

**CONTEMPORARY RITUAL PRACTICE IN AN  
ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENT:**

**THE WARLPIRI *KURDIJI* CEREMONY**

Georgia Curran

School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University

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WARNING: The names of people who have recently died have been included in this thesis. This has been done solely so their contribution to the research can be recognised in the future. Please do not continue reading if any offence may be taken.

*Ngajuku kapirdiki.*

This thesis is dedicated to Jeannie Nungarrayi Egan. She worked so hard to help me understand the songs and ceremonies discussed in this thesis. It could not possibly have been written without her.

This thesis is comprised of only my original work except where indicated and due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials used.

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## Abstract

Based on fieldwork undertaken in Yuendumu, Central Australia from 2005 to 2008, this thesis is an ethnography of the place of singing and ceremony in the contemporary Warlpiri world. Core to religious life, 'traditional' ceremonies and their associated songlines have always been an important aspect of Warlpiri identity as they link people to their kin, country and Dreamings. Over the last few decades there has been a decline in the learning contexts and opportunities for the performance of many of these ceremonies, such that today most ceremonies do not hold the same relevance. This consideration is set against the backdrop of recent historical and demographic changes consequent on living in large settlements, dependent on welfare payments and store bought food.

The features of Warlpiri songs and ceremonies are outlined as well as the contemporary contexts for the different genres of singing. It is shown how these songs and ceremonies reproduce people's associations with kin, country and Dreamings through their organisation and performance. The *Kurdiji* ceremony, in which both men and women are involved throughout, is presented as a central case study. It is held several times each summer for the purposes of male initiation and is particularly interesting as it is still of vital importance for all generations of Warlpiri people. While the numbers of people who attend individual performances and the scale of these ceremonies is increasing, it is in a vulnerable situation as the central songline that is core to its performance, and which guides the sequence of events for the entire night of its duration, is only known by a small group of older men. Once a domain in which people learned

religious knowledge central to survival, *Kurdiji* as one of the few ceremonies still held, is now more vital than ever, as through its performance core aspects of Warlpiri identity are maintained, particularly for younger generations.

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## Glossary

All spelling, English glosses and translations presented in this thesis accord, where possible, with those in *The Warlpiri –English Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (Laughren et al. 2007). Alternate spellings used in the literature are only used for direct quotes. Special words used only in the songs are not given in this glossary as details of their meanings are discussed in the text and in Appendix 1.

<i>jaja</i>	maternal grandmother (MM) or granduncle (MMB)
<i>Jakamarra</i>	male subsection name
<i>Jampijinpa</i>	male subsection name
<i>Jangala</i>	male subsection name
<i>Japanangka</i>	male subsection name
<i>Japangardi</i>	male subsection name
<i>Japaljarri</i>	male subsection name
<i>Jardiwanpa</i>	name of a conflict resolution ceremony (see Chapter 3 for further details)
<i>jarnamiljarnpa</i>	generation moiety of speaker's parents or children
<i>jarrardili</i>	elder brothers of an initiand, Northern Warlpiri word for <i>rdiliwarnu</i>



<i>jarrawarnu</i>	Australian Magpie-lark, Mudlark; *name for elder brothers of an initiand or the elder siblings of a deceased person
<i>jilkaja</i>	initiation travel, initiation travellers, ‘business mob’
<i>jinpurrrmanu</i>	the undulated sound made by mothers, father’s sisters and mothers-in-law whilst they dance during a <i>Kurdiji</i> ceremony
<i>juka</i>	ritual guardian, initiates brother-in-law (ZH)
<i>jukana</i>	(female) cross cousin (FZD, MBD)
<i>Jukurrpa</i>	Dreaming, dream (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed analysis of the meaning of this word)
<i>Jupurrurla</i>	male subsection term
<i>jujurdu</i>	powerful incantation, evil spell, murderer’s song
<i>Jungarrayi</i>	male subsection term
<i>Kajirri</i>	a ceremony associated with initiation in northern Warlpiri regions (see Chapter 3 for more detail)
<i>kana</i>	digging stick, yam stick
<i>kaninjarra</i>	inside, down, underneath, downwards, way down in
<i>kankarlu</i>	high, up, upper, top, outer

<i>Kankarlu</i>	religious festivals in the past held as part of initiatory rites (see Chapter 3 for more detail)
<i>kardiya</i>	non-Aboriginal, European, white person
<i>karnta</i>	woman
<i>karntakurlangu</i>	belonging to women
<i>karntamipa</i>	exclusively for women
<i>kirda</i>	father, paternal uncle, father's brother, father's sister, paternal aunt (*used in this thesis mainly to refer to the people who have inherited ownership of Dreamings, country and ceremonies from their father's side)
<i>Kirrirdikirrawarnu</i>	initiation ceremony, in the past held on the second night after <i>Kurdiji</i> (see chapter 3 and 4 for further details)
<i>kumunjayi</i>	no-name, taboo, name used for those whose name is the same or similar to that of someone who has recently deceased
<i>Kunapipi</i>	ceremonial name for an initiatory rite held in Arnhem Land (described by Berndt 1951)
<i>Kurakurra</i>	name of a conflict resolution ceremony (see chapter 3 for further details)
<i>Kurdiji</i>	ceremonial name for initiatory rites

<i>kurdungurlu</i>	maternal kin, *used in the thesis mainly to refer to the people who inherit managerial rites to Dreamings, country and ceremonies
<i>kurlarda</i>	spear
<i>kuyukirda</i>	Dreaming of father's mother and their patriline
<i>kuyuwapirra</i>	Dreaming of father's father and their patriline
<i>kuyuwurruru</i>	Dreaming of mother's mother and their patriline
<i>kuyuyarriki</i>	Dreaming of mother's father and their patriline
<i>lampanilyka</i>	maternal uncle, maternal nephew
<i>larr-pakarni</i>	men's chanting for <i>Jardiwanpa</i>
<i>Malamala</i>	sorry business, sorry meeting, bereavement ceremony, mourning rite
<i>Marnakurrawarnu</i>	part of initiation ground, ceremonial name
<i>marrkarilyka</i>	part of initiation ground
<i>milarlpa</i>	sprites, spirit people
<i>Nakamarra</i>	female subsection term

<i>Nangala</i>	female subsection term
<i>Nampijinpa</i>	female subsection term
<i>Napaljarri</i>	female subsection term
<i>Napanangka</i>	female subsection term
<i>Napangardi</i>	female subsection term
<i>Napurrurla</i>	female subsection term
<i>Ngaliya</i>	Southern Warlpiri
<i>Ngajakula</i>	conflict resolution ceremony (see Chapter 3 for further details)
<i>Ngapa Jukurrpa</i>	Rain Dreaming
<i>Ngarlu Jukurrpa</i>	Honey/ Sugarbag Dreaming
<i>ngarnarntarrka</i>	own generation moiety
<i>ngarrmarilyka</i>	cross cousin
<i>ngarrmirni</i>	cross cousin (directed at a specific circumstance)
<i>ngunjungunju</i>	white ochre

<i>ngurlu</i>	seeds, grain
<i>Nungarrayi</i>	female subsection term
<i>nyurnukurlangu</i>	a type of <i>yawulyu</i> sung for healing (see Chapter 3 for further details)
<i>pardinjalpa</i>	plant species used to make a strong scented tea which heals colds
<i>parmpa</i>	increase ceremony, men's corroboree, Dreaming rituals
<i>pukurdi</i>	pointed head dress
<i>Purluwanti</i>	name of conflict resolution ceremony, Barn owl (see Chapter 3 for further details)
<i>purlapa</i>	corroboree, dance, ritual performance, song, singing
<i>purrrpu-pakarni</i>	clap (at crotch), beat time on lap, beat rhythm on lap
<i>puru-nyungu</i>	hidden away, concealed, used to refer to initiands when they are secluded in the bush
<i>rdiliwarnu</i>	senior brother, senior sister
<i>wajamirnylyka</i>	uncle-in-law (WMB), great-grandfather (MMF), great-grandchild (ZDDS)
<i>wampana</i>	Spectacled hare wallaby

<i>wapirralyka</i>	Spectacled Hare wallaby
<i>Warawata</i> initiates	ceremony held directly prior to the circumcision of the
<i>Warlukurlangu</i>	Fire Dreaming (literally: fire+belonging)
<i>Warnayaka</i>	Northern Warlpiri
<i>warringiyi</i>	paternal grandfather, paternal grand aunt, father's father, father's father's brother, father's father's sister, grandchild (man's son's child), grandnephew (brother's son's son), grandniece (brother's son's daughter)
<i>warungka</i>	deaf, hard of hearing *senile, *mad, crazy, *ignorant
<i>watikirlangu</i>	belonging to men
<i>watimipa</i>	exclusively for men
<i>wati-rirri-rirri</i>	person in authority, person able to commence ceremonies, ceremonial boss, respected person, leader, boss, knowledgeable (especially for ceremonies) person
<i>wirikirlangu</i>	belonging to business people
<i>wirntimi</i>	dance, hover
<i>Yalpari</i>	particular group of Warlpiri people
<i>yankirri</i>	emu

<i>yarlpurru</i>	co-initiates, age mates, people of same age
<i>yarlpurru-kurlangu</i>	belonging to initiates
<i>yarripiri</i>	python species
<i>yawulyu</i>	women's ritual, women's ceremonies, women's songs, women's ritual performances, women's ritual designs, women's dancing
<i>yilpinji</i>	love songs, love charms, love magic
<i>yinjakurrku</i>	firestick, burning torch
<i>yulpurru parents</i>	and great-grandparents of the initiates
<i>yunparni</i>	sing
<i>yurlpa</i>	red ochre
<i>yurrampi</i>	honey ant

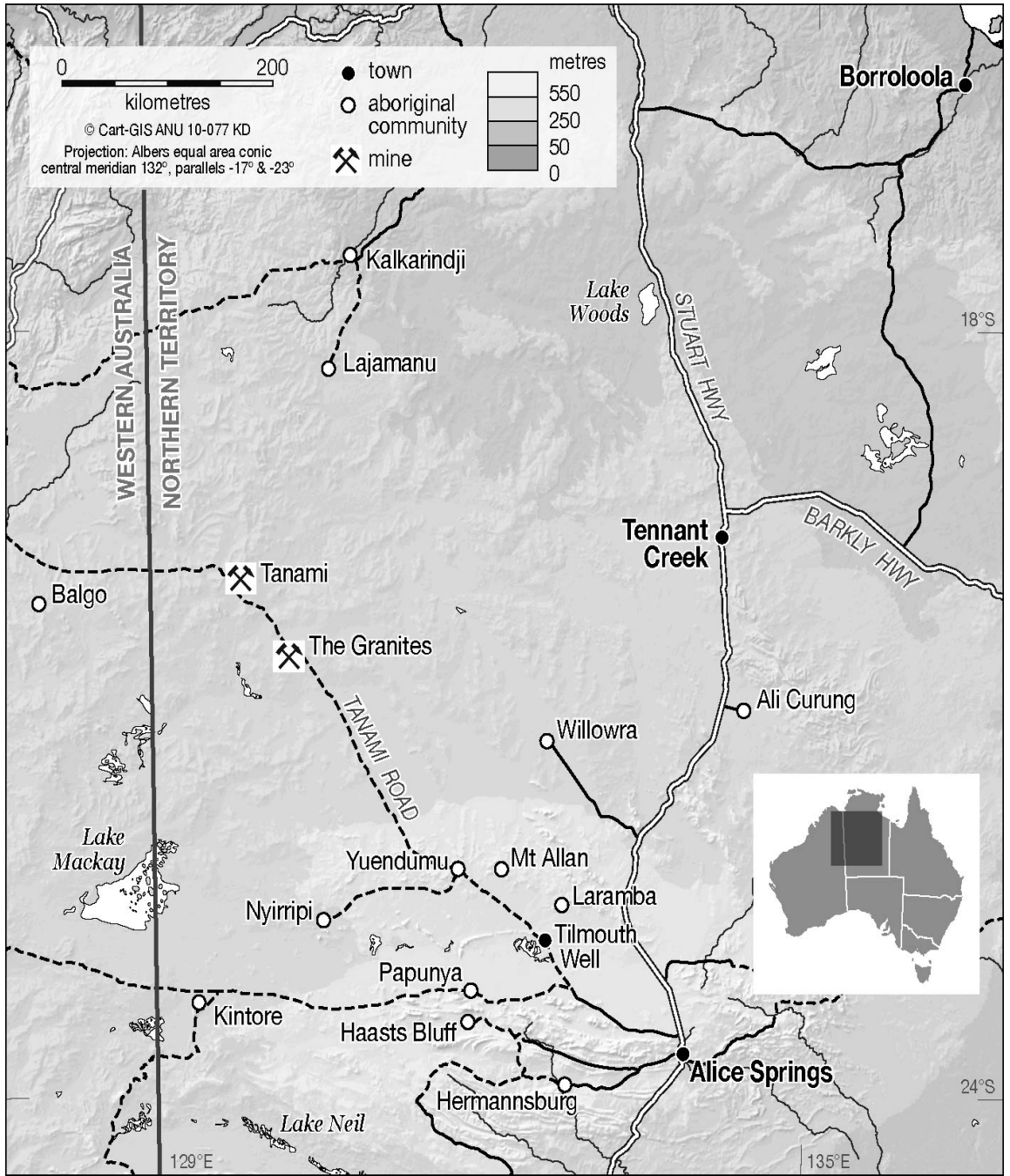
## Code to Linguistic Glossing

1SGsubj. = First person singular subject (suffixed to the subject), 'I'  
Erg. = Ergative case (suffixed to the subject of a transitive sentence), added to the subject of a transitive sentence  
Loc. = Locative case suffix (suffixed to a noun, often a place name in the song texts), at, on, with, in  
PAST = past tense (suffixed on a verb)  
Pres. = Presentative form 'Here it is'  
redup. = reduplication, used when a word is repeated for emphasis<sup>1</sup>

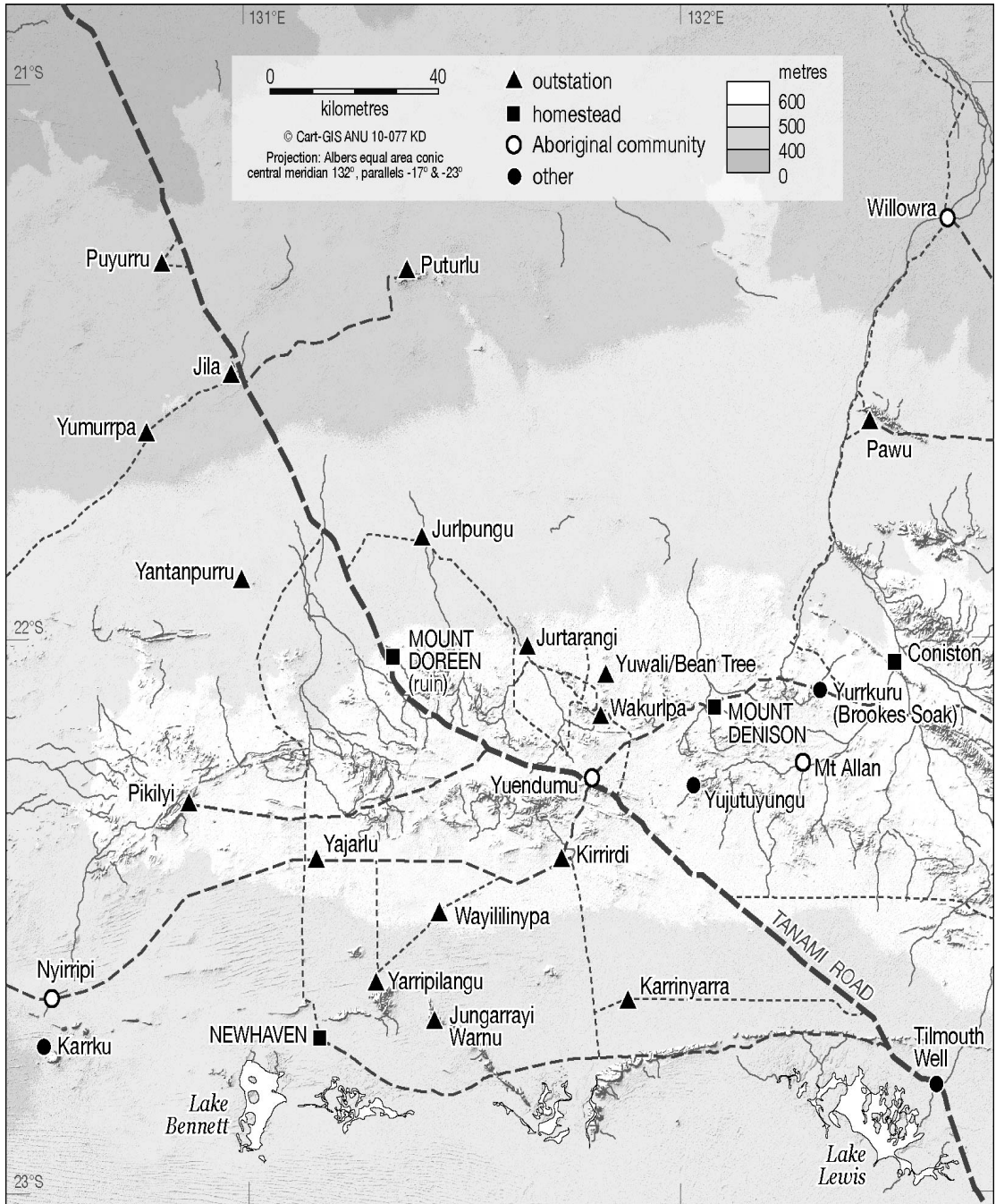
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<sup>1</sup> Words are also reduplicated to make them a plural. When this is the case I have glossed the reduplication with a plural marker instead.





**Map 1. Central Australia**



**Map 2. Yuendumu and surrounds**

## Preface

The first time I went to Yuendumu was in late November 2005 to begin research for my PhD thesis. I was involved in an Australian Research Council Linkage Project entitled ‘The Warlpiri Songlines Project’ (Reference #LP0560567) which was a collaboration of scholars from the Australian National University and the University of Queensland with the Central Land Council and the Jangarpa Association. This project was initiated by chief investigators Nicolas Peterson, Mary Laughren and Stephen Wild – all senior academics of varying disciplines with long and continuing connections with Warlpiri communities. Warlpiri people had strongly supported this project seeing the recording of their songs as a task that required urgent attention as the people who knew these songs and the associated religious knowledge were getting very old. There was a shared emotive goal amongst all the people involved in this project as they remembered a time when songs and ceremonies were performed more frequently and were essential for many aspects of life. Warlpiri people are intensely proud of the rich detail concerning Warlpiri religious life that is encoded in these songs. The academics who had been fortunate enough to research this for a large part of their lives too can see that the loss is catastrophic in terms of its unique intellectual contribution to human knowledge.

My tasks as the PhD student attached to this project were to record as many songs as I possibly could, work on transcriptions and translations of these songs with the help of literate Warlpiri people and obtain as much exegesis as possible about these songs. In a way this is a sort of salvage project instigated by people

who were keen to make a record of the rich detail encoded in songs; something which was no longer being learnt by younger generations. This type of project was popular amongst Warlpiri people in Yuendumu and I never had a shortage of people wishing to work with me. The research we were doing was regarded as not only important because it was creating a record of aspects of cultural heritage of which Warlpiri people were deeply proud, but also urgent as the older people who had this knowledge were dying and younger generations were not learning these songs, at least not with the same depth of knowledge or detail.

Academically, however, I was left feeling quite vulnerable. This type of salvage project being regarded as old-fashioned and obsessed with 'tradition' as something steeped in past practices which hold little relevance in the contemporary world.

In this thesis I take a performative approach to the study of songs and their place in ritual, concerning myself with the process of continuity and change to ceremonial life for the Warlpiri people of Yuendumu. My primary aim is to analyse these songs in their ritual context. I hope that this approach does not undermine the profound significance of the religious knowledge encoded in Warlpiri songs, often encoded in esoteric ways. In 1984, Ken Hale wrote of the intellectual joy that comes from understanding a Warlpiri song verse (1984: 259). Being privileged enough to have experienced this is something for which I will continually be thankful to the many Warlpiri people who have worked with me over the last few years. I hope this thesis will reflect the profound intellectual substance of these songs, something often only understood by older generations, as well as emphasising the ways in which they are important to all generations of

Warlpiri people, even those who may have very little knowledge of the content of the songs.

I want to particularly emphasise the role that two individuals had in this project. Jeannie Nungarrayi Egan and Thomas Jangala Rice not only wished to record and write down this knowledge for their own record but put extensive time and effort into explaining the stories. This involved taking a far more analytical approach to songs than would normally be made or is perhaps even culturally appropriate. Far more explanation was given to me than would normally be given in this context and the understanding of this ritual that I have presented in this thesis relies heavily on their immense effort.

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Shortly after Christmas in 2005, about a month after I had arrived in Yuendumu, a group of women who I had become friendly with told me that in a few days time we would be going to Mt Allan, a nearby settlement, for *Kurdiji*<sup>2</sup>. On New Year's Eve we got word that some boys had been 'caught' and were going to be initiated in the following days. I enthusiastically packed my Toyota to bursting point with blankets, billy cans, swags, drums of flour and a multitude of other items that we would need over the following few weeks. After driving for about an hour, along a rough dirt track heading east away from Yuendumu, we pulled up on the side of the road a short way from a few tin humpies set up near to a cluster of houses. On the southern side was a business ground<sup>3</sup> that had been recently graded in preparation for the upcoming ceremonies. The whole area was buzzing with people who had set up camps nearby. For most of the day we sat under the shade of a large tree, hiding from the sun which was beating down an intense heat. Various people came over to talk to us and I was introduced to many new people, so many that there were few faces or names that I was able to keep in my head. In the late afternoon we set up our swags. All the single women camped together in one long line, our heads facing towards the east, the other married couples and families camped in their own small groups a little bit further away.

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<sup>2</sup> *Kurdiji* is a ceremony performed by Warlpiri people in which boys of prepubescent age are turned into adult men. I will use this term throughout this thesis to avoid the use of the term 'male initiation' which is surrounded by many misconceptions and mixed meanings.

<sup>3</sup> A 'business ground' is the Warlpiri English term used to designate the cleared area in which a ceremony takes place.

The following morning over breakfast I was informed that we would need to go and get *yurlpa* (red ochre) so that the women could sing *yawulyu*<sup>4</sup>. There was a place where we could get this nearby. So when I had finished my tea, several women gathered together their crowbars and billy cans. We spent an exhausting day in the hot sun with little shade, hacking away at the dry, hard earth – in the end we had a few large chunks of reddish coloured soil. One old lady showed me how when it was ground into powder form and mixed with water it produced a beautiful shiny red paint.

When we got back to our camp we heard that during the day two more boys had been ‘caught’. Their mothers were sitting near to the business ground crying out in a high pitched wail, a look of helplessness and despair on their faces. In the late afternoon, nearing sunset, everyone clustered on to the business ground, women sitting on the far western side and men on the far eastern side. Two teenage boys sat amongst the women. Silence came over the whole group as two men in their twenties walked solemnly over to the group of women and took the hands of these teenage boys, leading them over to the men’s side. Their mothers, with whom they had been sitting, wailed helplessly, trying to grasp hold of their sons, clutching at them as they were led away and throwing themselves in the red soil when their attempts failed. They sat there sobbing dramatically until after sunset. The rest of us went back to our camp nearby.

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<sup>4</sup> *Yawulyu* is a genre of women’s song. This will be described in more detail in Chapter 3.

The following day after lunch the women gathered in several small groups under a shade which had been constructed on the western side of the business ground. The *yurlpa* we had collected and a white version called *ngunjungunju*, which someone produced from their bag, were applied to women's chests in beautiful designs. As they were being painted, the women sang *yawulyu* associated with the same Dreamings as the designs. Across on the eastern side of the business ground the men were dancing. I could see a Japangardi I knew from Yuendumu painted up with feathers in his hair and fluff attached to his body. Someone whispered to me "That's goanna from Mt Theo – he's looking for Nungarrayi"<sup>5</sup>. Three separate groups of women had formed, singing different songs and painting different women. The effect of this was a *mélange* of sound such that it was hard to make out the individual songs with the others singing in such close proximity. The women in these groups were thus leaning in close together so they could hear each other. This continued until sunset and after I headed back to our camp to get something to eat and have a rest before the big ceremony which was to be held that night. Exhausted from the heat and the labourious activities of the last few days I collapsed into my swag and fell into a deep sleep.

A few hours later, I awoke to the sound of a heavy clapstick beat and singing in the distance. I jumped up alarmed as I had missed the start of the ceremony. As I hesitantly made my way over to the business ground, I searched for someone I knew. A Napaljarri called out to me and I went over to sit with her. She told me

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<sup>5</sup> Several months later I learned the *Jukurpa* story associated with Mt Theo, where a Japangardi goanna falls in love with his mother-in-law, Nungarrayi. This relationship is 'wrong way' according to the rules of Warlpiri social organisation, but Japangardi continues to chase this Nungarrayi all the way from *Warnayaka* country to the north of Yuendumu, to a place called Yarripilangu in *Ngaliya* country to the south-west.



that her husband had been looking for me and went to get him. We went to the side of the business ground in an area that was open for both men and women. Japangardi told me sternly that I had to record this ceremony and was annoyed that I was late. I set up my recording machine on the side with the microphone close to the men who were singing. Fortunately I had a very long microphone lead so that I could myself sit amongst the women and operate the recording machine. Throughout the night I was called upon to dance several times. I imitated the other women of Nungarrayi subsection affiliation<sup>6</sup> as best I could as they danced in a long row facing eastwards, shuffling forwards with their arms slumped beside their bodies, occasionally certain women would hold one of several firesticks as they danced. The night was long and exhausting, the men frequently yelling out for the time, calculating how long it would be until the sun would rise. The boys being initiated sat at the back of the business ground decorated in white fluff. They looked spectacular as they occasionally stood up behind the glowing fire light and large windbreak made of green branches. This continued all-night until the sun rose in the morning. Quite suddenly I was told to pack up my things as we had to run. A frenzy of women gathering blankets and billy cans, raced back to our camp. In somewhat of an anticlimax we all lay down on our swags to get a few hours rest before the heat of the day took over. I could hear the sounds of the men in the distance as they finished up the business from the night.

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<sup>6</sup> Upon arrival in Yuendumu for the first time I had been given the subsection Nungarrayi such that Warlpiri people would know how to interact with me. My role in this ceremony was determined by this affiliation. Refer to Chapter 2 for more detail on these subsection terms.

This first time that I attended a *Kurdiji* ceremony I felt like I understood little of what was going on. Yet in the months following these *Kurdiji* ceremonies in Mt Allan, many people would often reflect back on this time with comments along the lines of ‘You know, you were there, and you danced’<sup>7</sup>. Whilst I did not understand much about what had happened or why, there were several points that were obvious from my first experiences of *Kurdiji* ceremonies. Amongst all the participants, there was a strong desire to adhere to their traditional roles, this being the most important part of the ceremony for many of the participants. Carrying out the required actions appropriately had a very strong emotive impact on the participants. The actions of the mothers revealed this in the most blatant way. Whilst they were clearly intensely proud of their sons, they unhesitantly adopted a role which revealed helplessness, despair and a sense of loss as their sons were being taken away from them – this involved ritualised wailing at various points. What was most clear from my participation in this ceremony was that it was about the experience; nobody was explaining to anyone the rationale or consciously thinking about the intellectual significance of the songs, actions or dances. They were however, participating wholeheartedly in this ceremony, the value and potency that it was having in their lives being due to the feelings surrounding what they were doing. An immense effort was being made to hold this ceremony, indicating the importance that it had to a very large group of people.

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<sup>7</sup> Several months later, one of the old men who had been singing during this ceremony gave me a beautiful painting saying he was “Just squaring things off” with me as I had danced in the role of mother for his son during this ceremony.

This thesis is an ethnography of the place of singing and ceremonies within contemporary Warlpiri lives in the settlement of Yuendumu, Central Australia. There is a widely held rhetoric amongst academics, the general public and Aboriginal people themselves that singing and ceremonial life are aspects of an authentic ‘traditional’ Aboriginal culture, something that has been devastated by European colonisation of Australia – in some areas more so than others. In the south-east of Australia, people of Aboriginal descent have lost a great deal of knowledge about their ceremonial life due to enforced settlement and the imposition of new ways by missionaries, station owners and other European settlers over the last 220 years. Social problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, family break-ups and the loss of enthusiasm for life have also been partly attributed to a loss of these kinds of religious knowledge and ritual. This is in particular because of their intrinsic connection to Aboriginal identity and the meaning this gives Aboriginal lives. Many programs that seek to deal with problems in Aboriginal settlements often initiate cultural heritage maintenance projects, paralleling this strengthening of cultural practice with the regaining of Aboriginal identity and a decrease in these kinds of social problems. Whilst I was living in Yuendumu, the highly successful Mt Theo Program, which works to eradicate drug abuse and petrol sniffing amongst indigenous youths, ran a program called *Jaru Pirrjirdi* (which translates as ‘Strong Culture’)<sup>8</sup>. This was run by around 15 ex-sniffers who saw their most important task as being the organising of ‘bush trips’ in which older Warlpiri people would take a group of their younger family members out into the bush for the weekend

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<sup>8</sup> Jeannie Nungarrayi Egan (now deceased) and her husband Thomas Jangala Rice, both crucial to the research on which this thesis is based, worked passionately for *Jaru Pirrjirdi* teaching young adults about their country and the associated stories and songs.

and teach them about the Dreaming stories and songs relating to the places which they visited. Older people participated in this enthusiastically, holding a similar view that if young people could only know about these aspects of their culture they would no longer have a need to resort to the kinds of anti-social behaviour that were negatively affecting their lives.

Songs and ceremonies are clearly an important component of Warlpiri people's cultural heritage, being a defining factor in their Aboriginal identity. Based on my fieldwork over 2005-2008, I explore what place ceremonial life has for contemporary Warlpiri people. Dramatic changes have clearly occurred to Aboriginal lifestyles in recent decades, yet what does this mean for the status of songs and ceremonies? Is this component of 'traditional' life something that is only important for older generations – a memento of the past that is becoming irrelevant in people's contemporary lives? Has the powerful role that ceremonies once had in Warlpiri religious life lost some of its significance? Are younger generations regarding these ceremonies as important for their ways of life or are they looked upon as a component of their cultural heritage, something only their grandparents know about? And if these ceremonies are still vital to aspects of Warlpiri lives, how will they take place when there are no longer any of the current older generation alive to sing the songs which are core to their performance? It is these questions that I explore in this thesis.

My approach to answering these questions comprises a detailed analysis of a ceremony known as *Kurdiji* which was held regularly throughout the time I spent in Yuendumu. Variations of this ceremony are held across the Central Desert and

are considered an essential ‘rite of passage’ (Van Gennep 1960 [1909]) for boys of prepubescent age to turn into men, thus making it a particularly interesting case study when exploring these questions of the importance of ritual to contemporary Warlpiri lives. I will use the term ‘initiation’ more generally to describe this kind of ceremony but will refer to this specific Warlpiri example as *Kurdiji*. The *Kurdiji* ceremony is a public ceremony in which a large majority of the Yuendumu population participates at various stages. Ceremonies like *Kurdiji* are often referred to as ‘male initiation’ in the literature resulting in the misconception that they are somehow restricted to men, particularly senior men who have a great deal of knowledge of Aboriginal religious life, and that the knowledge which is contained in these ceremonies should not be discussed in the presence of women or the general public. Whilst there are some stages of *Kurdiji* ceremonies that are restricted to men only (as recorded in Meggitt 1962: 281-316), I did not attend these nor was I even aware that they were happening. I write only about the public sections of this ceremony that are viewed by all people and to which outsiders (including many *kardiya*<sup>9</sup>) are frequently invited. Warlpiri people were keen for me to participate and record details of this ceremony and my research was made particularly easy by the enthusiasm and large numbers of people wanting to help. The *Kurdiji* ceremony marks an important stage in the life cycle of the boys involved and is highly significant for their fathers, brothers and circumcisers as well as a range of their female kin including their mother, sisters, future wife’s mother and future wife herself. The male and female realms of ceremony mix together in many ways. Françoise Dussart has taken up this point, emphasising that “women know about what is

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<sup>9</sup> *Kardiya* is the Warlpiri word used commonly around Yuendumu to refer to people of non-Aboriginal descent.

not proprietarily (in a ritual sense) “theirs’, and that while much of this knowledge cannot be performed by women formally, they nevertheless exert influence in performative domains technically off-limits to them” (Dussart 2000: 59).

It is through this ceremony, that changes in relationships amongst associated community members are forged. The relatives of a boy who is to be initiated enthusiastically participate in this ceremony and fulfil their ritual duties with the utmost seriousness. Mervyn Meggitt wrote that:

should [a Warlpiri boy] fail to pass through these rites, he may not enter into his father’s lodge, he may not participate in religious ceremonies, he cannot acquire a marriage line, he cannot legitimately obtain a wife; in short, he cannot become a social person (1984: 241).

Whilst the priorities of young men today are in many ways very different to those when Meggitt made this statement, it still holds that without going through this ritual at this point in his life cycle a young Warlpiri man cannot participate fully in social life as an adult person in this Aboriginal settlement.

*Kurdiji* ceremonies have maintained their place as an essential part of Warlpiri life when many other ceremonial forms have not. Warlpiri people would argue that this is because these ceremonies are essential for ‘making young men’ and that it has to be done as it is the way for boys around the age of 13-14 to be socialised into a new role as young men in which they have different responsibilities and are expected to behave in different ways. Many other

traditional ceremonial forms would also seem essential for other important elements of people's lives – such as ceremonies for curing sickness, for falling in love or to increase food resources. The frequency with which other ceremonies are held has, however, declined in recent decades such that today they are only known by a small group of older people.

Nicolas Peterson has suggested that the expansion of the numbers of people involved and of the distances which people travel to attend these Warlpiri initiation rites, is due to their emphasis on active roles of the younger generations rather than the specific knowledge of songs, designs and dances, which are predominantly known by older people (2000: 213). Erich Kolig noted a profound change in the role of religion in more recent decades, arguing that once something used to divide and differentiate people:

Religion is now rapidly becoming a powerful force binding the Aboriginal people together and fostering mutual recognition and solidarity. Religious practices have now created a modern network of communication and interaction that serves as a paradigm to instil a sense of belonging together (1981: 1).

Whilst it is true that in the *Kurdiji* ceremony there is more emphasis placed on the roles of young generations making it more inclusive of large numbers of people, the song series which is a crucial component of this ceremony is only sung by a small group of older men. Therefore despite the importance of this ceremony in contemporary Warlpiri lives in creating these widespread social networks, it has a somewhat precarious position as when there are no longer any

singers left this ceremony will have to change form significantly. I will explore the dilemmas surrounding these issues further in the conclusion to this thesis.

In this initial chapter I will begin by reviewing some of the literature on Aboriginal song and ceremonies, particularly that from Central Australia. Several scholars have focused their research on aspects of Warlpiri ritual life and I will thus show how my work will complement and extend some of their findings. I discuss some issues concerning change and adaptation, both particularly relating to Aboriginal ceremonial life, and more broadly connecting to the anthropological debates regarding the degree of dominance that broader structures or systems have over human practices. I outline some of the ideas surrounding the study of symbols and symbolic language in rituals, with an emphasis on performance theory within my central argument. I then move on to outline the fieldwork on which this thesis is based, my methodological approach and an outline of the rest of this thesis.

### ***Previous research into Central Australian songs and ceremonies***

Research into Aboriginal songs and ceremonies across Australia has been extensive, particularly so in the northern and central regions of the continent which were colonised more recently. In the last two decades, a number of volumes has been published incorporating the research of scholars working with Aboriginal music across Australia. Jamie Kassler and Jill Stubington edited a volume named *Problems and Solutions* in honour of Alice M. Moyle's



contributions to this field of study (Kassler and Stubington 1984). In Moyle's introduction, she highlights the fact that "...there have been social and political changes which have affected Aboriginal communities...[and] have had a marked effect on field work" (1984: 15). She notes the most prevalent of these to be the declining instances of 'traditional' singing and developments in the technology of audio-recording. This technological development has allowed musicologists to undertake very detailed structural analyses of Aboriginal music, in a way that was not possible before. Several papers in this volume (Ellis 1984; Hale 1984; and Wild 1984) focus on Central Australian songs, incorporating both technical musical and linguistic analyses.

Margaret Clunies Ross, Tamsin Donaldson and Stephen Wild also published a volume called *Songs of Aboriginal Australia* (1987). This volume, emphasises studies of 'song' over technical studies of 'music'. Linguists like Francesca Merlan (1987) and Peter Sutton (1987) have written specifically about the language used in songs with a particular interest in "how Aboriginal songs encode meaning and how opaque song texts are interpreted within Aboriginal communities" (Clunies Ross 1987: 2). One of the focal points emerging from these articles is a questioning of the Aboriginal ideology of the stability of their songs i.e. that a song is passed on in an unchanging form. This point will be addressed further shortly. This volume also emphasises the centrality of song in Aboriginal culture and encourages interdisciplinary collaboration to "avoid the non-holistic approaches that our own traditions of specialisation within separate academic disciplines have encouraged" (Clunies Ross 1987: 1).

Alice Moyle herself published a collection of papers in *Music and Dance of Aboriginal Australia and the South Pacific* (1992). This volume brings together verbatim the papers and discussion from the *Colloquium of the International Council for Traditional Music* held in Townsville. The main themes pervading this volume are what Moyle sees as “things that ethnomusicologists like to talk about” (1992: 1). These include: “their own experiences in the places where they worked; their dependence as researchers on the people whose cultures they have been able to study; their efforts to give back to these people copies of the tape recordings and films they have made; the doubts that some of them have since had about the usefulness of these efforts; and, the directions that some future activities of this kind should take” (1992: 1).

Linda Barwick, Allan Marett and Guy Tunstill published *The Essence of Singing and the Substance of Song* (1995), bringing together a collaboration of research on traditional Aboriginal music. This volume was put together in honour of Catherine Ellis and its articles evoke themes from her research. Their purpose, as stated in the introduction was to “...explore some of the ways in which songs and related cultural forms can be used as a departure point or point of reference, for discussions of insight, creativity and power; of philosophy, politics and/or education” (Barwick & Marett 1995: 1).

More recently Fiona Magowan and Karl Neuenfeldt edited *Landscapes of Indigenous Performance: Music, song and dance of Torres Strait and Arnhem Land* (2005). The papers in this volume look at how traditional styles of music from Arnhem Land and the Torres Strait have responded to the colonial forces,

in particular emphasising their creative power to adapt to new contexts for performance.

Allan Marett and Linda Barwick edited a special journal edition of *Australian Aboriginal Studies* entitled *Studies in Aboriginal Song* in 2007. The main focus of this volume was on song as both music and language with many of the papers being collaboratively authored by both linguists and musicologists working on issues of interplay between these two aspects. The majority of the papers in this volume deal with endangered song traditions. The editors emphasise in their introduction the catastrophic loss to future generations of Aboriginal people, and to heritage archives because too little research is being done on Aboriginal music, too late (Marett and Barwick 2007: 4).

Myfany Turpin, Tonya Stebbins and Stephen Morey (2010) have recently put together a special edition of *The Australian Journal of Linguistics* again pursuing the issue of how to explore song language through the interdisciplinary lens of musicology and linguistics. In particular the papers in this volume reveal songs to be “highly structured art forms that have the ability to convey complex associations of meaning beyond everyday spoken language” (Turpin and Stebbins 2010:1) through their analyses of both the formal properties of song (i.e. at least a textual and a musical component) and the meanings of songs. This volume, whilst not its sole regional focus, incorporates a number of papers from various regions across Australia.

Much of this research on Aboriginal songs has been focused in the Central Australian and Northern regions of Australia. Moyle (1974) has identified distinction between these two regional styles of music in terms of their instrumental accompaniments and their textual and melodic characteristics. She identified distinct central and northern styles. Songs from the Central Australian region are often described as being rigid in structure with little room for innovation, whereas songs from regions such as Arnhem Land are shown to leave a lot more to the individual's creativity to the point of having large parts which are improvised. This distinction has also been made in the New Grove Dictionary of Music (Sadie 1980) and in the analyses of the musical practices of individual groups within this region<sup>10</sup>. Wild (1984) has analysed the Warlpiri *Yam Purlapa* song series in this light, explaining that there are distinct northern influences despite this song's structural similarities to central Australian music. He provides a description of a performance of this song series and then attempts to correlate aspects of this musical performance with aspects of Warlpiri culture. He compares his analysis of this *purlapa* song series to those of Pintupi and Yolngu music observing that the Pintupi have less opportunity for individual assertiveness whereas the Yolngu emphasise this to a far greater degree. From this analysis Wild comes to the conclusion that the Warlpiri "straddle two major cultural regions in Australia", and whilst they clearly have more affiliations with other central Australian groups they have also absorbed influences from peoples to their north (1984: 201). Richard Moyle (1979) points out that the Pintupi, who have close ritual ties to the Warlpiri and therefore have very similar structural

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<sup>10</sup> It is widely accepted by many linguists that Australian languages differ significantly between these two regions. The Pama-Nyungan language family incorporates languages spoken across a large section of southern Australia, whereas non-Pama-Nyungana language families are found clustered in the north. (see O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin 1966).

features in their music, do not seem to allow for the degree of variation that is evident in Warlpiri music. However, in his other book on 'Alyawarra Music' (1986) he notes that these people to the east of the Warlpiri have songs which are less conservative and show more innovation, perhaps as they are located further to the north-east. Much of this comparative work is based on Wild's documentation of Warlpiri music as he recorded it in Lajamanu in the 1970s. Yuendumu is located significantly further south (see map 1), and although there are many people with kin relations in Lajamanu and consequently much sharing of songs, there are not as many northern influences and therefore there is not as much room for innovation in these songs. This does not mean though that Warlpiri songs are unchanging in their form as will be discussed in a moment.

There are many detailed studies that I will not discuss in this introduction concerning the songs of Northern Australia (see for examples R.Berndt 1951 & 1952; Marett 2005; Toner 2001), Cape York (see Dixon and Duwell 1990) and the south-east (Donaldson 1984; Gummow 1994 & 1995; Hercus and Koch 1995; 1997 & 1999). In the 1930s, Norman Tindale recorded songs from all over Australia and many others have followed in this pursuit in specific regions. The AIATSIS archive in Canberra houses many hours of sound recordings and films of Aboriginal songs and ceremonies. Comparatively little analytical work has been done to go alongside these. I hope that the song texts and analysis presented in this thesis will contribute to this gap in knowledge such that the recordings I have made of the Warlpiri *Kurdiji* ceremony can be better understood by future generations.

Theodore Strehlow's research conducted in the 1930s and eventually published in a volume entitled *Songs of Central Australia* is to this day the most extensive collection of song texts published from this region (Strehlow 1971). Here he brought together a collection of Arrernte and Luritja songs, analysing their song texts and themes as well as, to a lesser degree, their rhythmic and musical structures. Strehlow also made extensive films and sound recordings which are today housed at AIATSIS alongside those made by his father, Carl Strehlow, who was a Lutheran missionary at Hermannsburg between 1894 and 1922.

Catherine Ellis's research into Pintjantjatjara music in South Australia has contributed significantly to scholarly knowledge of Central Australian music. Ellis's observation that "music is the main intellectual medium through which Aboriginal people conceptualise their world" (Ellis 1985: 84) is fundamental to much of her research. Aside from her academic contributions, Ellis also had an interest in music therapy and music education which led her to establish the Centre for Aboriginal Studies of Music (CASM) in Adelaide, where many indigenous people from throughout South Australia participated in musical education programs focusing on traditional styles of music from their homelands.

Richard Moyle has contributed two large volumes, one focusing on Pintupi music (1979) and the other on Alyawarra music (1986). These books have been influential for this research, particularly in his distinctions between different categories of song and the dynamics of performance. In his book on Alyawarra music he gives a generalised description of a male initiation ceremony. Despite the many similarities in these ceremonies across the desert area, in comparing his

description to the Warlpiri *Kurdiji* ceremony, it is revealed that there are distinct differences in the ways in which these ceremonies are performed in different places.

Within Warlpiri territory there have been a number of studies of songs and ceremonies as well as some detailed analyses of Warlpiri ritual organisation and the surrounding negotiations. In particular, I refer to Stephen Wild's thesis *Warlpiri Music and Dance in their Social and Cultural Nexus* submitted in 1975, and Françoise Dussart's book *The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement: Kinship, Gender and the Currency of Knowledge* published in 2000. Wild's research on Warlpiri songs and ceremonies as performed during his fieldwork in Lajamanu from 1969-1970 forms a large part of his thesis. This volume outlines a contextual background to these songs, a description of their nature and some examples of different types of Warlpiri songs. Wild worked primarily with men, producing rich descriptions of male song genres and their performance contexts. Whilst he does mention in brief women's roles in ceremonies he provides little detailed information regarding women's song genres.

Dussart's (2000) book about the Warlpiri people living at Yuendumu gives us a more detailed reflection of the relationships and statuses of women and men in Aboriginal societies based on her fieldwork which has continued since the early 1980s. A large focus of this book is her analysis of the negotiations surrounding the performance of rituals within the settlement. Through her intensive work with female ritual leaders, Dussart comes to problematise dichotomies that are common in the literature concerning this region, which oppose secret/public and

male/female rituals. She highlights the problems of attempting to put ritual life into categories such as men's, women's, secret and open. Giving some detailed case studies, Dussart highlights that issues of gender and kinship are never clear cut. This book and Dussart's numerous papers on the women's song genre *yawulyu* (see for examples Dussart 2003 and Dussart 2004) also contribute significantly to our knowledge of women's roles in Warlpiri ceremony.

Several more general ethnographies have been written that also incorporate observations on Warlpiri songs and ceremonies. Mervyn Meggitt's (1962) classic ethnography *Desert People* which describes Warlpiri life in the 1950s, is an extensive study of many aspects of Warlpiri life, predominantly based on fieldwork in Lajamanu but also a few briefer visits to other Warlpiri settlements including Yuendumu. He also provides good descriptions of aspects of Warlpiri ritual life, particularly initiation rites including the *Kurdiji* ceremony, which I will draw on later in this thesis. Meggitt's (1966) series of monographs, *The Gadjari Among the Warlpiri in Transition*, also give detailed examinations of the ceremonies which were in the past held surrounding initiation.

Nancy Munn's (1973) book *Warlpiri Iconography* focused on the designs used in Warlpiri storytelling. She gives an account of ceremonial life in Yuendumu in the 1950s shortly after the settlement had been established. Munn worked with both women and men and largely focused on analyses of sand drawings that accompanied stories. Her emphasis on the symbolic representations of these designs has had important implication for studies of Warlpiri art. She shows how



these designs are incorporated into ceremonies both on the ground and painted on people's bodies in their ritual contexts.

Based on her extensive fieldwork in Lajamanu since the 1970s, Barbara Glowczewski has published several narrative style books in French, as well as numerous papers (see for examples Glowczewski 1983; 1991). Of particular interest to this study is a CD-ROM entitle *Dream Trackers: Yapa Art and Knowledge of the Australian Desert* (2001) which includes many of her film and sound recordings of Warlpiri songs and ceremonies. The text forms of many of her transcriptions and associated material are also included.

A large number of papers and theses have been published on Warlpiri people's ways of life<sup>11</sup>. There are numerous papers discussing individual song genres and types of ceremonies (see for examples Dussart 2003 & 2004; Hale 1984; Meggitt 1966; Peterson 1970; Wild 1984 & 1990 in Dixon and Duwell). Several films have also been made including Sandall and Peterson's of the *Ngajakula* ceremony (1977[1967]) and Lander and Perkins' film of *Jardiwanpa* (1992). I will discuss this literature further in my description of different genres of Warlpiri song in Chapter 3.

The literature outlined above on Central Australian songs is based on fieldwork undertaken over the last sixty years. Significant changes have taken place with

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<sup>11</sup> See David Nash's online reference list at <http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/wlp/> for an up-to-date bibliography of the hundreds of papers, books and theses that have been written about Warlpiri people, their language and ceremonial life. Nash also lists a large number of sound recordings but notes there are many more housed in AIATSIS.

respect to Warlpiri people's lives over this time. My research will place these descriptions of Warlpiri ceremonial life in their historical context as a point of comparison to the contemporary situation that I will describe in this thesis.

### ***Adaptation, change and continuity***

In *Songs of Central Australia*, Strehlow (1971) emphasises time and again that Aboriginal songs are passed down from generation to generation in an exact form. He reiterates the Aboriginal belief that songs are given to people from Dreaming ancestors, thus giving people little control over the ways in which they are performed. Despite these bold comments about the unchanging nature of Aboriginal songs some of Strehlow's observations indicate that he may have suspected otherwise. For example in discussing the learning process involved when teaching ceremonies to initiates he writes:

...most of the verses of these songs are learned by the young men at a time when the correct explanations of the archaic and poetic words have not yet been given to them (1971: 203).

This suggests that Strehlow recognised that the knowledgeable elders were structuring the ways in which songs were being learned and understood so as to slowly reveal the knowledge that they encapsulated. This gives these older men a degree of control over when and how songs are learned and which bits of this powerful information particular people know. Although Strehlow echoes an Aboriginal ideology about lack of change, there are many examples throughout his writing that show his recognition of the potential for innovation and change.

Geza Roheim (1945: 3) demonstrates how unconscious mislearning of a song, such as incorporating a misheard word into a song, leads to a transformation in tradition. Ken Hale explores a similar point but regards this type of change as a creative act, a way in which people are actively controlling the ways in which songs are sung rather than learning verbatim passages. He states in an interview with Jenny Green that what he wanted to do was show that there was ‘slippage’ when learning a song<sup>12</sup>. He sums this up in saying that “...you have a right to get it wrong” (in Green 2001: 40). Hale (1984) demonstrates this through an example of the Honey Ant song in both Warlpiri and Arandic contexts showing how changes can occur which provide avenues for creativity. He puts forth the idea, that “...the *learning* of a song is a creative act” (1984: 260). Hale emphasises that:

The view of creativity...must, of course, not be limited to the creation of an entity which never existed before. Creativity in the sense I mean here subsumes this and re-creation. This is, incidentally, consistent with an important principle in central Australian philosophy - namely, the principle of ‘the persistence of entities through transformation’ (1984: 260).

This concept is crucial in understanding what is meant by ‘creativity’ in the Aboriginal Australian context.

In discussing the notion of ‘cyclical perpetuity’ in an Aboriginal philosophy of time, Hale demonstrates how Warlpiri lexicon reflects a belief that “...a given entity presented to the senses at a given time is simply the current manifestation

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<sup>12</sup> Hale (1984) equates this to ‘mislearning’ and shows that by doing this people were making some kind of aesthetic improvement to a song.

of something which has existed always and will always exist” (1986: 235). Hale’s examination of Warlpiri verbs indicated that words like ‘create’ do not exist with their closest glosses being ‘transform’, ‘turn into’ and ‘fix’ (1986: 235-236). In this way Warlpiri people are never ‘creating’ anything ‘new’ but instead changing the form of something which previously existed in another form. As was noted in the above quote, nothing is surprising to an Aboriginal person; it is interesting. Geoff O’Grady was the first to publish anything about this concept of ‘the unity of the actual and the potential’ with his observations from his analysis of lexical items that there were shared terms for ‘fire’ and ‘firewood’ or ‘animal’ and ‘meat’ (1960).

Dussart discusses songs that are dreamt by Warlpiri people, noting that:

The nature of a dream’s new or reconfigured condition is called into question because of the perceptual distinctions surrounding the innovation. The dreamers themselves, when pushed for a specific term, may call what they dream “new”. But further amplification reveals that they consider the material to be retrieved or re-remembered – reclaimed from the Dreaming after an unspecified time of neglect or amnesia (2000: 147).

Sylvie Poirier’s book, *The World of Relationships* (2005), about the Kukatja people from around the Balgo area, to the north-west of Yuendumu. The underlying theme of Poirier’s book is an emphasis on the ‘openness’ and ‘flexibility’ of the Dreaming. The main data that Poirier discusses is related to

the process of being given new ceremonies in nocturnal dreams, again revealing openness to new information within the accepted structures<sup>13</sup>.

In his book *Knowledge and Secrecy in Aboriginal Religion*, Ian Keen (1994) comments on the restriction of religious knowledge in North-East Arnhem land to ritually senior Yolngu men and women. He highlights the ambiguous meanings of songs and suggests this is a way to control access to and use of this valuable and powerful knowledge (Keen 1994: 42). Francesca Merlan has also taken up this point in noting that the "The textual opacity of Aboriginal songs forces the learner (whether outside analyst or local person) to rely largely, even entirely, upon knowledgeable interpreters..." (1987: 146). This puts those ritually knowledgeable people in a powerful position as they are relied upon for an understanding of ritual matters. In Keen's discussion entitled 'the same but different' he shows that there is agreement amongst Yolngu about the general stories and symbols used in myth but the interpretations of them can be quite different (1994: 61).

The above discussion highlights one made by many in anthropology concerning the degree of dominance of broader social systems over the events of individual lives and the control that social actors have to shape their world when they live in an organised society with accepted ways, broader structures and systems (such as the Laws determined by the Dreaming). In *An Outline to a Theory of Practice* Pierre Bourdieu places a strong emphasis on structural power, his notion of

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<sup>13</sup> Lucy Napaljarri Kennedy (now deceased) explained that the *milarlpa* from her country brought the Dreaming from another place to where she was and informed her of it in a dream (Laughren 2009: pers.comm.).

*habitus* outlining a deeply buried structure that shapes people's dispositions to act in such ways that they wind up accepting the dominance of others, or of "the system" without actually being made to do so (1977). I will return to this notion in Chapter 7 where I discuss the ways in which the participants of a ceremony are absorbing broader themes surrounding initiation without being 'taught' in any way. Whilst still maintaining an interest in human practice, Marshall Sahlins' ideas differ somewhat from Bourdieu's, emphasising that human beings are not passively living their lives according to the dictums of particular cultural rules but are in fact active in controlling what happens (1985). I draw on the ideas of both of these scholars, emphasising that rituals and ceremonies are practices in which the participants are active in shaping what happens. I will, however, also emphasise that there are certain ingrained ideas about Warlpiri initiation which shape the way people make decisions about what will happen. The *Kurdiji* ritual that I analyse in this thesis reveals that cultural values and orientations of Warlpiri society are being made real through the performance of this ceremony. Edmund Leach explains that "Ritual is a medium for the expression of cultural ideas and models that, in turn, serves to orient, though not prescribe, other forms of social behaviour" (1976: 40). I will demonstrate that the symbolism of this Warlpiri initiation ritual is not understood by the participants through objective analyses of what the words or actions mean but rather through the experience of singing, dancing and performing the ritual in its social context. The symbols associated with this ritual are incorporated into their understanding of initiation which they carry through their lives. Michael Jackson has argued that "human experience is grounded in bodily movement within a social and material environment, and examining at the level of event the

interplay between habitual patterns of body use and conventional ideas about the world” (1983: 327). I will demonstrate in Chapter 7, that Warlpiri people gain an understanding of the themes surrounding initiation in a somewhat unconscious way through participating as dancers, singers and actors in this ceremony.

Historical circumstances over the last one hundred years have clearly had an influence over the ways that people choose to live their lives. This is very evident in contemporary Aboriginal Australia in which dramatic changes to Aboriginal lives have occurred in an extremely short space of time. In Chapter 2 of this thesis I present some historical background over the last century in Central Australia showing how the move of Warlpiri people from living as hunter-gatherers in small family groups to living in larger settlements has impacted on the place that ceremonies and songs play in their lives.

Several scholars provide some good examples of how Aboriginal songs and ceremonies have endured through time by adapting to changing circumstances in people’s worlds. Dussart has written about the changes that have occurred to the performance of public rituals for Warlpiri people living in Yuendumu (Dussart 2004: 276). She explains how after settlement in 1946 public performances were dominated by the men’s genres of *purlapa* which were held in the settlement for a predominantly Aboriginal audience<sup>14</sup>. With the onset of the Aboriginal Land

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<sup>14</sup> Women were, however, most probably holding ceremonies in special women’s areas during this time but only sang and danced publicly in larger ceremonies such as *Kurdiji* and other aspects of initiation. Laughren (2009: pers.comm.) has suggested that the segregation of men and women increased with settlement as there were so many avoidance relationships occurring amongst people living in a restricted location. This would have significantly restricted where women could go in the settlement.

Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976, and the subsequent need to perform public ceremonies as proof of legal rights to land, women began to be included in these public performances and the audience extended to include non-Aboriginal viewers. Dussart also explains that when the acrylic art movement began in the 1980s, there were demands for public performances at the openings of art exhibition all over the world. She demonstrates that these changes in gendered roles and performance contexts have gone alongside a change in the purpose for performance.

Elizabeth Mackinlay has also discussed how ceremonial contexts and gendered roles have adapted to post-settlement changes in Borroloola, in the Gulf of Carpentaria region (2000). She demonstrates through an example of a particular song, how a genre of restricted women's performance became unrestricted as male/female roles changed over the last 50 years. She attributes the employment of men in the cattle industry in the 1950s to the creation of a gender imbalance amongst the Yanyuwa living in Borroloola. As the men were often away for long periods working, the women were employed as domestic help on homesteads having a greater opportunity to expand their ceremonial responsibilities. The opening up of a particular genre of women's performance to incorporate men was a way in which women redressed the gender imbalance that had been created in this period.

Both the examples from Dussart and Mackinlay demonstrate that performance genres are flexible and open to negotiation according to the performers' changing life experiences. It is evident that in analysing songs and ceremonies



much is reflected about the changes occurring within a society. Scholars such as Anthony Seeger (1987) have suggested that musical practices create and define many aspects of social life. He describes this type of analysis as ‘musical anthropology’ and contrasts it with Alan Merriam’s (1964) earlier ‘anthropology of music’ which emphasised the study of music in culture. Thus Seeger argues that:

Rather than assuming that there is a pre-existing and logically prior social and cultural matrix within which music is performed, it examines the way music is part of the very construction and interpretation of social and conceptual relationships and processes (Seeger 1987: xiv).

This draws us back to the above debate concerning the dominance of overarching structures which influence people’s values and beliefs rather than the individuals pursuing their own objectives within this framework. In this thesis I wish to show that Warlpiri people are indeed manipulating, controlling, adapting, changing and choosing to follow the guidelines of the Dreaming and enacting this through song and ceremony. My case study focusing on the *Kurdiji* ceremony will further demonstrate how the contingencies of people’s lives are shaping the performances of songs and ceremonies.

### ***Performance theories***

The study of ritual has fascinated anthropologists since the beginnings of anthropology as a discipline, largely because the use of symbols in ritual contexts can give deep insight into a people’s world view, the interpretation of

which presents an interesting intellectual challenge. The ways in which these symbols are studied however have been approached from many perspectives. In my analysis of the Warlpiri *Kurdiji* ceremony I will draw on the ideas developed over the last few decades that emphasise that ritual performances are powerful because of what they do rather than what they mean, the symbols thus being effective because of the ways in which they are enacted. I will analyse a particular performance of *Kurdiji* focusing on several key ideas which have developed out of this theoretical emphasis on performance. I will also analyse in detail the language used in the *Kurdiji* song series (particularly in Chapter 6) as it is vital in guiding these actions.

The work of John Austin (1975 [1962]) distinguished between the performative act of speaking and the actual content of what is being said. He outlines examples of words which are performative in themselves such as “I thee wed...” in which the act of saying these words is what is meaningful. This translated into an anthropological tendency to de-emphasise analyses of the content of uses of ritual language, emphasising instead it’s performative function. Many people studying rituals have ignored uses of ritualised language regarding them as passages recited verbatim with little actually being understood and therefore having little relevance to the meaning of the overall performance. Maurice Bloch (Bloch 1974: 67) has discussed how the meaning potential of language is lost by the kind of formalisation that occurs in a ritual context drawing on Austin’s (1975 [1962]) ideas of the “illocutionary act” in which the purpose of language is to influence people, not to explain things. In the *Kurdiji* ceremonies I took part in and which form the central subjects of this thesis, the songs are only known by a

handful of older men and the content and its symbolic associations are not widely understood by the majority of the participants<sup>15</sup>. Other men sit with these singers yet are ‘just humming’ (see Peterson 2008) the tune of these songs. These songs may be paralleled to uses of Latin in Catholic Church services in which passages are recited as they have been categorised over time as being essential in achieving particular purposes. Whilst the individual words may not mean a great deal, when put together in the given context of performance they are influencing people’s actions, understandings and feelings regarding the performance. In my analysis I will argue however, that these songs are crucial in guiding the dancers and actions performed by other participants of the ceremony. It is hard to imagine the form this ceremony would take if there were no men who knew these songs, not merely because there would be no background singing, which is regarded as necessary to achieve the expected purposes but also because the other participants would have no guide as to what they needed to be doing and when to do it. It is for these reasons that, despite my emphasis on performance as the main mode of understanding I devote a whole chapter to analysing the content of the songs sung for the *Kurdiji* ceremony.

Amongst participants there is an implicit knowledge of how the ceremony will take place that has been derived from their experience of attending these ceremonies throughout their lives. Edward Schieffelin explains that, in ritual “meanings are formulated in a social rather than cognitive space, and the participants are engaged with the symbols in the interactional creation of a

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<sup>15</sup> This would not have been the case several decades ago when more people understood the associations of these songs. Nor may it be the case in other settlements where *Kurdiji* ceremonies are held today.

performance reality” (1985: 707). In my analysis of the content of this performance I will emphasise the way in which the symbolic material (in the song language, dances and other movements) discussed is being performed. In Chapter 6 I will show that there is a cognitive dimension to these ceremonies which should not be ignored due to this emphasis on performance. Here I will show that there is an understanding by the participants that they are relating to the *Jukurpa* and that this is important in their minds for linking songs to actions and for defining social and ritual roles. The associations that are made between particular songs, dances and actions amongst the participants make the songs meaningful in a way that has little to do with an intellectual analysis of their symbolic meanings yet is ultimately linked. Therefore whilst the meaning of these songs is not based in analyses of song content for the participants, there is a requirement that there be people in attendance who understand the symbolic representations made in songs well enough to be able to make these links apparent to the other participants.

A final point that I would like to make before moving on to a discussion of the fieldwork undertaken, brings me back to the discussion above concerning the dominance of overarching structural systems on the performance of ceremonies. In Richard Bauman’s *Verbal Art as Performance* (1975) he devotes a chapter to the emergent quality of performance. Here he emphasises that:

The ethnographic construction of the structured, conventionalised performance system standardises and homogenises description, but all performances are not the same, and one wants to be able to appreciate the individuality of each, as well as the community-wide patterning of the overall domain (Bauman 1975: 37).

With this idea in mind I have chosen to present a focal case study of a particular *Kurdiji* ceremony that was performed in February 2007. I hope through my analysis of this ceremony to show that whilst Warlpiri people may make idealised versions of this ceremony, what actually happens at any one particular ceremony is dependent on the contingencies of the particular situations and the dynamics of the lives of the participants at that time. This reinforces the ideas that the performance of rituals do not follow rigid structures; their practices being negotiated according to the interests of the participants (see Shieffelin 1985).

### ***Fieldwork***

The fieldwork on which this thesis is based was undertaken for a total of 17 months between late 2005 – early 2008. From November 2005 until February 2007 I was living in Yuendumu permanently and then I undertook two month long visits in May 2007 and January/February 2008. Throughout all these periods of fieldwork I used similar methodological techniques. My primary methodology was participant-observation, living and spending my days and nights immersed in Warlpiri people's lives. Not only did this mean that I was always aware when there were ceremonial or other events on but that I got to see things from a Warlpiri perspective and gain an understanding of the shared values of the community members (as well as people's individual eccentricities) and participate in everyday discussions surrounding these.

After all ceremonial events I took detailed notes. Unfortunately it was often difficult for me to take notes during the ceremonies. As many ceremonies were held at night I simply did not have any light with which I could write. Often I was preoccupied with the recording machine and monitoring the sound levels and my role in these ceremonies meant that I was required to dance at certain times and move around to different areas of the ceremony ground. Whilst I could set up the recording machine and still participate in this way, carrying a notebook around and writing whilst I did this was not only a burden but may have been inappropriate. Whilst in some respects this may mean I have not remembered some of the subtleties of what happened, in many others ways my understanding of the social negotiations occurring and the ways in which people ‘experience’ ceremonies were greatly enhanced. Warlpiri people emphasised to me that my understanding of ceremonies came from my participation much more so than from my later questioning or transcription of recordings. For the ceremony that I have written about in this thesis I also went over what had happened with several of the key participants incorporating these details into the description presented in Chapter 5.

Additionally, and as part of my involvement with the Warlpiri Songlines Project, I used a Marantz solid state digital recording machine to make elicited recordings mainly with senior singers and non-elicited recordings of ceremonies for which I had gained prior consent to record. This task was undertaken in intense collaboration with two senior Warlpiri people, Thomas Jangala Rice and his wife Jeannie Nungarrayi Egan. Thomas, being one of only a handful of senior men who are still alive and healthy, shared the extraordinary depth of his

religious knowledge through recording many public men's songs and providing detailed exegesis. He also facilitated my work with other senior men and guided me as to appropriate ways in which to record ceremonial events. Thomas will be referred to extensively throughout this thesis as one of the senior men who sang the *Kurdiji* songs that are the focus of the central case study. He is widely respected for his knowledge of traditional law and culture. Thomas' wife Jeannie, having been a teacher at the Yuendumu School for over 30 years as part of the bilingual education program, is literate in both English and Warlpiri. She assisted my work with Thomas, transcribing the words of the songs and making sure I understood the subtleties of the exegesis which Thomas provided. She also attended recording sessions that we organised with senior women, later transcribing the words of these songs too and working with these women to write down as much information as we could about the songs and their associated *Jukurra* stories. Many older women in Yuendumu also participated in this recording project, the genre of women's song known as *yawulyu* being the genre of song for which I have the most recordings and the most detailed transcriptions<sup>16</sup>. These recordings are all housed at the Pintupi Anmatyerre Warlpiri Media Archives (PAW) in Yuendumu and at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra.

My choice of informants was largely dependent on who wanted to work with me. As Yuendumu is a relatively tight-knit community, it was generally accepted who were the people with ritual knowledge. On arriving in Yuendumu and

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<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately there was no appropriate place in this thesis to discuss the details of the recordings of *yawulyu* which I made in Yuendumu. I have only briefly been able to mention these at various points.

explaining my research topic I was guided to these people immediately. Unfortunately this did have the adverse effect of making it very difficult to discuss the experience of ceremonial performance with those people who were not deemed to be experts yet were important participants in these ceremonies. This, however, was possible in several situations where they played a key role in the performance. For example, with the case study given in this thesis, most of the mothers of the initiands were not deemed to be ritually knowledgeable but were so important to the performance of the ceremony that I was able to discuss with them afterwards the role they had played and how they had understood it. Also in many instances where there was no longer a senior person left who knew the songs, a younger 'owner' was called upon to attend recording sessions even if they did not know how to sing the songs – their presence as an owner for that song being what was required rather than their knowledge of the song series<sup>17</sup>.

Another interesting aspect of the whole recording process was the extreme interest of Warlpiri people in this project. Given that these songs have been passed down as oral tradition for many generations, recording a particular instance of their performance would seem in many ways irrelevant. This was not the case; Warlpiri people seeing recording as a highly important task. Their reasons for this being that otherwise these songs would be lost when they die as they were not being passed on to younger generations in today's world. Thus in a way, a cultural heritage record was the aim of this project for many of the

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<sup>17</sup> This is an example of a contemporary situation in which younger people are actively learning the songs.



participants. I spent a great deal of time during my fieldwork burning CDs of the recordings that I was making for the singers and their family members.

Initially, due to my own past education, reading a body of literature on Central Australian songs and ceremonies which emphasises the ‘secret’ nature of songs and ceremonies, I was reluctant to record without making sure that all participants were in agreement that this should happen. My ways of doing this were often to make a big fuss of my recording machine and setting it up in a prominent position so that anyone who had a problem would be able to articulate it before I began recording. As I spent more time in Yuendumu I realised that Warlpiri people really did want me to record these ceremonies and in many ways saw me doing them a favour and were often offended if I did not make the effort. By the end of my initial 15-month stay in the settlement, at the *Kurdiji* ceremonies held over the summer of 2006/2007, the boss of these ceremonies would call out for me to put my recording machine on at the appropriate moment, making my job much easier as I did not have to worry about running around for permission beforehand.

As I have emphasised above, rituals are socially emergent and therefore all participants do not experience them in the same way. As my choice of informants was largely dependent on who wanted to work with me and as a particular ritual will mean different things to different people, the analysis in this thesis is not intended to be a “correct” version but one that exists in a set cultural frame. Thomas and Jeannie, as my principal informants were perhaps somewhat unusual in their willingness, ability and desire to articulate the meanings of this

ritual and the details of the symbolism used in the song texts. Transcription of songs was somewhat more difficult than transcription of spoken Warlpiri. Often whole songs would have generalized meanings that were given, whereas for others individual words could be detected and glossed. Some songs were in other languages (often Anmatyerre or Luritja) and many words were in a special kind of song language or a kind of skewed pronunciation of spoken Warlpiri (refer to Chapter 3 for further details on song language). For many songs, even Jeannie and Thomas were reluctant to give me an articulated explanation preferring to allude to its meaning through metaphoric association until I eventually caught on. I came to appreciate this as a central part of learning about songs. The longer I spent in Yuendumu and the better my knowledge of Warlpiri ways of life and environment became, the more interesting this method of learning was with descriptions of song meanings revolving around what my informants knew that I already understood.

### ***Thesis outline***

This thesis is presented in eight chapters, including this introduction. In Chapter 2, I provide a historical and social context for the present study beginning with a background to the founding of Yuendumu settlement and a description of Warlpiri people's daily lives over the period of my fieldwork from 2005-2008. Following on from this I discuss some of the continuities and changes that have occurred over the last century with a particular emphasis on Warlpiri people's ceremonial life.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the ways in which Warlpiri songs and ceremonies are marked off as being different from other domains of Warlpiri life. I emphasise the integrated nature of a Warlpiri song – encompassing song text, musical structure, dances and designs – all within particular performance contexts. I also present the different genres of Warlpiri songs and describe their performance contexts over the time of my fieldwork.

My focus in Chapter 4 is on providing some of the conceptual and organisational thinking that accompanies the performance of Warlpiri songs and ceremonies. Here I discuss the notion of the *Jukurrpa* as Warlpiri people living in Yuendumu today experience it. I then follow on to discuss the connections that people have with the country through which these *Jukurrpa* travel, and the ceremonies associated with them. The final section of the chapter outlines how these roles play out in ceremonial organisation and finishes by introducing the unique nature of the organisation of the *Kurdiji* ceremony, the central case study of this thesis.

In Chapter 5, I present a description of the events of a *Kurdiji* ceremony held in February 2007 discussing the roles of different kin and the course of events in each phase of the ritual which lasts for several weeks in its entirety. In Chapter 6, I focus in particular on the central song series sung during the all-night phase of this ceremony. Through a discussion of the central *Jukurrpa* story in which it is connected I show how this song content is in fact a crucial aspect of the performance of this ceremony as it guides what is happening throughout the night.

In Chapter 7, I bring together some of the main themes that are raised by this example, arguing that the participants are drawing an understanding of these themes through their active participation in the performance rather than through an abstract understanding of the knowledge contained in the song series. The themes that I discuss involve ways of evoking country, states of liminality, the expansion of networks of relationships and the reproducing of distinct male and female realms.

In Chapter 8, I draw together some conclusions on the place of singing and ceremony in contemporary Warlpiri life and answer some of the central questions raised in this introduction regarding Warlpiri people's adaptations to their changing circumstances. I will draw on the central case study of the *Kurdiji* ceremony to analyse why this ceremony has remained so popular in a world where many other ceremonies are declining in their frequency of performance.

## Chapter 2. Historical and social context

For months people had excitedly been telling me “*Jardiwanpa*’s going to be starting soon”. My initial response to this had been enthusiastic as I had seen films of this spectacular ceremony in Canberra before I had come up to Yuendumu<sup>18</sup>. As time went on and this ceremony did not occur, my enthusiasm waned. I was told that it was ‘traditionally’ held after the annual Yuendumu Sports Weekend, this event occurring every year in the first week of August. Sports Weekend came and went and discussions of *Jardiwanpa* began to fly around Yuendumu with fervour. Shortly after, a respected woman in her 60s passed away. Her status and apparent good health at the time of her passing away resulted in lengthy mortuary rituals that lasted for several weeks - many people travelled from far away to attend. There was ‘too much Sorry’ now for *Jardiwanpa* to possibly begin<sup>19</sup>.

About a month later, once Sorry was finished, *Jardiwanpa* again resumed as the topic of excited conversations. Then one day, an old lady who is a traditional owner for *Jardiwanpa* sites near to Yuendumu, told me to come up to the business ground in the east of the settlement at sunset time. As she spoke she held her hands up, palms facing forwards beside her shoulder and called out ‘uh, uh, uh, uuuuuhh’ – this I later that day learned to be the way that women danced for this ceremony and a common reference to it in conversation. Each

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<sup>18</sup> Peterson has glossed these ceremonies as ‘fire ceremonies’ (Peterson 1970). A performance of *Jardiwanpa* was filmed in 1992 by Ned Landar and a similar ceremony *Ngajakula* was filmed by Roger Sandall in 1967.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Sorry’ is the Warlpiri English word for the mortuary rituals that are held directly after someone dies (for further details see Meggitt 1962, Glowczewski 1983 and Musharbash 2008).

afternoon from then on a small group of old women would gather waiting at this business ground. A few old men would sit further out in the bush talking for several hours each afternoon. Some evenings the men would come and sit in the middle of the ceremony ground and sing songs from the *Jardiwanpa* song series, the women would follow sitting just to the south of the men in an east-west line. They would occasionally get up and dance. Younger women in their 30s and 40s would come up too, but they never danced and always sat at the back looking down so as not to attract attention to themselves. One day I noticed that the old ladies were gathering up there and I asked a 23 year old woman who was in my car if she wanted to come up. She responded by asking me to drop her at home explaining that *Jardiwanpa* was boring – people of her age were more into going to the disco.

Several months later we were still waiting for all the people who needed to arrive in Yuendumu to finish *Jardiwanpa* in its spectacular final two nights. A series of deaths and the requirements to attend other mortuary rituals in various settlements interrupted this ceremony many times. The difficulties of finding transport and money for fuel to get back to Yuendumu further lengthened these interruptions. In early October several hundred people gathered in Yuendumu for an Assembly of God convention. Whilst there are only a small group of people in Yuendumu who identify with this religious group it was a point of fascination for many<sup>20</sup>. Each night as we sat at the business ground, the Assembly of God convention participants would set up at the basketball court in the centre of the

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<sup>20</sup> In Lajamanu, where many people in Yuendumu have close family, many members of the Baptist church had joined up with this Assembly of God group, not seeing a conflict of interests between these two forms of Christianity, as do members of the Yuendumu Baptist church.

settlement, turn their speakers up loud and sing and preach, telling people that it was wrong to live in their traditional ways, to participate in business<sup>21</sup> or adhere to other culturally appropriate conventions. After several nights of fighting to be heard over this, the group of old people performing *Jardiwanpa* decided they would wait until this convention was over. Many of them I saw in the following days entranced by the events of the AOG convention.

In late November several senior community members held a meeting. The time of year had come when they needed to start thinking about the annual *Kurdiji* ceremonies<sup>22</sup>. It was proposed that *Jardiwanpa* should be temporarily suspended until after *Kurdiji* was finished. Whilst the traditional owners for this ceremony were not happy about this, reacting with threats that they would not attend *Kurdiji* that year, this suspension was determined. After all *Jardiwanpa* should be held in the cold time after Sports Weekend and it was now getting very hot with the lead-up to the summer holidays. Although initially serious, as I came and went from Yuendumu over the following years, it became a long running joke between one old lady and me, she would call out each time I went to say goodbye “When you come back we’ll finish *Jardiwanpa*”.

The above account highlights many of the contentions surrounding ceremonial life in contemporary Yuendumu. *Jardiwanpa* is considered by Warlpiri people living in Yuendumu to be an example of a ‘traditional’ Warlpiri ceremony, an

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<sup>21</sup> ‘Business’ is the Warlpiri English word referring to all the preparation and performance of all traditional ceremonies.

<sup>22</sup> These initiation ceremonies had not been performed in Yuendumu for several years due to conflicts between families. The summer of 2006/2007 was therefore particularly important.

iconic marker of true Warlpiri culture. Yet in the contemporary world, the practicalities of daily life make it very difficult for this ceremony to be held. The lives of Warlpiri people settled in Yuendumu today are very different from those of previous generations. Originally with settlement there was an increase in some aspects of ritual life due to the enhanced social networks that resulted from more people sharing residential ties, as well as the removal of the logistical restraints surrounding travel to bring the participants together in one place. More recently from 1969 as Warlpiri people, like other Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, have gained independent access to money and cars there has been a greater range of distractions which result in the many interruptions that can be seen to occur in the above account. Requirements to attend mortuary rituals, difficulties finding money for transport for the numerous kin required for this ceremony (which now exist across a much broader region), sweeping infiltrations of religious conventions, and the need to structure ceremonial activity around a western calendar to fit in with work schedules and the school year, all contribute to the practical difficulty of holding a ceremony such as *Jardiwanpa*.

In this chapter I will discuss the contemporary social context in which Warlpiri ceremonies are held. Significant changes have occurred over the last century as Warlpiri people have moved from living by hunting and gathering in small family groups to residing in settlements with many family groups, reliant on welfare payments and store bought food for survival. Therefore I will begin this chapter with a brief historical background such that the current social context is understood in a better light. Sherry Ortner has shown that "...“history” is not just



about the past, nor is it always about change. It may be about *duration*, about patterns persisting over long periods of time...” (2006: 11). There are many continuities as well as changes to the ways in which ceremonies are held by Warlpiri people. With this historical background in mind I will describe daily life in Yuendumu from 2005-2008 and then move on to discuss some of the continuities and changes that have influenced the place that ceremony has in contemporary Warlpiri lives.

### ***Historical background***<sup>23</sup>

Prior to European colonisation of the Australian continent beginning in 1788, Warlpiri speakers occupied a large area of the Central Desert north-west of the region of what is today the town of Alice Springs (refer to Map 1)<sup>24</sup>. Spencer and Gillen’s early ethnography in 1899 does not mention the Warlpiri in any detail such that little is known about Warlpiri life before the 1900s. It can be assumed from oral history and observations of early explorers that Warlpiri people prior to European colonisation lived a nomadic existence within this region living in small family groups. These movements were influenced by the availability of food resources and water<sup>25</sup>, and the demands of ritual life and its obligations. Little archaeological work has been done in this area as it is difficult to integrate

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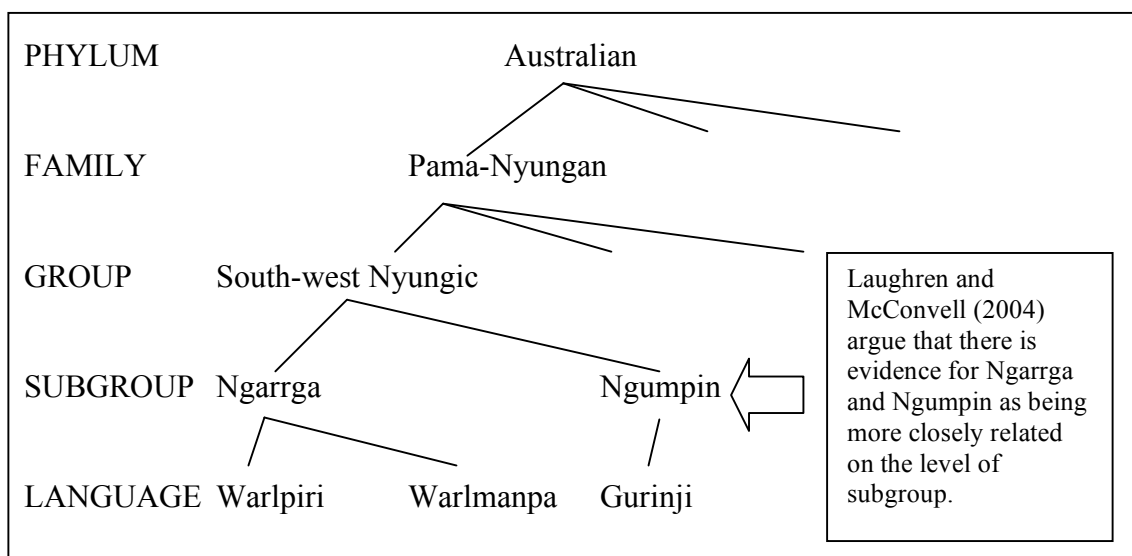
<sup>23</sup> For fuller descriptions of the history of Yuendumu refer to Hinkson (1999: 17-20), Keys (1999: 59-62), Middleton and Francis (1976: 10-15), Peterson et al. (1978), Steer (1996) and Young (1981b: 56- 123).

<sup>24</sup> European occupation of the inland of Australia was much later than 1788, the first explorations only occurring in the mid-1800s.

<sup>25</sup> Peterson (1972) has shown that relatively little time was spent in the quest for food and water. This is common among hunter-gatherers.

spatial and temporal data due to the large geographical scale of hunter-gatherer systems in arid areas (Smith et al. 1998: 275). Several archaeological studies do date Aboriginal settlement of this area back to the Pleistocene age i.e. at least to the end of the world's last period of repeated glaciations finishing in 12 000 BP . Smith et al. have shown that the red ochre mine at *Karrku* (in the south of Warlpiri country), which is still used today, has been mined since 32 000 BP. They also show through examination of rock art that people who inhabited this area have had a ritual life reaching back at least 5000 years (Smith et al. 1998: 276).

O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966) have shown that Warlpiri is part of the expansive Pama-Nyungan language family, sharing similarities with languages spoken across a large section of the southern part of Australia. They classified Warlpiri in the Ngarrga group which also incorporates Warlmanpa, a nearly extinct language which was once spoken by people living in the eastern side of the Tanami. McConvell and Laughren (2004) have shown that there are certain shared innovations amongst the Ngarrga and Ngumpin subgroups within the Pama-Nyungan family, indicating a closer shared ancestor language (which they label proto-Nyumpin-Yapa) (see Figure 1). The Ngumpin languages are spoken by people living in the region to the north-west of the Tanami into the south Kimberley of Western Australia and Southern Victoria River District. This suggests that the speakers of modern day Warlpiri have historical connections with speakers of Ngumpin languages, whether they be genetic connections between these language groups or because of a high degree of borrowing due to extensive social contact.



**Figure 1. O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin’s (1966) classification of the Australian languages** \*partially re-presented to focus on this area of study

Linguistic evidence shows more difference between Warlpiri and the Arandic language spoken by people in the region surrounding Alice Springs, suggesting that there was little contact between these groups<sup>26</sup>. Birdsell’s (1993) genetic data shows a clear division between people living in the western part of central Australia and those geographically close in the neighbouring regions of Western Australia, indicating a long standing separation between these two groups. Keats (1977) suggest that there was certainly intermixing between the Warlpiri and their near Central Australian neighbours – the Luritja, Pitjantjatjara and Aranda and perhaps even further afield with groups further to the east from around Mornington Island. Certainly today, the Warlpiri living in Yuendumu associate more with groups such as the Anmatyerre than with those to their west<sup>27</sup>. For

<sup>26</sup> Later studies concerning Arandic show evidence of dropping of initial consonants revealing these languages to be more similar to Warlpiri than was originally assumed in O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966).

<sup>27</sup> Peterson (2009: pers.comm.) has noted that when he worked in Yuendumu in the 1970s everybody was ‘facing the Tanami’ whereas today they are ‘facing Alice Springs’. This emphasis on a change to emphasise the larger township of Alice Springs may encourage the Warlpiri today living in Yuendumu to associate more with other groups who use Alice Springs as this kind of base too.

most Warlpiri, the notion of the *Jukurrpa* explains the past back further than can be remembered (this will be further discussed in Chapter 4). Many of these *Jukurrpa* stories involve the travels of ancestral beings from the west to the east or from the north to the south, this could possibly suggest evidence for a movement of people from these areas in the past.

Unlike other regions of Australia, Warlpiri people had limited contact with Europeans until the establishment of several permanent pastoral leases on their land in the 1920s. Before this some early explorers, namely Stuart (1865), Gosse (1874) and Warburton in (1875), had explored parts of this region in the late 1800s but due to the sparseness of this land they infrequently ran into Aboriginal people although they did note in their diaries evidence for people living there in the form of campsites, wells and tracks. Warburton described running into several groups of Aboriginal people in his journey, often kidnapping people and begging them to tell them where water was (Warburton 1875: 176, 203-7). He also notes seeing smoke in the distance but finding that people had run away when they arrived at its source (Warburton 1875: 207). Other early encounters that Warlpiri people had with Europeans included the inland telegraph line workers during the years from 1870-1872 and the large numbers of people who came into the desert for the short lived gold rush in the Tanami, in 1909, and later at the Granites in 1932 (Meggitt 1962: 22). Michael Terry explored the area around Mt Denison (just north of Yuendumu) and up into the Tanami in the 1920s. In his book *Hidden Wealth and Hiding People*, he gives detailed descriptions of Warlpiri country and the encounters he had with Warlpiri people throughout his expedition (1931). These encounters were all temporary,

however, such that these visitors were only really passing through although a small number of miners continued working at the Granites and the Tanami until after World War II.

In the early 1930s, Theodore Strehlow was appointed as an officer for the Department of the Protector of Aborigines (Hill 2002: 235). As the son of Lutheran missionary Carl Strehlow, he had grown up in Hermannsburg and had a good knowledge of Aboriginal languages and ways of life. Strehlow's role was to patrol the largely Aboriginal population "rather than have a policeman patrol the area of 15, 000 square miles with a resident white population of less than 30..." (Hill 2002: 235).

Apart from Strehlow, the first Europeans to have more permanent interactions with Warlpiri people were the early pastoralists. The first of these in the area surrounding Yuendumu, was the pastoral lease granted at Coniston in 1917 (Hartwig 1960: 3). Leases at Ti-Tree, Napperby and Mt Doreen soon followed. Initially, Warlpiri people avoided contact with European settlers as much as possible by living further out in the desert in areas in which the pastoralists took no interest, only occasionally coming in to the areas occupied by stations. The severe drought of 1924-1929 forced Warlpiri people to occupy the same areas and seek food from the station owners, causing tensions and conflict. The most well-known account of these conflicts today is that of the Coniston massacre in 1928 where Frederick Brookes, a dingo trapper, who was camped near a soakage named *Yurrkuru* (Brookes Well) just to the north of Yuendumu, was speared by a Warlpiri man (see *The Northern Standard* 13<sup>th</sup> November 1928). Warlpiri

people tell this story often today, recounting how Brookes had stolen this man's wife, his punishment being to be speared to death. The result, however, was the massacre of 60-100 Warlpiri and Anmatyerre people by the parties led by Constable Murray who were trying to capture the man responsible. The man who had actually killed Brookes managed to hide from the police and lived to be an old man in Yuendumu<sup>28</sup>. As a consequence of this period of police brutality, a distrust of European settlers began to develop amongst Aboriginal people.

During the 1930s several stations were established for mining and cattle rearing. Mt Denison station and Mt Doreen were sources of employment for many Warlpiri people living in Yuendumu today. Mt Doreen was established by Mr W. Braitling in 1926 and during the decades that followed many Warlpiri men worked there collecting wolfram from the nearby mine, whilst women were employed as domestic servants<sup>29</sup>. Many men also began to work as stockman at both Mt Denison and Mt Doreen. Whilst stories of hard times and brutality also mark this period of Warlpiri life, there are also many fond memories of a time when Warlpiri people lived on their country and could travel around widely whilst being supplied with rationed food and blankets although very limited cash as payment for their work<sup>30</sup>. Meggitt suggested that "Once the drought of 1924

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<sup>28</sup> This man's name was Kamanyarra Japanangka. He was nicknamed Walypali-pakarnu (whitefella-hit-PAST).

<sup>29</sup> Mt Doreen, especially the springs in the Pikilyi area, became the site of a major land use conflict (Peterson et al. 1978) between Braitling, the Aboriginal people, the Government and the Baptist Union of South Australia. The water source here being one of the only permanent sources within a large area – a place which all these groups were to rely on if they were to live in this area.

<sup>30</sup> Part of Braitling's justification for the low payment of his employees was that he was supplying their families with meat and flour as well. (Peterson et al. 1978).

had forced people to live on cattle stations and nearby mines, they became too accustomed to the new foods, warm clothes, steel axes and the like to wish to return permanently to the rigorous life in the bush” (Meggitt 1962: 27). Many of the oldest generation of Warlpiri people who live in Yuendumu today (i.e. those in their 60s and 70s) worked on these stations as young adults. These rationed foods are still favourite staples in the Warlpiri diet – tea, sugar, flour and tobacco considered essential food items. Often those people attributed with a good knowledge of the country are those stockmen and their families who travelled widely around Warlpiri country in these times. There were also some people who continued living on Warlpiri country until after World War II right up until the 1950s and 1960s, working trapping dingos to the north of Yuendumu, getting money for their scalps and only coming into Yuendumu occasionally.

In 1946, the Yuendumu Aboriginal reserve was established to which all unemployed Warlpiri were sent from the nearby cattle stations<sup>31</sup>. Yuendumu (*Yurntumu*), gets its name from a soakage to the south of the actual settlement that is an important place belonging to the *Yurrampi Jukurrpa* (Honey Ant Dreaming). This *Jukurrpa* also travels through the centre of Yuendumu through to a soakage called *Yakurrukaji* just on the north-eastern side of the settlement area. Today a large Telstra power pole in the centre of the settlement is said to be on the path of the Honey Ant Dreaming’s travels, this also being called *Yakurrukaji* despite the actual soakage’s location several hundred metres further

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<sup>31</sup> Another of these reserves had been established at Tanami but after a drought in 1945 all the people living there were sent to the Granites and then later to Yuendumu.

north-east in the scrub. For these reasons, many of the residents of Yuendumu today refer to their settlement as *Yurrampi* (Honey Ant).

The Native Affairs Branch initially financed this reserve. Meggitt (1962: 29) estimates that by the end of 1946 about 400 Warlpiri were living there. Meggitt (1962) explains that in bringing together all these people in one place<sup>32</sup>, old feuds were sparked such that some people were sent to another recently established settlement at Hooker Creek (today Lajamanu), some 600 kilometres away on the northern edge of the Tanami. Meggitt (1962: 29) states that by 1955 two-thirds of all Warlpiri were living on settlements and the rest were on cattle stations. Frances McGarry, was appointed manager of the settlement in these early days and was responsible for overseeing the distribution of rations each Saturday morning (Steer 1996: 33). He also directed the clearing of an airstrip (for further details see O’Grady 1977). Philip Steer and Laurie Reece arrived in Yuendumu in 1947 to start a branch of the Baptist Union of Australia initiating the beginnings of a community store and a school system for the children. The Steers left Yuendumu in late 1949 and Reverend T.J. Fleming arrived with his family in 1950 to continue their duties, staying there for the next 25 years. Elspeth Young has noted that “By 1950 they were, in addition to their evangelical duties, running a store, a school (partly staffed by government employed teachers) and a clinic, and teaching skills such as carpentry and

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<sup>32</sup> Prior to settlement, Warlpiri people identified with Ngaliya, Warnayaka, Yalpari or Walmala groups depending on their location of origin within Warlpiri territory. Dussart (2000: 40-44) has written about how residential patterns in Yuendumu in the 1980s reflected these groups. The patterns, however, no longer exist as people move following the death of relatives and are allocated housing by the Yuendumu Council in random areas. Today Warlpiri people identify with the settlement where they grew up for identification: Yuendumu Warlpiri, Lajamanu Warlpiri, Willowra Warlpiri etc.



dressmaking to adults” (1981b: 61). Hinkson (1999: 17) describes this situation noting that “The early period of settlement was a focused exercise in the training of citizens: education in hygiene, routine labour, child care, domestic work, Christianity, European education” but she also notes that:

Whilst regulated work regimes brought people into the settlement during working hours, outside of these times the physical and social separation of Warlpiri people with Europeans was relatively stark. Such segregation was reflected in the physical layout of the town – a central area in which European housing, the mission and ration sheds were built, with Warlpiri humpy camps situated at considerable distance. This separation was apparently mutually maintained by Warlpiri people and Europeans (Hinkson 1999:18)<sup>33</sup>.

This separation would have made it easier to continue with ceremonial life as Warlpiri people were not continuously under the scrutinising eyes of these overseers. However there were certain adaptations made to the times in which they were performed depending upon the requirements of the work day and of the church. In these early days, the missionaries discouraged holding ceremonies such that any of this activity had to be held outside of the enforced daily requirements of school, church and work. Dussart has pointed out that:

Alcohol consumption, sexual liaisons with non-Aboriginal peoples, and nominal economic compensation in the form of rations (in lieu of cash) all contributed to the accelerated transformation of pre-contact Warlpiri social structure (Dussart 2000: 37).

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<sup>33</sup> See Hinkson (1999), for a discussion of how these two domains became blurred in the self-determination era. She describes Yuendumu in the 1990s as an intercultural domain.

In 1969, following the payment of award wages to Aboriginal stockmen, social security payments, including aged and disability pensions but not unemployment benefits, began to be paid directly to Aboriginal people<sup>34</sup>. As of 1959 when Aboriginal people were first included in the social security system and given training wages, their wages had been paid to the Superintendent who redistributed them in the form of blankets and rationed food. Following the payment of full wages to Aboriginal stockmen in 1968, cattle station owners dispensed with many of their Aboriginal workers (all of them in some cases), increasing their reliance on white stockmen and upgrading the fencing infrastructure on their properties. This resulted in a further increase in Aboriginal people moving to join their families in settlements like Yuendumu. Musharbash notes in her thesis that "...the direct receipt of social security has been singled out by most social scientists as the single most significant factor determining the economic status of Aboriginal people and their relationship to the state to date" (Musharbash 2003: 17). This factor also contributed significantly to changes in Warlpiri ceremonial life as individuals often put aside large sums of their personal money for these purposes. Peterson (2000) has shown that the direct receipt of cash meant that Aboriginal people could buy their own cars; a fact which has significantly expanded the journeys of initiates and their guardians in which they collect people to attend initiation ceremonies.

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<sup>34</sup> In 1968, a year after the 1967 referendum which saw the Commonwealth Government assume responsibility for Aboriginal issues, the Social Security and Aboriginal Affairs minister, Bill Wentworth, pushed for the direct payment of social security entitlements (cf. Sanders 1986: 115-116). See Musharbash (2003: 19) for a list of different income sources for people living in Yuendumu in 1999.

In 1973, the Yuendumu Community Council was established and took control of the administrative affairs and service delivery of the community. In 1974, with the arrival of Frank and Wendy Baarda, the Yuendumu Mining Company was established and the school started up the bilingual education program. The 1980s saw the beginnings of the Warlpiri Media Association, Warlukurlangu Art Centre and Yurrampi Craft and the 1990s the establishment of a Women's Centre, the Tanami Network and the Old People's Program. All of these organisations (with the exception of Yurrampi Craft which no longer exists) play an important part in the daily lives of Warlpiri people today.

With the self-determination era which was inaugurated under the Whitlam Labor government of the early 1970s, Warlpiri people began to have more control over their land and the way their lives were being run. In 1978 Warlpiri people lodged a land claim for the parts of their tribal land which were still unalienated, gaining total control of over 100 000 square kilometres of land in the Tanami Desert (Peterson et al. 1978). Following this, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a movement to establish outstations in the areas surrounding Yuendumu. Young (1981b: 70) has noted that by 1979 there were six centres established on land that was now under Warlpiri control. Today there are twenty-one outstations in the areas surrounding Yuendumu, although none are permanently occupied. Many of these places have houses or some other form of permanent shelter, whilst in others people camp with windbreaks made out of sheets of corrugated iron. Many of these facilities are no longer working. Some outstations were highly successful for a period in the 1980s. *Wayililimpa* had a population of over a hundred people with a school with a non-Aboriginal teacher who travelled

from Yuendumu each day and an Aboriginal teacher who lived there permanently with her family. Many outstations did not, however, have schools and as Young (1981b) points out that in the 1980s there were few school-aged and hence parent-aged people living at outstations, leaving only older people and young children, this leaving people vulnerable as there were no younger adults who could use rifles to hunt for game, nor get into Yuendumu in the case of a medical emergency (1981b: 72). In accordance with the Warlpiri practice of vacating a house after the death of one of its residents, after several people died at *Wayililinpa* it was no longer feasible for most of the residents to live there anymore. Whilst some outstations are still occupied today, with family groups settling there for periods, there are many that remain vacant. The settlement of Nyirripi, originally established as one of these outstations in 1974, has been one of the more successful, eventually becoming a permanent settlement today inhabited by a population of several hundred people.

In mid-2007 it was announced that federal government policy towards Aboriginal communities was again to change. Following the release of the *Little children are sacred* report (Wild and Anderson 2007) which revealed high rates of child abuse in Aboriginal settlements, several intervening measures were to be put in place which would significantly influence Aboriginal people's lives. In his visit to Hermannsburg, the then Prime Minister John Howard announced that if Aboriginal communities were to survive they would have to become part of mainstream Australian society. The measures of the intervention include the quarantining of welfare payments such that half of a person's centreline payments is controlled such that it can only be used to purchase certain necessary

items from particular shops and cannot be used for alcohol, cigarettes, pornography or gambling<sup>35</sup>. This measure came into play as of May 2008 in Yuendumu. It is likely that this will affect the ways in which Warlpiri people structure their lives as they will only be able to shop in certain places. Many Warlpiri people lead highly mobile lives on the road which will not be possible if they are not able to buy food in the places to which they travel. This intervention, which by nature focuses on controlling Aboriginal lives to a greater degree<sup>36</sup> will surely have yet another impact on the way in which Aboriginal lives are structured and this will in turn affect the ways in which the ceremonies are held.

### ***Daily life 2005-2008***

The population of Yuendumu stated in the 2006 census was 692 people, (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006), including a population of 84 non-Aboriginal people<sup>37</sup>. This is a large population by desert standards and, like that of many Aboriginal settlements, is very mobile with many people frequently going to Alice Springs or to other desert communities to live for periods. The Yuendumu population, like many other Aboriginal populations across Australia, has had a massive increase in birth rates in recent decades. Young's estimations of population distribution in 1978, showed a significantly larger proportion of children to older people, a demographic change that she attributes to the decrease

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<sup>35</sup> See <http://www.centrelink.gov.au> for further details of income quaranting measures.

<sup>36</sup> As this intervention was announced suddenly and with little consultation with Aboriginal community members, its outcomes were often not intended and were not thought through by the government.

<sup>37</sup> This census was taken whilst I was living in Yuendumu in 2006 and thus is the most relevant to this research.

in infant mortality rates during this period (1981b: 64)<sup>38</sup>. This fact in itself is interesting when considering a study of ritual as the roles of the different generations are shifted in significant ways<sup>39</sup>. Yuendumu is predominantly populated by Warlpiri people with a small minority of other Aboriginal people who have married Warlpiri people and come to live in Yuendumu. Today there are Warlpiri people living in many settlements around Central Australia such as Nyirripi, Lajamanu, Willowra, Ali Curung and Alice Springs, and also enclaves in various places further afield such as Melbourne, Bundaberg, Adelaide, Darwin, Katherine and Port Augusta (refer to Burke 2009). There are also many Warlpiri people who went to work in cattle stations in the Eastern Kimberleys who stayed and married Nyininy or Jaru people<sup>40</sup>. These people now live in settlements such as Yaruman (Ringer's Soak) and Balgo. Yuendumu is in some ways very different from other Aboriginal settlements in that, due to its predominantly Warlpiri population, there is more cultural cohesiveness with similar worldviews and ways of doing things amongst its inhabitants. The central area shown on Map 1 remains the Warlpiri heartland, which people living in other places call home, a particular reference for younger Warlpiri people to their settlement of origin. The other Aboriginal people, predominantly Luritja and Anmatyerr, who also come to Yuendumu to live for periods have similar enough ways of doing things that holding joint ceremonies is possible.

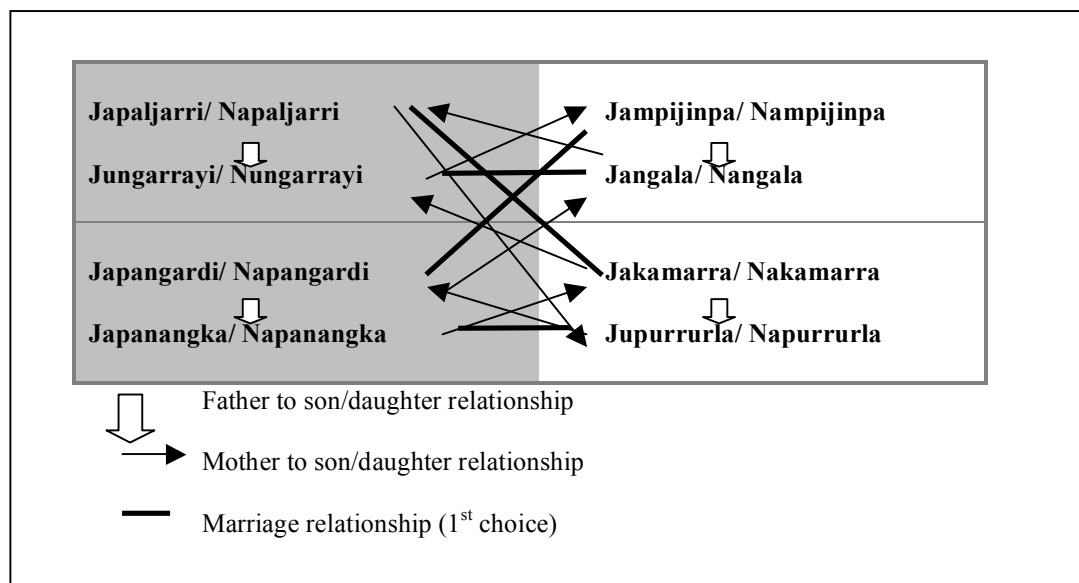
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<sup>38</sup> This overrides the decrease in fertility which Young has also noted (1981:64).

<sup>39</sup> Peterson has argued that this demographic change has had a marked impact on the size and frequency of initiation ceremonies (2008).

<sup>40</sup> Many older people living in the Eastern Kimberley can speak Warlpiri as well as Walmajarri or Jaru. Warlpiri is also spoken at Balgo and these families continue to transmit Warlpiri culture and language to their children.

Warlpiri people distinguish between closely and distantly related kin, considering all people in their immediate world to be related to them through kinship ties. This is possible due to a socio-centric system of social organisation which divides all people into one of eight subsections, all people being slotted into one of these categories so that it is possible to relate to them in daily life.



**Table 1. Subsection system of social organisation**

This subsection system is used in a broad area across the Central desert area of Australia, albeit with slight language differences for the names of the subsections. Elkin first suggested that:

... the subsection system spread from the East Kimberley fan-wise in a general eastern direction to just inside north-western Queensland; to the south-east it reached the Aranda in Central Australia, but not the south-west or south-east corners of the Territory (1970: 709).

The overarching nature of this system summarises a complex system of kin classification including patri-moieties and patricouples, which will be discussed in Chapter 4 with respect to the ownership of *Jukurrpa* and country and how these roles play out in ceremonial performance (see McConvell 1985 for a fuller analysis of how this system was amalgamated into pre-existing systems of social organisation across this region).

The subsection system makes use of eight different terms of which there are male and female equivalents (male terms beginning with ‘J’ and female terms beginning with ‘N’) and these encompass all relationships. These eight terms are referred to colloquially in Yuendumu as ‘skin names’. In day-to-day interaction, the use of these subsection terms to address and refer to people is considered to be more polite than using personal names (nick names are however the most common form of reference, but not address, in daily life)<sup>41</sup>.

When I arrived in Yuendumu I was incorporated into this system as a Nungarrayi woman, the name with which the majority of the population referred to me as and addressed me with for the duration of my fieldwork. To mark particular affection, the people with whom I was particularly close and associated regularly in my daily life would call me by the relationship which this made us to each other eg. a Napurrurla woman would call me *jukana* ‘cousin’ (MBD), a Napanangka calls me *jaja* ‘granddaughter’ (DD). Nick names are also commonly used in daily address, deriving from prominent physical attributes (people of

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<sup>41</sup> Christine Nicholls has written a paper about nick names used in Lajamanu with particular reference to those made for teachers at the Lajamanu School in the 1970s (1995).



short stature are often named ‘Shorty’ and tall people often have their name prefaced by the word long eg. Long Maggie), common sayings associated with a person (one man is named ‘40 dolla’ as he is constantly asking people for forty dollars), places from which they are associated (eg. Mt Theo-*wardingi* for someone who was born near Mt Theo<sup>42</sup>). Diminutives of subsection terms are often used for children, some of these sticking for life such that some adults are still called by these names (eg. Jakarra is the nickname used for a 25 year old man of Jakamarra subsection) (see Laughren 1984 for further details of ‘Warlpiri baby talk’).

Being only 300km from the large centre of Alice Springs – a small distance by Desert standards – the people living in Yuendumu have many government employees visiting daily. There are also a large number of organisations such as an Art Centre, a Media Centre, a School, two shops (three as of 2008), a Mining Company, a Clinic, a Health Centre, a Women’s Centre, the Baptist Church, an Old People’s Home, a Central Land Council office, a Council building, a Centrelink office, a community garage, a Child Care Centre, a CDEP program, a Police Station and a Youth Program<sup>43</sup> - with all non-Aboriginal people living in Yuendumu involved in some way or other with one or more of these organisations. Also there is a long history of academic research in this settlement, such that working with people like myself doing anthropological,

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<sup>42</sup> The suffix *-wardingi* in Warlpiri typically is added to a place where a person was conceived, indicating that they originated in the particular place. Today, however, it is added to more general places to which someone is associated such as building where they live within Yuendumu eg. one old lady is often refer to as ‘Mission House – *wardingi*’ as she lives at the Mission House and has done so for a very long time.

<sup>43</sup> All of these organisations have been described by Musharbash (2003: 19-26) and remained more or less the same when I did my fieldwork from 2005-2008 with only some minor changes.

linguistic or other research work has itself become institutionalised and an activity in which many Warlpiri people participate in their daily lives. The many visits by government workers from Alice Springs result in an endless string of meetings occurring on most weekdays, many people spending their weekdays moving around from one meeting to the next. Munn has described daily life in Yuendumu in the 1950s as “marked by the traditional division between men’s and women’s daily activities” (1973:12) with women congregating in women’s camps and men in shady spots in the bush. These patterns continue today and are particularly marked at times when ceremonies are being organized or are taking place.

Many Warlpiri people were employed by CDEP to work in the various organisations around Yuendumu<sup>44</sup>. There are a few Warlpiri people who are permanently employed in one or more of these places<sup>45</sup>. The Art Centre also provides income for the population of Yuendumu – with a core group of the more famous artists who paint there everyday and others who occasionally go there for supplementary income. Night-time activities include driving around visiting people, sitting in camps gossiping and telling stories or watching television. There are also frequent gatherings of gospel singers at the Baptist

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<sup>44</sup> A measure of the 2007 Intervention was to take away this CDEP scheme. The people previously employed under CDEP are now either unemployed or have jobs directly from the organisation with which they work.

<sup>45</sup> There are really only a small number of Warlpiri people in Yuendumu with permanent jobs: five or six people who work at the school as teachers, teaching assistants and janitors, several people with administrative jobs at the Council, a Land Council employee and a few employees at the Mt Theo program, Warlpiri Media Association and Yuendumu Clinic. Other jobs, including many within these same organisations, are more temporary depending on whether funding needs are met. There would probably not be more than forty Aboriginal people employed full time at any one time.

Church or at one of the houses of members of the Pentecostal and Assembly of God churches, these sessions often continue until the early hours of the morning. Weekends are somewhat different, most non-Aboriginal people staying in their houses and most Aboriginal people engaging in popular leisure activities such as going to the bush for hunting, swimming or just looking around their country. These activities that were in the past essential for survival are now instead popular recreational pursuits. Those that do not have access to vehicles to do this sort of thing tend to stay in their houses playing cards and talking, or moving around the settlement visiting various family members. A small number of Warlpiri people living in Yuendumu regularly attend the Sunday morning services at the Baptist church<sup>46</sup>.

There are of course generational differences in the activities that occupy Warlpiri people's days. Young men from their late teens to their early thirties tend to live a life on the road, travelling around to different settlements or to Alice Springs but using their houses in Yuendumu as a base from which to travel. Younger women of this age group also travel often but the responsibilities of motherhood often tie them down. Many younger women leave their children in the hands of grandparents whilst they go off on frequent trips. Older people tend not to travel so much, though are still relatively mobile. The remoteness of Yuendumu requires travel for health appointments as well as for the mortuary rituals for kin living in others settlements. Homesickness is easily felt by most Warlpiri people; regardless of how much they move around, making them keen to come back to

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<sup>46</sup> This small attendance at the church differs from the 1970s when the church would be full for services (Laughren 2008: pers.comm.)

Yuendumu often. The football competition over the winter months is also an important annual event with the large majority of people living in Yuendumu attending the grand final in which the Yuendumu team is usually a participant.

Warlpiri life changes dramatically over the period from just before Christmas until the end of January. This is often when many of the non-Aboriginal staff take their annual leave as it is when school is out and the Art Centre shuts down for the year. This is also the time of year when Warlpiri people hold the *Kurdiji* ceremonies which are the subject of this thesis. The dedication of this time of year to *Kurdiji* most likely began to fit in with the routine of the cattle industry. These summer months would have been a holiday period for many of the workers on cattle stations when they would have had ample time to perform these ceremonies in their entirety. Nowadays this is also a convenient time as there is a long break from school. Whilst the young men involved in these ceremonies rarely go back to school once they have been initiated it is still considered important to hold *Kurdiji* in this time period so that it is not seen as the reason for their lack of school attendance and so that younger family members and teaching staff can attend.

As Musharbash (2003: 205) has shown in her thesis, this general ebb and flow of daily life is punctuated by certain events. The high death rate is an unfortunate fact of life in Yuendumu today. During the period in which I was living there permanently from late 2005 – early 2007 not a week went by when there was not news of a death that somehow affected people in Yuendumu. Often this meant that people had to travel long distances to attend these mortuary rituals. The kin

of deceased had to camp at a sorry camp for many weeks, sometimes longer, and anything else which was happening at the time came to a direct halt until these rituals had been finalised. Fighting was also an event which punctuated everyday life. Whilst I was in Yuendumu there were several long running feuds between family groups which would occasionally flare up encompassing most of the population of the settlement, often in battles within and outside of the settlement. The Sports Weekends that occur across the Desert region over the winter period are also punctuations to daily life with large numbers of people travelling to the various settlements in which these events are held<sup>47</sup>. Other punctuations to normal daily life include events surrounding the church such as baptisms, funerals, sing-a-longs<sup>48</sup> and Bible studies groups. Most Warlpiri people identify with the Baptist church, a small number of others with Pentecostalism<sup>49</sup> and a few others with the Assembly of God church. All of these churches hold events within Yuendumu and often have trips which people attend to various places around Australia.

The ceremonial activities that occurred from 2005-2008 always took the form of punctuations to the daily life described above. In the descriptions of song genres in Chapter 3, I will highlight the occurrences of ceremonial activity throughout

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<sup>47</sup> In 2006 Sports Weekends were held in various settlements across the desert. On the days when they were taking place in one settlement, the others would be virtually deserted with few people staying behind.

<sup>48</sup> Sing-a-longs are held by all the church groups often at the houses of individuals. An amplification system with electric guitars and microphones is set up so the singing can be heard across a distance and they often continue to the early hours of the morning. Despite the disruptions that this causes to the surrounding houses very few people ever complain about this.

<sup>49</sup> Nyirripi has a large population of Pentacostal church members. Most people living in Yuendumu who identify with this group have family connections to Nyirripi. During 2006-2008, a small group of people from Mt Allan got involved with a Pentacostal group. Over these years some people were baptised into this Pentacostal church but also continued to have their Baptist affiliation in Yuendumu.

my fieldwork period. What is evident is that these punctuations normally involved relocating from a regular camp, whether it was travelling to another settlement or temporarily relocating camp to a different place within Yuendumu. Many ceremonial forms are also incorporated into contexts associated with settlement events. ‘Traditional Warlpiri culture’, of which ceremonies are seen to be examples, are often showcased to visitors as markers of Warlpiri identity. Examples of these types of ceremonies will also be outlined in the descriptions of song genres in the following chapter.

### ***Continuity and change***

The story which began this chapter highlighted many of the issues surrounding the ceremonial life of people in Yuendumu today and I will return to examine these with respect to the historical background and contemporary daily life described above. From this I do not wish to draw a harsh distinction between pre-contact and post-contact times but to show the process of change over the last 100 years, as Warlpiri people have come from being self-supporting nomadic people to welfare-dependent settled people. The significant changes that have taken place over this short time period have impacted on the ways in which the ceremonies that were once so essential to Warlpiri life are, if at all, being held today. Some ceremonies (such as the *Kurdiji* ceremonies) have expanded as a consequence of these changes to Warlpiri life. Dussart has pointed out that Warlpiri people today are the most populous group in the Northern Territory and:

Coupled with their residency on the actual traditional lands associated with Warlpiri patrimony, [that] accounts in measure for the vigour of Warlpiri ritual life as it is undertaken at Yuendumu, compared to that of other groups and other settlements (Dussart 2000: 40).

With settlement in places like Yuendumu, ceremonial life underwent many changes. Initially beginning with the routine surrounding cattle station work, ceremonial life became structured around a western calendar. A significant break at Christmas time meant that this was when ceremonial activity intensified.

Dussart (2000: 40) also notes that in the early days of the settlement, ceremonial life was frowned upon by the missionaries such that Warlpiri people had to hold ceremonies at times when they were not under their scrutinising eye. Nowadays in Yuendumu, the times in which certain ceremonies are held revolves around this westernised calendar. As was noted in the introduction to this chapter, the *Jardiwanpa* ceremony has come to be held in the cold weather time. Over the last few decades this has been after the Yuendumu Sports Weekend – a pattern which is viewed to be desirable by Warlpiri people and is now an established tradition. In a similar way, *Kurdiji* ceremonies have come to be associated with the hot weather of the summer holiday period just after Christmas.

The settlement of many different family groups in one place brought on a marked intensification of Warlpiri social life. As was noted above, this initially caused feuds to flare up, the close residential associations that these families have with each other also having an impact on ceremonial performance. Dussart discusses how settlement has impacted on the performance of the *Jardiwanpa* ceremony mentioned in the introduction in saying that:

Prior to settlement, rights to perform all subsequent *Jardiwanpa* were passed on to descendants of landowners and the ritual participants along the patriline. With the advent of sedentarisation, the generational pattern of transmission further complicated these parallel ownership rights by adding the influence of residential association (Dussart 2000: 33).

With the intensification of social life came an increase in activity as well as an increase in the numbers of people involved. Dussart describes this in saying that "...the pool was enlarged to include individuals who had ties based on residential proximity but who often came from different patrilineal descent groups" (2000: 33). She summarised this in saying that "While these ideal relationships are still found at the roots of ritual organization, they have been modified in the wake of sedentarisation" (Dussart 2000: 35).

Wild (1987) examines Warlpiri ceremonies in the light of the history of Lajamanu, changing relationships to land, taxonomic considerations, the creative process and Warlpiri relationships with other settlements and non-traditional social forces. He discusses the changing relationships to land that took place when Warlpiri people were taken to Lajamanu, a site outside of Warlpiri country, noting that "songs and dances assisted these changing relationships to land" (Wild 1987: 105). An increase in large-scale ceremonies represented the nature of settlements with many groups living together and new ceremonies from other tribes were adopted by whole settlement populations. Songs and song ownership were used to legitimise rapidly changing social conditions and the ebb and flow of political alignments.



The ceremonies held by contemporary Warlpiri people reflect this history of intensification that has occurred in their residential patterns. In the last few decades there has been a tendency for sweeping cult-like ceremonies or large-scale ceremonies that incorporate many people to be held more often and with greater participation than the site-specific ceremonies which require detailed knowledge of places and the song series related to them. Today, these site-specific ceremonies tend to be incorporated into the larger ceremonies rather than performed on their own. An example of this tendency will be provided in Chapter 5 that describes the individual ceremonies necessary for the initiation of several boys in 2007. In the late 1970s and early 1980s a ceremony came to Yuendumu from Balgo that incorporated the majority of the population of Yuendumu (see Laughren 1981; Wild 1981; and Young 1981). Whilst this ceremony is no longer held today, this trend for inclusiveness rather than the exclusiveness of the site-specific ceremonies is still emphasised in the expansion of ceremonies such as *Kurdiji*, which on many occasions during my fieldwork incorporate several hundred people from geographically distant places. Peterson (2000) has discussed the reasons for the intensification of these ceremonies, with particular reference to the expansion of *jilkaja* through which participants from different places are gathered together to be initiated. Mortuary rituals have also expanded in their scale, as well as in the long distances that people travel to attend – a result most probably due to the increased social networks (and avenues for increased communication) that people have over larger distances.

More recently there has been a decline in other kinds of ceremonies for which specific knowledge of *Jukurrpa* and country is required. Being settled in one

place has had a marked impact on Warlpiri people's knowledge of their country. Whilst people still go on bush trips and visit their country relatively often, this by no means gives them the same knowledge as the older people who lived on this country when they were younger and depended on an intimate knowledge of this country and its resources for their survival. Song series used in ceremonies often depict aspects of esoteric knowledge – evoking many emotive responses to particular features of the country such that without the experience of these places it is very hard to understand these concepts. It has been suggested that songs which provide rich descriptions of places are more important now that Aboriginal people do not frequently visit country and in some cases may not have ever been there, as they provide richly detailed descriptions of places giving people some knowledge of a place (Toner 2007: 183). With respect to Warlpiri songs, however, it appears to be that they are not understood as a consequence of this lack of intimate knowledge of landscape. Younger people actively participate in many of the larger-scale inclusive ceremonies mentioned above yet have little interest either in the site-based ceremonies or in learning the accompanying detailed knowledge of country and religion. This is in large part due to a lack of opportunity as the secondary phase of initiation known as *Kankarlu* in which much of this knowledge was taught is no longer held (refer to Chapter 3 for further details).

With the move into settlements, greater mobility and with more people owning cars, Warlpiri social networks have increased significantly. Consequently the requirements to travel to attend mortuary rituals has increased dramatically. This, as well as the high number of deaths in Central Australia in the contemporary

situation means that everyday life and other events are often interrupted by the need for people to attend mortuary rituals. The story with which I began this chapter highlighted these interruptions alongside those of sweeping religious movements through the settlement such as the Assembly of God convention held in Yuendumu in the midst of *Jardiwanpa*. The continual occurrence of many of these interruptions makes holding ceremonies like *Jardiwanpa* very hard to pull off as there never seems to be a right time when all the right people are in the right place. The *Kurdiji* ceremony, however, does not seem to be hindered by these factors and is held every summer. Why this is so will be explored further in the following chapters.

### **Chapter 3. Songs, genres and performance contexts**

Warlpiri lives have undergone significant changes over the last one hundred years. This is reflected in the changing functions of individual ceremonies, contexts in which, and frequency with which they are held, and attitudes towards their function in modern life. J. Lowell Lewis has suggested that performances are particularly useful with regard to analysing cultural patterns as they are contained by framing devices, everyday life being an “unmarked background” against which they are set (1999: 539). Here I focus on defining song and ceremony as a distinct domain, albeit one that influences and reflects upon many other areas of Warlpiri life. Particularly, I will emphasise the different aspects which come together to make a song. These include language, music, dance and painting of bodies and objects. I will also describe the different genres of Warlpiri song as I saw them sung for a variety of ceremonies. William Foley has noted that “Genres do not exist as abstract categories, but only as schemes of interpretation which are enacted in particular performances” (Foley 1997: 377). In my descriptions of song genres in this chapter, I will give examples of the particular ceremonial contexts in which I saw the types of song being sung. Following Gregory Bateson’s (1972: 128) observations that different forms of human verbal communication have framing devices which clearly mark certain messages as belonging to a certain type, Irvine Goffman (1974) developed the notion of ‘keying’ of performances to mark them as particular types or genres. In my descriptions of different genres in the second half of this chapter I will outline the different ‘keys’ which mark genres of song apart from each other.

## ***What are Warlpiri songs?***

It should be noted at the start of this discussion that there is no Warlpiri word that is used to mean ‘song’ in the generic sense in which it is meant in English. Rather, the terms for different genres of song are used to define specifically which type of song is being referred to. A verb *yunparni-* is used to describe the act of ‘singing’ with respect to all of these song genres, indicating that whilst there is no generic word for ‘song’, there is a classification in Warlpiri minds of all of these genres being of a similar semantic domain<sup>50</sup>. Songs and the ceremonies in which they are sung are regarded as a domain of Warlpiri ‘high culture’ (Peterson 2005: pers.comm) which is distinct from the everyday. Only those who have made the intellectual effort to learn about this type of religious knowledge have the authority to sing songs. Songs are property owned by particular people (as will be shown in Chapter 4) and are powerful and effective means for acting on the world. Warlpiri songs are thus clearly recognised as distinct modes of formalised performance where the act of singing particular songs is meaningful and powerful. Clunies Ross states that “the starting point for the determination of formal performances is whether the practicing community ascribes formality to a set of behaviours and places it within an indigenous taxonomy of registers” (1983: 17-18). Other criteria that uses to identify formal performance are:

Firstly, that those who practice them consciously consider them to constitute an entity separable from other behaviour sets; secondly,

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<sup>50</sup> The English word ‘song’ is often inserted into Warlpiri conversations to refer to all genres of traditional song discussed in this chapter. A possible exception is the verb *laarr-pakarni* used for the act of men’s chanting in *Jardiwanpa*.

that the entity possesses consistent structural features over and above those of the communication medium itself; and thirdly, that it is performed in specific contexts that the practitioners recognise as conventional and appropriate (1983: 18).

In the Warlpiri context, there is certainly an emic classification of song as a mode of formal performance, distinct in purpose from everyday speech and performed in particular accepted contexts<sup>51</sup>.

Richard Moyle (Moyle 1979: 17) regards the basic unit for Pintupi music and Desert music in general as the song series (song cycle or song line) “rather than the individual song”. Alice Moyle, in a more general description of Central Australian songs, uses many different terms such as ‘song styles’, ‘song types’, ‘song forms’ and eventually defines ‘song items’ as being “... performed in a sequence or series usually with short breaks in between” (1973: 240). With respect to Arandic songs, Strehlow defines song cycles as “a complete set of verses associated with any ceremonial site and pertaining to the doings of any single mythical being or group of identical totemic ancestors” (1971: xiii). Throughout this thesis I will use the word ‘song’ in a generic sense to discuss this domain of Warlpiri life. More specifically I will follow Linda Barwick’s use of the word ‘song series’ when specifically referring to “a collection of songs from a particular country, belonging to a particular group of people and a particular ceremonial genre” (1989:13). She explains that a song series is made up of a series of ‘small songs’ (a term used by Ellis and Barwick 1987) which are the two or three lines of singing which are repeated a number of times in

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<sup>51</sup> This includes a distinct separation from the performance of popular music genres such as rock, country and reggae. The styles of music being classified very differently in Warlpiri minds even if they consist of singing described with the verb *yunparni*.

performance. A sequence of ‘small songs’ is sung together over a 30-40 second period, these having the same text but not necessarily melodic contour, as the other song items in the small song. Myfany Turpin refers to a performance of a ‘song series’ as “many small songs performed at one venue, which usually lasts a number of hours” (2005: 92). My definition of ceremonial performance incorporates song texts, music, painting up, dancing, and of course the social negotiations that surround these. I do not include in this the telling of associated narratives, as in my experience these occur outside of the ceremonial context.

Performance context plays an important part in whether an act is regarded as ‘singing’. R. Moyle has noted that “there are some phenomena associated with song performance which, while they may satisfy the technical requirements of music sound in a European sense, are nonetheless not considered ‘singing’ by the Pintupi” (1979: 13). These included such things as a sung commentary about a song which had just been performed, text rehearsal (when trying to remember the appropriate words), singing ‘aaaa’ over the melody and calls made during performance. Wild has similarly noticed that:

On rare occasions a Warlbiri individual may sing one or two songs of a Warlbiri song cycle in the course of his normal daily activities, but on these occasions he is not performing for anyone; he is merely reminding himself, or reminiscing, about the rituals in whose contexts the songs are normally performed (1975: 57).

In my own experience, small songs are also often sung in isolation on various occasions. Such instances of ‘singing’ were often when a nostalgic memory was evoked of the content of a particular small song when visiting related country,

observing geographical features, items of material culture or hunting for particular foods. I have not incorporated these instances of singing isolated ‘small songs’ in my descriptions.

Ellis’ description of what a ‘song’ actually is in the Central Australian context maintains that the ‘interlocking of all components is the key’ and without this the product is not ‘song’ (1983: 142). Turpin has also emphasized that “...songs are a multimedia package where particular meanings may be represented in dance patterns, visual designs or in accompanying explanations, as well as in song text” (2005: 90). I too emphasise in this chapter that a Warlpiri song incorporates language (through song texts), musical features, dancing, painting of designs on bodies and objects and the social negotiations that continually surround the performance of all these aspects of song in a ceremonial context.

## **Song language**

The language of Warlpiri songs serves a very different function from that of everyday speech, not being for the communication of meaning so much as it is for more ritualised and connotative purposes. It is the *act* of singing particular words within a particular musical and social frame that is meaningful and powerful, reinforcing the feelings associated with a song and the traditional place that it has in a ritual. Often the language is different from everyday speech, but it is also common for the language to be very similar but to have multiple connotations which add layers of meaning (see Curran 2010). This has been noted across Australia with respect to Aboriginal songs from many different



areas. Strehlow observed that Arrernte song language uses prose words from other languages as poetic synonyms in songs (1971). He also notes that there is often an intermingling of two languages but that this did not seem to inconvenience the singers as they are usually bilingual. Sutton also observes that many different languages are used in songs, some of which are intelligible to the people singing and some which are not. He states that "...there is no strict identification of the language of a song with the language of a clan whose site is being celebrated in that song" and observed that "...there was often some reluctance to identify the language of these sacred songs..." (1987: 83). Hale too (in Green 2001: 38) recounts the thrill of discovering that some Warlpiri songs were in Anmatyerr, an Arandic language. Many of the Warlpiri songs that I recorded in Yuendumu also made use of other languages – in particular the languages spoken by neighbouring groups, Anmatyerr from the east and Luritja from the south. Normally the songs which are sung in these languages are associated with places in the territory of these speakers or with travels of Dreaming ancestors into these places.

The use of these different languages, however, can also indicate that songs have been traded to Warlpiri people and the particular languages used can give some indication of the places they have come from. In his description of the *Kajirri* ceremony, Meggitt explains that this ceremony has been transmitted over a long distance and has been modified in both form and interpretation (1966). He notes that this ceremony has links to ceremonies held by other groups to the east and north. It is evident from descriptions such as this that songs change form as they are traded from one region to the next and adapted into more region-specific

ceremonial modes. Yet often they retain some of the elements from their origins or other influences they have encountered as they have been traded.

Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman have noted that one way of keying a performance as of a certain generic type is to use intertextual references (1992: 135). This is common amongst Warlpiri songs, with references to other *Jukurra* stories or songs and their characters clearly grounding a particular song within the realm of ‘song’ rather than ‘everyday speech’. The use of the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun *-rna* throughout Warlpiri songs frames the singers as having the voice of the Dreaming ancestors, again clearly differentiating performance of song from other everyday activities. The use of this first person singular form in Example (1) from the *Minamina yawulyu* song series, indicates that the singer is identifying with the Dreaming ancestors focal to the song.

- (1) *Manitirrpitirrpi*            *manitirrpitirrpi*  
 red bird<sup>52</sup>                      red bird
- Kanalyurlparna*                      *kanalyurlparna*  
 in one group- 1SGsubj.            in one group – 1SGsubj.
- I am the red birds in one group.

In Example (2) from the same song series, the singers identify themselves as the country through the use of this first person suffix.

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<sup>52</sup> The gloss ‘red bird’ is used here as there is some contention as to what species this bird is. The Warlpiri-English Encyclopedic Dictionary (Laughren et al. 2007) glosses it as a ‘mythological bird’. Gosford (2008: pers.comm.) has suggested that it is a Red Capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*.

(2) *Kurrkara*      *kaarla*              *maninya*  
 Desert Oak      sound of wind effecting - Pres

*Warlurrumpurna*                      *maninya*  
 Honey Grevillea – 1SG.subj. effecting – Pres

I am Honey Grevillea country, getting homesick from the sound of the wind in the desert oaks.

Interestingly the first person is only ever used in its singular form regardless of how many singers there may be, perhaps indicating that the *Jukurrpa* is viewed as a singular entity.

Another special grammatical marker used in Warlpiri songs is the common example of the suffix *-nya* on verbs as a kind of presentative suffix. In Example (3) from the *Karntakarnta* song series, the suffix *-nya* is attached to the verb *nguna-* ‘to lie’.

(3) *Ngapakurla*                      *jurarri*              *jurarri ngunanya*  
 water-DAT-LOC              streaming              redup. lying-Pres.

*Ngapakurla*                      *parlawamu*              *ngunanya*  
 water-DAT-LOC.              settled on ground              lying-Pres.

There is water running over everything. There is water lying on top of everything.

In using this special marker in songs the information encoded in the song is presented as being the way it is, and has always been. This reflects the Warlpiri notion of the *Jukurrpa* dictating the way the world is, with the singers having little control. The use of the present tense in most Warlpiri songs alongside this presentative suffix also indicates that the Warlpiri notion of the *Jukurrpa* is not

of a past moment but one which continues and encompasses all time periods (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of notions surrounding the *Jukurrpa*).

As Peter Sutton notes “Mythic references in songs are far more oblique than in the words of spoken narratives” (Sutton 1987: 86). The use of metaphor and symbolism is abundant in the language of Aboriginal songs. Strehlow has also noticed the use of archaic and poetic words used in Arrernte songs describing this as “The curse of absolute unintelligibility” (Strehlow 1971: 202-203). An example of this use of esoteric glosses is to describe the features of the landscape or the *Jukurrpa* of a certain place instead of actually naming it. Sutton states that:

Songs are usually...cryptic. A song will very frequently refer simply to some aspect of the action of a mythical being, or perhaps the scent of the vegetation of the place, or the prevailing weather at the time of the event, but without tying any of these explicitly to both particular beings and sites all at once. The latter is usually done, if at all, by the participants using everyday language in a narrative or comment (1987: 87).

Some authors have suggested that the non-explicit nature of song texts is crucial for their maintenance. Marett has observed that “Such a lack of explicitness is typical of Aboriginal discourse and forms part of a framework for the generation of further meanings which in themselves may give rise to, or emphasise a sense of community for those ‘in the know’ ” (1994: 70). Clunies Ross too proposes that this “...grammatically built-in ambiguity has been deliberately cultivated” in song language (1982: 15). She notes that this explains the oblique and mysterious glosses that are sometimes given for words used in songs. Further

this creates a space in which there is much ambiguity and innovation and change in song texts can thrive.

As song texts are largely unintelligible to an outsider, it is important to obtain exegesis after recording a song. The ways in which I incorporated this into my fieldwork methodology were discussed in Chapter 1. As Hale explains "...the way you get the meaning is not by looking at the words, you get it by the story that goes with it. And the words evoke a story" (in Green 2001: 39). Francesca Merlan has also discussed the cryptic nature of song texts and the need for interpretation in her article about two song cycles from the Roper River area (1987: 144). She has proposed that "The predominance of these interpretive modes indicates the greater importance of "theme" as the organizing basis for song meaning over discursive meaning" (1987: 144). Tamsin Donaldson also highlights the increased understanding that she gained from people's interpretations of Ngiyampaa songs from northern New South Wales, where language loss is significant. Of particular interest is her observation that people who no longer understand the words of songs rely completely on embellished interpretations often surrounding a theme (1984: 240). Thus obtaining exegesis is frequently crucial in understanding the meanings of Aboriginal songs. I have demonstrated through examples from a women's *yawulyu* song series that everyday language can be used in connotative ways which require interpretation from knowledgeable Warlpiri people (Curran 2010).

## **Musical features**

In this thesis I do not deal with the musical aspects of these songs largely due to the limitations of my own education. Musical elements are however, clearly crucial to the singing that takes place in ceremonies, so I will briefly describe some of the musical features of Warlpiri song – many of which are typical of Central Australian music more generally. Ellis has demonstrated that music is used in Central Australian song to convey meaning. Her examples show that particular rhythmic patterns relate to broad semantic topics (Ellis 1997: 65-67; 1998: 436) and different ancestral paths have particular melodic contours which make them identifiable. Outside of Central Australia, in the Daly region, Marett has similarly shown that “In Australian Aboriginal music, the power of music to signify rests primarily on a widespread convention that associates particular melodic forms with Dreamings, and by extension with the peoples and countries associated with those Dreamings” (Marett 2005: 200). Subsequent musical analyses of the songs discussed in this thesis, in particular their rhythmic and melodic forms ,may therefore add significantly to our understanding of their meanings and associations.

Turpin has explained that there is a sharp correlation between text and rhythm in the Katyetye women’s songs genre she describes in her thesis (2005: 115). Ellis also noticed this with respect to the Central Australian songs that she analysed (1968: 24). This contrasts to the independence of melody and rhythm (and subsequently text). Central Australian songs are entirely vocal with no accompanying tonal musical instruments. Rhythmic accompaniment is however

common with the use of clapsticks, two boomerangs being clapped together or the thud of cupped hands on women's thighs as they sing. Often this rhythmic accompaniment is improvised at the time with whatever happens to be available, for example a stick tapped on a tobacco tin or box. Particular song genres however, make use of specific rhythmic accompaniments as 'keys' to that particular type of song. An example of this is the use of two boomerangs as an accompaniment to the songs men sing for *Jardiwarnpa*<sup>53</sup>. Boomerangs clapped in this way are also essential for the performance of *purlapa*. These accompanying beats are continued throughout the sequence of song items which are repeated over a 30-40 second period and finish up this sequence through a faster and less consistent beat to finish, regardless of whether the same small song is to be repeated again. The tempo or speed of this beating remains regular throughout the rest of a song series in most cases.

As there are no tonal instruments accompanying Warlpiri songs, the pitch is not determined by any outside reference. Generally there is a song leader who commences the singing of each separate small song and sets the pitch for the rest of the group. Sometimes these song leaders differ throughout the song series depending on the particular small song being sung and people's ownership rights as well as levels of knowledge concerning the song series<sup>54</sup>. On some occasions,

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<sup>53</sup> Some of the song texts of the *Jardiwanpa* song series describe the action of beating these two boomerangs together with the older men teaching the younger boys how to do it from behind.

<sup>54</sup> For the performance of *Kurdiji*, and more generally, this may be related to people's ownership over particular places that are the subjects of the song.

individuals would choose to sing at a higher pitch than the rest of the group, perhaps to mark themselves out as distinct<sup>55</sup>.

Like other Central Australian songs, the genres of Warlpiri song which I recorded and heard were all sung with all voices in unison. As mentioned above, a song leader normally started singing and the rest of the group followed the pattern that they set. This was not normally negotiated but assumed. Even in instances where someone without the proper authority takes it on to be a song leader, there is no argument about this during performance<sup>56</sup>.

A single repeated “melodic contour” (see Ellis 1985: 90) determines the ‘essence’ of a song. This makes the song identifiable without it being necessary to understand the words (see Marett 2005 for examples of this from Northern Australia). This text of a song is not set to this melodic contour in the same pattern with each repetition of the song item. Often the singing will start and stop at various points in the melodic contour depending on where a breath is needed. Parts of the melodic contour may be assumed when the singer needs to take a breath and picked up again at the point where a continued rhythm would expect it to be. This melodic contour is based on a flexible descending passage starting on a high tonic and descending to a low tonic (Ellis 1963: 88, 1966b: 5, 1998:

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<sup>55</sup> An example of this is my recording of *Wapurltarli yawulyu* where Bessie Sims sang much higher than the other ten women in the room. She is an owner for this Dreaming and had been called upon especially so we could record it.

<sup>56</sup> An example of this will be given in Chapter 6 where a man clearly mixed up the order of the songs, this being evident due to the disruption to the flow of the plot. Throughout the ceremony however, the other men kept singing along with him and only mentioned that he had made a mistake when re-listening to my recording of the ceremony many weeks later.



434 and R. Moyle 1986: 156). See Turpin 2005 for a detailed analysis of this for a Kaytetye *akwelye*.

As noted earlier, rhythm and text are integrated in all Warlpiri songs. Each song item consists of two of these rhythmic textlines being repeated until the end of the melodic contour. Musicologists describe this as ‘isorhythmic’ where a rhythmic pattern cyclically repeats although the corresponding melody notes may change (see Ellis and Barwick 1987, Barwick 1989: 13).

## **Dancing**

Megan Jones (1984) has described the dance patterns associated with Warlpiri ceremonies as she saw them in Willowra in the early 1980s. In her thesis she argues that Warlpiri dance styles are ritualised patterns of movement which depict activities of the everyday. As examples she parallels the styles of dance used in *yawulyu* performances with the movements made when women are hunting, emphasising that similar implements are used for both of these activities such as digging sticks and coolamons. In dancing, these implements do not necessarily need to be present for the dance style to be performed, the hands being held in a fashion which imitates holding that particular implement instead. These implements symbolise different things such as places, activities and people which are intimately linked. Everyday implements are transformed when they are painted with ritual designs.

Jones (1984) explains that the Warlpiri verb *wirntimi* can be translated firstly as ‘to dance’ and secondly as ‘to hover like a bird’. Her examples of the use of this verb to describe the action of bouncing a baby indicate that it refers more to a particular quality of movement that happens to be typical of Warlpiri dance. Jones has noted that for Warlpiri songs, “Each genre of formal performance has a distinctive dance form” (Jones 1982: 81). These dance styles are thus important ‘keys’ to particular genres of Warlpiri song. The styles of dance which she recognises for the *Kurdiji* ceremony are discussed below in Chapter 6 alongside the particular song texts for which they are performed. Cynthia Shannon has also described the range of body movements that are incorporated into Warlpiri women’s dance from her observations from fieldwork in Lajamanu (1971). She describes all Warlpiri women’s dance movements as variations of the ‘dance jump’ which adhere to a regular rhythm. She demonstrates that variations occur mainly in the arm movements perhaps as many of these ‘dances’ are also performed whilst seated, with the ‘knee quiver’ being a notable exception (1971: 91).

Turpin has explained that dance movements can provide clues as to how the interpretation of the song texts were made in accompanying exegesis (2005: 111). In Chapter 6, I will show that many of the participants of the *Kurdiji* ceremony, particularly the female dancers, are deriving their understandings of this ceremony from the dances which they perform to accompany particular songs. They are learning primarily through these actions and further associations become understood as they repeatedly dance in these ways through listening to

the songs, to the surrounding conversation and by learning their function in the ceremony.

## **Painting up**

Several genres of songs incorporate the painting of people's chests, backs and thighs as well as painting objects that will be used in the performance of ceremonies. Red, white, black and yellow ochres are used. Often the songs sung whilst painting up are also sung in other performance contexts which do not incorporate painting up. Painting up in Yuendumu is done prior to the dancing component in the performance of a large scale ceremony, often at different times of the day. It is however, an integral part of the performance of the ceremony and follows strict conventions which highlight the relationships amongst the song, the associated movements, and the designs. Visual designs are an important component of the ritual regardless of whether they are actually seen in the performance. Particular small songs are associated with particular designs and these are repeatedly sung whilst painting up until the design is complete. As will be explained in Chapter 5 through an example of painting up in the afternoon of *Kurdiji*, for this ceremony people are painted up with Dreaming designs with which they identify as owners. For the performance of the *Jardiwanpa* ceremony, a song series which incorporates the travels of a number of different Dreaming ancestors, the designs that women used for painting up in the afternoon of this ceremony reflected the patricouple affiliation of the person being painted and which ancestor they are associated with. Men both paint up for some ceremonies and in others are decorated with white plant down— I was not

able to ascertain how the designs and songs are determined as this genre of men's song restricted my participation. In Munn's extensive research into the visual symbols used during ceremonies he highlights that "a characteristic feature is that the graphs [designs] always have explicit semantic reference; they are not merely decorative forms" (Munn 1973:32). These references reinforce important symbolism associated with the broader ceremony for which the designs are being painted.

### ***Genres of Warlpiri song***

Defining songs through descriptions of their social purpose is by far the most common way in which Warlpiri people make genre categorisations. Songs are spoken of as being 'for making young men', 'for falling in love' or 'for curing illnesses' emphasising a highly functionalist focus on the purpose of songs and the rituals in which they are sung. Warlpiri people also distinguish song genres by the gender of the singers and participants in the associated ceremonies.

Dussart has outlined the types of Warlpiri ceremonies which are performed by men (*watikirlangu*) or women (*karntakurlangu*) as well as those which are restricted to men (*watimipa*) or women (*karntamipa*) (2000: 52-57). She also emphasises, however, that there are joint performances which involve both men and women (*wirikirlangu* = for business people) which have components that are restricted to men and women.

Briggs and Bauman (1992: 132) have shown that generic categories are renowned for their inadequacy as there are always certain components that either

do not fit a category or fit into more than one. The fuzziness of the boundaries between genres is acknowledged by Warlpiri people with some songs being described as being of two genres and others being distinguished by not belonging to any particular genre<sup>57</sup>. There is, however, a general agreement that Warlpiri songs can be categorised according to the genres outlined in this chapter. Firstly there are songs which men sing in larger ceremonies in which women are involved, usually as dancers. Secondly there are songs which men sing in smaller ceremonies, sometimes these are for men only and sometimes women participate as an audience. Lastly there are songs which women sing in predominantly female only situations. I want to emphasise that the genre divisions that I make in this chapter are classifications of types of songs rather than of the ceremonies in which they are performed. Whilst I have used an emic classification of Warlpiri songs which emphasises in most cases the function of the song or more specifically the particular purpose for singing it, I do acknowledge that the genre categories presented in this chapter may be influenced by my line of questioning on these matters and my informants' wishes to respond appropriately to my inquiries. Many of these categories do not have Warlpiri names yet were clearly seen by Warlpiri people to be of one type.

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<sup>57</sup> This situation most often came up when I asked someone what type of song was being sung. Normally a more specific response was given (eg. the Dreaming, dance style or place) associated with the song. Often if I was to ask if it was a specific genre, for example "Is that *yawulyu*?", the response would be "No, that's not *yawulyu*" with no further information given about a possible genre classification.

## Songs sung by men in large ceremonial contexts

In large ceremonial gatherings songs are sung only by men<sup>58</sup>. Older men are the singers and sit in a group facing eastwards, northwards or westwards depending on the ceremony and context. Women dance to this singing, sitting behind the men. Dussart writes that these ‘joint’ events are identified by Warlpiri people as *wirikirlangu* or *wirirlangu* – meaning “belonging to business people” (2000: 52-52)<sup>59</sup>. She emphasises that there are portions of these often complex ritual events which are restricted to men and women.

## Kurdiji

The word *Kurdiji* (also meaning ‘shield’) refers to ceremonies for the initial phase of initiation held each summer. It also refers to the song series which are sung in the all-night part of the ceremony called *Marnakurrawarnu*, central to the *Kurdiji* phase of initiation. Different song series are sung in different settlements across Central Australia although the ceremonies are almost identical. The events of a particular performance of this ceremony in Yuendumu will be described in detail in Chapter 5. A second phase of initiation which is no longer held called *Kankarlu* incorporates different genres of song (primarily *parnpa* which will be discussed shortly). *Marnakurrawarnu* starts early in the morning and continues through to the afternoon when *yawulyu* and *parnpa* associated with Dreamings to which the initiand is affiliated are performed in

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<sup>58</sup> This differs from genres like *purlapa* in which women can join in.

<sup>59</sup> *Wiri* = big, adult, important (Laughren et al. 2007)

their respective women's and men's groups. After this, the *Marnakurrawarnu* ceremony continues until sunrise the next day. The *Kurdiji* genre of song which I refer to in this section is performed during the all-night phase of *Marnakurrawarnu* where it is sung by senior men from around 10pm until sunrise the next morning. This *Karntakarnta* song series sung in Yuendumu will be analysed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. A day or so later a ceremony named *Warawata* is held in the afternoon leading up to the circumcision of the initiands shortly after dusk. Some small songs from the *Kurdiji* song series are also sung at *Warawata* but for a much shorter period of only about half an hour. In the past, this final stage took the form of an elaborate ceremony called *Kirridikirrawarnu* (as described by Meggitt 1984: 285-298 and Wild 1975: 107-112) but in recent years this has been replaced with the much shorter *Warawata* which has been borrowed from Pintupi and Luritja speaking groups to the south. Whilst Warlpiri people from Yuendumu participate in *Kirridikirrawarnu* when they go to other settlements (as they did in Napperby in 2008 and Mt Allan in 2006), in the period I spent doing my fieldwork from late 2005 until early 2007 it was not held in Yuendumu. A different song series is sung for *Kirridikirrawarnu* which older Warlpiri men know well and of which I have elicited recordings<sup>60</sup>.

The *Karntakarnta* song series performed in Yuendumu for *Kurdiji* ceremonies follows the journey of a group of ancestral women from near Kunajarrayi (Mt Nicker). They actually start their journey further west at Yapurnu (Lake

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<sup>60</sup> An account of this ceremony as witnessed by Hansen in Yuendumu in January 1953 is given in Hansen, I.V 1954.

Mackay), a salt lake on the border of the Northern Territory and Western Australia, and end it at Yuluwurru (Lake Lewis), another salt lake just south of Napperby (refer to Map 3 which marks the itinerary for this journey). In different settlements other song series are performed which are also referred to as *Kurdiji* songs as they are used for the same ceremony. In Lajamanu a different song series which follows the journey of a group of women from Minamina is sung<sup>61</sup> In *Kurdiji* ceremonies I attended in Mt Allan, predominantly populated by Anmatyerr speaking people, the song series begins at Yuluwurru where the Yuendumu one finished and continues eastwards, joining these two groups such that they can have ceremonies together. Most senior Warlpiri men in Yuendumu know the song series sung in Lajamanu, Yuendumu and Mt Allan and participate in *Kurdiji* ceremonies in these settlements frequently as well as many others across the Central Desert region.

Another ceremony, the *Kajirri* [Meggitt's *Gadjari*], is connected to the Warlpiri *Kurdiji* ceremony and has been outlined by Meggitt (1966) and Shannon (1971). This religious festival presents a further stage in boys' religious education. I did not witness or hear about this ceremony during my fieldwork, perhaps as it is no longer held. Just why this is the case is a complex question that I will not explore here. Meggitt emphasises the links that the *Kajirri* ceremony has to the *Kunapipi* ceremony widely performed across northern Australia (see Berndt 1951 for details) showing that this ceremony has come to the Warlpiri from the eastern Warumunga and that they obtained it from more northern groups. Stephen Wild (1971) also wrote an article about this particular ceremony a few years later

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<sup>61</sup> These women also commence their journey at Yapurnu (Lake Mackay) crossing paths with the group of women travelling to their south several times.



discussing it mainly in the context of how it relates to positions of leadership and authority in the settlement of Lajamanu. Wild believes that in the early days of the establishment of the settlement, police officers, station owners and missionaries did much to undermine traditional systems of authority leading to decay in traditional systems of leadership. He gives an outline of the *Kajirri* ceremony saying that in the past, initiation, circumcision, subincision and the *Kajirri* ceremony were all separate affairs. Nowadays these once separate affairs are all clumped together and performed over the 6-week break of the school holidays when people are free from their other work duties<sup>62</sup>. Wild indicates that at the time of his fieldwork in the 1970s, a man was ineligible to marry prior to the *Kajirri* ceremony and that a young man would have been ostracised if he had eloped without this establishment of his right to marry.

### **Songs sung for conflict resolution ceremonies**

Peterson (1970) has glossed these ceremonies as ‘fire ceremonies’ or ‘conflict resolution ceremonies’. These ceremonies involve large-scale participation of many people who are often required to come from remote places. It is this focus on participation of many people cooperating which makes it useful in conflict resolution. The song series which are sung by men for these ceremonies are all linked to *Jukurpa* stories which involve an initial fight which is resolved through joint performances of ceremonies (Rice 2007: pers.comm). During the time I was in Yuendumu, an attempt to perform *Jardiwanpa* was made. As was

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<sup>62</sup> Laughren (2009: pers.comm.) notes that in 1976, *Kankarlu* was held during the winter whereas *Kurdiji* was typically over summer. Shannon observed in Lajamanu over the 1970/1971 summer period that “the initiation rites lasted for two weeks. These were immediately followed by *Kajiri* which continued over the next five weeks” (Shannon 1971: 10).

outlined in the story that began Chapter 2, after several months of trying to get all of the people required for this large-scale ceremony without success, this ceremony was put on hold to be finished later. *Ngajakula*, a similar ceremony owned by the opposite patrimoiety, is still known by a few older men but there was no serious talk of holding this version of the ceremony when I was in Yuendumu. Harry Nelson (2006: pers.comm) stated that the primary function of these ceremonies was to open up the restrictions on remarriage for widows of deceased people associated with one of the *Jukurrpa* ancestors. A large part of one of the all-night ceremonies involves all the widows dancing in lines with flaming firesticks. Laughren (2009: pers.comm.) noted that some women choose to avoid participation in order to avoid pressure to re-marry.

Four of the ceremonies have been described by Dussart, these being *Ngajakula*, *Jardiwanpa*, *Puluwanti* and *Kura-kurra*. Dussart has shown that there is an obligatory reversal and exchange of roles in performance from one associated series to the next (Dussart 2000: 79). Peterson enhances this description demonstrating that there are complex interrelationships amongst these ceremonies, emphasising that *Ngajakula* and *Jardiwanpa* relate to different patrimoieties. The two patricouples within each of these moiety relate more directly to certain Dreamings along these lines. *Jardiwanpa* belongs to Jakamarra/Jupurrurla/Jangala and Jampijinpa patrimoiety. The Dreaming ancestor *yarripiri* (python) begins his travels at Wirnparrku, this place and associated Dreaming belonging to the Jakamarra/Jupurrurla patricouple. Further along this journey, the *yankirri* (emu) Dreaming joins in with the travels belonging to Jangala/ Jampijinpa patricouple. Other Dreamings such as

*wampana* and *ngurlu* (Nakamarra/Napurrurla) also join in at various points. *Ngajakula* revolves around the journey of *mala* (rat kangaroo) from *Mawurrungu* associated with the Japaljarri/Jungarrayi patricouple. Intimately linked is the journey of *Puluwanti* (owl) which is associated with the country surrounding Willowra. This belongs to the Japangardi/Japanangka patricouple. Laughren (2009: pers.comm) and Peterson (2009: pers.comm) have both independently reflected that in the 1970s when they lived in Yuendumu *Ngajakula* was performed more often than *Jardiwanpa* as the eastern Warlpiri from Willowra were dominant in ceremonial activity. Nowadays, *Jardiwanpa* is the most popular of the two ceremonies with many Warlpiri people using *Jardiwanpa* as a general gloss for these conflict resolution ceremonies which are performed almost identically despite their links to different Dreamings and country. *Jardiwanpa* has been performed several times over the last few decades whereas *Ngajakula* has not been performed at Yuendumu since the 1970s.

A conflict resolution ceremony generally takes about two weeks to complete, culminating in its spectacular final two nights. Before this, there is a sometimes lengthy period of waiting for everyone to arrive. In this period, people move their camps to the business area and gather together each night to rehearse songs and dances. This can go on for a long time until everybody necessary for the ceremony has gathered. The initial part of this consists of men singing from the central song series associated with that particular ceremony in the early afternoon whilst women dancing with their hands raised besides their shoulder, hopping forward singing out ‘uh, uh, uh, uuuuuh’ before switching to a shake-a-leg style dance incorporating a hand movement similar to winnowing seeds in a

coolamon. The dance style changes when the men are singing songs associated with the *yankirri Jukurrpa* (Emu Dreaming). This continues until all the people needed to perform this ceremony have gathered in one place. In their performance these ceremonies entail ritualised assaults and support. This is reflected in the layout in which people dance. On the final night there is an elaborate ceremony which involves the burning of long poles wrapped with eucalyptus leaves. The owners for the ceremony are locked in a round humpy made of branches and certain managers of the ceremony shake the poles over the owners showering them in sparks in a kind of ritualised assault. The other group of managers is responsible for protecting them from getting too burnt.

There are also *yawulyu* incorporated into this ritual, sung by women in the afternoon preceding the night-time ceremony. These are associated with the same Dreaming itineraries as these men's conflict resolution songs. This involves the painting of particular women's chests with associated designs determined by the woman's patricouple affiliation. These women's *yawulyu* were also performed with their associated dances before the *Jardiwanpa* ceremonies were to begin, to 'finish up' for a man associated with *Jardiwanpa* sites who had passed away a few years before.

### **Men's songs**

Some songs sung by men, such as *parmpa*, are restricted to a male only audience. Others, such as *purlapa* are sung in public situations and often incorporate women in various roles. *Yilpinji* are sometimes restricted and sometimes public.

Being a female researcher, I could only record the public *yilpinji* and *purlapa*. Recordings of some of the restricted genres have been made by other male researchers and are housed in AIATSIS with restrictions on who can listen to them.

## **Parnpa**

*Parnpa* are often labelled ‘increase songs’ in the literature, drawing on one of their functions which is to make food resources more plentiful. These songs, however, have other functions too, such as to cure illnesses or alter weather conditions. The primary function of these songs, however, appears to be to educate men about Warlpiri religion and country. Dussart makes a parallel between this and women’s *yawulyu* but notes “*Parnpa* ceremonies tend to be directed at specific circumstances (*ngarmirni* [‘increase’]), whereas the *yawulyu* are invoked for the more general maintenance of Warlpiri well-being” (Dussart 2000: 76)<sup>63</sup>. These songs are sung at *Kurdiji* ceremonies during the first day and relate to those Dreamings and places to which an initiand has affiliations. Although *parnpa* are often discussed as being ‘secret’ or ‘restricted’ songs in this context, they are performed on the opposite side of the business ground to where the women are sitting. Far from pretending not to see these performances, women actively plan to be there when they are happening. Dussart pointed out from her observations in the 1980s that although these ceremonies “are performed less often now than when Munn undertook her fieldwork in

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<sup>63</sup> *Ngarmirni* is a verb which is used for the act of performing *parnpa*. *Ngarmirninji* means made plentiful or rendered abundant (Laughren et al. 2007). *Ngarmirni* also means ‘beget’ as a father does to a child (Laughren 2010: pers.comm.).

Yuendumu [in the 1950s], their relevance in ritual life has in no way diminished” (Dussart 2000: 76). Similarly during my fieldwork, whilst there were only a few old men who actually knew how to sing these songs, they were still a crucial element of ritual life, particularly in their performance as part of the *Kurdiji* ceremony<sup>64</sup>.

In past decades, another stage of initiation called *Kankarlu* existed in which young men were eventually subincised. Peterson refers to these as ‘religious festivals’ (Peterson 2000: 207) where men’s songs associated with several different *Jukurrpa* are performed in a centralised area. People come from far away to camp nearby and once everyone has gathered the songs and dances associated with particular men are performed. The ritual events surrounding *Kankarlu* no longer occur in Yuendumu today. However the older generations reminisce about these frequently with older men recounting the songs, designs, dances and stories they learned in this period of their lives. Older people in Yuendumu describe *Kankarlu* as similar to ‘high school’ in that it was a period of instruction to young men of knowledge about Warlpiri religious life. The decline in Warlpiri peoples’ knowledge of *Jukurrpa* stories, songs, dances and designs in more recent decades is often attributed to the fact that *Kankarlu* is not practised anymore and that there is no other forum for learning about religious life that has replaced it.

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<sup>64</sup> This puts an enormous amount of pressure on this small group of knowledgeable senior men who have to do the majority of the work for the whole ceremony.

## Purlapa

*Purlapa* is a genre of men's song associated with specific places. Meggitt has described these as 'public entertainments' (1962: 244). Dussart has criticised this definition saying that this suggests the function of *purlapa* as being a "relatively inconsequential diversion" when *purlapa* do more than this in allowing people to "manifest...their control over stories, sites, and the resources associated with them" (2000: 76). Wild has also noted that *purlapa* related to the management of particular sites, serving a functionalist purpose other than entertainment (1975). He describes these songs which were performed regularly during his fieldwork as always being accompanied by a beat such as clapping together two boomerangs or sticks or hitting a bottle on the ground. He also notes that women join in, sometimes even with the singing, cupping their hands and hitting the insides of their thighs (*purrrpu-pakarni*). He explains that these songs can also be performed without any dancing in which case the men sit in an inner compact circle and that women and children sit around the outside.

Whilst I recorded versions of several *purlapa* song series with ritually senior men, the only *purlapa* which I saw performed during my fieldwork was one associated with the Christian stories surrounding Easter<sup>65</sup>. A large group of people from Yuendumu travelled to Ali Curung in 2006 for the performance of this ceremony on Easter Friday and again on Easter Sunday at dawn. Neville Poulson (2006: pers.comm) explained that in the 1970s this *purlapa* was

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<sup>65</sup> This is the only song series I encountered during my fieldwork which did not have ancestral beings and their journeys as core content.

composed by a group of older men and women as a way in which they could make sense of and pass on Christian stories. Men, women and children from many different places participated in the performance of this Easter *purlapa*. On the Easter Friday, a session was held in the afternoon without dancing, the songs were performed with men sitting facing eastwards clapping together boomerangs as they sang and women sitting behind them singing also facing eastwards<sup>66</sup>. The night-time events consisted of the same songs, accompanied by a march-like style of dancing by men and male children in which they were decorated with white fluff whilst they re-enacted the Easter story. The members of the Baptist church in Yuendumu are extremely proud of the Easter *purlapa* and showcase it to Christian visitors to the settlement as a kind of example of how indigenous culture has incorporated Christianity<sup>67</sup>.

## **Juyurdu**

These songs are known only by senior men and they are rarely sung in contemporary Yuendumu as their consequences are seen as being so dire. Older Warlpiri men informed me that as these songs are sung a bone is pointed and the victim becomes ill or in some case dies as a result. As part of the mortuary rituals performed directly after someone dies, accusations are often made as to why the deceased has passed away, Warlpiri people being unwilling to believe that

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<sup>66</sup> This seating pattern is similar to that for other ceremonies like *Kurdiji*. It is different to Wild's descriptions of how people sat when singing *purlapa* without dancing. In the *purlapa* that Peterson (2010: pers.comm) saw in the 1970s the women and some men would sit in the east and the men would dance towards them from the west.

<sup>67</sup> In 2006, several months after this ceremony had been performed in Ali Curung at Easter time, a group of school children and teachers from Mt Evelyn Christian School in Victoria came to Yuendumu as part of an exchange program. The songs associated with this ceremony were performed for them to demonstrate Warlpiri understandings of Christianity.



someone could have passed away from natural causes. Senior men are frequently accused of having been singing *juyurdu* and outcast as sorcerers responsible for the death for a period surrounding these big sorry meetings.

Thomas Rice (2007: pers.comm.) reported to me one day that he had gone up to see two old men who had both gone quite senile in their old age and that they had been sitting innocently singing *juyurdu*. He had rushed to stop them as their senility meant they had not understood the impact of what they were singing and were merely just remembering something from the past. Rice explained that these songs are dangerous as they can make people act strangely or dance like a fool. He recounted that often in the past, men would sing these songs if their wife had a lover such that the lover would start acting strangely and their wife would lose interest in him. When I asked him if I should record any of these songs he said he did not want to as he was too afraid of what might happen to me if I heard them.

### **Men's yilpinji ('love songs')**

*Yilpinji*, often called 'love songs' or 'love magic' in the literature have been the subject of much fascination in many studies of Aboriginal societies (Bell 1983: 145-146; Berndt 1950: 28; Kaberry 1939: 268; Meggitt 1962: 209; and Munn 1973: 45-47). Their purpose is to make people attractive to the opposite sex. These songs are targeted at a particular person and the singing is directed to an item of their clothing. As they sing this item of clothing is said to become 'shiny' – shininess being a sexually attractive quality to Warlpiri people. When a certain

person of the opposite sex sees the person for whom this *yilpinji* was sung wearing this piece of clothing they become attracted to them.

The men's *yilpinji* that I recorded were all sung by small groups of men. They relate to particular sites and appear to be important in nurturing the *Jukurrpa* and associated country. Some men's *yilpinji* are performed in restricted men's groups whereas others (such as those that I recorded) are more open and can be performed in front of women<sup>68</sup>.

Tindale reflects on the performance of *yilpinji* when he was at Cockatoo Creek in 1931. He describes a group of young men who sang and danced *yilpinji* in the late evening before a senior man brought over two young women with whom they had sexual intercourse. This suggests that *yilpinji* had a functional purpose in getting men (and possibly women too) aroused within a controlled environment overseen by senior men.

## **Women's songs**

Women's songs are generally sung in female only situations. Only certain *yawulyu* are restricted as such, but normally men do not attend their performance. They do, however, come up to the business ground whilst they are being performed if they need to see their female family members suggesting that

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<sup>68</sup> Jeannie Nungarrayi Egan also helped to record these *yilpinji*, indicating that they are open for Warlpiri women to hear too and that an exception was not just being made for the purposes of recording the songs.

there are no strong restrictions. When this occurs women normally stop singing nonetheless until they have left. The songs associated with initiation and women's *yilpinji* are more restricted and women cease to sing them whenever a man is in close proximity. Some *yawulyu* are also more restricted, particularly those which are danced whilst naked. This restriction may be more to do with modern taboos on being naked in front of men but is also important for adhering to avoidance relationships. These *yawulyu* are still performed on the business ground visible from the settlement area but a line of women always stands obscuring any view of the dancers.

### **Women's songs surrounding initiation**

Women sing throughout the course of initiation in less formalised contexts. Generally sung whilst sitting around where they are camping, these songs are particularly associated with the travels of the men. Women sing songs when the boys leave to go into the bush, then again to draw them back to the business camp again safely. During *jilkaja* journeys, women travel with the party of senior men, initiands and their guardians to collect further candidates for initiation. They sing these songs to ensure the safety of the party. Older women explained to me that they had to do this so that the boys would not get homesick. During a *jilkaja* that came through Yuendumu in March 2006, a particular group of older women related to a candidate for initiation sat up all-night singing these songs softly whilst the group of initiands and their guardians slept in the bush nearby. During the daytime part of *Kurdiji* the men are performing *parnpa* and women perform *yawulyu* on opposing sides of a business ground. Women also

perform other songs and dances which the men watch. I have not clearly established yet what the features of these songs are, only that they have direct functions related to the actions of the men at the time of singing. These songs were described to me several times as “not yawulyu” rather than giving them a distinct, named genre category of their own, but indicating nonetheless that they are of a particular category of women’s song. In the day-time part of the *Marnakurrawarnu* ceremony held in Yuendumu in January 2007 all able-bodied women were required to dance in a long line into the ceremony ground whilst a small group of senior women sang these songs. The men gathered on the opposite side of the business ground to watch this performance. I did not record any of these songs whilst I was in Yuendumu as my requests to do so were never taken seriously. I was never sure whether this was because they contained content that older women did not want to be recorded or whether they were not deemed as important enough to warrant recording. A younger woman explained to me that I should not record these songs as “they were not like *yawulyu*”.

### **Yawulyu (women’s songs)**

*Yawulyu* refers to the songs, designs and dances that are performed by small groups of women to represent the identity of a Warlpiri person. These song series follow the Dreaming itineraries of ancestral beings across the country. Women associate themselves with particular *yawulyu* according to their connections with country along these Dreaming itineraries. The content of these songs may have a narrative component but the emphasis is more on evoking places and the activities of Dreaming ancestors in a highly symbolic manner.

*Yawulyu* may be performed in a song series or as individual small songs, often in the broader context of a wider ritual (such as the *Kurdiji* ceremony that will be described in Chapter 5). Dussart has described *yawulyu* as “an umbrella term for the most pervasive of women’s rituals at Yuendumu” noting that it “...defies easy translation because of its plural functions” (Dussart 2000: 75). Some *yawulyu* are labelled as *nyurnu-kurlangu* (‘healing songs’) and are powerful in healing particular illnesses. In these situations, animal fat or cooking oil is ‘sung’ with these *yawulyu* and then massaged into the body of the sick person. Some *yawulyu* are also labelled as being *yilpinji*, as when sung for a particular person (or item of their clothing) it makes them more sexually attractive. Other *yawulyu* evoke places, weather conditions, increase food resources or recount events of the Dreaming. *Yawulyu* are performed in a song series which follow the travels of Dreaming ancestors across the country (as they were in the elicited recordings I made), or individually, relating to their particular purpose. Individual small songs are often sung whilst painting up.

Certain *yawulyu* are restricted to senior women whilst others are performed more openly. Those held when I was in Yuendumu tended to be female only situations, although they were not restricted. Some performances of *yawulyu* involved elaborate dancing<sup>69</sup> which was often hidden from the view of men by a group of women gathering in a cluster to hide a view of the dancing. It is the performance of *yawulyu* which is private, the songs being open for anyone to

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<sup>69</sup> The more restricted *yawulyu* today are performed naked, more open *yawulyu* are performed with skirts but no shirts so that the chest designs can be seen.

listen to<sup>70</sup>. During the time I have spent in Yuendumu I have seen *yawulyu* performed in many different contexts. As I was working predominantly with women due to the gendered segregation in Aboriginal settlements such as Yuendumu, this is the genre of Warlpiri song of which I have made the most recordings.

Before *Kurdiji* ceremonies, *yawulyu* associated with the candidates for initiation are sung by a small group of women who paint their chests with the designs and sing the songs (an example of this is given in Chapter 4). The Central Land Council organises annual gatherings in which women gather from many areas of central Australia and perform *yawulyu* for a whole week. Many community groups use this as an opportunity to demonstrate and show off their styles of song and dance. Warlpiri women, who tend to dominate these events, use this opportunity to do important business such as ‘finishing up’ for women who have recently passed away. These ‘finishing up’ ceremonies are also held in Yuendumu beforehand, with senior women singing and dancing *yawulyu* associated with the deceased, from just after sunset into the night for several weeks. These ‘finishing up’ *yawulyu* involve all senior women shifting their camp to the business ground where they sing *yawulyu* each afternoon after sunset for several hours. The final night consists of an all-night performance of the same *yawulyu*.

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<sup>70</sup> The only restriction on playing *yawulyu* on the Warlpiri Media radio station was if one of the singers was someone who had recently passed away.

*Yawulyu* are also performed for community events such as at the annual Sports Weekend or the opening of the new hospital in 2006. As was noted in the introduction, Dussart has discussed how *yawulyu* have come to replace the men's performances of *purlapa* in different settings such as courts and art exhibition openings (2004).

### **Women's *yilpinji* (love songs)**

Dussart reflects that "According to senior Warlpiri residents, *yilpinji* were the exclusive province of men prior to sedentarisation. However, the performance of *yilpinji* was opened up to women in the wake of enforced settlement. A new population density and the accompanying social disruption stimulated a dramatic increase in the "love songs" used to find lovers" (2000: 77). This indicates that *yilpinji* have in recent history been borrowed from nearby regions. I only recorded two *yilpinji* song series sung by women during my fieldwork, both of them being sung for my benefit<sup>71</sup>. One of them was from the Anmatyerr-speaking region to the north-east of Yuendumu and the other was from the Lurtija-speaking region to the south. These *yilpinji* were identified as belonging to these other groups, supporting Dussart's comment that they were only the realm of the Warlpiri men before sedentarisation. Unlike men's *yilpinji*, the women's versions seem not to be as intimately linked with places and *Jukurrpa*. Whilst places and *Jukurrpa* may be referred to in some instances, evoking their characteristics does not seem to be one of their powerful functions (as it is with *yawulyu*); their primary function being to attract lovers.

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<sup>71</sup> On both occasions I was going to be seeing my boyfriend in the following days and the women were singing these songs with this in mind.

Some individual *yawulyu* are said to be good *yilpinji*<sup>72</sup> and also *yawulyu* relating to the same places are performed in the middle of *yilpinji* song series (perhaps *yawulyu* are a way of grounding them in places and therefore making them meaningful for Warlpiri women)<sup>73</sup>. This reinforces the multi-functional role of the genre of *yawulyu*. Laughren, in comparing particular *yawulyu* and *yilpinji*, has noted that these two genres of women's song share some similarities, especially in their formal linguistic and musical properties but are clearly distinct in that *yilpinji* do not have the same structure to their performance, are performed by individuals rather than groups and have clear narratives with overtly sexual themes rather than the focus that *yawulyu* have on evoking country and Dreamings (Laughren 2010).

## **Conclusion**

Warlpiri songs and the ceremonies for which they are sung are an aspect of 'high culture' having distinct features that set them apart from other aspects of Warlpiri life. In this chapter I emphasise that it is song texts, music, dances and designs altogether performed in ceremonial contexts, which are powerful forces that shape the way the world is. I have also focused on defining the different genres of Warlpiri song according to their different functional purposes – their unique characteristics outlined accordingly. These performances of songs and ceremonies nurture Warlpiri people's religious associations with their Dreaming,

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<sup>72</sup> In the Minamina *yawulyu* song series, a song which evoked the movement of women's hips as they carried a baby in a coolamon attached to their body with snake vine, was said to be a 'good *yilpinji*'. Women were said to have obtained lovers through singing this song.

<sup>73</sup> Turpin (2009: pers.comm.) has noted that these terms are fluid with cognate terms seeming to cover different types of rituals even within the Arandic area alone.



country and kin. In the next chapter I focus on describing the nature of these associations and how they play out in ceremonial contexts.

## Chapter 4. *Jukurrpa*, country and ceremonial organisation

Maggie and her 29 year-old granddaughter, Kumunjayi<sup>74</sup>, came running up the road towards me. The day before I had organised with them to drive to Mt Allan settlement to visit some relatives and go to the shop. They yelled out that the shop was shutting at 11am that day and not opening again until after 2pm. We decided it would be best to wait and go that afternoon. I went up to see Maggie's two sisters, Ruth and Ena, who had also wanted to come with us and told them what was going on. They both agreed and then Ruth suggested that we could go now and stop at a place called Yujutuyungu on the way. "You know, that *Jukurrpa* we were singing about last week", she explained. Ruth and two other women from Mt Allan had sat down with me the week before and we had recorded *yawulyu* from the *Yurrampi Jukurrpa* (Honey ant Dreaming). Ruth had said she'd wanted to take me to this place so that I could see the *Jukurrpa* – Japangardi and Japanangka – honey ants who had travelled from near Papunya up through Yuendumu and towards Mt Allan.

In the car on the way to Yujutuyungu, Kumunjayi sat in the front with me and told me that she owned the place where we were going. Her father who had died many years before and his siblings had also been owners of this place as had their father and his siblings before them. The following year, I was to see

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<sup>74</sup> Kumunjayi is the name given to those who share a name with someone who is recently deceased. This term is used due to restrictions on saying a deceased persons name or words that sound similar. This prohibition continues from just after someone dies for several years.

Kumunjayi's brother, also an owner for this place, dancing and painting a shield associated with *Yurrampi Jukurrpa* for his son's initiation.

When we arrived the older women started to reminisce. All three of the older women had grown up at this place as teenagers. They laughed as they remembered how Ena had been caught by her promised husband nearby. They showed me *pardinjalpa*, a plant which is good for making babies warmer when they are cold. We could see Mt Wedge further to the south – just the other day a really big snake had been found there and it was rumoured that the army had had to come to take it away<sup>75</sup>. There were hills in the distance that we could see which were honey ants travelling past on their way from Papunya, a settlement further to the south. As we walked further away from the car and began to climb a rock outcrop, they showed me two holes in the rock where a Napangardi and a Napanangka had been digging for honey ants – these holes met in the middle under the ground and the two women had ended up stabbing each other. There were three vertically erect stones nearby – two Japangardis and a Japanangka, Kumunjayi's grandfather. As we left this place to head towards a large cave where the three older women had lived with their father decades before, we heard a loud noise from behind some rocks. The older women excitedly, but somewhat cautiously, went over to explore the area expecting to find tracks leading them to a large perentie goanna which we could later cook up for our lunch. They did not discover any tracks, however, and concluded that it had been

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<sup>75</sup> This may mean that some men in uniforms had come to get the snake and that rumour had spread to describe them as the army.

*milarlpa* - the spirits of Japangardi and Japanangka – the two honey ant  
Dreaming ancestors.

The power which Warlpiri songs have is on one level connected to their functional roles to achieve certain social purposes as was outlined in the previous chapter. On another level these songs hold great power as they are intimately connected to the Warlpiri cosmological concept of the *Jukurrpa* which is core to Warlpiri identity, social relationships and connections to country. The *Jukurrpa* permeates Warlpiri life on many levels. Through the above story which outlines a very typical day of my fieldwork in Yuendumu, the kind of place that *Jukurrpa* stories and places have in everyday life can be seen. In this chapter I discuss the concept of the *Jukurrpa* as it has been written about in numerous ethnographic texts and as I have come to understand it through my engagement with Warlpiri people during the time I spent in Yuendumu. This concept, far from being an abstract aspect of Warlpiri religious life only understood by older generations, holds an important contemporary significance (as the above story suggests). Following on from this, I will discuss the various ways in which individual Warlpiri are connected to the *Jukurrpa*, related country and ceremonies. In the final part of this chapter I will show how these connections come into play in ceremonies, highlighting the somewhat distinctive ceremonial organisation of the *Kurdiji* ceremony, which I will discuss in further detail in Chapter 5.

## ***The Jukurrpa***

The *Jukurrpa* permeates Warlpiri life on many levels, as has been shown in the story which commenced this chapter. A mundane, everyday activity such as going to the shop also turned into a trip infused with philosophical significance, connecting people to their past, to country and to the religious significance that these hold. The above account reiterates Poirier's observations that for Aboriginal people "there are no ontological dichotomies between social, natural and cosmological" (2005:52). Notions of the *Jukurrpa* are not set aside in Warlpiri lives nor only appreciated by older people who understand its more esoteric aspects. Notions of the *Jukurrpa* are relevant to people's contemporary social lives on a day-to-day basis as well as in the ceremonial contexts that I discussed in the previous chapter.

Cosmological notions of the Dreaming have been described in a vast body of literature from across Australia (see for example Stanner 1966 & 1979). The *Jukurrpa* is a term shared across a number of groups of Aboriginal people in the desert region of Central Australia (see Dussart 2000; Glowczewski 1991; Meggitt 1962; Munn 1973; Myers 1986; and Poirier 2005)<sup>76</sup>. In Stanner's early work in which he explores definitions of the Dreaming, emphasising that confusion arises from Western emphases on 'time' and 'history'. He writes that "Although... the Dreaming conjures up the notion of a sacred, heroic time of the indefinitely remote past, such a time is also, in a sense, still part of the present"

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<sup>76</sup> A wide range of terms are used for the Dreaming across the Australian continent, the term *Jukurrpa* being quite common in various cognate forms across the Central Desert and Western Desert areas of Central Australia.

(Stanner 1979: 24). This is reflected in the ways that the Dreaming comes into play in day-to-day Warlpiri lives. Often portrayed as concretely determining the way the world is, many authors have pointed out more recently a high degree of openness and flexibility, describing the *Jukurrpa* in such a way that human beings have a great deal of control over the way the world is within its parameters. Myers reflects upon Pintupi notions of the Dreaming, emphasising that:

It represents all that exists as deriving from a single, unchanging, timeless source. All things have been the same forever deriving from the same basic pattern. The Dreaming, which cannot be altered by human action, is the very image of self-direction and the source of a given autonomy in human life (1986: 52).

This view of the Dreaming, one often portrayed by Aboriginal people themselves, describes it as an overarching dominant structure which shapes the events of people's lives. Dussart explains that when Warlpiri people dream of new songs, designs or dances, they consider themselves to be accessing for the first time something which has always been there but has not been known about before or shown to them before (2000:147). Myers continues with this point in saying that:

Historical change can be integrated, but... it is assimilated to the pre-existing forms: The foundation had always been there, but people had not known it before. New rituals, songs or designs – for Westerners the products of human creation – are for the Pintupi clearer sights of what was always there (1986: 53).

The outline of events surrounding the *Kurdiji* ceremony presented in Chapter 5 will demonstrate, through examples of ritual practice, how the *Jukurrpa* is continually negotiated by Warlpiri people living in contemporary Yuendumu. Whilst always present as a guiding force or point of reference to make sense of the world, it is by no means a dictating and inflexible code for how things must play out. This degree of flexibility is an inherent part of this philosophy. Poirier explains that:

Not only has the *Tjukurrpa* always existed, but it continues to permeate and animate all matter, to actualise itself and be actualised in the ongoing present, in a world where networks of social relationships and exchanges involve not just humans but also named places and the ancestors, both acting as sentient agents. From an Aboriginal perspective, reality unfolds and reveals itself through the multiple interactions and relations among different constituents of the world, be they human, non-human or ancestral... (2005: 57).

Poirier argues that “The Aboriginal approach to time is relational and process-oriented rather than linear and genealogical, and it cannot be dissociated from place, meaning the landmarks where events occur” (2005: 57-58). Whilst this viewpoint may appear to imply a sense of ahistoricity, rather it emphasises an interest in history as a continuum. On one level there does appear to be a kind of sequential order to the journeys of ancestral beings across Warlpiri country, but all events are sung about in songs and spoken about in stories as if they are happening simultaneously. *Jukurrpa* ancestors seem to be ever present in places despite a reference to a moment in time when they travelled there making their mark. In Chapter 6 I will discuss the song series that is sung in the all-night part of the *Kurdiji* ceremony. The ancestral women that travel across the country in

this *Jukurrpa* story continually encounter other *Jukurrpa* ancestors, many of which are sung about at particular points along their journey. All of these individual *Jukurrpa* stories have a kind of logical sequential order in which certain events happen after others. However, all these ancestral beings are present at particular places at the same moments as others. This would indicate that there is more of a focus on their presence in *places* rather than on the temporal relationship that these stories have to each other. Poirier shows that for Aboriginal people, “Their sense of historicity rather is one of a reality that unfolds and reveals itself in places and through dynamic and intricate interplay among events and actions from the *Tjukurrpa*, the human and non-human realms” (Poirier 2005: 59). From this view emerges an understanding of the *Jukurrpa* as a set of rules or a pattern for living which is continually negotiated according to context but which has always existed in the landscape, although it may not have been revealed until a particular point in time.

The *Jukurrpa* is experienced in many ways by contemporary Warlpiri people within their day-to-day lives (as was noted in the opening vignette to this chapter). Poirier notes that amongst the Kukatja, “Although they are rarely seen, the ancestral beings are able to make their presence known by a variety of different means and to manifest themselves in a range of different forms” (2005: 61). During my fieldwork there were many instances in which people could feel the presence of ancestral beings. These events were always interpreted contextually, according to what was currently happening or with reference to the particular site.



This was particularly pertinent at the annual gathering of the Women's Law and Culture meeting in 2007.<sup>77</sup> This week-long gathering of women from all over the Central Desert to perform songs and dances, was that year hosted by Haasts Bluff settlement. As we drove towards the site where we would camp for the week I could hear the women I was travelling with murmuring in the back of the car about the two Jangalas, key characters in the *Warlukurlangu Jukurrpa* (Fire Dreaming) story. The chosen place for the meeting, whilst not associated particularly with a site, was directly on the path of the *Warlukurlangu Jukurrpa* in which two Jangalas were fleeing southwards from their father who was trying to burn them. Many of the women camped in our group were owners and managers (refer to discussion of *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* below) for this *Jukurrpa*. Throughout the week rumours abounded concerning the presence of kurdaitcha men who were lurking around the boundaries to our camp.<sup>78</sup> Many of the older women would sit up at night calling for the two Jangalas to keep us safe. A friend of mine who was camped next to an older lady associated with the *Warlukurlangu Jukurrpa* told me that in the middle of the night she woke up as she felt a wisp of wind move across the top of her. The old lady next to her woke at the same time muttering about how the two Jangalas had just walked over the top of them while they were asleep. The *Jukurrpa* is present in Warlpiri lives at all times and its presence is felt in many ways.

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<sup>77</sup> Women's Law and Culture week is held annually and is funded by the Central Land Council, Alice Springs. It is held in a different host settlement every year and large numbers of women from communities across South Australia and the Northern Territory attend.

<sup>78</sup> Kurdaitcha are evil non-human men who chase after women trying to lure them away. They cannot be seen except by the woman whom they are pursuing. The belief in these beings is widespread across Australia.

Dussart has identified five distinct meanings surrounding the term *Jukurrpa* which are used in different contexts by Warlpiri (2000: 17-22). Firstly, she highlights its most common usage to designate a moment in which “the world was physically and spiritually shaped by Ancestral beings who gave the Warlpiri their moral and ritual order” (2000:18). In the opening story it can be seen that *Jukurrpa* was referred to as a time in which features of the landscape were created that we can see today, such as the holes in the rock outcrop created by the ancestors digging for honey ants. The *Jukurrpa* is also continually spoken of as in the present tense, with the hills in the distance being referred to as the *Jukurrpa*, honey ants travelling past in the present time. The emphasis in this first meaning of the *Jukurrpa*, however is on the creation of places in this overarching moment rather than in a continuum of other historical events.

Secondly Dussart notes the use of the term *Jukurrpa* as a collective noun to designate the Ancestral beings themselves and the deceased ancestors of contemporary Warlpiri people. This was also seen in the above story with reference to the honey ants which are the subject of the *Jukurrpa* story.

Kumunjayi’s grandfather is referred to directly as a honey ant, one of the *Jukurrpa* ancestors. Dussart does note however that this does not mean that the deceased relatives are “instantly folded into, or immediately become one with, some larger cosmological force situated in the Dreaming” (2000: 18).

Kumunjayi’s father, who everyone present remembered as a living person was not referred to as *Jukurrpa* but as an owner for this place from whom Kumunjayi inherited her rights as his individual identity as a person was still remembered by all present.

The third way in which the term *Jukurrpa* is used is to refer to the narrative stories found in songs, objects, designs and dances associated with ritual. Dussart notes that these stories are also proffered in non-ceremonial contexts. Ruth's reference to the songs and dances they had sung the week before as being *Jukurrpa* allude to this meaning. The fourth meaning revolves around how gender and kinship play out in ceremonial contexts such that there are segments of narratives that may be gender and age specific and others that are not. Lastly Dussart reiterates that nocturnal dreams provide much of the mythological knowledge that the Warlpiri possess and are also known as *Jukurrpa*<sup>79</sup>. Dussart emphasises that all these different ways of talking about the *Jukurrpa* are interrelated in many ways.

Rituals and ceremonies are performative means for addressing the *Jukurrpa*. In Chapter 6, I will show the ways in which the performance of ritual is a symbolic representation of the *Jukurrpa* and its moral codes. "Ritual practices and performances are an objectification and enactment of ancestral actions and deeds, and manifestations of their enduring power. They are also acts of communication with the mythic beings" (Poirier 2005: 66).

### ***Associations with country***

As was illustrated in the story which opened this chapter, Warlpiri people relate to places in many ways. The three older women in the story that began this

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<sup>79</sup> The use of the same word for 'Dreaming' and for 'dream' is not widespread across Australia with different words for these two concepts being used in many languages. These two realms are regarded as somewhat distinct despite their interrelationships as outlined above and despite the shared use of the word *Jukurrpa* in Warlpiri.

chapter whilst not associated with *Yurrampi Jukurrpa* in any of the more formalised ways which will be outlined shortly, drew their connection with this place from the time they spent living there as young adults. Kumunjayi, who has spent her whole life growing up in Yuendumu settlement, related to this place through her ancestors, drawing a particular inherited connection as an owner through her paternal line (refer to discussion of *kirda*) as well as through her identity with the settlement of Yuendumu. All of these women also related to the place through our visit that day - the story of the *milarlpa* moving from behind the rocks is still recounted to this day when we reminisce about visiting Yujutuyungu. This story demonstrates how people living in contemporary Yuendumu take on the visual and acoustic forms of the *Jukurrpa* in both its surface (*kankarlu*) and deeper (*kaninju*) features.

The Yuendumu settlement area is situated on the path of the travels of the *Yurrampi Jukurrpa* such that the population that lives there has a connection to this *Jukurrpa* regardless of their inherited rights. Many Yuendumu residents refer to their settlement as *Yurrampi*. For young people who have spent their whole lives growing up in Yuendumu this forms a core part of their identity. They commonly say they are *yurrampi* (honey ants). In a more technical way, most women discover that they are pregnant whilst in Yuendumu and thus all babies born here can relate to *Yurrampi Jukurrpa* as their conception *Jukurrpa*. People talk about the place in which they were conceived as being ‘put’ there by the *Jukurrpa*, again reiterating the power of the *Jukurrpa* to shape human actions.

The ancestral beings of the *Jukurrpa* travelled between places which they created as they travelled and which still exist today. Poirier uses the phrases ‘mythical itineraries’ or ‘ancestral tracks’ to describe the “Spacio-physical narratives of the ancestors’ journeys, actions and performances across the land” noting how “These itineraries meander over the land, forming criss-crossing networks that define the social spaces of territorial and ritual knowledge, belonging, and responsibilities” (Poirier 2005: 52). Warlpiri people as individuals are connected to *Jukurrpa* in particular ways and are therefore associated with the country with which it is associated. Poirier again emphasises that the “*Tjukurrpa* and its multiple expressions are embodied in the land and are intrinsic to an Aborigine’s sense of self and experience of the world” (2005:52). In Chapter 6, I will discuss the journey of the ancestral women from *Kunajarrayi* which is the focus of the central song series sung for *Kurdiji* ceremonies in Yuendumu. This journey is symbolic in many ways of the journey that boys go through in becoming young men through the process of male initiation.

Warlpiri people derive the strongest of their connections to country from their inherited rights through both their mother’s and father’s families. In Chapter 2, I described the subsection system that is central to social interactions amongst Warlpiri people in their daily lives. This system reflects the system of patricouples which form two patrimoieties which are commonly discussed using the subsection terms. These patri-moieties are the basis for the transmission of people’s affiliations to country, songs, ceremonies and associated *Jukurrpa*.

Warlpiri people claim ownership (ie. they are *kirda*) for the *Jukurrpa* that are associated with their patriline ie. father's father and father. Kumunjayi and her brothers derive their ownership rights to the country surrounding Yujutuyungu and the other places associated with *Yurrampi Jukurrpa* in this way. The complementary role of *kurdungurlu*, glossed variously as 'manager', 'policeman' and 'working man' can be claimed for song series associated with country belonging to their mother and mother's father (*jamirdikipungu*).

It is the *kirda* who claim ownership in Warlpiri land claims for particular *Jukurrpa* and associated sites. It is also their responsibility to keep the country healthy by performing the ceremonies associated with these *Jukurrpa*. They have the right to live on that land and use its resources. Glowczewski (1983) too has discussed the differing roles of men and women as *kirda* noting that whilst a female child is born into her father's patrilineal line as *kirda* for the same *Jukurrpa* and country she is taught specifically feminine knowledge by her father's sisters, thus drawing on Dussart's fourth understanding of the *Jukurrpa* outlined above as gender and kinship specific (2000:18).

The complementary role of *kurdungurlu* is also crucial in maintaining the country and *Jukurrpa* associated with particular song series. These people are responsible for providing advice on the singing and dancing that a *kirda* performs. In the practice of looking after country and performing associated ceremonies the *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* are both crucial. Dussart notes that any major visit to country or decision about a ceremonial performance must involve both *kirda* and *kurdungurlu*. "*Kurdungurlu*-ship can be claimed by the rights

associated with the site at which one is “conceived”. While claims on the basis of conception site may coincide with inherited rights, there are ample examples of managerial positions being claimed by people whose ties to the associated *Jukurrpa* are only classificatory” (2000: 35).

As Warlpiri people ideally marry into the opposite patrimoiety (and matrimoiety) the *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* automatically belong to opposite patrimoieties. Each of these moieties has two patricouples, within which ownership of country is passed down. These patricouples have egocentric terms. *Kuyuwapirra* (FF) is one’s own patricouple. *Kuyuwurruru* (MM) is one’s mother’s mother’s patricouple, which together forms a patrimoiety with *kuyuwapirra*. The opposite patrimoiety to one’s own consists of one’s spouse’s patricouple called *kuyukirda* (FM) and one’s mother’s father’s patricouple called *kuyuyarriki* (MF).

<b><i>PATRIMOIETY 1: NGURRA-YATUJUMPARRA</i></b>	<b><i>PATRIMOIETY 2: NGURRA-KURLARNIYARRA</i></b>
<b><i>Kuyuwapirra</i></b> Japaljarri/Napaljarri Jungarrayi/Nungarrayi	<b><i>Kuyukirda</i></b> Jampijinpa/Nampijinpa Jangala/Nangala
<b><i>Kuyuwurruru</i></b> Japangardi/Napangardi Japanangka/Napanangka	<b><i>Kuyuyarriki</i></b> Jakamarra/Nakamarra Jupurrurla/ Napurrurla

**Table 2. Patrimoieties and patricouples**

\*the names for categories are based on ego as J/Nungarrayi (If J/Napaljarri is ego *kuyuwurruru* are the same but the *kuyukirda* are J/Nakamarra and J/Napurrurla, and the *kuyuyarriki* are J/Nampijinpa and J/Nangala)

Whilst much of the talk around affiliations to *Jukurrpa*, country and song series, uses groups of two subsection terms (to identify a patricouple) for classificatory purposes, specific individuals from these classes are considered to be the true

*kirda* or *kurdungurlu* through their inherited rights. Dussart has discussed how these categories are not fixed in saying that:

One's conception site, one's birthplace, a parent's birthplace, a parent's locus of decease, and overlapping territorial rights can all affect how land and ritual move from one patricouple to another within the patrimoiety (2000: 32).

Patriliney is sustained however by keeping these associated rights within the patrimoiety. Laughren (2009: pers.comm) has noted that when a man dies, one of his distant brothers may marry his widow and have children who inherit their rights in ceremony from both of these men, further broadening the rights an individual may have.

The *Kurdiji* ceremony which will be described in detail over the next few chapters, is different from this norm. When I asked Warlpiri people who were the *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* for the *Karntakarnta* song series which is sung for this ceremony they responded that "it is for everybody" perhaps referring more so to its use to initiate all boys, regardless of their inherited rights. The journey of the ancestral women focal to this song series travels through different tracts of country belonging to different patricouples. It starts at *Kunajarrayi* which belongs to the J/Napaljarri and J/Nungarrayi patricouple, then it moves on to country around *Warnapiyi* which belongs to members of the J/Nampijinpa and J/Nangala, patricouple etc..<sup>80</sup>. This journey continues in such a way that eventually women from many different parts of the country have joined in the

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<sup>80</sup> The conflict resolution ceremonies also have central song series for which ownership changes along the itinerary followed. However, this is only within the same patrimoiety ie. the two patricouples of a patrimoiety may have ownership over different places along this journey.



travels. This joining up of people and establishing of relationship networks is in fact a core theme emphasised in many aspects of the *Kurdiji* ceremonies (refer to discussion in Chapter 7). Whilst there is no sense of ownership of the ceremony being associated with ownership of these places, the songs associated with the particular sites are said to belong to the patricouple who are *kirda* for that place. The song series used in Lajamanu for initiation, however, does have clear *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* who are associated with the country where this Dreaming initially came out of the ground at Minamina. The reason for the lack of emphasis on *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* for the *Karntakarnta* song series, commencing at *Kunajarrayi*, may be due to the long time period in which performances of this ceremony have been used for initiating boys in Yuendumu. Other settlements use different but related song series in a similar way. Due to the inclusive nature of this song series, and the irrelevance of these *kirda/kurdungurlu* categories in the performance of *Kurdiji* (refer to Chapter 5), these ownership and managership rights may have become a point of non-emphasis. This was evident in discussions with Thomas Rice who initially said that “this was for everybody” and after probing said that it was “a Japaljarri/Jungarrayi song series, but it was really for everybody”. This indicates that whilst this *Jukurrpa* is associated with a particular patricouple, with the gathering of many people from different backgrounds in Yuendumu, the song series has become used as an overarching ceremony for initiating boys rather than addressing the identity of individuals<sup>81</sup>. The senior men who are in charge of *Kurdiji* in both Yuendumu and Mt Allan do however maintain individual *kirda* rights for the starting points of these song series.

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<sup>81</sup> In Lajamanu, however, the Minamina song series is used to initiate all boys yet still has distinct *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* who identify with this *Jukurrpa*.

## Ceremonial organization

In the site specific ceremonies, *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* have distinct roles. *Kirda* are responsible for dancing and taking a leading role in singing. *Kurdungurlu* oversee that these are being undertaken correctly and are typically involved in preparation of materials and the ceremonial ground and painting designs of the *kirda* on the artefacts that will be used in a ceremony. When the *kirda* for a particular *Jukurrpa* passes away, the associated ceremony is typically ‘put away’ for a period of time (often a few years) and then is brought out again by the *kurdungurlu*. As John Bern and Jan Larbalestier have pointed out with respect to the ceremonies associated with Limmen Bight on the western coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, “Rights in ceremonies, including those parts of the ceremony which celebrate the sites of particular estates, extend beyond the members of a single estate group” (Bern & Larbalestier 1985: 69). Dussart has followed up on this for Warlpiri ceremonial ownership saying that:

Ceremonial ownership and ownership of Dreamings differ in fundamental ways. Claims to Dreamings carry with them claims to land through which those Dreamings travel. Ceremonial ownership carries no such land rights. Also, to be *kirda* for a ceremony provides rights for only the material within the ceremony that implicates one’s patricouple. Other Dreaming material in the ceremony for which an individual lacks such patricouple association is not considered to be owned (2000: 32).

It cannot be assumed that ownership of country and *Jukurrpa* transposes neatly to ownership roles in related ceremonies. Instead such ceremonies may

incorporate more distantly related people – a factor which is most likely based on residency and larger numbers of people available to participate.

During my fieldwork I would often get groups of people together so that we could record particular song series. In this context, it was the norm to have a preliminary discussion before the singing began in which we went around to each person present (including myself) emphasising whether they were *kirda* or *kurdungurlu* for the forthcoming performance. Often people with no association to the particular Dreaming and country were present but were nonetheless incorporated on basis of their subsection affiliation. Dussart has proposed that this type of incorporation of people is a result of sedentarisation, as more people have been implicated more in the performances than they would have been prior to settlement (Dussart 2000: 33)<sup>82</sup>.

In the *Kurdiji* ceremony described in the following chapter, it is not the *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* who are focal to the performance but rather the relatives of the boys being initiated. *Kirda* and *kurdungurlu* roles are present in their incorporation in the performances of *yawulyu* and *parnpa* on the first day. However, the all-night part of the ceremony in which the *Karntakarnta* song series is sung, is organised around generational moieties resulting in active ceremonial roles for younger participants in particular. This organisation emphasises alternate generations as

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<sup>82</sup> Laughren (2010: pers.comm) suggests that this type of incorporation may have been important prior to sedentarisation too as a crucial way to maintain alliances and keep social exchange networks relatively open so that in harder times when more marginal country could support these different groups of people they could come together around permanent water holes.

being of the same group. This type of ceremonial organisation naturally leads to the inclusion of more participants and it is desirable to have as many people as possible participating in ceremonies; those which draw in large numbers of active participants being considered ‘winners’ as they are competitively compared to other ceremonies.

Dussart describes this kind of inclusiveness with respect to the *Jardiwanpa* ceremony mentioned in the previous chapter. She explains that it was traded into the Warlpiri performance repertoire from the east. This ceremony was associated with tracts of country with which Warlpiri people were not previously associated but it connected with Warlpiri people and linked to *Jukurrpa* paths that crossed Warlpiri estates. Therefore the people already associated with *Yarripiri*, *Wampana*, *Yankirri* and *Ngurlu* Dreamings which already ran through Warlpiri country, were implicated as *kirda* for this ceremony. As the ancestral beings focal to this song series travel through large tracts of country, encountering many different *Jukurrpa* the *kirda* for one place along the journey is not *kirda* for others further along. *Jardiwanpa* today is a large-scale ceremony which also incorporates many people who are not directly associated with these *Jukurrpa*, simply because they live in Yuendumu and should be involved in such a large-scale ceremony.

Myers (1986: 203-204) has discussed how Pintupi social organisation is structured around generation moieties, indicating that this emphasis has been borrowed from western desert groups. Thomas Rice (2006: pers.comm) explained that the *Warawata* ceremony, which is currently performed on the

second day of *Kurdiji*, has been borrowed from Pintupi people in the south in recent decades replacing a more complex Warlpiri ceremony which was previously performed (refer to Chapter 5 for an account of *Kirrardikirrawarnu*). This borrowing accounts for this part of the ceremony being organised in this way. The *Marnakurrawarnu* ceremony (which will be described in Chapter 5), which is Warlpiri in origin, is however, also structured around generational moieties. Peterson (2000) has argued that the active roles given to younger generations and the incorporation of large numbers of people, has contributed to the expansion of the *jilkaja* journey associated with initiation. The song series sung in the *Kurdiji* ceremony however, does relate to specific country with associated religious significance and connects directly to individual Warlpiri people through their inherited *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* rights.

The intensity of the performance of ceremonies such as *Kurdiji* may well be due to their incorporative nature, including people of all generations, with all levels of knowledge. Other ceremonies, such as the ‘Balgo business’ briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, were also very popular in recent decades most probably due to their incorporative nature. This new movement came into Lajamanu at a time when local self-government and equality for Aboriginal people were new government policies and when the Warlpiri had just succeeded in a land claim. Wild argues that this New Business may be an attempt to reassert power and increase involvement in Warlpiri rituals which were in a state of decline (1981). ‘Balgo business’ is different from other ceremonies that have been adopted as the song texts are not understood and the dance styles are markedly different from traditional Warlpiri styles. Nonetheless its sweeping inclusion of the

majority of the population meant that it was a popular ceremony which was frequently held during the 1970s and 1980s.

The mortuary rituals held directly after someone dies, know as *Malamala*, also incorporate the majority of the population of the settlement. Musharbash has noted that these ceremonies are held with such frequency in the contemporary Warlpiri world that they are having marked impacts on Warlpiri sociality (2008: 22). It is true that during the time I have spent in Yuendumu over the last three years not a week has gone by when there has not been a death that has implicated Warlpiri people in some way, being either someone from Yuendumu or from an associated settlement.

As the ‘Balgo business’ described above is no longer held in Yuendumu, *Malamala* and *Kurdiji* are the only ceremonial practices that do not operate around the *kirda/kurdungurlu* organisation described above. Instead they both emphasise incorporation of large numbers of participants. The high death rate in contemporary Warlpiri settlements clearly explains the frequent need for the performance of *Malamala* as well as an increase in birth rates resulting in the need for *Kurdiji* ceremonies to be held for many more boys each year. Peterson has argued however, that because of the declining rates of young men to senior men, the senior men are limiting the number of *Kurdiji* ceremonies that need to be held each year by incorporating more boys into each ceremony (2008). A few decades ago only three or four boys would be initiated at once, nowadays there are commonly around ten and often many more (the ceremony described in the next chapter is an exception to this more general trend).

*Kurdiji* and *Malamala* are connected in many ways and there are many parallels in their organisation and the roles of particular kin. Munn observed that “Warlpiri men associated the metaphor of dying with circumcision” (1973: 189). As an initiand is metaphorically dying as a boy and being reborn as a young man in the *Kurdiji* ceremony there are parallels with the *Malamala* ceremony, particularly shared organisational features and shared terminology for the participants. Musharbash has described the organisation of *Malamala* in Yuendumu noting that, “people sit in four distinct groups waiting for everyone to arrive: Men on the eastern side of the *sorry ground* (in two opposing groups, one to the south, one to the north) and women on the western side, mirroring the men” (2008: 26). This organisation is very similar to the way people sit prior to the *Warawata* ceremony which culminates in the circumcision of the initiands. Myers has shown similarities between mourning and initiation amongst the Pintupi, noting in particular that people in the generation level above either an initiand or a deceased person can be distinguished behaviourally (refer to his discussion of *yirkapiri*) (1986: 200). The kind of symbolic death of a young boy during his initiation is emphasised through these parallels.

## **Conclusion**

Warlpiri peoples’ connection to *Jukurrpa* and country is complex and multifaceted. This chapter has outlined the idealised connections of *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* that are core to inherited rights to certain *Jukurrpa* and the associated country and songs. *Kirda* and *kurdungurlu* roles organise the ceremonial performance of the site-based genres of song. Yet this is often idealised in the way it is spoken about with the actual performances revealing the

incorporation of other people without these ties. *Kurdiji* differs in that it emphasises generational roles and the active roles of younger people, something which is perhaps crucial to the increasing importance of ceremonies of this type. In Chapter 5 I give a detailed description of the events of a *Kurdiji* ceremony held in February 2007.



## Chapter 5. *Kurdiji*, Yuendumu, 2007

Both Mervyn Meggitt (1962: 281-283) and Stephen Wild (1975: 89-103) have provided detailed descriptions of the *Kurdiji* ceremonies that are held in Warlpiri settlements. Among the first scholars to write about Warlpiri culture and ways of life it was their goal to provide a normative account of this ceremony. Therefore they both brought together in one description their observations from several *Kurdiji* ceremonies which they witnessed in various places. Over the two years of 2006 and 2007, however, in which I participated in seven *Kurdiji* ceremonies, no two were the same. In this chapter I will emphasise the ‘emergent quality of performance’ (Bauman 1975) by describing one particular *Kurdiji* ceremony that was held in February 2007, demonstrating that "The continuous making and reiterating of social and symbolic order [be] seen as an active process, not as something which, once achieved, is fixed" (Moore 1978: 6). I will emphasise, through comparisons with Meggitt’s and Wild’s descriptions, that a normative account of what should happen and the actual practice of what does occur on any specific occasion, can be quite different. Rather than automatically enacting a pre-prescribed series of ritualised actions, the participants of this ceremony are adapting to the contingencies of that particular time and context. The organisers command social respect in different ways and there are often other things going on in the settlement which affect the particulars of the ceremony but not its larger functionalist goals of changing boys into men. It is precisely through this adaptability to encompass particular contingencies in specific situations that rituals such as *Kurdiji* maintain traditions in such effective ways.

## Roles of kin

I will not go into detail here about the specific roles of specific kin during this ceremony as these will become apparent in the description that follows. I would, however, like to introduce a few terms for the groups of people that have particular roles, emphasising their normative roles rather than those for the particular ceremony which will be described in this chapter. These terms will be used throughout my description and make clear that alternate generation moieties are the basis for the organisational structure of *Kurdiji* ceremonies (as was discussed in Chapter 4). One's own generation moiety is referred to as *ngarnarntarrka* (also sometimes *yarlpurru-kurlangu*, whereas the opposite moiety is called *jarnamiljarnpa* (sometime *ngawu-kurlangu*). In discussing these terms, Laughren (1982:77) notes that "the social significance of this division is great" emphasising that marriage contracts must be made between two people who belong to the same generation moiety. First, second and third choice marriage partners are therefore all found in one's own generation moiety and taboos on marriage occur with those in the opposing generation moiety.

Young men who get initiated in the same ceremony form an important bond which lasts through the course of their lives. They refer to each other as *yarlpurru* when they belong to the same subsection. There is also a special set of terms which are formed by suffixing *-lyka* to the morpheme which designates the relations between these two people (refer to Laughren 1982:78). These terms are summarised on Table 3.

in same subsection	<i>yarlpurru</i>
in mother's brother's/sister's son's subsection	<i>lampanilyka</i>
in sister's husband's mother's subsection (MMB)	<i>pirlpirlilyka</i>
in father's subsection	<i>wapirralyka</i>
in wife's brother's subsection	<i>marrkarilyka</i>
in wife's mother's brother's subsection (FMMB)	<i>wajamirnilyka</i>
in mother's brother's son's or father's sister's son's subsection (MF)	<i>ngarrmarilyka</i>

**Table 3. Co-initiate Kin Reference Terms** (adapted from Laughren 1982: 77)

*Juka* (sister's husbands) are responsible for caring for the boys over the period of their initiation. Initially they must inform the father of the boy when they think that he has matured enough to go through initiation. The *juka* must also prepare a camp for the boy in an area used by men for ritual and help the boy's elder brother escort him there. In the camp he acts as the boy's guardian, preparing him by rubbing him with red ochre and fat and tying his hair in a *pukurdi*<sup>83</sup> (Meggitt 1962: 283). Glowczewski also explains that the *juka* prepare hairstrings which are put on the young man when he is brought out of seclusion and reintroduced to his family (1983: 234). The hairstring is then passed over as a gift from him to his mother-in-law - this action furthering the ties between the initiand's family and that of his future wife<sup>84</sup>. The *juka* plays a crucial role in this ritual as he represents the family which the boy will potentially one day marry into.

<sup>83</sup> *Pukurdi* is a way of tying the hair behind the head to reveal the forehead and peak of head. This makes the initiands look like budgerigars, a metaphor that has also been noted by Elias (1997) in discussing the travels of initiands as similar to the travels of flocks of budgerigars in *Jukurrpa* stories where they stop at various places and then continue on their journeys.

<sup>84</sup> Glowczewski (1983) shows that hair amongst the Warlpiri is a powerful sexual symbol, promoting virility in men and fertility in women and therefore symbolically representing the marriage liaison that results from this ceremony.

The initiand's *rdiliwarnu* (elder brothers), also known as *jarrawarnu*<sup>85</sup>, are involved in deciding whether or not the boy is ready to be initiated and once he is caught they help to reassure him by explaining what will happen (Meggitt 1962: 282). They are involved in 'catching' the boys and taking him to the camp where he is initially secluded. During the rituals the *rdiliwarnu* are responsible for explaining the significance of ceremonies, supervising the painting of the shields with *Jukurrpa* designs associated with the initiand's identities<sup>86</sup> and lighting fires during the night time phase of *marnakurrawarnu*. The initiand's father's father (*warringiyi*), who is of the same generation moiety and subsection as the initiand, also performs a similar role but less actively. As these older men often have acquired more ritual knowledge they are there to make sure that the elder brother is actively learning about the *Jukurrpa* songs, designs and dances in the *parmpa* phase and also taking on his ritual responsibilities in looking after his younger brother throughout the entire ritual. This older man plays a particularly important role today as the fathers of the initiands are a lot younger than they were in the past and have not developed their ritual knowledge to the point where they could do this on their own.

The female *rdiliwarnu* (sisters, mother's brother's daughters and father's sister's daughters) are also active participants in this ceremony, particularly the younger generation. Dussart (2000:70) explains that this is the introduction into ritual life for the initiand's sisters. They often get *yawulyu* designs painted on their chest in

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<sup>85</sup> *Jarrawarnu* is also the word used for the siblings of a dead person. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of how mortuary rituals emphasise the role of sibling in a similar way. Northern Warlpiri use the word *jarrardili* 'flame'.

<sup>86</sup> For each boy being initiated there is a shield which is painted in this earlier stage of *Marnakurrawarnu* and used throughout the rest of the ceremony.

the afternoon of the *marnakurrawarnu* ceremony on the first day. During the all-night ceremony the *rdiliwarnu* dance on the northern and southern ends of the line of women making the sound ‘puh, puh, puh, puuuuuh’. The mother’s mothers and father’s mothers are also *rdiliwarnu* being of the same generation moiety but in a similar way to the male *rdiliwarnu* they do not take an active role as do the younger women and girls.

The *yulpurru* (fathers and mother’s brothers) are responsible for singing both the *Karntakarnta* song series during the night and the *parnpa* during the day, painting the shields and generally making sure the ceremony goes as it should. Today, not many men of this age group know these songs, although they actively participate by sitting with the older men whilst they are singing. As young men no longer go through the secondary phase of initiation called *Kankarlu* that was described in Chapter 3, they are having children at a much younger age than in the past<sup>87</sup>. As a consequence there is an extra generation of *yulpurru* present. There is usually one senior man from this group called a *wati-rirri-rirri*<sup>88</sup> who takes on the role of boss for the entire sequence of ritual events.

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<sup>87</sup> In the past young men would not finish their full initiatory rites until they were around the age of thirty meaning that they would be around forty-five when their sons went through initiation. Today most men become fathers a few years after their initial circumcision ceremonies such that they may only be as young as thirty when their sons are initiated.

<sup>88</sup> During the time I spent in Yuendumu over 2005-2008, Harry Jakamarra Nelson was *wati-rirri-rirri* for all *Kurdiji* ceremonies held in Yuendumu as he is *kurdungurlu* for *Kunajarrayi*, a central place along the song series sung for *Kurdiji* in Yuendumu. Harry Japanangka Dixon, also from Yuendumu, however, was *wati-rirri-rirri* for those ceremonies held in Mt Allan due to his status as *kurdungurlu* for the area around Mt Wedge, central to the songs performed for *Kurdiji* in Mt Allan. Both of these men attended all the ceremonies held in both of these settlements.

The women of the opposite generation moiety to the initiand are called *jinpurrmanu*<sup>89</sup> (mothers, father's sisters and mothers-in-law). They dance in the middle of the line of women during *marnakurrawarnu* making trilled sounds at the end of each phase of their dancing. The differing ways in which these women dance and the accompanying props that they use (such as firesticks, digging sticks, coolamons and dancing boards) bring about certain transformations in relationships amongst the participants of the ceremony. These different ways of dancing will be highlighted in the following description and their meanings further elaborated on in Chapters 6 and 7.

### **Getting 'caught'**

The summer of 2006/2007 was the first time in five or six years that *Kurdiji* ceremonies had been performed in Yuendumu. This hiatus had been due to fighting between families to the point where the cooperation between them to hold a ceremony was not possible<sup>90</sup>. Therefore this time was one of excitement due to nostalgia for the older people, curiosity for the young, and a feeling of the continuing of tradition and doing things the right way for everyone. In the previous years young boys from Yuendumu that were of the right age for initiation and their families had had to travel to other settlements in the Central Desert to attend ceremonies which were often held in slightly different ways and with different songs. The year before I had travelled to the settlement of Mt

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<sup>89</sup> *Jinpurrmanu* is also the name of the sound made by these women as they dance.

<sup>90</sup> During this time Yuendumu families also took boys to be circumcised further afield to Lajamanu and other settlements as a way of avoiding conflicts which had come to surround initiation in Yuendumu.

Allan (only 50km from Yuendumu) where we had camped for several weeks while three groups, each of about 5-6 boys, from various settlements were made into young men. Earlier in January 2007 I had attended a large scale *Kurdiji* ceremony in Mt Allan where twenty-one boys had been initiated including a significant proportion from Yuendumu<sup>91</sup>. It is not unusual to travel for initiation as part of *jilkaja* journeys which gather up people to attend ceremonies, this being increasingly encouraged as a way of establishing alliances amongst people from geographically separate places (Peterson 2000). The ceremonies held in Mt Allan were, however, different in many ways due to the influences of the large *Anmatyerr* population in this settlement.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2007 after a lot of build up and discussion about when it would start, the first lot of boys went through initiation in Yuendumu. This was quite a large ceremony as there was a backlog of boys that needed to go through and it was attended by many who maintained enthusiastic singing and dancing all-night. A few days later, I was sitting outside late at night having a cup of tea with Nancy Napurrurla Oldfield who I lived with. In the distance to the north we heard a few high pitched shrill cries. Nancy told me that they must have caught more boys and that meant there would be another *Kurdiji* ceremony on in the next few days. These cries were loud enough for everyone in the settlement to hear and were to warn the women to stay inside their houses or camps as the

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<sup>91</sup> When Meggitt and Wild described this ceremony in the 60s and 70s, no more than two or three boys were made into young men in a single ceremony. Peterson (2008) has argued that a change in the demographic structure of the population in Yuendumu has resulted in many boys needing to be initiated and very few older men who know the song series required for the performance of this ceremony. The result of this change is that many more boys are being made young men at once as in this example, relieving the older men from having to perform the demanding task of singing the song-cycle all-night on too many occasions.

sister's husbands were taking the boys that they had 'caught' from their camps out into an area immediately to the north of the settlement that is restricted to adult men and hidden from the view of the rest of the population by bush<sup>92</sup>.

Women were not meant to see them as they went out, the shrill cries being to warn them to stay inside or to keep their heads down. A short while later, Tyrone, an 11 year-old boy who lived next door to us, came over excitedly to tell us that he had been at the disco (attended by many kids and teenagers on weekends) when one of the other boys had been 'caught' by his brother-in-law and elder brother.

The following day I found out that three boys had in fact been 'caught' the day before: Lloyd, Eugene and Kumunjayi. The old men had wanted to catch Eugene for the ceremony a few nights before but as his mother, Dorothy Napurrurla White, lives in Alice Springs because she needs a dialysis machine, she was not able to make it up for that ceremony. They had decided to catch him now as she would be able to come in the next few days. As it would not be appropriate to initiate a boy on his own, two more boys of the right age were caught to result in a group of three<sup>93</sup> that would go through together.

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<sup>92</sup> In Mt Allan in January 2006 I saw the initiation candidates 'getting caught'. This occurred in the afternoon of the day before the *marnakurrawarnu* ceremonies were to begin. The women and children (including the boys who had been caught) sat together under their shade on the western side of the business ground and the men gathered on the eastern side. The *juka* for the boys walked over solemnly and grabbed the hands of the boys and they led them over to the men's side. The boys followed without struggle but their mothers wailed and lunged out after their sons trying to grab them as they were escorted eastwards. This part of the ceremony, however, was not performed on the occasion in February 2007 that I am describing in this chapter.

<sup>93</sup> Most *Kurdiji* ceremonies that I witnessed over 2006-2007 had many more boys being initiated. Peterson (2007: pers.comm.) noted that this particular ceremony was more the size of those in the 1970s when normally two and at most three boys would be initiated together.

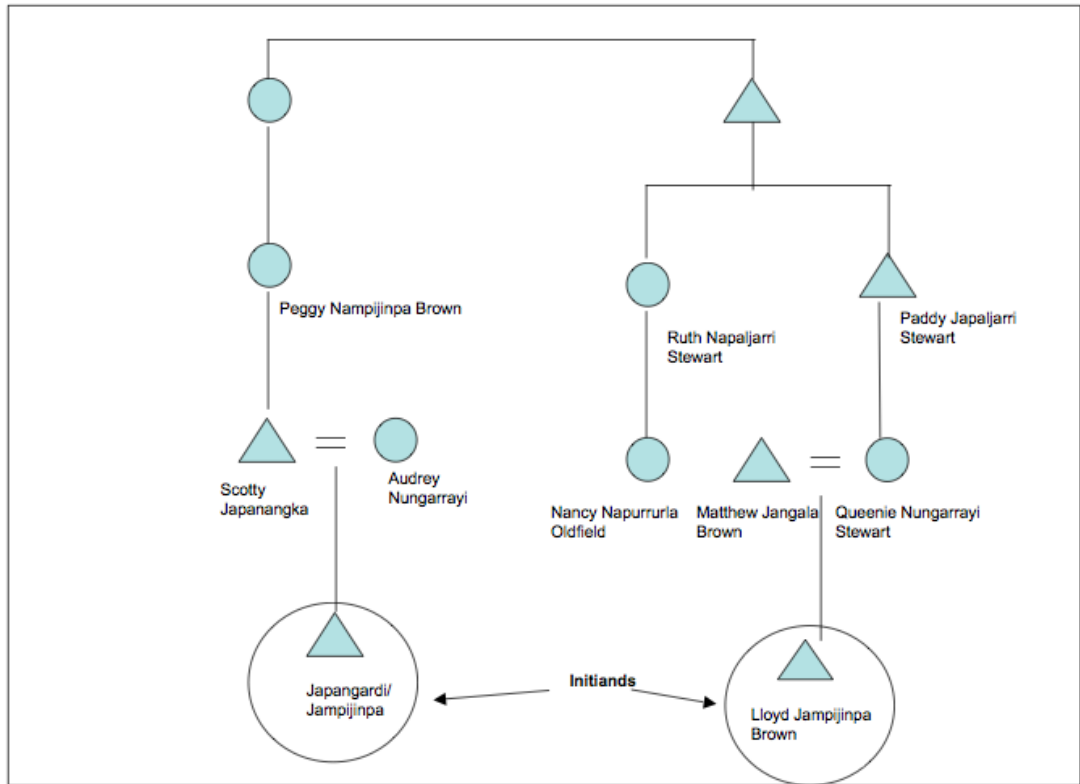


These candidates for initiation were all around 12-14 years old, showing signs of physical maturity but still appearing and acting as children in their daily lives. The older men had been carefully watching all the boys around this age group until they made a decision as to who would go through initiation that year. The boys that were caught were of two subsection groups: a Jampijinpa (Lloyd), a Japangardi (Eugene) and a boy of two skins Jampijinpa/Japangardi (Kumunjayi)<sup>94</sup>. In initiating the boy with two skins at the same time as these other two it would make the ceremony easier to perform as all relations to this boy would have an appropriate place to enact their roles at all times (this however is not always the case). The boys that had been caught to go through together were thus classificatory brothers-in-law (ZH). This also meant that the mothers of these boys who were classificatory ‘cousins’ (MBD, FZD) for each other and could thus potentially also act as ‘mothers-in-law’ for each other’s sons<sup>95</sup>. Lloyd and Kumunjayi share a common great-great-grandfather (ie. Lloyd’s FMMF and Kumunjayi’s MFFF, refer to Figure 2) whereas Eugene’s family was more distantly related still (see Figure 3). Therefore this ceremony would forge closer kinship ties amongst these families.

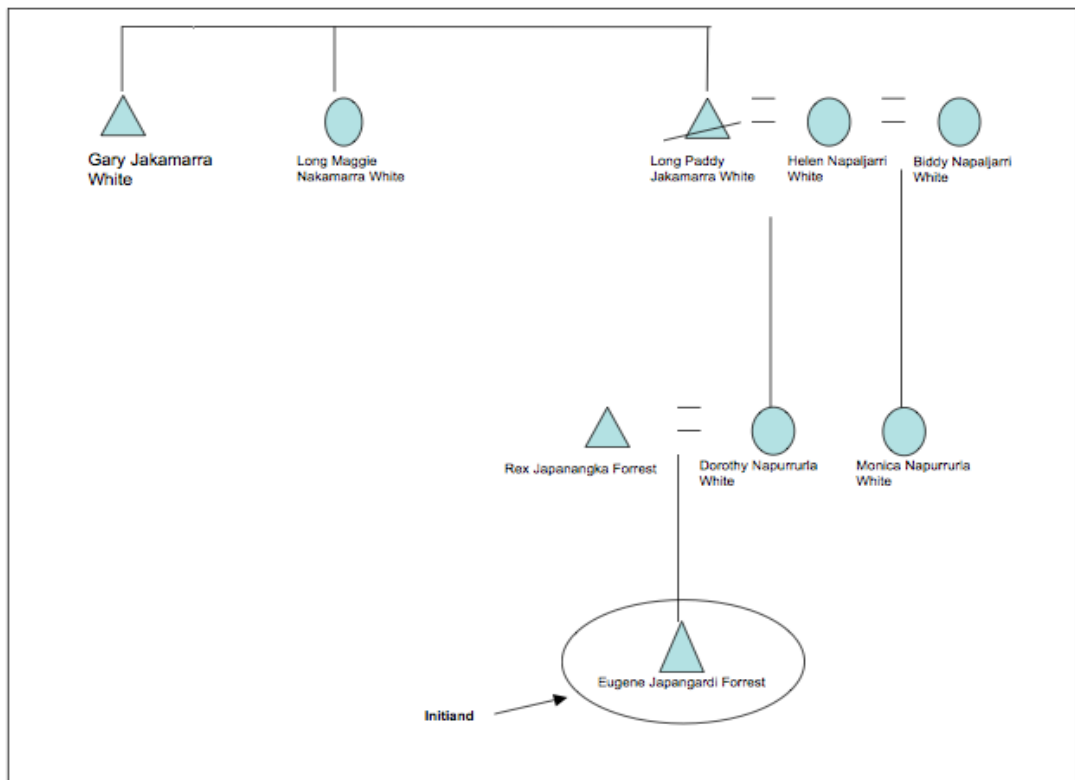
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<sup>94</sup> This boy’s parents were a Jangala and a Napurrurla which is a third choice marriage arrangement, arising from the marriage of a man to his MMBSD.

<sup>95</sup> It must be noted that whilst this was the case in this particular ceremony, it was not always the case in other ceremonies I witnessed.



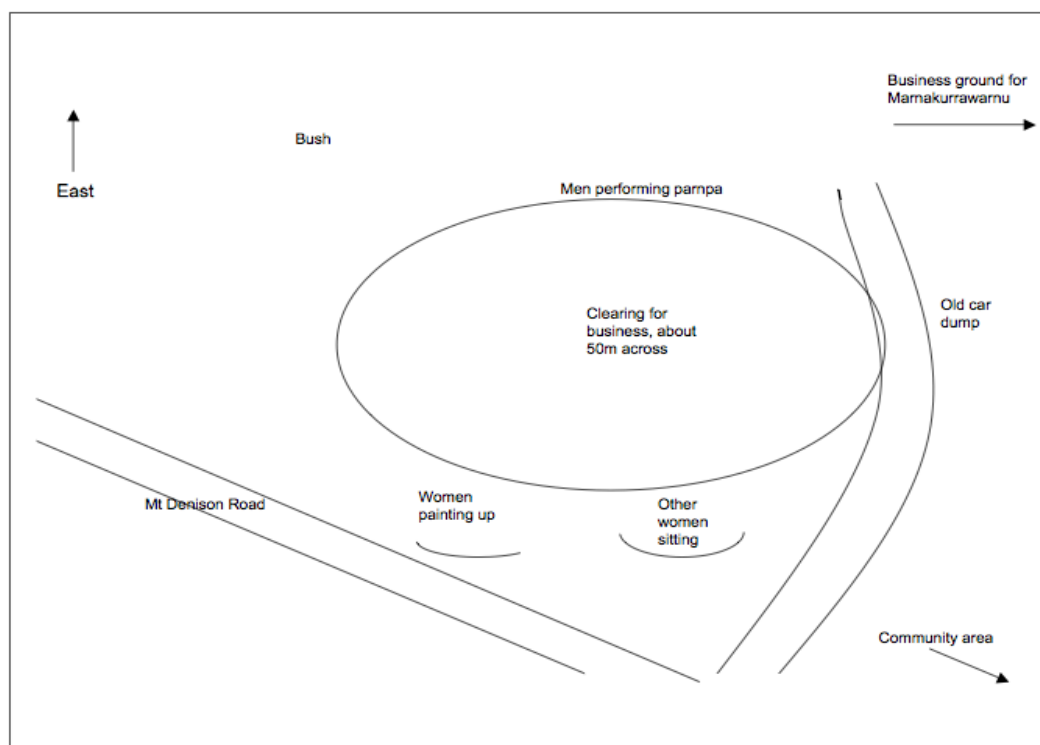
**Figure 2. The families of Lloyd Jampijinpa and Kumunjayi Japangardi/Jampijinpa**



**Figure 3. The family of Eugene Japangardi**

## **Day 1: Marnakurrawarnu**

In the afternoon of the following day<sup>96</sup> a small group<sup>97</sup> of six women had gathered at the business ground north-east from the settlement (see Figure 4). They were painting each other up with body designs and singing associated songs<sup>98</sup>. The women who were singing and being painted up were all older women who were grandparents to the initiands in various ways. Some younger women in their 30s, 40s and 50s including the mothers of the boys, were sitting nearby but not participating.



**Figure 4. Ground plan for the day-time part of *Marnakurrawarnu***

<sup>96</sup> On other occasions there was a period of two or three days waiting from when the boys were initially caught until the *Marnakurrawarnu* ceremonies began.

<sup>97</sup> Often several small groups of women would gather such that they would have to compete with each other for their singing to be heard.

<sup>98</sup> Shannon observed a woman painting herself, noting “One elderly woman, belonging to the napurula subsection traced the dreaming of yawaki of bush plum, over her arms and breast area. As she did so, she murmured the words of the dreaming in a partly whispered, partly sung voice” (1971:11).

The first *yawulyu* they sang was from the *Ngatijirri Jukurrpa* (Budgerigar Dreaming) song series, mainly associated with places around Willowra, a settlement about 150km to the north-east of Yuendumu. There were three Nampijinpa women from Willowra who were singing a small song from this song series. One Nampijinpa was painting Peggy Nampijinpa Brown from Yuendumu on the chest with red and white ochre as they sang. Peggy is the father's mother of Kumunjayi who was that night to be initiated (refer to Figure 2). She had excitedly told me during the day that her grandson had been caught and that she would be participating in the *yawulyu* in the afternoon but would go home before the all-night ceremony because she had bad asthma and did not want to be out in the night air. Peggy was being painted with a *Jukurrpa* design associated with her mother's country and therefore one in which she held a manager role. One of the other women present, Ruth Napaljarri Oldfield from Yuendumu, was an owner for this *Jukurrpa* yet again directly related to one of the initiands as his mother's father's sister (refer to figure 2). These two women from Yuendumu frequently perform *yawulyu* together in complementary owner/manager roles. The *Ngatijirri Jukurrpa* was also associated with the patriline of Eugene, whose father's mother, Long Maggie Nakamarra, was present during the singing. The *yawulyu* performed was associated with the *Jukurrpa* of one initiand's father's father, however the range of relationships needed to perform this was complex.

The second *yawulyu* to be performed that afternoon was associated with the country just to the south of Willowra, *Pawu* (Mt Barkly).<sup>99</sup> Long Maggie showed me a bump on her back and explained that she needed the other women to sing *nyurnukurlangu* to ease her pain (see Chapter 3 for a description of this type of *yawulyu*). Two of the Nampijinpa's from Willowra sat on either side of her to hold her while the third Nampijinpa painted her stomach. They sang a small song from the *Pawu yawulyu* song series as they held and painted her as this is a good *nyurnukurlangu* for this type of pain. The design they painted was a filled-in oval over her belly button with four semi-circles arching away from this central circle. This *yawulyu* appeared to be sung solely for the purposes of healing Long Maggie. I could not establish any links between this *Jukurrpa* and those associated with the boys going through initiation (this is not to say there were not any).

The final *yawulyu* sung that afternoon was *Warlukurlangu yawulyu* (Fire Dreaming), a favourite of women from Yuendumu, which had been recently 'opened up' again after the death of a much-loved woman who was an owner for this *Jukurrpa*<sup>100</sup>. This Dreaming is associated with country to the south of Yuendumu. Peggy is an owner for this *yawulyu* and Ruth is a manager. Ruth had complained after Long Maggie had had *nyurnukurlangu* sung for her stomach, that she too was sick as she had very sore knees and needed the women to sing

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<sup>99</sup> *Pawu Jukurrpa* belongs to the Jampijinpa/Jangala patricouple.

<sup>100</sup> In November 2005 an all-night ceremony was held in which *Warlukurlangu yawulyu* and *Ngapa yawulyu* were performed by a group of older women predominantly from Papunya and Yuendumu. This was to 'finish up' (refer to Chapter 3 for a description of 'finishing up' *yawulyu*) for a woman who had passed away several years earlier. In mid-2006 at the Women's Law and Culture gathering in Kalkaringi these Dreamings were again performed to 'finish up' amongst a much larger group of women from across the Northern Territory. After this these *yawulyu* were opened up such that they could be performed in any relevant context once again.

them to make them better. The women from Willowra first massaged her knees with red ochre and then painted the *Warlukurlangu Jukurrpa* designs on her chest. Ruth told me that this small song from the *Warlukurlangu* song series is particularly good for pain such as that caused by arthritis. *Warlukurlangu* is the country for Ruth's mother and uncles (MBs). Ruth's brother's daughter's son, Lloyd, was going to be initiated that evening. This *Jukurrpa* related to him as both Ruth and his mother's father are *kurdungurlu*<sup>101</sup>.

It was getting quite dark by the time they finished singing. We all quickly rubbed red ochre on our legs so they were strong so that we could dance that night.<sup>102</sup> Ruth Napaljarri and Peggy Nampijinpa went home for the night after this. It was clearly not essential that they attend the ceremony that was to go all-night as this was more about the younger generation taking an active role than it is about the knowledge of the older people.

During the afternoon whilst the women were singing these songs the men had been singing and dancing *parnpa* (referred to in Chapter 3) on the opposite side (the eastern side) of the same cleared area where the women had been singing *yawulyu*. The women had been sitting on the western side (refer to Figure 4)<sup>103</sup> The men were in clear view of the women and the women were occasionally

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<sup>101</sup> These groups are also related through marriage ties with the *kirda* for *Warlukurlangu Jukurrpa* intermarrying with those for *Ngarlu Jukurrpa*, for which Ruth and her brother are *kirda*.

<sup>102</sup> On many other occasions *yawulyu* were sung whilst rubbing red ochre on bodies and ritual paraphernalia. Shannon observed women singing *yawulyu* whilst preparing lengths of hair string into head bands and whilst greasing bodies with red ochre (1971: 11).

<sup>103</sup> On this map east is towards the top of the page to represent the eastern focus of this ceremony, where the sun will rise in the morning. This focus accords with Warlpiri ways of drawing maps.

laughing or chattering about which men were dancing and which *Jukurrpa* they were performing.

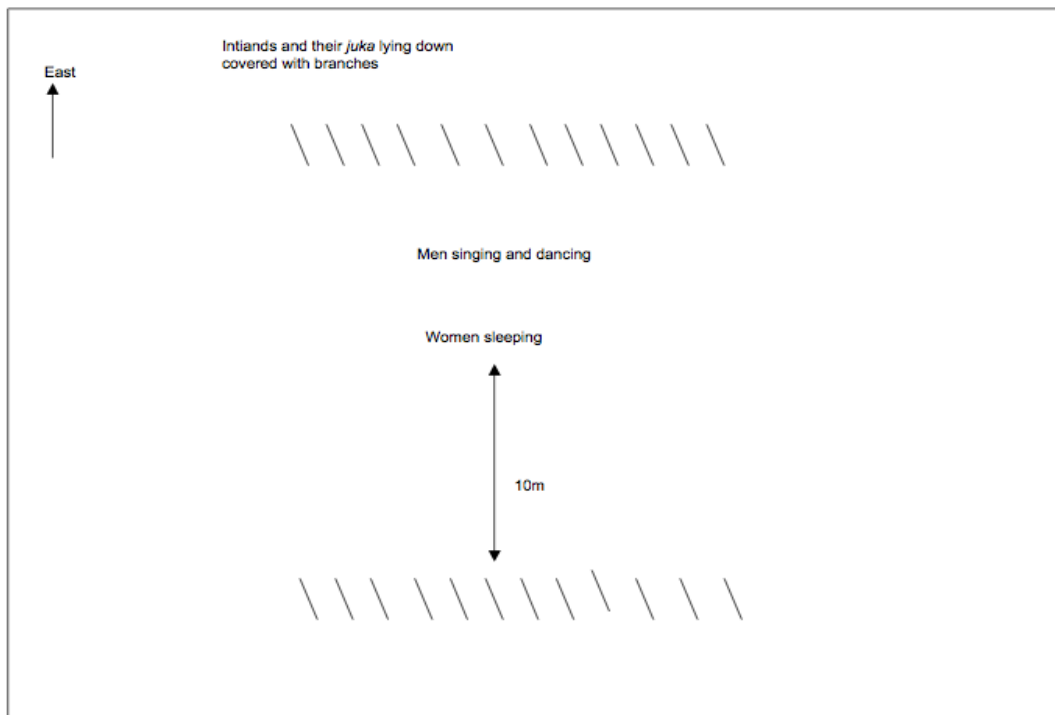
Several days after the ceremony I asked some of the older men who had been present at the performance of *parnpa* what they had done during the daytime part of *Marnakurrawarnu*. They said that earlier in the day the fathers of the initiands had painted shields with the *Jukurrpa* designs belonging to their patrilineal line<sup>104</sup>. As the fathers did not know how to paint these designs they had needed instruction. The older men were pleased that one of the fathers in particular had made a big effort to learn how to do this. After this they had had a rest in the hot part of the day. In the afternoon whilst the women had been singing and painting up with *yawulyu* the men had performed the *parnpa* associated with the designs they had painted on the shields. The initiands were not present for the painting of the shields or the *parnpa*. They were out in their secluded camp in the bush with their *juka*, presumably resting up for the big night they had ahead of them. This day had been predominantly used to educate the fathers of the initiands through teaching them their *Jukurrpa* designs, dances and songs.

After we had finished singing *yawulyu* there was a flurry of activity as many men and women went home, either to stay or to collect their swags for the night-time ceremony. The majority of women dragged their swags, cooking implements and food up to the ground on which the all-night phase of the *marnakurrawarnu* ceremony was to take place, a few hundred metres to the

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<sup>104</sup> Meggitt noted that the 'working men' paint the shield with designs associated with the initiand's patrimoiety. He explains that the masters (ie. F and FF) have chosen several designs associated with the novice's patrimoiety but that they exclude that of his father's lodge.

south of where we had been performing *yawulyu* and *parnpa* during the day. Once we had collected all our swags we lined them up from north to south and all the women lay down pretending to be asleep with their heads covered. By this point the sun had set and it was almost completely dark. After a few minutes Harry Jakamarra Nelson (as *wati-rirri-rirri*) came over and told us to move them further east because the men were sitting too far away. He wanted us to be about 10 metres away from where the men were (see Figure 5)<sup>105</sup>. Once we had repositioned we again lay down and covered our heads over, pretending to be asleep.



**Figure 5. Ground plan for *parnpa* just after sunset**

Whilst all the women were resting the men performed the same *parnpa* songs they had danced earlier in the afternoon (belonging to the initiand's *Jukurpa*

<sup>105</sup> Meggitt (1962) described this distance as being around 50 yards.



through his father's father).<sup>106</sup> They sang softly as they sat in a group just to the east of the women's heads. The women were not allowed to see what they were doing but we were allowed to hear.<sup>107</sup> At the end the men got up and danced just near our heads. I could head the thud of their feet on the ground really close to us. After about an hour,<sup>108</sup> Harry Jakamarra told all the women to wake up because they were finished.

All the actual mothers (ie. M or MZ) to the initiands walked around to the eastern side of the windbreak just to the east of the old men (refer to Figure 6). As Dorothy, Eugene's mother, was in a wheelchair she was pushed over until she was close by and then she hobbled over with her walking stick. The three boys who were to be initiated were lying on top of their *juka* faced upwards and covered with branches. Harry showed the mothers which one was their son when they got there. They hit their own sons on the chest lightly with their dancing boards and then rejoined the rest of the women. The initiands were led by their *juka* around the northern end of the windbreak<sup>109</sup> and the group of men and through the middle of the group of women, who had separated into two groups to let them through. They walked up to the far western end of the business ground

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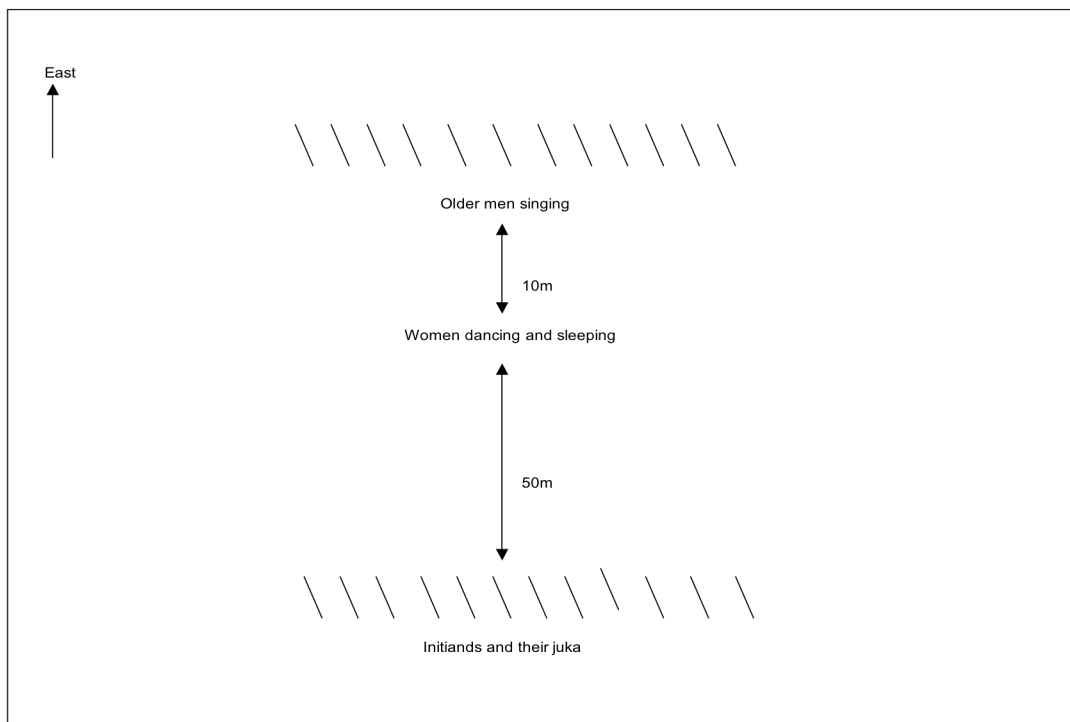
<sup>106</sup> The group of older men singing included Paddy Japaljarri Stewart, Thomas Jangala Rice, Johnny Japanangka Williams, Johnny 'Hooker Creek' Japangardi Miller, Harry Jakamarra Nelson, Dennis Japanangka Williams, Tommy Jangala Watson, Warren Japanangka Williams and Gary Jakamarra White.

<sup>107</sup> Shannon notes that " 'Policemen' strictly supervised the massed group of women and children to ensure that none saw the men's ritual activities" (1971:12).

<sup>108</sup> Wild (1975) described this section of the ceremony as going for 2-3 hours. After this the initiands were immediately decorated and began to sit in a crouched position at the western end of the ceremony ground, a similar time to when they got into this position in this 2007 ceremony.

<sup>109</sup> According to the older men they should have parted the windbreak and walked through the middle of the men who should have divided into two groups. The men were, however, too settled down where they were sitting and did not want to get up.

where there was another windbreak set up. This was about 50 metres behind the large group of women in the middle. The *juka* and *rdiliwarnu* for the initiands sat at this end of the ceremony ground too. All the male *yulpurru* and some older *rdiliwarnu* remained sitting in the group at the eastern end facing towards the east where they remained all-night (see Figure 6). The only senior men that got up and walked around (for other reasons beside to stretch or have a toilet break) were Gary Jakamarra White and Harry Jakamarra Nelson<sup>110</sup> who were responsible for organisational matters. They were in charge of making sure everything was happening the right way so would occasionally go to the back where the initiands were sitting to make sure everything was alright.



**Figure 6. Ground plan for the *parnpa* performed just after sunset**

<sup>110</sup> Gary Jakamarra White is MFB to Eugene and brother to Long Maggie Nakamarra White. Harry Jakamarra Nelson is MMB to Lloyd. He is also *kurdungurlu* for Kunajarrayi and the *Jukurpa* which is sung for this ceremony. Harry was *wati-rirri-rirri* for this ceremony, being more ritually senior, but both men together fulfilled this role in its entirety, Gary frequently seeing to organisational matters. Harry has also taken over control of the *Jardiwanpa* ceremony from Gary's older brother, who is now deceased, and thus by helping Gary in this way he remained onside with their family.

At around 10pm the older men had gathered in a small group at the eastern end of the business ground. They were sitting in a semi-circle facing towards the east ‘so they could see the sun rising in the morning’. The women were all sitting up now on their swags which were lined up from north to south.<sup>111</sup> Harry yelled out at me to start my recording machine and the men started singing songs relating to the journey of ancestral women from Kunajarrayi (refer to Map 3) who travelled from a salt lake called Yapurnu near the Western Australian border towards the east (a full analysis of this journey is given in Chapter 6)<sup>112</sup>. Some of these small songs relate to places or to the way these ancestral women danced and some were directly concerned with the events of the ceremony. The women’s dances are associated with these songs and they use firesticks, digging sticks, dancing boards and *yinirnti*<sup>113</sup> necklaces according to what song is being performed. These dances are often performed without these props; the particular style of dancing being what is important. These songs have different functions, some describing the specific places, some the environment that the ancestral women were travelling through and some the different dances and other events of the ceremony that was being performed. The order and purpose of these songs and their accompanying dancing are the subject of the analysis in Chapter 6.

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<sup>111</sup> The women position their swags roughly behind where they will dance to make it easy to sit down and rest at various points. *Yulpurru* dance in the middle and *rdiliwarnu* on the northern and southern sides. In larger ceremonies, when more boys are being initiated and therefore more people attend, there are often different segments along this line for certain families. In Mt Allan in January 2007 when 21 boys were initiated at once, the women from the Mt Allan families had danced at the southern end and those from the Yuendumu families at the northern end.

<sup>112</sup> In different settlements different song cycles are sung for this ceremony. In Mt Allan they travel along the journey of the same ancestral women but follow those who keep going east. In Lajamanu the *Minamina* song series is performed for this ceremony.

<sup>113</sup> These necklaces are made from stringing together different coloured seeds that have fallen from a Bean Tree.

In the first two hours of the ceremony the men sing the songs from Yapurnu all the way to just before Yunyupardi (refer to Map 3).<sup>114</sup> The next hour is spent backtracking through these places even though senior men said to me afterwards that this was not really the correct thing to do (Rice 2007: pers.comm.). The final six hours are spent continuously circling around from Yunyupardi back to Yuluwurru (refer to Map 3). The ancestral women from many places meet up and have a *Kirrirdikirrawarnu* ceremony at Yunyupardi and therefore there are a lot of songs related to this. This section of the ceremony moves into Anmatyerr country. They circle back around at the end of this ceremony creating the salt lake Yuluwurru. They keep singing and dancing around and around this area which creates the salt lake.

Whilst the men were singing the women danced just in front of their swags, shuffling forwards towards the east with their arms hanging limply on their sides. At the end of each phrase of the song verse the *jinpurrmarnu* call out with a trilled cry and throughout the *rdiliwarnu* sing out ‘puh, puh, puh, puh, puuuuuuh’. At various stages throughout the night different dances were performed that relate to the particular song that the men are singing. Most of the time the women danced shuffling from west to east, representing the journey of the ancestral women, but sometimes this varied such that they were hopping sideways from north to south and back again on occasion. Sometimes the women danced with their hands behind their head and the mothers-in-law danced with

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<sup>114</sup> Meggitt noted that an elder brother stood in front of the men spurring them on to sing.

the firesticks belonging to the initiands. Long Maggie danced with digging sticks pointing forward into the ground at various stages<sup>115</sup>.

Other women did not dance. Many went to sleep when it got late – particularly the younger girls. Particular women like Monica and Queenie (both mothers of initiands) hardly sat down all-night. Another older woman, Biddy Napaljarri, whose daughter's son was being initiated spent most of the night cooking and making tea for the men, sitting towards the back of the group of women.

The initiands slept for the first few hours of the ceremony. At around 2am they woke up and their *juka* decorated them with white fluff. After this they sat in a crouched position all-night. Their *juka* looked after them and sat with them all-night. Their elder brothers also sat up with the initiands. At a few stages during the night the men sang a particular song with a slower rhythm which allowed the boys to stand up and stretch their legs (refer to discussion of 'business songs' in Chapter 6). The women formed two lines on the northern and southern sides facing each other to provide a passage through which the men singing could see the initiands as they stood up. Harry, as *wati-rirri-rirri*, stood up and was telling the women to move into these two groups so that the men would have a clear view between these two lines of women. The women danced shuffling on one spot with their hands behind their head whilst they were doing this. The initiands were decorated with white fluff and looked spectacular standing in the fire light. Their *juka* helped them to stand up and warmed their hands on the fire to

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<sup>115</sup> Meggitt notes that the actual mothers of the initiands from time to time would go around to where their sons were crouched and dance around them in a circle (1966).

massage their legs. The actions of the *juka* were the content of the songs that the older men were singing<sup>116</sup>. Other than these few moments when they stood up the initiands did not move from this crouched position all-night until the morning.

In the morning, as the sun was rising, the *juka* led the initiands eastwards through the middle of the women who had once again parted into two groups to let them through. The initiands were clearly quite weak from sitting crouched for many hours and needed a lot of help from their *juka*. Monica, Queenie and Audrey, all mothers of the initiands, were holding the firesticks as they came through facing inwards, some on both the north and south sides. They stopped in the section where the women had been dancing all-night and the *yulpurru* rushed up to them wailing and picked the bits of white fluff off them. The female *rdiliwarnu* talked to the initiands telling them to be careful in the bush<sup>117</sup>. All of the women then gathered their swags as quickly as possible and ran away back to where they were camping, mostly to their individual houses within the settlement. The men stayed to do men's business. This did not last very long though as I saw many of them around the settlement in the next half hour.

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<sup>116</sup> They were singing Song #6 from Appendix 1. This song is discussed in Chapter 6 as a 'business song' as it is only sung during business and is not part of the song series.

<sup>117</sup> Shannon observed a "...ritual farewelling of the two boys who were to be circumcised. Four of the mothers bashed their beads with ritual nulla-nullas painted with red and white stripes" (1971:14).

## Day 2: *Warawata*<sup>118</sup>

Later in the afternoon<sup>119</sup> a large group of women gathered underneath a shade at West Camp<sup>120</sup>. A group of men was also nearby just to the north. Peggy came over and told me to face south as the men were doing something on our northern side which we were not meant to see. All I could hear was chanting and the sounds of their feet as they ran along in a slow jog (a movement often performed by men in various rituals). After they had finished doing this Bidy and Monica (mother and daughter) asked me to help them take their cooking implements home. They had come to this shade to make lunch for the boys. Some of the older men had come to get the food and take it out into the bush for the young men. Bidy had hurt her leg earlier in the year and wanted to stay at home because she would not be able to move quickly enough for the next part of this ritual. Monica came back to the business area with me.

When we got back Harry came over to the group of women and told us to go over to a cleared space further to the west but still within the public space of the settlement. There were lots of men there including the initiand's *juka*, however the initiands themselves were not present. Harry stood up and spoke to everyone

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<sup>118</sup> Myers (1986: 231-232) describes a very similar ceremony amongst the Pintupi. Warlpiri people too attest that this ceremony has been borrowed from this group living to their south. Myers notes that the first day of initiation for Pintupi groups consists of the *Kurdiji* ceremony borrowed from the Warlpiri. This indicates that trading of ceremonies between these two groups may be quite common.

<sup>119</sup> On other occasions this secondary ceremony was performed a few days after *Marnakurrawarnu*.

<sup>120</sup> West Camp in Yuendumu is located slightly further away from the main settlement area, although many people live there. This was the opposite side of the settlement to where the *Marnakurrawarnu* ceremony was held.

else who was sitting down in their generation moiety groups in a squared off area (refer to Figure 7). The initiands' own generation moiety (*ngarnarntarrka*) sitting on the eastern side and the opposite moiety (*jarnamiljarnpa*) sitting on the western side.



**Figure 7. Seating arrangements prior to *Warawata***

Harry stood up in front of everyone and lectured us about performing business properly and how important it was to take it seriously. He then referred specifically to two individuals who were going to circumcise the young men later that day. He introduced one man as Jangala who was to circumcise Eugene as he was his future wife's father (as promised in the ceremony the night before). Then Harry introduced another man as Jampijinpa, who got up and made a joke that he was husband for Queenie now after the ceremony last night. Normally as a man of Jampijinpa subsection he would be a classificatory son for Queenie Nungarrayi but as she had danced as a mother-in-law for Japangardi who he was

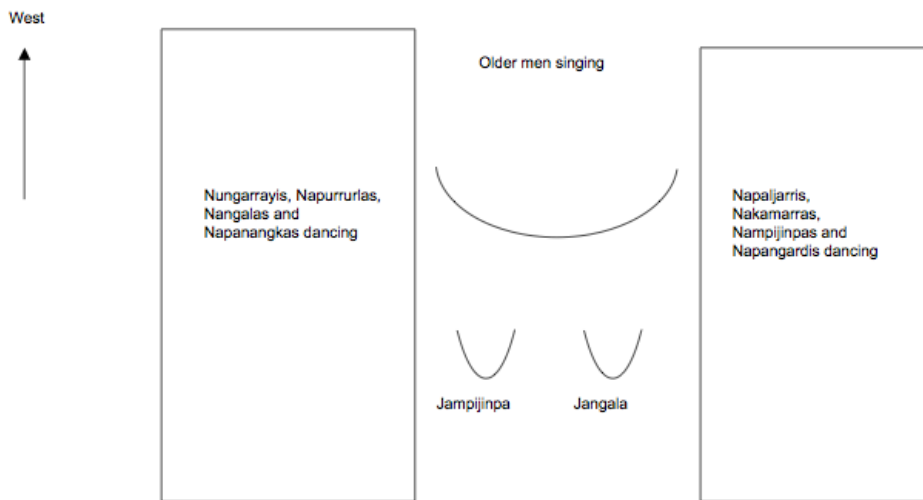


to circumcise, it now made her his classificatory wife<sup>121</sup>. Everyone laughed at this skewing of normal roles.

Harry then instructed everyone to move further west into the bush behind the houses on the periphery of the settlement. All the men sat down facing towards the west and some older men sat in a circle singing (refer to Figure 8). The Jangala and the Jampijinpa that Harry Jakamarra had introduced before stood on the eastern side behind these men with sticks behind their necks which they held on both ends. The women danced in their two separate generation moieties towards the west in the same shuffling style as the night before. Everyone was having a lot of fun, especially all the kids. The men on one side sang and the women of the same generation moiety danced and then the other side sang and danced in the same way. They sang really quickly and some women kept on having to sit out certain songs because they were too exhausted. At the end of all this they declared that the Nungarrayis, Napurrurlas, Nangalas and Napanangkas were 'winners' because this group of women had danced the fastest and had the most women still dancing at the end.

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<sup>121</sup> Normally a Jangala man would be required to circumcise a Japangardi (as his father-in-law).



**Figure 8. Ground plan for *Warawata***

When we had finished dancing, all the young uninitiated boys went to the fire on the east side behind where the women had been dancing. The *juka* were adorned with red ochre and they stood on the southern side. The young boys threw firesticks all the way over at them trying to hit them and the *juka* ran through the middle of the group and picked up the young boys and carried them on their shoulders back to the south-west side running the whole time. They threw them up in the air a few times and then the young boys ran quickly towards the east, back to the main settlement area in Yuendumu. Their mothers followed them as they were now candidates for initiation in the following years. The initiands appeared from the bush to the west and came in to where the men were sitting. Once they were in front of the men all the women stood up and went to touch them, wailing whilst they did it. This was the last time they would see them before their circumcision. All the women ran quickly back to their camps in

Yuendumu with several men yelling out from behind to go quickly<sup>122</sup>. The young men were circumcised that evening just after dusk.

I was told that the initiands had gone into the bush to their secluded camp once again with their *juka* and *rdiliwarnu*. From this point until when they returned a few weeks later they were referred to as *purunyungu* and no-one from the settlement could see them except for their *juka*, male *rdiliwarnu* and some of the older men.

## **Coming back from the bush**

All the women moved back to their regular camps within Yuendumu directly after the *Marnakurrawarnu* and *Warawata* ceremonies. The initiands were meanwhile in the bush with their *juka* and *rdiliwarnu*. The mothers of the boys continued to cook for them in their camps and send this food out with the brothers who came in at regular intervals. Unfortunately I was not in Yuendumu when these young men arrived back a few weeks later. The following is an account of what happened told to me by a mother of one of the initiands several months later.

About a month after the *Marnakurrawarnu* and *Warawata* ceremonies the women got news from Harry that the young men would be coming back from the

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<sup>122</sup> In Mt Allan, a much smaller settlement with a hill separating the cluster of building into two halves, all the women would have to run to the otherside of the hill and wait there for several hours until the men came to say it was okay to go back to the camp on the otherside.

bush that day. Due to the constraints of the start of the school year this period in the bush is cut short allowing enough time for their circumcision wounds to heal but little else<sup>123</sup>. In the afternoon all the women got dressed up and put red ochre in their hair and rubbed it into their skin so they would look good when the boys arrived<sup>124</sup>. This part of the ritual is meant to happen early in the morning at around 4 am but nowadays they often do it in the afternoon as happened in this instance<sup>125</sup>. They went up to the business ground in the north-east of Yuendumu settlement. The male *yulpurru* (fathers and mother's brothers) were sitting in a small group facing east. The men made a loud, high pitched 'brrrrr' sound so that the young men, their brothers and their brothers-in-law who were still in the bush would know it was time to come back in to the settlement. This sound was intended to wake them up but as this part of the ritual was held in the late afternoon instead of the early morning it was unlikely they were asleep. The men started singing a series of songs, the content of which concerned the events occurring for this ritual. Initially the men were singing to make the sun rise with descriptions of red light on the horizon and then descriptions of the sun fully up in the sky. After this they described the actions of the *juka* as they led the young men in towards their mothers and other women, covering them by walking in front of them and on the sides so no-one could see them. They also sung about the young men having long whiskers and long hair (something which does not

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<sup>123</sup> In the 'old days' the initiands would spend a long period of time in the bush from where they were eventually taken to the secondary phase of initiation called *Kankarlu*.

<sup>124</sup> Red ochre, particularly the shiny quality that it gives when applied to skin is seen as promoting beauty and sexual attractiveness. Women thus apply it when they want to look their best.

<sup>125</sup> Laughren (2009: pers.comm) saw young men adorned with hairstring and painted with red ochre being presented to their mothers and relatives in the late afternoon in the 1980s. They were presented by their *juka* to their *juka's* mother-in-laws. The mothers were engaged in wailing as one of the initiates had lost his father.

occur these days as they do not spend long enough in the bush), about the hairstring that they had crossed over their chest and the white fluff in their hair. Whilst this happened the mothers of the young men sat on the ground facing their sons, waving white feathers<sup>126</sup> from side to side and calling out ‘brrr, brrr, brrr’ rhythmically whilst the men were singing. The other women stood in a group behind the mothers. When the initiands arrived just in front of the group of men everyone stood up and the mothers of the young men put tea and damper, which they had prepared beforehand, down on the ground in front of them. Then they got up to greet their sons, picked off the fluff in their hair, took off the hairstrings and massaged their limbs so that they could stand up and begin to participate in their daily life once again.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have presented the series of events performed for a *Kurdiiji* ceremony held in February 2007. This description illustrates that the contingencies of people’s lives at that particular social time and in that context affect the way that the ceremony is performed. Throughout the ritualised events of the *Marnakurrawarnu* and *Warawata* ceremonies and when the boys eventually come back from the bush, singing plays an important part. In the following chapter I will discuss the symbolic content of the *Karntakarnta* song series which is sung throughout the all-night part of *Marnakurrawarnu* and again sung more briefly in *Warawata* the next day, arguing that it is vital to the

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<sup>126</sup> In Mt Allan one time when no-one had brought any white feathers we used ripped up bits of light coloured cardboard from old water casks that were lying on the ground.

performance of this ceremony, the symbolic content of the songs being important to guide the course of the performance throughout the whole night.

## Chapter 6. A symbolic journey

Tambiah has emphasised that “a marriage of form and content is essential to ritual action’s *performative* character and efficacy” (1985: 129). In this chapter I will demonstrate that the symbolic content of the song series that the senior men sing as part of the all-night phase of *Marnakurrawarnu* is a crucial aspect of the performance of this ritual as it guides the actions of the other participants. The sequence in which this song series is sung is not rigid in form although there are certain songs which must be sung in a particular order. The older men who sing these songs decide amongst themselves which songs are sung thus giving them a great degree of control over the sequence of events throughout the night. A theoretical trend in recent analyses of ritual towards emphasis on aspects of performance and the formal sequence of actions that make up a meaningful whole, has made it such that some songs and other instances of ritual language are often ignored. The language used in rituals is often seen as being passed on in such a way that it is recited verbatim with little actually being understood, but simply memorised for the purposes of performing the ritual. I will argue that for the performance of the *Kurdiji* ceremony, the song content is highly important as it guides what happens and how this is understood – making the meaning of the language in these songs a crucial part of the whole ceremony. Ritual language, such as that in this song series, often encodes a great deal of meaningful symbolism. For Warlpiri people songs are a perfect medium to inexplicitly express the values, themes and ideas surrounding initiation. However the esoteric references used make it such that many of the participants of this ritual do not understand in much detail the specific content of the songs used for this

ceremony. This creates a dilemma as despite this ceremony's importance to younger generations it will be hard to perform without older men who understand and can sing the songs. I will address this dilemma again in Chapter 8 in which I draw together some conclusions from this analysis.

The song series sung during the all-night phase of *Marnakurrawarnu* follows the journey of the group of ancestral women along a series of named places across Warlpiri country. As these ancestral women travel, they sing about the places and associated *Jukurrpa* events. These places, particularly those closer to Yuendumu, are often well known to Warlpiri people, and the actions of the *Jukurrpa* ancestors are intimately linked to these places in the minds of the singers. In the *Jukurrpa* these ancestral women sing and dance as they travel along this journey. The same songs and dances are performed in the *Kurdiji* ceremony. However in this instance, the men are the singers and the women are the dancers. The significance of the switching of these gendered roles will be discussed further in Chapter 7. In my discussion here I will alternate my focus on the *Jukurrpa* story as sung by the ancestral women, with the actual performance of the *Kurdiji* ceremony in which the senior men are the singers. As these two realms are symbolically interlinked this differentiation can sometimes be confusing.

I have identified three different types of small songs in the song series sung for *Marnakurrawarnu*. Firstly, there are those associated with the particular places and associated *Jukurrpa* events which can be plotted along an itinerary following the journey of the ancestral women (these places are marked on Map 3).



Secondly, there are ‘travelling songs’ which are associated with repeated events and landscapes. These small songs are therefore repeated often throughout the night. And thirdly, there are ‘business songs’ which are sung solely for functional purposes in the performance context<sup>127</sup>. There is only one of these ‘business songs’ that I identified but it served such a different purpose and took such a different form to the others that I have classified it on its own. In the ceremony described in the previous chapter, there were 60 different small songs that are sung over the course of the night (referred to as SS from this point). These were sung at least several times each (often many more) and repeated at certain stages of the night (refer to Appendix 2 for a full summary of the order of these small songs and the number of repetitions that they had in the *Kurdiiji* ceremony held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2007). Some of these small songs, in particular certain ‘travelling songs’, are repeated much more often than others as the type of landscape which forms their content is abundant in the country through which this *Jukurrpa* travels. Megan Jones, in her analysis of movement patterns associated with the *Kurdiiji* ceremony as it was performed when she was in Willowra in the early 1980s notes that:

After the men begin to sing, the women start to dance. The women “follow” the song. They know which movements to perform from the song content, and from what has preceded. For example, the women must dance facing north when a certain song verse begins, for the next successive song item, though it may be the same verse, they must dance facing south. The women finish dancing prior to the end of each song item – when the men begin the descending melodic contour. Within the limits of the song item, a woman has a certain amount of freedom to choose when she will start and stop dancing (Jones 1984: 138).

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<sup>127</sup> I have used the terms ‘travelling songs’ and ‘business songs’ as this was the way Thomas Jangala Rice described them whilst we were transcribing this song series. He used these terms to contrast these songs to those which were embedded in particular named places.

As was noted in Chapter 3, the song language, music, dances and designs are all intimately linked in the performance of a song series in its ceremonial context. It is through their performance that the participants understand the significance of the ceremony. In this chapter I discuss the small songs individually. I will draw on Jones's description of nine different types of dance movements performed by women throughout this ceremony, all of them having slight variations. She terms these 'dance verses' as they match up with particular small songs. Many of these 'dance verses' are however, danced to a number of small songs. Therefore I will refer to them more generally as 'dance movements' (from here DM) in my discussion to differentiate them from any neat correlation with particular small songs. The *Kurdiji* ceremonies which I participated in over 2006-2007 in Yuendumu incorporated these same dance styles (albeit with some slight variations which will be discussed in the text of this chapter) with the exception of DM #9, which Jones notes is only used for *Kirriridikirrawarnu*. This dance movement will not be mentioned in this thesis as this ceremony is no longer held, except in Chapter 7 when discussing the significance of 'throwing soil' as part of the *Kurdiji* ceremony. The songs specifically relating to particular places are all accompanied by either version of DM #1. The travelling songs however incorporate the rest of the dance movements – these often being described in the song texts as the ways in which the ancestral women danced as well. Particular ways of dancing appear to be associated with the types of landscape in particular places. DM #2, version 1, is performed when SS #6 is sung for the boys to stand up and stretch their legs. The symbolism behind these dance movements will also be discussed in Chapter 7.

<b>DM</b>	<b>Description of movement and its variations (based on Jones' description)</b>
1	<p><u>Version 1</u> Arms hang down at sides, performed by everyone, performed en masse in an arc.</p> <p><u>Version 2</u> Also performed by mothers and father's sisters with a firestick in two hands and pointed towards the centre of the group, performed while facing east either as individuals or couples (one behind the other), also performed when the partitioned arc of women faces the initiates' centre path.</p> <p>These two versions of this dance movement are performed for two-thirds of the night and commonly occur between the other dance movements.</p>
2	<p><u>Version 1</u> Hands on back of head, performed by everyone, the ancestral women were "carrying things" like children, performed as individuals in a line facing east or when the partitioned arc of women faces the initiate's centre path.</p> <p><u>Version 2</u> Holding coolamon on back of the neck, performed by the real mothers (or their representatives) and father's sisters of the initiands, performed as version 1 but these women do it individually rather than in a group.</p>
3	<p><u>Version 1</u> Hands on waist, performed by everyone, performed in an arc facing east.</p>
4	<p><u>Version 1</u> Hands together behind back at, or below waist, performed by everyone, older sisters dance in a single file line travelling either towards the north or the south.</p>
5	<p><u>Version 1</u> Hands under or holding breasts, swinging arms in and out and clicking fingers towards the east, performed by everyone, performed in an arc facing east.</p>
6	<p><u>Version 1</u> Preceded by picking up handfuls of dirt, letting dirt drift through fingers while arms move forward and back, performed by everyone, performed in a arc facing east.</p>
7	<p><u>Version 1</u> Alternatively moving hands forward and up and backward and down, oppositionally tossing "nothing" over each shoulder, performed by everyone, performed in an arc facing east.</p>
8	<p><u>Version 1</u> Sliding the hands, palms facing each other, forward and backward oppositionally, performed by everyone, "kana" digging stick, performed in an arc facing east.</p> <p>This initial movement is sometimes followed by picking up a digging stick which lies in an east-west direction between the dancers' feet, moving the stick slightly up and down almost in a passive reaction to the leg movement, at the end of the verse the stick is replaced on the ground between the dancers' feet, performed by mothers and father's sisters, performed by facing east travelling first forwards and then backwards.</p>
9	<p><u>Version 1</u> Preceded by throwing dirt to the west towards the initiates, moving both arms forward and backward, performed by everyone, performed in an arc facing east or west, takes place only on the second night for <i>Kirrardikirrawarnu</i>.</p>

**Table 4. Dance Movements (DM) for *Kurdiji* (altered from Jones 1984: 144-148)**

The songs about particular places are sung in sequence over the course of the night with occasional backtracking but always continuing in the same sequence again from these points. In the first two hours of the ceremony the men sing the song series following a path straight from *Yapurnu* to *Yurrkuru* (near Mt Denison station). At this point they “backtrack to *Warnipiyi*” (Rice 2008: pers.comm.) with the singers going back to sing SS #27 and the sequence of the following thirty-nine small songs is in exactly the same order until they again reach the area around *Yurrkuru* (refer to Appendix 2 which shows the order of songs). Singing the small songs associated with these same places again continues for another hour. From here, and for the rest of the night (ie. another seven hours of singing) they “circle around from *Yunyupardi* to *Yuluwurru*” (Rice 2006: pers.comm). It is the repetitive circling of the ancestral women as they keep dancing this path that creates the large salt lake named *Yuluwurru*. The small songs which are centred on places often describe significant physical features and the ‘travelling songs’ depict the landscape which exists between these places. The repetition of the small songs may also contribute to the ways in which they are remembered by the singers and hence the ways in which they guide the performance of the *Kurdiji* ceremony.

Elizabeth Minchin (2008) has shown that it is common to use different kinds of imagery in oral traditions, arguing that the use of spatial imagery in particular is crucial to the composition of oral traditions. Drawing on the work of David Rubin (1995), she defines spatial imagery as:

A memory system that encodes information about location, orientation, distance and direction... Our ability to remember scenes and the layout of objects within scenes allows us to evaluate routes, to revisit in our mind's eye places we know, and to identify and "inspect" particular sites without actually travelling to them (Minchin 2008: 10).

Minchin (2008) also highlights another feature of epic storytelling as being the use of movement. The ways in which these ancestral women dance as they move across the country are also evoked in the songs and re-enacted by the women in the ceremony. The *Kurdiji* song series is also clearly making use of this kind of spatial imagery in the way it follows an itinerary of events and places which are evoked through the songs. The links between the content of the *Jukurrpa* story, the small songs and the associated dance movements are all contributing to people's memories of the lengthy sequence of events that take place over the course of the night.

### ***The itinerary of the ancestral women***

The places visited by the travelling women have been plotted on Map 3 and are sung in the order presented there. They are not repeated frequently over the course of the night as are the 'travelling songs' or 'business songs'. These songs relate specifically to particular places and therefore once the ancestral women have journeyed past these places they do not return until the singers decide to backtrack on this journey and retrace their steps (as was described above). These songs depict the events of the *Jukurrpa* ancestors at these places, often in esoteric ways. The actions of these women as they journey from east to west can be seen in many ways to be a symbolic depiction of the journey of the initiands

and their families as they go through the initiatory process, the events of the ceremony having many parallels with the journey of these ancestral women. The dance movements accompanying these small songs do not seem to vary much; they are all accompanied by a movement with the arms hanging limply by the sides and a loose-kneed shuffle towards the east (refer to DM #1 on Table 4) or with the hands on hips or on the waist shuffling from north and then turning around to repeat this towards the south (refer to DM #4). The choice between these two dance styles may depend on whether a particular song is associated with the symbolism of east/west which depicts movement from the female to the male world (this will be discussed further in Chapter 7), or the association with the country depicted in the particular small song with different patrimoiety, the Japaljarri/Jungarrayi/Japangardi/Japanangka patrimoiety being represented by the north and the Jangala/Jampijinpa/Jakamarra/Jupurrurla patrimoiety by the south<sup>128</sup>.

The song series that structures the performance of this ritual from sunset until sunrise the next morning is concerned specifically with the journey of a group of women of the Napaljarri/ Nungarrayi patricouple who come from Kunajarrayi. They begin this journey but as they travel along into the country belonging to different Warlpiri women of different patricouples and incorporate women from these places who join them in their journey eastwards<sup>129</sup>. As they travel they sing

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<sup>128</sup> The seating patterns of the *Kirrardikirrawarnu* ceremony reflect these north/south associations of the two moiety as do those in the *Warawata* ceremony described in the previous chapter.

<sup>129</sup> This story has been put together from a collection of stories told to me by Thomas Jangala Rice. He told these stories with direct relation to the songs sung for the ceremony on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2007 whilst we were transcribing the song texts. This is one man's account and this story may alter depending on the story teller, who else was present when they were telling it, their

and dance the appropriate songs for particular places as well as acknowledging the features and landscape of the country they are travelling through and the activities of other *Jukurrpa* ancestors that are occurring around them. All these places have Warlpiri names which help to bring them and their features to the mind's eye. Toner has emphasised that:

For the Dhalwangu... a deeply-felt sense of place is built up through naming: naming is a central poetic feature of songs, and the singing of names articulates both the knowledge of geographical places and a profound nostalgia for those places as imaginative constructions which anchor personal and group spirituality (2007: 166).

The names of the places in the *Karntakarnta* song series are sometimes included in the song texts but are often evoked in more esoteric ways through descriptions of landscape or significant *Jukurrpa* events which occur at these particular places. Further exegesis from someone with a good knowledge of these places and associated songs is required to make the links<sup>130</sup>. Often a significant feature of the landscape is evoked in song such that people who know a place can bring it to their mind.

The journey of the ancestral women begins at Yapurnu<sup>131</sup> (Lake Mackay), a large salt lake near the Northern Territory and Western Australian Border. Whilst the

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motivations for telling it and certain other memory triggers at the particular point in time. Narrative stories like this are frequently told in conjunction with the singing of a song series as a way of explaining some of the more esoteric ideas present in the songs. These stories may differ in their details depending on the occasion for the associated singing.

<sup>130</sup> See Curran (2010) for a discussion of how different trees are often used as metonyms for places in the *Minamina yawulyu* song series performed by Warlpiri women.

<sup>131</sup> *Yapurnu* is also a generic word for any salt lake, however in this song series it refers specifically to Lake Mackay.

ancestral women who undertake this journey are of the Napaljarri/Nungarrayi patricouple and are owners for Kunajarrayi (Mt Nicker), they begin their journey at Yapurnu<sup>132</sup>. SS #1 and SS #2 which are sung at the beginning of the all-night phase of *Marnakurrawarnu* and begin the all-night events show that they are at Yapurnu through the use of this place name and an accompanying locative suffix.

(SS#1) (1)	<i>Yapurnurla</i> place-Loc.	<i>kaninjarra</i> deep down/inside
(2)	<i>Walyangka</i> ground-Loc.	<i>kaninjarra</i> deep/down/ inside
	<i>Jirrpjirrpi</i> nails	<i>parnkayarra</i> dance quickly-side to side

Deep down at Yapurnu (Deep down in the ground)  
Fingernails dancing quickly from side to side

(SS#2)	<i>Walyangka</i> ground-Loc.	<i>juturu-nyina</i> still-sit
	<i>Yapurnurla</i> place-Loc.	<i>juturu-nyina</i> still-sit

Sitting still on the ground  
Sitting still at Yapurnu

SS #1 reveals that they are coming out of the ground here, as do all *Jukurra* when they begin their journeys. Glowczewski (1991: 98) has summarised the associations of coming from deep down in the earth rather than from up high.

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<sup>132</sup> The small song commencing the night's singing is not always associated with Yapurnu eg. at the *Kurdiji* ceremony held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2007 they started with small songs associated with Yanjiwarra. Thomas Jangala Rice (2006:pers.comm) sited Yinintiwarra, a place near Kunajarrayi, as the real home of these ancestral women. Meggitt writes that the "immortal initiated man' arises at Miliwanu Hill near Yenindiwaguwagu [Yinintiwarra], the place of the bean trees (*Erythrina vespertilio*) which in turn is far to the west of Bigilyi (Vaughan Springs) [*Pikilyi*]" (1966:131).



The idea of coming from *kaninjarra* ‘deep down’ in the earth is associated with strong links to ancestral beings and is regarded as the secret domain. Coming from the surface of the earth, or higher such as the sky *kankarlu* is associated more with the everyday living world, a public domain. Whilst not expressed in the song text, exegesis provided for SS #1 and SS #2 reveals that a man named *Wirdangurla*<sup>133</sup>, of Jungarrayi subsection, and therefore a potential brother or father for these women, is also dancing beside them imitating their movements. *Wirdangurla* is from Western Australia and he came to the salt lake for a drink but when he sees the women dancing animatedly, he becomes sexually aroused. He copies the fast, animated way in which they are dancing in an effort to seduce these women. He has really long toenails and scratches marks in the salt lake as he dances. When the women see *Wirdangurla* following them they think he is mad because he is dancing like a woman and interested in an incestuous relationship with them. In an attempt to get him to stop following them, they sit quietly on the side of the salt lake, their stillness being unattractive. This being represented in SS #2 by the verb *juturu-nyina* ‘sitting around doing nothing’.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Wirdangurla* was also the public name of the famous Papunya painter, Johnny W. (now deceased).

<sup>134</sup> Meggitt (1966: 131-138) gives a detailed version of this story, calling *Wirdangurla* by the name *Winggi-ngargga*. His version differs somewhat, appearing to incorporate many of the Dreaming events associated with places which are followed by a group of women further to the north. These stories are sung about in *Kurdiyi* ceremonies held in Lajamanu. This indicates that these women cross paths at certain places and the songs sung in *Kurdiyi* ceremonies can follow a number of different routes. Roheim (1945) also mentions a character with similarities to *Wirdangurla*.

*Wirdangurla* has not let them out of his sight though and has continued to follow these women to their home at Kunajarrayi.<sup>135</sup> In SS #10 this place is not stated explicitly but alluded to by reference to the type of grass that grows there.

(SS#10)	<i>Kalpalpi-rla</i> Native lemongrass – Loc	<i>rarra-wapa</i> swarming
	<i>Yatingka-rna</i> tree roots-Loc-1SGsubj.	<i>rarra-wapa</i> swarm
	Swarming in the soft grass I am swarming in the tree roots	

This type of grass is glossed as ‘native lemongrass’ and ‘lemon scented grass’ in the Warlpiri English Encyclopaedic Dictionary (Laughren et al. 2007) and is soft enough for emus to lay their eggs on and presumably soft enough for the witchetty grubs to rest on as they come swarming out of the sides of the trees and the tree roots, as is depicted in SS #10. The yellow excrement that comes from the witchetty grubs can be seen everywhere. One witchetty grub ate another and then they all turned into lots of little snakes, and then finally into one big snake with wings. This snake flew to the Granites.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Meggitt’s version of this story recounts that “After a long walk this new man reaches Gunadjari (near Mount Farewell), the place of defecation, where a large party of *ganda* dreaming women of the Nabangari and Nabanangga subsections are camped. They have collected witchetty grubs (*coscid* and *cerembycid* larvae) from the stems of the witchetty bushes (*Acacia kempeana*) and are cooking them in the ashes of their fire. When they see the naked man approaching, they immediately know that he is a “son-in-law”, that is, he is of the Djabaldjari-Djungarai subsections, so they cover their eyes with their hands. He asks to sit beside them and to share their food, but they rebuff his attempt to violate kinship etiquette and order him to walk on. He does so and the women go on eating their grubs (1966: 132-133).

<sup>136</sup> Many Warlpiri people receive royalty payments from the Granites gold mine due to their connections to this story.

*Wirdangurla* sings about his actions as he copies the way the women dance with wild, animated movements. He is just on the side of a creek a few hundred metres away from the women and is getting more and more aroused by the women as he watches their bottoms and legs move as they dance. The women think he is crazy and ignore him, continuing to dance along their journey eastwards.

As they pass through Miyikirlangu it is raining and there is water running all over the claypan. In SS #14 this is alluded to through a description.

(SS# 14)	<i>Yalkiri (ra)</i>	<i>pawala</i>	<i>pawala</i>
	sky	cracks in ground	redup.
	<i>Yalkiri jawirri</i>	<i>jawala</i>	
	sky    nothing else	cracks in ground	
	The sky all through the cracks in the ground		
	Nothing but the sky through the cracks in the ground		

This place is evoked in describing how the water was flowing across the claypan into the cracks in the ground. The sky is used in the description of this place as it is being reflected in the large expanse of water. Other Warlpiri songs also make use of these kinds of optical illusions to represent places appearing differently from how they actually are<sup>137</sup>. Exegesis revealed that this place gets its name from all the vegetable food *mukaki* ‘bush plum’ which grows here in abundance. Miyikirlangu literally translating as ‘vegetable food-belonging’.

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<sup>137</sup> Mirages are often the content of other Warlpiri songs as they create an optical illusion where a place that is far away appears to be closer. They also look like bodies of water.

Next on the ancestral women's itinerary is Yanjiwarra<sup>138</sup>, a flat rock with a hole in it, as depicted in SS #15. Here they cross paths with two kangaroos.

(SS#15)	<i>Yanjiwarrarla</i> place-Loc.	<i>rdaku</i> hole
	<i>Yanjata</i> kangaroo	<i>patarrpala</i> stretching limbs

The hole in the rock at Yanjawarra  
The kangaroos are stretching their limbs

At this rockhole there are two kangaroos having a drink. They are from another Dreaming itinerary and have travelled from the north near Gurindji country.<sup>139</sup> They are on their way southwards when they encounter these travelling women. When they see the women they too get aroused and start stretching their legs out, showing off so that the women will notice them. They keep looking at the women sideways as they continue to have a drink. In SS #16 these kangaroos are singing about how their noses have big holes in which they can put nose pegs<sup>140</sup>.

(SS #16)	<i>Yajanpurrkarri</i> entice further	
	<i>Mulyurna</i> nose-1SGsubj.	<i>wilypiri</i> hole

Enticing futher  
I have a big hole in my nose

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<sup>138</sup> Yanjiwarra refers often to a Dreaming place (Laughren et al. 2007).

<sup>139</sup> Meggitt tells of how when the women meet the two kangaroos at Yandjiwara [Yanjiwarra] "each party tells the other of its doings, and they all join to sing of these matters and to enact them" (1966:135).

<sup>140</sup> Nosepegs are inserted through the septum of the nose generally only in ceremonial situations.

They are showing off trying to entice the women to come with them. When the women are not impressed by their nose pegs, despite this indication of their ritual importance, the two kangaroos decide to continue on with their journey southwards. In SS #17 the two kangaroos are again singing about themselves as they stand up to head off on their travels.

(SS#17)	<i>Wawirrina</i> Red Kangaroo-1SGsubj.	<i>parnkaparnka</i> run-redup.
	<i>Yilimintirrina</i> two legs – 1SG subj.	<i>karri</i> further
	I am a Red Kangaroo running off My two legs going further and further	

They sing specifically about their legs as they stand up to run off and also the particular kind of Red Kangaroo that they are (ie. *wawirri*)<sup>141</sup>.

In SS #18, as the women travel through Japangardiranyi, the next place on their itinerary, they sing about a large group of baby *kakalyalyas* (Major Mitchell cockatoos) sitting in a tree crying out for food.

(SS#18)	<i>Wujuju</i> complaining	<i>wangkaja</i> talk-PAST		
	<i>Wujuju</i> complaining	<i>wangkaja</i> talk-PAST	<i>yati</i> hole	<i>ngangkarrarra</i> nest in side of tree
	Called out in complaint Called out in complaint in the nest in the side of the tree			

<sup>141</sup> *Wawirri* is the word for ‘red kangaroo’ most often used in Willowra. It possibly is Arandic in origin from the word *agherra. Marlu* which is more commonly used in Yuendumu is perhaps Pintjantjatjara in origin (Laughren 2010: pers.comm)

This *Kakalyalya Jukurra* starts on the eastern side of the Mt Davenport range<sup>142</sup> from where they fly north to Yumurrpa and to a place near the Tanami. The women just pass this *Jukurra* too.

The women reach the range and after climbing this hill they stop to have a rest. In SS #21 they sing about preparing *miny*, a type of small black seed. This alludes to this place where it is known that these strong smelling seeds are found<sup>143</sup>.

(SS#21)      *Minyi ngapangaparla*      *parrakurra*      *kujurnu*  
 seeds    water-redup.-Loc      day-towards      throw-PAST

*Warlu yintiyintirla*      *parrakurra*      *kujurnu*  
 fire    heat-Loc.      day-towards      throw-PAST

Threw the black Acacia seeds in the water towards the sun  
 Threw into the heat towards the sun

The song describes how they lay them out in the heat first to dry and then put them in water to mix them together to make flour for damper.

They go to Ngurrपालangu, a cave above the Pikilyi waterhole. In SS #22 they sit inside the cave their voices echoing around inside.

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<sup>142</sup> This whole range is often referred to by Warlpiri people today as Pikilyi or ‘the Pikilyi area’. The place Pikilyi is really only the rockhole on the eastern side of this range and there is no Warlpiri name for the entire range and pound encompassed in this region.

<sup>143</sup> The strong smell of these seeds is perhaps a metaphor for the smell of a woman’s private parts.

(SS#22)      *Ngurrapalangurlu*      *kaninju*      *rdatirla*  
place-Erg.      deep      sitting quietly

*Yangangukurrangka*      *yanungukurrangka*  
echo-towards-Loc.      echo-towards-Loc.

Sitting quietly, deep in the cave at Ngurrapalangu  
Echoing around, echoing around

They sit inside the opening to the cave and the noise echoes around as they talk and eat their seedcakes. Ngurrapalangu gets its name from two grooves in the rock where they could see that the two kangaroos were sleeping. They sing about this in SS #23.

(SS#23)      *Ngurrangurra punju*  
camp – redup.

*Kujarrala*  
two kangaroos

Two camps  
Two kangaroos

The women leave the two kangaroos lying here and walk down from the range. Ngurrapalangu today is a place that only men can visit.

They travel on to Wirangkurlu. Here they have to leave the older women there as they have no energy to continue on with their journey. In SS #31 they sing about how the old ladies dance with their bodies slumped over because they are so tired.

(SS#31)      *Wirangkurlurla*      *rdanjiwirnparanya*  
place-Loc.                      loaded up

*Yanangkurlurlu*      *rdanjiwirnparanya*  
old ladies-Erg.                      loaded up

Hanging off their bodies at Wirangkurlu  
The old ladies are hanging down

At Ngipiri all the mother snakes leave their eggs whilst they go off hunting. In SS #33 a python from Yarliyumpu comes and eats them all.

(SS#33)      *Ngipiri*      *ngarnungarnu*  
egg                      eat-PAST – redup.

*Warapija warapija*  
moving around redup.

Desiring the eggs  
Moving around

Today there are little rockholes on the flat rock at Ngipiri where all these eggs were lying. This python kept going to Palkurda. When the mother snakes come back and find their eggs gone, they start fighting with each other.

*Wirdangurla* has been following the women the whole time but keeping his distance behind them. He leaves them at Warnalyurra<sup>144</sup> and continues north to Wijilpa, Warnpirrki and then Wakurlpa. At Warnpirrki, a big rockhole he dances with a firestick, still imitating the way the women are dancing. From here he sends his penis under the ground to where the women are dancing at the swamp

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<sup>144</sup> Meggitt notes that Wanalyurba [Warnalyurra] is “a mulga dreaming place where they eat quantities of mulga seeds, which they grind with stones and make the meal into cakes cooked in the ashes of their fire. Thence they walk east to Wiranggulubanda, the place of the old woman” (1966: 136).



at Ngarnawilypiri and tries to penetrate them as they urinate – his penis being referred to as a firestick in the small song<sup>145</sup>. The women sing about this in SS #34.

(SS#34)	<i>Ngurra</i> home	<i>jangiyi</i> firestick	<i>pirlirli</i> rock-Erg.
	<i>Wara</i> exclamation	<i>jangiyi</i> firestick	<i>manta</i> ground <sup>146</sup>

At the camp the rock has a firestick  
Get on to it without the firestick

They get out their digging sticks and cut off his penis as he tries to push it up through the earth beneath them. *Wirdangurla* reconstitutes himself several times repeatedly trying to penetrate these women until he eventually dies in the country close to Ngarlikirlangu.<sup>147</sup>

They travel on to Yipilanji and sing about getting these pink and white witchetty grubs from the sides of the Red River Gum trees (*Ngapiri*) in SS #35.

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<sup>145</sup> In the *Kurdiji* ceremony women dance with firesticks, each one representing one of the initiands. The glowing fire symbolising the young man's circumcision.

<sup>146</sup> *Manta* is a Pintupi word with the same meaning as the Warlpiri *walya* 'earth, ground' (Laughren et al. 2007).

<sup>147</sup> Meggitt (1966:132) recounts that Winggingarra [*Wirdangurla*] goes on to Ngaligulangu [Ngarlikirlangu], a rockhole near Wagulbu (Rock Hill) [Wakurlpa]. As he approaches he hears a woman urinating; he hides behind a rock and sends his penis underground to enter her. She detects the trick, however, and with her digging stick not only kills him but also chops up his penis in small pieces. This is the end of the incestuous man and of his penis, for they both go permanently into the earth to wander no more (1966: 136).

(SS#34)      *Ngapi*                      *yataparrkara*  
Red River Gum              two legs crossed over

*Waraparrpa*    *karrinya*  
bump in tree    further-Pres.

Standing with crossed legs at the Red River Gums  
Further and further into the bump in the tree

They stand with two legs crossed over, protectively guarding the *yipilanji* as they get them out from the sides of the tree with their *narnngu*, a small hooked twig. This cross legged style of standing is purposeful so that men are not aroused as they are when the women dance with their legs spread apart.

The women then keep travelling to Jarlji. They dig down into the sandhills and get big, fat, edible frogs. In SS #36 they sing about burrowing for these frogs<sup>148</sup>.

(SS#36)      *Yanakirri*              *jantarra*  
frog                      kneeling down

*Nyarla*              *pantarra*  
downwards              burrow away

Kneeling down for frogs  
Burrowing away downwards

At Jarlji these frogs are everywhere. The women dig down with their digging sticks. The frogs burrow into the sandhill, sometimes a metre deep, trying to avoid being caught.

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<sup>148</sup> Jangala said this was a particularly tricky song to sing as the words are hard to get around one's tongue.

At Wangala, a crow of Japanangka subsection, is sitting on top of the hill watching all the women dance for a *Kurdiji* ceremony. Japangardi the goanna from Mt Theo also went past but he did not stop as he was keen on finding his mother-in-law Nungarrayi with whom he had fallen in love<sup>149</sup>. Japanangka, the crow, is the owner of this country so all the women were bringing him lots of food as payment for having the ceremony there. He was sitting on top of the hill watching one of the Napaljarris, a mother-in-law for him. He was stretching around like crows do trying to attract her attention. In SS #41<sup>150</sup> the women sing about this.

(SS#41) *Wangala-rla-nji rringirli nyinajarlarra pata*  
 crow-Loc-having property of- from sit-pushy-down/away from

*Yanurrpungurlu nyina jarlarra pata*  
 coolamon-away from sit pushy down/away from

Coming from the place of the crow, sitting down pushily  
 Getting things, sitting down pushily

Napaljarri was getting embarrassed because he kept looking at her. He came down and joined the ceremony but instead of facing eastwards like everyone else he faced westward toward the women who were dancing (like Anmatyerre and Luritja people do) so he could watch Napaljarri. He had one hand over his eye so that no-one could tell that he was watching her. When the ceremony was finished

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<sup>149</sup> The story of the goanna that comes from Mt Theo and travels to Yarripilangu is associated with J/Napangardi and J/Napanangka subsection groups who come from Mt Theo. *Kirda* for Yarripilangu are the Jungarrayi/Japaljarri patricouple. The specific families who are *kirda* for these places are *jurdalja* for each other symbolising the marriage exchange between these families.

<sup>150</sup> Jangala explained that songs #40 and #41 were in the wrong order in the actual performance. This fitted better with his explanation of the logical sequence of events, however did not affect the performance in any way. One man had started singing this song out of its place and instead of picking him up on this the other older men had joined in singing with him.

everybody left, but Japanangka held on to Napaljarri's dog. When Napaljarri came to get it he grabbed her and had sexual intercourse with her.

A Jampijinpa and a Jangala from Warnipiya<sup>151</sup> that had joined the women as they travelled eastwards, blindfolded Japanangka. In SS #40 they sing about how he struggled as they took him to a nearby creek where they lit a fire.

(SS#40)	<i>Wipiya</i>	<i>wipiya</i>	<i>rdijipiya</i>
	stretch out	stretch out	alight
	<i>Ngarnkurrinya</i>	<i>kutakuta</i>	<i>rduluya</i> <sup>152</sup>
	creek edge	hole	fight
	Stretching out as set alight		
	Fighting in the hole at the creek's edge		

They threw him into the creek and into the fire as punishment for his unacceptable behaviour. All these black crows came out of the fire as he burned which is where they all come from today.<sup>153</sup>

As the women continue travelling past Mirdirdijarra they see a group of emus standing at Rdukirri. These emus have travelled from Wawurrwawurrpa in the

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<sup>151</sup> Meggitt notes that at "Wanabi, a big flat hill to the west of Igibali (Mount Eclipse), which is a bean tree dreaming site"... "the women make necklaces from red beans and don them, then travel east to Wangala, a crow (*Corvus* sp.) dreaming place (1966:136).

<sup>152</sup> *Rduluya* is used as a preverb in Warlpiri usually referring to a multitude of beings rushing out of somewhere.

<sup>153</sup> Meggitt's version of this story is very similar detailing that the women "make camp here [at Wangala] but do not notice that a crow man is watching them intently. He later tries to rap one of the group (inevitably his classificatory "mother-in-law") and in retaliation the women throw him into their fire. He escapes with his life but is burned quite black; this is why crows today are black" (1966:137)

west on their way to Yarliyumu. They sing about these emus in SS #42 and the way they are sitting with crossed legs, ready to get up if they need to run.

(SS#42)	<i>Larnkatipi</i> long legs-crossed	<i>kanpirriya</i> emu fat
	<i>Larnkajarra</i> long legs-two	<i>pajurrima</i> knees crossed
	Two legs crossed over, emu fat Two legs, two knees crossed over	

The emus are all sitting in a semi-circle watching the women as they travel past and also watching the fire from the *Warlukurlangu Jukurrpa*<sup>154</sup>. In SS #43 the women sing about the rough skin and sharp claws of the emus.

(SS#43)	<i>Mirdijirirla</i> place-Loc.	
	<i>Malantakurra</i> sharp nails – towards	<i>lantirni japa</i> scratching as move along
	At Mirdirdijarra Sharp nails scratch as they move along	

At Yankirri the emus sing about the way they bob their heads as they search for food. This movement is depicted in SS #44 by indicating that the emus are searching for food.

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<sup>154</sup> In this *Warlukurlangu Jukurrpa* (Fire Dreaming), two Jangalas get chased by fire southwards.

(SS#44) *Mirdijintilyiyirna*  
rough skin/knees – 1SGsubj.

*Parrarna*                      *yangkurrngurla*  
daytime-1SGsubj.          green vegetation-Loc.

I am two rough skinned knees  
I am the day light in the green vegetation

At Ngawara there is water lying over everything from the *Ngapa Jukurrpa* from  
Wartarlpanyu. The women sing about the water lying all over the ground in SS  
#46.

(SS#46) *Ngapakurla*                      *jurarri jurarri*                      *ngunanya*  
rain-Dat.-Loc.                      streams redup.                      lying-Pres.

*Ngapakurla* *parlawamu*          *ngunanya*  
rain-Dat.-Loc. foliage                      lying-Pres.

There in the water streaming lying around  
There in the water foliage lying around

This *Ngapa Jukurrpa* travels alongside them for a while as they are going to  
*Yurnkuru* too. Just before Yurnkuru the women dance with firesticks at  
Walyaramarri. They sing about this in SS #47.

(SS#47) *Walyaramarrirla*                      *marrirla*  
place-Loc.                      redup.

*Walyara*                      *jangijirna ngurla*  
ground                      belonging

At Walyaramarri  
I belong to the hard ground

In a variant of the above song, they sing about the hard ground at Walyaramarri and how it makes their feet sore in SS #47.

(SS#47)variant *Walyarna*                      *tapatakijirla*  
ground-1SG.subj.                      hard ground-Loc.

*Walyarna*                      *jangijirna ngurla*  
ground-1SGsubj.                      firestick-1SGsubj.-away from

I am the ground, on the hard ground  
I am the ground, I am away from the firestick

They are now in Anmatyerre country. They pass through the gap in the hills to Yunyupardi. They create a hole in the rock here as they travel through. Here they have a large *Kirrardikirrawarnu* ceremony. This is an Anmatyerre *Kirrardikirrawarnu*<sup>155</sup>. On the ground in the rocks the ceremonial ground can be seen: a windbreak for the men with an anthill on the west side and two fires. There is a long section leading up to the mother's windbreak on the far western end.

At Yuluwurru they are still dancing but getting tired – they are slumped over and have headaches<sup>156</sup>. They sing about this in SS #48 as they continue to dance around creating the salt lake.

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<sup>155</sup> These songs are said to be Anmatyerr songs from this point forward in the song series but are still in Warlpiri language. This reflects the joining together of these two groups (see Curran 2008). Meggitt also notes that “By this time the women are entering Yanmadjari [Anmatyerr] tribal country, so that Walbiri men narrating the myth nowadays are not sure of the details of subsequent episodes” (1966:137).

<sup>156</sup> Meggitt also recounts that at Yuluwuru [Yuluwurru], the women “make camp beside the big claypan or evaporated salt lake. Some of the women now decide that they are too tired to walk any further; they enter the claypan to reside permanently” (1966:137).

(SS#48)(1) *Yuluwurru* *rdajiwarnpungu*  
place tired

Getting tired at Yuluwurru

(2) *Wirriwirri* *rdajiwarnpungu*  
slumping over tired

Tired bodies slumping over

### ***'Travelling songs'***

Unlike the songs about particular places described above, there are numerous small songs in the *Karntakarnta* song series which recount the women's travels between these places. The content of these songs revolves around descriptions of the particular landscape, the ways in which the women were dancing or other events which are often repeated when they set out from one place to go to another. As similar landscape recurs as they travel along, there are certain small songs sung that are repeated whenever the ancestral women encounter a certain type of tree or scrub. This further adds to the mental map which can be made of the country. These songs differ from those described above in that they are not linked directly to one particular place. They are used to 'travel' between one named place and the next— the songs, however, being quite specific to particular landscape and therefore associated with the particular country of certain places. These songs also often depict the dancing of the ancestral women at particular places as they move along their journey. These songs and the landscape they describe at particular points are important to the overall story and sequence of the ancestral women's travels.



Travelling songs take several forms: firstly they may give descriptions of landscape such as particular trees, grasses or other physical features; secondly they describe dance styles used by the ancestral women as they travel; and thirdly they depict repeated events along the women's journey such as climbing hills, resting, or anticipating the sun rise. There is often a complex intermingling amongst these themes. For example certain landscapes often evoke particular dance styles with the associations commonly known amongst participants of this ceremony. In the ceremony, upon hearing particular songs the women know to dance in a certain way – the younger women picking this up quickly through their active participation. There is not always, however, a parallel between the dance styles being sung about and those styles being performed in the actual ceremony. This will be pointed out in the examples presented below.

For someone who has never visited the country along the journey of the ancestral women the songs sung between these two places along the song series provide a kind of mental map of what types of trees, scrub and other environmental features exist there. SS #3 is the first 'travelling song' sung in the ceremony held in February 2007. This song is associated with *pakarli* 'Inland ti-trees' and is sung numerous times at two points along the ancestral women's journey. The first time it is sung is when the ancestral women leave Yapurnu and are travelling in the country to the west of Kunajarrayi. It is repeated later on in their journey as they travel through the country around Warnpirrki.

(SS#3)      *Pakarli*      *yanjiwarra*  
Inland ti-tree    Dreaming place

*Yarlipilykipilyki*  
shaking

The special place of the Inland Tea-trees  
They are shaking

In this song there are rain drops shaking through the *pakarli* trees. There are many associations made from this image. *Pakarli* branches are commonly used in other ceremonies (including the *Kirrardikirrawarnu* ceremony) and always are shaken around vigorously. These *pakarli* trees also evoke women's legs as they dance shake-a-leg style – a similar image being evoked from both of these movements.

Mulga country is also common in the country through which the ancestral women travel and therefore SS #4 is also sung frequently over the course of the night.

(SS#4)      *Latiji lanja kuruku*      *kurrku*  
mulga thick    in one place    pile

*Rdalyaranga laar-rdangka*  
dry firewood    broken off from

A thick group of mulga trees in one place  
There it is, broken off firewood

The women sing about all the dry firewood lying around as they travel through this country. There are three other songs relating to mulga country (SS#5, SS#13 and SS#26) that are often, but not always, sung in sequence with SS #4. From the points along this journey where this song is sung it is evident that mulga trees

are common across Warlpiri country in particular in the area to the west of Kunajarrayi, between Kunajarrayi and Miyikirlangu, on the eastern side of Mt Davenport, the eastern side of Wangala and surrounding Ngawara.

SS #5 is also associated with mulga country and is sung each time the women encounter country with lots of the associated prickles in the ground.

(SS#5) (1)	<i>Jilkangka</i> prickles-Loc.	<i>larru</i> mulga gall	<i>jarujaru</i> digging into foot- redup.
(2)	<i>Walkangka</i> ground-Loc.	<i>larru</i> mulga gall	<i>jarujaru</i> digging into foot
	<i>Jilkangka</i> prickle-Loc.	<i>rdilyipi</i> broken	<i>nyiwī</i> thorn

At the prickled country, they dance on the prickles  
 On the ground, they dance on the prickles  
 At the prickled country, the prickles break in their feet

They sing about the prickles breaking in their feet and the pain as they try to get them out. The particular prickles they sing about are called *yarnajakarlarla* and there are lots of them in the country where mulga trees grow.

In SS #13 they sing about the sweet sugar that is found on the mulga trees.

(SS#13)	<i>Ngapirlirli</i> sugar-ERG	<i>marraya</i> swaying
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*Ngatulampa kurraya*  
 dripping to the ground

The sweet sugar is swaying

## It is dripping to the ground

*Ngapirli* is a type of sugar which forms on the leaves of the mulga trees. When it gets hot this sugar turns to a liquid and drips to the ground. The women are singing about this liquid falling to the ground as it sways in the wind. As this song is also associated with mulga country it is often performed alongside SS #4 and SS #5.

SS #26 is also associated with mulga country. The women are singing about *ngaru* growing everywhere.

(SS#26) *Wardiji*            *marurla*  
mulga-                    luscious-Loc.

*Ngaru*                    *wilyiwilyi (ya)*  
bush tomato            abundant

A luscious mulga forest  
Ripe bush tomatoes are abundant

*Ngaru* also grow in the mulga country. The women are singing about the dense foliage such that they cannot really see through the trees. Thomas Rice said that this song can be sung with a slight variation (below), if the scrub they are singing about is not as thick.

(SS#26)(variant) *Wardijirntakurlka*  
tree – can see through a little bit

*Ngaru*                    *wilyiwilyi*  
bush tomatoes            abundant

A few mulga trees

Ripe bush tomatoes are abundant

These songs vary according to how thick the mulga country is, the second one being sung when it is still possible to see through the scrub.

For someone who knows the song series and the associated country as intimately as Thomas Rice, it is possible to point out exactly at which parts of the women's journey particular 'travelling songs' should be sung. SS #45 appeared to be associated with particular places.

(SS#45) *Yarrajipirli*  
grass seed-ERG

<i>Yarrajipirli</i>	<i>ngipipurla</i>	<i>ngara</i>
grass seed-ERG	thick	Bush tomatoes

At Yarranjirpirli  
A dense forest of mulga trees

Thomas explained that this song was about travelling through the country where there are lots of *yalpiyaru* trees. He also said that this song could be sung at Yuwalinji by varying the song slightly. The similarity between these two variants being based on the thickness of the scrub rather than a similar tree.

(SS#45)(variant) *Yuwalinjirli*  
place

<i>Yuwalinjirli</i>	<i>ngipipurla</i>	<i>ngara</i>
place	thick	Bush tomatoes

At Yuwalinjirli, a thick forest of mulga trees

Whilst some other ‘travelling songs’ have variants, this was the only ‘travelling song’ that had a direct link in the variant song texts to particular places.

Some of these ‘travelling songs’ are concerned with the type of bush tucker that grows in the places the women travel through. In SS #12 the women are singing about *kurarra* (‘Dead finish’) seeds which are hanging down from the trees.

(SS#12)	<i>Nyarla</i> hanging	<i>kurarra</i> Dead Finish tree	<i>rdangka</i> apart from
	<i>Nyarla</i> hanging	<i>jurrparna janji</i> collecting searching	

The seeds are hanging off the Dead Finish tree  
Collecting them as they hang down

The women are collecting these seeds in their coolamons. This song is performed often throughout the night, these seeds being a common food resource along their journey. They sing this song when they are leaving Kunajarrayi travelling on its eastern side and when they leave Wirangkurlu on their way to Ngipiri indicating that the seeds grow on the trees in these areas.

Many of the ‘travelling songs’ depict the way that the ancestral women danced as they journeyed across the country, particular dances being associated with certain types of country as well as having distinct ceremonial functions. Months after the *Kurdiji* ceremonies, Nancy Oldfield and I were driving through the country to the north of Yuendumu near Wakurlpa, she motioned for me to look out the window “See that hill there, that’s Ngarningirri, the one like this

(motioning with her two hands clasped behind her head), where they dance with a parraja” (Nancy Oldfield 2006: pers.comm.). She reminded me of *Kurdiji* the previous summer where the women had been dancing in this way and emphasised again that the hill we had just passed was the place for which they had been dancing that way. This indicating an intimate connection in Warlpiri minds between particular places, certain features of the landscape and the songs and associated dance styles which are performed in ceremonies.

In SS #7 *Wirdangurla* is making tracks in the ground as he dances, imitating the women.

(SS#7)	<i>Jurnpurla</i> mound-Loc.	<i>rulawama</i> throwing up soil
	<i>Parlanji</i> flattening feet	<i>wirriwirri</i> channel
	Throwing up the soil in a mound Flattening feet, making a channel	

A big mound is building up on the sides of where he is dancing and a deep groove in the sand where his feet are shuffling along. He is dancing along throwing the soil up with his feet to create these tracks. *Parlanji* ‘termite mound’ is used to represent the way his feet move creating a deep groove with mounds of soil on the sides. He dances this way at several points along the women’s journey: between Yapurnu and Kunajarrayi, between Yanjiwarra and Japangardiranyi and between Warnpirrki and Yipilanji.

*Wirdangurla* is still dancing in SS #8 as he watches the women at Kunajarrayi.

(SS#8)    *Yinjirinpunganya*    *palarrararrara*  
swamp grass-lots    dual-dragging along the ground

*Parlanji*    *yatampurrukarri*  
flattening feet calm- stand

Dragging feet along through the Swamp grass  
Flattening feet and standing still

Here, *Wirdangurla* is dancing through the ground dragging his legs. He makes a track through the grass which is represented by the word *parlanji* as with the previous song. In the ceremony the women dance with their legs wide apart first towards the north and then back to the south again. He dances in this way at the same places where he dances in SS #7.

In SS #9 the women are singing about the way they are dancing with wide legs, their feet moving from being flat to inwards. They dance from north to south stopping at each end to go back the other way.

(SS#9)    *Yamanarna*    *japarra*    *wapa*  
wide legs-1SG.subj.    eat whilst    move

*Yamanarna*    *japirri*    *nguna*  
wide legs – 1SG.subj.    eat whilst    lie

I am dancing with wide legs, eating while I move  
I am dancing with wide legs, eating while I stay still

They dance in this way at two points along their journey: just to the west of Kunajarrayi and to the west of Wirangkurlu.



Throwing soil as they dance is also a theme in SS #24.

(SS#24)      *Walyarna      pinaru      wapa*  
soil-1SG.subj. throwing up      move

*Jurrmalinjirna*  
shaking- having quality of – 1SG.subj.

I am throwing up the soil as I move  
I am dancing shake-a-leg style

This small song is sung at two points along their journey: firstly when they leave Ngurrupalangu as they come down from Pikilyi and next as they are approaching Wangala. The significance of ‘throwing soil’ in this ceremony will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

In SS #27 the women sing about dancing in a line with firesticks.

(SS#27)(1)      *Ngiji      juturrungkarni*  
firestick      pushing up soil as dance in a row

(2)      *Jangiyi      juturrungkarni*  
firestick      pushing up soil as dance in a row

*Juturrungkarni*  
pushing up soil as dance in a row

Firestick, throwing up soil whilst dancing  
Throwing up soil whilst dancing

The women are all dressed up with *ngamirdingamirdi* (a type of circular prickle found in mulga country, several of which are put together on a stick to make a comb) in their hair, *yinirnti* necklaces and headbands and *jinjirla* (tails) hanging from around their heads. They sing this song when they travel through Yurnmaji.

In the Dreaming everyone had firesticks but nowadays only the mothers-in-law, father's sisters and mothers dance with them. They dance in lines with the others behind them holding their waists. For a mother-in-law to dance with a firestick is for her to promise her daughter, who may be a small child or still unborn, to the boy whose firestick she is holding.

In SS #28 the women sing about combing their hair and making themselves look pretty.

(SS#28)	(Ya)	<i>Wakurlunjarri</i> hair-intr.verb	<i>wilyarri wulya</i> long
	(Ya)	<i>Wakurlunjarri</i> hair- intr.verb	<i>linjalja</i> short
		Long hair	
		Short hair	

Thomas Rice (2008: pers.comm) also noted that in the old days they would put *wanya* on too which is a head band over the front where the forehead and hair meets – it's made of emu feathers. For this song the women dance throwing their hands behind their heads alternately (DM #7 in Table 4). Thomas said that this song can be sung at both Yurnmaji and Yinirntiwarrkuwarrku, further back to the west of Kunajarrayi.

In SS #29 they sing about the events of *Kirrardikirrawarnu*.

(SS#29) *Karntawurrurparna* *parlintirri*  
woman-low down-1SG.subj. defensive stance

*Yati nganjalayanganja*  
long spear with hairstring and feathers

I am a woman dancing low in defence  
A long spear with hairstring

At *Kirrardikirrawarnu* the boys give a long spear with hairstring wrapped around it to their mothers-in-law. The mothers too line up to give food to the boys to take into the bush. Afterwards the brothers-in-law who are acting as ritual guardians bring this spear out and put it in the middle of the ceremony ground until the morning. Then the mothers-in-law give it to the fathers. Today *Kirrardikirrawarnu* is no longer performed so the boys just give this straight to the fathers. The men still sing this song though as a part of *Kurdiji* and the mothers and father's sisters dance in a line with a digging stick held out in front of them (DM #8 in Table 4). They sing this as they leave Yurnmaji.

At *Wirangkurlu* the ancestral women sing about dancing in this way in SS #32.

(SS#31) *Nampunampu*  
heavy thud on ground

*Wirangkurlu* *wintijarna*  
place dance-PAST-1SG.subj.

Heavy thud  
I danced at *Wirangkurlu*

As was outlined in the *Jukurrpa* story earlier in this chapter, at *Wirangkurlu* the ancestral women leave the older women as they are too tired to keep travelling with them. This style of dancing is associated with the older women who lean on



Thomas Rice's exegesis for this song, described how the ancestral women danced, shuffling up and down, the necklaces making a distinctive sound as they shook up and down in their cupped hands. Jones (1984) describes the way the women dance in ceremonies at Willowra with their hands cupped underneath their breasts (DM #5 in Table 4)<sup>157</sup>. This style of dancing is perhaps used when there are no *yinirnti* necklaces available. These necklaces were not used in the ceremony described in this thesis either. They sing this song as they leave Jarlji on their way to Warnipi.

In SS #49 the ancestral women sing about how they are dancing with their hands behind their heads (DM #2, version 1 in Table 4) and down really low – ie. their bodies bent over as far as possible .

(SS#49)	<i>Walarakurraku</i> soft sand-towards-Dat.	<i>wirnpirla</i> dance down low
	<i>Wakumintirrirla</i> arm-back/behind-Loc.	<i>wirnpirla</i> dance down low
	Dancing down low in the soft sand Dancing down low, arms joined	

This was described as an Anmatyerr way of dancing, with no order – they just dance anywhere. For many *yawulyu* performances that I have seen over the last few years dancing low to the ground in this way was highly desired with the *kurdungurlu* often yelling out throughout the whole performance for the dancers

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<sup>157</sup> This indicates a symbolic connection between *yinirnti* and women's breasts or milk (as described by Jones 1984).

to dance 'lower'. They sing this song at Yarrukunulu when they meet up with Anmatyerr women.

There are a few other situations along the travels of the ancestral women which are repeated often and have accompanying songs which are sung each time they encounter that situation. SS #19 is sung each time the women have to climb up a hill which occurs a number of times along their journey. In particular they sing about the fat women trying to get up.

(SS#19)      *Yarlkinjirra*  
on top/up high

*Yurru pa yurru ku*  
fat people

                 Up high  
                 The fat people

This song is sung as the ancestral women climb up Mt Davenport and Warnipi the two major hills which they cross in their journey.

Another situation which occurs a number of times for the ancestral women is when they stop to rest – normally after one of these climbs to the top of a hill. In SS #20 they sing about how tired they are.

(SS#20)      *Yimirta*                      *nyarrurrangka nyarrurrangka*  
throbbing veins                      tired redup.

*Yapata*                      *nyarrurrangka nyarrurrangka*  
pain                                      tired redup.

Tired with aching legs  
Groaning in pain

Initially this song is sung when they reach the top of Pikilyi as they sit down for a break after the exhausting climb. It is sung again as they travel from Pangkunaparnta towards Warnipi. This time they stop for a rest before they climb the hill.

Lastly, there are two songs (slight variants of each other) which are sung to make the sun rise more quickly. These are sung when the night is getting long to bring the light over the horizon. This functional ceremonial purpose means they could be classified as ‘business songs’ as well. I have included them in my discussion of ‘travelling songs’ as they were also sung by the ancestral women in the *Jukurpa* at particular places.

SS #30 is sung several times throughout the night to make the sun rise.

(SS#30) *Wurrumpu parntirninnya*  
hidden coming up-Pres.

*Ngarnampu parntirninnya*  
desired coming up –Pres.

There it is hidden  
Desired to come up

For this song the women dance with their fingers clicking towards the eastern sky which they want to fill with light (DM# 5 in Table 4). They sing this song just before they reach Wirangkurlu.

The songs continue from this point to circle around at Yuluwurru, again and again deeply forming into the salt lake which is there today.

### ***'Business songs'***

SS #6 stands out in the song series in that it serves a ceremonial function only. It differs in form significantly from the other small songs sung during the course of the night. In the ceremony it was sung at three different intervals a number of times (refer to Appendix 2) and serves the functional purpose of allowing the initiands, who have been sitting in a crouched position all-night, to stand up, stretch their legs and go to the toilet. Whilst the language used in this song text is not very straightforward and almost impossible to translate, exegesis provided for this song text literally described the actions as the initiands and their guardians who escort them. The words which were easily translatable made use of quite vulgar and simplified Warlpiri words.

(SS#6)      *Jaka yangawa*  
                 *Kaka yarrarnta*  
                 *Jaki yarringki*  
                 *Rima yarrarnta*

The guardians are holding the initiand's buttocks to help them up  
They are rubbing them with warm hand from the fire  
They are fixing up the fluff on their heads  
They are holding under their arms to support them while they stand

Whilst the men sing this song, the ritual guardians of the initiands help them to stand up and lead them off to the side. They are often quite weak and need a lot



of help as their legs are stiff from crouching all-night long. The initiands are decorated with white fluff and other ritual paraphernalia and their guardians make sure that these are all in place before the boys sit back down. The old men keep singing this song until all of the above has been done. When the women hear this song they divide into two groups, two lines of women facing each other (one facing north, one facing south) and dance with their hands behind their heads (DM #2, version 1 in Table 4). This forms a clear passage down the centre through which the older men who are singing can see the initiates. In an elicited version of the *Karntakarnta* song series in which I recorded Thomas Rice singing the songs along the itinerary for no ceremonial purpose, he did not sing this song indicating that it is not part of the song series as such but nonetheless still has a functional purpose in the performance.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I demonstrated that the song texts which are sung as part of the all-night phase of *Marnakurrawarnu* are an important part of the performance as they guide the actions of the other participants throughout the night. The content of these songs represents the travels of a group of ancestral women, their journey symbolically alluding to many important aspects of Warlpiri initiation. The non-explicit nature of the language used in these songs is a perfect medium for alluding to core themes with which this ceremony is concerned. In this chapter I have outlined three different types of songs which were identified when transcribing this song series. Firstly there are songs embedded in particular places which can be plotted along an itinerary. Particular *Jukurpa* events occur

at these places which the ancestral women sing about as they travel through. Secondly 'travelling songs' are sung as the women perform repeated events. The way they dance, climbing hills, resting and making the sun rise all become intimately associated with particular landscape. In the next chapter I will discuss some of the major themes that come of these songs and the ways they are performed and how this is also depicted in other events associated with Warlpiri initiation.

## Chapter 7. Themes surrounding initiation

Despite participation in *Kurdiji* ceremonies by the majority of the population of Yuendumu, the full song series central to this ceremony is only known by a small group of older men. It is clear that the other participants derive meaning from this ceremony in other ways. In the previous chapter I have shown how the participants of this ceremony are engaging with the songs sung by the older men such that these men are directing their performance and hence their understanding of this ceremony. In this chapter I will explore how Warlpiri people come to understand shared cultural values and broader themes relating to initiation through their participation such that the symbolism of the *Jukurrpa* is brought into people's experienced lives. In line with performance theorists (see for examples Ortner 1978 and Shieffelin 1985) who argue that meaning is derived from ritual symbols through their enactment rather than by mentally processing their often abstract meanings, I will demonstrate in this chapter that the symbolism of the songs and associated stories, is not understood by the participants through a rational, intellectual analysis but rather through the experience of singing, dancing and holding the ritual in a meaningful social context. I will show that symbolic meanings are not effective because the participants understand their underlying logic (Kapferer 1979) but because they are enacting them in less conscious ways, predominantly through their bodily experience of this ritual (Jackson 1983). With this phenomenological emphasis I will demonstrate how the central themes surrounding liminality, distinct male and female realms and widespread relationship networks come to be understood through the actions of the participants. *Kurdiji* ceremonies today are not so much

about learning the complexities of religious knowledge (though this does still happen to some degree), but more about gaining an understanding of these broader themes which are central to Warlpiri ways of being.

## ***Liminality***

Van Gennep (1960) identified three core moments in a rite of passage: separation, marginalisation and aggregation. He argues that these moments inform the symbolism of the rites at many stages of the ceremony. Victor Turner (1967) has picked up on the intermediate stage of ‘the margin’, emphasising that the liminal period is particularly well marked in initiation rites. He emphasises that in this stage the participants are ‘in between’ their old and new roles in society and therefore do not adhere to its rules. Turner points out that during this transitional period, symbols used to represent them typically surround “the biology of death, decomposition, catabolism, and other physical processes that have a negative tinge, such as menstruation (frequently regarded as the absence or loss of a foetus)” (Turner 1967: 96). Marett has noted themes of ‘liminality’ in the *wangga* genre of song performed in the Daly region of Northern Australia which emphasise the marginal state between being alive and being dead. He comments that:

The association of *wangga* with liminal states of being – dream states, and the states of being in the twilight zone between life and death, or between childhood and adulthood – is enacted in ceremony and reflected in its poetics. Animals who can exist in both salt- and freshwater environments, the mixing of fresh and salt water at the Marri-ammu *wudi-pumininy* spring, the ebb and flow of the tide: all these allude to the intermingling of the living and the dead within the liminal context of ceremony (Marett 2005: 5).

In the *Kurdiji* ceremony, however, the emphasis is on being reborn into the world in a new role with a new social function, albeit after the symbolic death<sup>158</sup>. It is held at night which is associated with sleep and death, and thus re-awakening and re-birth in the morning when the sun rises<sup>159</sup>. The social status of the participants of the ceremony also ends as during the ceremony they neither hold the relationships they had prior to the start of the ceremony nor have they yet attained those that they will have at its conclusion.

The majority of this ceremony is directed towards the east where the sun will rise in the morning<sup>160</sup>. The journey of the ancestral women who are the subjects of the central song series also have this directional focus as they come out of the ground in the far west of Warlpiri country and keep dancing towards their eastern goal. The association of the west with women and the female world, and the east with men and the male world, will be discussed later in this chapter. The journey of the ancestral women from west to east is symbolic of the transition of the initiand from the female world (in which he spent most of his time as a child) to that of the men. The ceremony which takes place from sunset one night to sunrise the next morning, is itself a liminal state. There are several songs in the

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<sup>158</sup> Peterson has concluded in his analysis comparing ritual themes amongst the Murgin in Arnhem Land and the Warlpiri in Central Australia, that “unlike the Murgin clan rituals, those of the Warlpiri do not focus on death but on fertility. The concern of desert ceremonies with fertility would appear to correlate directly with the environmental differences between Arnhem Land and the desert” (Peterson 1972: 22). C.Berndt (1950) also makes this point with regard to people in the East Kimberly.

<sup>159</sup> Munn (1973: 189) also notes that “Warlpiri men associated the metaphor of dying with circumcision”. The ritual culminates with the death of a boy and the rebirth of a young man.

<sup>160</sup> The one exception to this is the ‘circumcision sequence’ (see description of *Warawata* in Chapter 5) where people are facing west (Peterson 2009: pers.comm).

*Karntakarnta* song series which involve ‘making the sun rise’, alluding to this symbolism.

SS #51, shown again below, reveals that the rising of the sun is a desired outcome and the participants of the ceremony consider the sun to be ‘hidden’ at night time. The sun becomes unhidden in the morning rising out of this liminal state and at the same time the initiands are reborn into the world of adult men<sup>161</sup>.

(SS#30)      *Wurrumpu*      *pantirninya*  
hidden              shooting up + presentative suffix

*Ngarnampu*              *pantirninya*  
depression in ground      shooting up + presentative suffix

There it is hidden, coming up from the ground.

This similar notion is expressed through imagery in a variant sung during this night, shown below.

(variant)      *Mangakijakiji-rla*  
burrow(N) + locative suffix

*Larnpirripirri*  
Kingfisher (luurnpa)

*Mangapantipantirla*  
burrowing (V)

The Kingfisher is digging a burrow.

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<sup>161</sup> They do not properly become young men until they have been circumcised and spent a period of time in the bush. Coming back from the bush marks the end of the overarching liminal phase of their initiation into manhood.

This small song was described to me as being an Anmatyerr version of SS#51 and is accompanied by the same dancing style in which fingers are clicked towards the eastern sky (DM #5). The action of the Kingfisher burrowing through and coming out the other side is symbolic of the movement of the sun as it sets in the west in the evening and then comes out on the eastern side in the morning. The bright yellow glint of the feathers of this Kingfisher, similar to that of the sun rising over the horizon, further reinforces this imagery. The liminal state, in this song is represented by the bird within the burrow. Like the participants of the ceremony it is 'in between' one state and the next.

Peterson has shown clear symbolism of rebirth in the performance of the Kurdiji ceremony (2006). As described in Chapter 5, the initiands are crouched down behind a windbreak at the back of the ceremony ground for the majority of the night. At various points the actual mothers (ie. not classificatory) of the boys move around to the back of this windbreak and circle around the boys a few times. Then they rejoin the other women. These boys are decorated with white fluff and as dawn breaks this is removed from the top of their heads and replaced with red ochre. Once the sun has fully risen they are covered from head to toe with red ochre. Peterson argues that this can "be understood by the anthropologist as gestating in a womb and one identified with women, rather than appropriated by men" (2006: 6).

Throughout the night certain actions are performed which result in complex changes in relationships. Certain women establish themselves as mothers-in-law by dancing with firesticks which has the effect of promising their daughters as

wives for the initiands. Their husbands establish themselves as fathers-in-law the next day through circumcising the young men. Strong lifelong bonds are created between the young men that get initiated in the same ceremony and with their *juka* who look after them throughout this process. The initiand's sisters begin their ritual careers dancing in this ceremony, also transitioning into adulthood in a less formalised way. Their mothers lose a child but gain status as the mother of an adult man. All the participants of this ceremony are 'reborn' as new social beings with new sets of relationships in the course of this all-night ceremony. This is established through the enactment of this ceremony and symbolised through the song texts, dances, ritualised actions and other aspects of this ceremony.

Munn has summarised that:

...in circumcision ceremonies, the social separation of the boy from his mother and his family of orientation is dramatized through his separation from women and his integration into adult masculine society: in these ceremonies, women (especially the boy's own mother) are the focus of separation against which is counterpoised the boy's integration with men, and with the symbols of ancestral cult. The boy is "reborn" through his shift in identification. The mother's relationship to her son is one in which identification must be severed – while the father's relationship is the reverse, since it is in part through him that the boy's new identity will be defined (Munn 1973: 189).

### ***Re-establishing male and female realms***

Jeannie Nungarrayi Egan explained to me when we began working on the texts of the *Karntakarnta* song series that "These songs were sung by women in the



*Jukurrpa* but now only men can sing them” (Egan 2006: pers.comm). This reflects the complex interplay between gendered roles with concern to the actions of *Jukurrpa* ancestors and present day Warlpiri people. Glowczewski (1991: 98) has counterpoised the world underneath the ground with that above, noting that underground is associated with female ancestors of the *Jukurrpa* yet is the secret domain of men, whereas above ground is associated with male ancestors yet is the more public domain of women. In the song discussed in the previous chapter the ancestral women sing about their long hair and making it look beautiful with red ochre and other decorative features. Ernest Giles has written of the Pitjantjatjara in 1875 that “Some wear their hair in long thick curls, reaching down to their shoulders, and beautifully cultivated with iguana’s fat and red ochre. This applies only to men; the women wear their hair cut short” (1875: 61). As the ancestral women are said to sing about their long hair, it identifies them with men (in a traditional style). However, men sing this song in the ceremony, associating them with the ancestral women. These kinds of inversions again reflect the men’s role in ceremony as similar to that of the women’s in the *Jukurrpa* with these ancestral women as being symbolic of a male world. In *parmpa* ceremonies men throw a handful of earth to one side at the start of the dance to mark them coming out from the underground spirit world. In the *Kurdiji* ceremony women throw soil at the boys in the morning after they walk through the centre when they are coming into the world of adult men. This action can be seen as symbolically moving the initiands from their place with the women, associated with everyday, to the realm of the men which is associated with the *Jukurrpa*. There are complex transitions between male and female realms occurring both in the *Jukurrpa* story and the ceremonial enactment that reinforce

the distinct separation between male and female realms in Warlpiri life. These kinds of inversions are common and are revelled in by Warlpiri people as they express fundamental values and ideas in such an inexplicit way.

Wild has noted that “Two principal themes mark the circumcision rituals: transition from the ranks of women and children to the ranks of men, and transition from family of orientation to family of procreation” (Wild 1975: 92). The west to east symbolism discussed above can be further analysed as a symbolic journey from the world of women, associated with the west, into the world of men, associated with the east. This ceremony is thus a journey from being a boy who socialises predominantly with women and other children. After initiation, on becoming a young man, he will spend the majority of his time with other men both his age and older. The association of the west with women and east with men is reflected in many other parts of Warlpiri life including in other ceremonial contexts such as mortuary rituals (see Musharbash 2008). The seating arrangements for this ceremony also have men sitting in the far east of the ceremony ground, women further to the west and the boys who are being initiated in the far west. At the end of the night they move from this far western position through the women eastwards until they are with the men, this symbolising their transition from the world of women to the world of men. Men refer to and address women as *Karlarningintipatu*, literally ‘west side ones’.

After these ceremonies are finished and the boys return to camp with their family they are encouraged more and more to affiliate with men of similar age or older than themselves and less with their mothers and other groups of women and

children with whom they socialised as boys. It would be simple to assume that this ceremony is about dividing male and female realms as distinct from one another and repositioning a man of adult age within the male realm. Much of this symbolism would suggest a harsh division between the worlds of men and women. This, however, is not the case. Dussart highlights the problems with trying to put ritual life into categories such as men's, women's, secret and open, pointing out that "women know about what is not proprietarily (in a ritual sense) "theirs", and that while much of this knowledge cannot be performed by women formally, they nevertheless exert influence in performative domains technically off-limits to them" (Dussart 2000: 59). She also explains that "...the Warlpiri at Yuendumu seemed to transfer their ceremonial material via networks of kinship that accommodated, indeed revelled in, discrete expressions of cross-gender exchange" (Dussart 2000: 59). In singing *parnpa* so close to women just after sunset, men re-emphasise that women can hear but not see these ceremonies – after the relaxed daytime performance which women could see the men dancing from afar. Reference has already been made in Chapter 5, to the older woman who insisted we get back to the business ground quickly, rather than wait in the queue at the shop, as she did not want to miss out on seeing the men dance *parnpa*. Whilst not commonly discussed in such an open way, these performances of supposedly 'restricted' men's songs are clearly intended to be seen by women.

Dussart asks the question "How do the men and women of Yuendumu exchange material that might appear, to the outside, to be restricted to one group or another?" (Dussart 2003: 4). The restrictions surrounding male and female

specific information are reinforced through distinct gendered roles in the performance of events associated with initiation. However, there are many areas where these distinctions between male and female knowledge are blurred. After being initiated, young men are encouraged to learn the songs, designs and dances associated with their father and father's father. Before this they would have gone along to women's *yawulyu* ceremonies with their mothers and now they start participating in the men's ceremonies. Throughout my fieldwork Thomas Rice (2006: pers.comm.) was keen to help me to understand women's *yawulyu*. I had not expected him to know much about these women's songs because the men are always sitting somewhere different when these are being performed. However, he said that whilst he could not sing them he knew about and could help transcribe and provide exegesis, particularly those to which his mother was affiliated and which he had thus listened to as an uninitiated man who was hanging around predominantly with his mother and other women. Men learn about aspects of women's business in their childhood years which they remember throughout their lives.

As recounted in the previous chapter, the ancestral women who are the subjects of the song texts are pursued by a man named *Wirdangula* at various points along their journey. At the beginning of the song cycle, at Yapurnu, Wirdangula sees the women and starts dancing like them in an effort to seduce them.

Dancing in an animated way with lots of emphasised movements is deemed to be sexually attractive amongst Warlpiri people (Egan 2006: pers.comm.). However, Warlpiri exegesis for these song texts revealed that this was only a dance that women did and Wirdangula's attempts to act in that way made the women think

he was mad. Their way of dealing with this initially is to sit quietly (not moving and hence not being attractive). *Wirdangula*, however continues to follow the women and keeps dancing along like a woman just beside them. Eventually he leaves them. However further along the women's journey when they are urinating, they see something coming up from the ground underneath them. They get out their digging sticks and poke around in the ground trying to find out what it is. *Wirdangula* has sent his long penis underneath the earth and is trying to rape them. They cut his penis off with their digging sticks and *Wirdangula* dies.

Wild addresses a similar point when he looks at the Warlpiri men's dance styles and their relation to sex roles within Warlpiri society (Wild 1977/78). He argues that "...men dance in women's style in part as a symbolic celebration of the complementarity of sex roles, and partly as a symbolic appropriation of women's procreative and nurturing role" (Wild 1977/78: 14). After providing a description of the underlying factors of Warlpiri ritual life Wild discusses female symbolism in men's rituals, particularly the *Katjiri* (*Kajirri*) ceremony. The underlying theme of the *Katjiri* is fertility and regeneration of Warlpiri society and this can be seen in the men's dance styles through the adaptation of women's styles. Thus men's rituals are collectively and metaphorically conceptualised as female" (Wild 1977/78: 20). In a similar way *Wirdangurla* dances like a woman in the *Karntakarnta* song series as a way of playing with these associations and therefore further emphasising them.

Ken Hale described a men's ritual language called *jiliwirri* or 'up-side-down Warlpiri' (Hale 1971). This is a language that men learn in the exclusively male

phase of initiation (which is no longer performed today) – therefore it is inappropriate to discuss this language with Warlpiri women or children. Hale describes the general rule for speaking this language as follows: “replace each noun, verb, and pronoun of ordinary Warlpiri by an ‘antonym’”(1971). He gives some obvious examples such as to say ‘I am tall’, one would say ‘You are short’. He then moves on to other examples which reveal that an antonym is derived from something of a similar taxonomic group. The *jiliwirri* for a galah is a cockatoo, and the *jiliwirri* for mulga tree is witchetty bush, both acacias that coexist in the same terrain. His list goes on but it appears that to find an opposite one looks to the closest possible example that is just a little bit different<sup>162</sup>. This language clearly gets very interesting as more abstract semantic domains come into the picture largely as it reveals what is considered similar in a Warlpiri mind. Hale summarises that “the *jiliwirri* principle of antonymy is semantically based, ie. that the process of turning Warlpiri ‘up-side-down’ is fundamentally a process of opposing abstract semantic objects rather than a process of opposing lexical items in the grossest and most superficial sense” (Hale 1971: 477).

During ceremonial gatherings that I attended in Yuendumu, a practice also called *jiliwirri* was performed in an exclusively female realm. This involves raucous joking around to the point where often everyone would be in stitches of laughter by the time it was finished. Certain women were renowned for ‘making *jiliwirri*’ and were often the centre of these events. This type of behaviour occurred even more often in highly restricted women’s groups (such as the Women’s Law and

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<sup>162</sup> Keen (1994: 37- 132) and Berndt (1989: 389-391) give examples of this same idea with reference to other Aboriginal groups.

Culture weeks organised by the Central Land Council in which the events organisers prohibit the entrance of men into the ceremonial area or nearby country) but also in situations where men had gone away for the day to attend to men's business and women were required to stay in the one place until they returned. One time in Mt Allan in 2006 the women danced around mockingly in *parmpa* style with red headbands similar to those that the men wear for business. When the men returned there was a panic to get rid of these so that the men would not see what they were doing. Often women would pretend to have penises and strut around with a masculine stagger teasing the other women by pretending to make sexual advances at them. Like the *jiliwirri* language that Hale described, this behaviour was also about 'turning up-side-down' the normal roles of women in Warlpiri society. These examples from the performance, song texts and surrounding activities of the *Kurdiji* ceremony demonstrate clearly Dussart's point that male and female realms are not exclusive and that there is a large degree of sharing of knowledge between these groups. The ways in which this knowledge is shared, however, clearly mark the differentiation between male and female realms. In playing around with these gender divisions Warlpiri people reinforce their distinction.

### ***Forming of widespread relatedness***

Myers summarises the overarching purpose of initiation ceremonies in the Central Desert in saying that "The production of the social person involves an elaboration of the ties of relatedness to others..." (1986: 228). As the ancestral women travel along from west to east they continually meet up with women

from the country they are travelling through who join in with them to hold a ceremony and then continue with their travels so by the end of the journey the group of travelling women is made up of people from all the countries crossed. At the end of this journey, these Warlpiri women meet up with Anmatyerre women (a language spoken in the country to the east of Warlpiri country). They perform a large *Kirridikirrawanu* ceremony together which consolidates bonds of relatedness between these two groups.

Many Warlpiri song series follow routes across the country that meet up with other *Jukurrpa* ancestors. This is particularly marked in the song series sung for larger ceremonies such as the conflict resolution ceremonies (described in Chapter 3) and the initiation ceremonies that are the subject of this thesis. This emphasises the importance of the performance of ceremony in bringing people together to form relationships as well as the role of ceremony in creating a wider polity. The encounters that the ancestral women have with the two kangaroos and the *Kakalyalya Jukurrpa* (Major Mitchell Cockatoo Dreaming) at Pikilyi and the *Ngapa Jukurrpa* (Rain Dreaming) going to Warturlpunyu that travels along with them, all represent new relationships formed through these travels; a parallel to the new relationships formed during *Kurdiyi* ceremonies. It is the wider polity and the new relationships formed within this that have to be continually renewed since once people disperse from a ceremonial gathering, things start to weaken or fall apart. These encounters with other *Jukurrpa* characters also play on the temporal dimensions of the *Jukurrpa* as all these *Jukurrpa* events are presented as happening simultaneously, despite the sequential order in which the individual stories are presented. This indicates that



a chronological and logical order of events in time is not the focus of notions of the *Jukurrpa* but rather an emphasis on the country visited by the ancestral beings (this was discussed in Chapter 4).

As a boy makes the progression from child to young adult during the course of this ceremony he strengthens and gives meaning to relationships with people whom he may have only known distantly before this. The boys that get initiated together form a strong bond which lasts for the course of their lifetime becoming known as *yarlpurru*. These boys may be from the same settlement but they may also be from geographically remote places. Such people come together through *jilkaja* journeys in which an initiate travels with his guardian (ZH), often over great distances today (see Peterson 2000), bringing other boys to be initiated back to his own settlement. This party of travellers includes senior men as well as women who help to look after the boys by cooking and singing songs (refer to Chapter 3 where this genre of song was outlined).<sup>163</sup> Myers describes Pintupi initiation ceremonies which have a similar practice that:

Like many ceremonial forms, it addresses the problem of differentiation among people who live in geographically separated areas. The symbolic action of the initiatory process, prescriptively including people from “far away”, converts difference into relatedness (1986: 229).

The families of the boys that go through initiation together also form new relationships through the establishment of marriage ties, relationships between the mothers of the initiands and of course a strong bond between the boys

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<sup>163</sup> The women who travel with a *jilkaja* party often talk of the boy who will be initiated as *kurdu* (‘child’) for its duration.

initiated together and their brothers-in-law<sup>164</sup> who are the boy's guardians through the ceremony. Peterson (2000: 209) notes that after Aboriginal people in the Central Desert area gained independent access to cars in the late 1960s, *jilkaja* expanded significantly. He highlights one journey from Tjuntujuntjara to Lajamanu and back again, a distance of approximately 4500km, which involved 1200 people at its peak. Peterson shows that:

The reproduction of this wider regional sociality is now taking place primarily through initiation ceremonies. It is these ceremonies, which are still vital to the production of social persons, that are also reproducing the conditions of widespread relatedness (2000: 212).

The new relationships formed in the process of this ceremony prepare a young man for the next phase of his life in which he commonly travels widely around the Central Desert visiting different settlements, often those which he has come to know through travelling with *jilkaja* parties. In the past this would have continued until they were married. Nowadays young men are in and out of relationships frequently during this period but none the less do not typically 'settle down' with one wife until they are well into their thirties (see Musharbash 2003: 68).

In a similar way 'relatedness' is also transformed between the initiand's family and the members of the boy's future wife's family which may have previously been only distant kin. Initially this relationship is established with the boy's

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<sup>164</sup> These guardians are typically their sister's husbands *ngumparna*.

sister's husband acting in the role of guardian to him throughout this ritual. During the *Marnakurrawarnu* ceremony the boy's future mothers-in-law dance with a firestick (which was provided by the initiand's father's sister when he initially went into seclusion). This action confirms her approval for her very young or perhaps unborn daughter to marry the boy being initiated. As well as making this promise, the action of the mother-in-law in dancing with this firestick also forms a bond between her and the boy's mother. Once they have danced with the firestick and promised their daughter as a future wife for the other woman's son these two women can no longer call each other by their names and must call each other *yinjakurrku* (firestick). The bonds between these two families are further established when the future father-in-law acts as the young man's circumciser. The actions performed during the *Kurdiji* ceremony thus firmly intertwine the family of the initiand with the family of his future wife. These relationships are also seen when someone dies with the principal female mourners being the mother, wife and wife's mother. In contemporary Yuendumu the marriage contracts arising from the initiation ceremonies no longer commonly eventuate with women preferring to marry men of their own choice and age. However, as Musharbash noted in the late 1990s "Even if promised marriages do not eventuate, the respective 'promised' spouses are linked to each other in everybody's minds..." (Musharbash 2003: 68). The relationships established between these families during initiation ceremonies are still important even if the union which they have anticipated does not work out in actuality. The avoidance relationships between an initiated man and his mother-in-law that have been established in this ceremony remain regardless of whether or not the marriage eventuates. The song texts set out in the previous chapter also

emphasise these ‘correct’ marriage relationships. As is common throughout Warlpiri *Jukurrpa* stories men lusting after their mothers-in-law is a recurring theme<sup>165</sup>. The women central to this song series are being pursued by men of the wrong subsection throughout their journey, again emphasising an inverse of the way things should be. Whilst still adhered to in some ways today, in the past these avoidance relationships were important as wives were typically 15 years younger than their husbands at the time of their first marriage (Meggitt 196). A wife’s mother was often of a similar age to a man and therefore a potential sexual partner. These avoidance relationships are strictly adhered to and this among other reasons prevents liaisons between a woman and her son-in-law. The story of *Wangala* the crow who is burned for pursuing a potential mother-in-law, emphasises the consequences of pursuing women of the wrong category of relationships. The ancestral women also cross paths with a Japangardi from Mt Theo who has fallen in love with his mother-in-law, Nungarrayi, and is chasing her many hundreds of kilometres; the result being that he is ostracised from social life. Other taboo relationships are also emphasised, such as *Wirdangurla*’s affection for the travelling women (he too is a son-in-law to these Napaljarri/Nungarrayi women). In the ceremony the future mothers-in-law of the initiands promise their daughters to them and the future fathers-in-law are responsible for circumcising the young men to further reinforce this promise. The establishment of these marriage relationships is core to initiation in Yuendumu and experienced by the participants in the strict avoidance relationships that are established between the initiand and his future mother-in-law as well as the women who call each other *yinjakurrku*. These relationships

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<sup>165</sup> It is typical of Warlpiri *Jukurrpa* stories to outline a situation which is the inverse of the way it is in the everyday, or the way it should be.

continue for life and are respected within the wide polity that is created through forming networks of relationships.

## **Conclusion**

Warlpiri people gain an understanding of some core themes in Warlpiri life as a result of holding the *Kurdiji* ceremony. This understanding comes from the symbolic content of the *Jukurrpa* story that is sung about by the older men. I argue that rather than being a consciously thought out process, an understanding of these ideas is derived from a participant's experience. The central song series used to structure this ceremony alludes to a lot of core symbolism surrounding initiation that is enacted in other parts of the ceremony and associated events. In this way Warlpiri people come to have shared understandings of the symbolism surrounding this ceremony. Whilst there are a small group of older men who sing and can give detailed exegesis surrounding the song texts, the majority of the participants in this ceremony cannot. However, they do appear to understand the symbolic associations in an unarticulated way. The central themes of liminality, the distinguishing of male and female realms and forming widespread relationships, were highlighted in this chapter and are core to the initiatory journey of all participants and to other areas of Warlpiri life as well. The emphasis on these themes in the experience of enacting this ceremony is perhaps contributing to the popularity of this ceremony, as these themes are core to the lives of younger generations of Warlpiri people as well.

## Chapter 8. Conclusion

I began this thesis by describing my experience of attending a *Kurdiji* ceremony in Mt Allan shortly after I had arrived to live in Yuendumu. This experience was one of overwhelming spectacle, intense sensation, many unknowns, patience, hard work and a great feeling of communality. These feelings were no doubt enhanced in my case, as it was not only the first *Kurdiji* ceremony I had ever been to, but I was also new to life in an Aboriginal settlement and was still absorbing at great speed the new faces and experiences of the day to day. The *Kurdiji* ceremony that I attended a year later was a different experience. I had spent a year living in Yuendumu immersed in Warlpiri culture and doing intensive research every day into Warlpiri songs and ceremonies. By the time the *Kurdiji* season came around in 2007 I had a good knowledge of who was who in Yuendumu and how they related to each other as well as being aware of many of the contingencies of their lives at that the point in time. I knew what the sequence of events was likely to be for the evening such that I did not oversleep and miss important parts. I had also spent a great deal of time recording elicited versions of the songs that are sung for *Kurdiji* ceremonies, transcribing and translating these as well as obtaining exegesis concerning the meanings of their content. I could recognize songs and understood the particular point of the ceremony and the associated abstract symbolism. All these experiences over this year had an impact on how I came to understand the *Kurdiji* ceremony which I have described in this thesis. Nonetheless, the first time I attended *Kurdiji* in Mt Allan made it clear early on that the true significance of *Kurdiji* in Warlpiri lives

comes from the experience of participating and the intense emotive responses that go along with sustaining tradition in this way.

As stated in the introduction, the main purpose of this thesis is to describe the place that songs and ceremonies have in Warlpiri life today. My description of *Kurdiji* serves to show the place that this particular ceremony has for contemporary Warlpiri people. The chapters of this thesis reflect the different ways in which I came to understand this. In Chapter two, I outlined the history of the settlement of Yuendumu and showed how this has impacted on people's present-day lives and subsequently the place of singing and ceremony. In Chapter 3, I described songs and ceremonies as a part of Warlpiri 'high culture' discussing how they were marked as such through special language, musical features, dances and designs. I also outlined the different genres of Warlpiri songs and their performance contexts. Contemporary notions of the *Jukurrpa* and the connections to Warlpiri people and country are explored in Chapter 4, concluding with an examination of how these factors play out in the performance of ceremony. The *Kurdiji* ceremony is a particularly interesting case study for this thesis as it was a ceremony that was held often throughout my fieldwork when many others were not, having a particular contemporary importance. In Chapter 5, I described the events of a *Kurdiji* ceremony that was held in February 2007. The emergent nature of rituals is evident from this description in which the contingencies of the participants' everyday lives were affecting in significant ways the sequence of events in the ceremony. In Chapter 6, I showed that the content of the songs sung by the older men relates intimately to the performance of this ceremony, guiding the dancing and associated actions. This

gives the older men a significant degree of control over the ways in which this ritual is held. And finally in Chapter 7, I examined how some core themes are understood through the performance of this ceremony such that the participants gain knowledge of ritual symbols through performance. Rituals such as *Kurdiji* are important because they maintain traditions which give meaning to people's lives in a rapidly changing world where traditional values are often hidden. The effectiveness of rituals in doing this derives precisely from their emergent nature which gives the participants a great degree of control. The contingencies of people lives influencing the forms they take in many ways. In this conclusion I will discuss these issues and then move on to examine why *Kurdiji* is so important to contemporary Warlpiri lives when many other ceremonial forms are rarely, if ever performed.

Warlpiri people go to immense efforts to hold ceremonies like *Kurdiji*, indicating their continuing importance to Warlpiri lives. People travel extraordinarily long distances to attend ceremonies, often a number of times, returning to collect other family members who also need to attend. Large sums of money are spent on food, diesel and blankets – many people contributing the majority of their already small income so that these ceremonies can take place. Over the weeks surrounding the ceremony, people often camp in rough conditions in extreme heat. Often there is no running water and little shade, the shops having strange hours over the summer holiday period such that food is not always readily available. As recounted in the introduction, the older women need to obtain *yurlpa* through a heavy day's work digging into hard rock. The older men are required to stay up all-night singing and certain women must also dance all-



night. Despite the extreme effort and the hardships that must be endured, these times surrounding ceremony are often seen in retrospect as some of the happiest times in Warlpiri people's memories. Warlpiri people would no doubt prefer it to be easier for them to hold ceremonies such as *Kurdiji*, but it is so important in their lives that they will endure these hard conditions to be able to attend and for it to take place; a fact that illustrates the vital role of ceremony in contemporary Warlpiri lives.

As stated in the introduction, one of the most pressing motivations for Warlpiri people's involvement in the Warlpiri Songlines Project was the desire to make a record of detailed religious knowledge which is today only known in much detail by older people. It is important for older people who understand the intricate details and power that Warlpiri songs and ceremonies have, and it is important for younger people as it adds meaning to their identity as Warlpiri people. The possibility of changing the world through singing is respected by all Warlpiri people and therefore the people who know these songs are considered to be very powerful<sup>166</sup>.

There are many areas of Warlpiri daily life where learning about these aspects of 'traditional culture' are seen as important, especially to young people. The school regularly holds 'culture days' in which older women and men come in and teach the children about their country and associated *Jukurpa*. Often the

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<sup>166</sup> Senior men and women are often accused of having been 'singing' when something goes wrong.

children are painted up with *yawulyu* designs and participate in dancing under the instruction of the older women and men. Everyone enjoys this immensely. The *Jaru Pirrjirdi* program organises bush trips which serve a similar function for older youths. Camping out in the bush and learning from their elders is an activity which makes people feel good about themselves and gives meaning to their lives. Art exhibition openings in far-off places are often prefaced with a performance of a ‘traditional’ song and dance, as are the openings of more local events such as the annual Sports Weekend or the opening of a new hospital. These songs and dances are seen to be presenting something so intrinsically Warlpiri that they are performed in situations where this identity needs to be highlighted.

‘Traditional knowledge’ such as songs and ceremonies and the associated knowledge of country is often presented as something that only the old people know about. Younger people are regarded as being ignorant and in need of learning this knowledge. This view is shared by young people, their elders and the wider population. Knowledge such as this, does not however die out in such a clear cut way. As was shown in Chapter 7, through active participation in *Kurdiji* ceremonies younger people are absorbing knowledge about *Jukurrpa*, country and ceremony and the esoteric references that occur surrounding these. A decline in traditional learning contexts such as *Kankarlu*, means that younger people do not learn about this knowledge in the same nor in as many learning context as in previous decades. It is true that they do not appear to be learning song series and the detailed associated knowledge but their participation in ceremonies such as *Kurdiji* indicates that they are absorbing surrounding

knowledge in another way. In turn the important roles that younger people have in ceremonies like *Kurdiji* empower them to take on greater responsibilities with respect to Warlpiri ceremonial life.

As was shown in Chapter 5 through the description of a *Kurdiji* ceremony held in 2007, this ritual is never repeated in exactly the same form. Rituals are emergent and the ways in which they are held respond to the circumstances of people's lives at that particular point in time. The *Jukurrpa* is often described by Aboriginal people as an unchanging structure which shapes the way the world is and the practices of human beings within this. The performance of ceremonies which symbolically represent the events of the *Jukurrpa* counter this view in many ways. Rather than prescribing the way ceremonies must be performed the *Jukurrpa* provides a framework in which the participants of a ceremony decide, through complex negotiations, how it will be held. It is precisely in this ability to adapt that rituals remain meaningful to people over a long period of time and are so effective in maintaining traditions.

I have emphasised the flexible nature of *Kurdiji* ceremonies, each being unique to that particular performance. While there is a generalised template which is followed, this is always affected by the contingencies of people's lives at that point, the desires of the more powerful participants and other disruptions that may occur. In Chapter 5, there were many specific examples of the types of contingencies surrounding a particular ceremony that was held in February 2007. This ceremony was only held as one of the mothers of the initiands had not been able to attend the first ceremony held a few days before. As she is very sick,

requiring dialysis treatment for kidney disease, and thus lives in Alice Springs, she had only just been able to make it for this ceremony. Due to her poor health certain adaptations had to be made to the ways in which her role in the ceremony was performed. She was unable to dance leaving this important role in the hands of her sisters (who are also regarded as mothers for her son), one sister in particular taking on much of the burden of this role. As it would have been inappropriate and an unnecessary effort to initiate one boy on his own, two more were 'caught'. The families of these boys became intertwined in many ways due to this ceremony, affecting their interactions with each other and other community members for the rest of their lives.

As was noted in Chapter 3, only the very old women know the *yawulyu* songs that are performed in the afternoon of *Marnakurrawarnu*. For this particular ceremony the responsibility of performing these fell on five women, one of whom only came along because she happened to be in my car when I said I was going to go up there to see what was happening. As Peggy Nampijinpa Brown, who had been singing *yawulyu* during the day, had bad asthma she did not stay for the night-time phase, returning to her house in the settlement before sunset.

The men had emphasised that during *parnpa* some of the fathers had made more of an effort than others. The individual personalities involved in particular ceremonies play a large part in what happens. Certain men were bolder and more confident, other were shy and did not want to adopt a position of importance. Others desired to please their fathers and grandfathers.

The men singing had lengthy discussions between the small songs which they continued singing over the whole night. They have a large degree of control over what happens and their decisions at that particular moment are shaping the ways in which the other participants respond and the ways the ceremony plays out. In Chapter 6 I showed that there is a clear journey, a path across Warlpiri country followed by these songs. This was followed with a great deal of accuracy considering all the debate that went on surrounding which song was next.

Thomas Rice (2006: pers.comm) complained to me after the *Kurdiji* ceremony described in this thesis, that the other old men had mixed up the order of the songs, that they had sung them the wrong way – he explained this clearly to me pointing out a song sung at particular country which was not visited by the ancestral women until after the point they were at. My recording of this night, however, reveals that he chose to keep this quiet at the actual ceremony, despite his seniority and the respect that he has amongst the other men. This ‘mix up’ did not impact on the effectiveness of the performance in any way.

At the *Warawata* ceremony, Bidy Napaljarri, the maternal grandmother of one of the initiands wanted to go home. The previous year she had stepped on a tin can and developed a serious infection resulting in her being unable to move very quickly. She was worried that she would not be able to run fast enough back to the settlement at the end of the ceremony.

Another more distant mother to one of the initiands Barbara (who has the same father as Dorothy and Monica), told me the next day that Monica (who helped Dorothy fulfil her duties as mother of Eugene) had been very upset with her for

not coming the night before. She is a teacher at the Yuendumu School and it was their first week back – she was afraid that the new principal would fire her if she was too tired to go to school that day. This again did not impact on the effectiveness of the ceremony but if Barbara had been there she would have had a very important role as a mother – Monica’s complaints perhaps due to the burden this placed on her to perform this role on her own.

All these anecdotes reveal that ceremonial performances such as *Kurdiji* adapt to circumstance. There may be in theory an ideal way in which they are meant to play out but each particular ceremony is shaped by many individual circumstances of people’s lives. If this ceremony was inflexible it would not have any place in modern lives, nor be able to achieve its more functional goals. Kolig (1981) noted in the early 1980s that:

Traditional Aboriginal religion, though in one sense the reservoir of the autochthonous Aboriginal heritage, the symbol of unchanging continuity, has nowadays clandestinely become the vehicle of change. As the religion is being transformed, it alters and shapes Aboriginal consciousness accordingly (1981: 1).

Nowadays this is still the case with ceremonies like *Kurdiji* being particularly successful in adapting to accommodate Warlpiri lives, still being performed several times annually in various settlements. Many other Warlpiri ceremonies have rarely been performed in the last few decades as circumstances make this too difficult - the example of the *Jardiwanpa* ceremony in Chapter 2 being a case in point. Mervyn Meggitt’s and Stephen Wild’s normative accounts of *Kurdiji* ceremonies in Warlpiri settlements in the 1950s and 1960s, however show that

there are also some remarkable patterns of continuities given the dramatic changes that have occurred to Warlpiri life in the last few decades. This ceremony is seen as significant in achieving the coming of age of males despite all the other pressures and changes. Why this is so is particularly interesting when considering the place of ceremony in contemporary Warlpiri lives.

In many ways *Kurdiji* would appear to have lost some key aspects of its significance. The marriage contracts which are established through this ceremony rarely eventuate with the younger generation that are being initiated in ceremonies today most often making their own choices as to their marriage partners. Whilst the alliances between the families that participate in this ceremony are still forged they by no means hold the same relevance and necessity for Warlpiri social life. However it is apparent to anyone visiting Yuendumu over the summer, that *Kurdiji* ceremonies are the focus of Warlpiri lives, particularly the younger generation who are busy seriously fulfilling their duties. Following Kolig's (1981) suggestion that Aboriginal religious life, which was one about exclusion and separation, has in recent decades become defined by its ability to unite and establish networks, Peterson (2000) has suggested that it is the emphasis on active roles, particularly those of younger generations which makes this ceremony still so popular. In a world where *Kankarlu* is no longer held, Warlpiri men have no forum in which to continue learning religious knowledge. Therefore the ceremonies which emphasise this knowledge, particularly those associated with sites, can no longer be held by younger people. The roles of the younger generation in *Kurdiji* empower young men in particular to have an important place in this religious realm.

The large scale of these ceremonies today can also be attributed to the emphasis on younger generations. As was noted in Chapter 2, an increase in birth rates in the past few decades means that there are significantly more young people in Aboriginal settlements than there are older people in their grandparent's generation. This results in many more boys needing to be initiated each year and hence the large scale of the *Kurdiji* ceremonies held each summer. In Chapter 4, I discuss how large-scale ceremonies in general are increasing in Yuendumu, alongside a trend for inclusivity in recent decades. I discussed how sweeping ceremonies incorporating large numbers of people in inclusive ways were popular in the 1980s in Yuendumu. The Balgo business (*julurru*) discussed in that chapter was an example of this trend. Today *Kurdiji* and *Malamala*, a mortuary ritual, are the most often performed rituals in Yuendumu, both of them taking on this inclusive form and often resulting in hundreds of participants. Both of them emphasise inclusivity and this, alongside the increasing relational networks established across the Central desert, leads to their large scale.

Regardless of this emphasis on younger generations, it remains a fact that only older men know how to sing the songs which are so central to the performance of *Kurdiji*. This creates somewhat of a dilemma, as younger generations view this ceremony as necessary for the continuing of their relationships and transferral of their roles into adult men yet when the core group of older men that know these songs are no longer alive to sing them it will be difficult to imagine how this ceremony could be held.



In Chapter 6 I discussed how the medium of song is important for this ceremony to be performed as it is through singing that the older men control the sequence of events for the night. It is so crucial that if they are no longer known by any men, the ceremony will have to change form dramatically. Song is a perfect medium to inexplicitly allude to the themes that are so central to initiatory rites. Merlan (1987) has noticed the importance of theme in song texts which make esoteric references. It is often this broader theme which is crucial to understanding a song text rather than the specific meanings of particular words. As was noted in Chapter 3, Donaldson also emphasises the importance of themes in understanding song texts in languages that are no longer understood by the singers (1984). These general themes are also come to be understood in other ways. As I showed in Chapter 7 through the performance of *Kurdiji* and related events the participants absorb themes surrounding liminality and transitions, male/female realms and establishing relational networks; these being crucial components of what it means for a boy to become a man and for the other relationship changes to occur surrounding this. Marett (2005) and Ellis (1985) have discussed how themes (particularly with associated Dreamings) are expressed through the melody of particular songs, and that upon hearing particular melodies, the associations are brought to mind. On one occasion when Nic Peterson was in Yuendumu during my fieldwork, Thomas Rice explained to him that many of the young men did not really know these songs anymore, they were 'just humming'. This opens up some interesting questions as to the nature of learning and the types of knowledge being transmitted. These younger men are clearly learning the tune of these songs and most likely the associated themes. They are also probably learning quite a lot of the words even if they do

not acknowledge this outright. Perhaps it is a lack of confidence or a degree of submission to authority which is causing them not to sing. Whatever the case, senior men consider that they are not learning them. What form this ceremony, which clearly holds such importance in Warlpiri lives, takes and how it can be sustained after the current generation of older men pass away is an interesting question for a future ethnographer to explore.

In many other places in the world and other parts of Australia, the contexts needed and knowledge required for initiation rituals which serve similar purposes to *Kurdiji*, no longer exist and subsequently they are no longer performed. Gabriele Sturzenhofecker has discussed the outcomes of such a situation in Papua New Guinea where the *Palena* initiation rites have declined in saying that:

The demise of the Palena cult may also be seen as having contributed to male anxiety. One thing the cult accomplished was the removal of boys from domestic life with their mothers and their institutionalized socialization into male personhood under the tutelage of ritually pure bachelors... This time of separation no longer exists, and in a sense boys pass in an unrecognized and amorphous period of limbo from boyhood to manhood without a context in which they are unambiguously taught the proper ways to be men. Many later filled this void by seeking work outside of the local area as laborers on coastal plantations or, more recently, on mining sites (Sturzenhofecker 1998: 171).

As has been demonstrated in this thesis, *Kurdiji* entails much more than the changing of a boy into a man. There is a complex of other relationships which change alongside these: friendships (solidarity relationships) are created amongst boys initiated in the same ceremony and alliances between distantly related

families are forged. It remains vital in contemporary Warlpiri lives and the voids will have to be filled in creative ways. The outcome of what happens to this ceremony will obviously be fascinating for a future ethnographer to compare to my own research and that of Meggitt and Wild in previous decades and other earlier accounts. One way in which this ceremony could be sustained for a bit longer is for these relational networks to be called upon such that older men from different settlements in the Central Desert who know the songs required to initiate boys will be called on to travel to various settlements. This is already happening today to a small degree. Laughren (2009: pers.comm) has pointed out that in the East Kimberleys one or two families have become the specialists whose presence is needed to perform initiation ceremonies. This too is, however, unsustainable long term.

Ceremonies and their associated songs clearly have an important place in contemporary Warlpiri lives. Recent decades have, however, seen a shift of emphasis. In the recent past, songs were valued for the intrinsic religious knowledge and the power these had to change the world and maintain social order. Whilst these aspects of songs are still valued today, the ceremonies in which they are sung are no longer very relevant to Warlpiri lives. Instead, ceremonies such as *Kurdiji* which do encode important religious knowledge but also emphasise performative aspects, are taking over as the dominant ceremonial forms. The significance of this ceremony in Warlpiri lives was apparent from the first *Kurdiji* I went to in Mt Allan a few weeks after I first moved to Yuendumu and remained apparent in the ceremony I describe in this thesis from 2007. The same emotions, the same dedication to hard work, the immense effort

to stay up all-night, the spectacular nature of the whole affair, the large numbers of people and the great sense of sustaining tradition, are what drive Warlpiri people to keep holding this ceremony year after year. This experiential component of ceremony is further enhanced in the contemporary Aboriginal world where there is a decline in learning contexts for associated religious knowledge.

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## Appendix 1. Songs performed for *Kurdiji*, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2007

The songs presented in this appendix are referred to throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapter 6. They are presented in the order in which they were sung in the all-night part of the *Marnakurrawarnu* ceremony on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2007<sup>167</sup>. Many of the words are special ‘song words’ or skewed versions of regular Warlpiri words. Those that are in regular Warlpiri (or had roots clearly traced to regular Warlpiri) have been referenced as they were found in *The Warlpiri- English Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (Laughren et al. 2007). All other glosses given have been referenced as personal comments by Thomas Jangala Rice and Jeannie Nungarrayi Egan (Rice & Egan 2008) who helped to transcribe and translate their meanings. Some of the words could not be glossed in any exact way. Related, or possibly related words have been included preceded by an asterisk as they were largely based on my own analysis. A basic free translation is also given directly after the song text.

### Song #1 (place)

A1 *Yapurnurla kaninjarra*  
A2 *Walyangka kaninjarra*  
B *Jirrpjirrpri parnkayarra*

A1 Deep down at Yapurnu  
A2 Deep down in the ground  
B Fingernails dancing from side to side.

Yapurnu *proper noun*. a salt lake near the Northern Territory and Western Australian borderline

\*yapurnu *noun*. salt lake (Laughren et al. 2007)

-rla *noun suffix*. at, in, on, near (Laughren et al. 2007)

kaninjarra *noun*. inside, down, underneath, downwards, way down in (Laughren et al. 2007), a depression in the ground (Rice & Egan 2008)

jirrpjirrpri *noun*. long fingernails and toenails (Rice & Egan 2008)

parnka- *verb*. run, fly, dart, speed, race (Laughren et al. 2007), dancing really quickly (Rice & Egan 2008)

-nyarra *verb suffix*. side to side, back and forth (Rice & Egan 2008)

Wirdangurla is dancing quickly from side to side at Yapurnu on the salt lake. He comes from Western Australia. He came to the salt lake for a drink and saw all the women dancing there. He was watching them for a while thinking that they looked really pretty. Then he joined in dancing to try to impress them making a mark in the ground there with his long fingernails. He thought his fast dancing would allure them towards him.

### Song #2 (place)

A *Walyangka juturu nyina*  
B *Yapurnurla juturu nyina*

A Sitting still on the ground  
B Sitting still at Yapurnu

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<sup>167</sup> The order of songs presented here would not necessarily be the same as for other *Kurdiji* ceremonies, although some similarities would exist.

Yapurnu *noun*. a salt lake near the Northern Territory and Western Australian borderline

\*yapurnu *noun*. salt lake (Laughren et al. 2007)

-rla *noun suffix*. at, in, on, near (Laughren et al. 2007)

juturu *preverb*. unmoving, quiet, still, unanimated (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*jutu *preverb*. cease, leave, desist (Laughren et al. 2007)

\*junyuku- *preverb*. lifeless, apathetic, listless, quiet, loner, reserved, uninterested (Laughren et al. 2007)

nyina *verb*. sit (Laughren et al. 2007)

walya *noun*. ground, earth, land (Laughren et al. 2007)

-ngka *noun suffix*. at, in, on, near (Laughren et al. 2007)

At Yapurnu they sit quietly on the ground. By sitting quietly they are trying to lose the attention of Wirdangula so that he does not follow them any further. Their previous animated dancing had attracted him to them. Dancing with a lot of movement makes women very sexy whereas stillness and rigidness has the opposite effect.

### **Song #3 (travelling)**

A *Pakarli yanjawarra*

B *Yarlipilykipilyki*

A The special place of the Inland Tea-trees

B They are shaking

pakarli *noun*. Inland Tea-tree, Paper-bark tree (Laughren et al. 2007)

yanjawarra *noun*. Dreaming site (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*yanjarra *noun*. Dreaming site, Dreaming place, Dreaming, Dreamtime (Laughren et al. 2007)

yarlipilykipilyki *noun*. shaking, quivering, trembling, moving loosely [opposite:

lalka *noun*. solid, hardened, stiff, firm, frozen stiff, congealed, rigid, dried up (Laughren et al. 2007)] (Rice & Egan 2008)

The raindrops are falling through the leaves of the *pakarli* trees and the women are dancing shake-a-leg style. They dance like this in the cool of the afternoon, after the rain. The way the rain falls through the leaves of the *pakarli* and the movement of the women's legs as they dance are both evoked through the word *yarlipilykipilyki*.

### **Song #4 (travelling)**

A *Lardiji lanja kuruku kurrku*

B *Rdalyaranga larranya*

A A thick group of mulga trees all together

B There it is, broken off firewood

lardiji *noun*. mulga (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*wardiji *noun*. mulga (Laughren et al. 2007)

lanja *preverb*. thickly grouped (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*laja *preverb*. amassing (Laughren et al. 2007)

kuru *preverb*. in one place (Laughren et al. 2007)

kurrku *noun*. heap, pile, mass, lot, large quantity (Laughren et al. 2007)

rdalyaranga *noun*. dry firewood (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*rdaaly(pa) *noun*. broken (of solid entity) off, snapped, split in two, in pieces, apart (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 \*laarr-rdangka *preverb*. broken off, split off from  
 \*laarr(pa) *preverb*. out of (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 \*rdangka *preverb*. apart from, away from, separate from (Laughren et al. 2007)

larra *noun*. cracked, split, slit, torn (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 -nya *noun suffix*. presentative suffix ‘there it is’, ‘here it is’ (Laughren et al. 2007)

The women stop in a dense forest of mulga trees, they cannot see through them. The branches have broken off so there are piles of dry firewood lying everywhere. There is an Anmatyerre song just like this.

### Song #5 (travelling)

A1 *Jilkangka larrujarru jaru*  
 A2 *Walkangka larrujarrujaru*  
 B *Jilkangka rdilyilpi nyiwi*

A1 At the prickled country, they dance on the prickles.  
 A2 On the ground, they dance on the prickles.  
 B At the prickled country, the prickles break in their feet.

jilka *noun*. prickle  
 \*jilkarla *noun*. prickle (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 -ngka *noun suffix*. at, on, near, with (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 larrujarru jaru *verb*. dancing fast on the prickles, getting the in their feet (Rice & Egan 2008)  
 \*larrungka *noun*. mulga gall (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 \*jarala *preverb*. all over (the place), everywhere, up and down (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 \*jararr(pa) *noun, preverb*. ground, digging (of ground) (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 \*jaru *preverb*. curved downwards, sloping downwards, bent over, on a slope, on its side (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 walka (=walya) *noun*. ground, earth, land (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 rdilyilpi *noun*. broken (Rice & Egan 2008)  
 \*rdilyki *noun*. broken, rent, torn, fractured, smashed (Laughren et al. 2007)  
 nyiwi (-nyili) *noun*. thorn, prickle, sticker, spike, spine (Laughren et al. 2007)

They are dancing on the prickles around the mulga country. They broke in their feet and were really painful. They sat down to get the prickles out. The prickles are called *yarnajakarlarla*, there are lots of them where mulga trees grow. They have three points that come out that are really sharp. Some bits of them get stuck in their feet and are throbbing with pain (wiyingkiwiyingki = stinging, irritating, hurting)

### Song #6 (business)

A *Jaka yangawa*  
 B *Kaka yarrarnta*  
 C *Jaki yarringki*



## D *Rima yarrarnta*

- A The guardians are holding the initiand's buttocks to help lift them up.
- B They are rubbing them with warm hands from the fire.
- C They are fixing up the fluff on their heads.
- D They are holding under their arms to support them while they stand.

*jaka noun.* buttocks, behind, rear, backside, bottom, rump, arse (vulgar)  
(Laughren et al. 2007)

*yangawa verb.* fixing up their dress (headbands, fluff etc.) (Rice & Egan 2008)

\**nawaya noun.* headband (Laughren et al. 2007)

*kaka noun.* defecates (for a small child) (Laughren et al. 2007)

*yarrarnta verb.* moving off to the side (Rice & Egan 2008)

*Jaki (=jaka) noun.* buttocks (Rice & Egan 2008)

*yarringki verb.* standing up (Rice & Egan 2008)

\**yarriyarri preverb.* rising, going up, high up (Laughren et al. 2007)

\**yarrinki noun.* new growth, fresh vegetation, green grass (Laughren et al. 2007)

*rima*

\**riwariwa noun.* toilet (Laughren et al. 2007)

This is a special song for business. When the young men are crouched down all-night they get stiff legs. They sing this song so they can stand up and stretch. Their *rdiliwarnu* help them stand up. They hold them under their arms to support them from falling over. They've been asleep while they've been crouched down. The women move apart from each other in two groups so the men can see the boys in the back. The women dance with dancing boards and firesticks in two lines facing each other whilst the men look at the initiands through the middle. The woman in the front has the firestick and dancing boards and there are a few others behind her holding on to the woman in front's waist. The cousins and sisters dance sideways and make the 'puh, puh, puh' sound. The mothers, mothers-in-law and father's sisters hold the firesticks. The singers make an undulated sound at the end of this song.

## **Song #7(travelling)**

A *Jurnpurla rulawama*

B *Parlanji wirriwirri*

A Dancing and throwing up soil into a mound.

B Dancing with flattened feet so the tracks are forming a channel

*jurnpu preverb.* raised, humped (Laughren et al. 2007), the mound of sand made on the side of a dancer's tracks (Rice & Egan 2008)

*-rla noun suffix.* on, at, with, in (Laughren et al. 2007)

*rulawama verb.* moving feet such that they throw up soil whilst dancing (Rice & Egan 2008)

*parlanji verb.* flattening feet so they are wide apart (Rice & Egan 2008)

\**parlaparla noun.* flat ground (Laughren et al. 2007)

\**parlanji noun.* termite mound (Laughren et al. 2007)

*wirriwirri noun.* deep tracks (Rice & Egan 2008)

\**wirri noun.* watercourse, floodway, channel, flood plain, gutter, runoff areas, drainage channel, valley (Laughren et al. 2007)

Wirdangula is singing about himself and the way he is dancing and making tracks. He is dancing with the women, copying them and joining in as they dance first with their feet flat, making a deep track and then throwing them out to the side to make a mound of soil on the side of their tracks. He's dancing like this because he's a loverboy and wants the women to notice him and be attracted to him.

### **Song #8 (travelling)**

A *Yinjirinpunganya palarrararrara*

B *Parlanji yatampurrukarri*

A Dragging feet along through the swamp grass

B Flattening feet and standing still

yinjiri *noun*. swamp grass, spear grass (Laughren et al. 2007)

-npunganya *noun*. large quantity (Rice & Egan 2008)

pala *preverb*. tight, secure, fixed (Laughren et al. 2007)

rarra-rarra *preverb*. drag feet along the ground (Laughren et al. 2007)

parlanji *verb*. flattening feet so they are wide apart (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*parlaparla *noun*. flat ground (Laughren et al. 2007)

\*parlanji *noun*. termite mound (Laughren et al. 2007)

yatarmpa *noun*. calm, still (Laughren et al. 2007)

karri- *verb*. stand (Laughren et al. 2007)

Jungarrayi was dancing with wide legs because he was copying the women. He started dancing in the grass and then moved out to where the women were dancing. He made a clearing in the grass where he was dancing. This happens at a place called Wirdangula, not far from Kunajarrayi. This is where he lived. He saw the women getting witchetty grubs at Kunajarrayi and came over there. The women are dancing with wide legs sideways from north to south and back again.

### **Song #9 (travelling)**

A *Yamanarna japara wapa*

B *Yamanarna japiri nguna*

A I am dancing with wide legs, eating as I move

B I am dancing with wide legs, eating as I stay still

Yamana *noun* wide legs (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*yamalanypa *noun*. numb and cramped (Laughren et al. 2007)

-rna *noun suffix*. 1<sup>st</sup> person singular subject suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)

japara *preverb*. eating while on the move (Laughren et al. 2007)

wapa *verb*. moving along (Laughren et al. 2007)

nguna *verb*. lying (Laughren et al. 2007)

The women are dancing around the rock at Kunajarrayi. They are moving their feet from being up on the outside to being flat. They are dancing side to side and making the dust coming up and pushing the sand along. They are eating witchetty grubs as they dance.

### **Song #10 (place)**

A *Kalpalpirla rarra wapa*

B *Yatingkarna rarra wapa*

A Swarming in the soft grass  
B I am swarming in the tree roots

*kalpalpi noun.* lemon-scented grass, Native lemon grass (Laughren et al. 2007), soft grass to put delicate items on (Rice & Egan 2008)  
*-rla noun suffix.* at, on, near, with (Laughren et al. 2007)  
*rarra-wapa-mi verb.* stream in and out, swarm, go in all directions (Laughren et al. 2007)  
*yatingka noun.* tree roots (Rice & Egan 2008) [syn: *kuturlurla*]  
*-rna noun suffix.* 1<sup>st</sup> person singular subject suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)

The witchetty grubs are moving around everywhere on the back of the rock at Kunajarrayi. The witchetty grubs turn into one snake. This snake ate another witchetty grub first and they turned into lots of little snakes and then they turned into one big snake with little wings – *rimpirimpi* who flew to the Granites.

### Song #11 (place)

A *Warnampa warna pirrirdi japa*  
B *Warnampa warna jarrirdi japa*

A The snakes are going around in a circle  
B The snakes are flying off

*warna noun.* poisonous snake  
*jarrirdi japa verb.* fly off (Rice & Egan 2008)  
*pirrirdi japa verb.* going around the rock in a circle (Rice & Egan 2008)  
\**japiya noun.* big, much, many, large amount of, great quantity of, big number of, numerous (Laughren et al. 2007)  
\**jarri noun.* singing (Laughren et al. 2007)  
\**pirdi noun.* whole, cave, cavity, cavern (Laughren et al. 2007)

All the witchetty grubs have come together to turn into snakes. The women are dancing around the rock in a circle. The women are singing about this. In the ceremony they dance sideways from north-south. The rock at Kunajarrayi has a big hole in it.

### Song #12 (travelling)

A *Nyarla kurarra rdangka*  
B *Nyarla jurrparna janji*

A The seeds are hanging down from the Dead finish tree.  
B Collecting them as they hang down.

*nyarla noun.* hanging down (Rice & Egan 2008)  
*kurarra noun.* Dead finish tree (Laughren et al. 2007)  
*rdangka preverb.* apart from, away from, separate (Laughren et al. 2007)  
*kurarra noun* edible seeds from tree (Rice & Egan 2008)  
*rdangka preverb.* apart from, away from, separate from (Laughren et al. 2007)  
*jurrnarpa noun.* entity used as a tool (Laughren et al. 2007)  
*-rna noun suffix.* first person singular subject suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)  
*janji preverb.* searching (Laughren et al. 2007)

They start to leave Kunajarrayi travelling east. This is a travelling song. They are collecting the edible seeds hanging off the kurarra tree. In the ceremony they dance from side to side, north to south in a loose style.

### **Song #13 (travelling)**

A *Ngapirlirli marraya*

B *Ngatulampa kurraya*

A The sweet sugar is swaying

B Dripping down

*ngapirli noun.* the sweet sugar on the mulga tree (like kunpu but on the mulga tree) (Rice & Egan 2008)

\* *ngapiri noun.* Red river gum (Laughren et al. 2007)

*marraya verb.* swaying in the wind (

\* *marrara noun.* tree species (Laughren et al. 2007)

*ngatulampa verb.* dripping to the ground (Rice & Egan 2008)

*kurrara noun.* Dead finish (Laughren et al. 2007)

In this song the mulga trees are swaying in the wind and the sweet sugar is dripping to the ground.

On the branches of the mulga tree there is a red thing with white sugar on top. When it gets hot it drips to the ground. Yapa collect it and put it in a coolamon and mix it with water. When it dries you can suck on it like a lolly. All the trees have different sugary substances and they all have a different taste. Yapa used to put them in a soft grass called yilyirri covered with bark to keep it from melting.

### **Song #14 (place)**

A *Yalkiri rapawala pawala*

B *Yalkiri jawirri jawala*

A The sky is all in the cracks in the ground

B Only sky in the cracks in the ground

*jawirri jawala noun.* water running all over the place (Rice & Egan 2008)

*jawirri noun.* no more than, only, simply, just, and nothing more, nothing else, leaving, desisting

*jawala* (perhaps play on *pawala*?)

*yalkiri noun.* sky (Laughren et al. 2007)

*pawala noun.* waterhole, swamp, depression, lake (Laughren et al. 2007)

\*crack in ground typically caused by a tuber growing below (Laughren et al. 2007)

There is fresh water everywhere overflowing. The women are looking around at it. At Miyikirlangu there are lots of bush plums, mukaki (other name is yangkulayi).

### **Song #15 (place)**

A *Yanjiwarrarra rdaku*

B *Yanjata patarrpala*

A There is a hole in the flat rock

B The kangaroos are stretching their limbs

Yanjiwarra *proper noun*. place name, a rockhole, a large flat rock (Rice & Egan 2008)

rdaku *noun*. hole in ground, hollow, cavity (Laughren et al. 2007)

yanjata *noun*. kangaroo [synonymous with marlu (Rice & Egan 2008)]

patarrpala *noun*. stretching their limbs around showing off (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*palapala *noun*. stiff (as of (leg) muscles from walking), tired, tight (of muscles), paining, aching, weary (Laughren et al. 2007)

The two kangaroos sing this one. They are drinking from the rockhole and stretching their legs out. They are loverboys and stretching around showing off trying to get their attention. They are looking at the women sideways while they're having a drink. They just stopped to sing this one. They are travelling from the north (in Gurinji country) to the south. They cross paths with these women.

### Song #16 (place)

A *Mulyurna wilypiri*

B *Yajanpurrukarrri yajanpurrukarrri*

A I am a nose with a big hole

B Enticing further and further

Yajarnpurrukarrri

\*yajarni *verb*. invite, entice, ask for, solicit, fetch, round up, get to go with, enlist, ask along, get to accompany (Laughren et al. 2007)

\*purru *noun*. semen (Laughren et al. 2007)

\*karri *interj*. further and further, on and on (Laughren et al. 2007)

mulyu *noun*. nose (Laughren et al. 2007)

-rna *pronoun suffix*. 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)

wilypiri *noun* hollow in something, cavity (Laughren et al. 2007)

They are singing their noses to have big holes for nosepegs. The two kangaroos are singing themselves. They are trying to win the affection of the women by singing about their nosepegs - a symbol of their ritual importance. Yanjiwarra is a big rockhole where the two kangaroos and the ancestral women meet up.

### Song #17 (place)

A *Wawirrirna parnkaparnka*

B *Yilimirntirrirna karri*

A I am a kangaroo, running

B I am two legs going further and further

yilimirntirri. two legs (J&J 2006)

-rna *pronoun suffix*. 1<sup>st</sup> person singular

karri *interj*. further and further, on and on (Laughren et al. 2007)

wawirri *noun*. Red kangaroo, Plains kangaroo (Laughren et al. 2007)

parnka (-mi) *verb*. run, fly, dart (Laughren et al. 2007)

The two kangaroos are leaving Yanjiwarra. They are singing about their two legs as they run off to the south.

### **Song #18 (place)**

A *Wujuju wangkaja*

B *Wujuju wangkaja yatingangakarrarra*

A Called out in complaint

B Called out in complaint, calling out from the nest in the tree.

*wujuju preverb.* complaining, protesting (Laughren et al. 2007)

*wangka verb.* speak, talk, say, tell (Laughren et al. 2007)

*-ja verb suffix.* past tense (Laughren et al. 2007)

*yardi. noun* scar, scarification, gash(es), cut(s), cicatrice

*ngangkarrarra noun.* nest (a hole in the side of the tree) (Laughren et al. 2007)

*\*ngangamani preverb.* yak-yak-yak, yakity-yakity-yak, blah-blah-blah (Laughren et al. 2007)

*\*karrarrarra preverb.* special call make by mothers of initiates at the *Kankarlu* rituals when the initiates are brought out into public view (Laughren et al. 2007)

This is *Kakalyalya Jukurra* (Major Mitchell Cockatoo Dreaming). They start their travels on the otherside of Pikilyi and then fly to Yumurra and then the Tanami. They are at Japangardiranyi on the northern side of Pikilyi.

### **Song #19 (travelling)**

A *Yarlkinjirra*

B *Yurru yurru*

A Up high

B The fat people

*yurru yurru noun.* fat people (Rice & Egan 2008)

*\*yulyupardi noun.* fat women (Rice & Egan 2008)

*yarlkinjirra noun.* on top, up high (Rice & Egan 2008)

The young ones are helping the fat old ladies to climb to the top. They really want to get to the top. They do not want to walk around the hill. They are climbing up Pikilyi. This song is sung when they are climbing other places too.

### **Song #20 (place)**

A *Yimirta nyarrurrangka nyarrurrangka*

B *Yapata nyarrurrangka nyarrurrangka*

A Tired with aching legs

B Groaning with weakness

*yapata adjective* tired (Laughren et al. 2007)

*\*yapaja verb.* groan in pain, wail of pain (Laughren et al. 2007)

*nyarrurrangka noun* tired (Rice & Egan 2008)

*\*narrunaru noun.* weak, hungry, starving (Laughren et al. 2007)

yimirta *noun.* veins are throbbing and sticking out from exertion (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*yimirda *noun.* crossed legs [syn. warnarri] (Laughren et al. 2007)

They are on top of Pikilyi. They have really sore legs from walking so they sit down to massage their legs by the fire. There is a big rockhole on top of Pikilyi. They are getting all the seeds on top. The *warnayarra* snake is underneath – they cannot see it but you can hear it underneath and feel the ground move. When Thomas was working as a stockman they used to camp there and could hear it moving underneath - it was like thunder.

### Song #21 (place)

A *Minyi ngapangaparla parrakurra kujurnu*

B *Warlu yintiyintirla parrakurra kujurnu*

A Threw the black Acacia seeds in the water towards the sun

B Threw into the heat towards the sun

warlu *noun.* fire, heat (Laughren et al. 2007)

yintiyinti *noun.* heat (Rice & Egan 2008)

-rla *noun suffix.* at, in, on, near (Laughren et al. 2007)

minyi *noun.* little black seeds from an Acacia (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*minyi *noun.* wattle, Acacia species (Laughren et al. 2007)

parra *noun.* sunlight, daylight, daytime, day, sun, sunshine (Laughren et al. 2007)

-kurra *noun suffix.* towards, to, into, onto, against (Laughren et al. 2007)

kujurnu *verb.* threw [past tense of kijirni] (Rice & Egan)

\*kijirni *verb.* throw, propel, toss, project, hurl, pitch, chuck, topple, knock down (Laughren et al. 2007)

ngapa *noun.* water, rain, humidity, rain-cloud, water source (Laughren et al. 2007)

They threw all the seeds in the sun to dry, then they mix them with water to make damper. They make little seedcakes called *pidijirri*. These seeds have a really strong smell (*warrkaripiya*). The women are still at Pikilyi.

### Song #22 (place)

A *Ngurrapalangurlu kaninju rdatirla*

B *Yangungu kurrangka yangungu kurrangka*

A Sitting quietly inside the cave at Ngurrapala

B Echoing around, echoing around

Ngurrapalangu *proper noun.* place on top of Pikilyi (lit. bed-two, two grooves in the rock where the kangaroos sleep) (Rice & Egan 2008)

kaninju *noun.* deep inside (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*kaninjarra *noun.* inside and under, down under, below, within (Laughren et al. 2007)

rdatirla *noun.* sitting around (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*rdatu *noun.* quiet, well behaved, not causing trouble, not instigating a fight, retiring (Laughren et al. 2007)

-rla *noun suffix.* at, in, on, near (Laughren et al. 2007)

yangungu *noun.* echo (Rice & Egan 2008)

-kurra *noun suffix*. while, when, as (Rice & Egan 2008)  
-ngka *noun complementiser*. while, when, then, at (time) (Laughren et al. 2007)

They are on top of Pikilyi inside the cave at Ngurrupalangu, eating seeds, talking and dancing.

### Song #23 (place)

A *Ngurrangurra punju*  
B *Kujarrala*

A Two camps at the rockhole  
B Two kangaroos

ngurra *noun*. camp, home, residence (Laughren et al. 2007)  
Ngurrangurrapunju *proper noun*. big rockhole on top of Pikilyi (Rice & Egan 2008)

ngurrangurrapunju *noun*. when they hollow out a bit of soil to sleep in (like in the old days when there were no swags) (Rice & Egan 2008)

kujarrala (kuyujarra in spoken Warlpiri) *noun*. the two kangaroos

They left the two kangaroos lying down at Ngurrupalangu. The women are leaving Pikilyi now. This is a sacred site. They leave the kangaroos there. There are two grooves in the rock where they slept.

### Song #24 (travelling)

A *Walyarna pinaru wapa*  
B *Jurrmarlinjirna*

A I am throwing up the soil as I move  
B I am dancing shake-a-leg style

walya *noun*. ground, earth, land (Laughren et al. 2007)  
-rna *suffix* 1<sup>st</sup> person singular subject suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)  
pinaru *verb*. throwing up soil (Rice & Egan 2008)  
wapa *verb*. move, slither, crawl (Laughren et al. 2007), shuffle feet along the soil without really lifting them (Rice & Egan 2008)

jurrmalinji- *noun*. shake-a-leg style dancing (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*jurrmurl-jurrmurl(pa) *preverb*. convulsing, shaking, in a fit, in a spasm (Laughren et al. 2007)

\*-nji *noun suffix* Characteristic: having the property, quality denoted by N; associated with, or effected by event, state, process denoted by infinitive (Laughren et al. 2007)

-rna *suffix* 1<sup>st</sup> person singular subject suffix

The women alternate their dance style, first throwing up soil as they shuffle their feet along the ground. Then dancing shake-a-leg style. They are leaving Pikilyi now, coming down the hill.

### Song #25 (travelling)

A *Talkinji tarritarri warra*  
B *Turlpanji tarritarri warra*



A The tall ladies are dancing around.  
talkinji *noun*. tall (Rice & Egan 2008)  
turlpanji [yurlap-nji] *noun*. having red ochre (Rice & Egan 2008)  
tarritarri *noun*. long legs (Rice & Egan 2008)  
warra [wapa] *verb*. move (Laughren et al. 2007)

All the tall ladies are putting yurlpa on themselves and on their waluwarnu etc. They are singing about themselves, their long legs moving as they dance. They are still at Pikilyi but on the eastern side now at the bottom.

### **Song #26 (travelling)**

A *Watijiyimarurla (ya)*  
B *Ngaru wilyiwilyi (ya)*

There are ripe warnakiji growing everywhere.

wardiji *noun*. mulga (Laughren et al. 2007)  
maru *noun*. ripe, really green, lush (cannot see things clearly because of the overgrowth (Rice & Egan 2008)  
    \*maru *noun*. black, dark colour of (Laughren et al. 2007) ripe, really green, dark green and lush, can't really see things very well because its so green  
-rla *noun suffix*. at, on, with (Laughren et al. 2007)  
ngaru *noun*. Bush tomato, Wild tomato (Laughren et al. 2007)  
wilyiwilyi *noun*. abundant (J&J)  
    \*wilyirriki *noun*. visible, able to be seen, exposed, revealed, not hidden, uncovered, bare  
(ya). added for an extra syllable when they are singing (Rice & Egan 2008)

There are bush tomatoes everywhere, like a farm. There are different ways of singing this song. Thomas sang another way like this:

A *Watijarntakurlka (ya)* – can see through a little bit  
B *Ngaru wilyiwilyi (ya)* – ripe warnakiji

A *kajalarra* (scoop, scraper) is used to clean the black seeds from bush tomatoes (*wanakiji*) If you eat them you can go blind. They are travelling between Pikilyi and Yurnmaji.

### **Song #27 (travelling)**

#### Version 1

A *Ngiji juturrungkarni*  
B *Juturrungkarni*

#### Version 2

A *Jangiyi juturrungkarni*  
B *Juturrungkarni*

ngiji *noun*. fire-stick, piece of burning wood, flaming stick, torch, firestick (Laughren et al. 2007)  
juturrungkarni *verb* pushing up the soil as they dance in a row (Rice & Egan 2008)  
jangiyi *noun*. fire-stick (Rice & Egan 2008)

The women are all dressed up. They have *ngamirdangamirdi* (circular combs) and have put *yininti* (bean seeds) in their hair, *waluwarnu* (headbands and *jinjirla* (tails) hanging from their hair. In the *Jukurrpa* everyone had firesticks, and they would dance in a big line with others behind them. In the ceremony the mothers-in-law, father's sisters and mothers dance with firesticks in lines in the middle. The women behind them hold their waists. The *rdiliwarnu*, ie. cousins and sisters and FM and MM dance on the sides with no firesticks. The mothers-in-law who dance with the firesticks are promising their daughters to the boy who firestick they are holding. They are at Yurnmaji.

### Song #28 (place)

A *Wakurlunjarri wilyarri wulya (ya)*

B *Wakurlunjarri linjalja (ya)*

A They have long hair.

B They have short hair.

wakurlu *noun*. head hair (Laughren et al. 2007)

-njarri *intransitive verbaliser* (Laughren et al. 2007)

wilyarri wulya *noun*. long hair (Rice & Egan 2008)

linjalja *noun*. short (Rice & Egan 2008)

This song is about combing their hair (with a *ngamirdingamirdi* or a *pimirdipimirdi*) and making themselves pretty, long hair and short hair. Anmatyerre people do this song too.

Men used to have long hair too which they would tie in a pukardi. They would put on a head band over the front where the forehead and hair meets. It is made of emu feathers. They throw their hands alternately behind their head when they dance for this one. They are at Yurnmaji (they also sing this song at Yinintiwarrkuwarrku).

### Song #29 (travelling)

A *Karntawurrurlparna parlintirri*

B *Yati nganjalyanganja*

A I am a woman dancing low in defence

B A long spear with hairstring

yatinganjalyanganja *noun*. long spear with hairstring wound around it and feathers hanging from the end, [synonymous with *wirriji*] (Rice & Egan 2008)

parlinterri *noun*. the way they are standing holding the spears out in front of them to stop from being hit (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*parlinterri *noun*. club, in a defensive position (Laughren et al. 2007)

karnta *noun*. woman (Laughren et al 2007)

wurrurl(pa) *preverb*. low, out of sight (Laughren et al. 2007)

-rna *noun suffix*. 1<sup>st</sup> person singular subject suffix

At *Kirrardikirrawarnu* in the morning there is *wirriji* (a spear with hairstring wrapped around it). The mothers give food to the boys to take into the bush. The boys give their mothers-in-law the *wirriji*. (or *purduru*). At the end the brothers-in-law bring it and put it in the middle until morning and then the mothers-in-law give it to the fathers later. Nowadays they do not do this because they do not have *kirrardikirrawarnu* anymore. They just give it straight to the fathers. All the mothers and father's sisters dance with a *karlangu* (spear) all in a line holding it in front of them for this song.

### **Song #30 (travelling/business)**

#### Version 1

A *Wurrumpu parntirninnya*

B *Ngarnampu parntirninnya*

A There it is hidden

B Desired to come up

#### Version 2

A *Wurrumpu partirninnya*

B *Lanji marramarra lungkarrungka*

*wurrumpu noun.* lance, stabbing spear (Laughren et al. 2007), hidden (it is light but can not see the sun yet) (Rice & Egan 2008)

*parntirni verb.* pierce, stick into, prick, jab, stab, poke, spear, sting, puncture, peck (Laughren et al. 2007)

*ngarnampu verb.* wanting (Rice & Egan 2008)

*\*ngarnungarnu noun.* desired

This song is to make the daylight come more quickly. When they get tired they sing this song to bring the sun up. All the women dancing clicking their fingers and pointing to the east. They are at Yurnmaji (this song can also be sung at Yuluwurru too).

### **Song #31(place)**

A *Wirangkurlurla rdanjiwirnparanya*

B *Yanangkurlurlu rdanjiwirnparanya*

A Hanging off their bodies at Wirangkurlu

B The old ladies are hanging down

*Wirangkurlu proper noun.* place,[lit. hanging down] (Rice & Egan 2008)

*-rla noun suffix.* in, at, on, with (Laughren et al. 2007)

*yanangkurlurlu noun.* old ladies (muturna) (Rice & Egan 2008)

*\*yangarlu noun.* alone, by oneself (Laughren et al. 2007)

*rdanjiwirnpa preverb* stomachs, breasts, sagging skin is hanging down off the bodies of the really old ladies (Rice & Egan 2008))

*\*rdanjarrpa preverb.* loaded, amassed, laden, large quantity, big load (Laughren et al. 2007)

They left the old ladies here. They were too big with the bits of skin around their breast and stomachs hanging down so they could not really dance. They are at Wirangkurlu.

### **Song #32 (travelling)**

A *Wirangkurlu nampunampu*

B *Wirangkurlu wintijarna*

A The thud of Wirangkurlu

B I danced at Wirangkurlu

*Wirangkurlu proper noun.* place [hanging down] (Rice & Egan 2008)

wirntija *verb.* danced (wirnti+ja) (Laughren et al. 2007)  
-rna *noun suffix.* 1<sup>st</sup> person singular subject suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)  
nampunampu *noun.* heavy thud on the ground as they dance (Rice & Egan 2008)  
\*ngampungampu *noun* sprightly, lively, brisk (Laughren et al. 2007)

The old ladies are too heavy to dance. They dance in a row leaning on their *karlangu* (spears) which they place in the ground in front of them to support their dancing. They try to dance but the others hold them down. Nowadays old women who are really fat are too shamed to dance but in the *Jukurpa* they were not. They are at Wirangkurlu.

### Song #33 (place)

A *Ngipiri ngarnungarnu*  
B *Warapija*

A Desiring the eggs  
B Moving around

ngipiri *noun.* egg (Laughren et al. 2007)  
ngarnungarnu *noun.* highly desirable, craved for, lusted after, highly prized, an entity that people fight and kill in order to possess (Laughren et al. 2007)  
warapija *verb.* move around (Rice & Egan 2008)

A python from Yarliyumpu came to Ngipiri and saw all the little snake eggs. He ate them all. There are little rockholes there today on a flat rock (*panma*). Then he went to Palkurda which is a bit to the north and then after back to Yarliyumpu. This is an Anmatyerre story. When the mother snakes came back and found no eggs they started fighting with each other. The place is called Ngipiri.

### Song #34 (place)

A *Ngurra jangiyi pirlirli*  
B *Wari jangiyi manta*

A At home, the rock has a firestick  
B Get on it, without the firestick

wari *verb.* get on to (Laughren et al. 2007)  
jangiyi *noun.* firestick (Rice & Egan 2008)  
manta *preverb.* absent (Laughren et al. 2007)  
ngurra *noun.* home (it was a swamp) (Laughren et al. 2007)  
pirli *noun.* stone, rock, pebble, mountain, hill (Laughren et al. 2007)  
-rli *case suffix.* ergative case suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)

This is Wirdangurla singing again. He leaves the group of women at Warnayurlpa and travels north. He sings this song at Warnpirrki, a really big rockhole (just north of Wanayurlpa). He dances with a firestick copying the women. From here he goes north through Wijilpa and Warnpirrki to Wakurlpa. At Ngarnawilpiri all the Napaljarri and Nungarrayis from Wakurlpa kill him with their digging sticks because he is trying to rape them when they urinate. Warijangiyi is also the name of the place where this happens. A Palkurda there is a white rock.

### Song #35 (place)

A *Ngapiyataka yataparrkara*  
B *Waraparrpa karrinya*

A Standing with cross legs at the Red river gums  
B Further and further into the bump

ngapiri *noun*. Red River Gum (Laughren et al. 2007)

yataparrkara *noun*. two crossed legs, (the way the women stand when they get yipilanji) (Rice & Egan 2008)

waraparrpa *noun*. the bump that the yipilanji make under the bark, there is a hole inside where the yipilanji sits – it eats the bark away to form the hole and turns the wood yellow (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*wara-paarr-paarr(pa) *preverb*. restricting, restraining, keeping for oneself (Laughren et al. 2007)

karri-. further and further, on and on (Laughren et al. 2007)

-nya *verb suffix*. presentative suffix

They are singing about the witchetty grubs from the Ngapiri tree. They are called yipilanji and are pink and white. They live in a hole in the side of the tree. The women are rushing to get them with their *karlangu* (spear) and *narngu* (a stick with a little hook on it). They stand with their legs crossed over when they collect them.

### **Song #36 (place)**

A *Yanakirri jantarra*

B *Nyarla panturru*

A Searching for frogs

B Escaping downwards

yanakirri *noun*. aestivating frog (Laughren et al. 2007), really big, fat edible frogs (Rice & Egan 2008)

nyarla *noun*. downwards (Rice & Egan 2008)

panturru *verb*. the frogs are burrowing down (get away from the women), making a hole downwards (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*pantarni *verb*. extract, pull out, extricate, take out from, remove from, get out of, gut (Laughren et al. 2007)

\*parntu-pinyi *verb*. get the better of, win, conquer (Laughren et al. 2007)

jantarra *verb*. kneeling down (Laughren et al. 2007)

janta *preverb*. sharing, distributing, lending (Laughren et al. 2007)

The *yanakirri* frogs are everywhere. They go down into the ground in the sandhills, sometime to one metre deep. The women are getting them with their digging sticks. This is a really tricky song to sing.

The place is called Jarlji.

### **Song #37 (travelling)**

A *Waparlaku karrimarnkarra*

B *Karrimarnkarrimarnkarra*

A Dancing in a line, holding on to each other from behind

B Holding on to each other from behind

waparlaku *verb*. holding on to waist or shoulders (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*waparla *noun.* disappeared (Laughren et al. 2007)  
karrimarnkarra *verb.* standing behind each other in a line (Rice & Egan 2008)

The old ladies are standing in the front of the line and the younger ones are behind them.  
The older women are at the front and the young ones dance behind them. They are at  
Pangkunaparnta, at the bottom of Pikilyi

### **Song #38 (travelling)**

A *Yinirnti jilpirri jilpi (ya)*

B *Yinirnti nanparri nanparrirna (ya)*

A Cupped hands full of *yinirnti*

B The *yinirnti* seeds are making a noise.

*yinirnti noun.* Bean tree, Bats-wing Coral tree, seeds of Bean Tree (Laughren et al. 2007)

*jilpirri verb.* dancing with cupped hands with big handfuls of *yinirnti* necklaces shaking up and down (Rice & Egan 2008)

\* *jilypirri verb.* crowded into, fill up, fill to capacity (Laughren et al. 2007)

*nanparri noun.* sound made by necklaces (Rice & Egan 2008)

*-rna noun suffix.* first person singular subject suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)

They are dancing with *yinirnti* everywhere – on their waists, hands, necks, head. They are cupping their hands so that the *yinirnti* gather to make a sound as they hit against each other. The *yinirnti* are strung together on hairstring (*yinirnti larlka*). They are at Pangkunaparnta.

### **Song #39 (travelling)**

A *Yarrilkinjirrpa*

B *Yurrrpayurrrku*

A Climbing up high

B The old ladies

*yurrrpayurrrku noun.* old ladies (Rice & Egan 2008)

*yarrilkinjirrpa noun.* up high, on top (Rice & Egan 2008)

The big ladies are keen to climb up, they really want to go up instead of walking around. They are climbing up Wamipiyi.

### **Song #40 (place)**

A *Wipiya wipiya rdijipiya*

B *Ngarnkirrinya kutakuta rduluya*

A Stretching out as set alight

B Struggling towards the hole near the creek's edge.

*wipiya verb.* extend out, stretch out, radiate, go out from (Laughren et al. 2007)

*rdiji preverb.* firing, setting fire to, lighting, igniting (Laughren et al. 2007)

*ngarnkirri noun.* brow, deep washout, gorge, steep gully, sharp edge, ridge, steep bank, steep slope (Laughren et al. 2007)

kutakuta [rdakukurra] *noun*. hole + towards (*noun suffix*) (Laughren et al. 2007)  
rduluya *verb*. struggling (Rice & Egan 2008)  
\*rdultu *preverb*. display of anger (Laughren et al. 2007)

This song is about Japanangka, the crow, being burned. First they should sing about him sitting on the hill watching the ceremony. A Jampijinpa and a Jangala from Warnipiyi that had joined up with the Kunajarrayi women to travel east, blindfolded Japanangka. They took him to the creek and dug a big hole where they lit a fire. They threw him into the fire for being such a bad man. All these crows came out of the fire as he got burned. That is where all the crows come from today. They are at the creek near Wangala. This song should be sung after SS#41 but some of the men singing jumped forward too quickly (Rice 2008: pers.comm).

### **Song #41(place)**

A *Wangalarlanjirringirli nyina jarlarra pata*  
B *Yanurru pungurlu nyina jarlarra pata*

A Coming from the place of the crow, sitting down  
B Getting things, sitting down

Wangala *noun*. crow (Laughren et al. 2007)

-rla *noun suffix*. on, at, in,

-njirringirli =

\*-nji *noun suffix*. having the property, quality denoted by N

\*-ngirli/-ngurlu *noun suffix*. from, away from (Laughren et al. 2007)

nyina *verb*. sit (Laughren et al. 2007)

pata *preverb*. down, away (Laughren et al. 2007)

yanurru

\*yanurru *noun*. coolamon, water carrier (Laughren et al. 2007)

\*jarlardapu *noun*. hot tempered person, bossy, overbearing, speechless with anger (Laughren et al. 2007)

Japanangka is sitting on top of the hill at Wangala watching all the women doing Kurdiji. Japangardi from Mt Theo went past but he didn't stop because he was too keen on finding Nungarrayi. Japanangka was the owner for this country so they were bringing him lots of food as payment for having the ceremony there. He was watching one Napaljarri. He was stretching around lots like crows do now showing off so that she would notice him. She was getting shamed because he kept looking at her. He was sitting up at the ceremony like Anmatyerre and Papunya do, facing the women a bit so he could watch Napaljarri. He had one hand over his head so no-one could see that he was watching her. When they finished everyone walked off. Japanangka held on to Napaljarri's dog underneath and pretended to be telling it to go even though he knew it couldn't because he was holding it. When Napaljarri came back to get it he grabbed her and slept with her.

### **Song #42 (place)**

A *Larnkatipi kanpirriya*  
B *Larnkajarra pajurrima*

A Two crossed legs with emu fat  
B Two legs, two knees

larnka *noun*. long legs (Rice & Egan 2008)

-jarra *noun suffix*. dual (Laughren et al. 2007)

kanpi *noun*. animal fat, emu fat (Laughren et al. 2007)

tipi *noun* crossed legs (so they can get up and run really fast) (Rice & Egan 2008)

pajurrima *noun*. two knees crossed over (Rice & Egan 2008)

They are singing about how the emus are standing at Rdukirri with their legs crossed over. All the women and men doing the ceremony are on one side and the emus are standing around in a semi-circle watching them as they travel past. These emus are from Ngarna and Rdukirri. They are also watching the fire from the Warlukurlangu Jukurra. They are at Mirdirdijarra (west from Ngarna).

### **Song #43 (place)**

A *Mirdijirijirirla*

B *Malantakurra lantirni japa*

A At Mirdirdijarra

B Sharp nails scratch as they move along

mirdi *noun*. knee (Laughren et al. 2007), rough leatherlike skin (Rice & Egan 2007)

-jarra *noun suffix*. dual (Laughren et al. 2007)

Mirdijirijiri (Mirdirdijarra) *proper noun*. place name, the Emu Dreaming travels through here (Rice & Egan 2008)

-rla *noun suffix*. locative case suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)

malanta *noun*. sharp nails of emu's foot (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*malantarra *noun*. Sandhill wattle (Laughren et al. 2007)

lantirni japa *verb*. scratching as move along (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*larrjirni *verb*. claw, scratch, maul, rip into (Laughren et al. 2007)

\*wapa *verb*. move (Laughren et al. 2007)

They emus' nails are really sharp and their legs have really rough skin. They are singing about the skin on the legs and the sharp nails of the emus. They have travelled from Wawurrwawurra in the east through Yarliyumu.

### **Song #44 (place)**

A *Mirdijintilyirna*

B *Parrarna yangkurrngurla*

A I am two knees

B I am the daylight in the green vegetation

parra *noun*. daytime, sunlight, day time, day, sun, sunshine (Laughren et al. 2007)

yangkurrngu [from mungkurrmungkurrpa] *noun*. green vegetation (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*yangkurl(pa) *noun*. habitat, nest, burrow, hole, perch, place, resting place (Laughren et al. 2007)

-rla *noun suffix*. locative case suffix (Laughren et al. 2008)

mirdiji *noun*. knee (Laughren et al. 2007), rough skin (Rice & Egan 2008)

-rna *noun suffix*. first person subject singular suffix (Laughren et al. 2008)



They were going into a jungle where there is a lot of grass. Can only see the legs of the emus in there with their rough skin. The emus were eating mukati. Mungkurmungkurpa is the green food that the emus eat. The emus are walking around looking for and eating this food.

### **Song #45 (travelling)**

A *Yarrajipirli*

B *Yarrajipirli ngipipurla ngara*

A At Yarranjipirli

B A dense forest of mulga trees

Yarranjipirli *proper name*. place name, country with lots of *yalpiyaru* trees (similar scrub to at Yuwalinji) (J&J)

\**yarrajipi noun*. edible grass seed (Laughren et al. 2007)

*ngipipu noun*. (synonym: *yuwurrku*) thick trees (Rice & Egan 2008)

*-rla noun suffix*. at, on, in, with (Laughren et al. 2007)

*ngara* ?

They are singing about the scrub around Yarranjipirli. It is country with lots of *yalpiyaru* trees (a type of mulga). This place has the same scrub as Yuwalinji. Thomas said they can sing this song for Yuwalinji too. Like this:

Yuwalinjirli

Yuwalinjirli ngipipurla ngara

### **Song #46 (place)**

A *Ngapakurla jurarri jurarri ngunanya*

B *Ngapakurla parlawamu ngunanya*

A There in the water, streams lying around

B There in the water, leafy branches lying around

*ngapa noun*. water (Laughren et al. 2007)

*-ku noun suffix*. for (Laughren et al. 2007)

*-rla noun suffix*. on, at, with, in (Laughren et al. 2007)

*jurarri verb* making tracks, running along, streams (Rice & Egan 2008)

\**jurajura preverb*. drag along the ground (Laughren et al. 2007)

*nguna verb*. lie (Laughren et al. 2007)

*-nya verb suffix*. presentative suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)

*parla noun*. leaf, foliage, leafy branches, small plant, bush (Laughren et al. 2007)

The Ngapa Jukurpa from Wardalpunyu comes through here. It travels alongside the Karntakarnta mob for awhile. They are going to Yurnkuru too.

### **Song #47(place)**

A *Walyaramarrirla marrirla*

B *Walyara jangijirna ngurla*

A At Walyamarri

B I am belonging to the ground

Walyamarri *noun suffix*. place name (Rice & Egan 2008)

walya *noun*. ground, earth, land (Laughren et al. 2007)  
-rla *noun suffix*. locative suffix (Laughren et al. 2007)  
jangiji belonging to (Rice & Egan 2008)

They are dancing on the walya just before Yurnkuru. This is Anmatyerre country from now.  
Place: Walyaramarri, just west of Yurnkuru

### **Song #48 (place)**

#### Version 1

A *Yuluwurru rdajiwarnpungu*

B *Rdajiwarnpungu*

A Getting tired at Yuluwurru

B Tiredness

#### Version 2

A *Wirriwirri rdajiwarnpungu*

B *Rdajiwarnpungu*

A Slumping down with tiredness

B Tiredness

Yuluwurru *proper noun*. place name, salt lake (Lake Lewis) (Rice & Egan 2008)

wirriwirri *noun*. tired, slumping down (Rice & Egan 2008)

\*wirri *preverb*. escaping, breaking away from (Laughren et al. 2007)

rdajiwarnpungu *noun*. tired, headachy, weak (rdalinpardalinirli nyina) (Rice & Egan 2008)

They are getting tired at Yuluwurru.

### **Song #49 (travelling)**

A *Walarakuraku walarakuraku wirnpirla*

B *Wakumintirrirla wakumintirrirla wirnpirla*

A Dancing low down in the soft sand

B Dancing low down, arms joined

walarra *noun*. soft sand, loose earth (Laughren et al. 2007)

waku *noun*. arm (Rice & Egan 2008)

wirnpirla *noun*. really low dance with heads down (Rice & Egan 2008)

wiirnpirnpa *preverb*. shaking, vibrating, to and fro, jiggling, moving, swaying (Laughren et al. 2007)

They are dancing around with their fingers hooked to each other. Some of them dance like this and some dance with a coolamon or a dancing board. They are dancing in no order, mixed up everywhere. In Mt.Allan they dance like this sometimes.

## Appendix 2. Sequence of songs sung for *Kurdiji* 4<sup>th</sup> February 2007

\*The sequence of songs and the number of times they are sung have been given here for the first five hours of this all-night ceremony. The last part of the night was highly repetitive and has not been included as it would take up too much space. This representation of the first half of the night serves as an example.

Song number	Phrase	Repetitions
SS #1	1	A1, B, A1, B, A1, B, A1, B
	2	A2, B, A2, B, A2, B, A2, B
	3	A2, B, A2, B, A2, B, A2, B
SS #2	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #3	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	3	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #4	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #5	1	A1, A2, B, B, A1, A2, B, B, A1, A2, B, B, A1, A2
	2	A1, A2, B, B, A1, A2, B, B, A1, A2, B, B, A1
SS #3	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	3	B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	4	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	5	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	6	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #6	1	A, B, A, B, C, D, C, D, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, C, D, C, D, A, B, A, B
	3	A, B, A, B, C, D, C, D, A, B, A
	4	A, B, A, B, C, D, C, D, A, B, A, B
	5	A, B, A, B, C, D, C, D, A
SS #3	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #7	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	3	B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #8	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
SS #9	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #10	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
		A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #11	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #12	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #4	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #13	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A

	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #14	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	3	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #15	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B,
SS #16	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #17	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	3	B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #7	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	3	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #18	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
SS #19	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #20	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #21	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #22	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
SS #23	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	3	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #24	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #25	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #4	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A,
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #13	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	3	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	4	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	5	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B,
SS #26	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	3	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	4	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #27 (1)	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS#27 (2)	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	3	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	4	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #28	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B

	2 3	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #29	1 2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #30 (1)	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #30 (2)	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #13	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	3	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	4	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #9	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #31	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A,
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #32	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	3	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	4	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #12	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #33	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #11	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	3	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #34	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #3	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #7	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #8	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #35	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
SS #36	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #37	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	3	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
SS #38	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #20	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #39	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #24	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A

	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #25	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #40	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #41	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	3	A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #4	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #42	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B,
SS #43	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #44	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #45	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
SS #5 (1)	1	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #46	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #4	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #47	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	3	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #48 (1)	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS#48 (2)	1	A, A, A, A, A, A, A, A, A, A, A
SS #49	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #28	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #27(2)	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #28	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	3	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #29	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #30	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #30 (2)	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
SS #13	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	3	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	4	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #9	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #31	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A

	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #32	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	3	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	4	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #12	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #33	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #11	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	3	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #34	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #3	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #7	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #8	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #35	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
SS #36	1	A, B, B, A, B, B, A, B, B, A, B, B
	2	A, B, B, A, B, B, A, B, B, A, B, B
SS #37	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	3	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
SS #38	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #20	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #19	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #24	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
SS #25	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #40	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #41	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	3	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #4	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #42	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #43	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #44	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B

	2	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #45	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
SS #5	1	B, B, A1, A2, B, B, A1, A2, B, B, A1
SS #46	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
SS #4	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #47	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B
	3	B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
SS #48	1	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B
	2	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A
	3	A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B,
SS #49	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B
SS #28	1	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B
	2	A, A, B, B, A, A, B, B, A, A, B,

CONTINUES FOR ANOTHER FIVE HOURS