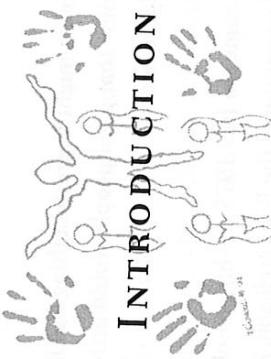


WEEK ELEVEN

INTRODUCTION



I travelled a lot when I was a young fellah, looking for work, because I liked to be able to see into the distance. Aboriginals feel more safe that way, while Europeans feel safer surrounded by walls. I'd go to the pub in a new town, because that's where people know what work's available, and all the patrons would be grinning and snickering at me. So I'd pick up my swag and walk straight out again because I wasn't wanted, and all the men would come to the door laughing to watch me go. Us Aboriginals were used to these things happening, but we always wondered *why* – why were people angry at us and hated us? We'd done nothing wrong.

The police would follow me out of town, pull up beside me and ask what I was doing. When I'd say, 'Looking for work,' they'd say, 'You blacks don't bloody work! Come back to the police station with us.' Then they'd interrogate me for hours and lock me up on a made-up charge, like drunk and disorderly, and let me go the next morning without even a cup of tea.

I'd keep walking and then, as I came to another little town, I might see smoke under the bridge. I'd head for it and then be surrounded by Aboriginals saying, 'How you going, Bud? You looking for work? You had a feed? Hang on, and I'll cook you a feed.' We'd sit around the fire and laugh about all the obstacles in our paths, feeling sorry for the people who were refusing us work. We'd think they must lead very unhappy home lives to feel such hatred for people they didn't know. I'd say to myself, Round the next bend, I'll meet good people, or,

This young policeman might learn something and be human when he gets older. I knew that good people would arrive one day, and times would slowly change.

They had to.

Then that day came. In July 1975 the biggest change of my life happened when I encountered the Baha'i religion. A small group of Baha'i people visited us Aboriginals at the Framlingham Mission. We saw them sitting in the grass outside the mission boundary, singing songs together and politely waiting to be invited in. A whole lot of us piled into a car and drove past to have a good look at them. All these people of different nationalities sitting there together looked like one happy family, real sincere, like we feel about people. I took this sight as a powerful sign that things everywhere were going to look up for us Aboriginals now. I was right. One of the Baha'i I met that day, Camilla, became my closest friend from that day on.

Very soon afterwards I was in Warrnambool Base Hospital. I get pneumonia regularly because I worked in the bluestone quarry – I think its proper name is basalt – for years and years. Another couple of Aboriginals, Lloyd and Albert, were in my hospital room too. While we were there, people got to speak with us who had never talked with Aboriginals before. And Camilla brought her little children to visit us, and sat with us giving us her presence.

The other patients and the nurses couldn't understand why Camilla – a respectable white woman with two little kids – was visiting Aboriginals. How could Aboriginals be so important? I could tell that was their attitude – they couldn't work it out. But in the end, when they understood that she was an upright lady with no feelings against anyone, they saw that they could be like that too. Camilla was teaching them how to get on with people. They started to treat us a bit differently then. You know, with respect.

And Camilla's little girl Ruth came to see us too and played her ukulele, and the staff thought that was great – they used to stand around and watch her play. Things like music, which the hospital people hadn't thought of before, draw people together. There was no question of black or white – a child was singing to make us better, make us feel well.

It was something different, meeting these Baha'i people. They didn't say much, but felt deeply. You was treated as more than equal. You was treated as somebody special – special because you was Aboriginal. We'd never heard them sort of words before. All we'd heard was that Aboriginals were no good. Yet here I was, listening to this little girl saying, 'You're special because you're Aboriginal. You've got a beautiful culture.' And I thought, 'What more could anyone want, when a little girl like that's speaking? I've been called all kinds of things before by white people, but never special. White Australians here always became suspicious of me if I wanted them to treat me as a true friend and help me get a job. They'd confine themselves to saying g'day and being friendly in the street. And whenever we're turned away from something today because we're Aboriginal, all our past treatment comes back to mind. Because it's the same prejudiced outlook that's causing it. But these Baha'i people were different.'

On my last day in hospital Camilla turned up and I told her, 'They've just discharged me. I'm going home.'

She said, 'I know.' Then, when she was driving me, she turned off the main road. I said, 'Not that way – the mission.'

She said, 'My own place is going to be your home for a while.' I was confused, and exclaimed, 'But I'm better now!' 'No, you're not,' she told me. 'I asked the doctors to let you come here so we could nurse you back to health.'

And she and her family looked after me. I thought, There must be
a lot of good white people around, and we hardly met them before!
Where did they come from? Grown-ups and children with open
hearts.

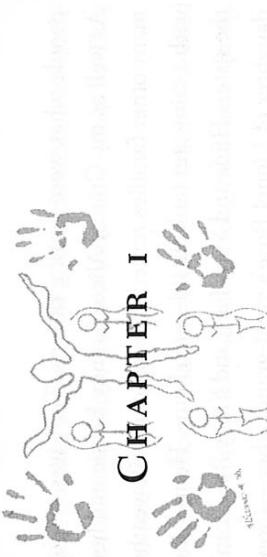
Camilla's little ones loved me being with them. Young David was
just starting to walk, and he'd keep walking out of the door wanting
me to follow him. He'd lead me straight to the woodpile, where I
made a stool for him. I also made a tree house for him and Ruth. He
liked doing things and helping me.

A lot of my friends came to see me while I was at Camilla's,
Aborigines who had lived a heart-breaking life trying to cope in
the white man's world. Camilla invited them in and showed them
her trust. She left the house open for them if she had to go out for
the day.

All these events inspired me to want to write a book. I reckoned
that the way these high-society people shared with me would tell
something to the world about equality, and having love for people
from different races. I reckon if people knew about true Aboriginal
qualities – so similar to the Baha'i beliefs – then this would help the
world do things from the heart. I think for people to learn about
Aboriginality might even be the saving of the world.

I asked Camilla to help me write my book and she agreed.
Twenty-five years later, we have still been working out everything
that I want to say.

Pant One
1922-1939



The Hopkins River below my place is sacred. That's where we went as little kids. All around the valley there you'd hear children's happy laughter, all calling to one another. These days you don't hear that.

I was born in a bark hut on Framlingham Mission, right in the heart of my father's tribal country. There never was a time when our whole family left that land, and even as a child I was never away for long. They say I was born in 1922, or probably earlier – Aboriginal people often don't know when their birthdays are – but I don't know. They put a number on me, but it seems like a long time ago.

Most of my brothers and sisters were born the same way. My sister Ettie was born way up in the bush. There were four of us boys and five girls. Norman, Frank and Bert were my brothers; my sisters were Alice, Amy, Ettie, Gladys and Ellen. My older sister Alice was born on the Murray River, at Cummeragunja Mission. My mother came from there, so when my parents married they stayed for a while. Old Aboriginal ladies nursed all us babies in their own Aboriginal ways, and they done a good job too – I'm well over seventy now and they looked after me, so they must've knew their job all right. It's been sad to see them pass on, though. When they did they took a lot of customs and tribal ways with them.

Framlingham Mission was all more or less forest when I was a little fellah – just natural. The people was living in bark huts, but there were a few old houses here. More than a hundred of us lived on and around our mission then. All the Old People lived here – the

people what were getting rations. They was all good Old People. As well as my Granny Alice, Granny Bessie and her husband Billy, many other families rented government-built weatherboard houses, with a rainwater tank outside each home: Henry Alberts, John Egan, the sisters Hilda and Mary Fary, and Emily Rose. Emily Rose was the daughter of Lionel Rose's great-grandfather – Lionel who became bantamweight boxing champion of the world. The rest of us lived in huts round about – the Couzenses, the McKinnons, lots of Austins, lots of Alberts, lots of Clarkes and Roses.

Later, all the old houses of that time were cleared away, except one my grandfather built. They shouldn't have cleared them away. They was good houses, full of memories. The Old People took great pride in their homes, lining the walls with tar paper against the damp. But government officials raised the rent if they made their houses too nice, or added a room. Paying to live on their own land made my people so mad that most refused to in the end. The rent collectors were met with such anger that they just gave up and left.

When I was no more than a little child, I learnt how to build a bark hut like the one I was born in. They were easy to make. They was warm in winter but kept the heat out in summer, and the draughts too. But I remember stormy nights when the roof bark of our hut would sometimes be blown off. I'd watch my dad climb up in the dark to put another bit of bark over the hole. He'd get it done so quickly that we'd hardly feel the rain.

There were other huts like ours in the forest, but some had been built the lazy way. They had old manure bags for walls, split and opened to double their size, hung overlapped with each other and waterproofed with tar. A heavy rug would cover the doorway. Some people still slept in the traditional mia-mias, or humpies – they were oval-shaped shelters made of bent boughs and bushes, with a place

for a little fire just outside the entrance. Other families used nothing more than a traditional brush-fence windbreak to sleep by. They did really well on hot summer nights.

We lived in several places – on Spring Hill, for instance. We used to get water from the spring. It's still there today, that same spring. But nobody goes there now.

I was only a baby when the ferret bit me. My family left me in the hut one day and went to do something. They came back in and heard me crying. My sister Alice grabbed the ferret and pulled it away. The ferret hung on and tore all the skin from my throat. Dad took the old horse and cart to Warmambool with me tied up in it, and then poor old Dad got frightened that the doctors might do something wrong to my throat. He brought me home and he fixed me up himself with salt and a bush poultice, and things like that. He sewed me up with an ordinary needle and thread, dipped in kerosene. There are still scars where the ferret tore into my throat and chin. Dad done a lot of things like that. When people cut themselves with an axe, or had any accidents, they'd come to my old dad's place and he'd get the needle and sew them up.

One of my sisters sharpened every tooth of a cross-cut saw once, and she had it sticking out on the stump, the way they used to sharpen them. She led the horse to the stump where the saw was, and got on the stump to jump on the horse's back. The horse pulled away and she fell across the saw. From above her knee right up to the thigh the sharp saw went right in. Dad stitched her up – all those stitches. The doctor asked him who done it, and my dad said he done that. The doctor said, 'Well, I can't do any more. It's just what I would do.' So my dad drove home again.

I used to be always with the Old People. I think they liked having me because I used to listen to them. They taught me all the principles: how to go about life and how to share with other people. I used to share with them too. And if I had a pair of shoes, I didn't want to wear them if my mates had none – all sorts of things like that. That sharing still happens today in the older generation of Aboriginal people, but I can see a lot of those principles fading away from Aboriginal society now.

Every day I learnt a lot from helping the Old People, because they used to teach me all the reasons behind what we were doing. They taught me to hunt in a way which would make nature stronger, and that I must use every part of a tree or animal. They taught me never to eat in front of another human being or creature without sharing, and that all things must be respected for what they are. They taught me the secret names of the people buried in the cemetery, and which plants were used for healing and which ones I must be very careful with. All being well, they said, one day I would find a child or children to pass the story of our tribe on to.

It was the same with my dad. Among my people, the father has always been the Elder of the clan, the protector. Most days at sunset my dad used to take me walking in our cemetery on the cliff overlooking our river. He too would confide to me in secret the names of the earliest full-blood people buried there. He told me that when I became an Elder, I should wait to find someone worthy before I could pass the knowledge on.

It was tradition for our tribe that once a person died their name had to be dropped from our language forever, and from the English language as well. It was a sign of respect. So I would just tell people, 'My friend is buried here.' We wouldn't name them. And at funeral after funeral we would keep our tribal customs

despite the Christian service. Even the youngest little kid would come and cry at the grave. Everyone would cry and wail. We would sing the old American hymn: 'Yes! We'll gather at the river,/The beautiful, the beautiful river,/Gather with the saints at the river/That flows by the throne of God,' all the while eyeing whichever bush animal had come to watch us this time. The animal's presence would comfort us with the thought that it might contain the spirit of the departed one.

It's still traditional here that if you're buried on your tribal land, your spirit will be at peace and you'll affect the future development of the tribe. But if you're not buried on your land, your spirit will wander sadly forever. So everyone wants to come home to die.

There's a huge, lone pine tree that grows in the middle of our cemetery. It stands up there like a big monument, and you can see it for miles around. It was planted in 1886, I think. Up until recently, if one of our tribe deliberately and publicly stood and faced that giant pine, it was a message to all of us that he or she had come home to die, or knew she was about to die. No more needed be said or done. Everyone knew. Little children and all knew it – they lived through it, and remembered not to be scared of death.

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Waanangga

In Lailai, when the Big Spirit Bee Wanjina Waanangga came to the cave with his followers, he put the honey into a Warari tree, the oldest tree in history, a softwood with dark flesh that does not dirty the honey. Later in history, a Wanjina Bee Man, Yadnanya, came with his Wanjina Followers. He cut the sugarbag tree with a tommyhawk. The honeyed log was laid onto a rock ledge. There is a cut mark next to where the Queen Bee Wanjina lives in the yellow parts ... When the Sugarbag Tree was cut, the honey burst out and flowed like water. 'Quick, quick,' they cried and put the anggna, the stringy bark bowl, underneath to catch the honey. The vessel turned into rock – the floater stone on the ground. And to the place where he cut the Tree, they gave his name – Algnun Dorr Amorangnari.

(from Mowaljarlai & Malnic, 1993, pp. 71–4)



MOWALJARLAI
Yadnanya: Where Yadnanya cut the tree

"Hey, see all those wild donkeys looking at us! And there's a big emu!"
About twenty dark faces, ears pointed – and one emu – are staring in our direction. At the sound of the gunshot the emu jerks, then flees with the donkeys.

"Got' im, some place!"

Jormary follows. Half an hour later he returns empty-handed: "First time I see this. Donkeys made circle around emu, pushed him safe, on and on, into the bush."

Wild donkey herds abound in the Kimberley because the Aborigines were told by missionaries, "Bad luck to kill donkey. Donkey has cross on his shoulders because he carried Mary and Jesus."

"But how come whiteman choppers can shoot them for petsmeat?" asks Jormary.

We drive through stretches of gum country, bush with eucalypt stands, and through large patches of bloodwood, then come into boxwood country, where we encounter three graceful wallabies.

One goes down with a bullet. Its baby, a pink, hairless little joey, is pulled from the dead mother's pouch, banged against a stone, and thrown away.

"Good bait for fishing, Jutta. Better pick 'im up."

"No thank you, the dingoes need breakfast."

We pass a bluff hill not far from the road – Malara. Malara is a kangaroo stomach that fell out and turned to stone, this hill.

Shortly after, Mowaljarai points ahead, "Look, we're near those Blackheaded Rock Pythons now. Big mob here."

"Pythons!!?"

"The ones we found last time, remember?"

"Aah, those paintings!"

15

Alwayu – Dreaming of Daylight and Darkness

At last the scrub opens to the shining waters of *Alwayu*. Upriver, the Drysdale stops short of a terraced waterfall; downstream, it glistens in a chain of quiet pools. Pandanus and eucalypt double in mirror reflections. This is the Wungud pool that belongs to the Dreaming of Darkness. Although darkness was always on Earth, there is a painting for it high on a bluff in Alwayu. We can't climb up there because of my troublesome foot. I am told the painting of Darkness is also the painting of Daylight:

When the Blackheaded Rock Python became a widow, she cut her head bald and painted herself with charcoal so people would know she was a widow. On Mount Agnes at Alwayu she struggled all night in the darkness and was singing out for daylight to come, on the sundown side. But daylight came from the other side, from the east.

"Oh, I was calling out wrong place, daylight coming up in the east!"

Here in the Leijmorro area, where the light came and pushed out the darkness, Daylight and Darkness painted together.

Darkness Dreaming is not the same as a Devil Dreaming. Devils don't paint together with Wandjina; they are separate. Hector is of a Devil Dreaming. He totemises the Devil. Wandjina put those people to represent these things, to tell the story of his Idea.

And his *Idea* became the painting. The land was given and divided out to the people as caretakers to keep his Idea going. People who live today still carry on, because we are still of the same image as that ancestor mob dead-gone before us. Even today we still represent Creation. Yorro Yorro is ongoing, everything standing up alive.

Yesterday, when resting in the Sugarbag shelter, I noticed some bees buzzing about a shrub outside. Bees! They were the keystone to my puzzle. Untold thousands of years ago, the Wandjina had installed the System of the Beehive. There at the Sugarbag Dreaming, the bees were still buzzing about – the same swarms, the same communities, though not the original

bees of course. As individuals died, new ones were hatched. Queen bees reigned and were succeeded. At times the bee communities had swarmed and built other hives in the vicinity. It followed, therefore, that at any time and to this day, all bees around here were descendants o' the first bee communities of this original Bee System.

I suddenly understood how Kimberley communities saw themselves in unbroken lineage to the first people in the Beginning.



Miniature "skeletons" from gullet and neck bones of a freshwater turtle.
"These images remind us of how we were created from water."

I am heading upstream with my camera, Mowalfarlai comes up running to deliver a warning:

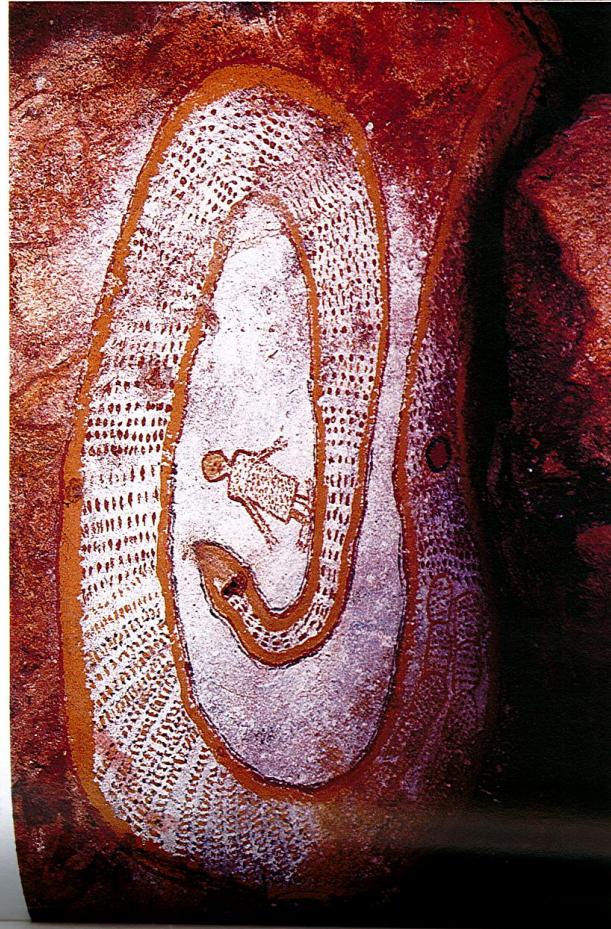
"Never ever go into wunggud water – very bad," he burbles out of breath. "Downriver is okay," he says, "you can swim there."
"Why is wunggud so bad?"

Because Wunggud is the Snake, and the waterhole is where she decided to stop. That's Wunggud – Her. Where the water is running it becomes 'living water'.

It is running because, when the Snake became *Midjeha*, which means "she stretched out, unwinding her coils", the waters stretched out too, and are now flowing forever.

But, in the middle of that water, that's Her – Wunggud the Earth Snake, a power. She is here at Alwayu. We dream kids from this

wunggud [water containing concentrated Earth energies]. And in that wunggud water we swim whenever we are sick. The power cleanses us from that sickness. We don't swim in the middle – you can't disturb the power that is inside – only at the end part you can swim, where it flows. The Wunggud inside the power smells your odour, your sweat. They know when you are sick. They get up and then we call this *mulla* – they lick the sore, the sick man's sore.



Wunggadinda with spirit child, cameo from Njallagunda Snake Dreaming

"Mowal, are you saying that the Earth energies come up and balance the energies in the sick person's body – that Nature is capable of healing itself, and it's own?"

"It's that mulla, lick, you know what it means now. We have no Dreamings for healing, only plenty of Sickness Dreamings. When we are the owner of such a place and we go there, we don't get sick, because we *are* that sickness, that painting, and immune to ourselves. We just represent that sickness."

Later in the day we sit at the edge of the lively waters by a lively campfire. Turkey and wallaby are cooking, the blackbream are ready to eat. We have Johnny-cakes, jam, nallija, a damper in the charcoal, two long-necked turtles, big as ducks, and three short-necked ones – all this for a midday dinner for five.

At a distance from the group, I have just settled with my notebook in shade and comfort when Mowaljarlai strolls up, with a strange object in each hand. He brings these things so close that they almost fill the space between our faces.

"Look at these," he chuckles, "that's how Wandjina put his image into his chosen animal – long-necked turtle."

Am I dreaming? I am looking at two miniature skeletons of human form, no more than twelve centimetres high. The heads have an empty space in the middle, appendages dangle from hands and feet.

"You'll never see these again, Jutta. Better have a good look."

"What are they?"

"Wandjina. Violet took them from the turtles."

Violet had freed these figures from the gullet and neck bones of the turtles she caught.

"We will give you one. You can always remember the Wandjina then, and Lalai." Then he tells how every sweetwater turtle holds the image of man.

That's why the turtle's name is *wullumarrar* – "see the *wullu*". *Wullu* is any wungud place in nature where a spirit child enters either one of the parents, before or during pregnancy.

To those who still hold the knowledge, this little Wandjina figure in every *wullumarrar* is a reminder of the creation of mankind in this country.

These stories are not written down, but they are written on the land, into nature; otherwise we wouldn't take you or anybody and show them. They are there for everyone to see – not just to read about.

Early in our association I had thought that Mowaljarlai's references to the Bible were out of context with Aboriginal culture. No longer. Now they were highlighting the historic and geographic differences between two kinds of fundamental edict to me – one a divine imprint in nature, the other written creeds of sacred teaching.

We showed you that sharp hill over there, that Malara. It's a kangaroo stomach. It fell out of the kangaroo and now it's a mountain. People say it's a joke, how can it come into a big mountain? People laugh, how can it be a kangaroo stomach, eh?

I told one missionary, "Do you believe that God made those Ten Commandments? You take it seriously?"

"Yes."

"What is the mountain called where God gave those Ten Commandments to Moses?" He said the name of it.

"And is it important?"

"No, it is not important."

"How come it is not important, wherever it was in Christian land?" And then he tells me, "God gave the *Law Tablets* to Moses, that is important. The mountain is not important."

How come? He has never been there, but he read about it in the Bible and he takes that more seriously. I don't think that Christian missionaries take the Old Testament very seriously. "Too much Law, and too little salvation," I told him.

Once we were arguing about a sacred site where mining people were working in a big cave. I said to those mining people, "In England, Saint Paul's or any of those big cathedrals in Europe, now those places are important for white people, they are the top, supreme, high. Same with the place of a Wandjina painting. If it is blown away, I am useless. No good asking me for story – who is going to listen to me then?"

Our story is painted in the shelters, it's on the rock, on the mountain and in the earth. Miners know, I know, all Aborigines know that we would become nobodies and powerless. Millions of stories we have recorded, white people have been recording – still they don't want to believe! Maybe some believe, I don't know, but money is more important than sacred testimony.

The afternoon at Alwayu is spent in logical sequence to a hunting rampage – feasting, resting and with a quiet stroll to the sunbaking ledges of the waterfall. At sundown, conversation livens up again.

As I gaze over the tranquil waters, my mind fills with a host of joyous spirit children waiting there to be born.

"The rai and the blueprint image together make a full personality, then?"

Yo. The rai are the little spirits that enter the womb, and they must have wunggud names. The names come from nature, from the wullu.

As long as it is wunggud, it is part of Creation.

I'll give you an illustration. I don't say that this is the way my Aborigines taught me – I'm trying to keep that separate from the Bible – but as an illustration I can give you this one:

You look at Joseph and Mary. Joseph was promised to that girl Mary, but in white-man law they don't have sex before they get married. God is talking through a cloud. That power from God is saying to Mary that he, God, is giving her a special Son who will never touch grog. It's there in the Bible.

On the Aboriginal side it's different. The man is married already. He goes directly to the wunggud waters where he gets children that are already there, from the Creator's reflection – two different things, you see what I mean?

"Not quite, Mowal."



Awayu, living water

"Talk about those water babies," I urge, "I'm still a bit vague about them."

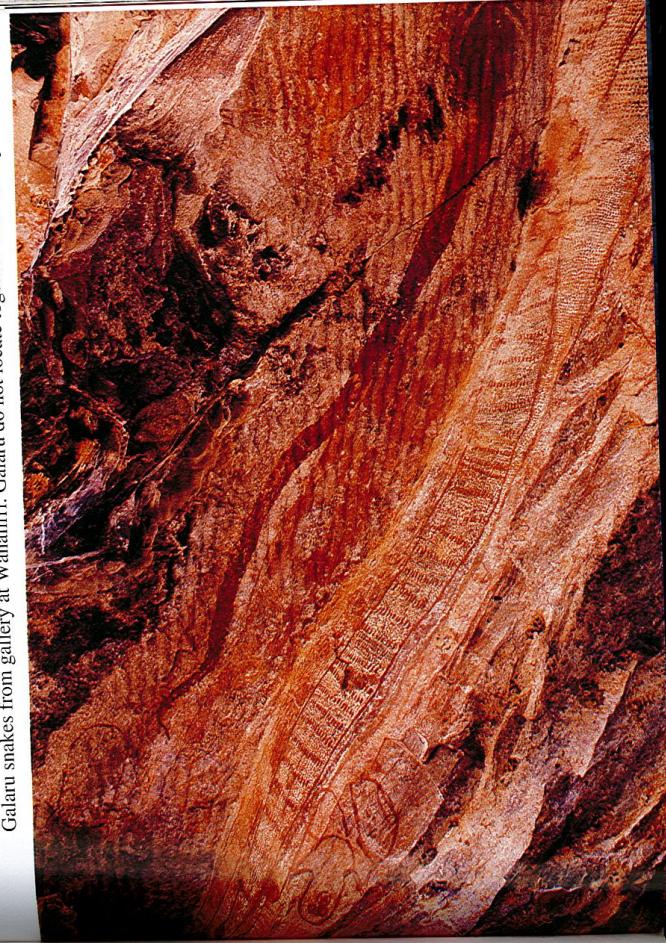
He meditatively arranges his legs to cross and looks up. "Well, it's like this."

Wondtji, when we talk about Creation Time, means "to build". He built animals, he built rocks, that's all *wondtji*: when he builds. We also say *annu mengga*: he built us like himself.

The thing is, once he put his own reflection there into the water, that means that he had made human beings. He painted himself, he put a blueprint-picture there, the pattern, right? So that rests in the wunggud water – in all the wunggud waters.

Then he went back to the Milky Way. He did not stop here, he only left his reflection. Now those spirit children are coming out of that wunggud place exactly like his body.

After that, individual *rai* come there to the wunggud place, from *Dulugum*, the spirit region where people go when they die. The *rai* are the spirit children, the individuals.



Galaru snakes from gallery at Wanaliirri. Galaru do not locate together with Wandjina them."

White men think they only have to have sex with women, that's all they have to do to have a baby. For Aboriginal people, God puts the baby into the womb, like he did for Mary.

An Aboriginal man, who has had sex with his wife, goes along to the place where he himself was created, where the reflection and image of God is. The Aboriginal man gets his children from the spirit-side, not just from himself.

"Are you saying then that a baby, conceived with love and acknowledgement of the Creation *pattern*, is an immaculate conception every time? Is that why you don't make a special issue of sexual intercourse in respect of procreation?"

Yo. Testament says, "He shall be born. He will not touch any strong drinks" and all that. That's John the Baptist. He was the one who baptised Jesus in the River Jordan. He was an older relation of Jesus, his mother and Jesus' mother were cousins. But John the Baptist said, "I'm not worthy to stoop down and untie his bootlaces. He is more greater than me." He says in the Bible, "He is the Mighty One who is coming after me."

There was no stopping this rapidsfire sermon, and I didn't want to either.

After Jesus got baptised, he went into the desert for forty days and forty nights to be tempted by the Devil; to make the Devil tell him, "If you the Son of God, you turn these stones into bread because I see you are hungry." And Jesus said, "Every man doesn't live by bread alone but by the word of God."

And then he takes him on the highest pinnacle of the temple and says, "Now, if you are the Son of God, and you say so, cast yourself from the pinnacle of this temple. You jump down! Lest you dash your feet against the rocks, you won't do that, because the angels will land you nicely, without hitting your foot on the rocks."

And the third and last one: he takes him to the highest mountain. And he looks at all the kingdom, it's so beautiful. He says, "Look at all this panorama, this kingdom. If you bow down and worship me, I will give all this kingdom to you," he says to Jesus.

"Get thee behind me, Satan," Jesus said. "You shall worship the Lord, the Almighty alone." So the Devil left him for a season, he gone for good.

"Thank you, Mowal. It's years since I last heard of the Three Temptations."

Night clouds spread the light of a rounding moon. I am utterly comfortable. Then I drift into a lovely dream, feel warm eyelashes brushing against my cheek. Thoughts alight and dim away, a notion of lighthearted laughter passes by – and I follow, waver lightly with unseen presences. Then I hear a deep, soothing voice say, "The earth is sleeping – touch her, make a wish."

And gently into my hand muzzles a dog, my childhood dog. I feel his head, his body lies close. Oh Ali Baba-dog, everything is good and simple again. I sigh – the dog is gone.

In darkness I scrawl some words into my notebook. In the morning they hang there like a magician's rope, coming from nowhere, not touching ground, a reminder that I had understood *something* during the night – but what? The words read: "You can only see with your eyes closed. Be patient."

At breakfast we once again eat like camels drink, storing the last of the hunting feast inside. Where else to keep food in this thirty-eight and rising temperature? Then the swags are rolled, bags and boxes stowed. I am sad to leave you, beautiful Alwayu.



Lawandi, Mowaljarlai's early teacher, opens a kangaroo with double-edged shovel-spear. "It had an iron blade made from a mission horse shoe."
1938. Lommel

The Old Pelican

After two more tyre-changes, Mowajarla's singlet lies flat to the skin with sweat. At Drysdale all station-hands are busy. Sorry, but they can't help till afternoon, the vet's plane has just landed. They are going to test for TB and still have several holding pens full of cattle to tag. "See what you can find in the shed," they recommend.

Nicole, a radiant young lady at the station, helps to search the cavernous toolshed for patches and glue, while keeping a vigilant eye on the whereabouts of two blond, lively youngsters. Her smile is infectious. When a man leaves a nearby coolroom with a carton of beer, he elbows the heavy door so slowly that I catch sight of beef carcasses hanging inside.

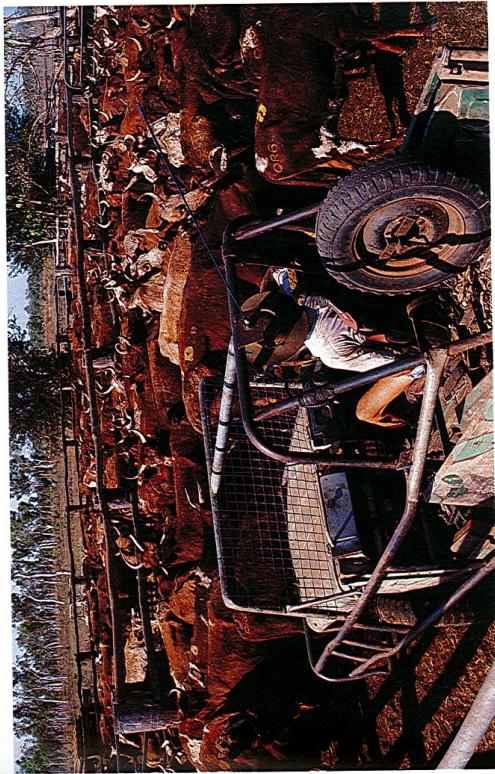
"Nicole, would you sell me some beef?"

"I'm sorry, but I can't. We are not allowed to sell meat."

"It's just that I don't like kangaroo."

"You don't?" That impish smile again.

Climbing back into the truck, I find a big parcel sitting on the driver's seat. "Don't tell anyone, it's a gift," she calls out as I am starting the motor.



88

Mowal, Dargnall and Jormarry at Donkey Creek

25 Law

This is how the Law came to be. The sand ground, where he did not see their tracks, represents the space of time since Creation and the introduction of the Law.

Then he came up to where they were and the Council got them all together. They apologised to him, these two, Wodoi and Djingun: "Very sorry, but we got law now. We had to get this thing, a covenant to put agreement on, to make Wunnan a law. That is why we took it away.

"*Maggan*," Wodoi and Djingun said. *Maggan* means "no got". They didn't have anything to relate to in life. So Wibalma said, "All right, I won't be angry now. I was angry in the first place, but I split another tree with the boomerang to make a new one."

Wibalma precedes the story of the Jump-Up Place where Wodoi and Djingun started sacrifices, the Marriage and Wunnan laws. They first exchanged daughters at *Berra Berra Gnari*, by the river near the jump-up, and agreed on bride payment.

Wodoi said, "You make spears, Djingun, and I make spears, so we can exchange spears in sharing our daughters."

The spears were the bride price, the exchange, the tie and seal. Only the *mongun*, the nightjar owl, was not concerned with this law. He was a bachelor and remained single all his life.

Initiation started among those people who were blind, whose eyes were opened by the healing powers of the snake *Krowat*, who had bitten a little boy at a place called *Mari Dudulmeri*. Only now, at the time of writing, have I realised that the eye-opening refers not to an Ancient Time man and woman who were born with eyes closed like young puppies, but to people's eyes being opened to higher spiritual influences. In this sense the opening goes on now.

After blood-sacrifice started at *Mari Dudulmeri*, which represented Wunnan, blood had to spill on the earth for someone to be initiated, to be a full Law Man. Initiation then started all over the country. Say the old men: Wherever initiation took place, *djallala* signal stones formed a big circle; wherever people sat down and asked themselves, "What shall we do?" and decided: "Let us spill blood to be Law people, to belong to our country, to the wungud places."

Some objects are among the most sacred and secret in the life and ritual of Aborigines. Mirrors of a cosmic order, they are marked with the stellar position of law identities in the Milky Way. They represent acceptance of the law of the universe for Earth. The following story tells how these things became a covenant.

During Wodoi and Djingun time there was a man called *Wibalma* who made sacred things. He kept them in a workshop, at a distance from where he lived. He had a wife who was old and blind.

One day, when he was out hunting, Wodoi and Djingun came to visit him. They came up and asked the old woman, "Where is Wibalma?" And she said, "Out hunting. He'll be back soon."

So the two men went over to the workplace and took a whole lot of things away with them.

Wibalma was a banman – he got a feeling out there in the bush, where he was hunting. He came straight back. [Medicine men have an extended psychic perception.] He said, "What happened here?"

His wife said, "Two men came here, Wodoi and Djingun. I heard them rattling there, but I am too blind to see what was going on. It was silent after that. They never came back to me, they went off." He got really angry then. He took a boomerang. He got so angry he threw that boomerang and it split an ironwood tree, which we call *djinnang gang*.

He split this tree in half with his boomerang. But then he said, "Ah, never mind, I'll make a new Law from this tree that was split." And he made a new Law.

Wodoi and Djingun came to the community, where they were stopping. They said, "We have a Law. We stole it from this man."

The next day Wibalma followed their track. Where they walked on stone, he could see their track; but where they walked on the plain ground, he could not see their track. He had to go to the rocky places and find their tracks there.

In corroborees the Law is perpetually evoked, sung and danced into mind and body memory. A song is introduced by the bannman, and after some years, it is traded along the Wunman route.*

Under the Wunman, man and woman belong to Wodoi, land and animals to Djingun. Within a subdivision, the turkey is Djingun moiety (one of two halves), brolga is Wodoi moiety.

There is kinship between people and all animals. Such is the Law.

* See pp162-63

Opposite: Mundugu, snake saliva stones; Njallagunda Snake Dreaming, Gibb River



Bush turkey wing

From left: Cobra Njararaman, "Cheeky Snake"; Rock Python/cyclone; two images of illangud, King Brown Snake/willy-willy, at Bunker River, Napier Ranges

26 Dulugun

The Law is guarded and enforced by the banman, the medicine man in the community. He has spirit powers and special sight (many eyes); he travels astrally and knows how to channel the healing energies of Snake Power. Now the number of banman men has shrunk to a handful, and no-one knows much about their activities. They are said to leave neither trace nor shadow. Dargnall tells the story of how the banman craft was created:

A little frog was going, "Oingg, oingg, oingg, oingg..." There was a drought. This frog was singing for water, for rain.

Now this Wandjina picked up the little frog and put a song on him: "*Di djalla burra diarrum jojojo bindi djarrum kangganda...*" As he sang this song, clouds came up and rain formed. When the rain fell, the frog was happy.

The little frog and all the other little frogs came out, hopped and swam all over the place. You could hear them going, "Oingg, oingg, oingg..." everywhere. And that's the end of the story.

With the song to bring on rain the frog became the symbol for the banman. From a rain cloud the banman can strike lightning; and lightning is the tool of the law-enforcing banman. This story from Mowaljarlai illustrates the method:

A man wanted to punish another man for seducing his wife. When she ran away with her lover, he used the luring song and struck him with lightning.

When he was singing him, he held two *nulla-nulla* sticks, and then he'd go, "Wrrr-oooffftt!" When the nulla-nulla sticks cracked together, the lightning hit that man.

The really clever banman are also teachers, but select only the best initiated boys and men.

They tell them: "You got electricity inside your body from there above. That was transferred to man, electricity inside, a power. It is released from your body. You can feel it when you are standing on



wet earth. If you want to strike a tree, a red flash goes out from red flesh, lights on the tree and strikes it."

To make lightning strike is a good way to find out what happened. Maybe you want to bring the spirit of a dead man out from his grave, or from a body that lies on a platform.

When it's raining, that's the best time to find out what happened, why this man died or who killed him. The banman can send lightning to the dead man's grave to bring up the spirit for questioning. We can see him up in the air and we can talk to him.

Then the spirit remains with his body until the flesh has rotted away and he and his body are collected.

We gather the bones when they are pure white and we wash them. We take red ochre and kangaroo fat to anoint the bones. We have a big corroboree and dance with waving palm leaves.

The palm represents his lifetime, and the dance shows that he had been a servant of nature. Now he is argula, hidden in the darkness of death, and we follow him there.

After the ceremony, the leader cuts the death cord, the hair cord that was stretched between two poles as a division between the sides of Light and of Darkness. Then the dead spirit is a living spirit again and able to cross the border back into the community. Mowaljalrai:

The death cord is a spirit cord. It has power and protects you. The community and the family decide if he deserves to be brought back. Then, just before the sun slips over the horizon, we deliver this dead man to the community and we celebrate that he is no longer hiding in darkness.

You can't rescue the spirit of a dead man out of the dark. At the moment of sunset you have the power to reach him. It is the moment to make a decision between light and dark. That's what the death cord represents: a division between light and dark.

When we present him to the community, he will be living with them. They cry for him; he is being welcomed, everybody has food. The relatives keep his bones tied up in a paperbark wallet [coffin]. "He is going to camp, to camp," we say, a homecoming to the home camp. Everybody knows he is there and he's alive again.

After about one year, we have to take him back to the Wandjina who created this man. That is why you have seen those bones in the caves. We open the paperbark with his bones and his spirit can go in and out. We put a bush bucket of water beside his bones, a paperbark vessel with the wungund water he was created from. He can drink of it and his spirit is now free to come and go as he wishes. We have taken him back to the Creator, the Wandjina.

From there the dead spirit begins the journey to *Dulugun*, the home of dead spirits, and *Dorgei*.

Dorgei is a fountain of talking waters – beautiful. Plenty of trees and green grass. All the people who died before us are there and we join them. It is bright, happy bright, but there is no sun and no night. You can walk under a waterfall. It is pouring and bubbling. "Gushing", that's what Dorgei means. The water is flowing all year around, always the same amount of water. People drink of it. People may sleep, do what they want to do. They just live like – spirits. They don't work, don't have to eat, they don't fight like what we have been doing here. There is peace.

Once a year, thinking of their family, the spirits of Dorgei are longing to go back. When the west wind blows, they follow that wind, ride and drift along with the westerly breeze.

They walk on this land. Those with many eyes [the spirit sight] see them at the campfires and everywhere, same body as they were before.

When the spirits come, they don't share food with us. We don't eat their food either, because we are not part of the dead spirit world yet. The tucker is very smelly in that place. We visitors are not allowed to eat it. Their tucker smells because it is a different land, which has a different odour.

In a visionary session in Sydney, Mowaljalrai and I continue to follow the stages of a dead person's passage to Dulugun. Equipped with map, sketchpad and pencil, we are sitting at my desk.

Libudbud Udhman Ngirri Ngari, is the name of a mushroom-shaped *wunnangga* [loose stone setting] on the way to Dulugun. It lies in tidal depths in the Indian Ocean, off the northern coast of

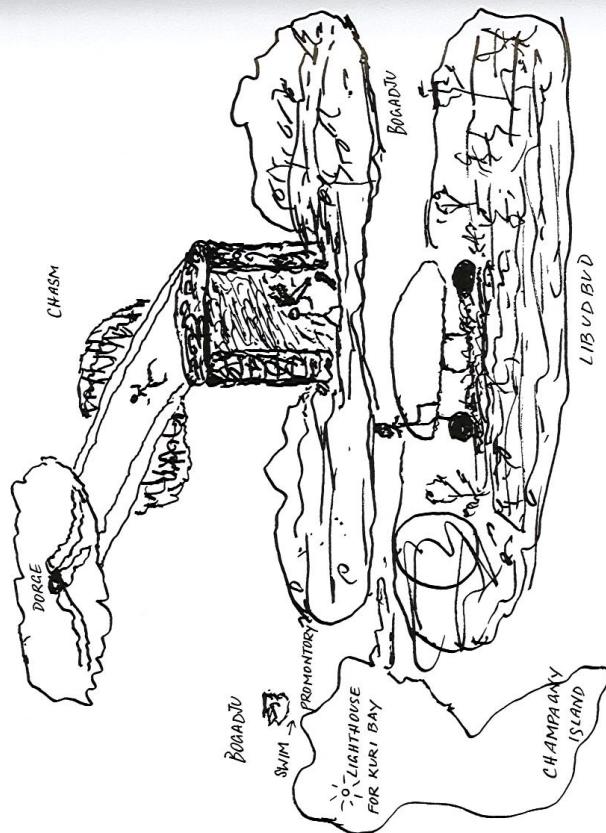
Champagy Island, where the spirits pass through. Saltwater cuts it off. We don't walk about there, it's dangerous.

The word Libudbud refers to what it does—it rings like a bell. Mowaljarlai draws a rounded slab balancing on large pebbles. He demonstrates swaying on the top stone.

The dead man jumps on it and see-saws from one side to the other. The slab hits these rock pebbles that go “bang, bang-bang.” The spirit is on the signal rock and is tinkling the stones.

Now a feature has appeared on the sketchblock that looks like a coast-watcher’s bunker – a tunnel. A figure at the tunnel entrance brandishes a burning torch.

He’s going to walk through a dark tunnel here, Bogadjju. At the entrance, he first picks up a firestick, a torch. He blows on the firestick and the fire lights up. He can see now. When he comes to the other end of the tunnel, he puts down the firestick and flies out to Dorgei.



“You have drawn that spirit as if it was dog-paddling, Mowal, why?”
It’s because he’s flying between the power lines of a chasm.
Going back to the mainland on the map allows a second launch from terra firma. Humpies are drawn.

He dies here, with his community. Then he goes to *Libudbud Gadba*, [as the Wororra call it] he bounces on the mushroom rock. It hits the pebbles below and they ring out ding-dong, ding-dong. That’s when he changes appearance. If he was killed by a spear, all his wounds and blood fall down on the stone, all his suffering is washed away when the tide comes up. “He drops his bundle,” we say. All sadness, all worldly weights and the afflictions of life disappear. Then he goes on. Before Libudbud, he could have returned to life and his old body, but from here no longer. He is a new creature, a healed man, and has a new skin.

“This rock bell must be delicately balanced.”

It is, and it sounds nice. He gets to the fire torch. He blows it. That’s what *bogadju* means. The torch is lying on the ground, just glowing. He picks it up, blows, and it glows up gently with a flame. At that moment he’s changing from argula into a dead spirit. He can see now and is gaining confidence going towards the light.

At the end of the tunnel everything is bright, no sun, just pure light. He puts down the torch for the next person. It returns to the entrance and goes out by itself. It’s a magic one, the Light of the Fire of the Spirit.

“And what happens in the chasm, is there another transformation?”
There is no change in there, the chasm light flies him along. He just zooms through, flying in the middle of two light beams.

The people in Dorgei have listened to the signal and come to welcome him. He meets his old people, they are all there. They cry with him and welcome him home. “You’re home,” they say.

One day I am going there, to take a picture of it from the boat.

“Dulugun is a real island then?”
A real one, on the map, a separate little island from the Champagy naval base* and close to Meteor Island.

*Temporary US naval base during WW2, referred to on p122

We now come to an intriguing story. At first telling, I thought of a freak space incident, but soon came to see the symbolic significance.

A man gets speared inland and dies. The spirit, already very light, starts off to Dulugun. It happens that he is caught in the light-power of a shooting star. Together with this meteor the spirit then flies to Meteor Island, *Langgumania Kalemulu*. This and another, Entrance Island, *Bandjinwarru*, are known to be meteor prone. In this part of the Indian Ocean all islands are part of Dulugun.

Big mob of meteorites falling there all the time, on the island and under water. A diver could lift them out; or with the boat and the winch. Meteor Island lies near Augustus Island, further out from Port George, near Kunnumuya. The spirit now sits on that meteor, a long, chimney-like rock. He is facing back towards his old life thinking about his wife and his family.

The spirits of his mothers, aunts and grannies come across from Dorgei and are digging, digging, digging at the base of the rock. They come to change his thoughts towards the spirit world, to welcome and help him to leave life heaviness behind.

That makes him turn away from his former life. He gets up, he puts his foot on the rock, and when he steps, the *Amnangna*, his tombstone, tips balance and rolls over, down into salt water. They watch as it goes down, calling "Kaaaa-o, kaaaa-o, kaaaa-o." *Booommm*, it shakes the earth. He's clear of life heaviness, he flies away, like a rocket.

In our communities, or in the bush, when we see a shooting star, then everybody is silent. We wait for about five or six seconds – that's the time the relatives dig at the base of this stone – and we are silent until we hear that *banggg*.

Freed of his earthly ties, the dead spirit then proceeds through the correct main channel, Libudbud and Bogadju, into *Wullawan*, the big chasm. Two beams of light radiate out from the doorway of Bogadju, the Light of the Fire of the Spirit. The two walls of the chasm are the beams. The power of that light floats him along.

The visiting banman comes by a different route and is taken by the Devil. The Devil is Argula, the Deceiver.

He is only argula because he wanted to do wrong things. Argula also also means "dead person". When a person dies, he becomes argula; but only when he has just died, while he is in darkness.

When he goes through Bogadju, he changes and stops being argula. Then he can't drift back.

The Devil chaperones the banman to the edge of the earth's shadow. His reach is limited. He is forever bound to return to earth. For that reason, under the Devil's aegis the banman is certain to get back.

Three separate powers influence life on earth: Wandjina; the Snake; and Argula, the Devil. They always paint (manifest) separately.

The argula-mob protect the banman on the death cord. They surround him with an arc of energy, a kind of walkway of light, so he can't fall off like in tightrope walking. They bring him back on the same thing.

This banman remains in darkness [argula]. The dead-mob are on the light side. The argula-mob reign in the between area. With them you can come into and out of the chasm, two-way traffic. One-way ticket goes through Bogadju.



Dulugun gateway

The following songs give further insight. They were composed by Geoffrey Mangalnammara and Manila Karadada. Geoffrey says, "I am a composer." Manila: "And I am a composer." Composers bring songs from the spirit world.

With Argula to Dulugun

When we travel around,
then just after tea we feel sleepy,
too early to go to sleep,
but those spirits, they numb us,
in our sleep we see them coming.

They say, "Aye, aye, aye – wake up!"
"What is it, what is it?" we say to those spirits.
Argula, the Devil, he'll say,
"Come and see what is painted up."
"Whereabouts?"

And he'd say, "Way over there, in Dulugun."
He takes us along to near the border,
then he says, "You wait just behind this tree.
I'll open up the doorway and I'll check
if you can come in. I'll tell them
that you have come to see this corroboree."

The Devil leaves the banman men at the door, a side entrance to the chasm.
They go inside, they watch the dancing, listen to singing, learn and record
it instantly in memory.

Their odour smells strong
like the flying foxes in that place.
We hold the *biyu*, the death cord.
When the singing and dancing is finished,
we get onto this cord.

Then our guide beckons:
"Let's go back home. I'll take you back."

Then you get your community together
and sing them the song, show them the dance.
And you tell them the name of the fellas
who was your guide.

The banman goes only once for each song. It is kept for a year or more,
used all the time in corroboree, then traded on. From the same composers:

Another Argula Story

The Devil was sick and died at *An Badda*.
At a place called *Gud Enggnari*

he was covered up in a grave.

After some time had passed, the people got worried.
They had heard him crying
on the range *Waddabunggan*.
They wanted to know where he had gone.

They said, "We'll sing out.
Let's find out from which way he'll answer,
in the south or west or somewhere,
he'll answer us back. Let's call for him now,
it's Dulugun Time."
The sun was *njallara*,
just about setting.

So they went *bang-bang*
with all the nulla-nulla sticks,
and they called, "Cooooo-eee,
answer us where you are!"
"Cooooo-eee!" the Devil answered
from Sundown, from Dulugun.

The Devil formed the sidedoor to the chasm.
He had to carve his own entrance into Dulugun.

Njallara, the colour of sunset, means "arse of the sun", explains Mowal.
At one time it had happened that Manila got locked up in the underworld.

The spirits took me to this island. When I got inside, the boss-spiritman *Kalinda* came. The spirits told him, "We got Manila Karadada here. We want to show him this dance." *Kalinda* stopped talking and got angry. He said, "He didn't signal me. He didn't let me know he was coming. Shut the door!" That's what happened to me, it's a song. He thought I had come through Libubud gate, but that way for a bannman is wrong. *Kalinda* had mistaken the bannman for a person who had died. This is the song of how they locked him up.

You Can't Escape Your Life Record

In this dream I walked
and then sat down in an area.
Suddenly, they ambushed me
with *jabiri*, spears.
They came from everywhere
until I was surrounded
by all those people with spears.
I couldn't escape.

Getting Locked Up in the Underworld

The name of this boss-man is *Kalinda*,
boss-man for all the spirit people.
Grey-haired *Marrul* we call him.
He has grey hair. He came to the door
inside the chasm in Dulugun,
inside where all the spirit people are.

He said, "Who is that?"
"Manila Koordada," they told him.
Then he said, "Why didn't he give me a sign?
Don't go to him," he told these other spirits.
"I give you an order – lock that door!
He's not allowed to get out!
He didn't send a message first.
Don't you blokes go and talk to that lot.
Stop quiet here and keep that door shut."

So they shut the door.
After a while, when he cooled down,
he accepted me.
Grey-haired *Marrul* we call him.

Marrul have grey or white hair, often a long beard. The term also refers to *Wandjinjas*. Another song by Manila carries an awesome message.

It is a song about suddenly being ambushed and trapped, spears looking at Manila from around a big ring – he was well locked in, couldn't run and escape. He would have been killed if he ran, so he had to face them.

There's a history kept on you.
All your life's actions can look at you like spears.
You can't escape your life record.
The spear-holders are all spirit men,
they make you face your life record after you die.

One last question remained to be asked on the topic of Dulugun: "In the olden days, did Aborigines commit suicide?"

No, never! Now they commit suicide, like in jails. They want to kill themselves because they are drunk. And there is no fire.
Fire is the spirit of life, love, family life, all those kind of things are tied up with that.

In the womb, we are in a little world. When we are born to the larger world, the first things we see are the sun, the family and the fire, these three important things.

We grow up with that spirit of caring and warmth of the sun, fire and love from our family. Those are the growth elements, the elements of *Wandjina*. *Wandjina* can't walk in jails.
When Aborigines are cut off from that, they want to kill themselves. They just die then and go to Dulugun. There is only that one channel. And they are all coming back.

Guyan Guyan

Since the first publication of this book some controversy has arisen over the relationship of Wandjina and Wungud figures, and the disciplines of culture represented by them, to rock paintings known in common parlance as Bradshaw images, from the first European to bring these sites to wider notice. The Ngarinyin call these paintings *Guyan Guyan*. Unlike the image energies deposited by the Creator Wandjina, they are held by the Ngarinyin to have been painted by their ancestors during a key era, the *Djanangi* phase of human evolution. In this era, Kimberley people expressed with exuberance and sophistication a new knowing of themselves as humankind, who they were and what they were totemically representing, or "Gi-ing". They danced this in ritual, and they painted it. Mowaljarli commented on the Guyan Guyan paintings that, "they are dancing history forward."

There is also debate over the age and origin of patterns of indentation or cupules in rock sites in the Kimberley and elsewhere.

The following dialogue recorded in 1996 may offer a new perspective. The cupules are described as arising from Wandjina activities.

J: Mowal, how do you know that the people in the "Bradshaw paintings" were the same people as you were?

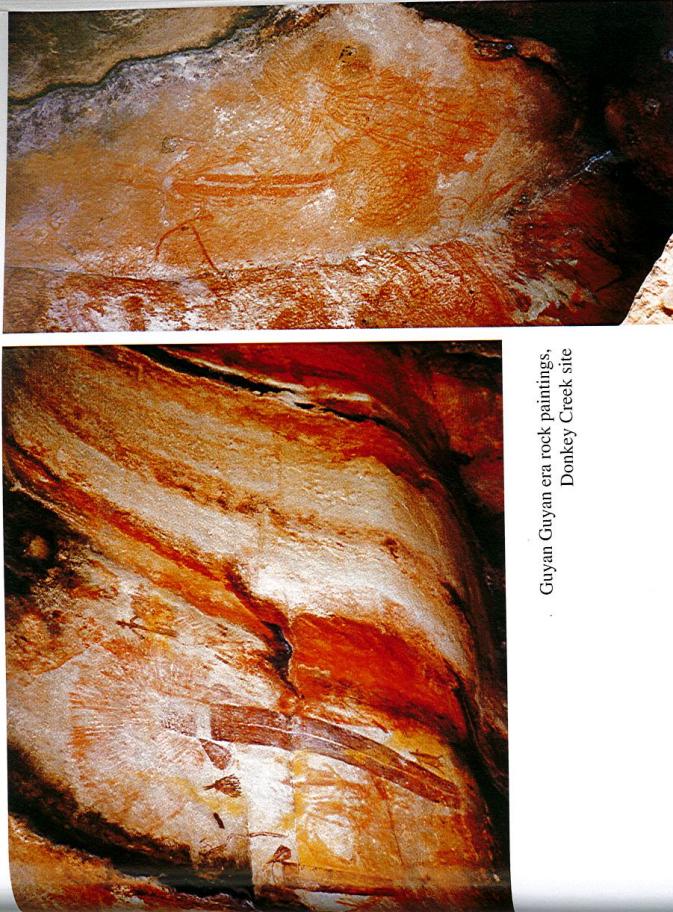
M: We call them Djanangi Djanangi. Those are the men, the dancing ones. They are Djanangi tribes. Djanar-gi, "I just put you in the direction — gi." You got that gi on the end. That's a gi symbol now. So you come into the symbol.

J: Gi is the symbol for connection, the connecting?

M: Like I am a hibiscus. And Neowarra is a Wandjina. Neowarra gi's that Wandjina. It's his totem. *Their* totem is that stone knife. That's *their* gi-symbol now. They gi-d that flick of a stone.

J: How does the stone flick come into this?

M: They had nothing in their hand. We call them *Mungugnangga* — "Nothing in hands." They didn't have a knife, or a tomahawk. They thought of tools. That's *nunggu nangga*, looking around, "Oh, what can we find, what can we use? Let's test everything,



Guyan Guyan era rock paintings,
Donkey Creek site



this stone!" They find out now. They become scientific. They were naming those stones *gimbu*, which ones to use. They start doing this, shaving (flaking) it. They found a useful stone for this. That's their *gimbu*. They said, "This is very good. We are going to use this for the rest of our lives." They started cutting with those knives. Start cut the skin. It's a Law now, a commitment. They started *gangar*. We call that *gangar*, knife. All knives. The stone knife specially for cutting flesh and cooked meat and skinning kangaroo. Putting tribal marks, that's all *gangar*.

J: They invented the use of stone?

M: This is a scientific mob now. Before, they had nothing.

J: *Djanargi* *Djanargi* are men in the Beginning of (the era you refer to as) Ancient Time?

M: Yo.

J: Paddy Neowarra gave three names for three periods. Can you give me those three periods?

M: I have given you *Djanargi* now. That's number one, the Beginning of Ancient Time. The second is *Mungu Nangga*, for when they had a session meeting, they were talking about planning, as a group. Then they said, "Tomorrow we look for... You two go there, you two go here, you two go there." They started planning work.

J: What does *munggu* mean?

M: Looking, with their eye. Walking around looking like this, "What should we get?" Searching.

J: And *nangga*?

M: *Nangga* means explorers. To find out, to explore. We say, "Everyone should find out, explore." They were feeling happy, enterprising.

J: And the third one?

M: Guyan guyan.

J: What does the word guyan mean? Do you use it now?

M: That first word *guya* means "go". And that last part, that -yan: with a purpose. Guyan: "you go and look for." That's an order. It's a timetable belong to them. What day to look for something. "Tomorrow you go looking for things."

J: This is all within Ancient Time? We understand that there were long spaces between the three stages. There was an awakening of spiritual awareness, law making, start of initiation, social organisation, first banman people, tools.

M: This lot now. That's what we are talking about. There's the banman mob there now in the paintings. You know, *Djillingna*, that woman one, that woman painting, in the cave, where young people are not allowed to see it. Very important. It only for old people. They know this big mother one, she is sitting down with open legs. She is the Mother Earth. No young people look at that woman. Paddy took Jeff Doring there and made pictures of it. Mr. Coates took a picture of it for Professor Elkin. There are paintings of this Earth Woman everywhere.

J: In the Guyan Guyan paintings the dancers don't have breasts.

M: They're all men, skinny ones. That's their mother, that *Djillingna*.

J: What about the boomerang as a symbol, the crescent symbol? Not just as a weapon.

M: It's a sacred object. It belongs to woman.

J: In the paintings that I have seen, dancers are not holding the boomerangs in their hands. They are just next to their arm.

M: The dancers are men, the boomerang shapes belong to Women's Business. The boomerang shapes are *mundi*, painted like that. In Lily Koordada's paintings of *Wandjina*, she always includes turtles and boomerangs. Why is that?

M: Boomerang started off with those *Djanargi*. *Wandjina* told them to make these weapons. It became sacred for women's side from that mob now.

J: When it is next to the arm like that?

M: We call the dance *mundigai*, acting with the mundi, the sacred Woman's Business, because this lot started it off, this lot *Munggu Nangga*.

J: Did the people in these paintings have the same totems, the same rituals, as yours?

M: Broiga, Ibis, Quail Emu, Duck, Honey sucker, Bush Turkey, all those decorations refer to that. Then, if we paint, we must put decoration this way, bird painting onto our body. The Owl paint, or if we got Ibis, well, we make ibis with grass tied up with nose sticking out like ibis. Or turkey. Or broiga. Grass one. You make an image out of grass with the beak sticking out in the front.

M: Yeah, on the top, in the cap.

- J: They are dancing with these tassels, with decorations.
- M: I'll tell you about the decorations. One of these long ones, they call *ururumal*.
- J: What does that mean?
- M: It slides down here. You know when a thing hangs down? It's a slider decoration. For looking beautiful. The end part of *ururumal*, the -mal, means it's lone, the end part hangs down on its own, "lonely necklace". It's separated, lonely. *Ururumal*, "It hangs lonely, on its own."
- J: Just hanging down as a loose string with end tassel?
- M: Yo. Another is *wandalan*. That was made by this hair here, a hair belt. It was twisted, it was a broad one, like a band, human hair. They had a twisted tassel hanging down here, in front of the public, to cover. We call that *walput*. *Walput* for woman and man, for they all wore it.
- J: They already started covering themselves.
- M: This is the inventing time, what they started off with. They started all this. Then we got hold of it. We still using it today. All the bush time, when we walked about; when Lommel was with us. They had these things wearing.
- J: But we have the picture here of your grandfather without one.
(P.109/114)
- M: He wore it all the time. Just sometime they turn it around on the waist so it doesn't get in the way for hunting. In that picture of my grandfa ther the hairbelt is wanalan. He lifted the kangaroo up, you see him put the kangaroo underneath his hair, that is *djagarra*.
- J: They did have a belt. Did they make string from bark for those tassels?
- M: Hair, long one, called *djaggara*. *Wandjina* hair, your hair, my hair — all *djaggara* too. They spun this hair and twisted it into a long string. They didn't plait it. They were winding, twisting the long hair like that. They made a tool. This front part (on top of the head), they overlapped it. Then they rolled it up. They bind it up. They shut this end with string, a knot down there. That is a bag for the stone knives. Round one. They kept their knives in that pouch.
- J: They tied it up at the back of the head, and at the waist?
- M: They didn't tie it up at the waist. They carried those stones from their head. It hung like from a post, down this way. The weight of it rested on their back. It couldn't bring their neck back because it sat properly in the net. The shoulders balanced it.
- J: They appear to have made tight armbands out of some fine fibre and stuck leaves into them, similar to the Trobriand Islanders, who use herbs in their armbands like the feelers of an insect, antennae, for heightened perception.
- M: We do that with bird wings, feathers and leaves. We do that for dancing. Rhythm goes out into the action. That's all decoration.
- J: And those Ingaldji, the Lightning Brothers, they represent lightning. But they are not *Wandjina*, are they?
- M: They are Rain Mob, just the lightning. *Angubban* is the Rain Country, the Cloud Dreaming, *Murrumbabiddi*. This is the Wunggud country. They tell stories at wunggud places.
- J: There are always two lightning figures. Why always 'Brothers'?
- M: There are two or three different lightnings. Ordinary lightning little skinny one, what smashes a tree; and this Big One, he don't smash, but he big one what start off cyclone. It hits the earth, makes a whirl, it cuts a big trench. That ball sitting down there. That power, like a big football, a basket ball — ball lightning. It will cut the ground, he sink down and he makes a big hole there. Goes into the earth. That's why they call them the Lightning Brothers.
- J: What is your idea about those cupules, the patterns indented in rock thought to have been man-made, at Jinnium, Kimberley?
- M: Those stones, stone as a cloud, all soft. When earth was soft, you know? When *Wandjina* walked, the big Creator *Wandjina*, he come to this cave, he wanted to settle down yet. He sweat, and it's still there for us to look at. We say: He sweat, "Here, *nguning*," we say, "nguning, nguning here." When that sweat come down, we call that sweat of *Wandjina*, nguning. You know how we get sweat, really pouring? It fell off his face, when he has a spell, when he was resting, at the cave. It sprinkle, sprinkle. It squirts, sprinkle on the rock. It's everywhere now. That's the Wunggud, from this sweat, from His face. We get spirit for children now,

- children's names. Woman may be called *nguniella*, when she gi-s that little pothole (totemises it). That's the Wungudd now.
- J: This is from the time when the Wandjina walked?
- M: He sprinkle sweat, and it hardened up now.
- J: These cupules are everywhere, also in Vanuatu.
- M: Wandjina walked everywhere, it still is a cloud and the rain. Doesn't matter where his footprint, everywhere. It's a drip-drip. everywhere. Everywhere His sweat dripped. You see it anywhere. It reminds you "Oh, Wandjina, good, here!" It's like that jaw belongs to turtle, how man was created, Long-necked Turtle*, it's a reminder, like that. The print of Wandjina everywhere.
- J: Why are some Wandjinjas lying on their side in the paintings, while most others are painted upright?
- M: That's the main Wandjinjas, having a rest. He lie down.
- J: I observed at the Neggamorro place, Angguban, the Cloud Dreaming (p.63) that the cloud stone protecting the images in the back of the shelter is a different texture of stone from the rest of the shelter. Is that in other places as well?
- M: Whatever colour they got, yellow cloud, blue cloud, white cloud and black, different clouds.
- J: Where Wandjina left His image in the caves and sites we visited, those cloud rocks protecting the Wandjina images were always different, much denser, finer than the sandstone, or wall, behind them.
- M: When you come to the sandstone, you see black-brown colour on top of the cave. Inside is white one, white colour. That's the cloud now, that white one. This one dried up, on top, it became brown. It's the same cloud. Inside the cave is the white one, where they do painting.
- J: The protecting stone is different to the wall stone, the canvas?
- M: That whole stone was a cloud. It's a different colour now, the colour of the earth.
- J: And the cloud was still soft?
- M: Like a snow, like a fog, dew. That cloud. He carried the cloud, we call cloud-carrying *burrul manuba*.
- J: Is that why Wandjinjas lift up the clouds over their heads in your paintings?
- M: Yellow one, red one, the lightning, then dark one at the bottom, more in the forehead. That's when He low. That's all the clouds, he carried them.
- J: Each whole escarpment is a cloud then?
- M: All clouds. They line up. Not only one. Where all the painting is, it's all cloud.
- J: The Wandjina gave you the example for painting your face.
- M: That's called *ngunin* now. When His face got watery, water fell down on the earth. When that sweat fell, then it dried up. It made this paste. Now, when we have mud here, mud painting, along the cheek and the jaw, now when you get sweat, all those peel off. It's heavy. He painted Himself, and this upraided, this thing was running off, slowly.
- J: What does the word *ngunin* mean?
- M: Dirt. The mud, dirt that came off His face. It rolled off His face. So *ngunin* is the (sweat and the) mud, the dirt, from His face paint.
- M: It dropped. It couldn't disappear, but it sunk and made little holes. Then it reminds us, because of this little thing, "Oh, *ngunin*," we say. If it didn't make a hole, we couldn't tell story.
- J: How do you know the "Bradshaw" people are Ngarinyin? Are most of the guyan guyan paintings in areas of your country, on the Mitchell Plateau?
- M: They are there. We are the Ngarinyin mob.
- J: What about the Wunambul and the Worrora?
- M: The Wunambul and Worrora were same as us, at that time. We know the people in the paintings are in the beginning, making tools. Archeologists said, "It's eleven-thousand years ago." So what? We've been talking about that a long time. Now they find us, now. The symbol is still sitting there. Then they come with these instruments. We're telling them, "This is the Wungud belong Creation Time, right?" So they get all these measurements now, measurements, stick-them-down. "Oh, this is fifty thousand years!" So what? We've been telling him it's there. And we did laugh at him — now he's finding out. He never believed us, but he believed his instrument.

* The Wandjina manlike skeleton in the turtle's neck bone structure

- J: Some researchers don't believe Kimberley Aborigines have been here ever since Creation time. The instruments don't come up with this suggestion, or this timing. That's why they can think that you got here later.
- M: We go in front. All our history is front. Now he's coming along with history behind!
- J: Dr. Paul Taçon of the Australian Museum argues that, due to the stress of everybody moving together, the Serpent became a symbol of unity as well as of Creation and Destruction.
- M: That is the power really, from Wunggud side. But with all that painting, the three don't paint together. Wandjina on his own, Snake on her own, and Devil on his own. They're separate. Ngarniyin, Worrorra and Wunambul are being described as "subsequent cultures" to the Bradshaw people. They are accused of hacking out some of the paintings, of purposely destroying them.
- M: We've got no reason to pluck the paint down, for what? This is what I am talking about. We don't go to white man church and pluck things out. They do this in our churches.
- J: What you said at the first Rock Art Symposium in Darwin has lingered in people's minds for a long time.
- M: We never had a chance of recording properly the *meaning* of the art. We never get into the rhythm of explaining the story properly, working proper hard, making a big book for the whole of Australia.
- J: One message is, "Everything goes in cycles, back to the beginning."
- M: When we die, we go back.
- J: To be born again. And you also say that of the earth?
- M: That's *yulput*, it means every wunggud place now is caving in. Yulbut means 'caving in'. Same places where you have beautiful waters, waterlilies and all that, the earth is caving in now. It's falling inside. We call it *yaworara*. Yaworara is 'sinking in'. This is the history what happening now, it's going back now, going back to the Creator. Because the Creator waiting there. The Wandjina. The Wunggud. Everything returning back.
- J: So you see the earth as an entity. And every so many thousand years the earth also goes back into Wunggud.
- M: That what we are saying. That what Wunggud is. That what yaworara is. And that yulput, that caving in.
- J: Do you think that's due now?
- M: It's due in coming.
- J: Mowal, are you still teaching about the universal connection with the stars?
- M: Yo.
- J: A consciousness of the earth being just one little part in the whole of the universe?
- M: That's what we're telling the young initiates: "You see it here: now, in the night you can see it there, in the Milky Way and all those stars. There they are now," we are telling them. You can see it, that reflection now. "Oh yeah," they see it. They know. This star lot up there was down here. They went up to space, and now they're up there.
- J: How do your youngsters cope with that?
- M: They listen, they listen really. We're sitting there, in a big ring. We parcel it up. One teacher comes out with one little bit. Another feller come out with more, to the end of this story. A pupil can't tuck all these stories in properly. But he records it. He's got to sort it out.
- J: When you're with him, one teacher, one pupil, that is different. You just give him one little story at a time. You give a student the parallel, a positive side and a negative side, he follows that straight away. He remembers what this man was saying, starts fitting it in. He patch it all up, in here (head). He gets it all clear without doubt now, because that one-man was telling him. "Oh, I remember what that old man was telling me there." He finds the line through the pattern. That is what the young people need to do. I was taught that way, yo.
- J: Are there still people teaching like that, again?
- M: Four of us, five, six. Some older woman, Paddy Neowarra, Laurie Gowanulli, Paddy Womma, Hector Dangall, all this Ngarniyin mob.
- J: What are you are telling them? "You've got to come also under our Wunggud, the stronger space in the universe, the stronger Wunggud to go with your English Wunggud belonging?"
- M: It's like this ashtray here, this is England and this is Australia. They came here. The red flag thing, England, all the law in here.



The law of the British came over here, White man law I'm talking about. This is the earth, the land Australia is up in space also. It's reflecting, the Wunggud. It still reflecting there in space, the law. And we're losing it here. The British also have their Wunggud, and it is reflecting here in Australia. Do you understand what I mean?

J: No, not quite.

M: This European lot came over here. They settled down in Australia. They put down all their rules, British rules. We are holding them now, in Canberra, everywhere, in Sydney. Sydney is called after Mr. Syd*. There's the imprint now. British Wunggud is here and up in space. And Australian Wunggud is also up in space. "You need the Wunggud belong to this country," we're telling them now. We are telling this feller, "Now you listen to me about my Wunggud belong to this country. You have to understand." We're telling them now, the English (descended) mob: "You were born here, but you don't know the rules, the spirit belong to this country. You have to listen to us." Like we had to listen to him. This bush school and all those things are like that, not just in your head, but in your powers. That's what we Ngarinyin are talking about now. And Worrorra and Wunambal too. That's a gift now, a gift from us, a gift for wider Australia.

J: Do these people at Bush University understand this now?

M: Well, we teach them the beginning, the beginning.

Ngallewan Nally at Njallagunda Snake Dreaming, Gibb River

* Lord Sydney, Thomas Townsend, 1733-1800

Features of a Wandjina

Djagara or *Jagarra* is the Wandjina's hair, in radial lines.

All rings around the head represent clouds and lightning:

Mangirri, the Lightning Ring, is the first or closest to the head.

Djilij: second ring, dark, low, rainladen clouds, "the woolpack".

Angabani: thirdring, clouds building up big rain, cumulo-nimbus, the Travellers.

Ngongnol kude: fourth ring, ciro-stratus, high windclouds.

Bindak: fifth and sixth rings, distant cloud bank that flashes lightning, signals first rain after the Dry.

Big Spirit Wandjina have large eyes, never have a mouth nor ears as such [there is an exception at the Barker River site]. The line between the eyes indicates where the power flows down, and is not a nose.

First generation Ancestor Wandjina, Wodoi and Djingun, may show a mouth, Wallanganda, the Creator Wandjina, did not create with his hands, only through his voice, with power. White areas on face and upper chest represent mists, regions beyond our understanding.

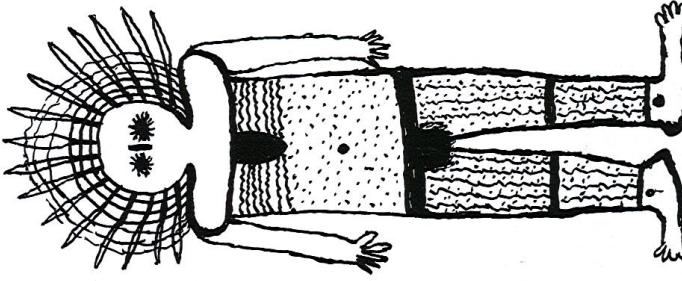
Rangit is the narrow black plaque in the middle of the chest, his heart.

Omiba, wavelines to the side of the heart, are ribs.

Kurimbi, spray-painting, is done with the mouth.

The hairbelt is plaited with human hair.

The public sheath is woven of hair from the Chosen Female Kangaroo sacrificed to him. Since this offering she belongs to the Wandjina.



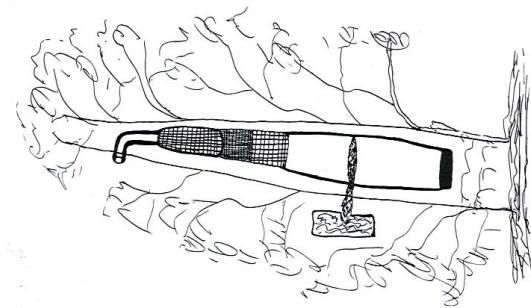
Only earthly people, ancestor people in Creation-time form [e.g. Wodoi and Djingun], and Argula, the Devil, have testicles on paintings; they were meant to have wives and children. Big Wandjina carry only a pubic sheath and the hairbelt.

Knees, ankles, anklebones and feet may be indicated and the legs decorated with body paint.

All body paint is referred to as *djirli* - beautiful colour, but only white is spray-painted with the mouth.

It is an interchange of cleanness and purity, the watery essence of life.

Waananga, Sugarbag



Bent pipe: amen, the eye

1st hatched area: *onja*, yellow eggs

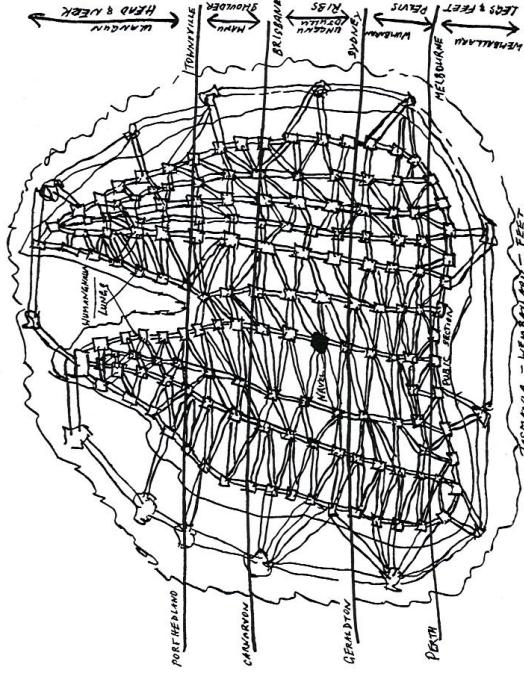
2nd hatched area: cheeky *mala*
[stings the tongue]

3rd hatched area: quiet *mala*

clear area: *anin*, reservoir of liquid honey, connected to the outside by a cut, with honey pouring into a coolamon, *garagi*

This drawing can be compared to the photograph and explanation on pp 71-75. The *garagi* at Waananga site is extremely important, a sacred, table-like rock, positioned under the painting of the honey log, which must be treated with care and reverence.

Bandaiyan — the Body of Australia, Corpus Australis



Time periods

Under the mists that hide eons of evolution we can touch on some helpful stepping stones, fairly consistent reference terms for time periods that Ngarinyin, Worrorra and Wunambal groups of Kimberley people use.

1. Before Our Time – Narkundajja – before Creation

Heaven and Earth are separate realms, Wallanganda is in the Milky Way, Earth a jelly soft snake floating coiled to a ball in the cosmos. Fresh water falls on earth.

2. Lalai – the active part of Creation

Wallanganda appears on earth in the form of a Wandjina Raingod to install all of nature and bring life to the planet.

3. In the Beginning

Wallanganda lays down the blueprint mould, creates man and woman.

Basic organisation. Wandjina paint in shelters.

4. Way-way Back – Ancient Time

Awakening of spiritual awareness, law making, start of initiation, social organisation, first banman people.

5. Flood and Ice Age – interruption, Wipe-out

Divides prehistory and known times. Images turn to rock during Ice Age.

6. Stone Age – Munggignangga

When only stone tools were used for killing animals, Aboriginal people hunted with string-rope traps and clubsticks. No spearheads yet, but little flaked stone knives and manufactured grinding stones. Mowajarlai explained that the Ngarinyin thought of this stage in evolution as sectioned into three sub-stages:

a) Dijanangi Djanganji - Flaked stone knives, they call *githinu*, are their first tool, also first tool symbol. They started to name things.

b) Mungegu Gnaangga - They became conscious they had "nothing in their hands", no tools, started planning, as a group, searching, exploring, experimenting.

c) Guyan Guyan - "Guyan" means "go!" with "ya" it means: "tomorrow you go look for things", an order. They are now working to a schedule, with a purpose. Acknowledging and dancing their items..

7. Long Time Ago – Djuman Nangga

Wandjina came back for re-Creation after Ice Age Wipe-out, painted in shelters once again. Teaching, acceleration of technical advancement and introduction of healing. Wandjina taught the people how to make spears and woomera, the spear-thrower. Boomerang, coolamon and digging sticks came into use.

8. In the Olden Days – “when we all still lived in the bush”

Expanse of time from the introduction of tools to the arrival of the Europeans and shift to missions and government settlements.

9. Yorro Yorro – from the Beginning to the present and onwards

As long as we are standing up with everything in Creation; as it was in the Beginning and will be for as long as nature regenerates itself. Ongoing creation, perpetual renewal of nature in all its forms.

Glossary of Aboriginal language

Ngarinyin (Nga), Worrorra (Wor), Wunambal (Wun). Common usage: NWW.	
Sounds: b, d, g, m, n, l, w, y as in English a as in English 'father', 'not' 'mate' or 'apple' e as in English 'set', 'not' as in 'me' i as in English 'pit', 'not' as in 'find' j as in English 'joy', but also like 'y' in 'yes' ng as in English 'singer', 'not' 'finger'; comes at the beginning of words ny as in English 'canyon', 'not' 'many'	o as in English 'poke', but also sometimes as in 'lock' r w tongue tip curls back, as in US English card' rl w tongue tip curls back as in US English 'girl' rn w tongue tip curls back as in US English 'girl' rr rolled, up of tongue tip taps roof of mouth, as lat., Span. u — oo, as in English 'clue', 'not as in 'but' or 'cute'
ada njuma	'where she reigns [sts, stays] forever' (Nga)
Adjarr	Raingod: the Creator; rain (Wor)
Alamalla barria	a place (Wun)
Alamat	place of hot, or cheeky, yams; name of old tribal area (Nga)
Algum Dorr Amoragnari Yadhanya	place where Yadhanya, Sugarnbag Wandjina, cut the tree (Nga)
Alowanowa	dolphin (Wot)
Alwayu	Dreaming of Light and Darkness, wungud waterfall where widowed Blackheaded Rock Python sat down, Mt Ham (Nga)
Algal, algal	yan creeper; stump of vine 'aims down, where yan is, after bushfire', so directing searcher; name of Mowajarlai's mother (Nga); Algarifjar (Wo) male public section; also lower part of Bandaiyan, continental Australia (Nga)
ambut	eye (Nga) stone, sound of the splash when it tips into the water (Nga/Wun) a place, where the Devil died, foot of hill near Mt Barnett (Nga)
amen	Annanganga An Badda Abulita Mirri
angenna	Angeguban, angeguban
angnulu	he built us like himself, in his own image (Nga)
annu mengna	liquid honey, sugarbag (Nga)
arin	spikes, spurs on emu leg (Nga)
Argula, argula	the Devil, Deceiver, or quality thereof, dead person (NWW)
atral	a tribe (Nga)
Aulinggnari	spiritual and common name: front-fanged venomous snake, <i>Denisonia suta</i> ; also long muscle, upper thigh (where snake bit daughter sun) (NWW)
Auwntabangnari	area of a mountain range, including Bold Bluff, Isell R. (Nga)
Balgajit	hill which represents the snakes frightened and running (Nga)
Balija Gni	Speeding Place (Nga/Wun)
Balija Mirri	table rock in front of Sugarnbag paintings (Nga)
Balalong	reef (NWW from Nga)
balbul	place, home camp, any river junction (Nga)
Bahnadaa	where legs join body; junction of Ham R. and Station and Snake Creeks (Nga)
Balmadurra	King Brown Snake, spiritual and common name (NWW); Balmalinya (Wor)
Banale, banale	continent; land mass, nature, people in relationship; Australia (NWW)
Bandaiyan	small tree-climbing lizard (Kwini)
bandau	Entrance Island, near Kunmunga Mission (Wor)
Bandjuwarra	deeply, profoundly initiated man, doctor man, Man of High Degree (NWW)
bannnan	dawn (NWW)
barella	'let's paint ourselves as a couple, make a picture of the two of us there' (Nga)
bararam barra granti mati	bushnut with hard shell and narrow kernel (Nga)
barrawan	a place, Drysdale Station area (Wun)
Bartrayu	

He can't move his country

This earth
I never damage.
I look after.
Fire is nothing,
just clean up.
When you burn,
new grass coming up.
That mean good animal soon.
Might be goose, long-neck turtle, goanna, possum.
Burn him off,
new grass coming up,
new life all over.

I don't know about white European way.
We, Aborigine, burn.
Make things grow.
Tree grow,
every night he grow.
Daylight
he stop.
Just about dark,
he start again.
Just about morning, I look.
I say, 'Oh, nice tree this.'

When you sleep,
tree growing like other trees,
they got lots of blood.

Rotten tree,
you got to burn him.
Use him to cook.
He's finished up,
cook or roast in coals,
White man cook in oven,
From university that.
Aborigine didn't know that before.
Now all this coming up with Toyota.

First people come to us,
they started and run our life... quick.
They bring drink.
First they should ask about fish, cave, dreaming,
but
they rush in.
They make school. Teach.

Now Aborigine losing it,
losing everything.
Nearly all dead my people,
my old people gone.

Those first people was too quick,
wasn't Aborigine fault.
Still Aborigine all around 1929,
1952, 1953 few left but...
1970 to 1979... gone.
Only me, Robin Gaden and Felix Holmes.

Each man he stay,
stay on his own country.
He can't move his country
so he stay there,
stay with his language.
Language is different,
like skin.
Skin can be different,
but blood same.

Blood and bone,
all same.
Man can't split himself.

White European can't say,
'Oh, that Aborigine no good.'
Might be that Aborigine alright.
Man can't growl at Aborigine,
Aborigine can't growl at white European.
Because both ways.
Might be both good men,
might be both no good.
You never know.

So you should get understand yourself.
No matter Aborigine or white European.

I was keeping this story myself.
It was secret in my mind
but I see what other people doing,
and I was feeling sad.

Law

Law never change,
always stay same.
Maybe it hard,
but proper one for all people.

Not like white European law,
always changing.
If you don't like it,
you can change.

Aboriginal law never change.
Old people tell us,
'You got to keep it.'
It always stays.

Creek, plain, hill.
That plain can change.
Wet season, him mud.
You get lily,
you get fish.
But, he dry up...
that's alright.
Then people can get long-neck turtle.
Same for animal.
People look for food,
animal look for food.
Lizard look,
bird look,
anyone look.
We all same.

Each billabong can be dry...
no fish, turtle, nothing.
He want new water,
then fish and turtle,
make him new one.
New rain coming up,
That rain make everything again.
Plenty fish, turtle, lily.

Rain for us, for anybody.
Rain give us everything new.
Yam, fish, everything.

Barramundi good in the wet season,
still good after the wet because of rain.
Big barramundi from salt water.
He follow fresh water down river,
rain helping him.
He can make eggs.

We must get rain.
Law says we get rain.
He come along wet season
and go dry season.
Rain come down
and give us new fresh water.
Plants coming up new.
Yam, creeper, all plants new.
Then we get fruit, honey and things to live.

Tree, he change with rain.
He get new leaf,
he got to come because rain.
Yam he getting big too.

Old people say
'You dig yam?
Well you digging your granny or mother
through the belly.
You must cover it up,
cover again.
When you get yam you cover over,
then no hole through there.
Yam can grow again.'

'You hang onto this story,' they say.
 So I hang on.
 I tell kids.
 When they get yam, leave hole.
 I say
 'Who leave that hole?
 Cover him up!'
 They say
 'We forget.'
 I tell them
 'You leaving hole.
 You killing yam.
 You killing yourself.
 You hang onto your country.
 That one I fight for.
 I got him.
 Now he's yours.
 I'll be dead,
 I'll be coming to earth.'

All these places for us,
 all belong Gagudju.
 We use them all the time.
 Old people used to move around,
 camp different place.
 Wet season, dry season,
 always camp different place.
 Wet season
 we camp high place,
 get plenty goose egg.
 No trouble for fresh water.

Dry season,
move along floodplain
billabong got plenty food.
Even food there when everything dry out.

All Gagudju used to visit,
used to come here to billabong,
dry season camp.
Plenty file snake, long-neck turtle.
Early dry season,
good lily.
Just about middle dry season
file snake, long-neck turtle,
lily flowering.

Everybody camp,
like holiday.
Plenty food this place.
Good time for ceremony,
stay maybe one or two weeks.

Pelican, Jabiru, White Cockatoo,
all got to come back,
make him like before.

Fish,
he listen.
He say,
'Oh, somebody there.'
Him frightened, too many Toyota.
Make me worry too.

I look after my country,
now lily coming back.
Lily, nuts, birds, fish.
Whole lot coming back.

We got to look after,
can't waste anything.
We always used what we got,
old people and me.

If man leave one or two barramundi behind
he go bad.
Trouble,
big fight.
He can't waste anything.
My culture's hard,
but got to be to keep him.
If you waste him anything now,
Next year you can't get as much
because you already waste.

When I was young I never wasted,
otherwise straight away I get trouble.
Even bone not wasted,
Make soup or burn that bone.
Watch out...
That might be dreaming one too.

That story change him now.
It should still be,
but young people won't listen.
Just chuck him away.
Waste him,
destroy everything.

When we young...
my time, Felix's time,
we never eat big fish.
That fish for old people.

Same for goose.
Young people only eat shoulder of goose,
older people must have goose first.
Same for Oenpelli, Mary River, all over.
If young people eat goose or fish,
then he'll be dead.
No young people touch him big fish or goose.
If touch him,
law says got to die.

You know frill-neck lizard?
He look funny.
Used to be good smooth animal.
He was man.
He done something wrong.
Look ugly now... skinny leg, arm,
big one ear, frill-neck.
What he done?
Break law.

He went to sacred ceremony...

called Ubarr.

He didn't listen,
clapping hands.

Old people tell him

'You break law,
you'll be skinny,
you won't grow more.'

People will see you like that.'

And he went like that...

big ear.

'You'll be like that for ever and ever.'

Lizard say,

'You make me back like I was before.'

People say 'No,
you break law.

You got to stay like that,
it's law.'

We can't break law.

No, we can't break law.

That frill-neck lizard done it first,
now look how thin he is.

That his own fault.

He spoilt ceremony.

We can't change it.

That's law.