Vestey: 'you can keep your gold. We just want our land back'".²⁰ However, Rose primarily explored the perspective of Aboriginal people from Victoria River Downs rather than those from Wave Hill.

Thus, the purpose of this chapter becomes clear: it addresses the need to discuss the walk-off episode more thoroughly with specific questions based on the oral historical accounts of the Gurindji people. Only through this approach can we understand the meaning of the walk-off, not from an

¹⁶ Jowett 1990; Riddett 1990:Chapters 8-9; 1997.

¹⁷ McConvell and Hargen 1981:81- 127. See, for other examples, Neilley 1970; NTAS. NTRS 226 TS 485; Bernard 1996.

¹⁸ Aboriginal Land Commissioner 1982.

¹⁹ Rose 1991:Chap.24.

²⁰ Hobbles Danayarri, quote from Rose 1991:229.

economic or sociological perspective, but more strongly from the Gurindji perspective.

5.3. Before the Walk-off: Sandy Moray and President Kennedy

5.3.1. "Wish we had someone behind us."

A leader of the Wave Hill walk-off, Tommy Vincent Lingiari, a Gurindji elder, told Hardy what he had been thinking during the 'Vestey time', i.e. before the walk-off:

"The manager of Wave Hill was Tom Pisher. Besty [Vestey] man, Tom Pisher. Always when big plant start to go out from station when mustering start, they go out two, maybe three month. Aboriginal men out in bush all time. White ringers come back to station ebry Friday night. That not right. I think to mesel' about that longa time. And think them Bestey mob don't treat Aborigine native people right way."²¹

A similar story is also told by Captain Major (Lupgna Giari or Lapngayarri), another Gurindji man who led the Aborigines of Newcastle Waters station and walked off to the vicinity of Elliott, which was about three months before the walk-off at Wave Hill station. Captain Major told Hardy the following:

"All around the Territory I bin working more than thirty year. And I bin thinking: white fella don't treat native people proper, don't gib him proper wages or nothing. He never teach you to read, only to count, to keep tally when the cattle go in the yard. [...] I was thinkin' to mesel': I was reckon I only get ten dollar and all these other men only get six dollar. And them women might book a few things down at store, lucky if thirty bob left after two months. That not right. And I bin thinkin' agen: Wish we had someone behind us somewhere."²²

²¹ Vincent Lingiari, quote from Hardy 1968:71.

²² Captain Major, quote from Hardy 1968: 30-1.

Dexter Daniels, a young Aboriginal Roper River man, who worked for the North Australian Workers Union (NAWU), also remembers that Captain Major "told me he had often thought this. He told me about having someone behind him, someone who would help the Aborigines".²³ These comments show us that both the Gurindji men, Vincent Lingiari and Captain Major, had been thinking about the poor situation of their people. It was before Dexter Daniels and Hardy arrived to support Aboriginal stockworkers that Captain Major was looking for 'having someone behind him' who would help Aboriginal people.

I would like to explore this point: what did it really mean when Vincent Lingiari said, "I think to mesel' about that longa time" and Captain Major said, "Wish we had someone behind us somewhere"? What was behind these statements? This should be the starting point for exploring our first question: where did the idea of the walk-off originate from?

5.3.2. Sandy Moray

Most of the Aboriginal elders in Daguragu remember a Gurindji man, Sandy Moray Junganaiani, who seems to have been well known throughout the region.²⁴ Frank Hardy met and wrote about him, describing Sandy as 'an ancient thin man'.²⁵ Hardy also drew a portrait of Sandy Moray on the front page of *The Unlucky Australians*.

Among the Gurindji elders in Daguragu community, I held intensive discussions with Jimmy Mangayarri, Mick Rangiari, Peanut Pontuari and Stanly Sambo. They convinced me that Sandy Moray was the founder of the walk-off before Vincent Lingiari took the real action.

They told me that Sandy Moray was called 'Tipujurn' among the Gurindji and his country was Seal Gorge and Wattie Creek.²⁶ During the

²³ Dexter Daniels, quote from Hardy 1968:28.

²⁴ Rose 1991:226. According to the census report, 1962, Sandy Moray was born in 1905. See NAA. E944/0 WAVE HILL 4.

²⁵ Hardy 1968:161.

²⁶ Peanut Pontuari, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.; Mick Rangiari, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

mustering time, he did stockwork on Wave Hill station, then he went back to his country, Seal Gorge, when the wet season [holiday time] started.²⁷ Sandy Moray also worked for Alex Moray, a pastoral inspector for Vestey's, whom they called 'Vestey's big boss', or 'travelling boss'.²⁸ Tipujurn's European name, Sandy 'Moray' comes from Alex Moray.²⁹ Since Sandy Moray worked for Alex Moray, "he bin all over" Australia.³⁰ His frequent inter-state trips gave Sandy Moray an unusual opportunity to observe the race relations at cattle stations in other places such as Queensland and Western Australia. In other states, especially in Queensland, Sandy Moray was impressed to see that Aborigines and white Australians worked together and the conditions of the Aboriginal people were better than in the Northern Territory.³¹ Sandy Moray wanted to show the better race relations in Queensland to his 'mate', Vincent Lingiari. One day (holiday time?) they went to the NT/Qld border to meet some Queensland Aborigines. However, local police denied them entry because they did not have permission to travel into Queensland.³²

Eventually, Sandy Moray started to think about changing the

²⁷ Mick Rangiari, Tape 30, 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4; Peanut Pontiarri, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

I also found his name in the Aboriginal employment records at Wave Hill station. For example, Sandy Moray had worked for 29 weeks in 1952, zero weeks in 1953, and 14 weeks up to July in 1954. He earned one pound per week as most of the other male Aboriginal workers did. See "Employment of Aborigines in the Pastoral Industry, Wave Hill Station", in NAA. F1 52/736; NAA. F1 53/674.

²⁸ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.; Mick Rangiari, Tape 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4; Peanut Pontiarri, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.; Stanly Sambo, Tape 32, 22-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4. See also, McGrath 1987: a photo page between 84-85; Cole 1988:196.

²⁹ Peanut Pontiarri, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

³⁰ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4; Mick Rangiari, Tape 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4; Peanut Pontiarri, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

³¹ Mick Rangiari, Tape 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4; Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

³² Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4; Mick Rangiari and Stanly Sambo, dictated, 22-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

Aboriginal situation in his country: "he [Sandy] bin start think'n, (and said) 'I gonna get somebody. I got a bit of idea.'"³³ The Gurindji elders with whom I spoke could not fully explain to me how Sandy Moray developed the idea of changing the situation of his own country. They did suggest that Tipujurn was good at following the white man's ideas and practices because he had known Alex Moray for a long time.³⁴ They also told me that Sandy Moray may have met unionists in Queensland and learned how to fight.³⁵ Mick Rangiari suggested that Sandy Moray had a good 'brain' so that "maybe he bin think'n himself."³⁶ He also said, "he [Sandy] bin think'n every night."³⁷



Figure 5.1. A portrait of Sandy Moray by Frank Hardy

³³ Mick Rangiari, Tape 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4, Tape 32, 29-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

³⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4; Peanut Pontiri, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

³⁵ Stanly Sambo, Tape 32, 22-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

³⁶ Mick Rangiari, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

³⁷ Mick Rangiari, Tape 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

5.3.3. *Parti*.. Tree meeting

On the other hand, what they clearly remembered is that, Sandy Moray called meetings under the '*partiki* tree' [*Terminalia arostrata*, or 'nut 'ree']³⁸ at Wattie Creek. Jimmy Mangayarri was one of the participants. Other participants he remembered were Vincent Lingiari, and Peanut Pontiarri's father, Bob Warriyawun.³⁹ Mick Rangiari was a little boy at that time.⁴⁰ Pincher Nyurrmiyari (Manguari) was not there because he was not yet a member of this project.⁴¹

At these meetings, Sandy Moray told them, "What's for we work'n langa *kartiya* [white people]? We wanna fight the *kartiya*. Get the country back! Don't worry about it. You gotta [will get] land, no worry. You gotta land, you gotta station, you gotta horse, you gotta *buluki* [bullock], you gotta *motika* [car]."⁴² Initially, most of them did not believe him.⁴³ However, Sandy Moray patiently explained his idea to people. He said, "We gonna do something" and explained his plan every night.⁴⁴ He talked 'all night, and get old men made'em understand'.⁴⁵ Jimmy Mangayarri and Mick Rangiari confirmed that these meetings had been held a long time before Hardy visited the Gurindji country.⁴⁶

The ideas of getting their land back and running the cattle station by themselves were formulated by Sandy Moray and had been in the Gurindji people's consciousness long before the actual walk-off occurred. Riley Young

³⁸ Wightman et. al. 1994:50-51.

³⁹ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4. I personally think another walk-off leader, Captain Major, could have been there as well. Peanut told me that Bob Warriyawun passed away before the walk-off began (Peanut Pontiarri, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.)

⁴⁰ Mick Rangiari, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

⁴¹ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

⁴² Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

⁴³ Mick Rangiari, Tape 40, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

⁴⁴ Mick Rangiari, Tape 40, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

⁴⁵ Stanly Sambo, dictated, 22-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

⁴⁶ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.; Mick Rangiari, Tape 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

of Lingara told Rose that Sandy Moray also went to the Ngarinman country to explain his plan, which, according to Rose, appears to have been around 1950:

"And old Sandy Moray used to come out from Wave Hill. ... Sandy Moray, Jangala [subsection] bloke. He used to come out there and tell us this story for us. Tell us. Ohhh, myall time. We were working for whiteman yet. He used to come out and tell us. He used to come out from Wave Hill for holiday, you know.

'Ah,' he told us, 'ah, you gotta change the law now. El? Might be four years' time, might be five years' time'. He (had had an) education for whiteman before. Working (for) the whiteman too long. He used to go down to Canberra, talk with them Waterside Union. Talking with them. Telling them. Sreaking without no permit... . He used to come out telling us: 'We gotta get this land back. Don't tell anybody'."⁴⁷

However, if Sandy Moray was the person who conceived the project, was there a reason that prevented him from leading the walk-off? Peanut Pontiari explained that he was already too old to become a leader of all the actions they would take.⁴⁸ Instead, Sandy Moray said to Vincent Lingiari, "You gotta do something"⁴⁹ and told people, "You can do it. No body gonna stop you."⁵⁰

Here, they were ready to take action. The only thing they had to do in advance was to look for someone *from outside* who could help the people to achieve the purpose. The supporter/s must know how to deal with white agencies such as Vestey's, the government and the Australian media.

This story of Sandy Moray helps to answer to the question I raised above. When Vincent Lingiari said, "I think to travel' about that longa time" and Captain Major said, "Wish we had some one behind us somewhere", they

⁴⁷ Riley Young, quote from Rose 1991:226.

⁴⁸ Peanut Pontiari, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

⁴⁹ Mick Rangiari, Tape 33, 30-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

⁵⁰ Mick Rangiari, Tape 32, 22-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

meant that they had been thinking about how to put Tipujurn's plan into practice and were looking for someone to facilitate their project. Their project was, from the very beginning, to get their land back and to establish their own cattle station.

5.3.4. Why has Sandy Moray not appeared in previous studies?

One may wonder why the story of Sandy Moray has been strangely neglected by the many previous oral accounts of the Gurindji people. We heard much about Vincent Lingiari as a leader of the walk-off, but rarely about Sandy Moray as a founder of the walk-off. As oral testimonies are often criticised, it is natural to cast doubt on the Gurindji people's memories of Sandy Moray. Was this aspect made up by the Gurindji people decades later? Is it likely that previous studies are more accurate than my research conducted 30 years after the events?

To answer this, I have already mentioned that there was little oral historical research which explored the specific question of 'who invented the walk-off?', instead of 'who led the walk-off?'. As shown above, Rose was one of the few people who collected a story of Sandy Moray. In addition, Patrick McConvell, who did intensive fieldwork at Daguragu in the mid 1970s, was also told that Sandy Moray formulated the idea of the walk-off. According to McConvell, he was referred to as 'jangala' – his subsection name – since his name was taboo at that time. McConvell found out later 'jangala' referred to Sandy Moray.⁵¹ Because of the nature of oral accounts, every detail of the story of Sandy Moray may not be accurate, but it is compelling that the essence of the story has remained identical over the decades spanning the research done by McConvell, Rose and myself.

It is also interesting to note that the story of Sandy Moray has been gradually revealed to non-Gurindji; first, briefly to McConvell in the 1970s, then to Rose in the 1980s, and to me in more detail in the late 1990s. I found that Gurindji people today have become more comfortable telling the stories about the deeper background to the walk-off episode. I will return to this

⁵¹ Personal communication with Patrick McConvell.

point after discussing the whole event.

5.3.5. The Gurindji network system

In order to explore the sequence prior to the walk-off in more depth, it is also important to examine Aboriginal relations and networks in different stations. I would especially like to explore the relations between the Gurindji elders of different stations.



Plate 5.1. Alex Moray, 1936?
photo: courtesy of Vern O'Brien

It is interesting to note that Captain Major also worked for Alex Moray. In *The Unlucky Australians*, Captain Major told Hardy that "I bin

droving sometimes and I worked in Queensland. I worked for Alex Moray, Vestey man but very good".⁵² In addition in 1977, he told Ann McGrath that he used to work for Alex Moray.⁵³ Jimmy Mangayarri also confirmed that Alex Moray used to take two 'boys', Captain Major and Sandy Moray.⁵⁴ There is a strong possibility that the two Gurindji men from different stations, Captain Major from Newcastle Waters and Sandy Moray from Wave Hill, discussed what they had seen in Queensland and Western Australia and how to change the situation in their own country. They may also have visited or heard about the Pilbara (Pindan) walk-off in 1946 in northern Western Australia.⁵⁵

Eventually, Captain Major took the first action at Newcastle Waters and Sandy Moray told Vincent Lingiari to lead the walk-off at Wave Hill station. When reading *The Unlucky Australians* without such background knowledge, readers probably assume Dexter Daniels was the one who chose Newcastle Waters as the first place to strike, and that Wave Hill station was chosen as the site of the second strike through discussion between Hardy and Dexter Daniels.⁵⁶ However, Dexter Daniels had been to many stations to encourage Aboriginal workers to take action. In addition, conditions at Newcastle Waters were far better than at other stations in the area.⁵⁷ Captain Major even said the manager of Newcastle Waters, Roy Edwards, was the "best boss I ever work for. We had good house at Newcastle Water, cement floor and 'lectric light, good buildings. Better than other stations".⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the Aborigines' response to Dexter Daniels' offer was much

⁵² Captain Major, quote from Hardy 1968:30.

⁵³ McGrath's interview with Captain Major, in A. McGrath's Fieldnote 20-6-77, Daguragu.

⁵⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

⁵⁵ Rowley suggests that they may have had contact with the Pilbara people (Rowley 1971b:338). On Pilbara walk-off, see, for example, Stuart 1959; Wilson 1980:151-168; McLeod 1984; Hess 1994. Hess argues that it was 'a tribal law meeting' that initiated the Pilbara strike (Hess 1994:71). This view certainly corresponds to my argument about the Gurindji's initiative for the Wave Hill walk-off.

⁵⁶ Hardy 1968:21, 24, 64-65.

⁵⁷ Rowley 1971b:338.

swifter and more organised at Newcastle Waters than at many other stations.⁵⁹ It is logical that if you are looking for help and waiting for the right moment, your response to the right offer will be quick.

It is also noteworthy that when Dexter Daniels met an old man called 'Double-O' from Newcastle Waters, he suggested that Daniels meet Captain Major.⁶⁰ Why did Double-O tell him to see Captain Major? It is reasonable to assume that, through the network among Aboriginal people, they knew of the long awaited Gurindji project, and in particular that Captain Major (and Sandy Moray) were looking for 'someone behind them'. Before Captain Major received a letter from Dexter Daniels, he already "bin hear about that young Dexter, an aboriginal who work for that Union mob in Darwin".⁶¹ Here, you can see how the Aboriginal people were trying to make a 'connection' between people who were looking for assistance, and a person who was willing to help them. Hardy may have been unaware of, or have underestimated, the amount of planning among the Gurindji people prior to his involvement. In fact, Captain Major expresses this point of view in *The Unlucky Australians*:

"Some white fella bin say Dexter tell me to strike because him higher man in tribe. That not right. Dexter Roper River man, me Gurindji; nothing to do with Roper River mob. We strike because we sick of small money. We had someone behind us."⁶²

One may interpret this to mean Captain Major was asserting his authority over the Gurindji 'strikers'. But the oral historical approach gives us the

⁵⁸ Captain Major, quote from Hardy 1968:30.

⁵⁹ Dexter Daniels indicated to Hardy that he had been to many stations and 'they are ready to fight' (Hardy 1968:24-26). Aborigines from Brunette Downs went on strike, but they soon went back to work (Hardy 1968:27). As we know, successful actions have only been led by the Gurindji men, i.e. Newcastle Waters and Wave Hill.

⁶⁰ Hardy 1968:27.

⁶¹ Captain Major, quote from Hardy 1968:31.

⁶² Captain Major, quote from Hardy 1968:32.

deeper meaning of his statement: Dexter Daniels and Frank Hardy were the *external conditions* which ignited the Gurindji's long awaited project.

The above discussion reflects the Gurindji temporal and networking system discussed in Chapter 2: the Gurindji people had been waiting for the 'right time' to come. When the Gurindji information system confirmed the 'right time' for their long awaited project, their action was immediate and well organised.

5.3.6. International network: JFK visited Wave Hill

In order to understand the Gurindji network system better, it is also crucial to explore the Gurindji people's 'international network'. However, in order to convince readers of this Gurindji internationalism, once again I have to confront the 'subaltern pasts' or the cultural gap between the Gurindji and academic histories.

Ngumpin were desperate to find 'someone behind us' in order to fight against the Vestey mob or 'English *kartiya*' and to realise their project of having their country returned. They needed allies who had more power than England. As I already discussed, one of these allies, such as Hardy or the NAWU mob, came from 'union country'.⁶³ Old Jimmy also told me 'Mr. Berndt' who was one of 'union mob' visited Limbunya station to study how *kartiya* treated *ngumpin*.⁶⁴ Union members became one of the international allies supporting *ngumpin*'s fight for their land.

Furthermore, we also need to understand the role of 'America' in order to grasp the Gurindji people's walk-off story. Even though I learned this Gurindji-American relationship from Old Jimmy and Dandy Danbayarri, I realised this was not a story that every Gurindji person knew. Rose learned a similar story from the Yarralin people, but she was asked to conceal some parts of the story. She writes, "Because some stories are not fully for the public, and some story tellers worry about publicity, I cannot discuss these

⁶³ See Chap.3.

⁶⁴ See Chap.6.

matters further."⁶⁵ The stories I learned may not be exactly the same as Rose's. However, in respect for their concern about publicity, I confirmed many times with Old Jimmy and Dandy that I could write the following story:

Old Jimmy told me that America or 'Yankee country' is 'just like rangers country'.⁶⁶ Yankees live in '*ngurra punyu* [good camp/country]'⁶⁷ and they are 'same as *yunmi* [you and me]'.⁶⁸ This implies Americans are different from English *kartiya*. As Rose suggests, 'Americans' represent one of the most powerful moral Europeans.⁶⁹

During the 'Vestey time', President Kennedy or 'Big American Boss',⁷⁰ from America visited Wave Hill station. Dandy told me that he saw a huge airplane arrive in Wave Hill airstrip. According to Dandy, there was a star mark on the 'tail' of this plane. He explained the plane was so big that there were two *motika* [cars] loaded inside.⁷¹

President Kennedy came to Jimparrak (Wave Hill station) in order to talk to and help *ngumpin*. According to Old Jimmy, President Kennedy met Sandy Moray at the No.1 Bore. There, Sandy Moray told President Kennedy how badly English *kartiya* treated *ngumpin*. "He [Kennedy] bin sorry for *ngumpin* ... (He was) good *kartiya*."⁷² After their long meeting, President Kennedy agreed to support Sandy's idea of returning their country. He said to Sandy, "You gotta your country back soon... You gotta your money, you gotta your *motika*".⁷³ Dandy told me that President Kennedy met not only Sandy Moray but also Vincent Lingiari, and promised to support their walk-off project.⁷⁴ Hobbles Danayarri gives a detailed description of the final meeting

⁶⁵ Rose 1992:194.

⁶⁶ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 37, 11-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

⁶⁷ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

⁶⁸ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 35, 1-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

⁶⁹ Rose 1992:193.

⁷⁰ Rose 1992:193. Rose does not refer 'Big American Boss' as President Kennedy.

⁷¹ Dandy Danbayarri, Tape 47, 12-3-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.6.

⁷² Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

⁷³ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 37, 11-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

⁷⁴ Dandy Danbayarri, Tape 47, 12-3-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.6.

between 'Big American Boss' and Vincent Lingiari to Rose:

Big American Boss (B): 'You know all these Australian people really bad men. We don't know Northern Territory. We only hear Australian people take it away longa you. You want it back?'

Vincent (V): 'Course'

B: 'You want help?'

V: 'If you can give me help.'

They shake hands.

B: I'll help you. You keep going. Union strike (will) tell'em Vestey mob finish. Don't you worry. Any day I might (be) hearing what you do now. You been fight for your land (before, and) you lost your land. Right we'll fix it up. Thank you, old Tommy Vincent. I'll really work for you. I'm behind you. Goodbye Tommy Vincent.⁷⁵

How did President Kennedy help *ngumpin*? Old Jimmy said President Kennedy started 'the biggest war' against England in order to 'kill'em all (English) *kartiya*.'⁷⁶ From an academic historical perspective, one may speculate that this story corresponds with the Vietnam War (1961-75) in which the American president John F. Kennedy was heavily involved. In Gurindji people's history, the battlefield was not Vietnam but 'England', and the purpose of the war was to kill immoral English *kartiya*.

What is the significance in the Gurindji history of these international networks? I think the Gurindji people's history helps us understand how much *ngumpin* looked for strong supporters from the outside to help realise their project. I believe that Gurindji and academic historians can share the 'historical reality' of how scary, adventurous and challenging it was for *ngumpin* to fight against the oppressive colonial regime. Without confirming these international supporters, the Gurindji elders probably could not make a decision to take action.

⁷⁵ Hobbles Danayarri, quote from Rose 1992:193.

⁷⁶ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 37, 11-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

5.4. The Gurindji Walk-off: Was it a Strike?

At this point, I would like to explore the sequence of the walk-off. The main question in this section is: to what extent was the Gurindji walk-off a 'strike'?

5.4.1. Historic meeting at Darwin hospital

It was in early August 1966 that Dexter Daniels met Vincent Lingiari in the Darwin hospital for the first time. Vincent Lingiari explained that he had been kicked by a donkey, which broke his foot. Hardy describes this meeting as if Dexter Daniels coincidentally knew Vincent Lingiari was at the Darwin Hospital so that he could visit this Gurindji leader of Wave Hill station in order to discuss the condition of the station.⁷⁷

It is probably true that, as Jowett writes, "this discussion was the catalyst for fundamental change to Aboriginal political rights in Australia".⁷⁸ However, she as well as Hardy and other writers do not explain how this historic meeting was made possible. Was it too coincidental that while the strike had been going on at the Newcastle Waters station, a leader of the Wave Hill Aboriginal people broke his foot and went up to Darwin, and that Dexter Daniels happened to know he was in the hospital? There could well be something more behind this event.

Mick Rangiari told me another story about this meeting. Sandy Moray told Vincent Lingiari to pretend to be 'sick' (injured?) in order to go to Darwin to see Dexter Daniels.⁷⁹ We might believe that this story was made up later by the Gurindji people in order to control their own past more actively. However, his story may be true. As I discussed, if the Gurindji people were ready for the action and looking for someone behind them, and then found out what Captain Major did at Newcastle Waters station, it is reasonable that they wanted to hold discussions with Dexter Daniels about further action at Wave Hill station. Captain Major may have sent a message to Sandy Moray or

⁷⁷ Hardy 1968:68-69, 72

⁷⁸ Jowett 1990:44.

⁷⁹ Mick Rangiari, Tape 33, 30-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

Vincent Lingiari to come to Darwin to see Dexter Daniels. In the same manner, it would not be surprising if Vincent Lingiari intentionally let a donkey kick his foot to create a reason to contact union members in Darwin.

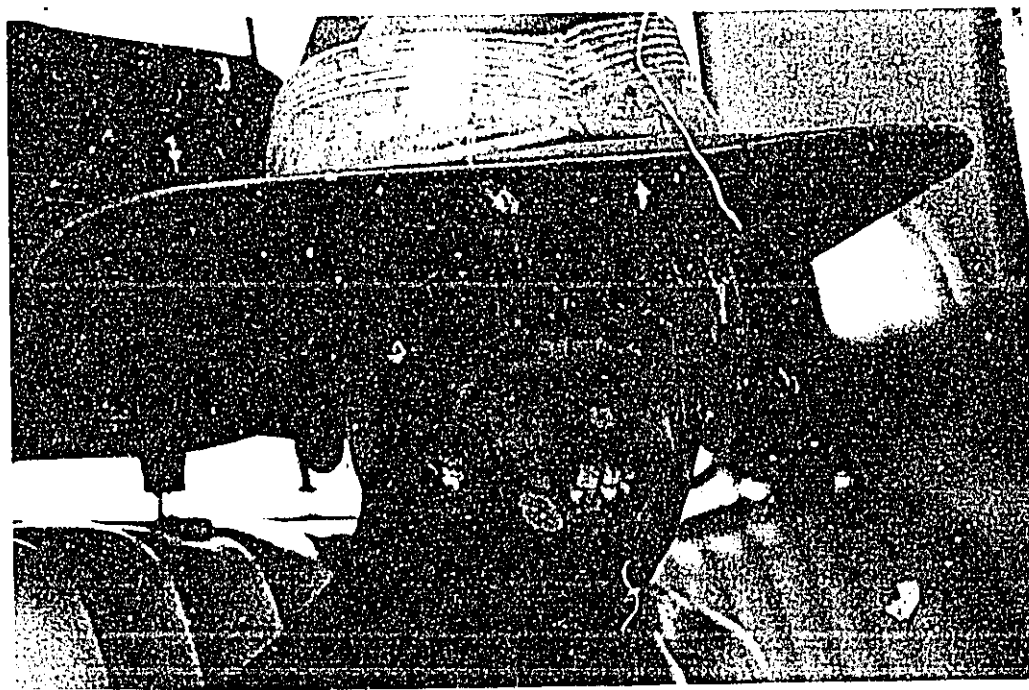


Plate 5.2. Mick Rangiari, 1997
photo: courtesy of Mayumi Uchida

5.4.2. Why did they walk off?: the meaning of the Gurindji 'movement'

It was on 23 August 1966 that Vincent Lingiari organised the Aboriginal people at Wave Hill station. They walked off the property for sixteen kilometres to the banks of the Victoria River near the Wave Hill Welfare Settlement.

Why did they walk off? If the Gurindji's action was literally a 'strike', the aim of their action must have been equal wages or improvements in their living conditions. In that case, it would not be necessary to leave the station. They should have stayed there and simply stopped working in order to force the manager to negotiate.

An approach from Gurindji perspective gives us two key reasons

why they wanted not only to stop working but also to leave the station. First, physically moving and shifting their living space is a Gurindji cultural tactic for solving problems. As discussed in Chapter 2, Gurindji people were, and in many aspects still are, nomadic. Mobility is one of their fundamental social modes of being. To change places for economic reasons is a common practice in hunting-gathering Aboriginal societies. Mobility is also fundamental for maintaining their ceremonial exchange system. One cannot underestimate the importance of the physical and metaphysical functions of movement in Aboriginal social practice.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the importance of Aboriginal mobility, even within the context of relatively settled contemporary lifestyles of Aboriginal communities, should not be underestimated.⁸¹ For the Gurindji people, the 'strike' did not mean negotiating with the Wave Hill manager, but instead it meant leaving the station and shifting their living location. It is noteworthy that, from the beginning of their action, the Gurindji people did not want to stay at Wave Hill station. Changing their living space or 'camp' was seen as the first step to independence from European authorities: be nomadic and white settlers cannot catch up with you!

This idea gives us the second reason: since their purpose was to regain the authority in their country, the first thing they had to do was to leave the European authority. For example, Pincher Nyurrmiyari says, "We go back to Wave Hill if that Tom Pisher [the manager] leave, alla that Besty mob leave".⁸² What they wanted was not an improvement in the conditions at Wave Hill station, but to remove Vestey's from their country and run the cattle station. Vincent Lingiari explains more clearly why they did not stay at the station. He told Hardy that one Aboriginal person suggested they go back to Wave Hill:

"He [an Aboriginal man] said: 'When white fella go on strike, they don't walk off straight away, they see their boss and talk things over. I worked for

⁸⁰ See, for example, Thomson 1949; Yengoyan 1968; Kolig 1984; Rose 1987.

⁸¹ See, for example, Young and Dooham 1989.

⁸² Hardy 1968:111.

white man myself and start for sixpence maybe, or five bob, now I got proper money.'

'You work for that Welfare?' I (Vincent Lingiari) said. And he said: 'Yes, them Welfare blokes are all right. And Tom Pisher a good man. Why can't you fellas go back to work? And I said: 'I won't go back.' That's all I said. I never said no more.'⁸³

Vincent Lingiari implies that the Gurindji 'strike' was not like a white workers' strike. He did not want to negotiate with the manager; he wanted to leave the station. Peanut Pontuari remembers that Vincent Lingiari once asked people if they wanted to go back to the station, but they said, "No, we don't wanna go back. No more station. One way walk-off, that's it!"⁸⁴

5.4.3. Was it a strike?

The memorable day of 23 August 1966 was not the day that the Gurindji people started negotiations with the white authorities, but the day they physically left foreign authority and returned to their own. In other words, the walk-off was not really an agitation against Wave Hill station, but a *spatial movement* which allowed them to regain the power to establish their own community. They did not want to return to Wave Hill unless Vestey's left the property. Higher wages and improved conditions may have been secondary considerations, but neither was the original nor main purpose of their action.

Therefore, one needs to be careful when referring to the Gurindji walk-off as a 'strike'. I do not object to the usage of the expression 'Wave Hill strike', not only because it has already become part of the Australian lexicon but also because the Gurindji people also express their walk-off as the 'strike'. However, the Gurindji people do not describe the sequence as moving 'from a strike to a land claim'. The word 'strike' should be understood in Gurindji Creole as meaning their physical walk-off from European authority in order to fight for their land. Later, Hardy himself

⁸³ Hardy 1968:156.

⁸⁴ Peanut Pontuari, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

admits that the key issue was their land not wages. He "discovered that wages were not the only, perhaps not even the main, issue for the Gurindji men. They were concerned about their women, about the children getting an education, about housing, about dignity and self-respect, about tribal identity – and there hovered vaguely behind every thought a desire to live alone in their own land".⁸⁵ As already discussed, it would be remiss to read this change in Hardy's impression as a change in the Gurindji people's demands. Their aim was consistent, but their strategy was to avoid discussing their central project with white people in the beginning. They did not explicitly challenge the agenda or politics of unionists. Rather, they simply followed their own initiative in not returning from the walk-off, once outside support for their action had been secured.

However, if their aim from the outset was to regain their land, why did they not express this to outside supporters at the first stage? To answer this question, Rose provides us with the insight that for the Gurindji people, "wages were a language which Europeans could understand, and constituted an issue which trade unions were known to support".⁸⁶ They were looking for allies who could help them to realise their plan, and finally found unionists such as Dexter Daniels, and a writer like Hardy, who were willing to help them. The Gurindji people knew that unionists were keen about the issue of equal wages. They knew that 'equal wages' was the key term for gaining support from outsiders. After the walk-off leaders confirmed these people's support, the Gurindji people gradually started to 'educate' them to understand the real purpose of their action.

5.4.4. Ngumpin 'educates' kartiya.

This 'educational' process can be observed in the supporters' confusion as narrated in *The Unlucky Australians*. From Hardy's point of view, he was the one who knew how to fight and that was why Dexter Daniels as well as the Gurindji people asked him to help. However, he eventually discovered the

⁸⁵ Hardy 1968:93.

⁸⁶ Rose 1991:227.

Gurindji's plan extended beyond his own conception. When the Gurindji leaders told Hardy about their desire to run their own cattle station, Anne Jeffrey, a wife of a welfare officer at Wave Hill, asked Hardy if this was originally Hardy's idea:

"Anne asked: 'Did you have this in your mind when you came here, Frank? [...] 'Are you sure you didn't prompt them? If you did, they'll agree just to please you because you want to help them. Right?'

(Frank said) 'No, Anne. Vincent mentioned it first on the way to Mount Sanford and I didn't take much notice. Then Pincher approached me. I'm positive I didn't plant it in their minds. It wasn't even in my mind. I was thinking of wages and conditions and strikes'.⁸⁷

Later, when Hardy found their 'strike' seemed never-ending, he was confused about what the Gurindji people were really thinking regarding their future and wondered if he should tell them to stop the struggle:

"Is anything going on in the Aborigines' mind? Have they really any plans for the future? Should I try to end their travail by urging them to go back to work at Wave Hill?"⁸⁸

However, Vincent Lingiari soon told Hardy about their plan to move their camp to Wattie Creek and establish their own community.⁸⁹ Through all these processes, we can see the Gurindji people's initiative. At the same time, Hardy's constant support for their self-determination must also be acknowledged. There is no doubt that his non-paternalistic attitude towards the Gurindji people facilitated the establishment of a firm rapport between Hardy and the Gurindji. Accordingly, Gurindji leaders gradually told the supporters about their plan and the final destination of their walk-off

⁸⁷ Hardy 1968:109-110.

⁸⁸ Hardy 1968:166.

⁸⁹ Hardy 1968:166-167.

movement.

5.4.5. Reactions of non-Gurindji Aboriginal people

Before concluding this section, I would also like to discuss the relations between Aboriginal people at Wave Hill and Victoria River Downs (VRD) during the Gurindji walk-off movement. As already discussed, Sandy Moray went up to the VRD to tell Aboriginal people about his plan. *Ngumpin* at VRD must have discussed Sandy Moray's plan to get their land back. However, their attitude towards the Wave Hill walk-off had been equivocal.

In *The Unlucky Australians*, a main figure among the VRD mob is King Brumby, probably a Bilinara or Ngarinman man. In Hardy's book, it is not clear if King Brumby really wanted to lead *ngumpin* and leave VRD and Humbert River station. Dexter Daniels believes that Aboriginal people there wanted to walk-off, but the station manager interrupted them.⁹⁰ Certainly, some VRD Aboriginal workers left the station, but then some of them returned to work. It was 1972, six years after the Gurindji had started their walk-off, that the VRD people finally joined the movement.⁹¹

In *Hidden Histories*, Rose says she has "never fully understood precisely why it took people so long to make the decision, for it seems clear that their commitment to change and their desire for their own land were as strong as those of Wave Hill people."⁹² She suggests that VRD people may have "wanted to see what would happen at Wattie Creek because for them, [...] going to Daguragu meant leaving their own country, and many were loathe to do so."⁹³ Rose's speculation certainly explains why VRD and Humbert River people did not join the Gurindji walk-off for six years. However, it is still not clear why they did not walk off by and for themselves and move to their own sacred place.

In my opinion, VRD people did not move straight after the Gurindji walk-off because, among the Aboriginal people of this area, there was a feeling

⁹⁰ Hardy 1968:70-71.

⁹¹ Doolan 1977; McConvell and Hargen 1981:123; Rose 1991:229.

⁹² Rose 1991:229.

⁹³ Rose 1991:229-230.

that this was a business of 'the Gurindji people and their country'. For example, when eight to ten young Aboriginal men left the walk-off camp and went back to Wave Hill station, Vincent Lingiari emphasised that they were 'nearly all Walbiri, only two Gurindji', and said "Maybe them Walbiri not like listen word of Gurindji Kadijeri man, I reckon."⁹⁴ He also stressed that the Wattie Creek project was for the Gurindji people:

"Gurindji people scatter now like bullocks, some eat here, some eat there. That not right. After the wet season, when the river go down, I gotta go to Camfield and Montejinni make sure them young fellas come back here later on. [...] Gurindji I mean – Walbiri can go they own way, I won't touch them. But I'll tell young Peter and other Gurindji: We gotta do things right way now. All together in Gurindji country."⁹⁵

A similar attitude was displayed by Captain Major. He had been working at Newcastle Waters station which is in the Mudbura country. When he led the 'strike', his aim was to go back to the Gurindji country. He hoped to 'live in my own country with Gurindji tribe.'⁹⁶ This does not mean that Bilinara, Ngarinman or Warlipiri people did not agree with the walk-off, instead it should be understood that this was not their countries' business. Warlipiri people in the Gurindji country had to follow the Gurindji elders' decision because they lived in a foreign country. For example, Gerry, a Warlipiri man, became one of the leaders. However, Hardy carefully notes that Gerry 'seemed to be accepted as a strike leader by the Gurindji.'⁹⁷ Initiatives were always made by the Gurindji.

The inter-group political situation of the VRD and Humbert River people was different to that of the Warlipiri in the Gurindji country. VRD people knew the Gurindji people would do something; Sandy Moray was there to explain his plan to them. They knew the plan. However, it was their own choice to follow the

⁹⁴ Vincent Lingiari, quote from Hardy 1968:158.

⁹⁵ Vincent Lingiari, quote from Hardy 1968:159.

⁹⁶ Captain Major, quote from Hardy 1968:34.

⁹⁷ Hardy 1978:111.

Gurindji movement or not. As Rose says, the VRD people probably wanted to see what would happen at Wattie Creek, but I think this is not simply because they did not want to leave their country. Rather, VRD people initially regarded the walk-off as the Gurindji people's project. For them, there was no need to be in a hurry to follow the Gurindji way: they would observe the sequence, and then make their own decision later.

For the Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district, the walk-off was the Gurindji project which was planned by the Gurindji old man (Sandy Moray), and conducted by the Gurindji leaders (Captain Major and Vincent Lingiari). It was a while before the walk-off became the symbol of Aboriginal struggles in general and Wattie Creek became the centre of not only the Gurindji but also other Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district.

5.5. Establishment of the Daguragu Community

In this section, I would like to discuss the sequence of the establishment of the Daguragu community at Wattie Creek. We will see how the Gurindji people finally accomplished their long awaited project.

Prior to this, however, I need to discuss why their movement was first to near the Wave Hill settlement, and later to Wattie Creek.

5.5.1. From station to welfare settlement

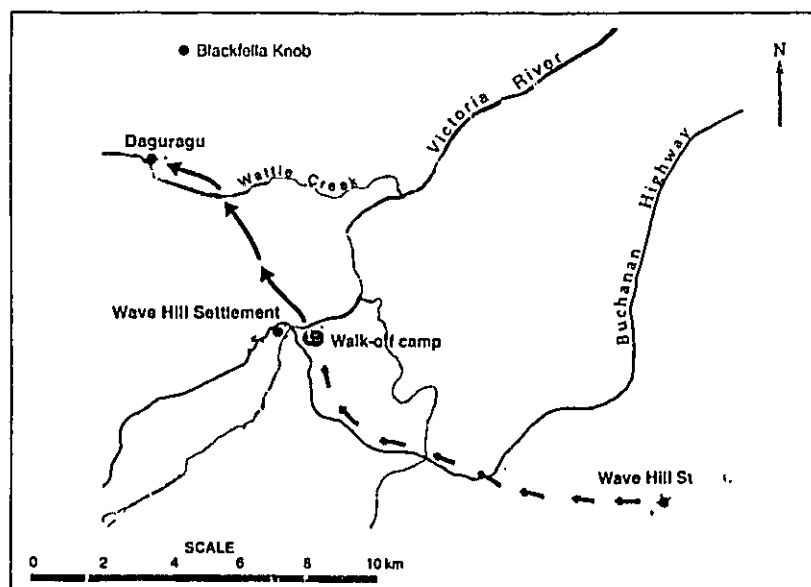
The most immediate need following the walk-off was to maintain access to an adequate food supply. Vincent Lingiari told people to look for bush tucker.⁹⁸ They certainly relied on bush food, but at the same time, a sedentary camp could not support over 200 people on bush tucker alone. Mick Rangiari often told me how they were relieved when a truck with plenty of food arrived in the walk-off camp.⁹⁹ *The Unlucky Australians* also notes the urgency of keeping enough food to feed the walk-off mob.¹⁰⁰ When they left Wave Hill

⁹⁸ Hardy 1968:74.

⁹⁹ Mick Rangiari, Tape 27, 11-10-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3; Tape 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4; Tape 32, 22-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

¹⁰⁰ Hardy 1968:74, 78-79.

station, the nearest place they could get enough food was, obviously, Wave Hill Welfare Settlement. They also had to camp there because they definitely needed access to the white settlers' information network. It was essential to keep in touch with outside supporters, such as Daniels and Hardy. When they left the station, Wave Hill Welfare Settlement was the only place for them to access the telegram and other mailing systems, by which the Gurindji people could communicate with the outside world. Furthermore, their plan remained flexible at its initial stages. If Vestey's left their country, they could regain their authority over the country simply by going back to Wave Hill station and running the property by themselves. The Gurindji people needed to see how Vestey's, as well as outside supporters, reacted to their initial action. Therefore, the riverbank near the Welfare Settlement was ideally suited as a temporary camping place.



Map 5.1. Movement of the Gurindji Walk-off

5.5.2. Wattle Creek is not a 'central' Dreaming place

In March 1967, at the end of the wet season, seven months after their walk-off from Wave Hill station, the Gurindji people shifted their camp to Wattle

Creek near the Seal Gorge Dreaming site. The main question here is: why did they choose Wattie Creek?

Many scholars simply explain that the Gurindji people chose Wattie Creek because it was a symbolically central place for them. For example, Jowett states: "This area was chosen because it was the main place of the Gurindji Dreaming and the geographical centre of the traditional Gurindji country".¹⁰¹ It is not surprising that people simply accept such an explanation because the Gurindji leaders themselves explained their decision to the public in the same way. In April 1967, with the assistance of Hardy and Bill Jeffrey, the Gurindji leaders wrote a petition to the Governor-General for the return of five hundred square miles of their country. In this letter, they explain Wattie Creek is 'the main place of our dreaming'.¹⁰²

However, their explanation of Wattie Creek as a main place for their Dreaming was probably a tactic to make white people understand how important it was to establish their community there. Such a tactic is similar to the way they used 'equal wages' to gain public attention at the first stage. They needed a public reason that could help outside supporters understand their decision.

If you study the sacred sites in the Gurindji country, it is not difficult to discover that the Seal Gorge/Wattie Creek is only one of many Dreaming sites for them. For example, McConvell and Hargen suggest there are over 200 sites in the Daguragu land claim area.¹⁰³ T. G. H. Strehlow explains that since the major totemic sites were "linked according to the nature of their totems with the totemic sites of other subgroups and even of other tribes, not one of them was fitted in any sense to act as a sort of central 'capital' site for a whole tribal subgroup or a whole tribe".¹⁰⁴ In Dreaming geography, there is no such 'centre' or 'main' place. Dreaming sites are connected to each other

¹⁰¹ Jowett 1990:60. See, for other examples, Hardy 1968:167; Forest 1985:13; Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1986:5.

¹⁰² Petition to the Governor-General. 19 April 1967, in McConvell and Hargen 1981:109; Attwood and Markus 1999:223-225.

¹⁰³ McConvell and Hargen 1981:58.

¹⁰⁴ Strehlow 1970:129.

through the Dreaming tracks and you cannot claim one of them as a centre of these Dreamings.¹⁰⁵ Certainly, Seal Gorge was one of the important Dreaming sites for the Gurindji people so there must have been no problem in shifting the camp there. However, in order to make settlers understand and win the favour of the Australian public, they – or possibly Hardy and Jeffrey – used the hierarchical terminology of settlers' language and culture, such as 'centre' or 'main', to describe Wattie Creek.

5.5.3. Refusing the Government's plan

In 1968, the government announced the construction of a new village near the Wave Hill Welfare settlement for Aboriginal people living in the area.¹⁰⁶ The area had been excluded from Vestey's property. However, most of them did not leave Daguragu and this governmental plan was ignored.¹⁰⁷ At this time Pincher said the following:

"Forty-five years I work for Vesteys – bread, salt beef, little bit of tea and sugar, that's all. Now I got nothing, don't even own this little bit of my land. Welfare do nothing for us. We don't want Welfare town, we don't want that dirty, stony place over on Common, that's only rubbish country. We want Wattie Creek for ourselves and our children. This country belong to us, Wattie Creek our dreaming place, sacred ground belonging to Gurindjis."¹⁰⁸

Pincher's statement implies the Welfare township is a 'dirty stony place' and not a sacred Dreaming place. However, the Gurindji people today live both in Daguragu and the ex-Welfare township which is now called Kalkaringi. I was also told by the Gurindji elders that Kalkaringi township is or *'aru* Dreaming track.¹⁰⁹

Therefore, as previous research shows, one of the reasons they refused

¹⁰⁵ See Chap. 1. Also, Rose 1996:Chap.4.

¹⁰⁶ Department of the Interior 1958.

¹⁰⁷ McConvell and Hagen 1981:117; Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1985; Jowett 1990:72.

¹⁰⁸ Pincher Nyurmiyari (Manguari), quote from Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights 1968.

¹⁰⁹ See Chap.1.

the government's plan and adhered to Daguragu was probably because they did not like to be dependent on welfare, and they wanted to support their own economy at Daguragu where water was plentiful.¹¹⁰ Mick Rangiari also told Jowett that the Gurindji elders "would get very angry with the way that they had been treated by Vestey's in the past and how the government ignored their wishes and continued to ignore their wishes throughout the strike."¹¹¹

They refused the plan of the Welfare township not because Daguragu was the only sacred place but because they refused government paternalism.

5.5.4. Wattie Creek as Sandy Moray's country

We still do not have an answer as to why they chose Wattie Creek in particular and not an alternative Dreaming site. Jowett interviewed Mick Rangiari in 1990, and summarised his comments: "it was Vincent Lingiari's decision to walk off Wave Hill station, but that was only after he had consulted with senior members of the community. When they were at Wave Hill settlement the elders decided to move to Wattie Creek".¹¹² There is no doubt that when it became clearer that Vestey's would never leave Wave Hill station, they were looking for a place near the Dreaming site for the location of their new community. From Wave Hill Welfare Settlement, one of the closest sites is Wattie Creek. This purely geographical factor may be one of the reasons for their decision.

However, Wattie Creek holds more meaning for the Gurindji elders and their walk-off project. It is important to note that even though the leader of the walk-off was Vincent Lingiari, he constantly 'consulted with senior members' about the decision and destination. One of the elders would have been Sandy Moray, an original planner of this movement and the one who told Vincent to take action. Wattie Creek was the country of Sandy Moray. Furthermore, the '*partiki* tree meeting' during which Sandy Moray told his plan to the Gurindji elders for the first time was held at Wattie Creek. Jimmy

¹¹⁰ Middleton 1979:116; Jowett 1990:73.

¹¹¹ Jowett 1990:73.

¹¹² Jowett 1990:59.

Mangayarri took me to the big *partiki* tree where the meeting was held. The tree was located in the middle of the Daguragu township, only about thirty metres away from the memorial stone of Gough Whitlam handing over the Gurindji land to Vincent Lingiari. The Daguragu community was established beside the memory of their historic meeting. Sandy Moray told people, "Before I die, you gotta do it."¹¹³ Mick Rangiari proudly said to me, "So we did it!"¹¹⁴

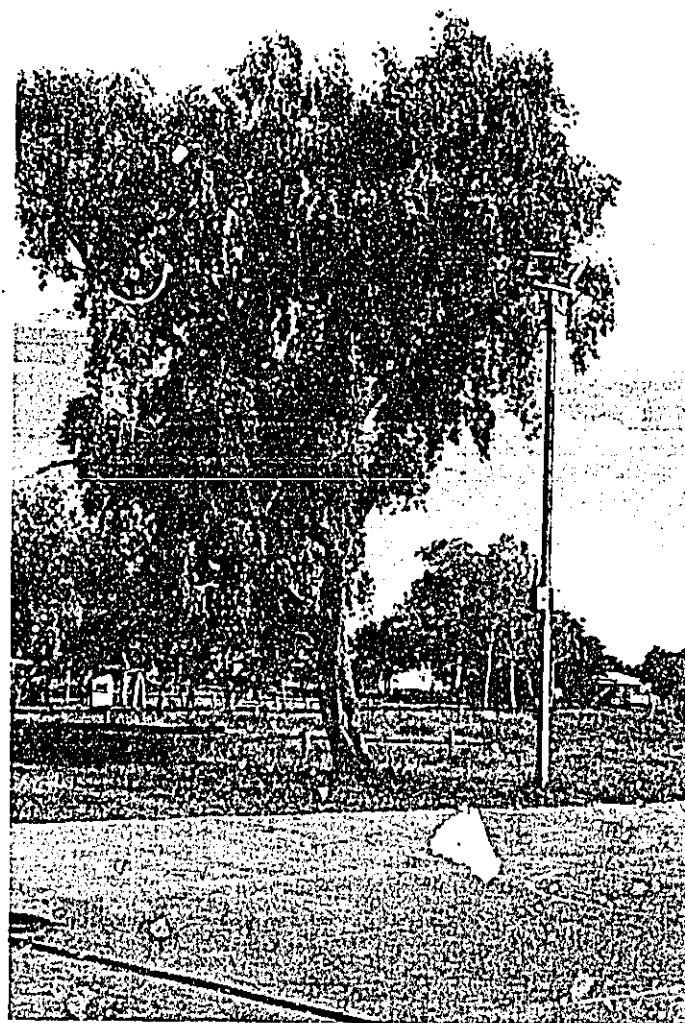


Plate 5.3. *Partiki* tree in the Daguragu Township, 1997

¹¹³ Mick Rangiari, Tape 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

¹¹⁴ Mick Rangiari, Tape 31, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

The project of the walk-off had been formulated at Wattie Creek and returned to the same place at the end.

5.5.5. From illegal occupancy to legal freehold

After the Gurindji people walked off Wave Hill station, it took nine years for them to legally get their land back. This also means that they illegally occupied Wattie Creek for over eight years.



Daguragu 1975.

Plate 5.4. Gough Whitlam and Vincent Lingiari, 1975

photo: courtesy of Darrell Lewis

It is not necessary for the purpose of this chapter to enter into a detailed discussion of these eight years. This is primarily because the Gurindji historians are not very interested in talking about this period. The Gurindji historians did not tell me much about these years. I think, for the Gurindji people, this eight years was more or less a period of clearing up 'the remaining business'.

Of course, the Gurindji people knew that they needed to regain their land legally so they called for non-Gurindji supporters and went on their Australia-wide campaign. Finally, in January 1972, Vestey's, the owner of Wave Hill station, promised to give an area of land from Wave Hill to the Gurindji people. It took another three years of negotiation for a lease to be permitted in July 1975.¹¹⁵

However, these legal issues and procedures were probably of relatively marginal importance to the Gurindji people. Practically speaking, the Gurindji people regained their authority when they walked off the station. At Wattie Creek, the Gurindji leaders did not have to initiate the nation-wide campaign, the legal procedure and the negotiation with Australian authorities. Rather, such a process had been conducted in a more collaborative manner with non-Gurindji supporters such as Actors Equity, NAWU, the Waterfront Workers Union as well as student organisations such as Abschol¹¹⁶ or the Melbourne Gurindji Group.¹¹⁷

Through the process of this campaign, the Daguragu community became a cultural and political centre for the 'walk-off mob' in the Victoria River district and a symbol of the Australia-wide Aboriginal land rights movement. In 1972, Aboriginal people in VRD and Humbert River station walked off and stayed at Wattie Creek. Rose explains: "people who walked off went there because that was the place where they could get food and other assistance, medical attention, publicity for their case, education for their children, and solidarity from their peers."¹¹⁸ The Daguragu Aboriginal community, however, was still directed mainly by the Gurindji people and the leaders were the Gurindji elders such as

¹¹⁵ Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1975; McConvell and Hargen 1981:120-124.

¹¹⁶ On Abschol activities at Wattie Creek, see, for example, Oke and Oke 1969; Abschol 1970; Franklin 1976:183.

¹¹⁷ Rose 1991:228.

¹¹⁸ Rose 1991: 229.

Vincent Lingiari.¹¹⁹ At the same time, Aboriginal people in New South Wales regarded the Gurindji people as the new allies of their own land rights movement.¹²⁰ The Gurindji walk-off now gained a wider attention than originally planned by the Gurindji elders.

On 16 August 1975, Prime Minister Whitlam attended the land-giving ceremony at Daguragu. This handing over ceremony was memorable for the Gurindji people and they still remember and describe Gough Whitlam as a 'good *kartiya* boss'.

Negotiations with Australian authorities for their country seemed like a never-ending process. In 1981, the Gurindji people claimed Aboriginal freehold title under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976 (NT)*. This time, academics such as Patrick McConvell and Rod Hagen helped their land claim. It was in 1986 that the Gurindji people finally succeeded in holding the freehold title in Daguragu country.

5.5.6. Running the cattle station: postcolonial dynamics

When learning the Gurindji history of the walk-off, one may tend to pay most attention to the aspect of returning their country. However, we also need to remember that the aim of their walk-off was not only to regain their land but also to run their own cattle station. It is safe to say that the aim of the Gurindji walk-off was not to return to the precolonial hunting-gathering lifestyle, but to move living conditions forward to, namely, the postcolonial domain. Today, the Gurindji people often refer to the post-walk-off era as 'New Generation'.¹²¹

The Gurindji elders' aim of running the cattle business was very clear from the beginning. Sandy Moray explained his project at the *partiki* tree meetings as 'we gotta land back. We gotta station, we gotta horse, we gotta *motika* [car]'. In addition, it is also clear that Vincent Lingiari was positive about their children receiving a Western education. He says to Hardy the following:

¹¹⁹ Dor' 1977:107.

¹²⁰ Goedall 1996:324-327.

¹²¹ See Chapters 6 & 7.

"That Besty mob neber bin teach Gurindji people to read, but now our childrens bin go to school house. Later on they bin learn ebrything and know what to do. Then, we bin want this ground, all belonga we Gurindji. Childrens grow up proper book work. We wait for that, then no white man here."¹²²

Pincher's view is even stronger. He says that the Gurindji people "work the cattle. Learn to build yard, lay concrete, build fence, sink bore. Lib same as white fella, have property."¹²³ They were keen to run the cattle business, but they wanted to do it by themselves. Long Johnny Kitgnaari, another Gurindji elder, says: "We know cattle business. We can do without white fella. [...] Binceni bin manager. White fella keep book. We like to see something from books, him tell us. We do all the cattle."¹²⁴

Ann McGrath stresses that "it was proper, no 'shame job', to have helped the white man, look after cattle, or the white women in the homestead."¹²⁵ As I will discuss in following chapters, it is doubtful as to whether *ngumpin* enjoyed helping *kartiya* at the station. However, it is clear that for the Gurindji people, decolonisation did not mean going back to a hunting-gathering economy, but meant running the cattle business under their own authority.

5.5.7. Political context of oral history

Before concluding this section, I want to return to the questions: why has the story of Sandy Moray rarely been told to the non-Gurindji? Why didn't the Gurindji people discuss Wattie Creek as the country of Sandy Moray in earlier research?

It is crucial to understand that the Gurindji people had been fighting for their land until 1986 when finally their inalienable freehold title was granted. Therefore, what they thought was worth telling to the non-Gurindji during that time was probably not 'who invented the walk-off?' or 'who

¹²² Vincent Lingiari, quote from Hardy 1968:101.

¹²³ Pincher Nyurrmiyari (Manguari), quote from Hardy 1968:111.

¹²⁴ Long Johnny Kitgnaari, quoted from Hardy 1968:112.

¹²⁵ McGrath 1987a:174.

belongs to Wattie Creek?'. Instead, their greater concern was letting outside supporters know about Vincent Lingiari as a leader of their movement and Wattie Creek as the country for all the Gurindji. It is indisputable that Vincent Lingiari was the leader of the Gurindji walk-off movement. It is also true that Daguragu became the symbolic place for all the Gurindji who fought for their land. These were the issues they wanted to communicate to non-Gurindji supporters at that time. Since then, the Gurindji people's political circumstances have changed and their rights over their country have become more certain. Today, the Gurindji people probably feel more comfortable telling the stories about different aspects of the walk-off episode. The story of Sandy Moray has been gradually revealed to non-Gurindji according to their situation at different times.

Therefore, one should be more critical of the naive notion that the earlier oral testimonies are more accurate than the later. We should consider the historical and political situation in which any – oral and written – accounts are inevitably located. The assessment of the oral historical accounts should not only be based on their temporal distance from the events, but also according to their political context.

5.6. Conclusion: What Was the Gurindji Walk-off?

To sum up, I shall now answer the question: what was the Gurindji walk-off? From the very beginning, the Gurindji walk-off was not initiated by white people in order to protest against European authorities and gain better working conditions. Of course, there is no doubt that the Gurindji people needed and looked for supporters from outside. Without the presence of Dexter Daniels and Frank Hardy, the Gurindji project might not have happened. Without Australia-wide support, their project could not have been completed. Today, the Gurindji people remember Hardy and many other outside supporters as 'good *kartiya* helped *ngumpin*'. The Gurindji people are deeply grateful to them for their devotion in fighting for Gurindji country. However, let me repeat here that these were the external conditions that the Gurindji people had been long waiting for.

What was the Gurindji walk-off?

The walk-off was the Gurindji mode of decolonising their land, planned and conducted by the Gurindji people and those related to the Gurindji country. Their aim was to physically leave settlers' authority, to regain autonomy and sovereignty over their country, to establish their own community, and to run a cattle station by and for themselves.

Chapters 6 & 7

Chap. 6: Vesteys and the Gurindji Country *and* *Chap. 7: Cattle and the Gurindji Country*

...fact may not be true, and truth may not be factual.
The question of which parts of a story were factual
and which were not was not a very important one for Cinnamon.
The important question was not what his grandfather did
but what his grandfather might have done.
(Haruki Murakami 1997)

6&7.1. Introduction: Berndts vs. McGrath vs. Rose vs. Hokari

In the following two chapters, I would like to discuss the Gurindji people's history of their life with *buluki* [cattle] and *kartiya*. Like the other chapters, these two chapters also explore the colonial stories covering the issues of Captain Cook and Jacky Pantamarra through to the contemporary problems in the Gurindji country.

In the introductory section, I want to discuss previous studies related to the question of cattle stations and Aboriginal labour at length. I hope this introduction will convince readers why I need to present these two chapters *at the same time*.

6&7.1.1. Before *Born in the Cattle*

Before Ann McGrath's *Born in the Cattle* (1987)¹ was published, the way the Aboriginal situation in the cattle industry was discussed focused on "how badly Aboriginal labour was treated by white pastoralists". The first major publication on the Aboriginal situation in the pastoral area was *Aborigines in the Northern Territory Cattle Industry* (1974) by Frank Stevens.² Although his study was about racism in the cattle industry in general, his major concern was the situation of Aboriginal stockworkers, particularly the wage inequality between

¹ McGrath 1987a.

² Stevens 1974.

black and white stockmen.

A more theoretical approach towards the socio-economic history of Aboriginal labour was taken by Gordon Briscoe. Applying Marx's historical materialism, Briscoe emphasised the importance of class analysis in Australian racial history and used the Gurindji history as one of his case studies.³ Dawn May's work on Aboriginal labour history in North Queensland applied the theory of articulation of mode of production, or internal colonialism to explore the historical process of the capitalist's exploitation of Aboriginal labour.⁴

Even though Stevens' book was the first publication in the area, it should be noted that anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt, as advisers to the Australian Investment Agency (Vesteys), researched the Aboriginal situation in the Northern Territory cattle industry in the mid 1940's – about twenty years prior to Steven's fieldwork.⁵ However, their report *Native Labour and Welfare in the Northern Territory* (1946) was not published for an unusual reason. According to the Berndts, A. P. Elkin "was reluctant to have it published for general distribution, because he felt it would have more influence on the Australian Investment Agency and on government opinion if it were treated privately."⁶ A short version was distributed among some institutions such as the University of Sydney in 1948 under the title of *A Northern Territory Problem: Aboriginal Labour in a Pastoral Area*.⁷ C. D. Rowley's *Destruction of Aboriginal Society* (1970) as well as the Gurindji's land claim book by Patrick McConvell and Rod Hagen (1981) used this short version of the Berndts' report as a primary source to describe the poor living conditions of Aboriginal people in the northern pastoral industry.⁸

Today, we still have no way of accessing the full version of this original report. As far as I know, the original manuscript cannot be found in any public institution. I personally cannot help speculating that if the Berndts'

³ Briscoe 1986:Chap.5.

⁴ May 1983:Chap.5.

⁵ Riddett 1985:201.

⁶ Berndt and Berndt 1987: xiv.

⁷ Berndt and Berndt 1987:xv. See also, Knightley 1993:167.

⁸ Rowley 1970:333-337; McConvell and Hagen 1981:90-91.

report had been published and widely distributed among Australians by the 1950's, public attention (i.e. the 'external condition' of the Gurindji walk-off) may have been gained much earlier than it actually was.⁹ However, the report was not published and the situation of Aboriginal people in the cattle industry was not recognised by the general public until the mid 1960's. The Gurindji people had to wait much longer until realising the project of the return of their country. The Berndts' report was revised and re-edited and then finally published in 1987 – more than forty years after their primary fieldwork. In the same way as Stevens' work, this book also showed how badly the pastoralists treated Aboriginal cattle labourers. However, rather than industrial relations, the Berndts' were more concerned about Aboriginal material and health conditions such as malnutrition, diseases, the high infant mortality rate, and the unsanitary conditions of Aboriginal camps, etc. The Berndts later wrote that the poor living conditions of Aboriginal people in the area at that time (1940's) "are almost unbelievable today. Yet, without a doubt they did exist."¹⁰

6&7.1.2. *Born in the Cattle and End of an Era*

It may be a remarkable coincidence that McGrath's controversial work, *Born in the Cattle*, was published in the same year – 1987 – that the Berndts' *End of an Era* was finally published. At first glance, McGrath's oral historical accounts seem to frequently contradict the Berndts' research results. While the Berndts describe the miserable conditions of Aboriginal people during the mid 1940's, McGrath emphasises that Aboriginal people regard the period 1910-1940 as the 'golden age' in cattle stations.¹¹ We naturally have to ask: how could this be possible?

How could a time requiring such 'tolerance, fortitude, and patience' (Berndts)¹² be the 'golden age' (McGrath)? Is this because the Berndts'

⁹ A similar point is discussed in Gray 2000.

¹⁰ Berndt and Berndt 1987:x.

¹¹ McGrath 1987a:x.

¹² Berndt and Berndt 1987:xi.

research had been done during and after the Second World War?¹³ Did the war and the introduction of small wages suddenly and completely change the Aboriginal view of cattle station life within five years? – I doubt it. Or, do the poor living conditions of Aboriginal people not contradict their view of the 'golden age'? Or, is one of their research results simply wrong?

Tim Rowse explores these questions in his two articles published in the following year.¹⁴ By contrasting the Berndts' and McGrath's works, he begins, "there could hardly be a better illustration of the complexity of historical judgement than to consider these works (*End of an Era* and *Born in the Cattle*) side by side."¹⁵ Rowse suggests that the Berndts' best argument was demographic.¹⁶ Malnutrition, disease and high infant mortality all meant to the Berndts that Aboriginal people's "physical extinction was at hand."¹⁷ Bain Attwood also supports Rowse by saying the Berndts' picture of "dispossessed and exploited (Aboriginal) workers suffering from disease and malnutrition ... is completely convincing."¹⁸

On *Born in the Cattle*, Rowse addresses three main aspects of McGrath's new approach: (1) the complex power structure and open-ended concept of 'culture', (2) female perspective, and (3) oral accounts as primary historical evidence. First of all, Rowse points out – and mostly agrees with – McGrath's analysis of the complex colonial power structure which contrasts to the Berndts' 'zero-sum' concept of power.¹⁹ While the Berndts presented Aboriginal exploited workers as people with no choice (i.e. no power) but to be obedient to pastoralists, McGrath pointed out that Aboriginal people in fact

¹³ McGrath describes 'golden age' as: "Before grog, before wages, before the Japanese war". See McGrath 1987a:x.

¹⁴ Rowse 1988a, 1988b.

¹⁵ Rowse 1988a:22.

¹⁶ Rowse 1988b:62.

¹⁷ Rowse 1988a:21.

¹⁸ Attwood 1988:271. It should be noted, however, that McGrath points out the Berndts' 'subjective' humanitarian factors behind their seemingly 'objective' evidence. For example, she says "they should have asked if station women's fertility and abortion rates differed from that of past generations on stations and from those living bush lifestyles." See McGrath 1988:175.

enjoyed stockwork ('no shame job')²⁰ as well as being in the bush. Therefore, Aboriginal culture that was in 'both sides of the frontier' (station and bush)²¹ accommodated settlers' pastoralism. In other words, Aboriginal people adopted aspects of European society and incorporated these into their own cultural system.²² Aboriginal people were not just 'victims' but 'active agents' in Australian colonial history.²³ McGrath's controversial conclusion was that Aboriginal people 'were never truly colonised'.²⁴ Here, as Rowse suggests, McGrath provided a flexible, open-ended notion of 'culture', which is quite a contrast to the Berndts' relatively hidebound concept of 'culture' that could not accept stockwork as part of Aboriginal culture.

To some extent, McGrath's perspective is followed by May's later work which also emphasised the huge contribution of Aboriginal labour to the cattle industry in Australia.²⁵ My previous work also followed McGrath's view of the flexibility of Aboriginal culture and economy in the cattle industry.²⁶ However, even though May and I described Aboriginal people not just as victims but also as active agents, it should also be noted that both May and my previous study took an economic historical perspective and were dubious about McGrath's stress on the 'golden age'.

Secondly, McGrath made it clear that Aboriginal men and women have different views about the sexual relations between white men and Aboriginal women. While earlier works described it as nothing but sexual exploitation, McGrath argued that Aboriginal women often enjoyed the exchange and were in a better position than Aboriginal men to receive 'gifts' from whites. Although McGrath did not deny their memories of some cruel experiences, her emphasis was, again, on the complexity of the race relations in the colonial

¹⁹ Rowse 1988a:24-25; 1988b:65-67.

²⁰ McGrath 1987a:174.

²¹ McGrath 1987a:21.

²² Attwood 1988:266.

²³ McGrath 1987a:176.

²⁴ McGrath 1987a:175.

²⁵ May 1994.

²⁶ Hokari 1996a, 1996c.

history. Rowse says "to the extent that there was a redistribution of power away from men and towards women within colonised Aboriginal society, it is McGrath's rather than Berndts' framework that makes the phenomenon intelligible."²⁷ I regret that I cannot develop further discussion on the gender relationship, as a consequence of the limited scope of my fieldwork. I did not spend enough time with Gurindji women to discuss this extremely sensitive matter. For this perspective, probably more attention should be paid to Lyn Riddett's *Kine, Kin and Country* (1990) that follows and develops the female perspective in the racial history of the cattle station.²⁸

On the third point, Rowse becomes more critical of McGrath's work. He, and probably more so Attwood, are suspicious of the way McGrath used oral accounts. While McGrath herself admitted the possibility of romanticising the 'nostalgic' past by the Aboriginal survivors, Attwood points out she "fails to reassure us that she has adopted a critical approach to her sources."²⁹ Both Rowse and Attwood compare her work with Howard and Frances Morphy's article discussing the Aboriginal 'nostalgic' view of their pasts.³⁰ The Morphys treated Aboriginal oral accounts of the 'golden age' as their present view of the past; i.e. nostalgia. The Morphys argued that the 'golden age' was possible "through the transformation from the 'wild' black into the 'civilised' station black"³¹, which means "whites had come and initiated the process of destruction of the 'wild blacks', and thus survival was possible only because they had participated in the process."³² Here, Aboriginal oral accounts were treated as the 'present view of the past', but not as the historical evidence. Furthermore, Attwood argues McGrath "tends to provide an ideal model or model picture drawn out of a patchwork quilt of evidence, using examples from a range of places to support her argument."³³

²⁷ Rowse 1988a:26.

²⁸ Riddett 1990.

²⁹ Attwood 1998:267.

³⁰ Morphy and Morphy 1984.

³¹ Morphy and Morphy 1984:473-474

³² Morphy and Morphy 1984:474.

³³ Attwood 1988:267. See also, Markus 1994:xv.

While acknowledging *Born in the Cattle* as "the first academic monograph to rely heavily on oral sources, as distinct from those who have merely used them to complement other data (Attwood)"³⁴ or "to bring to the foreground Aborigines' subjective relationship with colonial authority (Rowse)"³⁵, they both seem to conclude McGrath's work was the product of an Aboriginal nostalgic view of the past, i.e. 'myths' or 'memory' rather than history.

6&7.1.3. *Hidden Histories* and *Born in the Cattle*

However, since Deborah B. Rose's *Hidden Histories* (1991)³⁶ was published, one cannot as easily accept Rowse's and Attwood's critique of McGrath's study. This is not because Rose approved of McGrath's argument, but interestingly enough, because she clearly took a position against it. Although Rose used as many oral historical sources as McGrath, she provided quite a different picture of Aboriginal history in cattle stations. As Rose said in the introduction to *Hidden Histories*, many Aboriginal stories of their pasts "are distressing. They tell of intense cruelty perpetrated by human being [settlers] against human being [Indigenous]."³⁷ She also wrote, "people who worked for VRD and Wave Hill, for the most part regard the decades of work for others as a time of horrendous hardship, deprivation, and oppression."³⁸ Thus, one can probably safely say Aboriginal accounts from Rose's interviews are not 'nostalgic' at all. Therefore, I have to ask once again: how could this be possible?

While McGrath's research was done in the north western part of the Northern Territory and the east Kimberley in the late 1970's, Rose's fieldwork was conducted in the early 1980's mainly in the Yarralin community, where she interviewed people who used to live and work on VRD, Wave Hill and

³⁴ Attwood 1988:266-267.

³⁵ Rowse 1988b:57.

³⁶ Rose 1991.

³⁷ Rose 1991:xxiii.

³⁸ Rose 1992:24.

Humbert River Stations.³⁹ Even though their research areas are not perfectly identical, their research method (oral history) as well as research period are almost the same, compared to those of the Berndts'.

Rose suggested that McGrath's interviewees were mostly from west of VRD, where many people now live in town and used to work mainly on family-owned stations (such as the Durack's). Their experiences and memories would differ from company-owned stations (such as Wave Hill and VRD). She argued, "apparently they [McGrath's interviewees] had no deep and long-term sense of exploitation, and their retrospective view of station life includes considerable pleasure". Rose concludes that *Born in the Cattle* "underscores the advisability of treating generalisations with caution".⁴⁰ The logic – only the logic – of this comment is in fact similar to one of McGrath's critiques of the Berndts' *End of an Era*. McGrath argued that the Berndts' data was collected exclusively from Vesteys' stations which were owned by an 'extremely stingy company'.⁴¹ Here it seems that both McGrath and Rose agreed with the diversity of Aboriginal experience 'according to region', yet disagreed with each other about the 'general view' of the Aboriginal history of the northern Australian pastoral area. Let me summarise their positions as following:

- McGrath: even though there is regional diversity, Aboriginal people in cattle stations generally had lives of pride and accommodation.
- Rose: even though there is regional diversity, Aboriginal people in cattle stations generally had lives of terror and oppression.

There is probably no doubt about the existence of regional diversity, but I believe one should not jump to the conclusion that Rose's and McGrath's different views only come from this regional diversity. Instead, one may naturally come to the idea that the reality in most of the pastoral area was actually *in between these two opposite views*: not the diversity of different regions, but the diversity within every region. This could be the case.

³⁹ Rose 1991:xxii.

⁴⁰ Rose 1991:xxiii.

⁴¹ McGrath 1988:175.

However, don't you think something is still missing here?

If the reality was in between the two opposite views, why do McGrath and Rose not come to this conclusion? Is it, as Attwood criticises McGrath's work, because they both tend 'to provide an ideal model or model picture drawn out of a patchwork quilt of evidence, using examples from a range of places to support her (their) argument'?⁴² This could be partly true as well. However, my own research convinced me that the problem here is not as simple as Attwood suspects.

Before explaining my own approach, which was inspired by the stories I learned from the Gurindji historians, I want to reassess the contributions of McGrath's and Rose's studies.

6&7.1.4. Re-examination of *Born in the Cattle*

In her edited book *Contested Ground* (1995), McGrath wrote a review chapter of Aboriginal historiography.⁴³ In this chapter, she mistyped a subtitle of her own book. *Born in the Cattle*'s subtitle is 'Aborigines in Cattle Country', but here she wrote 'Aborigines in Cattle Industry'.⁴⁴ To me, her mistake was symbolic: a symbolic mistake for those who have read *Born in the Cattle* as the Aboriginal history of *industrial relations* between pastoralists and Aboriginal people, and I am afraid that McGrath may bear some responsibility for this confusion.

In terms of the race (industrial) relations, McGrath was very careful not to exaggerate the situation. For example, she wrote "they [Aboriginal people] maintained self-esteem in a typically racist frontier"⁴⁵; "although Aborigines accepted many of its contingencies for their own reasons, they were not blind to the contradictions and injustices of the system. ... many employers

⁴² Attwood 1988:267. See also, Markus 1994:xv.

⁴³ McGrath 1995a:359-397.

⁴⁴ McGrath 1995a:370.

⁴⁵ McGrath 1987a:ix.

were uncomfortable with this knowledge, but they still had a monopoly of guns, imported foods and desired trade items"⁴⁶; "on some stations, the manager was under strong pressure to spend as little money on Aborigines as possible"⁴⁷; or "although the cattle industry was an oppressive institution and crucial to the overall colonial takeover of the north..."⁴⁸ In these phrases, she admitted cattle stations in northern Australia were part of 'a typically racist frontier' which inevitably held 'contradictions and injustices of the system' under the 'oppressive institutions'. In addition, as McGrath responds to Rowse's review article, particularly Chapter 5 ('Tame Blacks?': Paternalism and Control),⁴⁹ life on the cattle stations "presents the many inherent tensions in the master/servant relationship, with its frequent collapse and explosions into violence."⁵⁰

Furthermore, on the issue of health conditions and the problems of Aboriginal depopulation, McGrath's arguments were not much different from those of the Berndts'. She wrote, "Aborigines were facing a health crisis during this period. Diet, clothing, lifestyle changes and low immunity to western diseases caused harmful effects"⁵¹; "Employers continued to neglect their employees' health, and to avoid the expense of transporting them to hospitals"⁵²; "the Aboriginal population was decreasing rapidly from 1900 to 1940"⁵³; "the uncertainty caused by changing managers, meanness in food distribution, and the widespread displacement of people of the war years could have contributed to such hopelessness."⁵⁴

To sum up, even though McGrath certainly showed a few examples of a harmonious relationship between pastoralists and Aboriginal workers, *Born in the Cattle's* picture of race relations in the cattle industry still remains one of

⁴⁶ McGrath 1987a:121.

⁴⁷ McGrath 1987a:140.

⁴⁸ McGrath 1987a:173.

⁴⁹ McGrath 1987a:95-121.

⁵⁰ McGrath 1988:174.

⁵¹ McGrath 1987a:134.

⁵² McGrath 1987a:136.

⁵³ McGrath 1987a:136.

⁵⁴ McGrath 1987a:137-138.

racism, exploitation and oppression.

However, if so, why then does *Born in the Cattle* give us the impression that Aboriginal people have a positive view of their pasts? I believe this is because many of McGrath's oral evidences show Aboriginal people's memories of *their stockworking lives with cattle in their country*. In her introduction, McGrath emphasised Aboriginal people's accommodation with the cattle life. She wrote, "Aborigines now see the work they performed on stations as an important feature of their lives"⁵⁵; "Aboriginal excellence and desire for continuing work in the pastoral industry contradicts the popular image of Aborigines as bludgers and misfits"⁵⁶; "we may think the cattle economy swamped Aborigines, but in fact they have incorporated cattle life into their world, consciously adapting and integrating it".⁵⁷

This view repeatedly came out in her arguments supported by much oral evidence: "many Aborigines were initially compelled to work on stations, but later when they started to excel at the work, it took on positive meaning, including a way to regain lost pride"⁵⁸; "Despite the hard work, most Aborigines have positive memories of their days on horseback"⁵⁹; "their use of this work to continue ritual ties with land challenged colonial ownership and the domination of white Australian culture"⁶⁰; "the cattle station lifestyle has become incorporated into Aboriginal culture, and many Aborigines today do not want to dispense with it"⁶¹; or "station blacks have a certain empathy with cattle; they do not view them as a symbol of European usurpation of their lands, but are calmly accepting of their presence".⁶²

Furthermore, she argued the Aboriginal people had a strong attachment to their country even under the colonial regime: "it was not the western work

⁵⁵ McGrath 1987a:ix.

⁵⁶ McGrath 1987a:ix.

⁵⁷ McGrath 1987a:ix-x.

⁵⁸ McGrath 1987a:44.

⁵⁹ McGrath 1987a:46.

⁶⁰ McGrath 1987a:46-47.

⁶¹ McGrath 1987a:145.

⁶² McGrath 1987a:149.

ethic, but rather a unique mixture of 'cowboy complex' values and distinctive Aboriginal values – especially land-related – which motivated Aborigines to work with cattle⁶³; "they viewed the annual walkabout as the 'really time' for hunting – 'when the rain come'"⁶⁴; "the Aborigines viewed the land, animals and other primary resources on the cattle station in a more egalitarian and holistic sense than non-Aborigines"⁶⁵; "they worked not just for tucker, but literally to 'hold onto' their land, and keep it alive".⁶⁶

Readers should take McGrath's arguments of Aboriginal attachment to the cattle and the country *literally*. These are all about the Aboriginal people's positive relationship with cattle and the country, *but not with Europeans*.

However, McGrath's speculation went too far: since Aboriginal people established a harmonious relationship with cattle and the country, she jumped to the other generalisation that Aboriginal people must have had a harmonious relationship with pastoralists as well. This 'jump' is not explicit in her text, yet McGrath certainly gave another type of argument without enough oral evidences: "to protect their country and its people, Aborigines had to teach station whites many things"⁶⁷; "Aborigines did not think their living conditions harsh, for they were 'soft' by bush standards"⁶⁸; "despite economic exploitation on stations, many Aborigines with cattle station backgrounds are tolerant and friendly towards whites, and express a desire for harmony".⁶⁹ However, even though she gave few such examples,⁷⁰ the view of harmonious race relations certainly contradicts the Berndts' *End of an Era*, Rose's *Hidden Histories* as well as my study from the Gurindji historians, and most importantly, it also negates McGrath's own statements about the 'contradiction and injustices of the system' under the 'oppressive institutions' in 'a typically racist frontier'. It

⁶³ McGrath 1987a:44.

⁶⁴ McGrath 1987a:127.

⁶⁵ McGrath 1987a:153.

⁶⁶ McGrath 1987a:174.

⁶⁷ McGrath 1987a:viii.

⁶⁸ McGrath 1987a:122-123.

⁶⁹ McGrath 1987a:145.

⁷⁰ McGrath 1987a:100-102, 170-173.

is an obvious contradiction if harmonious race relations are *generally* established in 'a *typically* racist frontier'.

6&7.1.5. Re-examination of *Hidden Histories*

Let us now examine Rose's *Hidden Histories* by comparing it to *Born in the Cattle*. From the discussion above, I believe the connection between these two seemingly contradictory oral historical works becomes more apparent.

First of all, while Rose spent about half of her book discussing the period of 'invasion and the establishment of control',⁷¹ McGrath spent about only one seventh of her book discussing this same period.⁷² Rose justified this structure of her book by stating that it was in accordance with the instructions of her primary Aboriginal historian, Hobbles Danayarri of Yarralin.⁷³ In contrast, this period was not the major issue in *Born in the Cattle* since McGrath's study was more about the period when pastoral lifestyles were already well established -- 'a relatively stable time'.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Rose and McGrath seemed to agree with each other that there was violence during the European invasion.

However, in *Hidden Histories*, the Aboriginal historians of Yarralin mostly told stories of terrifying race relations even after the establishment of the cattle industry. Rose wrote, "In analysing station life, Hobbles wanted to explain the continuities between the European strategy of killing Aborigines directly and the strategy of working them (often to death). Both strategies, as I understand him, were based on the relationship he started in discussing Aboriginal trackers: 'Me white fellow, you black fellow. You work with me... You work not for your people'".⁷⁵ Rose went on to elaborate on this view by saying, "Mass murder declined and was eventually stopped, only to be replaced by life on the station where, in the words of Reverend Woods, people died 'in

⁷¹ Rose 1991:xxiii.

⁷² Rose 1991:15-129. McGrath 1987a:1-23

⁷³ Rose 1991:xxiii.

⁷⁴ McGrath 1987a:x.

⁷⁵ Rose 1991:156-157.

the cruellest and most horribly lingering of ways"⁷⁶; or "Terror remained a key feature of European-Aboriginal social relations on VRD, Wave Hill and Humbert River, and the fact that brutality appeared to be officially condoned added a further element of threat".⁷⁷

In fact, Rose did not deny the possibility of exceptionally friendly relationships between Aboriginal people and pastoralists, yet she did not hear such happy stories from Aboriginal historians. She explained, "The issue is not so much what happened, but what people think is worth telling."⁷⁸ Rose's arguments about 'terror' and 'total power'⁷⁹ support the Berndts' zero-sum power structure in race relations.

What about Aboriginal stories of their relationship with the land? In *Hidden Histories*, Aboriginal historians also expressed their strong concern for and attachment to their countries over the period, which certainly corresponds with McGrath's work. However, although some Aboriginal historians mentioned the time of 'walkabout' as the important period to 'look after the land' in their own way,⁸⁰ *Hidden Histories* did not explore how Aboriginal people looked after their countries. I suspect this was probably because Rose wanted to concentrate on the issue of race relations in her *Hidden Histories* and was preparing another more anthropological book for the purpose of exploring the Aboriginal relationship with the land. In her *Dingo Makes Us Human* (1992) published a year after *Hidden Histories*, Rose explained, "The one saving grace, for cattle station people, was that work could be effectively carried out only during the dry season. Aborigines are turned off from the stations during the wet ... The result was that for part of every year Aborigines in this region were living in their own country, and were using and maintaining the ecological, technological, social, and religious knowledge required for the continued care both of the country and of the relationships between people and

⁷⁶ Rose 1991:169.

⁷⁷ Rose 1991:175.

⁷⁸ Rose 1991:209.

⁷⁹ Rose 1991:Chapters 17, 18.

⁸⁰ Rose 1991:194, 201.

country.”⁸¹ The subtitle of this book is ‘Life and Land in an Aboriginal Australian Culture’.

In *Hidden Histories*, instead, Rose repeatedly referred to the story by Riley Young of Yarralin: “We couldn’t, we didn’t any help behind [no one to back us up]. You know, we tried, but sort of frightened for – Aboriginal people (were) too frightened he might get shot. ... (they thought) ‘long as you can look after the land. Keep the place, right thing ...’”⁸² Rose explained, “As long as people chose to remain close to their country and kin, to ‘look after the land’ and ‘keep the place’, as Riley young put it, their choices were constrained”⁸³; or, “Increasingly, resistance to European invasion was being constructed as staying home and staying alive. ‘Don’t fight,’ people told Riley, ... as ‘long as you can look after the land’”.⁸⁴ All these arguments made it clear that Aboriginal people’s first priority was to ‘look after the land’ even under terrifying oppressive institutions.

On the issue of stockwork experiences, Rose and Aboriginal historians of Yarralin mostly emphasised how hard Aboriginal people worked for whitefella and ‘made them rich’; these were the evidences of exploitation of Aboriginal workers.⁸⁵ However, by reading the stories of Aboriginal historians, one cannot deny the Aboriginal people’s pride in being good stockworkers even though Rose did not really explore this aspect. In *Hidden Histories*, Aboriginal historians repeat, “we had [did] a good job”⁸⁶; “How were we doing a lot of work? We made the numbers (of cattle) for the station. Not only this place, Vestey, every way, don’t matter where. I know. Because everything was done good, I tell you. That’s true”⁸⁷; “we did all that good thing for first owner. We did that good job mustering the cattle”⁸⁸; “we did a good job. Because we

⁸¹ Rose 1992:20.

⁸² Riley Young, quote from, Rose 1991:xxi.

⁸³ Rose 1991:73.

⁸⁴ Rose 1991:128.

⁸⁵ Rose 1991:Chapters 16, 20.

⁸⁶ Doug Campbell, quote from Rose 1991:189.

⁸⁷ Doug Campbell, quote from Rose 1991:191.

⁸⁸ Hector Wartpiyari, quote from Rose 1991:196.

handled them (well) ... That's the Aboriginal people handled the beef all in the Territory for this VRD".⁸⁹

On the aspect of Aboriginal people's strong identity as stockworkers, Rose provided only a few sentences, yet her statements were clear: "to gain the stockman's skills which by the 1920s, had become an important part of an Aboriginal man's identity ..."⁹⁰; and, "Working stories come close to being happy because it is so evident that people value their skills and the hard work they have done in their lives. In a country which values the ability to do a hard day's work year after year, these people are workers who know that they deserve recognition".⁹¹ Needless to say, Rose's understanding was exactly the same as that of McGrath's. In the introduction of *Born in the Cattle*, McGrath stated, "Their identity as station workers does not detract from the strength of their identity as Aborigines"⁹²; "so far he [the Aboriginal stockworker] has been excluded from our national legends because of racism and his position in the story of colonialism ... Aborigines wanted their stories to be told".⁹³

6&7.1.6. Contribution of an oral historical approach

Comparing Rose's *Hidden Histories* with McGrath's *Born in the Cattle*, we found some connections between seemingly contradictory works. Here I would like to summarise the different contributions of these two oral historical works to the Aboriginal history of cattle country.

First, the contribution of *Born in the Cattle* is not that it described the 'complex power structure' of race relations in the cattle industry. McGrath's argument about race/industrial relations is confusing rather than complex. Instead, McGrath's contribution is that she has thrown light, for the first time, on Aboriginal people's pride as stockworkers and their positive memories of their relationship with cattle and country. I would like to repeat here that many Aboriginal oral accounts in *Born in the Cattle* are about the Aboriginal view of

⁸⁹ Anzac Munnganyi, quote from Rose 1991:200.

⁹⁰ Rose 1991:93.

⁹¹ Rose 1991:208.

⁹² McGrath 1987a:ix.

stockwork and their country, not the race relations. Hence, it is absolutely correct and appropriate that *Born in the Cattle* is subtitled: 'Aborigines in Cattle Country'.

Secondly, the contribution of *Hidden Histories* is to confirm for us that even when taking an oral historical approach, the race relations in the Australian pastoral frontier still remain a 'zero-sum power structure'. In addition, though it was not explicitly discussed, Rose's work also showed that Aboriginal people gained a strong identity as stockworkers even under the pastoralists' racist regime. Furthermore, both McGrath's and Rose's oral historical approach clearly showed us the Aboriginal people's continuing strong commitment to their country throughout history.

For the most part of *Born in the Cattle*, McGrath provided neither an Aboriginal 'nostalgic' view of the past, nor a 'model picture drawn out of a patchwork quilt of evidence'. Instead, she explored the Aboriginal people's *general* affection for the cattle and country as well as their identity and pride as good stockworkers. McGrath succeeded in disclosing Aboriginal voices crying out for wider recognition of the fact that 'we did a good job'. Rose shared this view in *Hidden Histories*, even though most of her book focused on the zero-sum power structure of race relations.

Aboriginal people's positive attitude towards the cattle and stockwork co-existed with their negative view towards the Europeans. The difference between McGrath's and Rose's works did not simply come from regional diversity because both agreed with the Aboriginal people's strong identification as stockworkers in every region. Neither is this because the reality was between two opposite views. Instead, it seems that Aboriginal people *generally* had had two seemingly contradictory experiences *at the same time*.

Let me give you one fairly well known story here to confirm my argument so far: when the Gurindji people stopped their stockwork for Vestey's and walked off from Wave Hill station, one of their concerns at their walk-off camp was the poor situation of the cattle. Since they stopped stockwork, no one looked after the cattle at that time. Aboriginal people heard the cattle crying for

⁹³ McGrath 1987a:viii.

water. Vincent Lingiari said, "We not bin let them cattle die of thirst. Them big Vestey bosses not hear them cattle die; but I bin hear them cattle die." He decided not to bring pump workers back to their walk-off camp.⁹⁴ In the middle of their fight for independence from European pastoralism, the Gurindji people were still concerned about the situation of the cattle. What they wanted to kick out from their country was the *kartiya* (Vestey mob), not the cattle. Furthermore, as I discussed in the previous chapter, the purpose of the Gurindji walk-off was not to quit the stockwork, but to run the cattle station by themselves.

This episode clearly shows that both Aboriginal hatred towards *kartiya* and their affection for the *buluki* [cattle] and stockwork did co-exist.

6&7.1.7. Approach

Another type of 'complexity' in the colonial history of the pastoral frontier in northern Australia now becomes clear: what was 'complex' was not the 'power structure' of the race relations, but the ambiguity of the way Aboriginal people reacted to different aspects of colonisation. In other words, Aboriginal people had complex ways of accepting colonisation *even under the zero-sum power structure*. 'Complexity' is not restricted to race (power) relations, or regional diversity, but is found also in the relationship between racial and non-racial aspects of colonialism. Although both McGrath's and Rose's studies implied this complexity, neither of them explicitly explored the issue. Instead both concentrated on one side of it: the zero-sum power structure of race relations (Rose), or Aboriginal identity as stockworker (McGrath).

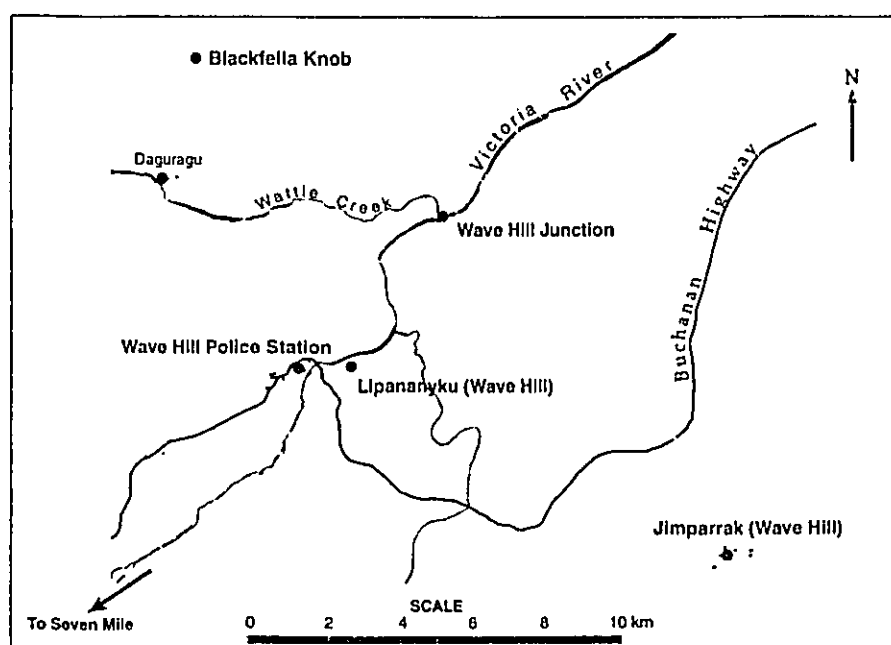
After accepting that two different stories co-existed, what needs to be done next is to ask how and why, and to look into the complex interaction between racial and non-racial aspects of Aboriginal colonial experiences.

For this purpose, allow me to write this part of my thesis in quite an experimental way: I would like to explore two chapters at the same time. The reason why it should be two different chapters is that the Gurindji historians

⁹⁴ Hardy 1968:90. Pincher Nyurmiyari told McGrath a similar story. Personal communication with Ann McGrath.

told me the stories about 'Vesteys and the Gurindji country' and 'cattle and the Gurindji country' in quite different contexts. It is therefore clear to me that these are separate issues for the Gurindji historians. However, these two chapters should not be narrated in a completely separate manner. This is not only because both chapters deal with the same period of time, but also and more importantly, because the two separate stories quite naturally interact with each other in the Gurindji people's story tellings.

My apologies for this long introduction. Finally, I welcome you back to the teachings from the Gurindji country.



Map 6&7.1. Around the Gurindji Country

6.2. Stealing Country

In this second section of Chapter 6, I would like to discuss the Gurindji people's stories about how *kartiya* 'stole' the Gurindji country. It was a 'shoot'em time'; many *ngumpin* were shot by *kartiya*. The Gurindji historians explore the question of where, how and why this tragic colonial encounter happened.

6.2.1. Biggest mistake: Captain Cook's invasion

Captain Cook came to Australia. According to Jimmy Mangayarri, Captain Cook came to Darwin and said, "(This is) good country, put the place [colony] in there." The first station was established at Port Darwin, then Captain Cook came down to the south, to places such as Timber Creek station, and later, the Gurindji country. He said, "Oh, he [Aboriginal people] gotta good country, (let's) make'm station there." Captain Cook started shooting *ngumpin* in order to steal Aboriginal people's countries and set up cattle stations.⁹⁵

Mick Rangiari's story started with Captain Cook coming to Sydney Harbour: Captain Cook first came to Sydney. At that time, he looked around the beach but he did not see anyone. When he came back from England, Captain Cook brought many people with him and arrived at La Perouse and set up the first settlement. When they first saw Aboriginal people there, *kartiya* thought they were 'monkeys'.⁹⁶ Captain Cook's mob went back to their camp and got guns and bullets to start shooting *ngumpin* in order to 'clear up' and 'kill'em people for no reason'. Mick and other Gurindji historians often use body actions for this part of story. They use their arms and faces to represent a rifle at the ready, and demonstrated shooting by mimicking the sound of gunfire: "duuuuuun, duuuuuun". Captain Cook brought more people from England and 'spread from Sydney' all over Australia. Later, not Captain Cook himself, but his followers came to the Gurindji country and had 'claim(ed) a bit of station'.⁹⁷

Another Gurindji elder, Dandy Danbayarri of Kalkaringi, said Captain Cook first came from 'Big England' to Sydney by boat (ship?). He then came to the Gurindji country by horse in order to 'shoot'em up *ngumpin*'.⁹⁸ Ronnie

⁹⁵ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0; Tape 37, 11-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

⁹⁶ It is interesting to note stories that a 'monkey' was the origin of *kartiya* (see Chap.4) as well as Captain Cook thought *ngumpin* 'monkeys' co-exist without conflict or contradiction in the Gurindji people's historical knowledge.

⁹⁷ Mick Rangiari, Tape 3, 24-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1. Tape 6, 30-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Tape 39, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

⁹⁸ Dandy Danbayarri, Tape 47, 12-3-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No. 6.

Wave Hill of Kalkaringi was not sure if Captain Cook first came to Darwin or Sydney, but he was convinced that Captain Cook came to the Gurindji country.⁹⁹ George Karlipirri of Daguragu also said Captain Cook appeared in the Gurindji country.¹⁰⁰

Strictly speaking, every Gurindji person narrates slightly different versions of Captain Cook's story. As I discussed in Chapter 2, it is part of the nature of the Gurindji ways of historical practice that even though there are contradictions between the stories, different variations of historical knowledge co-exist. However, even though people have different ideas about which part of Australia Captain Cook came to, no one ever told me that Captain Cook had been a good person. Captain Cook is the evil figure of the *kartiya* who came to *ngumpin* countries (Australia) and 'shoot'em Aboriginal people'. Probably no one from the Gurindji country would disagree with what Mick Rangiari calls this tragic beginning of colonisation – 'biggest mistake'.¹⁰¹ Old Jimmy asked, "why they [settlers] never said '(let's) live together'?"¹⁰²

I believe that many academic historians would readily share this idea of the 'biggest mistake' with the Gurindji historians. Once again, I quote from Rose: "(even though this Aboriginal) account is at odds with Western knowledge of Captain Cook's journeys, the more interesting point is that this difference is irrelevant. Invasion did happen, people did get shot, they did have their lands stolen."¹⁰³

*

*

Since Aboriginal stories about Captain Cook are already well known and widely discussed in the academic arena, I do not have more to contribute on this issue. Instead, I would like to focus on exploring the *connection* between

⁹⁹ Ronnie Wave Hill, Tape 40, 23-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.5.

¹⁰⁰ George Karlipirri, Tape 48, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁰¹ Mick Rangiari, Tape 6, 30-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

¹⁰² Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 4, 25-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Tape 7, 1-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1. See also, Jimmy Mangayarri, quote from, Rose 1991:265.

¹⁰³ Rose 1991:17.

Captain Cook and other colonial figures.

A story of Captain Cook was not normally narrated as an independent story by Gurindji historians, but often used as a 'gate way' to enter different aspects of their colonial experiences. As I discussed in Chapter 4, Captain Cook's activities in Australia are deeply related to the origin of the *kartiya*, Jacky Pantamarra's thought and practice. Stories of Captain Cook were also used to refer to the nature of European pastoralists, especially Vestey's. Jimmy Mangayarri has a clear idea that the Vestey mob were the people who followed the law of Jacky Pantamarra and Captain Cook. Vestey men are the same people as Captain Cook.¹⁰⁴ Vestey men and Captain Cook were both from England and "live on English way ... live on Jacky Pantamarra's book".¹⁰⁵ They had stolen *ngumpin* country by shooting people. "Vestey men put the (European) people every where. That's why Captain Cook come here and shoot the people [*ngumpin*]."¹⁰⁶ Captain Cook's journey to the Gurindji country is related to the history of people being shot by *kartiya* and the establishment of cattle stations by Vestey's.

6.2.2. 'Shoot'em time'

In 'early days', *ngumpin* got shot and killed by *kartiya* all over the country. According to Roger Yiriwa of Daguragu, *kartiya* thought *ngumpin* were 'devils'. *Kartiya* started shooting Aboriginal people, not only men but also 'mother, piccaninny [child]'.¹⁰⁷ "Whiteman don't like Aborigines. People got shot by whiteman, from every country, shoot'em Aborigines, early days."¹⁰⁸ Mick Rangiari's agitation is even clearer: "*Kartiya* hunting, not for *buluki* [cattle], not for kangaroo, but shoot'em Aboriginal people. Clear up!"¹⁰⁹ Stanly Sambo said it was a 'shoot'em time'.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

¹⁰⁵ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁰⁶ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

¹⁰⁷ Roger Yiriwa, Tape 2, 20-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

¹⁰⁸ Roger Yiriwa, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

¹⁰⁹ Mick Rangiari, Tape 39, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

¹¹⁰ Stanly Sambo, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

Why did settlers kill Aboriginal people? There are many ways to answer this question: because *kartiya* followed Jacky Pantamarra's book or Captain Cook's law, because *kartiya* wanted to 'clear up' *ngumpin* in order to use the land for their own purposes: "shoot'em people just for land",¹¹¹ or because they thought Aboriginal people were 'monkeys' or 'devils'. Mick Rangiari also suggested that *kartiya* killed *ngumpin* 'for no reason'.¹¹²

Another interesting answer was given by Old Jimmy. According to Old Jimmy, one of the reasons that *kartiya* shot *ngumpin* was that *ngumpin* stole *buluki* [cattle] from the station: "*ngumpin* bin steal'em *buluki*. That's why *kartiya* bin cheeky [dangerous, aggressive], shoot'em *ngumpin*." Moreover, *ngumpin* knew the cattle belonged to *kartiya*. *Buluki* is 'nothing belonga [not part of] Dreaming'. I asked Old Jimmy why *ngumpin* stole *buluki*. I was expecting answers such as "because bush tucker was eaten by cattle" or "because we did not like *kartiya* bringing strange animals". However, his answer was different: because beef was 'good *ngarin* [yummy meat]'.¹¹³ In fact, Old Jimmy's analysis is different from the academic historians' argument. I will return to this point later.

6.2.3. Blackfella Knob and Seale Gorge Cave

The place to which they often referred me as an example of such killing episodes was Blackfella Knob located 3 km north of Daguragu. It seems that Blackfella Knob forms a symbolic memory of Aboriginal massacres in the Gurindji country.¹¹⁴ Why did they particularly pick Blackfella Knob as an example? I think this was partly because one can see the hill from the Daguragu township. Gurindji historians often pointed to Blackfella Knob, and told me the tragic stories from early days. As I discussed in Chapter 2, landscape is often important evidence of history as well as a motivation for story tellings.

The other reason why the Gurindji elders repeatedly mention

¹¹¹ Mick Rangiari, Tape 33, 30-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

¹¹² Mick Rangiari, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹¹³ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Middleton 1979:114.

Blackfella Knob is probably because the massacre that occurred there was so traumatic for the people that it became a symbolic event in their historical narratives. In telling the story of Blackfella Knob, I found that the Gurindji historians are in fact telling the history of the first contact which *happened everywhere*.

However, at the same time, even though the Gurindji people told me many times about the massacre at Blackfella Knob, they did not tell me detailed stories. This could be because they did not have any more detailed stories than the ones I learned, but maybe it was because they did not want to talk about it in too much detail. In the same manner, even though they pointed to the hill in the distance for me, I found they were reluctant to go close to the hill.



Plate 6.1. Blackfella Knob from Daguragu, 1997

According to Harry George of Daguragu, it was 'before Vestey time' that Captain Cook came to the country and 's'oot'em *ngumpin*'. Aboriginal people were on the top of Blackfella Knob spearing *kartiya* and running away from their shooting. *Kartiya* kept circling the base of the hill and shooting

ngumpin, "little baby, woman, everybody (got shot)".¹¹⁵ 'Big mob' got shot and dead,¹¹⁶ but Ronnie Wave Hill said some young people managed to run away from the shooting.¹¹⁷

The Gurindji history does not explain who were the people who killed 'big mob *ngumpin*'. The nearest cattle station to Blackfella Knob was Wave Hill, and the nearest police station was at Bow Hill, and later Wave Hill.¹¹⁸ It could have been Vestey men, police trackers, or maybe even Aboriginal trackers. After telling the story of the massacre at Blackfella Knob, Tommy Wajabungu told me that Old Bow Hill Police Station was established 'on the dead man's bone'.¹¹⁹ It was not clear to me if he meant this as a consequence of Blackfella Knob's story, or in a more abstract sense corresponding to 'shoot'em time' in general.

Dead people's bones were carried by *ngumpin* survivors to Seale Gorge Cave. The Gurindji people often told me about the bones in the cave after telling the stories of 'shoot'em time' or the Blackfella Knob massacre. Seale Gorge Cave is an important site for the Gurindji people today. However, to my knowledge, this is not simply because Seale Gorge is a sacred Dreaming site, but also because it is a dead people's place. *Ngumpin* who were killed by *kartiya* became *kaya* [ghost] and live in the cave – even today.

When I went to Seale Gorge to fish with three other Gurindji men, they told me not to walk too far away. They were concerned that I did not go too close to the cave without preparation. Peter Raymond told me one would get sick if one goes too close to the site.¹²⁰ George Sambo also explained to me that people had to let *kaya* know first before entering the cave. He said, singing out would have to be done in 'our language [Gurindji]'. Therefore, you should go

¹¹⁵ Harry George, Tape 42, 26-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹¹⁶ Tommy Wajabungu, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

¹¹⁷ Ronnie Wave Hill, Tape 40, 23-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No. 5.

¹¹⁸ On the establishment of Bow Hill Police Station (1913) and the later shift to Wave Hill (1918). See Rose 1991:71.

¹¹⁹ Tommy Wajabungu, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

¹²⁰ Peter Raymond, dictated, 22-6-97, Seale Gorge, Fieldnote No.1.

there only with knowledgeable old men.¹²¹ After telling me the story of Captain Cook, Blackfella Knob, and later the dead people's bones in Seale Gorge Cave, Harry Gorge said to me, "I'll take you (to the cave) sometime."¹²² Some other old men were also talking about taking me to the Seale Gorge Cave, but until now, I have not visited the site. I do not really know why they have not taken me to the site. This could be because they thought I was not ready to visit the site yet, or they did not really want to come close to the place of *kaya*, or maybe they simply could not find a chance to do so.



Plate 6.2. George Sambo pointing at Seale Gorge, 2000

The relationship between place and memory which is the crucial aspect of the Gurindji way of historical practice is not always facilitated through the physical connection of visiting the site. On the contrary, I found that being told *not to visit* could also explain a lot about their history. In other words, the Gurindji people also practise history through connecting with the place *by not*

¹²¹ George Sambo, Tape 9, 27-7-97, Lawi Waterhole, Fieldnote No.1.

¹²² Harry George, Tape 42, 26-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

visiting. I did not insist that they take me to the place. Someday, they may take me to the cave and start telling more about 'shoot'em time'. You never know. You just never know.

6.2.4. Old Jimmy's personal remembrance



Plate 6.3. Old Jimmy demonstrating how *ngumpin* were chained, 2000

Regarding the story of 'shoot'em time', even older members of the Gurindji elders such as Roger Yiriwa or Mick Rangiarri said they did not experience it but learned about it from old people¹²³ – the exception is the oldest man in Daguragu, Jimmy Mangayarri. To my knowledge, he is the last survivor in the Daguragu community who experienced the 'shoot'em time'. At the Bow Hill station, there was a big Bloodwood tree to which Aboriginal people used to be

¹²³ Roger Yiriwa, Tape 2, 20-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Mick Rangiarri, Tape 6, 30-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

chained and tied up by police trackers.¹²⁴ By opening both his arms, Old Jimmy demonstrated to me how people were chained; "chain here [a wrist of right arm], chain here [left] (and *kartiya* had) shoot'em." He also demonstrated how *ngumpin* were hanged on the tree.¹²⁵

Old Jimmy rarely spoke of his personal life experience, but one time he told me the story of his mother and granny [maternal grandmother] killed by *kartiya* in front of him. When he was a little boy, *kartiya* told his mother to stop her son [Jimmy] crying, but she could not. *Kartiya* kicked his mother's *pinji* [kidney] and she died.¹²⁶ His *granny* also got shot by *kartiya* and her body was burned at the riverbank by *kartiya* to destroy evidence.¹²⁷

Old Jimmy often said to me, "I bin see'm through my eye!"; "I never forget. I saw it through my eye...in my memory". 'Shoot'em time' was part of his life experience.

7.2. Stockwork Experiences

The second section of Chapter 7 is for exploring the Gurindji people's stories of their stockwork experience. How did they start to work for Wave Hill station, how did they like stockwork, and what does stockwork mean for the Gurindji people today?

7.2.1. "No more shooting, work for *kartiya*"

The Gurindji people did not remember, did not care, or did not tell me exactly how the first Wave Hill station at Lipananyku [Old Wave Hill station] was established. However, people often told me how the first *ngumpin* started working for *kartiya* at Lipananyku. Ronnie Wave Hill seemed to have a special

¹²⁴ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 18, 30-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Noeleen Morris and Rodney Bernard, dictated, 25-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

¹²⁵ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 7, 1-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

¹²⁶ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 7, 1-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Tape 37, 11-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5. See also, Rose 1991:41-42.

¹²⁷ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 7, 1-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Tape 35, 1-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

kind of authority over this story.¹²⁸ Therefore, I mainly use his story tellings along with alternative versions from other Gurindji historians.



Plate 7.1. Ronnie Wave Hill, 1999

Old Wave Hill station received a letter from the Darwin government. It said, “Don’t shoot’em (Aboriginal people). You can’t shoot’em nomo [anymore]”, “Nomo [Don’t] shoot’em. Give’m job”. Therefore, the station *kartiya* decided to

¹²⁸ I could not figure out why Ronnie has such a high authenticity on this particular story.

take some young Aboriginal men into the station.¹²⁹ Roy Yunga explained that the *kartiya* went to the west of Wave Hill and found *ngumpin* holding a corroboree. The *kartiya* tried to catch some young boys but ended up shooting them and kidnapped only women.¹³⁰ According to Ronnie Wave Hill, the *kartiya* finally found one Aboriginal boy. This *ngumpin* boy – his skin name was ‘japarta’ – was caught and taken to Lipananyku by *kartiya*. He became the first *ngumpin* to be ‘*walyak* [inside] longa *kartiya*’. He gradually learned English.

Since this story of the first *ngumpin* living with *kartiya* is disconnected from the sequence of a later story about two *ngumpin* who helped *kartiya* bring Gurindji mob into the station, I suspect there is a connection between this ‘japarta’ and Old Jimmy’s story of ‘japarta buluki-waji’. As I will discuss later, he was the first *ngumpin* who ate *buluki* [cattle]. Both stories tell us about the first contact with settler society (cattle/settlers) that occurred west of the Gurindji country. And in both stories the key Aboriginal persons’ skin name was ‘japarta’. It is nothing more than speculation, but it seems these two *japarta* could have been the same person who bravely and peacefully approached settlers and stayed with them for a while in the very early stages of colonisation. It is reasonable to assume that the *japarta*’s stories of eating beef and learning English have been separately narrated among the Gurindji historians because of the ‘separate roles’ of *kartiya* and *buluki* in Gurindji historical practice.

Kartiya’s attempt to bring some *ngumpin* into the station continued. Later, the *kartiya* found two little boys fishing at the Wave Hill junction. The *kartiya* quietly approached them, and said, “Hey, come in! Come this way!”¹³¹ When these *ngumpin* saw the *kartiya*, they got terribly frightened about being shot, but the *kartiya* were already too close for them to run away. *Kartiya* took these two *ngumpin* to Lipananyku. The *ngumpin* thought they would be killed there, but instead, the *kartiya* gave them beef, flour and tea, as well as clothing. These two *ngumpin* boys stayed there with *kartiya* and started to learn English.

¹²⁹ Ronnie Wave Hill, Tape 40, 23-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.5; Mick Rangjari, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6; Dandy Danbayarri, Tape 47, 12-3-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.6.

¹³⁰ Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

¹³¹ Mick Rangjari, Tape 39, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

Later (a few years later?), the *kartiya* ordered them to go back to the bush and explain to the other *ngumpin* that *kartiya* would not shoot them anymore but wanted *ngumpin* work for them: "Ok, youbala [you fellows] go, find'em more people. Bring'em in."¹³²

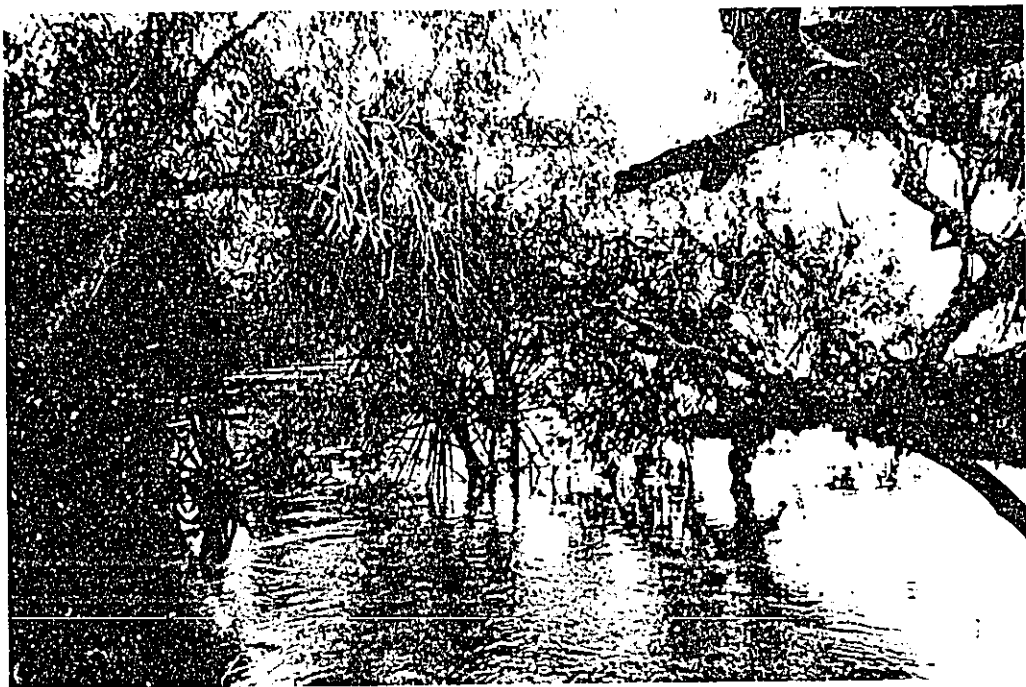


Plate 7.2. Wave Hill Junction, 1999

When these two boys went back to their family, their families were surprised to find out that these boys had survived and grown into 'big boys'. Since they wore clothes, they looked a bit like *kartiya*.¹³³ The two *ngumpin* explained to them, "They can't kill *ngumpin*. ... When we take (you) back (to the station), (whitefella) make you worker. They can't kill you".¹³⁴

Accordingly, a lot of *ngumpin* came down to Lipananyku. A *kartiya* put marks on a wooden stick with a knife in order to count the number; there were

¹³² Ronnie Wave Hill, Tape 40, 23-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.5; Mick Rangiri, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6;

¹³³ Ronnie Wave Hill, Tape 40, 23-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.5

¹³⁴ Mick Rangiri, Tape 39, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

'maybe 100 or 200 people'. The *kartiya* said, "Oh, that's enough". Then, they held a big meeting. The two *ngumpin* and one *kartiya* explained, "Don't frighten. *Kartiya* don't shoot'em". *Ngumpin* said, "Oh, that's good!" The *kartiya* said, "nomo fight, (you) work here". *Kartiya* gave them *mangarri* [food], and the next morning, the *kartiya* took them to the store and gave them clothing.¹³⁵ This was how the Gurindji people started to work for *kartiya* at Old Wave Hill station.



Plate 7.3. Lipananyku, 1997

7.2.2. Stockwork

Before exploring the Gurindji elders' stories of stockwork at Wave Hill and other cattle stations, let me give you my impression of Daguragu's 'fashion scene'.

While I was in Gurindji country, the young people's standard fashion was mainly basketball or football uniforms and sunglasses. On the other hand, the important Gurindji elders' 'fashion' was the cowboy hat. Many elders, if not

¹³⁵ Ronnie Wave Hill, Tape 40, 23-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.5; Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

all, wear very old cowboy hats which are deeply ingrained with their sweat and dirt, and also probably with their experiences of the 'hard time'. The Gurindji elders used to be stockmen. They are proud of their history. I have no doubt that cowboy hats are part of their (historical) identity. Today, young people do not even know how to ride horses. The young Gurindji don't wear cowboy hats.



Plate 7.4. Daguragu's fashion scene, 1997

Many elders who used to be stockmen are now pensioners. Some younger 'elders' and young people in the community today work for Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) which include road construction, making bread, building and repairing houses, making arts and crafts, cleaning the community, etc. I found that elders viewed CDEP in a very negative way compared to the stockwork of their 'early days'.

For example, Tommy Wajabungu said, "when I was young, I work everywhere. I like stockwork. I don't like CDEP. Stockwork all I can do. Mustering cattle everywhere. They [younger generation] use *motika* [car]. They

don't like riding horse. Young people don't like horse, mustering cattle."¹³⁶ Teddy Crew who used to be a stockman, now works at the 'Vincent Bakery' baking bread. I asked him which he preferred – being a stockworker or a baker. His answer was clear, "I like stockwork."¹³⁷ Stanly Sambo said CDEP was 'useless' but stockwork had been a 'good life'. I was surprised because he said this statement right after telling me how bad the Vestey's were.¹³⁸ Harry George's narration had a similar structure: he started to tell me that today is much better than 'Vestey time', but then he said stockwork was a good job, better than CDEP. Then his story returned to how 'rough' *kartiya* were in 'Vestey time'.¹³⁹

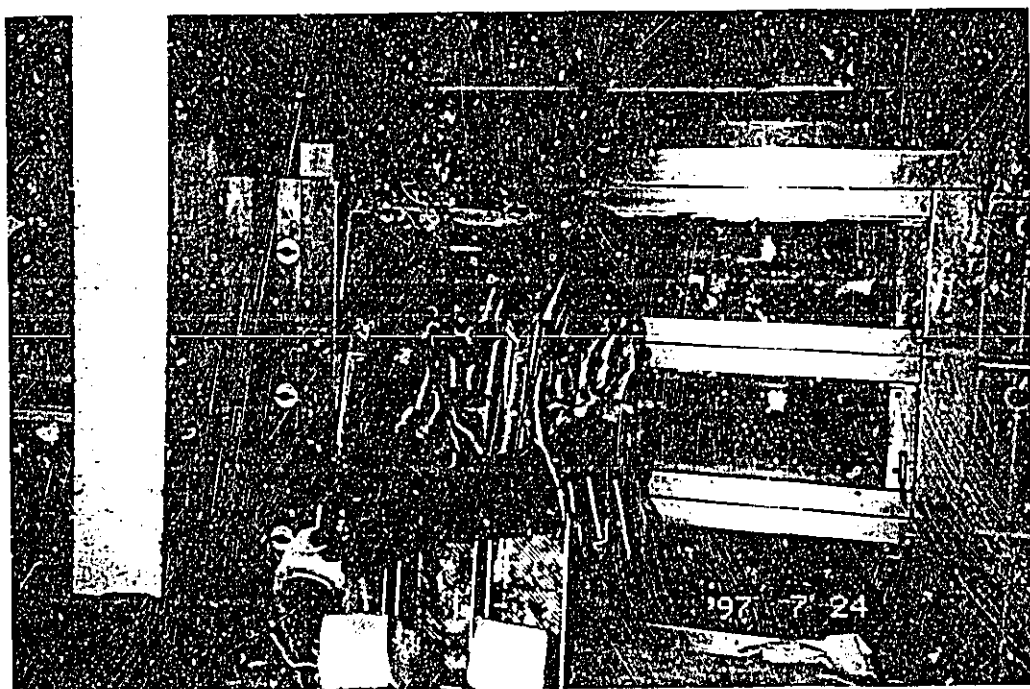


Plate 7.5. Teddy Crew, 1997

Even the older generation of elders like Mick Rangiarri, who is probably more aggressive about *kartiya* than the others, said that "cattle work

¹³⁶ Tommy Wajabungu, dictated, 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

¹³⁷ Teddy Crew, dictated, 24-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

¹³⁸ Stanly Sambo, Tape 48, 15-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹³⁹ Harry George, Tape 42, 26-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

more better than CDEP work. .. Longa [being in the] bush, a lot fun."¹⁴⁰ Jimmy Mangayarri was more careful and considered the possibility of damage to *mangaya* [Dreaming sites], but he still said stockwork was 'good job, branding cattle, mustering...' ¹⁴¹ and "(stockwork was) alright. (But) you gotta careful. You never kill'em Dreaming. ... Mustering, droving, that's alright."¹⁴²

The Gurindji elders also repeatedly told me that stockwork was very hard. In the very early morning, *kartiya* came to the *ngumpin* camp and announced the work. In the dry season, they took cattle 'everywhere'. They worked at making yards, did mustering, branding and droving. Steven Long told me that sometimes *ngumpin* had to work in the bush for eight months – the whole mustering season.¹⁴³ Tommy Wajabungu said, "Ride'm horse everywhere. Hard time...but I like it."¹⁴⁴ Old Jimmy said, *kartiya* needed *ngumpin*'s help for stockwork because *kartiya* could not work by themselves. *Ngumpin* were better stockworkers; it was *ngumpin* who made *kartiya* rich.¹⁴⁵

For a stockworker, joining a long droving trip was something he was very proud of. The Gurindji elders told me with great pride about their experiences droving to Queensland.¹⁴⁶ This was how Vestey's took their cattle to the market and sold them. Stanly Sambo said it was *ngumpin* who took *buluki* to Queensland and 'made money, made'm (Vestey's) rich'.¹⁴⁷ Although the Gurindji elders told me how hard the droving was, the manner in which they described such experiences was quite similar to how they proudly talked with excitement about our ceremonial journey to the Docker River in 1997.¹⁴⁸ It was about their mobility, about an adventure, and droving was about the stories of

¹⁴⁰ Mick Rangiari, Tape 40, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

¹⁴¹ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 37, 11-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

¹⁴² Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated, 30-11-97, Men's secret place, Fieldnote No.4.

¹⁴³ Steven Long, dictated, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁴⁴ Tommy Wajabungu, dictated, 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

¹⁴⁵ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁴⁶ Roger Yiriwa, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Stanly Sambo, Tape 15, 24-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No. 2; Mick Rangiari, Tape 40, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

¹⁴⁷ Stanly Sambo, Tape 48, 15-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁴⁸ See Chap.1.

experiences in the countries away from their own.

To sum up, although many Gurindji historians said most of the Vestey mob had been bad people, the elders also agreed stockwork had been a hard but good job. There was no contradiction between bad Vesteys and good stockwork in their mind. The word 'hard time' was used by the Gurindji historians in both positive and negative ways. Listening to the Gurindji elders' stories of stockwork experiences, I felt exactly the same as the way McGrath described in her *Born in the Cattle*: "when Aboriginal men describe their cattle work, they do so with pride; they speak with a sense of propriety, as though describing something of deep significance."¹⁴⁹ Teddy Barry once told me, "I bin grown up with cattle and horse. There was no *motika* [car], only horse."¹⁵⁰

Yes, McGrath was right: they were 'born in the cattle'.

7.2.3. 'All history man gone'

As I discussed in Chapter 5, the purpose of the Gurindji walk-off was to have their country returned to them and run the cattle station by and for themselves. However, even though a few *ngumpin* are still working at Mistake Creek and some other stations, the Daguragu community does not run the cattle station anymore. Why, if they like stockwork so much?

Mick Rangiarri told me how they set up the Daguragu cattle station: "we set up stock yard. ... people [supporters?] give us paddock. ... We bin make'm stockman. Murramulla Gurindji Company... put'em cattle together. ... Put bore, fence...after that put cattle in paddock. Mustering the country..." Then, I asked him why they stopped cattle work. He told me in a disappointed tone: "Losing gear, brand, ... missing out. We still have cattle this country, but everyone steal gear. We couldn't do nothing more... Horse still running around..."¹⁵¹

Aboriginal people in Daguragu – both young and old – sometimes told

¹⁴⁹ McGrath 1987a:47.

¹⁵⁰ Teddy Barry, dictated, 16-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

¹⁵¹ Mick Rangiarri, Tape 40, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

me that there has been a plan to restart the cattle business. However, while I was in Daguragu, I did not hear about any organised or funded plan for this project. At the moment, the situation is closer to what Stanly Sambo described to me: I asked him, "why did you stop cattle work?" Stanly answered, "All history men gone. ... Young people not good enough (for stock work)."¹⁵²

The history people have all gone!



Plate 7.6. Stanly Sambo, 2000

¹⁵² Stanly Sambo, Tape 48, 15-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

Today, stockwork is history. It was part of the story of 'early days'. Those who used to be stockmen became 'history men'.

6.3. *Ngumpin* Attacked *Kartiya*

Returning to Chapter 6, I want to discuss how *ngumpin* resisted or could not resist *kartiya*'s colonisation of the Gurindji country. My main purpose in this section is to make the Gurindji people's negotiation with their history visible by paying attention to the 'localities' of events.

6.3.1. At Wave Hill station

On the colonial history of the Gurindji people and their country, I did not learn much about the stories of *ngumpin* attacking *kartiya* from the Gurindji historians. McGrath described an episode of a clash that occurred between Captain Major and Tiger Goddard at Wave Hill station in 1935.¹⁵³ Wave Hill Police Journal held a report from 1956 that alleged some Aboriginal stockmen refused to work at Wave Hill station.¹⁵⁴ Another story I found in archival documents was about an Aboriginal man who 'struck' a manager of Wave Hill, 'Mr. Willock':

The manager informed me [a director of the Native Affairs branch] that earlier in the year (1947) four natives from their No.2 Camp left and said they were just like white men and could leave the job when they felt like it. ... (July or August) the manager was informed by his overseer that the natives were not going to work and their spokesman was interviewed by the manager who alleges that when their discussion was over a native named JERRY passed the remark "We are just as good as youwhites". The manager turned and asked him to repeat it and the native struck him. A fight ensued and eventually the native gave up. Other native came down from the camp with their spears and the white staff also gathered round. It is difficult to get a coherent story other than there was a lot of shouting and yelling on both sides but as far as I can ascertain the only people using physical violence were the manager and the native Jerry. The result was that all natives except seven have returned to work

¹⁵³ McGrath 1987a:114-115.

¹⁵⁴ NTAS F292 Police Station - WAVE HILL (Commonwealth), Police Journals 1916-1977. 19-7-1956.

and these seven are just sitting around the camp.¹⁵⁵

This report affected me in two different ways. First, I was excited to know that even in the 1940s, some of the Gurindji people had already given a demonstration of stopping and leaving stockwork to demand the right of mobility as well as the recognition of their importance as stockworkers. It is also noteworthy that the event happened in the year following the Pilbara Walk-off. This naturally raised questions: was there any connection between this event and the Pilbara walk-off? Was Sandy Moray there as a member of this 'resistance'?¹⁵⁶

However, I also felt disappointment that the Gurindji people did not remember much about this story. I was not told this story before I found this report. After finding this episode at the National Archives of Australia, I asked people in Daguragu about it, but I later realised they have not clearly held onto this story even though *ngumpin* Jerry as well as *kartiya* manager Willock were in their memory.¹⁵⁷ I had to conclude that the story was not very important for the Gurindji historians. From the Gurindji historical perspective, this event was probably not successful enough, not adventurous enough, and not violent enough to remember as a part of their 'early days' history.

Although some incidents were reported,¹⁵⁸ there have been very few stories of *ngumpin* attacking *kartiya* in Gurindji country both in oral and documentary accounts. It is quite a contrast to the stories that Rose as well as the Reads explored in the northern part of the Victoria River district.¹⁵⁹ It seems

¹⁵⁵ 'Native Situation at Wave Hill' (1947) in NAA (Darwin) F1 1946/450 *Ill-treatment of Aboriginals*.

¹⁵⁶ See Chap.5.

¹⁵⁷ Mick Rangiari, Tape 40, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5; Harry George, Tape 42, 26-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, "Murderous Blacks in the Territory" in *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 10-6-1895; "Attack by Blacks at Wave Hill" in *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 20-1-1899. However, since the incidents happened mainly in the northern part of Wave Hill station – on the border between Ngarinman and the Gurindji countries – it is not clear if the attack was conducted by the Gurindji people.

¹⁵⁹ Read and Read 1991:Chap.3; Rose 1991:Chapters 7, 14, 23.

there were many more Aboriginal physical attacks against settlers in the northern areas than in the Gurindji country.

6.3.2. Mystery of 'Leichhardt' killed at Wattie Creek

There was only one story I was told of *ngumpin* murdering *kartiya* in the Gurindji country. However, due to the lack of information, I must admit I have no way of exploring this story beyond simply presenting what I learned: according to Old Jimmy, a *kartiya* named 'Leichhardt' travelled through the country in order to shoot *ngumpin*. Two *ngumpin* attacked and speared him at Wattie Creek. They cut his stomach and filled it with stones, and then threw him into the river.¹⁶⁰

This story probably makes you think of the great explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt, who disappeared during his expedition of an east-west crossing of the continent in 1848.¹⁶¹ However, how much should I speculate about this story? From an academic historical perspective, there is no substantial evidence that the murdered *kartiya* was Leichhardt. From a Gurindji perspective, this was just another story of how one bad *kartiya* was killed by *ngumpin*. From a cross-cultural perspective, I can neither trace how the name 'Leichhardt' was remembered by the Gurindji people nor explore the cultural meaning of 'Leichhardt' or '*kartiya* killed at Wattie Creek'. I can only speculate and suggest that the Gurindji people *needed to remember* at least one story of rebellion in the Gurindji country.

6.3.3. Mystery of the rebel, 'Major'

In fact, there is a more complicated story told by the Gurindji historians. It was about a *ngumpin* called 'Major' who killed many *kartiya* during his journey from Northern Territory to Western Australia. The story was not located in the Gurindji country, but some elders passionately told me about this episode. I wondered why. After sharing the story I learned from the Gurindji elders, I would like to discuss the meaning and importance of a story which is *not*

¹⁶⁰ Jimmy Mangayarli, Tape 45, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁶¹ Chisholm 1973; Webster 1980; Turnbull and Broadhurst 1983, Roderick 1988.

located in the Gurindji country.

Mick Rangiari once told me 'Major' might have come from somewhere in Queensland, but later the elders seemed to agree that he was a Jingili man. The Gurindji elders did not explain much to me about Major's background, but the story started when he had shot one *lubra* [Aboriginal woman] and two *kartiya*.

Major was a stockworker, and his wife did domestic work. They both worked for *kartiya* at a stockyard in Pigeon Hole or Montejini station.¹⁶² However, "young *kartiya* did silly thing".¹⁶³ This *kartiya* took Major's wife to his camp and slept with her; "*kartiya* bin take 'ni *lubra* belonga him [Major]",¹⁶⁴ "*kartiya* gott'em *ngumpin* woman!"¹⁶⁵ The next morning, Major picked up a rifle and bullet and shot his wife who was washing clothes and plates at the river. Two *kartiya* there tried to run away from Major's shooting, but he eventually shot and killed both of them.

According to Old Jimmy, Major later moved to the hill near Mistake Creek station. Major lived there for a while and shot and killed many *kartiya* there. Old Jimmy justified his activity by saying, "*kartiya* shoot'em (Aboriginal) people, (so that) he take'm over, clean *kartiya*." However, other *ngumpin* did not help him because they were too frightened. Major had to fight against *kartiya* by himself. Later, Major moved his camp to Texas Down and then to Nine Mile Creek. There he was finally shot by an Aboriginal tracker. Before being shot and killed by police trackers, Major said, "oh, youbala [you fellows] got me, OK, youbala can shoot me". He lifted up his hands – Old Jimmy showed me this through his actions – and then they shot him to death.¹⁶⁶

Mick Rangiari gave me more detail about Major's itinerary: when he killed a *lubra* and two *kartiya*, he went to Mt. Sanford (VRD) to find a job, pretending he did nothing. Then Major moved to Limbunya station but he was

¹⁶² Mick Rangiari, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6. Old Jimmy did not know which country they were working (Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 45, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.)

¹⁶³ Mick Rangiari, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁶⁴ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 45, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁶⁵ Mick Rangiari, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁶⁶ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 45, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

by himself and *ngumpin* there did not want to mix with him. Major tried to talk to them but no one helped him. He kept travelling through Inverway to Mistake Creek station. There he shot and killed a couple of *kartiya* travellers. By that time policemen were investigating and looking for him. Major moved to Nine Mile Creek. After a gunfight at the hill near Nine Mile creek, he ran away to Ord River station but policemen still chased him. There he shot and killed two more *kartiya* and ran away to the hill near Mistake Creek. Major killed some more *kartiya* policemen on the hill, but an Aboriginal tracker finally shot him. Before he died, Major said, "I bin try help everybody (*ngumpin*). I bin shoot'em whitefella. You silly my people shoot me."¹⁶⁷

It is also important to note that both Old Jimmy and Mick Rangiari as well as George Karlipirri said it was Tinker, George's father, who finally shot and killed Major. Tinker was a police tracker.¹⁶⁸ I asked them a naive question about why *ngumpin* worked for *kartiya* policemen. Old Jimmy said, "Oh, because *ngumpin* bin frighten. *Kartiya* fright'em him. (*Kartiya* said,) 'If you don't help me, I shoot you!'"¹⁶⁹ Roy Yunga's father was a police tracker as well. He also said his father had to shoot *ngumpin* otherwise *kartiya* would have shot him.¹⁷⁰

When I heard this story, I was truly amazed by their very detailed story telling about Major despite the fact that the episode was not related to the Gurindji country. And later, in Canberra, I was once again amazed and also perplexed because the story I had learned obviously had direct and indirect connections with several incidents where Aboriginal people killed settlers which happened in several different places around (but not in) Gurindji country.

Let me start with Bruce Shaw's study. Using Aboriginal and European oral accounts as well as contemporary newspapers, Shaw explores the story of 'Major' who killed at least three Europeans near Texas Downs and Blackfellow

¹⁶⁷ Mick Rangiari, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁶⁸ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 45, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6; Mick Rangiari, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6; George Karlipirri, Tape 48, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁶⁹ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 45, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

¹⁷⁰ Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

Creek in 1908.¹⁷¹ Major originally came from Wadaman country, and he was brought as a boy to east Kimberley by a European named Jack Kelly.¹⁷² His second wife, who followed him from his first murder until he was shot dead, was called 'Knowla' which was probably her skin name [subsection name].¹⁷³ Major killed a European named Scotty McDonald at Texas Down station, and then disappeared into the hills. Later he killed two more Europeans at the Blackfellow Creek outstation in Lissadell.¹⁷⁴ He ran away and travelled and lived in hilly places over countries such as Argyle, Mistake Creek, Nine Mile, Turkey Creek, etc. Major and his companions also harassed white travellers and stockmen. According to Aboriginal oral accounts, Major killed about twenty Europeans especially around Mistake Creek country.¹⁷⁵ He seemed to intend to return to his Wadaman people via Wave Hill to Darwin, with a premonition about his death.¹⁷⁶ He was chased by white and Aboriginal police trackers and was finally shot and killed at Nine Mile Creek.¹⁷⁷ This was the story of Major's death told by Jack Sullivan: "...he [Major] could no longer load his gun. He lifted up his hand: 'You got me', and they walked up and did him in. They shot him little by little..."¹⁷⁸

Secondly, there is Peter and Jay Read's study of 'Major'. In 1895, two Europeans named John Mulligan and George Liger were speared by Aboriginal guerrillas at Jasper Gorge, the rugged country of the Victoria River basin. The attack was done by Ngarinman, Ngaliwurru and Wadaman people and one of the attackers' name was 'Major'. The 'revenge massacre' took place later at Gordon Creek. The Reads cross-examined the story from both documentary and

¹⁷¹ Here, I mainly use an account from Shaw 1983. See also, Shaw and Sullivan 1979:104-107; Sullivan and Shaw 1983:70-74, 215-219; Durack 1983:197-200.

¹⁷² Shaw 1983:11.

¹⁷³ Shaw 1983:11.

¹⁷⁴ Shaw 1983:13-14.

¹⁷⁵ Shaw 1983:14-16.

¹⁷⁶ Shaw 1983:16.

¹⁷⁷ Shaw 1983:17-19.

¹⁷⁸ Jack Sullivan quote from, Shaw 1983:19; Shaw and Sullivan 1979:107; Sullivan and Shaw 1983:74.

oral sources.¹⁷⁹

Thirdly, there is Rose's study of 'Alligator Tommy'. Rose also narrates the story based on both oral and documentary accounts. Alligator Tommy was from Alligator River area in Arnhem Land. Tommy worked at VRD as well as the Darwin area.¹⁸⁰ In January 1905, Alligator Tommy and *lubra* [Aboriginal woman] called 'Nowra' and three Europeans named Harry Edwards, Richard Frost, Henry Benning were at Long Leach (Pigeon Hole). Presumably, Nowra was Tommy's wife but she was 'taken' by *kartiya*. When Edwards and Frost threatened Tommy with a gun, he responded by shooting Frost, Edwards and Nowra. Benning ran away and later became a witness at the trial.¹⁸¹ An Aboriginal account claims that Tommy shot 'a mob of white men',¹⁸² and also that Nowra was pregnant by a 'yellow fellow [mixed decent]'.¹⁸³ Alligator Tommy was arrested near Darwin and sentenced to death. He escaped from goal once but was re-arrested and hanged at Fannie Bay gaol in December 1905.¹⁸⁴ I would like to add one more oral account of this incident. Ruby Roney, who was born in NSW in 1892 and went to the Territory in 1904, gave an oral account of this episode which she heard while she was at Delamere station located in Wadaman country. I omit her detailed story since it is almost identical to Rose's except for the name of the Aboriginal killer: Ruby said his name was 'Major'.¹⁸⁵

While trying to give a clearer picture of Alligator Tommy's incident from documentary and oral sources, Rose confesses, "the stories of Alligator Tommy are a jigsaw puzzle from hell."¹⁸⁶ However, my hell seems to be even worse.

¹⁷⁹ Read and Read 1991:55-62.

¹⁸⁰ Rose 1991:55-56.

¹⁸¹ Rose 1991:57-58.

¹⁸² Rose 1991:59.

¹⁸³ Rose 1991:58, 61.

¹⁸⁴ Rose 1991:62.

¹⁸⁵ Ruby Roney, interview with Monica Weedon and Joy Collins, Northern Territory Archives Service, NTRS 226, TS 517, n.d. pp.9-10.

¹⁸⁶ Rose 1991:62.

6.3.4. Historical 'reality' of Gurindji's Major

Here are Figure 6.1. depicts a comparison of several elements in these four different but possibly connected stories, and a map of geographical locations of the incidents.

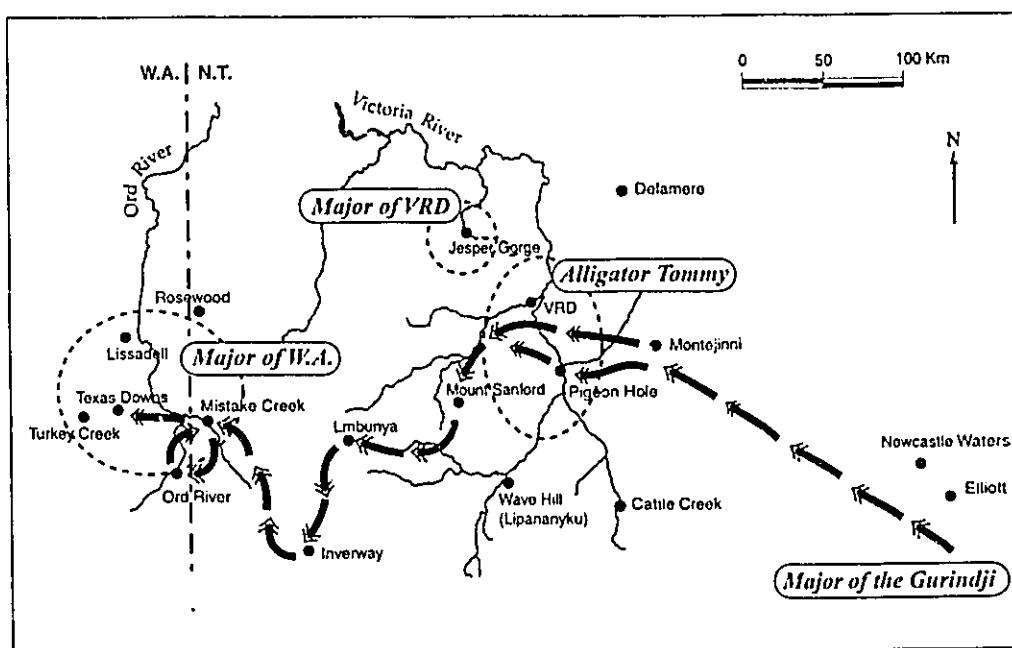
	Shaw	Read	Kose	Gurindji
Name of killer/s	Major	Major and others	Alligator Tommy ('Major' by Roney)	Major
Country of killer/s	Wadaman, later in east Kimberley	Wadaman Ngarinman Ngaliwurru	Alligator River (Arnhem Land), later in VRD	Jingili, later travelled to W.A.
The killed or injured	Three or more Europeans	Two Europeans	One Aboriginal woman and two Europeans, or 'a mob of white men'	One Aboriginal woman and two Europeans, then later many Europeans
Place of killer's attack	Texas Downs, Blackfellow's Creek (W.A.)	Jasper Gorge (VRD)	Pigeon Hole (VRD)	Pigeon Hole or Montejini, later Mistake Creek and W.A.
Place of killer's death	Shot at Nine Mile (W.A.)	N/A	Hanged in Darwin	Shot at Nine Mile (W.A.)
Year	1908	1895	1905	N/A
Note	Major's second wife's name was 'Knowla'.	'revenge massacre' happened at Gordon Creek	Killed Aboriginal woman's (skin) name was 'Nowra'	

Figure 6.1. Four stories of Major

My purpose here is neither to prove how much of the Gurindji story of 'Major' was based on historical 'facts', nor to explore how imaginative their story was. Instead, I aim to struggle with and think through the historical

'reality' and meaning of the Gurindji version of Major's story.

First of all, it is not difficult to notice that the earlier part of the Gurindji's account of Major (Major of the Gurindji) is almost identical to the incident of 'Alligator Tommy', and the latter part is closer to Shaw's story of Major (Major of W.A.). In particular, Old Jimmy's story of Major's dying speech, 'you got me', and lifting his hands to receive gunshots is surprisingly similar to Jack Sullivan's version. The story of Major of W.A. was certainly carried to the Gurindji country through the Aboriginal information network.



Map 6.1. Locations of Major's stories

'Major' was such a common name among Aboriginal people in the area that it is hard to judge, for example, whether Major in Read's account (Major of VRD) and Major of W.A. are in fact the same person. We can only tell that both Majors could have been from Wadaman country. It is also possible that Ruby Roney mis-remembered the name 'Alligator Tommy' as 'Major', because she also could have heard the story of Major of VRD and/or Major of W.A. Such a coincidence is also found in the Aboriginal woman's name in these stories. Alligator Tommy's wife and a wife of Major of W.A. were both remembered by their skin name [subsection name] of 'Knowla/Nowra'.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that although using or influenced by such a meaningful coincidence of historical actors' names, the Gurindji historians have combined all these stories into one big historical narrative of Major's long heroic yet tragic journey. I cannot explore when or how long it took for all the stories to be blended into one big story through the Gurindji historical practice. However, instead, I want to explore the importance of the *locality* of Major's journey in the Gurindji cultural geography in order to understand the historical 'reality' in the Gurindji mode of historical practice.

We should not ignore the Gurindji claims that Major originally came from Jingili country – located farther east of Mudburra country. This is uniquely the Gurindji's perspective since other accounts indicate Major was from either Wadaman, Arnhem Land (or Queensland). Why did Major of the Gurindji come from Jingili country? I believe that the idea of 'Major from the east' was crucial for the Gurindji people. The Gurindji historians located Major's historical appearance not only in Pigeon Hole, Limbunya, Inverway, Mistake Creek, and Texas Downs, but also in Jingili country and Montejini station. There were no significant cattle stations in the south of the Gurindji country. Therefore, in the Gurindji historical practice, Major's itinerary of 'clear up *kartiya*' covers most of the cattle stations around the Gurindji country (Wave Hill).

Once again, I need to remind you here that the Gurindji people did not give me any stories of significant rebellion against *kartiya* within Gurindji country. Although there are oral and documentary accounts of cattle killings, I could not find a substantial documentary source which clearly shows Aboriginal murder of settlers in the area of Wave Hill station. I suspect this was because the Gurindji country was flatter in comparison to the mountainous northern countries. It was probably too difficult to attack *kartiya* effectively in the Gurindji country. If one wanted to be a member of the resistance, one would have moved up to the northern sandstone area of Bilinara or Ngarinman countries.¹⁸⁷

The Gurindji people in Wave Hill area were mainly descendants of those who did not/could not resist efficiently and violently against *kartiya* in

¹⁸⁷ See Rose 1991:Chap.7, 14; Read and Read 1991:Part 1, Chap.3.

their country. I believe this geographical condition is strongly related to the Gurindji version of Major's legend. In their historical practice, Major was a hero who killed *kartiya everywhere*. He did not come to Wave Hill maybe because there was no hideout in the Gurindji country, and also maybe because the Gurindji history had to be 'factual' so that they did not create a story out of nothing claiming that Major killed *kartiya* in their own country.

I also want to emphasise that the Gurindji historians told me that *ngumpin* did not help Major, and the Gurindji man Tinker actually killed Major, and Major said, "I bin try help everybody. I bin shoot'em whitefella. You silly my people shoot me." Even though their country was *kartiya*-friendly, that is, they had no choice but to be obedient to *kartiya*, I felt that the Gurindji people had a 'sense of guilt' that they did not fight against *kartiya* aggressively enough in the early days. It is nothing but my speculation, but I wonder if this guilty feeling was one of the conditions of the initiative the Gurindji showed in their later action. The 'resistance' by the Gurindji people was more organised and well prepared, but happened much later in 1966.

7.3. Dreaming and Country

The third section of Chapter 7 is to show how the Gurindji country has been 'alive' throughout the colonial history. Dreaming as well as many other non-human beings have also been historical agents. Following are some examples.

7.3.1. *Kaya*

As McGrath says, "The bush contained many hidden and different dangers for Aborigines which were unknown to Europeans."¹⁸⁸ In the Gurindji country, one of those dangerous beings in the bush is *kaya* [ghost].

I went for a three day hunting trip with Peter Raymond, Harry Sambo and George Sambo. We could not catch anything on the first day, but the following day was a big catch. We caught so many *polan* [turtle], *yawu* [fish] and *chamut* [wild turkey] that there was a lot of *ngarin* [meat] left over that night. When we set up camp near the river, I realised George and Harry built

¹⁸⁸ McGrath 1987a:40.

fires in many different places in order to surround our camp with fire. They explained to me that *kaya* were close to us and trying to steal our *ngarin*. Peter had a bad headache and asked me for an aspirin. His headache was caused by the *kaya*, and I was surprised to know that European medicine like aspirin would help to ease this kind of headache as well. I asked them to tell me more stories about *kaya*, but it was already so dark that they were afraid of attracting the *kaya* to our camp by telling stories. I had to wait for the next day.¹⁸⁹

Kaya never die. Some say *kaya* is just a skeleton, or you can see its eyes sparkling in the bush, and others say you cannot see *kaya* at all, but can only smell it. They often live in caves and move around the country at night. When *kaya* find people camping in the bush, they kill the people and eat their flesh. *Kaya* also kill *buluki* [cattle] and eat the meat as well. Furthermore, *kaya* make people 'go bush [crazy]' and transform them into *kaya*.¹⁹⁰ People in Daguragu were terribly frightened of *kaya*.¹⁹¹ During the ceremonies that were held at night, I was told not to stay far away from other people because *kaya* were around.¹⁹² At other times, a *kaya* appeared in Daguragu township, and people tied up the door so as not to allow *kaya* to come inside the house.¹⁹³

Naturally, *kaya* are historical actors as well. During the 'Vestey time', *kaya* sometimes took people away from stock camps. One of Old Jimmy's nephews was one of these victims in early days.¹⁹⁴ The most amazing story I heard was that of a *ngumpin* cook who worked at the stock camp and was taken away by *kaya*, but managed to survive. According to Peter and Harry, his name was Barshem and he still lives in Darwin. At the stock camp, he had to wake up earlier than the others because he had to prepare breakfast. But this time the

¹⁸⁹ 28-6-97, near McDonald Yard, Fieldnote No.1.

¹⁹⁰ Harry Sambo and George Sambo, Tape 6, 29-6-97, near McDonald Yard, Fieldnote No.1; Peter Raymond, Tape 6, 30-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 7, 1-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1. Discussion with young men, dictated, 22-11-97, Men's secret place, Fieldnote No.4.

¹⁹¹ Discussion on *kaya* is also to be found in Rose 1992:92-93.

¹⁹² Discussion with young people, dictated, 22-11-97, Men's secret place, Fieldnote No.4.

¹⁹³ 14 and 15-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

¹⁹⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 7, 1-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

cook woke up too early, and it was still too dark; *kaya* were still around the stock camp. Peter explained the *kaya* wanted to take this cook with them because the *kaya* knew he was a good cook. When the others woke up, the cook had already disappeared. Other *ngumpin* looked for him, and a few days later they found him on the top of a big tree. He was pulled down from the tree, and managed to survive.¹⁹⁵

7.3.2. *Mungamunga*, and *karrkan*

Mungamunga and *karrkan* are also living in the country and trying to catch people, but they seem to be much less harmful than *kaya*. *Mungamunga* are 'bush country women' and *karrkan* are 'water country women'. *Mungamunga* are in fact *ngumpin* women living in the bush who never come close to the community or homestead. *Karrkan* are like mermaids; they live underwater and eat fish. They have a fish tail, but also walk around the bush during the night time.

When I asked about stories of these mysterious women, people explained to me with inquisitive eyes that they seduced men and slept with them.¹⁹⁶ Peter Raymond said he had experienced sleeping with a *mungamunga* near Cattle Creek outstation during stockwork time. But since he said this half in jest, I was not sure if he was telling me a 'true story'.¹⁹⁷ Old Jimmy said there is a song for *mungamunga*. If you sing this song all day, a *mungamunga* will come up to you at night.¹⁹⁸ Cattle Creek area seems like the country for *mungamunga*. Banjo Ryan told me about an old man who used to live in Daguragu but had already passed away.¹⁹⁹ Banjo told this story to me with a burst of laughter:

¹⁹⁵ Harry Sambo and George Sambo, Tape 6, 29-6-97, near McDonald Yard, Fieldnote No.1; Peter Raymond, Tape 6, 30-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1. I have not yet met this lucky person who survived a *kaya*'s kidnapping.

¹⁹⁶ Peter Raymond, dictated, 16-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5; Discussion with young men, dictated, 17-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.5; Banjo Ryan, dictated, 18-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

¹⁹⁷ Peter Raymond, dictated, 16-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5

¹⁹⁸ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated, 18-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

¹⁹⁹ Banjo said he could not speak this old person's name.

when this old man was sleeping near Cattle Creek at night, he realised *mungamunga* were on each side of him. These two *mungamunga* started to touch his chest.... and then slept with him. The next morning, he followed the *mungamunga*'s track and chased them over to the cave, where he realised he had lost his way. He was nearly caught by *kaya* there.²⁰⁰



Plate 7.7. Banjo Ryan, 1997
photo: courtesy of Mayumi Uchida

²⁰⁰ Banjo Ryan, dictated, 18-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5. Hobbles Danayarri told Rose his experience with *mungamunga* at a stock camp. See Rose 1992:96-97.

7.3.3. Wave Hill flood and Dreaming

In February 1924, the first Wave Hill station at Lipananyku near the Victoria River bank was washed away by a big flood. Newspapers reported this disaster as follows:

A wire from Mr. (Alex) Moray who has arrived at Katherine, states that disastrous floods have occurred at Wave Hill. Everything on the station in the shape of improvements has been destroyed. The damage is enormous but there were no casualties.... [*Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, February 29, 1924]

...the Wave Hill homestead has been completely washed away by the flood and only the kitchen, a hut, and a waggon shed are left standing. Fourteen people comprising whites, Chinese and blacks who were at the homestead at that time were compelled to take shelter on the roof of the waggon shed during the night... It is not known how the cattle fared, but stockmen consider that as only about four inches of rain had fallen in that locality prior to the flood, that most of the cattle would be on the flats adjacent to the river and with such a flood as reported, hundreds, perhaps thousands, would perish. ...[*The Northern Standard*, March 4, 1924]

...Other aboriginals in the vicinity lodged their women folk in the high growing timber and (stood?) by stoically until the torrent took them off their feet, and carried them in some instances 10 miles down the river. The dairy herd shared the same fate but in neither case was there any loss. Cattle in other directions were not so fortunate, and the probabilities are that a large number were drowned. Mr. Moray saw carcasses on his road into Manbulloo, and the loss in this direction, combined with the damage to fences and buildings is estimated at £10,000. ... [*Northern Territory Times*, March 13, 1924]

The above newspaper reports certainly explain how disastrous the flood was. However, they do not explain why this flood occurred. Of course, it was because of heavy rain. But why did such heavy rain fall in that particular area in that particular year? The Gurindji people have an answer: one of the Gurindji men made it happen. The flood was the 'fault' of George Karlipirri's father, Tinker.

It was one of those years that the Gurindji people were working for *kartiya* at Lipananyku - the first Wave Hill station. In that particular year, there was little rain for a long time in the area. As shown above, the newspaper said, "only about four inches of rain had fallen in that locality prior to the flood".

There was no grass for *buluki* [cattle] and horses. Tinker was 'a proper clever man [sorcerer, witchcraft]', and he decided to make a big rain.²⁰¹

In order to make a rain, you need a 'rainstone'. When I was in Daguragu, George Karlipirri's rainstones were taken by his nieces so he did not have any. Instead, Mick Inverway showed me some rainstones. They were crystal stones which you can find in certain places in their country.²⁰²

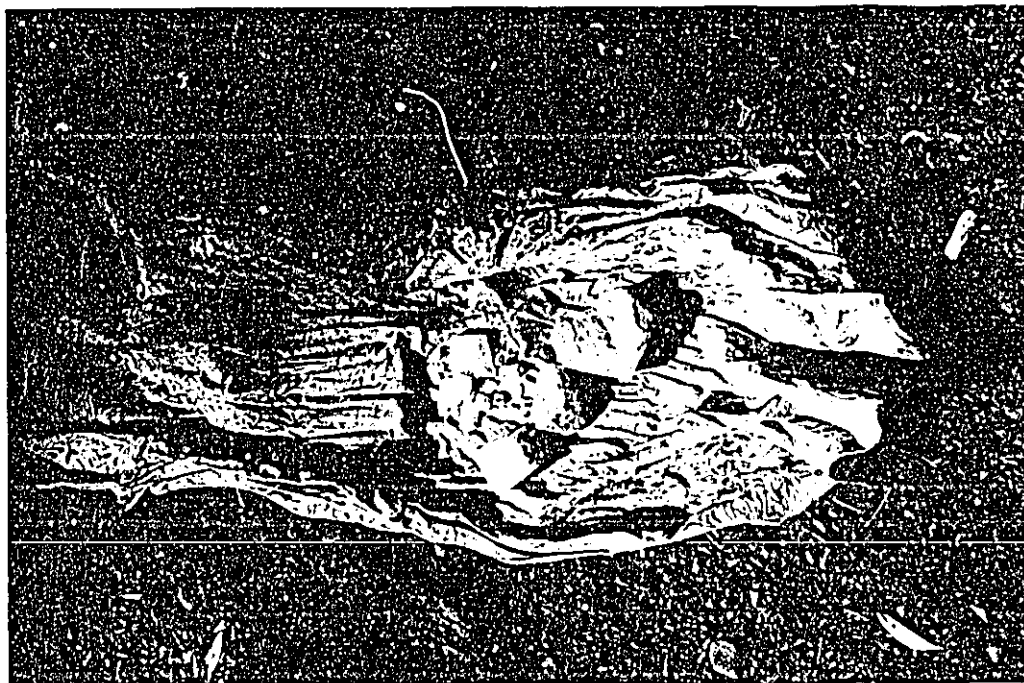


Plate 7.8. Rainstones, 1997

The easiest way to make a rain is to fill up water in a billycan and put ('cook'em') a rainstone underwater. Then, rain will start.²⁰³ However, what Tinker did at that time was much more elaborate. Tinker went to the Seven Mile

²⁰¹ Noeleen Morris and Rodney Bernard, Tape 8, 25-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; George Karlipirri, Tape 11, 10-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Tape 48, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6. See also, Fitzherbert 1989:6.

²⁰² George Karlipirri, Tape 11, 10-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Tape 15, 23-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

²⁰³ George Sambo, Tape 9, 27-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 37, 11-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

waterhole where a *kurraj* [rainbow snake] had been living. He dived into the water and found the *kurraj*. Tinker explained how dry the country was and then handed over the rainstones and asked the *kurraj* to make a big rain.²⁰⁴



Plate 7.9. Seven Mile Waterhole, 1997

The next day, rain started and it kept raining for four days and four nights. Soon Tinker realised that the rain was too heavy. He stopped it by warming both his hands at the fire – this is how to stop the rain. But it was too late. The Old Wave Hill station was washed away.²⁰⁵ According to the police report, the rain started on 9th February, the Wave Hill homestead was flooded by 11th, and the rain stopped on 13th – it was four days and four nights.²⁰⁶

Tinker's intention was to make a rain for *buluki*, but he ended up

²⁰⁴ George Karlipirri, Tape 11, 10-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Tape 48, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6. See also, Fitzherbert 1989:6.

²⁰⁵ George Karlipirri, Tape 11, 10-Aug-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Tape 48, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6. See also, Fitzherbert 1989:6.

²⁰⁶ "The Flood at Wave Hill", 11-2-1924, in *Wave Hill Police Letter Book 1919 – 1931* NTAS F589.

drowning them. Giving rainstones to *kurraj* causes too much rain. Tinker should not have done that. The elderly women discussed this and told me, "give'm rainstone make'm too much rain. No good!"²⁰⁷ When Peter Raymond took me to Lipananyku, he told the story of the Wave Hill flood and also said to me, "Karlipirri father (was) no good."²⁰⁸ However, even though the Gurindji elders agree that Tinker did too much, they told me about Tinker's 'fault' with some amusement.

Again, here is the uncrossable cultural gap between the academic and the Gurindji historical practices. I as a PhD candidate of Australian academic society, cannot simply follow the Gurindji explanation and state that it is an historical 'fact' that a Gurindji man made a heavy rain and thus it was his fault that the Wave Hill station was washed away.

What significance does this Gurindji version of the flood story hold for a cross-cultural historical approach? This story certainly gives us a better understanding of the historical 'reality' of the Gurindji people. As academic historians control the past based on their historical reality, the Gurindji history is also under the Gurindji people's control. Here I mean that the Gurindji historical practice describes their colonial history as the interaction between different historical actors which include not only *ngumpin* and *kartiya*, but also Dreaming. As I discussed in Chapter 2, it is obvious and rational in the Gurindji country that Dreaming beings have been as active as humans throughout the colonial history. *Kurraj* [rainbow snake] is one of those active historical agents. Even in January 1998, the Katherine township was flooded because someone killed *kurraj*.²⁰⁹ Since Dreaming has always been interacting with people, the Gurindji people have interacted with Dreaming over the country, even under colonial rule.

The Old Wave Hill station at Lipananyku was completely ruined by the flood and later the new Wave Hill station was set up at Jimparrak, where many of the Gurindji elders spent their lives until the 'walk-off' started in 1966. In

²⁰⁷ Women's discussion, dictated, 25-8-97, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.2.

²⁰⁸ Pete Raymond, Tape 18, 1-9-97, Lipananyku, Fieldnote No.2.

²⁰⁹ Kelly Jimmy, dictated, 4-3-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.6.

1967, the homestead was again moved to its present place which used be a No. 1 Bore and stock camp. McConvell and Hagen write, "it was a source of some amusement to the Gurindji that the Europeans take the name 'Wave Hill' with them every time they move; it contrasts strongly with the Gurindji view that a name belongs to a site forever 'in law' and obviously could not be applied to another place."²¹⁰

7.3.4. Gurindji country has been alive.

Dreaming and many other living beings in the bush were all active before, during, and after the 'Vestey time'. In other words, it is 'evident' that the Gurindji country has been alive and actively interacted with *ngumpin* through the colonial history. I did not hear the Gurindji historians saying that the stockwork was part of *ngumpin* way. Therefore, I am not sure that the Gurindji historians would agree with what McGrath argues: "The mobility necessitated by stockwork complemented the traditional semi-nomadic and seasonal nature of the Aboriginal lifestyle". However, it is of no doubt that the mobility of stockwork maintained the Gurindji people's interaction with Dreaming and other beings over the country.

6.4. Dreaming and the Cattle Station

Moving on from the stories from the previous section of Chapter 7, here I would like to explore the historical interaction between Dreaming and cattle stations. The Dreaming activities are not restricted to interaction with *ngumpin*. The Gurindji historians told me how Dreaming acted towards *kartiya* as well.

6.4.1. Wave Hill flood and Tinker's escape

From an academic historical perspective, it was not the Vestey's but Nathaniel Buchanan and his family who established the first Wave Hill station in the early 1880s.²¹¹ Vestey's took over the property in the 1910s.²¹² However, according to

²¹⁰ McConvell and Hagen, *A Traditional Land Claim*, p.84.

²¹¹ Buchanan 1997:Chap.12.

²¹² Buchanan 1997:140.

the Gurindji historians, the Vestey mob established cattle stations all over the place by following Captain Cook's journey, which included the first Wave Hill station at Lipananyku. Therefore, it seems that 'Vestey time' started from the very beginning of the colonisation of their country.

Even though I learned a story of how *ngumpin* started to work for *kartiya*, the Gurindji people did not tell me how the first Wave Hill station at Lipananyku was established. Instead, their favourite story was how this Old Wave Hill station was washed away by a flood.

Why did Tinker, the father of George Karlipirri, decide to make a heavy rain over the Wave Hill station? As I have already discussed, one story explains that the Gurindji people were worried about *buluki* dying due to lack of water. However, there are several alternative, but co-existing versions of the story.

Another story explains that Tinker made big rain because *kartiya* did not believe *ngumpin* could control rainfall. The *kartiya* manager at that time, Mr. Rankin, made a bet with Tinker that he could not make rain.²¹³ Another story says that '*kartiya* asked *ngumpin*' to make rain because the country was too dry.²¹⁴ In contrast, there is a version that Tinker made it flood in order to drown *kartiya*.²¹⁵ These different versions certainly imply some aspects of race relations in the cattle station: settlers did not trust Aboriginal people, settlers needed Aboriginal people's help, and Aboriginal people generally did not like settlers.

Tinker dived into Seven Mile waterhole and gave some rainstones to the *kurraj*, and then it became a big flood.²¹⁶ He stopped the rain, but it was too late. When the Old Wave Hill station was washed away by the flood, the *kartiya* got so angry that they decided to kill Tinker. Tinker ran away into the bush and

²¹³ Noeleen Morris and Rodney Bernard, Tape 8, 25-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No1. See also, Fitzherbert 1989:6.

²¹⁴ George Karlipirri, Tape 11, 10-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Tape 48, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6; Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 37, 11-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

²¹⁵ Mick Rangiari, Tape 26, 11-10-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3.

²¹⁶ George Karlipirri, Tape 11, 10-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Tape 48, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6. See also, Fitzherbert 1989:6.

two *kartiya* trackers followed him.²¹⁷ When the *kartiya* found Tinker, they prepared a big fire to burn his body and said to him, "we gonna shoot you!". However, Tinker, 'a clever man' sang a song to put them to sleep. When the two *kartiya* had fallen asleep, Tinker picked up *mangarri* [food] from their camp and vanished into the bush. Later (a few years later?), Tinker walked all the way back and appeared at the new Wave Hill station at Jimparrak.

Let me summarise the racial aspects that can be drawn from this story: *kartiya* did not trust Aboriginal people, but the Gurindji proved they could control the weather by using rainstones. It is noteworthy that later *kartiya* admitted *ngumpin* could do it. Otherwise, why did *kartiya* get angry with Tinker and try to kill him? However, once again, *ngumpin* had more power than *kartiya* in terms of sorcery. Tinker managed to run away from the *kartiya* trackers.

This episode is an example of both Dreaming and *ngumpin* actively interacting with *kartiya* and being involved in colonial history. Of course, if you prefer, I can change this sentence to a more academic style: Gurindji historians 'tend to interpret their pasts' much more actively than academic historians do. And the Gurindji people's historical interpretation probably implies their struggle for survival and calls for the recognition of their dignity under the oppressive colonial regime.

6.4.2. "Earth punish *kartiya*, too"

I would like to share some other examples of racial conflict over the Dreaming and its country.

The countries farther west of Daguragu, where the Limbunya and Mistake Creek stations have been, are well known and to some extent are notorious as being areas holding very dangerous *mangaya* [Dreaming sites]. Limbunya is Jimmy Mangayarri's country. Old Jimmy warned me that I should never walk around there by myself, "Limbunya, plenty *mangaya*. You can't

²¹⁷ Peter Raymond, Tape 18, 1-9-97, Lipananyku, Fieldnote No.2; Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 37, 11-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5; George Karlipirri, Tape 48, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

walk around. Very dangerous, proper dangerous"²¹⁸; "This place [Daguragu], you can walk around anywhere. But that way [Limbunya], very dangerous".²¹⁹

Mistake Creek station is also the location of several very powerful *mangaya*. While I was in Daguragu, a Gurindji man came back from Mistake Creek station. He was working as a stockman there but got sick and came back to Daguragu. Investigations started among the elders, and they soon found out that he had discarded the *Jurntakal* dreaming by digging a Dreaming waterhole. People whose *kuning* [dreaming, totem] were *Jurntakal* helped him through the ceremony to recover from the sickness. However, he passed away at the Darwin hospital about a month later.²²⁰ This tragedy reminded me of Old Jimmy's teaching:

"Earth is man. He watch'em you. Earth punish you. ... Earth can punish you any time."²²¹

Old Jimmy emphasised that the Dreaming can punish *kartiya* as well. Earth is alive, earth is powerful. If we – it does not matter if 'we' are *kartiya* or *ngumpin* – mistreat the earth, the earth punishes us. We have to look after the earth as the earth looks after us:

"*Kartiya* don't know. He reckon ground. He don't know what's in there. He just go anywhere. He think he do good thing, but he do bad thing. ... You don't know Boss [Dreaming] there. He might kill you. ... *Wangaj* [bad], very dangerous. ... Maybe *mangaya* look (at you). *Mangaya*, he kill'em."²²²

It is crucial to notice that Old Jimmy's teachings explain that the Dreaming has been interacting not exclusively with Aboriginal people, but also with non-

²¹⁸ Jimmy Mangayarra, Tape 45, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

²¹⁹ Jimmy Mangayarra, Tape 46, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

²²⁰ Out of respect for the feelings of his family, I do not specify the name of the deceased person as well as dates of the episode.

²²¹ Jimmy Mangayarra, dictated, 16-11-97, Men's secret place, Fieldnote No.4.

²²² Jimmy Mangayarra, Tape 45, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

Aboriginal people. In the same way as the *karu* [children] dreaming followed me all the way to Japan,²²³ the Dreaming punishes you whoever you are, if you profane *mangaya*.

Old Jimmy used to work at Limbunya station as a stockworker during the 'Vestey time'. One day, a *kartiya* dug into the ground near his house at Limbunya station (for burying the petrol tank underground?). However, by digging the ground, he profaned *mangaya* without knowing it. The next morning when he woke up, he saw many *piriki* [maggots] coming out of ground. This *kartiya* got sick and died. Soon after his death, a fire rose from the ground and burnt his house as well as his body.²²⁴ This episode seems to be related to the fire that burnt down Limbunya mechanic store in 1961. According to the police report, a person called Anthony John Perry was burnt and killed by this fire.²²⁵

There are two different cultural interpretations this event. From an academic historical perspective, the fire was probably the consequence of human activities. But the Gurindji historians see it as the result of the interaction between humans and the Dreaming. Although an academic cannot present the story of "the Dreaming punished the pastoralist" as historical 'fact', a cross-cultural historian should try to see an historical 'reality/factuality' in the Gurindji's story: it is factual that Limbunya has been a country of many important Dreaming sites. It is a fact that settlers did not care about these sites when they used the land. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude the 'reality' of the explanation that the fire at the Limbunya station was a punishment wrought by the Dreaming.

7.4. *Ngumpin* and Cattle in the Bush

The Gurindji people's activities in the bush, and thus their communication with the country, continued through their history. Furthermore, the Gurindji people's

²²³ See Chap.1.

²²⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 45, 9-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

²²⁵ NTAS F292 *Police Station - WAVE HILL (Commonwealth)*, Police Journals 1916-1977. 13-9-1961.

interaction with cattle was not restricted to their stockwork. In this section of Chapter 7, I explore how *ngumpin* made their connection with foreign animals *not at the station, but in the bush*.

7.4.1. 'Japarta buluki-waji'

McGrath argues, "With the totemic system so important in Aboriginal life, it would be expected that cattle would eventually be incorporated in song cycles or dreamtime stories, like all other animals occurring in their country."²²⁶ Although I share similar expectations with McGrath, cattle are not yet part of Dreaming in the Gurindji country. The Gurindji historians instead have the clear idea that *kartiya* brought cattle to their country.

Jimmy Mangayarri said to me, "no *buluki* [cattle] dreaming. *Kartiya* bin bring'em up this country."²²⁷ Old Jimmy differentiates between two different types of animals: kangaroo, goanna or emu are 'on history', but cattle, horse and camel are 'not on history'; "you never see history belonga bullock."²²⁸

According to Old Jimmy, the first cattle appeared in his country from Seven Mile Creek. This indicates that cattle appeared from east of Jimmy's country (Limbunya). This story roughly corresponds to the documentary evidence which states that the first stock arrived in the area from Queensland in May 1883, and thousands of cattle were brought from Queensland in the following years.²²⁹

The first *ngumpin* who ate cattle was called 'japarta buluki-waji' – 'japarta' is a skin name [subsection name], and '-waji' is the suffix for agent. Thus, it means 'cattle-man whose skin name is japarta'. He speared a cow and killed it. He wanted to see what its meat tasted like, "maybe *punyu* [good], maybe *wankaj* [bad]". He made a fire and cooked the cattle meat.

²²⁶ McGrath 1987a:149.

²²⁷ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

²²⁸ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 17, 28-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Tape 22, 2-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.

²²⁹ Buchanan 1997:Chap.12; Buchanan 1933:70.

He tried it..... "good *ngarin* [meat]!"

This *japarta* told *ngumpin* that this foreign animal had good meat. This was how *ngumpin* started to 'steal' cattle from *kartiya*. As I already discussed, Old Jimmy explained that *kartiya* did not like *ngumpin* 'stealing' cattle because cattle came with *kartiya* and belonged to *kartiya*, and naturally it caused violent conflict between *ngumpin* and *kartiya*.

7.4.2. The question of cattle killings

In order to understand the cultural and historical meaning of cattle for Aboriginal people, it is crucial to note that Old Jimmy explained the reason behind cattle killing was to eat the cattle's tasty meat.

In fact, Old Jimmy's historical analysis is quite different from academic historians' discussion about the cattle killings. For example, McGrath explains that Aboriginal people speared cattle because it was 'one of the most effective means of resistance.'²³⁰ She writes, "While Europeans were frustrated by Aboriginal 'lawlessness', blacks were undoubtedly infuriated by the settlers' wastage of natural food resources, total disregard for sacred sites and the pollution and depletion of waterholes."²³¹ However, this part of her work is based on documentary evidence with a settler's perspective, not on Aboriginal oral accounts.²³² May's argument is more radical. She writes, "While in some instances the killing of stock proved an additional source of food, there is clear evidence out of the district (Queensland) that in many cases Aboriginal attacks were aimed at driving Europeans out of the district." But her 'clear evidence' is also drawn from historical documents.²³³ On the history of the Gurindji country, the Daguragu Land Claim Book also says, "by 1886, cattle killing as a response to invasion had begun in earnest", but again this statement is based on

²³⁰ McGrath 1987a:13.

²³¹ McGrath 1987a:16.

²³² McGrath 1987a:13-16, 180.

²³³ May 1994:38.

documentary evidence.²³⁴

Old Jimmy said *ngumpin* killed cattle because it provided tasty meat, not because they wanted to demonstrate their agitation against *kartiya*. During my fieldwork, I never heard anyone saying that they killed cattle in order to fight against *kartiya*.

Was killing cattle really an act of 'resistance'?

It could be true that for Aboriginal people, defending the waterholes was crucial for both economic and cultural reasons.²³⁵ It is also obvious that the introduction of cattle rapidly changed soils and plants, which caused economic crises in Aboriginal societies.²³⁶ However, what if Aboriginal people's purpose was not 'resistance' but simply the desire to ensure their food supply and take opportunities to eat 'good *ngarin*'?

When I saw the Gurindji people's attitude towards animals -- regardless of whether they are 'on history' or 'not on history' -- I could not picture Aboriginal people killing animals not for eating but for 'resistance'. The Gurindji people are very friendly toward cattle, horses and many other animals. While driving around the country, they often wave their hands and call out to cattle, donkeys or horses. When cattle sitting on the road, the way they disperse them -- shouting at them to move away -- is quite similar to the way they act toward relatively domesticated community dogs. When we visited one of the Dreaming waterholes, they explained to me without any hesitation that *kurraj* [rainbow snake] lived there and bullock came to drink water.²³⁷ These episodes remind me of what McGrath writes, "they acknowledge the ecological damage done by cattle and buffalo, and try to prevent them fouling sacred sites, but are basically tolerant of them."²³⁸

Did they really kill animals only to show their agitation towards

²³⁴ McConvell and Hagen 1981:85-86.

²³⁵ McGrath 1987a:6-9.

²³⁶ Rose 1996:Chap.7.

²³⁷ Kelly Smiler and other young men, dictated, 21-7-97, Matt Spring, Fieldnote No.1.

settlers? Although specifying only 'station blacks' not 'bush blacks', McGrath writes, "they do not view them [cattle] as a symbol of European usurpation of their lands, but are calmly accepting of their presence. The Aborigines' relatively non-aggressive attitude to indigenous animals (in the sense that they rarely kill for 'sport') now extends to the non-indigenous."²³⁹ Deborah Rose also told me that an Aboriginal person said to her that cattle had done nothing wrong. It was whitefella who held responsibility for Australian colonisation.²⁴⁰

It is possible that Aboriginal people's attitude to cattle changed through history. Old Jimmy's perspective may be just a 'present view of the past'. They may have been aggressive towards cattle as much as they were towards settlers in the earlier stages of colonisation. We do not know. However, at the same time, the Gurindji historians' perspective suggests that we may need to take a more critical approach towards historical documents.

The documents used for the evidence of cattle killing as 'resistance' were mostly written and reported by pastoralists and police. We should not forget that they were the people who tried to 'clean up' or 'keep out' Aboriginal people especially in the earlier stages of colonisation. It is reasonable to assume that they exaggerated the number of cattle killings, or even made up the story of Aboriginal people killing cattle not for food but for 'resistance'. Why would they do this? Of course, in order to justify their 'reprisals'.

7.4.3. Walkabout economy

The Gurindji people's strong commitment to their country continued even after they started to work for cattle stations. In particular, 'holiday time' or walkabout season became crucial periods for the station *ngumpin* to intensively interact with their countries.

The pastoral industry in northern Australia was regulated by the dry-wet seasonal cycle, so most Aboriginal stockworkers were laid off temporarily during the rainy season. For example, the following figure shows a case study

²³⁸ McGrath 1987a:149-150.

²³⁹ McGrath 1987a:149.

²⁴⁰ Personal communication with Deborah B. Rose.

of Wave Hill station in 1952-1953. It indicates that while the same number of female workers were constantly employed throughout the year, the number of male workers varied considerably according to the season. We can infer that while Aboriginal female workers were employed for the domestic jobs at the homestead, and thus worked continuously for the whole year, men in stockwork were concentrated only in the dry season, and then they were on annual holiday. It is well known that, during the lay-off period, most Aboriginal people (male and female) left the station and returned to the bush for hunting and gathering, visiting neighbours, and holding ceremonies. I defined this as the 'walkabout economy' in my previous study of the Aboriginal economy in the pastoral area.²⁴¹

It is true that this 'walkabout economy' was ultimately subordinated to the 'pastoral economy'. Rowse argues that the models of 'internal colonialism' and 'articulation of mode of production' are more appropriate than McGrath's exposition of the 'dual economy'²⁴² – yet this is only if one aims to show the logic of pastoral capitalism.

The Gurindji historians do not think that *ngumpin* were exploited by *kartiya* during the 'holiday time'. The Gurindji's historical view is probably quite similar to the notion of 'dual economy'. For example, Mick Rangiari said they used to 'live on *kartiya* food' at the station, then 'live on bush tucker' during the 'holiday time'.²⁴³ I was never told that the Gurindji people lived on bush tucker because *kartiya* did not feed them.

Today, even though most of the community food supply comes from a shop, bush tucker has higher priority than *kartiya* food. This is not just true of the elders; while living in Gurindji country, I was mostly asked by younger people to go hunting, fishing and gathering. When we were collecting *muyung* [*Vitex glabrata*, or 'bush plum']²⁴⁴, Teresa Yibcin told me an excellent analogy that bush tucker is good food because it 'come up from sun', but *kartiya* food is

²⁴¹ Hokari 1996a:23-24; 1996c:Chap.5.

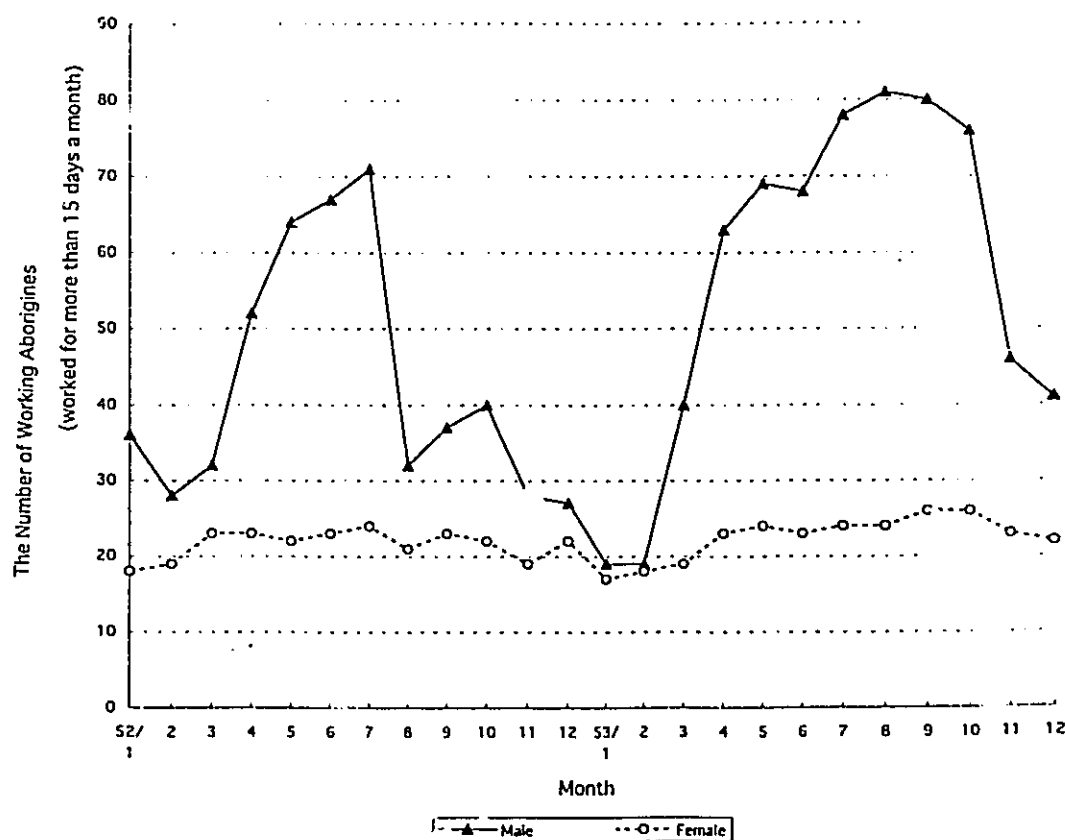
²⁴² Rowse 1988b:72. See also, McGrath 1987a:153-160.

²⁴³ Mick Rangiari, Tape 40, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

²⁴⁴ Wightman et. al. 1994:54-55.

	52/1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Male	36	28	32	52	64	67	71	32	37	40	28	27
Female	18	19	23	23	22	23	24	21	23	22	19	22

	53/1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Male	19	19	40	63	69	68	78	81	80	76	46	41
Female	17	18	19	23	24	23	24	24	26	26	23	22



Sources:

"Employment of Aboriginals in the Pastoral Industry, Wave Hill Station"
in AA. F1 52/736., AA. F1 53/674.

Figure 7.1. Number of Aboriginal workers at Wave Hill station (1952-53)

bad because it 'come from fridge'.²⁴⁵ Mick Rangiarri said during the 'holiday time', *ngumpin* ate good food because they 'find'em bush tucker, live on bush tucker'.²⁴⁶ Many people liked to tell me with great pride about what kinds of bush tucker they hunted and gathered during the holiday time; kangaroo, goanna, porcupine, crocodile, emu, fish, snake, turtle, sugarbag, bush plum, bush banana, bush yam...²⁴⁷

The 'walkabout economy' was not just the 'survival economy' during the wet season, but it was also the 'cultural economy' that gave them the opportunity to interact with bush tucker, and thus with their country. Bush tucker is not just food, but 'cultural' food which is 'on history' (Old Jimmy), or 'come up from the sun' (Teresa). Bush tucker has Dreaming stories and songs, and therefore has a direct connection to their country. This is what I mean by 'cultural economy' – that *ngumpin* and bush tucker have kept a dialectic relationship through the Dreaming geography over the countries. Hunting and gathering bush tucker is fundamentally different from buying *kartiya* food. Likewise, eating bush tucker is fundamentally different from eating *kartiya* food. *Ngumpin* buy and eat *kartiya* food because they are hungry, but they hunt, gather, fish and eat bush tucker not only out of hunger, but more importantly, because this is one of the ways of communicating with their countries.

7.4.4. Food supply and ceremonies

However, were they really well fed only by bush tucker during the 'holiday time'? This question should be raised not only because ecological conditions had been changed by the cattle grazing over the country, but also because, as the Berndts already found in the 1940s, Aboriginal employees "tended to lose some of their skills in hunting and food-collecting."²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Teresa Yiboin, dictated, 2-1-99, Matt Spring, Fieldnote No.5.

²⁴⁶ Mick Rangiarri, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

²⁴⁷ For example, Nugget Gordon, dictated, 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0; Tommy Wajabungu, dictated, 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0; Mick Inverway, Tape 2, 20-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-Aug-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Mick Rangiarri, Tape 40, 22-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

²⁴⁸ Berndt and Berndt 1987:75.

Although the Gurindji elders emphasised that there had been plenty of bush tucker in their country and they used to 'live on bush tucker' during their walkabout, they did not deny that they had also received 'holiday ration' from the station.²⁴⁹ According to the Berndts, in 1944 at Wave Hill station, 'walkabout rations', which were officially supposed to last them for a month "consisted of half a bag of flour (twenty-five pounds), eight pounds of sugar, one pound of tea, one tin of baking powder, twelve sticks of tobacco, one handkerchief, and three boxes of matches ... Dissatisfaction was at its highest at that time, when they received what they regarded as the result of their year's labour..."²⁵⁰ Mick Rangiari said that the ration was so little that they soon finished it and had to rely on bush tucker.²⁵¹ It was probably the case that, as McGrath points out, "'walkabout supplies' were used up near the station before the real travel began."²⁵²

Before discussing another method of food supply during the walkabout season, let us shift our focus from food to ceremony. When I asked the elders about the 'holiday time', they told me mainly about their bush tucker hunting, but they also talked about the ceremonies they had in the bush.

During the 'Vestey time', *ngumpin* were not allowed to hold *business* [ceremony] while working for *kartiya* in the dry season. Naturally, they had to practice lots of *business* during the 'holiday time'.²⁵³ Victor Vincent described that it was a 'good holiday' walking around the country, using foot and spear wherever you go. Then, when *business* started, they made a 'big camp' in the bush, and held big ceremony.²⁵⁴ As Stanly Sambo said, "whitefella don't care land, (but) blackfella take care land."²⁵⁵ I probably do not need to explore how important it is to hold initiation and many other ceremonies to keep the

²⁴⁹ Victor Vincent, dictated, 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0; Mick Inverway, Tape 2, 20-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Mick Rangiari, Tape 26, 11-10-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁵⁰ Berndt and Berndt 1987:70.

²⁵¹ Mick Rangiari, Tape 26, 11-10-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁵² McGrath 1987a:159.

²⁵³ Mick Rangiari, Tape 26, 11-10-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁵⁴ Victor Vincent, dictated, 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

²⁵⁵ Stanly Sambo, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

connection with the country as well as to meet people from different places and exchange information. These have already been emphasised and well argued by anthropologists and historians.²⁵⁶

I would rather explore the meaning of cattle during 'holiday time'. If the 'walkabout ration' was consumed near the station, how did they manage to collect enough food in the bush after such ecological damage as well as the loss of their hunting skills? It is not difficult to assume that food would have been more difficult to supply, especially at times when they held a ceremony because more of the population gathers at one place.

Naturally, they stole cattle. The Gurindji elders did not often tell me about stealing cattle during 'holiday time'. This was probably because they knew their act was an offence. Roy Yunga once told me that they sometimes killed cattle and ate at the bush camp. When they finished eating, they threw the bones into the river; "next year, *kartiya* find camp, but no bone (no evidence)."²⁵⁷ I believe cattle meat greatly contributed to the holding of a 'big ceremony' during the walkabout season. In the earlier stages, its contribution was perhaps limited to supplying enough food to the participants of the ceremony. However, cattle was not just food. I could not tell when this started, but I often participated in ceremonies where beef 'fat' was used for the purpose of medication or sorcery.

Today, securing enough beef to supply the ceremony is one of the important concerns among the Gurindji elders. They spend a lot of money to buy a huge amount of beef for the ceremonies.

As I discussed, cattle are not (yet) a part of Dreaming. Nevertheless, cattle meat has become an essential part of their ceremonial practice. Even though *ngumpin* left the station, and were physically and culturally separated from *kartiya* during the 'holiday time', *ngumpin* did not lose their connection with cattle for the whole year.

²⁵⁶ See, for example, McGrath 1987a:38, 158; Rose 1992:20; Meggitt 1955:45-50; Riddett 1985:206.

²⁵⁷ Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

6.5. Vestey Time and the New Generation

What was the relationship between the Aboriginal workers and the Vestey mob, or European pastoralists? Again, I do not have to discuss this issue at length as there have already been many studies and reports about 'how badly Aboriginal people were treated by white pastoralists'. Furthermore, the Gurindji 'walk-off' campaign produced many newspaper and magazine articles related to this issue, particularly about the Aboriginal situation at Wave Hill station.²⁵⁸

Providing nothing very new but similar stories to previous publications, in this section of Chapter 6, I aim to confirm that the Gurindji's historical perspective of the Vestey mob has not changed from the time of the walk-off until today.

6.5.1. 'Hungry time': working for *kartiya*

Before the walk-off, it was a 'hungry time'. The phrase 'hungry time' was given by a Gurindji woman, Violet Donald, while we were collecting bush fruits near Kalkaringi, and later fishing at Ten Mile waterhole.²⁵⁹ According to Violet, 'hungry time' started when *kartiya* came to the Gurindji country and ended when the Gurindji walked off from Jimparrak [Wave Hill station].

Before *kartiya* came to the Gurindji country, *ngumpin* lived on bush tucker, and they were not hungry. It was a 'bush time', or as she also called it: 'bush *tanku* [well fed]'. However, when *ngumpin* started work for *kartiya*, 'hungry time' began. In 'hungry time', only *kartiya* were *tanku* and *ngumpin* were hungry.²⁶⁰ *Ngumpin* worked for *kartiya*, but they worked for nothing: "(we used to) live like *warlaku* [dog]. ... *Kartiya* bin treat us wrong way."²⁶¹ When Violet was telling the story of 'hungry time', she was criticising the food situation in the cattle station. 'Hungry time' was more localised in the cattle

²⁵⁸ See Chap.5.

²⁵⁹ Violet Donald, dictated, 19-9-97, near Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.3; Violet Donald, dictated, 21-9-97, Ten Mile Waterhole, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁶⁰ Violet Donald, dictated, 19-9-97, near Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁶¹ Violet Donald, dictated, 21-9-97, Ten Mile Waterhole, Fieldnote No.3.

stations than the bush. Although it is evident that the introduction of cattle had a destructive impact on the ecological system,²⁶² it seems that the rations received from the station were much smaller than the food provided by bush tucker (and cattle they secretly killed) during the 'walkabout' season.



Plate 6.4. Violet Donald, 1997

People in Daguragu often told me how little food they received from the station. It was almost a fixed action and phrase among the Gurindji – forming a scoop with their hands and saying, “little bit of sugar, flour, meat, tea,

²⁶² Rose 1996:Chap.7.

tobacco... that's all!"²⁶³ Mick Rangiarri explained that after they received rations on Friday, they finished it in two days and had to live on river water. There was also not enough bush tucker to be found around the station.²⁶⁴

These stories certainly correspond to the Berndts' report. The Berndts describe the food supply in Wave Hill station in the following way: "the weekly amount for each adult was two or three pounds of white flour, sometimes with rising (to those requesting it); one half to one pound of sugar (often less), to which was added a small handful of tea (under one ounce); and one stick of tobacco (to those requesting it)."²⁶⁵ When it came to meat distribution, Aboriginal employees received a certain amount of meat, but their dependants received only bones and offal. And this 'already meagre quantity of rations' was "spread out over an even greater number than originally intended."²⁶⁶ The Berndts' conclusion was that the amount of food from the station "was not sufficient to maintain a person in good health". Furthermore, during the working season, "there was no appreciable opportunity for anyone living on the station to look for 'bush tucker'... (they) had no time for such activities."²⁶⁷

The Gurindji people worked hard for *kartiya*, but the Vestey mob never recognised the Aboriginal contribution to their business. Here is another fairly fixed phrase they often said to me: "we bin work for Vestey, made'm rich. We work for nothing, no money!"²⁶⁸ Stockwork was certainly very hard work, but it

²⁶³ For example, Stanly Sambo and Roger Yiriwa, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Tommy Wajabungu, dictated 14-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6; Mick Rangiarri, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6; Steven Long, dictated, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6; Pater Raymond and several old women, dictated, 15-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

²⁶⁴ Mick Rangiarri, Tape 26, 11-10-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁶⁵ Berndt and Berndt 1987:72-73. Berndts' research in Wave Hill station was done in 1944. The medical survey conducted in Wave Hill station in 1953 also shows a similar amount of rations. It shows there was not much improvement of Aboriginal rations after the Berndts' report. See "Report on the Medical Survey of the Wave Hill Station, July, 1953" in NAA (Darwin), F1 1952/736.

²⁶⁶ Berndt and Berndt 1987:73-74.

²⁶⁷ Berndt and Berndt 1987:75.

²⁶⁸ Stanly Sambo and Roger Yiriwa, Tape 1, 19-J6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Tommy

seems to me that the worst part of it was not the stockwork itself but the way *kartiya* treated *ngumpin*. Even though they emphasised to me how 'hard' the stockwork was, it was clear that they were rather proud of it; it was not really a complaint. Instead, what they agitated about was that *kartiya* did not give them enough food, enough money, and enough respect. The younger generation, who are now middle aged, also gave me another example of this treatment: *kartiya* never let *ngumpin* sit in the front seat of a truck. Even it was raining, *ngumpin* always had to sit in the back of a truck and get wet.²⁶⁹

During my research in the Gurindji country, I was told that only Alex Moray was a good Vestey man.²⁷⁰ In general, literally everybody said to me that Vestey mob was 'bad': Vesteys did not like *ngumpin*, did not trust *ngumpin*, and *ngumpin* never liked Vesteys.²⁷¹ The notion of 'Vesteys, the bad mob' could have been exaggerated through the Gurindji walk-off campaign. However, it was also clear to me that the Gurindji people did not remember, or did not think it was worth telling me about, any exceptional friendly relationship with the Vestey mob, even if there was one.

6.5.2. (Not) visiting Jimparrak

A young couple Noeleen Morris and Rodney Bernard said to me that old people did not want to visit Jimparrak [Wave Hill station] because of their traumatic memories.²⁷² When one considers the Gurindji cultural and historical geography, it is important to know that, for elders, Jimparrak has become a location of not-willing-to-visit. Eventually, Victor Vincent, a son of Vincent

Wajabungu, dictated, 14-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6; Dandy Danbayarri, Tape, 47, 12-3-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.6; Stanly Sambo, Tape 48, 15-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6. See also, Rose 1991:Chap.17.

²⁶⁹ Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Stanly Sambo, Tape 48, 15-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

²⁷⁰ See Chap.5. See also, Hardy 1968:30, McGrath 1987a:141.

²⁷¹ For example, Stanly Sambo and Roger Yiriwa, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Harry George and Stanly Sambo, Tape 5, 26-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Peanut Pontiarri, Tape 31, 20-Dec-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4; Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

Lingiari, took me to Jimparrak. He showed me, for example, how *ngumpin* workers received food from the kitchen and carried it to the tree near the creek – *ngumpin* were not allowed to eat inside the kitchen. Since the wind from the south was so cold, they made a stone wall around the southern part of the tree. Victor was moved when he realised that the tree and the ruins of the stone wall were still there.²⁷³



Plate 6.5. Ruins of the stone wall at Jimparrak, 1997

He also pointed out to me roughly where the Aboriginal camps had been. The Aboriginal camp sites and the Wave Hill homestead were divided by the creek. Victor emphasised there were no houses but only humpies for *ngumpin*. He also told me how hard it was to carry water the long distance from the bore to their camp.²⁷⁴ The problem of carrying water was also described by some other

²⁷² Noeleen Morris and Rodney Bernard, dictated, 25-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

²⁷³ Victor Vincent, Tape 11, 10-8-97, Jimparrak, Fieldnote No.2.

²⁷⁴ Victor Vincent, Tape 11, 10-8-97, Jimparrak, Fieldnote No.2.

people in Daguragu.²⁷⁵ In 1947, the report explained it as follows: "Water is obtained from a bore half a mile away and has to be carried up a grade to the camp." According to this report, a director of the Native Affairs Branch discussed improvements to the Aboriginal camp with the manager which included, "detailing someone to pay attention to the camp sanitation and hygiene, the provision of washing facilities, the making of water more readily available..." The manager agreed with all of these suggestions, but the reporter doubted if he would implement any of them.²⁷⁶



Plate 6.6. Victor Vincent visting Jimparrak 1997

²⁷⁵ Stanly Sambo and Roger Yiriwa, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Steven Long, dictated, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6

²⁷⁶ 'Native Situation at Wave Hill' (1947) in NAA (Darwin) F1 1946/450

Ill-treatment of Aborigines. Similar discussions can be found in "Native Affairs Branch Report on Inspection Aborigines (Pastoral Industry) Regulations 1918-1947 Wave Hill Station", in NAA (Darwin), F1 1952/736; "Report on Patrol Western Stations Alice Springs, 29th June, 1945" in NAA (Darwin), F1 1944/275; "Report on Medical Survey of the Wave Hill Station, July 1953" in NAA (Darwin), F1 1952/736.

Ngumpin had been waiting for help to change the situation for a long time. Later, President Kennedy from 'Big America' came to Wave Hill to show his support for *ngumpin*. Then, Sandy Moray organised to realise his plan of regaining their country from Vestey's. When the Gurindji walk-off started, unionists from 'union country' also supported *ngumpin* fighting against the Vestey mob. Prime Minister Gough Whitlam came to Daguragu to hand over the Gurindji country.

The Gurindji 'walk-off' happened, and then the 'New Generation' started.

6.5.3. 'New Generation': happy time, citizen time

After telling me the episode of the Gurindji walk-off, Mick Rangiari said, "Today, we are happy, we got money, we are citizen."²⁷⁸ Kennedy Ricky, a middle aged man called today 'citizen time': In 'olden time', Vestey man never trusted *ngumpin* and *ngumpin* were hungry all the time. However, Kennedy continued, "we (did) walk-off. We got citizen time." In citizen time, *ngumpin* can drive *modiga* [car], have money to buy a rifle. But most importantly, "we got place, community to live."²⁷⁹

I was attending a men's ceremony at the secret place near Daguragu in September, still during the dry season. Billy Bunter and Mick Rangiari explained to me that *ngumpin* could not hold a ceremony during the working period (dry season), but could only afford to do it in the short period of the holiday time, or walkabout season. But "now, we are free to do *business* [ceremony] anytime."²⁸⁰ Stanly Sambo's comment was simple and clear: "Today, (we live) more better. That's why we bin walk-off."²⁸¹

From the Gurindji perspective, the 'walk-off' returned their country, the 'walk-off' made them become 'citizens', and thus the 'walk-off' ousted Vestey's from their country and brought *ngumpin* emancipation from working

²⁷⁸ Mick Rangiari, Tape 27, 11-10-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁷⁹ Kenedy Ricky, dictated, 14-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

²⁸⁰ Billy Bunter and Mick Rangiari, dictated, 27-9-97, Men's secret place, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁸¹ Stanly Sambo, Tape 48, 15-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

for *kartiya*, as well as enough food, money and also, ideally, racial equality.

The Gurindji people who I talked with generally agree with the idea that '*kartiya* and *ngumpin* (should) live together, work together'.²⁸² In fact, it is quite a contrast to the Gurindji elders' original plan during the 'walk-off'. According to Jack Doolan, when Vincent Lingiari was asked how many white advisers he needed for running the community and cattle station, he answered 'none'.²⁸³ While I was in Daguragu, I never heard statements about keeping out every *kartiya* from their country. They may have changed their view of *kartiya* after receiving so much support from them. Or what Old Vincent may have meant was that he did not want any *kartiya* related to the Vestey mob who never wanted to work together with *ngumpin*.

I also want to note here that the Gurindji people today see that *ngumpin* are still 'behind *kartiya* government'. Although race relations are much better than before the 'walk-off', *ngumpin* and *kartiya* are not yet equal. Billy Bunter complained that the government told them about self-determination, "but always we are behind the government."²⁸⁴ He sees that this *ngumpin* situation is not only found in Australia. Although acknowledging people like the Chinese, Indians and Africans still retain their strong cultures, Billy said, "*kartiya* way everywhere (in the world)".²⁸⁵ Mick Rangiari also said to me, "we are still behind the government. Government don't want us go front."²⁸⁶ These statements by the Gurindji elders reminded me of Dipesh Chakrabarty's argument about a 'hyperreal Europe'.²⁸⁷ Today, we all have no way of separating ourselves from '*kartiya* way' on this globe.

7.5. New Generation: Before and After

While the Gurindji elders told me how 'hard' the 'Vestey time' was, they also emphasised that the *ngumpin* law was much stronger at that time compared to

²⁸² See also, Rose 1991:Chap.27.

²⁸³ Doolan 1977:110.

²⁸⁴ Billy Bunter, dictated, 16-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.5.

²⁸⁵ Billy Bunter, dictated, 2-11-97, Men's secret place, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁸⁶ Mick Rangiari, Tape 6, 30-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

today. This probably sounds contradictory: they start the walk-off project in order to regain autonomy and sovereignty. What happened to sovereignty? The fifth section for Chapter 7 explores the Gurindji people's idea of the 'ngumpin way' before and after the 'walk-off'.

7.5.1. Strong law

For the elders, stories from early days are the evidence that the *ngumpin* law was stronger than today. They tell these 'early days' stories to young people and try to pull them back to the *ngumpin* way. Elders say with great pride that they used to move around the country by foot, and never used a car.²⁸⁸ Or, they say they used a spear for hunting instead of a rifle.²⁸⁹ Today babies are born at the hospital, but they used to be born in the bush.²⁹⁰ In 'olden time', *ngumpin* did not go to a *kartiya* school, but learned more about the *ngumpin* law. Young people today go to the *kartiya* school and read books, but they are not following the *ngumpin* way anymore.²⁹¹ During the 'Vestey time', young men were not allowed to even look at young women at the camp.²⁹² Although Roy Yunga told me the way that cheating old men and met girls in the bush outside the station camp, he also admitted that the law of promised wife was more strict in 'olden time'.²⁹³

Old Jimmy said to me, "When I was young, one bloke bin broke the (*ngumpin*) law. He (got) killed, *tanpang* [dead], got spear(ed). Family can't

²⁸⁷ Chakrabarty 1992.

²⁸⁸ For example, Billy Bunter, dictated, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; dictated, 20-9-97, while driving to Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3; Ronnie Wave Hill, dictated, 14-11-97, Men's secret place, Fieldnote No.4.

²⁸⁹ Victor Vincent, dictated, 15-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0; Mick Inverway, dictated, 17-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0; Tape 2, 20-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1; Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Billy Bunter, dictated, 20-9-97, while driving to Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3.

²⁹⁰ Stanly Sambo, Tape 48, 15-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

²⁹¹ Roy Yunga, Tape 36, 4-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5;

²⁹² Billy Bunter, dictated, 4-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5; Jimmy Wave Hill, dictated, 19-3-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.6.

²⁹³ Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

help'em. He broke the law... Proper hard way... When I was young, *malaluka* [elders] like that..."²⁹⁴ At a meeting among elders, I heard someone say, "we live on too much *kartiya* way today."²⁹⁵ Billy Bunter also said: "Before 66 [walk-off], law very strong..."²⁹⁶

7.5.2. Grog comin' up

The Gurindji elders told me that *ngumpin* started drinking grog [alcohol] 'after walk-off'; "Today, bad kidney. Too much grog."²⁹⁷

Old Jimmy views alcohol as (if it is?) a living being. He explained that grog (along with card playing) belongs to *kaya*. He could actually see *kaya* inside the bottle of beer: "You can see the shadow, *kaya* shadow."²⁹⁸ Grog is "no history on this country. .. He [grog] get out life from everybody. ... He kill'em everybody."²⁹⁹ When you drink grog or play cards, *kaya* speak to you, "go on, go on, com'on mate!" You play cards or drink grog all day and night. *Kaya* makes you 'go bush [crazy]'.³⁰⁰ He also said to me, "Drink grog make'm fight everywhere, no good all together. ... Before Keen Lewis [Jacky Pantamarra], we live good life. No grog, no fighting at that time. ... People live on proper food."³⁰¹

Old Jimmy also explained the process of grog invasion in the *ngumpin* countries; Jacky Pantamarra brought grog from 'England' to *ngumpin* country.³⁰² Grog first came down to towns such as Halls Creek, Wyndam, and Darwin. Then, 'slowly bring up every station'.³⁰³ When Old Jimmy was a young man, he was camping in the bush and saw a woman drinking grog

²⁹⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated, 28-11-97, Men's secret place, Fieldnote No.4.

²⁹⁵ Speaker unknown, dictated, 15-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.5.

²⁹⁶ Billy Bunter, dictated, 4-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

²⁹⁷ Jimmy Wave Hill, dictated, 19-3-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.6. Also, Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2; Stanly Sambo, Tape 48, 15-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

²⁹⁸ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 17, 28-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

²⁹⁹ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 39, 18-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

³⁰⁰ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 17, 28-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

³⁰¹ Jimmy Mangayarri, dictated, 26-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.

³⁰² See Chap.4.

everyday. In front of him, this woman sprouted horns and hair grew on her body – she became *kaya*. Old Jimmy told me, “I bin fuck’n frighten!”³⁰⁴

Since Daguragu Community Council Government started to operate a social club at Kalkaringi in 1998, community problems rapidly increased; violence and abuse among families, breaking into shops or a clinic and stealing things, smashing windows of a school and a town council, or breaking into a recreation hall or CDEP office and destroying community property. The community members agreed most of these cases were done by young people, and the acts were directly or indirectly related to alcohol consumption.

There was a series of meetings to discuss these problems among the elders. However, when the community council offered a plan to remove community facilities from Daguragu to Kalkaringi for security reasons, the elders became more serious and were firmly against the plan. Old men, women, and young people as well as a town clerk and other council members all gathered at Daguragu to discuss this issue.

There, Billy Bunter, a member of *ngumpin* elders³⁰⁵ represented the pride of *malaluka* [elders] or ‘walk-off mob’. He was unusually aggressive and shouted, “I don’t wanna die out the history, walk-off story!” He continued, if we gave up having offices in Daguragu, “that’s *minirri* [shame]. People think Gurindji nomo [not] strong enough. ... I really worry about culture slow down. Gurindji get very bad news. People think we can’t control property. ... I bin think of history we bin fight for. We had hard time for [against] government, (but) now we had hard time for own people.” Then, Billy shared his experience of protecting Daguragu community when Vestey men came to Daguragu with rifles. He concluded; “We bin fight for this land!”³⁰⁶

The elders showed their support for Billy’s talk, and the idea of shifting offices from Daguragu to Kalkaringi was shelved.

³⁰³ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 39, 18-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

³⁰⁴ Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 17, 28-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

³⁰⁵ Billy is also a member of the Daguragu Community Government Council.

³⁰⁶ Billy Bunter, dictated, 19-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.



Plate 7.10. Billy Bunter, 1997

7.5.3. Young people and their prospects

The Gurindji elders are worried about the younger generation. Using sand drawing, Billy Bunter explained their situation to me:

He drew lines in opposite directions representing *ngumpin* way and *kartiya* way. Then put a circle in the middle indicating young people who could not go either way; “not go *kartiya* way to end, not go *ngumpin* way to end.

They don't know which way to go."³⁰⁷ He often said to me that young people today were 'stuck in the middle' between *kartiya* way and *ngumpin* way.³⁰⁸ Young people break both *ngumpin* law and *kartiya* law.³⁰⁹ He explained to me that 'olden time' was a hard time but *ngumpin* kept strong law. Today, young people were 'stuck in the middle'; "that's why we teach'em *business* [ceremonies], show them early days", and the elders are trying 'to put the old law back.'³¹⁰

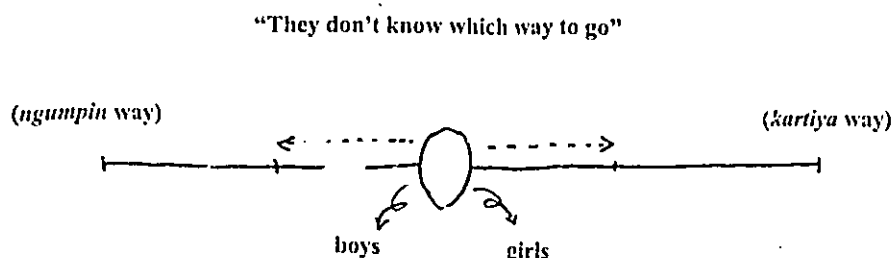


Figure 7.2. Billy's sand drawing

When ceremonies started, I never saw any participants – young or old – drunk. Ceremonies certainly give elders the opportunity to teach young people the *ngumpin* way as well as tell them histories from the 'olden time'. It is also true that the elders are not very keen about Western education and sometimes even complain that the *kartiya* school takes young people away from the *ngumpin* way. However, at the same time, the elders generally agree that young people should learn and use both the *ngumpin* way and the *kartiya* way. At the community today, literally everybody wants more money to buy *kartiya* food, a rifle, an axe, and a car. No one wants to live in humpies anymore. The elders and young people both seemed very happy and proud when the Daguragu football team won a game. They want both the *kartiya* and *ngumpin* ways under

³⁰⁷ Billy Bunter, dictated, 2-11-97, Docker River, Fieldnote No.3.

³⁰⁸ Billy Bunter, dictated, 20-9-97, while driving to Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3; dictated, 2-11-97, Docker River, Fieldnote No.3; Tape 36, 4-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

³⁰⁹ Billy Bunter, Tape 36, 4-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

³¹⁰ Billy Bunter, dictated, while driving to Daguragu, 20-9-97, Fieldnote No.3; Tape 36, 4-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

their control.

Billy Bunter is highly respected by people in Daguragu and Kalkaringi because he knows both the *ngumpin* way and *kartiya* way. Since he had a Western education, he can read and write English, and thus he has been an important representative in the Daguragu community from the time of 'walk-off'.³¹¹ Billy said to me that he has been a 'spokesman'.³¹² However, it should be noted that he is respected by community people not simply because he knows how to write and read, but because he also practises the *ngumpin* way very actively. He is certainly an important figure in organising and running ceremonies as well. After telling me that learning the *ngumpin* way is lifetime work, he humbly said, "for old people, I'm still child. Old people, they know every stor' and dance. .. I'm blind. I know *kartiya* way, but it's nothing for me. Aboriginal way first, *kartiya* way behind. Proper work [council job] nothing for me. *Kartiya* way (is) too light..."³¹³

I understood their fundamental question was how to integrate the *ngumpin* way and *kartiya* way in order to operate their community effectively as well as keep their country alive and strong. I personally did not fully agree with Billy's view of young people 'stuck in the middle'. To me, they were trying to establish their identity as '*ngumpin* of the New Generation', and were struggling to find a way to create the 'third way' out of *ngumpin* and *kartiya* ways. However, this is not the focus of my study this time. As a student of the Gurindji historians, I would like to close their teachings by quoting Jimmy Mangayarri. I believe this statement tells us something terribly important about history and the future:

"You never kill history. (If) you break it, history kill you."³¹⁴

³¹¹ Billy Bunter appears in Hardy's *Unlucky Australians* as a school teacher at Wattie Creek: Hardy 1968:206, 230.

³¹² Billy Bunter, dictated, 17-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

³¹³ Billy Bunter, dictated, 2-11-97, Docker River, Fieldnote No. 3.



Plate 7.11. Old Jimmy, 1997
photo: courtesy of Mayumi Uchida

6&7.6. Summary: Cultural Positioning of Cattle

Before closing these two chapters, I would like to briefly summarise the cultural positioning of cattle in the colonial history of the Gurindji country. This should bring us to the question: how can the position of 'cross-cultural' be realised? In the introduction to these two chapters, I suggested an examination of the interaction between racial and non-racial aspects of the Aboriginal colonial experiences. What have we found through this?

Although the Gurindji historians have the clear idea that *kartiya* brought cattle to their country, cattle have been tolerated, or even warmly welcomed by *ngumpin* throughout the colonial history. Despite their hatred towards *kartiya*, *ngumpin* established a peaceful relationship with cattle – and many other animals from 'England'. Obviously, *ngumpin* did not see cattle as being as oppressive as *kartiya*. Rather, cattle succeeded in being 'cross-cultural', bridging the gulf

³¹⁴ Jimmy Mangayari, Tape 20, 6-9-97, Timber Creek, Fieldnote No.2.

between *kartiya* culture and *ngumpin* culture.

Cattle certainly belong to the settlers' pastoral colonialism: *kartiya* brought cattle from 'Big England'. Cattle have no dreaming. *Ngumpin* were killed by *kartiya* because they stole cattle, and *ngumpin* did stockwork for Vestey's to make them rich. These aspects clearly show that cattle were part of *kartiya* way, or settlers' culture. However, the very same cattle also managed to cross the cultural boundary and move into *ngumpin* world. It was ironic that *kartiya*, human beings who could communicate in language, were more intrusive and less communicative than cattle towards Indigenous people. It was not cattle but *kartiya* who killed *ngumpin*. *Kartiya* did not give *ngumpin* enough food at the station, but cattle supplied extra tucker during 'holiday time'. *Kartiya* destroyed the Aboriginal economy without providing an adequate alternative source of supply. However, even though cattle also destroyed the Aboriginal ecology, they supplemented the Aboriginal economy with their own meat. Working for *kartiya* was a hard job, but working for cattle was a good job. Cattle eventually became an important part of Aboriginal ceremonial practice. Through the interaction with *ngumpin* over the country, cattle established their positioning in *ngumpin* culture as well. To sum up, the *ngumpin*'s relationship with cattle was much more reciprocal than their relationship with *kartiya*.

How can we become as cross-cultural as cattle?

It sounds odd but Australian non-Indigenous settlers may need to learn how to be 'cross-cultural' from cattle. For example, academic practice is, without a doubt, *kartiya* way. Just as cattle are not part of Dreaming, a PhD thesis is not part of Dreaming either. Therefore, my thesis inevitably belongs to *kartiya* culture. The Gurindji elders know it. They know and accept that I would use 'paper' to present their history in *kartiya* societies. The Gurindji people have been patiently 'cross-cultural' as well.

However, naturally, what they expected me to do was to position my historical practice as close to *ngumpin* way as possible. The Gurindji people have been calling for such a dialectic partnership in many different aspects of

Australian race relations. I believe Mick Rangiari's message is meaningful to anyone who participates in multicultural societies:

"Yes, you learn *kartiya* way and *ngumpin* way. Don't matter where you from in the world, we should live together, work together. Very hard, but gradually, we understand each other."³¹⁵

³¹⁵ Mick Rangiari, dictated, 26-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

Chapter 8

Chill Out: But Journey Never Ends

An Eschatological Laundry List:

1. This is it!

2. There are no hidden meanings.

* *

33. All important decisions must be made on the basis of insufficient data.

34. Yet we are responsible for everything we do.

35. No excuses will be accepted.

36. You can run, but you can't hide.

* *

41. You are free to do whatever you like. You need only face the consequences.

42. What do you know...for sure...anyway?

43. Learn to forgive yourself, again and again and again and again

(Sheldon Kopp 1972)

8.1. Fourth Fieldwork: Feedback from the Gurindji Country

Having written the first draft of every chapter – except this final chapter – I went back to the Gurindji country with my thesis draft. I decided to show my draft and explain what I wrote to the Gurindji elders, and hopefully to receive their feedback and approval.¹

8.1.1. Do I need feedback and approval from the Gurindji people?

There was a certain degree of anxiety among some academics with whom I discussed this idea. Some said 'my analysis' of their history does not need approval from the story tellers; 'academic freedom', perhaps? Others called it 'unreal' or were concerned it would just be 'lip service' because they would not read through my thesis and understand my academic arguments. On the other hand, some academics strongly supported this idea. The supporters said such feedback is important because even though my analysis belongs to me, the stories I learned certainly belong to the Gurindji people; I needed to consult the story tellers about the way I use them.

¹ I acknowledge Peter Read who suggested I receive approval from the Gurindji people before submission.

Overall, I liked this idea because I knew I would feel more comfortable and confident about my project if I show the Gurindji elders my draft and explain it as much as I can, and also, as much as they want. However, there was another serious obstacle to carrying out this idea: my financial crisis! Being a PhD student for four years and already doing fieldwork three times, my scholarships had almost run out. Without finding another source of financial support, I knew I could not return to the Gurindji country. I decided to leave it to fate.

I was fortunate – again. A Japanese publisher approached me to write columns for a non-academic pictorial book introducing Australian nature and culture to the Japanese. I explained to the editor how beautiful the Gurindji country is and how exciting and meaningful my experience there was. Later, they asked me to become a coordinator for their entry into the Daguragu community to take photos of the Gurindji country and the people's everyday lives. They also offered to pay my expenses for transportation from Canberra to Darwin as well as renting a car, accommodation, etc. I took this opportunity with delight for showing my thesis draft and receiving feedback from the Gurindji elders.

However, there were still problems with this idea: what if the Gurindji people disagree with my writings? Should I give up submitting my thesis? – Maybe not. I would probably try to negotiate with them. What if they say they cannot judge my thesis unless they are able to read through the text? What if they are not interested in listening to my presentation? Should I encourage them to listen? – Maybe not. "They said they could not judge my thesis" or "they were not interested in my thesis" would be 'their feedback' as well. I believe what a researcher can do is to make their feedback and negotiation visible in their text whatever the feedback is.

8.1.2. Presentation and reaction

On 17th of July 2000, I returned to the Gurindji country.² I was warmly welcomed by the Gurindji people again. Considering my restricted schedule, I planned to show and explain the draft primarily to my three main teachers – Jimmy

² I entered the Gurindji country by myself for presenting my thesis draft. The editor and cameraman from Japan joined me on 27th of July.

Mangayarri, Mick Rangiari and Billy Bunter – as well as the Daguragu Community Government Council members at their official meeting held fortnightly.

When I explained what I was going to do, Mick Rangiari said to me, “Ok, I listen what you got here. If I agree, you take’m university.” The others were simply curious about what kinds of stories I wrote.

I knew I had no way of explaining the Aboriginal historiography or postmodern/postcolonial theories to them. Instead, I explained the ‘politics’ which my thesis inevitably had to face: the difference between *kartiya* and *ngumpin* ways of historical practices. I emphasised that I tried to convince *kartiya* how to learn and share the Gurindji people’s history.



Plate 8.1. Presentation at Daguragu, 2000

I also realised that they did not want to sit next to me just listening for too long. Each time, my presentation took about 15 to 30 minutes. I explained chapter by chapter what stories I wrote. For example, Billy Bunter was very excited when I told my argument that the idea of the walk-off originated from the Gurindji

consciousness. He told me that I learned the Gurindji history 'from inside us'. After hearing my presentation, Mick Rangiari said, "Good one. Good one this one. *Punyu* [good], *punyu*. [...] If you mak'em book, you can bring it back here." Old Jimmy said, "*Jarrakap* [stories] like that mak'em people happy. Everything I bin tell you (is) good story. [...] That book [my draft] make me happy." I also showed them photos that I intended to use in my thesis. I explained to them that anyone could access these photos once my thesis was lodged in the university library. The Gurindji elders confirmed to me that there were no secret photos among them.



Plate 8.2. Presentation at the council meeting, 2000

I presented my thesis draft to ... community council meeting as well. Some of the council members asked where my publications would be circulated (place-oriented history!). I explained the thesis would be lodged in the university library if the examiners approve it. Furthermore, after warning them publishing a book is a terribly difficult task, I told them that I would try to publish a book based on this thesis in Japanese as well as English. Therefore, stories would be

circulated in Japan, Australia, and possibly other overseas countries. I also confirmed that I would send a copy of every publication based on this project to the Daguragu community.³

Spending time with the Gurindji elders, I naturally learned more new stories as well. Once again, I want to emphasise that the Gurindji people's history is alive and organic. There is no way of learning 'entire Gurindji history'. It would be fair to say that there is no such thing as 'entire Gurindji history' – the Gurindji history should be open-ended. My purpose for this fieldwork was to confirm the Gurindji people's acceptance of my thesis draft. I still needed to edit the draft, but I wondered if I should change the context or add new stories after their confirmation. They probably would not mind. But I decided not to do so.

8.1.3. Did I do a good job?

In the end, I did not receive any serious objections to my thesis draft from the Gurindji people. I got the impression that they were, even before my presentation, confident that I had done a good job. They certainly liked hearing my talk as well as looking at the photos. However, they basically picked up the parts which they understood from my talk and showed their approval rather than carefully examining my presentation. I realised that, for the Gurindji people, this whole process was an opportunity for them to show their trust in me, rather than to examine my draft.

Did I really do a good job?

To be honest, I don't know. I do not know because there are still difficult questions left over: did I present my draft to them in a fair manner? Is it acceptable that I did not present my draft to everybody who contributed to this project? Is it inevitably just 'lip service' unless they 'read through' the thesis? I am just hopeful that I did my best at this stage.

On the one hand, I concluded that expressing their trust in me rather than thoroughly examining my thesis draft was the Gurindji way of showing their

³ See Appendix 2.

approval. However, at the same time, I cannot help hoping that the Gurindji people of the 'New Generation' will read through my thesis in the future and provide their – possibly more critical? – feedback.

8.2. On Place-Oriented History

I shall summarise here the Gurindji mode of history which I characterised as 'place-oriented history'.

8.2.1. The Gurindji 'periodisation'

It was clear that the Gurindji historians generally see two major discontinuities in their history: (1) before and after Captain Cook, thus precolonial and colonial, and (2) before and after the 'walk-off', thus colonial and postcolonial. These are major *periodic* blocks that the Gurindji historians are conscious of. However, what is not clear or not too strict is the Gurindji historians' application of seemingly chronological periodisation within each block, especially in the colonial part of their history, such as 'shoot'em time', 'Vestey time' or 'hungry time'.

I discovered that one should not simply understand the Gurindji people's notion of '(---) time' in a strictly chronological sense. Giving an example from Chapters 6 & 7, there were events where *ngumpin* were shot by *kartiya*, and there was also a story about when *kartiya* stopped shooting and started to attract *ngumpin* to the station as stockworkers. They sometimes mentioned that the shooting had happened 'before Vestey time'. Therefore, the Gurindji history seems to give us a certain sequence: from 'shoot'em time' to 'Vestey time'.

However, we also need to remember that Captain Cook came to the Gurindji country in order to set up cattle stations, and therefore the Vestey mob appeared in the Gurindji country from the very beginning of colonisation. When people told me the story of 'stop shooting and start working for *kartiya*', they never said it occurred at the 'beginning of the Vestey time'. The stories of Old Jimmy's mother and granny getting shot by *kartiya* were clearly narrated as events that happened in Limbunya station – this was during the 'Vestey time'.

The stories of *ngumpin* stealing cattle also overlap with the 'shoot'em time' and 'Vestey time'. Notions of 'shoot'em time' and 'Vestey time' are not as clearly chronological as they appear at first glance. Rather, there were events of 'shooting' as well as 'not shooting', both of which overlap within a category of *larrapa* or 'olden time'.

Although academic historians emphasise the gradual process of the transition 'from bush to station', it seems to me that they still try to pinpoint the year of this shift. They generally agree that the Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district settled down at the stations as workers by the late 1920s,⁴ Aboriginal killings by Europeans had ceased by the 1930s,⁵ and many Aboriginal people lived in both the bush and on stations until the 1940s.⁶ I do not disagree with all these indexes in terms of their accuracy, but I would also like to emphasise that for the Gurindji historians, 'more shooting in earlier days and more working for *kartiya* in later days' is enough information in terms of the temporal structure of the Gurindji history.

In order to understand the Gurindji sense of '(---) time', we need to shift our attention from chronological order to spatial order.

8.2.2. Gurindji History = Place x (Past + Present)

In his *Land is Life*, Richard Baker says his major purpose is to illustrate "the value of considering Indigenous notions of history and geography. An understanding of how Aboriginal people classify periods of their pasts and perceive their environment is fundamental to the study of cultural contact."⁷ Thus, unlike many other academic historians, Baker applies the periodisation used by the Yanyuwa people such as, 'wild times', 'police times', 'welfare times', 'cattle times', 'land rights (Gough Whitlam) times' and 'these (tourist) times'.⁸ And he also warns us that such times 'should not be seen as neatly divided periods as they are often overlapping.'⁹

⁴ McConvell and Hagen 1981:87.

⁵ Rose 1991:73.

⁶ McGrath 1987a; Riddett 1985:205.

⁷ Baker 1999:7.

⁸ Baker 1999:65-124.

However, since the Indigenous notion of 'history' and that of 'geography' are argued in a relatively separate manner, the intricate 'relationship' between the Indigenous notions of 'history and geography' is not fully focused in Baker's work. I certainly share with Baker the value of using the Aboriginal notion of '(---) times' as well as its 'overlapping' quality. Nevertheless, even though he gives an excellent analysis of the cultural geography or landscape of the Yanyuwa people within the framework of 'contact history', the very concept of 'periodisation' and 'history' still remains purely 'temporal' in Baker's discussion.

Here, I need to remind you once again of Howard Morphy's notion of 'time being subordinated to space' in Aboriginal cosmology. If one wants to explore the 'Indigenous notion of history and geography', I believe we should look into the *connection* between 'time' and 'space', 'history' and 'geography'. In the Gurindji cosmology, 'time' *is* 'space', and 'history' *is* 'geography', which leads us to the framework of a 'place-oriented history'.

In place-oriented history, the very concept of 'history' is not purely 'temporal' anymore. In the Gurindji historical practice, history is more about locality than periods. In other words, history is *more spatial than temporal*. Obviously, the Gurindji historians are conscious that more shooting happened in the earlier days, and more 'working for *kartiya*' happened later. Therefore, it is not wrong to say, 'from shoot'em time to Vestey time'. However, for the Gurindji people, this temporal order seems less important than the spatial order or *locality* of the events.

I believe I showed enough examples to confirm the above idea. First of all, you have to connect yourself to places to explore the history. Such place-oriented historical practice leads you to place-oriented historical knowledge (Chapter 2). Therefore, the historical questions are not so much about 'when' but more about 'where' or 'which direction'. For instance, Blackfella Knob *is the history* of 'shoot'em time', and Lipananyku *holds the history* of starting stockwork for *kartiya* (Chapters 6 & 7). The spatial direction from north down to south *is the history* of Captain Cook (Chapter 3), and the Major's history *is*

⁹ Baker 1999:61.

his movement from east to west outside the Gurindji country (Chapter 6). 'Vestey time' is *located* in cattle stations, but 'holiday time' is *not located* in 'Vestey time', but has its places in the bush (Chapters 6 & 7). In contrast, 'hungry time' is *located* in cattle stations (Chapter 7). Furthermore, the history of Jacky Pantamarra is strongly connected to the Gurindji moral geography (Chapter 4). And the story of the Gurindji walk-off would not be understood without knowing the important connections between places (Gurindji country, 'union country' and 'America') as well as their spatial movement from Jimparrak to Daguragu (Chapter 5).

To sum up, the Gurindji concept of 'time' is, in fact, 'time x space'. Likewise, the Gurindji concept of history is 'past x place'. Furthermore, since the Gurindji sense of 'place' includes 'everywhen', place itself includes 'present + past'. It may be worthwhile contrasting the two different equations of Gurindji and academic history. In the conventional Western notion of 'history', history is regarded more or less as the 'past'. Therefore, equations become as follows:

Conventional Western history: History = (+ -) Past

Gurindji mode of history: History = Place x (Past + Present)¹⁰

'Place' is a much more fundamental element than 'time' in the Gurindji historical practice. It is not chronology but places that construct and form the 'backbone' of the Gurindji mode of history.

8.3. Personal Reflection

What a journey it was! Please allow me to start from the beginning of my life. I was born and grew up in Niigata city, my hometown in Japan. When I was a high school student, I studied very hard to enter a university because I wanted to get out of Niigata and live in Tokyo. However, in Tokyo, I began to dream of getting out of Japan.

¹⁰ If you insist, my understanding of postmodern history is: History = Text x (Past + Present)

It could be a part of my personality that I am never fully satisfied with where I am. I am not proud of it. Rather, I respect, and even envy, Old Jimmy and other Gurindji people as well as some of my cousins and friends in Niigata who attach to their own places and maintain their sense of belonging there.

As part of the sequence of my ten-year journey from Niigata to the Gurindji country, I managed to reduce my 'love/hate' feeling towards Niigata or Japan, and began to be more interested in making the connection between my Japanese background and Aboriginal societies. This is partly because I realised the need for negotiation with my own identity not in an essentialistic or nationalistic way, but in a more relational/cross-cultural way. For example, the history of the Japanese-Aboriginal relationship, or Indigenous Japanese history, are some postdoctoral projects in my mind at this stage.

Attending the *Belonging Conference*¹¹ as well as reading Peter Read's *Belonging* (2000),¹² I wondered if my cross-cultural journey itself is my way of 'belonging'? I clearly remember when I first arrived in Australia, I was particularly excited to get on a bus because I liked to see the ethnic diversity of passengers. It was a strong contrast to a public bus in Japan – everybody looks so similar. It is of no doubt that there is cultural/ethnic diversity in Japan as well.¹³ However, such diversity is much more 'visual' and 'tangible' in Australia. Not to mention the fact that I had a lot of problems with speaking English, and still do. I have also experienced some racist attitudes towards me in Australia. However, in general, I was and am happy to be in Australia. Even today, I sometimes talk to myself, "Goodness, I'm really in Australia. I'm really speaking English. I can't believe myself!"

While I was struggling with this thesis, the Sydney Olympics started. I was not really interested in such a nationalistic and commercial event. However, one of the exceptions was Cathy Freeman's 400 metres. Even though I still felt some excitement whenever Japan won an event, I literally SCREAMED when Cathy

¹¹ The conference was held by the Humanities Research Centre, ANU, in 1999. I acknowledge Peter Read and Deborah B. Rose who gave me an opportunity to express my personal 'belonging' to Australia at this conference.

¹² Read 2000.

¹³ See, for example, Denoon 1997.

Freeman won her race. How could I explain this feeling? Since I am not where my families are, where I was born and grew up, it is probably true that I am now in the place where I do not belong. Nevertheless, I cannot help admitting some sense of 'belonging' to this country – Australia? Aboriginal Land? The Gurindji people's country? Or by following Old Jimmy's teaching, I can perhaps call it 'the earth'?

As I explained in Chapter 1, I have no intention of claiming that I spiritually became Aboriginal at all. Furthermore, the issue is not whether I want to become an Australian citizen or not. Instead, I want to make it clear that this PhD project took me to the point of meditating on the question: would it be possible to 'choose' to be cross-cultural and maintain 'relational belonging' if a person cannot deny that her/his ethnic, genealogical and cultural background is hopelessly 'mono'? Is there any space where one can establish non-essentialistic 'belonging'? Should I call it a 'communicative' identity? Or, perhaps, the question is not really about 'belonging' but 'becoming'? I believe this is not just my personal problem, but is likely to be one of the fundamental questions among many of us in the era of globalisation.

Let me apply the above personal problem to the academic historiographical context: would it be possible for the academic historical discipline to become cross-cultural if its historical and cultural background has undeniably originated from the colonial 'West'?

8.4. On Cross-Culturalizing History

Dipesh Chakrabarty concludes one of his recent articles on the postcolonial historiography of *Subaltern Studies* by saying: "the nature of political modernity in colonial India made this project of history writing nothing short of an engaged critique of the academic discipline of history itself".¹⁴ Taking an ethnographic approach towards the Gurindji people's history, the project of cross-culturalizing history explored precisely Chakrabarty's point above. I would like to summarise where I (we?) stand now, in an academic historiographical sense.

¹⁴ Chakrabarty 2000b.

8.4.1. From observation to communication

I believe this thesis showed the value of the ethnographic approach towards the problem of 'history and Europe' or 'history and academia'. Distancing myself from previous schools of historical anthropology or ethnohistory, I proposed an alternative way of using ethnographic tools towards history. That is to say, this project was neither an exploration of the academic history of an ethnic minority (ethnohistory) nor an ethnographic description of an historical event (historical anthropology). Instead, I applied an ethnographic approach in order to create an interaction between Gurindji and academic modes of historical practice. In other words, an ethnographic approach was taken not for 'observing' the Gurindji history, but for 'communicating' with it.

Needless to say, this communication was carried out 'over the cultural gap'. Therefore, my challenge has been, on the one hand, describing what this gap looks like by learning from the Gurindji historians, and on the other hand, attempting to create a dialogue over the gap by destabilising academic historical practices.

Naturally, this project suggested an alternative approach towards oral historical studies. I did not treat the Gurindji people's oral histories either as simply their life histories or as private/public memories. Instead, I tried to understand their oral histories within the Gurindji mode of historical practice. The value of oral histories is not restricted just to exploring people's life stories or knowing what they remember or forget. I proposed that oral historical studies hold the possibility of exploring alternative modes of history, which may be able to interact with, destabilise, and also expand the academic notion of history and historical reality.

I probably have to admit that my usage of 'history' has been, to some extent, ambivalent through out my discussion. My broader definition of history has been 'modes of exploring and expressing the past' and I constantly emphasised the importance of 'place' in the Gurindji historical practice. Nevertheless, I sometimes paid more attention to the historical 'factuality' of the Gurindji people's history, and on other occasions, I emphasised the Gurindji people's historical 'reality' rather than the academic sense of 'historicity'.

Furthermore, I sometimes called our attention to the 'present nature' of the Gurindji mode of history, and on other occasions, I shifted our focus to the 'past nature' of the Gurindji history.

Therefore my speaking position was not firmly consistent. The term 'history' has been ambivalent between the Gurindji and academic historians, and also between the present and the past. In order to cross-culturalize academic modes of history, my discussion of the historical reality has shifted between the Gurindji historians' and conventional academic 'historicity'. Likewise, I also had to shift our focus between the Gurindji mode of historical practice and the product of it. I sometimes interpreted the Gurindji people's past through the Gurindji mode of history, but at other times, I interpreted the Gurindji mode of history through the Gurindji people's past.

In my opinion, this ambivalent nature of history writing is the unavoidable condition of the project of cross-culturalizing history because this is a product of communication, not observation; it is the nature of communication over the gap.

8.4.2. Performing histories

In fact, I am worried if this piece of writing can be called a 'thesis'. I checked "The Australian National University: Information for Candidates on the Submission and Examination of Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy". According to this official policy paper, to qualify for the degree, the candidate is required:

- (a) to carry out independent research involving a comprehensive study of a scope and size that could normally be expected to be completed in the equivalent of 3 years' full-time study; and
- (b) to make a substantial contribution to learning and demonstrate a capacity to relate the research done by the candidate to the broader framework of the discipline or disciplines within which it falls at the standard internationally recognized for the degree in the relevant discipline or disciplines.¹⁵

¹⁵ The Australian National University 1999:108.

Since I did independent research for over four years, I am confident of (a). On (b), one can never judge by oneself if her or his work reaches the international standard for the degree. However, I am relieved to know the policy emphasises 'the broader framework of the discipline or disciplines'. I am hopeful that my narrative strategy, especially the frequent use of first and second person, is still within 'the broader framework' of the academic disciplines. I am further hopeful that the combination of Gurindji Creole and Japanized English fits within a multicultural academic framework.

Accordingly, I hope the way the policy defines the standard of PhD theses does not contradict the way Greg Denning describes 'writing':

"... writing is theatre and the writer a performer. The writer's goal, in the words of the theatre, is to 'produce effects'. Make someone laugh, make someone cry, make someone angry. And the writer does it in performance. All the possibilities, all the perfectibilities are closed down in a performance to one 'there you have it'. The writer is vulnerable at this moment. Writing, I said to a friend, is like dropping a stone into a deep well and waiting for the splash. No, he replied, it is like dropping a rose petal into the Grand Canyon and waiting for the bang."¹⁶

Whatever I say about the Gurindji historical practice and cross-cultural communication, it is of no doubt that, ultimately, my thesis is a product of my writing – my performance.

I have no intention of comparing the 'quality' of my study with the great historians' works. However as an 'effects producer', I wanted to combine Henry Reynolds' *The Other Side of the Frontier* (1981) and *Why Weren't We Told?* (1999)¹⁷; the interaction between 'the other side' and my personal search for Aboriginal history. I also intended to combine Ann McGrath and Deborah B. Rose; the interaction between bright/positive and dark/negative narrations of Aboriginal history. Furthermore, I tried to combine Dipesh Chakrabarty and Greg

¹⁶ Denning 1998:xix-xx.

¹⁷ Reynolds 1999a.

Denying; the interaction between 'provincializing Europe' and 'a poetic for histories' in current historiography.

But I remind you: these desires of mine as a writer originate not simply from my readings, but rather, from my interaction with the Gurindji people. Precisely speaking, my readings of the above works helped and encouraged me to realise my desire of setting up a 'theatre' in which I can perform the dialogue between the Gurindji historians, heterogeneous pasts and presents, places, Dreaming, and myself.

8.4.3. Open-ending

I feel that I have been writing a long letter to whoever you are, reader. I wanted to share with you how challenging but enjoyable it is to perform cross-cultural practice. I also wanted to share with you how apparently impossible but still possible it is to 'communicate over the gap'. Above all, I wanted to share with you the teachings from the Gurindji country. Now, I post it to you – *the writer is vulnerable at this moment*.

It is up to you whether you shift your being fully into the Gurindji historical reality (if you think you can), or firmly reject it. An alternative choice is, as I have been struggling through this thesis, trying to find a way of being 'cross-cultural'. I believe cross-cultural practice, by definition, cannot avoid the risk of destabilising one's own cultural framework. Otherwise, what is the point of calling it 'cross-cultural'?

I threw a petal.

Let's wait for the bang.

Appendix 1

Agreement between Daguragu Council and Minoru Hokari

Agreement between The Daguragu Community Government Council and Minoru Hokari (the researcher)

Introduction

1. a. The Daguragu Community Government Council (Daguragu Council) is a body corporate representing the interests of traditional owners and people interested in and associated with Daguragu Aboriginal Land Trust, Northern Territory.

b. The researcher has discussed with members of the Daguragu Council his interest in undertaking a research project.

c. The research is to be conducted with a view to completion by the researcher of a doctoral thesis that is to be registered with the university that Minoru Hokari is enrolled with.

Copyright and publication

2. The parties to this agreement confirm that information generated by this research is jointly owned by Daguragu Council and the researcher. Either party can use it as they think fit as long as they consult the other parties and acknowledge the other parties' assistance in doing the research.

3. The researcher will inform the university where his thesis registered, of any restrictions imposed by the Daguragu Council pursuant to this agreement in relation to access and use of any information contained in the final thesis.

Access to information

4. The researcher will make available to the Daguragu Council copies of any information or materials (including cassette recordings, photographs, and literature) collected during the course of this research if it is requested, provided that doing so does not breach the confidentiality of informants.

5. On completion, the researcher will submit a copy of the completed thesis to the Daguragu Council.

Confidentiality

6. The researcher undertakes to respect the confidentiality of individuals and organizations (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) where information collected is regarded as sensitive. The researcher will consult with Daguragu Council and/or individual informants in order to identify any confidential, sensitive or restricted material and to determine the conditions of access and other restrictions on the use of this material.

Authorship

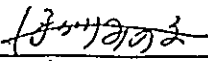
7. The parties agree that authorship will be retained by the researcher in accordance with academic conventions concerning authorship.

Agreement between Daguragu Council and Minoru Hokari

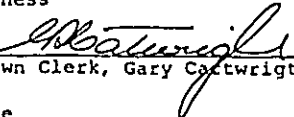
Signatures

The following signatures of the involved parties, constitute agreement to the terms and conditions included in this document.

Signed on behalf of the researchers:

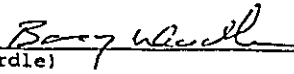

(Researcher, Minoru Hokari)

Date
1/3/1999

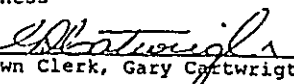
Witness

(Town Clerk, Gary Cartwright)

Date
1/3/1999

Signed on behalf of Daguragu Council:


(President, Barry Wardle)

Date
1/3/1999

Witness

(Town Clerk, Gary Cartwright)

Date
1/3/1999

Appendix 2

Approval for Minoru Hokari (the researcher) to submit his thesis

Introduction

1. The Daguragu Community Government Council (Daguragu Council) represents the interests of traditional owners and people interested in and associated with Daguragu Aboriginal Land Trust, Northern Territory.
2. This document is to ensure and declare that Minoru Hokari has the approval of the Daguragu Council to submit his doctoral thesis to the Australian National University and that they have no objections to the researcher producing further publications from this research.

Thesis submission and further publications

3. Minoru Hokari spoke to the main teachers who form the basis of this thesis to ensure that there are no errors in the main understandings and that they give their consent for him to submit the thesis. The researcher recorded this discussion on audiocassette to have a document of their agreement.
4. The researcher also presented his thesis to the Daguragu Council for their approval to submit it to the Australian National University.
5. This document also clarifies that Minoru Hokari has consulted with the main teachers as well as Daguragu Council and they agree to the researcher making further publications based on this project. He will give the community copies of the thesis and any further publications and he will acknowledge their contribution to the work.

Signatures

The following signatures constitute agreement to the terms and conditions included in this document.

Signed on behalf of Daguragu Council:

X Justin P

(President, Justin Paddy)

Date

18/7/00

Witness

Sean

(Town Clerk, Sean Heffernan)

Date

18/7/00

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Tape Recordings and Dictations

<Tape Recordings>

Billy Bunter, Tape 36, 4-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

Dandy Danbayarri, Tape 47, 12-3-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.6.

Harry George, Tape 42, 26-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

Harry George and Stanly Sambo, Tape 5, 26-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1

Mick Inverway, Tape 2, 20-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

George Karlipirri, Tape 11, 10-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

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Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 2, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 4, 25-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

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Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 20, 6-9-97, Timber Creek, Fieldnote No.2.

Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 22, 2-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.

Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 30, 17-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

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Jimmy Mangayarri, Tape 41, 25-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

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Noeleen Morris and Rodney Bernard, Tape 8, 25-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1

Peanut Pontiarri, Tape 31, 20-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

Mick Rangiari, Tape 3, 24-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

Mick Rangiari, Tape 6, 30-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

Mick Rangiari, Tape 26, 11-10-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3.

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Mick Rangiari, Tape 44, 3-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

Peter Raymond, Tape 6, 30-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1
Peter Raymond, Tape 18, 1-9-97, Lipananyku, Fieldnote No.2

George Sambo, Tape 9, 27-7-97, Lawi Waterhole, Fieldnote No.1.
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Harry Sambo and George Sambo, Tape 6, 29-6-97, near McDonald Yard,
Fieldnote No.1.

Stanly Sambo, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.
Stanly Sambo, Tape 15, 24-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No. 2.
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Stanly Sambo and Roger Yiriwa, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

Victor Vincent, Tape 11, 10-8-97, Jimparrak, Fieldnote No.2.

Tommy Wajabungu, Tape 16, 26-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

Ronnie Wave Hill, Tape 40, 23-2-99, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No. 5.

Roger Yiriwa, Tape 1, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.
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Roy Yunga, Tape 13, 15-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.
Roy Yunga, Tape 36, 4-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

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Teddy Barry, dictated, 16-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.

Billy Bunter, dictated, 17-1-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.0.
Billy Bunter, dictated, 19-6-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.
Billy Bunter, dictated, 20-9-97, while driving to Daguragu, Fieldnote No.3.
Billy Bunter, dictated, 2-11-97, Men's secret place, Fieldnote No.3.
Billy Bunter, dictated 12-11-97, Docker River, Fieldnote No.3.
Billy Bunter, dictated 2-10-97, Yarralin, Fieldnote No.3.
Billy Bunter, dictated, 4-1-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

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Teddy Crew, dictated, 24-7-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.1.

Violet Donald, dictated, 19-9-97, near Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.3.
Violet Donald, dictated, 21-9-97, Ten Mile Waterhole, Fieldnote No.3.

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Steven Long, dictated, 12-3-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.6.

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Peter Raymond, dictated, 22-6-97, Scale Gorge, Fieldnote No.1.
Peter Raymond, dictated, 16-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5

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Kenedy Ricky, dictated, 14-8-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.2.

Banjo Ryan, dictated, 18-2-99, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.5.

Stanly Sambo, dictated, 22-12-97, Daguragu, Fieldnote No.4.

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Women's discussion, dictated, 25-8-97, Kalkaringi, Fieldnote No.2.

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