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EDITORIAL

NELEN YUBU would like to thank St Patrick's Parish, Kerang (Vic.), for the generous financial support its people, school children and parish priest are giving as part of their own 'missionary' orientation. Their subsidy will enable *Nelen Yubu* to keep on appearing for a while even with the present number of subscribers – long enough, hopefully, for the subscription rate to climb up to a level where the periodical will be close to paying its own way.

In this issue Western Australia features – though this is simply a matter of chance.

We publish a few pages of background instruction for his staff at La Grange which the Pallotine missionary priest, Kevin McKelson, had prepared in 1976. It is a good example of the sociological awareness that, in varying degrees, should be a fruit of and prerequisite for work in Aboriginal communities, where social factors are a major determinant of outlook and behaviour.

During my 1980 Aboriginal studies course at the Yarra Theological Union one student spent a lot of energy in collecting and collating the various public statements made about oil drilling at Noonkanbah. His paper merits inclusion, I think, not because it adds any new, hitherto hidden factor, but inasmuch as it displays the issues as they were presented to our national consciousness, and conscience. The nature of church intervention in the affair is worth looking at.

Thirdly, a Cistercian hermit in the Kimberleys, Fr Dan O'Donovan, continues to rake about in my mind for bits of evidence for transcendentalism in Aboriginal tradition. The issue, being important, is probably beyond clear demonstration either way. (Anything the human mind can prove apodictically is thereby shown to be a minor matter, and conversely: a sound bit of intellectual agnosticism?)

Nelen Yubu would like to thank those readers who have expressed appreciation for our struggle to do what we think we are trying to do.

Martin Wilson MSC

NOTES FOR STAFF ON LA GRANGE MISSION: KINSHIP

K. McKELSON SAC

Orthographical note

/dy/ as in Rudyard

/n̄/ as in amongn̄

/ny/ as in onnyon

Tribes at La Grange

- Garadyari: the original people of La Grange
Nyan̄umada: people from Anna Plains and south thereof
Yulbaridya: people from the far south east
Dyuwaliny: people to far east of La Grange. The Dyuwaliny are like the Walmadyari of Fitzroy Crossing and Balgo
Mañala: the people to the north east of La Grange. These days many are found at Looma Settlement near Derby.

Numerically Yulbaridya form the majority followed by the Dyuwaliny, Mañala, Nyan̄umada and Garadyari. The first three are basically of the desert and the last two of the coast.

Notes on the Languages

Garadyari and Nyan̄umada are like one another, but here we must be careful. Garadyari has three dialects whilst Nyan̄umada has two. Nyan̄umada spoken down Hedland way is called N̄ulibadu. The other three desert languages are quite different from the coastal languages and are different from one another. A word common to all five is *nyundu* = you singular. *Nyura* (you plural) is common to four except Yulbaridya where it is *nyundu-rdi*. *Mai* (food) is common to all except Dyuwaliny where it is *mi*. *Guwi* (meat) is also common to all five except Yulbaridya where it is *guga*. *Gagara* (east) is common to all five.

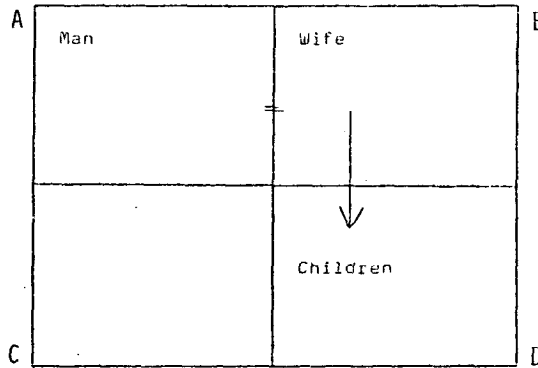
Notes on Kinship

Aboriginals are all related to one another. Perhaps the following notes may help clarify this statement.

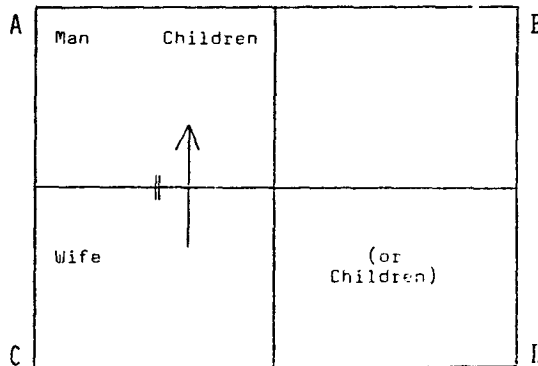
These notes were prepared by Fr K. McKelson SAC for his staff in 1976. Fr McKelson has spent many years at La Grange (on WA coast south of Broome): he has achieved a good knowledge of several of the local languages, especially Garadyari, in regard to which he has produced a grammatical-lexicographical handbook, *Studies in Garadyari* (282 mimeographed A5 pages). He sent these notes to me for my interest, and agreed to my request to publish them in *Nelen Yubu*. I have introduced several editorial adaptations: principally I have recast his diagrams into a more standard form. (Ed.)

Tribal Aboriginals in this area belong to four groups. Call them A, B, C and D. Male members of A group must marry those of B and vice versa. Take one case as a rule and apply it to the others.

A male in A group marries a female of B group: the children belong to D group. The children receive their group identity from the mother.



It may be said descent can come from the father crosswise: A marries B, and D children are the result from A. If however a couple is linked wrongly (e.g. if A is not coupled with B, but with C) the children receive their group identity from the mother. They would in this case be A:



Dr John Howard, quoting Dr Piddington, referred me to an instance where in a case like this the pattern of descent came from the father:

A (male) married C (female)

D children came from the union through the father.

Still, in this locality descent is normally through the mother, matrilineal, not patrilineal.

Names of These Four Groups

Garadyari call the four groups:

- | | | | |
|---|---------|---|---------|
| A | Buruñu | B | Banaga |
| C | Badyari | D | Garimba |

Nyañumada:

- | | | | |
|---|---------|---|---------|
| A | Buruñu | B | Banaga |
| C | Milañga | D | Garimba |

Dyuwaliny, Yulbaridya and Mañala:

- | | | | |
|---|----------|---|--------|
| A | Garimara | B | Banaga |
| C | Badyari | D | Buruñu |

Yulbaridya also call the C group Burgulu.

A	G: Buruñu N: " D: Garimara	G: Banaga N: " D: Banaga	B
C	G: Badyari N: Milañga D: Badyari	G: Garimba N: " D: Buruñu (Y: Burgulu)	D

In a situation like this, one becomes confused at first. Sometimes an Aboriginal will call himself or herself Buruñu. If they are Nyañumada and Garadyari, then they belong to A group and their partners to B. If they belong to the other tribes, then they belong to D group and their partners belong to C. After a while familiarity with the tribal groupings will help one to recognize the difference.

In notes on La Grange 1974 these four groupings were related to the four groupings of the Aranda.

Aranda & Garadyari (Aranda in italics)

A	<i>Burulu</i> Buruñu	<i>Bananka</i> Banaga	B
C	<i>Ballara</i> Badyari	<i>Kumara</i> Garimba	D

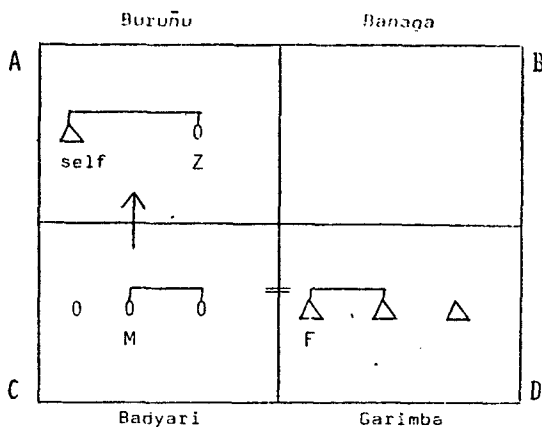
In the Walmadyari and Gugadya systems referred to also in Notes 1974 members of each group have four names, two male and two female, giving a total of 16 names compared to the four in the systems referred to above, but still and all they can be reduced to the same basic four. The preceding has stated that Aboriginals belong to one of four groups and that they receive their group identity from their mother. All tribal Aboriginals belong to these four groups whether they are related by blood or not. How they received this identification or classification originally does not concern us here except to mention that it is an extremely interesting question. Aboriginal society is being taken as it is.

The following will try to explain step by step and by means of diagrams how group classification is related to and functions within the kinship pattern. Starting with the familiar, certain differences will be noted and consequences drawn.

Diagram 1

Diagram one shows myself (by assumption a male Aboriginal), my father, my mother and my sister.

Diagram 1¹



Not only do I call my actual father 'father' but all his brothers whether actual or classificatory. The latter refer to those individuals whom he calls brothers, but in fact are not, but are termed so because they belong to the same lodge, grouping or sodality

¹In this and later diagrams the standard symbols and abbreviations are used, viz. Δ is male; \circ is female; = indicates marriage (sometimes indicated by crossbar below the symbols ---); crossbar --- indicates siblings; vertical lines \downarrow indicate descent; arrow \uparrow indicates section transmission; F is father, M mother, Z sister, B brother, S son, D daughter, H husband, W wife; and complex relations are indicated by adding the letters together, e.g. MB = mother's brother, MMF mother's mother's father, i.e. maternal great-grandfather etc. I have added several symbols: a lower case 'y' or 'e' before a symbol indicates younger or older respectively; a lower case 'il' after a symbol indicates in-law.

(section) as himself. I do not call them 'uncles'. The same applies to my mother. I call 'mother', my real mother, her actual sisters and all those she calls 'sisters', namely those who belong to the same sodality group or lodge as herself. I do not call them 'aunty'. Consequently I call the children of all my fathers and mothers – 'brothers' and 'sisters'. Assume also I am a Buruñu after the Garadyari fashion. My mothers will be then all Badyari, my fathers all Garimba and my brothers and sisters all Buruñu as I am too.

Diagram 2

Diagram two reveals my mother's brother. I call him 'uncle'. He is a Badyari like my mother. Usually but not always I will marry my mother's brother's daughter.

Diagram 2

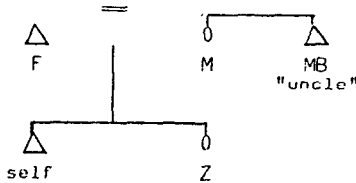
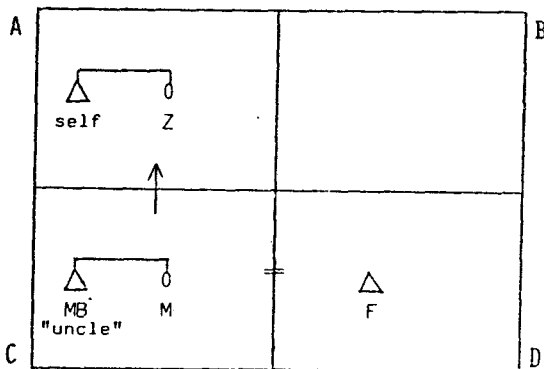
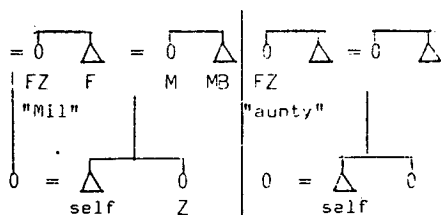
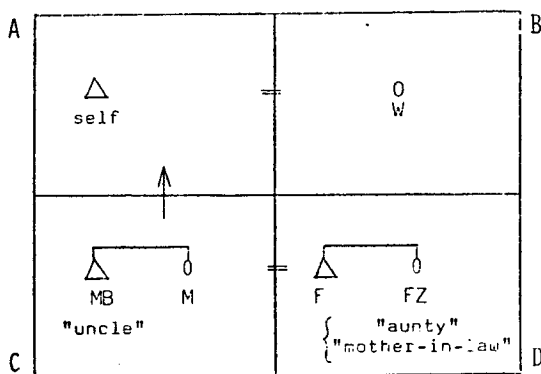


Diagram 3

Diagram three reveals my father's sister. I call her 'mother-in-law' or 'aunty'. My mother's brother marries her – she is a Garimba like my father. She is the most important relation I have as far as my future marriage goes as I will, if I call her 'mother-in-law', most likely marry one of her daughters.

Although I call my father's sister 'mother-in-law', it can also happen that I will call her 'aunty' if she is my actual father's sister.

Diagram 3



Note:

The father's sister is rarely mentioned by a male Aboriginal because she is always his potential mother-in-law, unless she is declared 'aunty'. Because of this, the accent has always fallen on the mother's brother as far as information is concerned. The key figure is father's sister. If she is my mother-in-law then I cannot address her or mention her name. I can refer to her as 'mother-in-law' but as little as possible do I do this. I can and actually do give her presents indirectly through others. Some Aboriginals even avert their head and close their eyes if they hear mention of her name. The common word for mother-in-law is *mali*. Other words are *malinyanu*, *dyigal*, *yumari* and *marugu*.

Diagram 4

Diagram four reveals the daughter of my uncle and mother-in-law. I call her 'wife' even if I am not married to her. If married to her I will call her 'my woman'.

It also reveals the daughter of my uncle and my aunty. I call her by a term which means unmarriageable cousin. She is a Banaga as is my wife. Both are 'straight' women but one I can marry, the other I cannot, except by special dispensation as it were.

Diagram 4

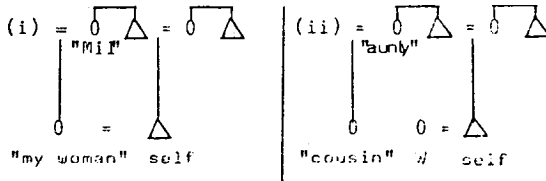
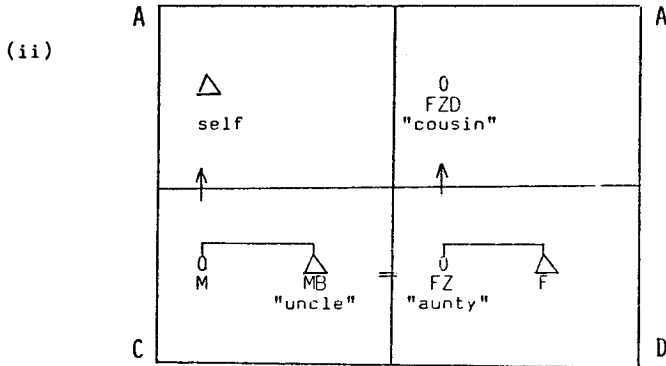
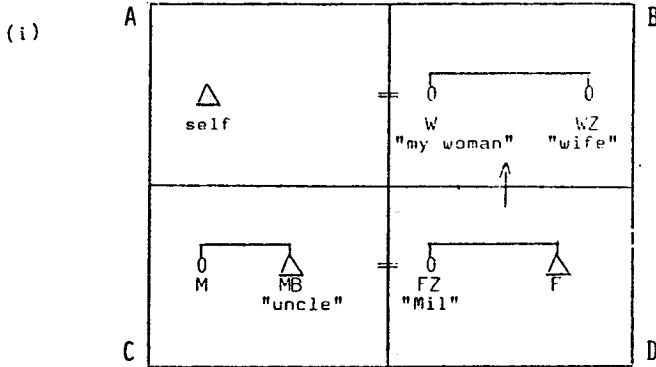
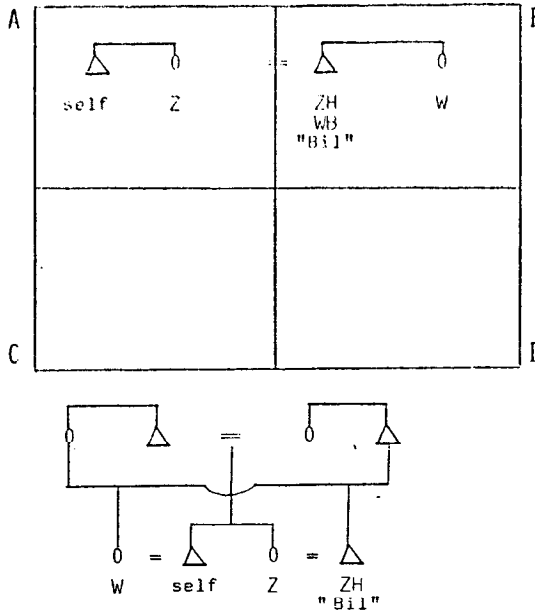


Diagram 5

Diagram five reveals my wife's brother, my brother-in-law. He is the son of my uncle and mother-in-law. The common word for him is *yagu*. He marries my sister and is a Banaga like my wife. So far we are describing a system by which real and classificatory brothers and sisters are exchanged in marriage. It is called the Kariera system after a tribe in the Port Hedland area which followed it.

Diagram 5



Note:

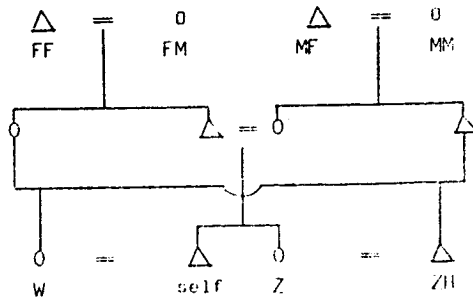
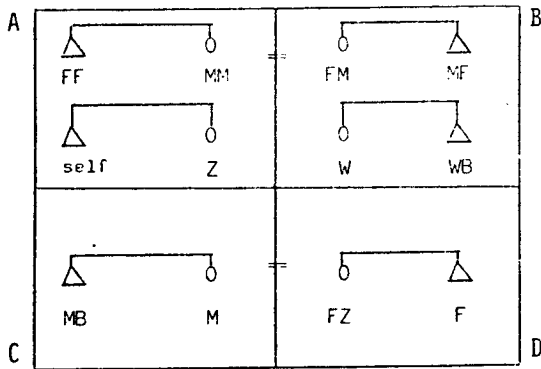
Though the terms are written in the singular, they may be taken in the plural. The term 'myself' stands for me and all my brothers, actual or classificatory, and term 'wife' stands for all those whom we can marry.

Diagram 6

Diagram six reveals my father's father and my father's mother, my mother's father and my mother's mother. My father's father and father's mother are my paternal grandparents. My mother's father and mother's mother are my maternal grandparents, but bear in mind they cover all the individuals in that group. The most important person in this group for me is my father's mother. She has the same 'skin' as my wife – the same classification. The question

arises whether I may marry my father's mother. Usually she is called *gabalidy*. Invariably one gets the negative answer. Why? Because she is the mother of my mother-in-law . . . still and all if the father's mother comes from a 'long way off' or from a different tribe, apparently the dispensation is given. There are several cases of this kind of union.

Diagram 6



Notes:

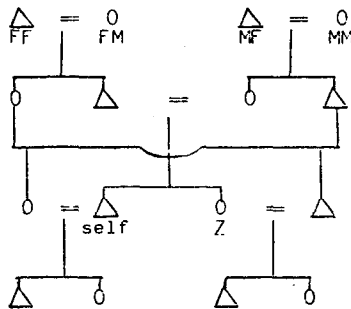
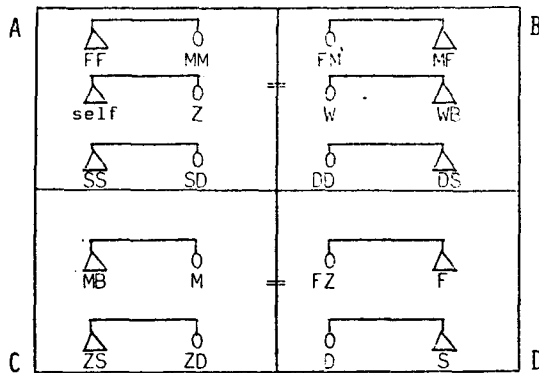
My father's father and father's mother are the parents of my father and his sister, my mother-in-law. My mother's father and mother's mother are the parents of my uncle and my mother.

Note the classificatory identity between (a) myself and father's father – we are both **Buruñu**; (b) my wife and father's mother – they are both **Banaga**; (c) between my brother-in-law and mother's father – they are both **Banaga**; (d) between my sister and mother's mother – they are **Buruñu**.

Diagram 7

Diagram seven reveals my own son and daughter, and my sister's son and daughter. Most of the languages do not distinguish between my son and my sister's son as far as terminology goes. The same goes for my daughter and sister's daughter. However Garadyari is an exception and for this reason we shall use it as a model later on when giving Aboriginal terms for these kinship names.

Diagram 7 (&8)



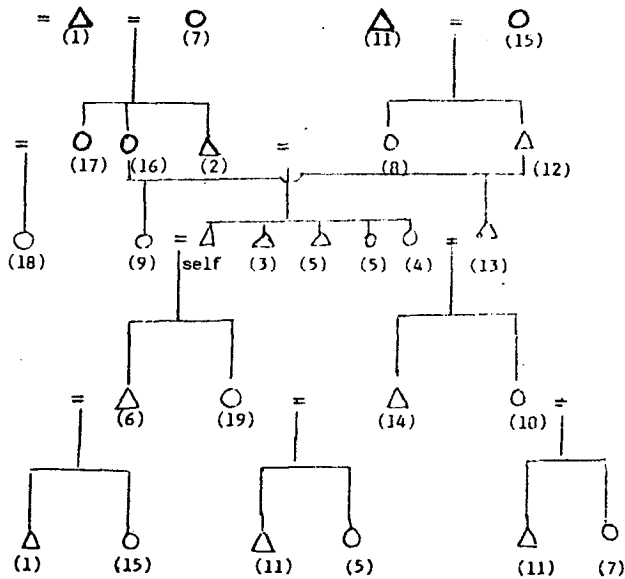
Note:

Note my father and my son have the same skin Garimba as my mother-in-law and my own daughter. My mother and my sister's daughter have the same skin as my uncle and my sister's son.

Diagram 8

Diagram eight (cf. preceding diagram) shows a fifth line, but as far as terminology goes it is the same as the initial grand-parental line in the ascending generation. In effect it means I call my son's son 'grandfather' and my daughter's daughter 'grandmother'. The same holds good for my sister's son's son and my sister's son's daughter: I call them by the same grandparental terminology as in the ascending line. This will become clearer when the Garadyari terms are given to their English counterparts.

Diagram 8 cont.



(1) FF SS	Galudyi gami	(11) MF ZSS	Dyambadu
(2) F	Dyabulu	(12) MB	Gage
(3) B	Babala	(13) WB	Yagu Yiñalbi
(4) Z	Gaburdyu	(14) ZS	Dyalañga
(5) yB, yZ	Margada	(15) MM SD	Gami
(6) S	Uba	(16) WM (FZ)	Malinyanu
(7) FM ZSD	Gabalidy Dyambadu	(17) FZ ("aunty")	Nunyarri
(8) M	Guadary Gudari	(18) FZD ("cousin")	Dyalawai or Yagu (cf. No. 13)
(9) W	Nyuba	(19) D	Uba Wonguda
(10) ZD	Dyalbi		

Note:

With line five the whole process starts over again. Were my galudyi (father's father), and my other galudyi (my own son's son) alive at the same time (and through the classificatory system this can happen) then they would call each other 'brothers' and I would call my grandfather and grandson by the same term – galudyi.

Diagram 9

With diagram nine begin illustrations of modifications to the rule. In this case we are dealing with the case when my father's sister is called 'aunty'. The Garadyari solve this one, one way, but the others differently. This diagram shows how the daughter of an aunty is called *yagu* – a female brother-in-law. Her daughter is called *malinyanu* and the daughter of the *malinyanu* *nilban* or *bilyur* – a straight woman whom I can marry. The brother of *malinyanu* is called a *mugali*.

Diagram 9

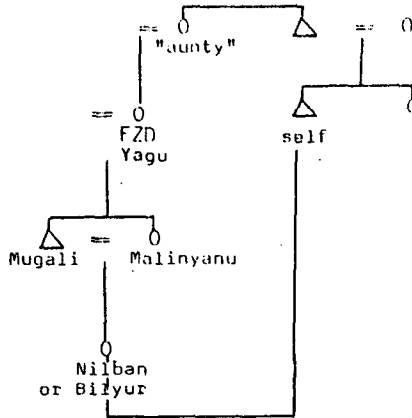


Diagram 10

Diagram ten shows what happens when I call my father's sister 'aunty' if I am not Garadyari. Using Garadyari terms, the daughter of my aunty is called by a special term meaning unmarriageable cousin. In this case let us call her *dyalwal*. Her daughter is my niece *uba wanguda* and the daughter of the latter my *galalidy* or *dyambadu*. The daughter of my *galalidy* is my *malinyanu*, so I can marry her daughter.

Diagram 10

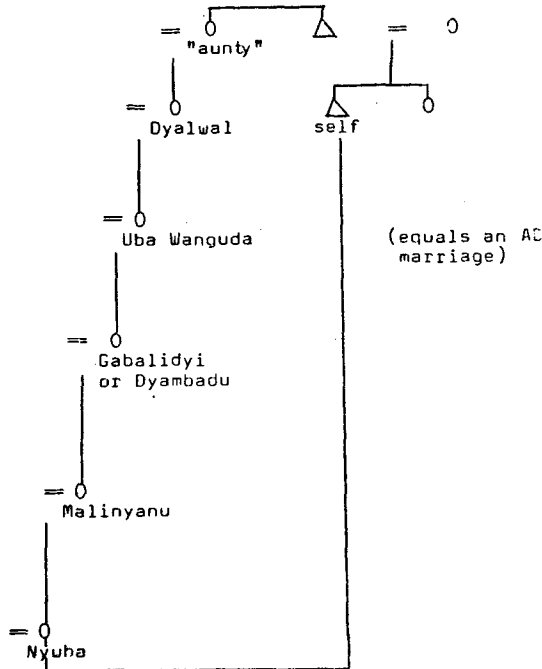
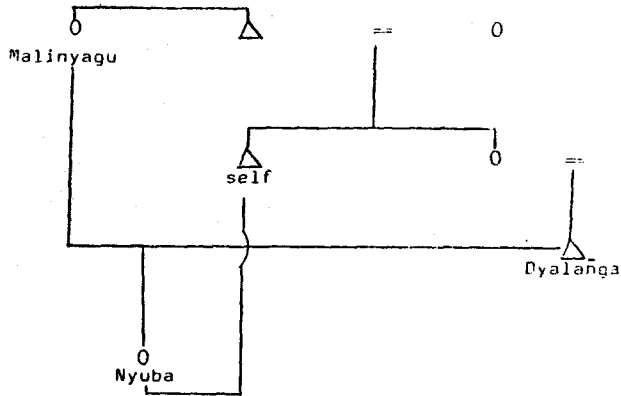


Diagram 11

Diagram eleven shows that sometimes my father's sister, my *malinyanu*, need not be married to my mother's brother. Indeed she can be married to my nephew. In any case I can marry her daughter.

Diagram 11



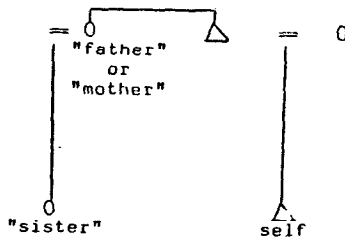
Note:

Note in this case my *dyalanga* calls my mother 'grandparent' and vice versa.

Diagram 12

Diagram twelve shows how my father's sister can be called 'father' – a female father, *dyabulu*. Dr Elkin mentions this. In this case I call the daughter of female father 'sister'. I can in no way marry her or even contemplate marrying her. To call a father's sister 'father' is more severe than calling her 'aunt', though at times I have heard the term *nunyari* translated as 'father'. The sequence then runs as in diagram 10.

Diagram 12



Notes

1. Sometimes my father's sister is called 'mother' (cf. preceding diagram). She can be called 'mother-in-law' or 'female father', but also 'mother'. In this case I call her daughter 'sister' and cannot marry her. The rest proceeds as in diagram 10.
2. It sometimes happens that a woman will rear a boy belonging to the potential son-in-law class. In this case he ceases to call her 'mother-in-law' but calls her 'mother', although his brothers call her *malinyanu* and marry her daughters. This individual cannot marry his 'mother's' daughters though his brothers can. Such a case can be dispensed with but it creates malaise.
3. Whereas I can marry *one* of my mother-in-law's daughters, I may not marry another. She is declared unmarriageable for me but may of course marry one of my tribal brothers. The Aborigines call this procedure 'cutting out'. In this way they spread blood lines.
4. I can marry my mother's brother's daughter (MBD) but my *malinyanu* (mother-in-law) calls my father 'grandfather'.

Concluding Remarks

Assuming I am an Aboriginal male, I not only am related to the rest of my community, as brother, son, grandfather and so on, but my relationship to each and every one is given a special name. There are names too for special combinations of kin. For example, if I see my brother sitting down with my father or if my brother for that matter sees me sitting down with my father, then he can call the pair of us by a special name *gadirañu*. If he sees me and another brother sitting down with my father, he can then call us *gadiramada*.

If my brother sees me sitting down with my mother, then he calls the pair of us *bibarañu*. If he sees my mother with myself and another brother he calls us *bibaramada*.

If I see my father sitting down with my mother than I can call the pair of them *dyamurañu* and if there were several parents sitting down together I would call them all *dyamaramada*.

Up till now I am using Garadyari terminology.

If my father were *Nyañumada* he would call my mother *birnadyi* a straight woman, and if he were to refer to several straight women he would call them *birnara-maliñu*. If my father were referring to himself and his wife, he would refer to the pair of them as *birnara*.

The same goes for all the other languages. There are approximately 170 to 180 possible relationships (can be reduced to 30-40), in the tabulation already given; some of them are repetitive. For example, the relationship between me and my father is described in the same way as between myself and my own son. But in some languages a father/son relationship is described differently in so far as one term expresses the father/son relationship of my paternal grandfather to my father, and the other expresses the relationship as between my son and his son (my grandson).

The purpose behind these notes is to help the enquirer, be he teacher, priest, brother or sister, to understand what is behind this aspect of Aboriginal culture. The teachers then, having understood it, may present the material in simpler form.

This part will be expanded in Notes for La Grange - 1977.

Tabulation of Kinship Terms for Five Language Groups

KIN	SECTIONS ⁴				LANGUAGES				
	A	D	B	C	Garadyari	Dyuwaliny	Yulbaridya	Manala	Nyanumada
<i>male</i>									
FF	X				galudyi	dyaddyadu	yabai	gami	galudyi
F		X			dyabulu	yina	yina	wulu	dyabadu
B	X				babala	babadu	gurda	babala	babala
S		X			uba	walagu	gadya	walagu	budyamu
SS	X				galudyi	dyadyadu	habai	gami	galudyi
<i>female</i>									
FM			X		gabalidyi	ñauwidyi	dyamu	dyambadu	gabalidyi
M				X	gudany	ñamadyi	dilbu yibi	dyula gambadya	bibi
W			X		nyuba	gadu	nyuba	wañu	nyubadyi
FZD ¹			X		dyalwal	bañgu	dyalwal	dyalwal	yingarni
ZD				X	dyalbi	gurdal	gurdal	gurdal	budyamu ²
ZSD			X		gabalidyi	ñauwidyi	dyamu	dyambadu	gabalidyi
<i>male</i>									
MF			X		dyambadu	dyamidi	dyamu	dyambadu	dyamudyi
MB				X	gaga	gaga	gaga	gaga	gaga
WB			X		yagu	numbaña	margunda	yagu	yagu
ZS				X	dyalanga	walagu	gadya	walagu	budyamu
ZSS			X		dyambadu	dyamidi	dyamu	dyambadu	dyamudyi
<i>female</i>									
MM	X				gami	dyadyadu	yabai	gami	gamidyi
FZ		X			malinyanu ñunyari	mali ñunyari	yumari ³ yuñgu-dyara	mali ñunyari	marugu dyanidu
Z	X				gaburdyu	ñabalu	dyudu nyarumba	ñundudu	gangudyi
D		X			uba wanguda	gurdal	gurdal	gurdal	budyamu
SD	X				gami	dyadyadu	yabai	gami	gamidyi

Notes:

1. unmarriageable cousin, cf. Note 3 above.
2. in southern Nyañumada own daughter and sister's daughter are *gurdal*.
3. also *ñunyari*.
4. The sections have been allocated in this example on the supposition that *ego* is a male member of Section A.

NOONKANBAH: THE REPORTS, STATEMENTS, DOCUMENTS

P. McMILLAN MSC

The dispute at Noonkanbah has caused dissension among 'white' Australians. Those who support the Yungngora community are labelled 'left wing socialists' while those who support the Court Government are accused of 'blatant genocide'. The purpose of this paper is to collate and synthesise the reports, statements, and documents surrounding the decision to mine Noonkanbah.

Noonkanbah Community

Noonkanbah Station is situated about 100 kms from Fitzroy Crossing in the Southern Kimberleys in WA's north west. The station was acquired for the Yungngora Community in 1976 by the Aboriginal Lands Fund Commission (a Commonwealth body) to be administered by the WA Aboriginal Lands Trust as a pastoral lease to be run by the Yungngora Community.

The Aboriginal Lands Trust's bearing on operations at Noonkanbah comes from its majority shareholding in the pastoral company formed to run the station. The Trust's role in these properties at present is budget control until such time as the groups are ready to assume full responsibilities of management, when the Trust will consider either a sub-lease for the remaining unexpired period or the actual transfer to the communities.

West Australian 29/8/80

The community consists of 150-200 people. 'There are about 12000 cattle on our land (400,000 hectares) and last week we got good prices for 450 head - we've got \$30,000 to spend on new fences and bores. We want to build better houses for the people. We've got 56 children and they all go to school. I never got any education when I was growing up on Noonkanbah. I had to work with the stock. We look after our old people too. Before we had Noonkanbah most of our people had to live on the reserves round the Kimberley. There was nothing for them but drink and fighting.'

*Age: interview of
Mr Skinner, 6/9/79*

The Noonkanbah people want their children to be able to cope in the white man's world. They want their children to be able to read and write and use mathematics. They want their children to have options of modern society which were never really open to them. They also want them to know the ways of their own people and to preserve their language and their culture.

*West Australian 4/8/80:
a statement by Senator
Chaney and Mr Viner*

What went wrong?

September 17, 1976. Exploration Permit 97 granted to Whitestone Petroleum Aust. Ltd. and others for a period of 5 years.

AMAX joined the group and became the operator on December 16, 1976.

Noonkanbah: The Facts,
issued by the WA Government, 1980

In late 1978, the community took their objections to tenements taken out on their land to a Broome Warden's Court hearing. The Court ruled that the company's (AMAX) exploration could continue subject to a number of conditions, including a requirement that the Museum ensure that the Aboriginal Heritage Act (1972) was complied with.

In April 1979, a Museum Officer visited Noonkanbah and after talks with Aboriginal elders concluded that there existed many conflicts of interest with the company (contrary to a report presented to the Museum Sites Department in June 1979 by the company).

In May 1979 the Under Secretary for Mines requested a Museum survey of AMAX's drill sites.

Extract from *Black Australia: Profile of Struggle*

Report by the Museum Sites Department on the Pea Hill area at Noonkanbah, June 1979.

Conclusions:

- 1) The whole area within which any drill hole could be located by the company falls under the influence of the special sites shown to me by the Aborigines of clan descent group for that area.
- 2) The site complex is significant in both religious and economic context. Mythological connections are both authentic and ancient and are intimately linked to the economic present.
- 3) It is currently the opinion of the Aboriginal community that any utilization of the drill zone, particularly the substrate, by the company would be deleterious to the site complex.

Any disturbance of the surface or substrate near these important sites is seen by the Aborigines as a sacrilegious act. They feel it is a direct assault on the proper continuation of abundant supplies of several food sources which are both economically and mythically important, to disturb this area by drilling or sampling the ground. Further to drill a hole in this area and remove the subsurface to the surface is seen as a disastrous inversion of the natural order.

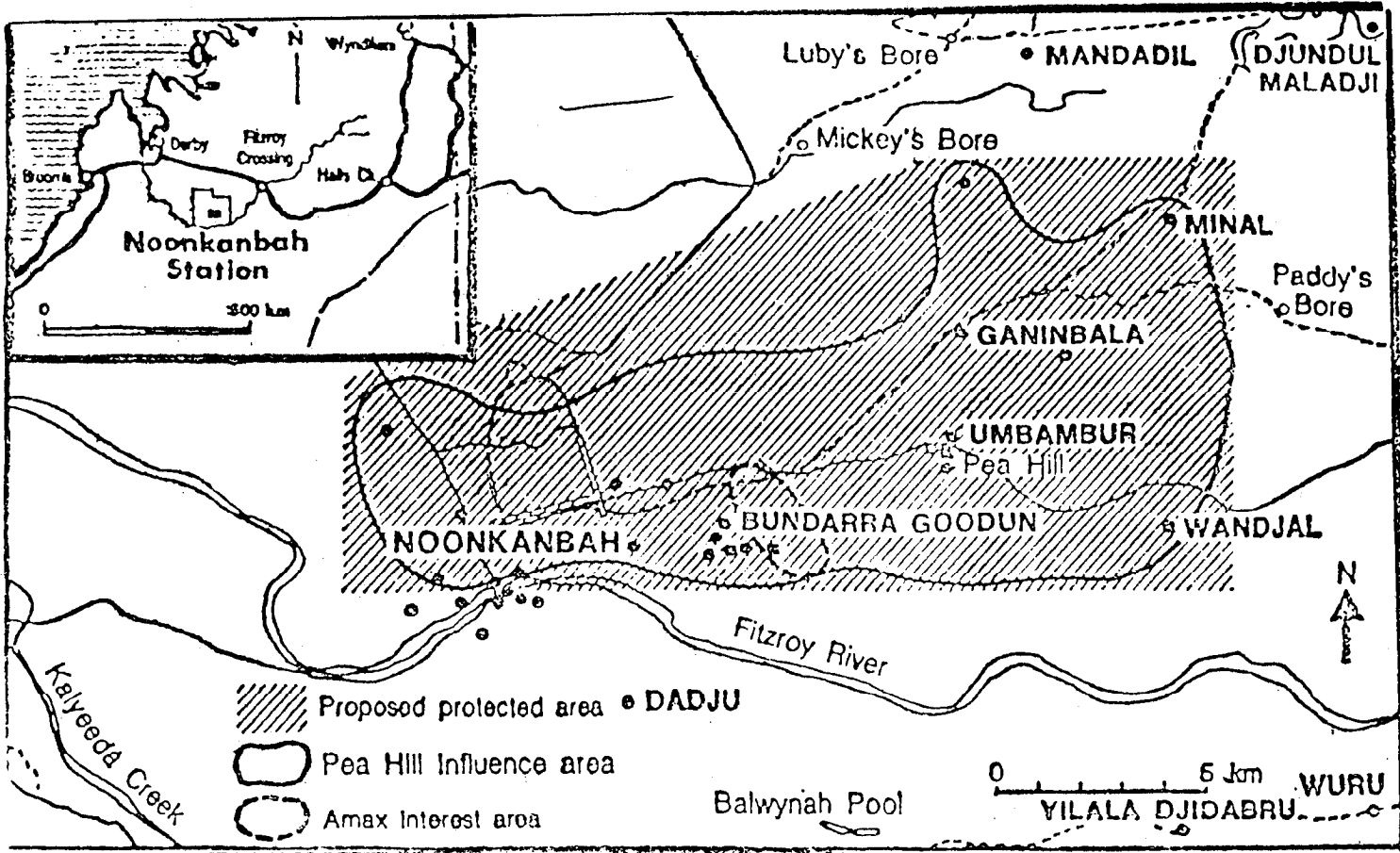
The WA Museum:

We are the only museum in Australia that has responsibility for Aboriginal sacred sites.

... the trustees see their responsibility to all the people of WA, not just the Aboriginal people of WA.

We have to rely on an evaluation of Aboriginal opinion. We get the best advice we can. We talk to the right people, the elders who have the traditional knowledge. ... It takes a long time to talk calmly, quietly, sensibly to the right people.

If the owner, which may be a mining company under an exploration lease arrangement, wants to destroy a site, it has to seek the trustees' permission. Under the Act, the trustees then can do one of two things – give permission or say 'No'. If they say 'No' the proposal goes to Executive Council and if Executive Council agrees then it becomes a protected area.



AMAX, A VERY BIG FISH

Amax, the United States-based company embroiled in the drilling row at Noonkanbah, is the world's largest diversified mining corporation.

As such it is entwined in the US corporate sector with some fine connections. The biggest shareholder in Amax is Standard Oil of California (SOCAL), with a 19.3 per cent stake.

As America's fourth largest oil company it is a member of the 'Seven Sisters', the term used to describe the world's top seven oil corporations.

SOCAL has virtually no direct operations in Australia, but provides the 'Cal' in Caltex, which is a joint venture with Texaco, another Sister. The second biggest shareholder in Amax is the British-based Selection Trust, with a 7.51 per cent interest.

Selection Trust earlier this year was taken over by BP, yet another Sister.

Amax has a concentrated ownership with the top 38 shareholders holding 54 per cent of the company's shares. Among that list is the energy giant General Electric which also owns Utah, the big Queensland coal producer.

Amax has interlocking directorships with other world companies.

Some Amax directors are also on the boards of IBM, Pepsico (the competitor to Coca Cola), Chrysler, Pan American, the Chase Manhattan Bank, and Singer, the sewing machine company.

One Amax director, Mr Carl M. Loeb, junior, is vice-chairman of the US National Council on Crime and Delinquency while an honorary director and former active participant in the company is George W. Ball, a former Under Secretary of State in President Johnson's administration.

While Amax is in the news for its oil drilling, its main operations centre on mining and processing of exotic and base metals. Amax's oil and gas division is quite small in world terms although it does have a 12.5 per cent stake in producing fields of the Dutch section of the North Sea.

Overall Amax is expanding at a rapid rate. Turnover rose to just under \$3000 million in 1979, a 50 per cent jump on the previous year. Its profits after tax were \$365 million, double that of 1978.

In Australia, Amax has a 25 per cent holding in the giant West Australian Mt Newman iron ore project. Amax and Mitsui of Japan are joint partners in Alumax, one of the world's big six aluminium producers.

Alumax plans to build an aluminium smelter in the Hunter Valley region of NSW in conjunction with BHP. In a separate venture with BHP, Amax plans to develop a large coal deposit at Boggabri also in the Hunter Valley.

Amax also has gold and bauxite interests in Australia, and of course its oil exploration programme in Western Australia.

Internationally Amax is well known for its stranglehold on the world molybdenum market. Molybdenum is used as a steel and alloy hardener and is a very valuable metal.

Base metals like copper, lead and zinc make up 39 per cent of turnover with a similar spread of operations. Amax's energy sector is expanding and its coal output is about twice that of Utah in Queensland. The energy and industrial chemical sections together account for 21 per cent of turnover.

For Amax, Noonkanbah is only a small cookie beside its world cake.

Age, 25/8/80

If along the line the Government says it wishes mining to proceed, then it has the power legally to direct us to give consent for that to take place.

Some people didn't seem to be aware that the power of direction by the Minister was in the Act . . . *It hadn't been invoked before.*

West Australian, 17/6/80

'Since that article [the above] appeared, the Aboriginal Heritage Act has been amended, mainly so that the trustees can recommend to the Minister whether disturbance to sites should be allowed or not; he then has responsibility taking into account that recommendation and other factors, for deciding whether or not to allow disturbance.'

Extract from a letter to me from the Museum

Before seeing the report the acting Minister for Cultural Affairs directed the Museum Trustees to consent to drilling. The Minister later claimed he based his decision on a skeletal outline of the report provided by the Museum. The Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS), acting on behalf of the Yungngora Pastoral Company secured an interim injunction to prevent mining activity at Noonkanbah.¹ This injunction was later lifted by the Supreme Court of WA.

Following the court decision, Aborigines from all over the Kimberleys congregated on the Noonkanbah Station to physically prevent any desecration of sacred sites.

Extract from *Black Australia: Profile of Struggle*

Why the Land is Sacred

The spiritual relationship (between land and people) is given emphasis in the belief that for a child to be born, a spirit must first enter the mother's womb to give the child life.

The spirit derives from one of the various sites associated with the Dreamtime heroes. Consequently there is a direct personal link between the spirit being, the child and the place from which the spirit came.

That place is the source of the person's life force and he or she is inseparably connected with it. The connection is timeless, beginning before birth and continuing after death.

Aborigines believe that if their land is destroyed then they too are destroyed. For in the destruction of a man's land you effectively destroy him by breaking the birth cycle of the spirit which must return to the place from where it came.

This link with the land is broken neither by death nor by distance from the spiritual site. (It is not surprising that Aborigines do not publicly reveal, till they must, information which is of spiritual significance and importance only to them.)

Extract from a statement by Senator Chaney and Mr Viner in the *West Australian*, 4/8/80

¹ On 3/8/80 the Minister for Cultural Affairs, Mr Grayden, called for the disbanding of the ALS, claiming it to be 'professionally engaged in manipulating Aborigines'. (Two days later he rejected Commonwealth suggestions for resolving Aboriginal land-rights disputes in WA.) On 21/8/80 the State Government renewed its call to have the ALS disbanded. In reply the WA Law Society strongly supported the ALS.

Their land is a mythological tracing board engraved by their culture-heroes; it is the home of their own spirits from pre-existence unto death.

The doctrine is part of their overall philosophy of the universe and man, which is expressed in their myths and rituals. In these, past and present, the individual and the group, and men, nature and the world are one.

A. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, 1974: 381

In a land where the supernatural beings revered and honoured by their human reincarnations were living, not in the sky, but at clearly marked sites in the mountains, the springs, the sandhills and the plains, religious acts had an immediate personal intimacy rarely, if ever, equalled in other religious systems.

R. Berndt, *Australian Aboriginal Anthropology*, 1970: 133

For us, the Aboriginal people of the Kimberley, land is sacred. Land is something of deep spiritual significance. Because of the nature of the relationship between ourselves and our land, the deprivation or destruction of that land is the direct cause of the destruction of our society.

The land is my mother culture

It is my spirit world.

The land gives us our life.

Our tribal law was there from the beginning.

*The land, the emu, the kangaroo, snake, fish and turkey
have all been put there.*

This land is the womb – to us it is everything.

For us, the rivers, the wind all has meaning.

We have our tribal law. We call it daragu.

This is our tribal land, our tribal story.

This law stays in the ground.

*We can't change it. We've got it in our flesh today
– in these marks on our bodies.*

We own this land, and we follow the dreamtime story.

*When the whiteman first came to this land,
they saw the Aborigine painted up in his dreamtime story,
and they shot him in his dreamtime.*

The whiteman says he owns this land.

*But he can't read that land, those sacred areas,
that tribal law ground.*

The whiteman has taken our land away.

Now we are fighting to get back our land.

*We will put our heads together, and speak with one voice,
to ask the government for land rights.*

For, without our land we are nothing.

When the whiteman tries to destroy our land, we cry.

We cry in our hearts for our country.

You mine our land. You break our bodies.

Whiteman took the land away from the Aboriginal people before.

What more do they want?

Extract from information sent to me by
Rev Robert Stringer, Assistant Superintendent
of the Uniting Church, Western Australian Synod

'The argument which Aborigines, churchmen and anthropologists have with Sir Charles in the current Noonkanbah dispute is the ease with which he can take Aboriginal traditional, cultural, spiritual concepts born thousands of years ago and compress them into localised and isolated physical features, declaring all the remainder of the landscape to be devoid of any serious significant value to Aborigines. Thus he can accept Pea Hill, an isolated little pimple, as a sacred site, so defined by Aborigines and limited by a European cultural term, and completely ignore the very real area of vital spiritual influence flowing from it, even when acquainted unambiguously of this fact by local Aboriginal elders.

On March 15th, 1980 the *Daily News* contained the report of an interview with an Aboriginal elder from Noonkanbah, representing the Yungngora community. The following are excerpts from his statement:

We want to tell you about the land where AMAX want to drill; and what we think about that land and what we are doing to protect it. The area is a goanna place. All around on the top of the ground the stones are really the goanna eggs. The sacred goannas have been living there under the ground since the Dreamtime. If the drill goes down and kills the goannas it will kill the spirits of the dead people living there too, and it will be no more for use to eat . . . but they already have messed up the roads and made a big mess in the Maladji place for the goanna. They are making the old people upset. One old man who has to look after that place is already sick; the spirits from that place are getting at him. The Government and the miners didn't listen to our word. We told them this would happen but they didn't care. We are going to keep fighting for our country. This week we are building two camps, one at each drill site. If we lose the case in court we will move all our people on to this area to stop any more mining work. We must save our sacred places . . . last year the Museum did the report on the Pea Hill area, but the Government didn't listen to them.

It is obvious that this man was talking about more than Pea Hill itself. He was speaking of a complex centred on Pea Hill, which includes both drill sites, and in which are sacred places; hence the concern of Aboriginal people for the area of influence greater than Pea Hill itself.'

An answer by Don McCaskill²

to Sir Charles Court's article in the *West Australian*, 18/8/80

One of the Museum workers who prepared the material for the report said: 'The one thing that should be made constantly clear is that prior to ever knowing AMAX drilling plans, the Aborigines claimed that the whole area should be protected. No distinction can be made between the area of the proposed drilling and Pea Hill in regards to its religious significance.' He was adamant that no delineation could be made between the significance of Pea Hill and the two drilling sites about four kilometres away.

West Australian, 2/4/80

Resolutions vs Inevitable

— The following is an excerpt from a letter to Sir Charles Court from the Yungngora community, dated 18/7/80.

Proposed agreement:

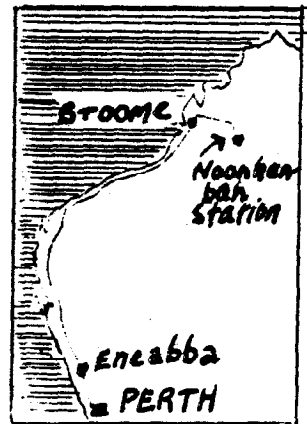
² Rev Don McCaskill: 'Minister of the Subiaco Uniting Church. Ten years experience in the outback of Western Australia with an intimate knowledge of the Aboriginal people of Wūuna and the desert country. Studied anthropology and subsequently worked as a site recorder for the WA Museum, identifying and recording sacred sites.' (Extract from information sent to me by the Australian Council of Churches)

- 1) *The community agrees to carry out a programme of mapping of sacred areas on the station in conjunction with the Museum and community anthropologists by stages as follows:*
 - a) *the area along the Fitzroy River from Paradise to Quانبun boundary and ten miles north of the river by the end of this year.*
 - b) *the balance of the station done within eighteen months.*
- 2) *Mapping to be done on the following conditions:*
 - a) *the Government is to accept any future recommendations of the Museum.*
 - b) *the mapping to be carried out with the present Aboriginal Heritage Act to apply.*
 - c) *no mineral exploration to be carried out on the station until the mapping is done, then such exploration to be done through negotiation between the parties involved.*
- 3) *To that end the community undertakes to negotiate with the Government towards terms and conditions for such mining exploration and developments on these areas of the station which are not Aboriginal sites within the meaning of the Aboriginal Heritage Act.*
- 4) *No drilling on protected areas or mineral exploration of any kind within such areas.*
- 5) *A promise from the Government that it will accept any further recommendations from the Museum about the protection of sacred areas.*
- 6) *A promise that there will at no time be mining or drilling in the area delineated by the Museum Report of 1979 and recommended for protection.*

- The oil rig left Eneabba for Noonkanbah 'travelling the back roads and using State Emergency fuel dumps to avoid union disruption. Police outriders will clear any obstruction on the roads.' (Age, 8/8/80)

- The WA Government pledged to do anything in its power to ensure the convoy got through.

'We want to see drivers free from threats and stand-over tactics', the Minister for Police, Mr Hassell, said last night. 'The Government wants to make sure that the rig will arrive at Noonkanbah by whatever means we have in our power. We hope there will be no trouble at Noonkanbah but the Government is prepared for it.' (Age, 8/8/80)



- 'The convoy, escorted by several police and road traffic authority cars and motor cycles moved with military precision under the cover of darkness early yesterday . . . the convoy of trucks had been issued with new number plates [so the owner's identity would be concealed]' (Courier Mail, 8/8/80)

- 'Reporters in the North have been denied access to information about charges laid against unionists [attempting to block the convoy] in the Pilbara yesterday. [In normal circumstances reporters have access to charge details once they are laid.] ... At Karratha yesterday, a Channel 9 cameraman, Fred Miles, was struck by a police vehicle while he was filming a union picket line.' (*West Australian*, 11/8/80)
- 'The lead truck smashed the [protestors'] banner carried by the men, narrowly missing them ... Mr Reynolds [AMAX exploration manager] said several times that negotiations had been upset because AMAX could not deal directly with the Aboriginals concerned.' (*Courier Mail*, 12/8/80)
- 'AMAX was willing to move the Noonkanbah rig till a settlement was reached, the ACTU president, Mr Hawke, said last night. But the Premier of WA would not consider the alternative site and would not grant the company a licence to drill, he said. ... Mr Reynolds said that AMAX did not have an alternative site ...' (*West Australian*, 21/8/80)
- 'The WA Government is pressing AMAX to begin its drilling programme at Noonkanbah this year. It has threatened to rescind the company's licence otherwise.' (*Australian*, 21/8/80)
- 'Sir Charles confirmed yesterday that Mr Reef [AMAX senior vice-president] had telephoned him about the proposal [an alternative site] but [Sir Charles] remained adamant about drilling at Noonkanbah.' (*Age*, 22/8/80)
- 'Canberra: An Opposition move to have the Noonkanbah dispute referred to the House of Representatives standing committee on Aboriginal Affairs was blocked yesterday by the Government.' (*West Australian*, 22/8/80)
- 'The Prime Minister ... agreed to meet a delegation of Noonkanbah Aborigines following their threat to take their case to the United Nations.' (*Age*, 22/8/80)
- 'Sir Charles Court issued a strong statement asserting the State's right to control mining and pastoral leases and accusing the Commonwealth of "meddling" in the issue.' (*Canberra Times*, 25/8/80)
- 'The P.M., Mr Fraser, yesterday reiterated his support for oil drilling at Noonkanbah, just a few hours before he and seven of his ministers met with National Aboriginal Conference [NAC] leaders.' (*Financial Review*, 26/8/80)
- 'The Federal Government would meet mining companies in an attempt to settle the oil drilling dispute on the Noonkanbah Aboriginal station, the P.M., Mr Fraser, said today. The companies have a concern that there are not confrontation circumstances, Mr Fraser said.' (*Brisbane Telegraph*, 26/8/80)
- 'The P.M., Mr Fraser, has ruled out any chance of the Federal Government using its powers to override State laws and block oil drilling at Noonkanbah.' (*Age*, 26/8/80)
- 'It became clear during the discussions with the NAC on Monday that the major concern of Aborigines was the preservation of their traditional way of life.' (*Australian*, 27/8/80)
- 'When asked what AMAX would do if either the WA or Federal Government blocked exploration at Noonkanbah, Mr Reef said: "If it was an arbitrary decision then I assume there would be argument and discussion about compensation".' (*Age*, 27/8/80)
- 'Drilling of the sacred Noonkanbah site began yesterday while the Noonkanbah Aboriginal community was away from the pastoral lease.
The WA Government took possession of a rig, and a company recently formed for the job started work on the site.' (*Age*, 30/8/80)

Extracts from a Statement by Sir Charles Court (these extracts were in reply to the joint statement by Senator Chaney and Mr Viner):

- pastoral properties have the 'specific aim of helping Aborigines to develop their management skills and to generate economic independence to some degree at least'.
- essentially a place 'where the old are secure and the young are given the opportunity to train properly for the options that are open to them'.
- 'The purpose of our assistance is to enable them to take their place in the community, whether in rural or urban situations, with a reasonable prospect of providing a satisfactory lifestyle for themselves and opportunities for their children.'
- '... special steps must be taken to ensure that the lifestyle of any Aboriginal pastoral community is protected from social or personal damage which could result from mining activities.'
- 'A new legal framework is not needed. Genuine goodwill is.'

The Motives

1. WA Government

Considering that the Government

- a) received a report from the Department of Mines that estimated the likelihood of finding oil at odds of greater than 50:1 against
 - b) directed the Museum, which it had never done before, to consent to drilling
 - c) gave this direction before the final report of the Museum was made
 - d) rejected AMAX's proposal to move to another site while the Government negotiated with the Aborigines
 - e) employed a company organised specifically to drill oil on Noonkanbah
 - f) 'CSR's consent had not been formalised when the Government took possession and commenced to drill using a crew assembled by another contractor.' [CSR were drilling contractors]
 - g) 'No government could have granted it [the drill site] as an area of influence because it would have been liable to compensation of possibly several million or even hundreds of millions of dollars' (Mr Grayden, Minister for Cultural Affairs, 22/8/80)
- indicates to me that the Court Government was not concerned about the spiritual/religious needs of the Yungngora community; rather, the Government has used the Noonkanbah dispute as a test case for future land-rights and mining deals.

2. Prime Minister

One reason why the Noonkanbah people applied to speak at the United Nations was because of the 'failure of the Federal Government to invoke its constitutional power to intervene in, and effect a peaceful settlement to, the Noonkanbah dispute' (*Age*, 22/8/80). The threat of the Yungngora community to send a delegation to the UN was not taken lightly by the Prime Minister, because of (as reported in the *Age* 25/8/80) possible repercussions this might have for the Commonwealth Games to be held in Brisbane in 1982. Thus the Prime Minister became involved.

Colbung Affair

Mr Ken Colbung, the chairman of the Aboriginal Lands Trust, said on the 29/8/80 that sacred rites were not at risk in the Noonkanbah dispute and asked the union movement to withdraw their bans on drilling at Noonkanbah station.

Mr Colbung said that if the bans were lifted, only one exploratory hole would be drilled this dry season, and there would be further negotiations before a decision was made on further drilling.

Financial Review, 29/8/80

But the Noonkanbah community said last night that Mr Colbung had been acting without their knowledge or authorisation, and they were angry at what they saw as a Government-inspired move to back them into a corner.

Age, 29/8/80

Mr Cook [secretary of the WA Trades and Labour Council] said that when he received the letter from Mr Colbung he tried to contact him but found that he was not home. His wife said 'she would be surprised if he (Mr Colbung) had sent that message' (*West Australian, 29/9/80*).

Federal Opposition sources said last night they believed some pressure may have been applied to Mr Colbung by the WA Government.

Financial Review, 29/8/80

3. Union Development

The president of the ACTU, Mr Hawke, has asked American trade unions for help in a final bid to prevent drilling on sacred Aboriginal land at Noonkanbah station in WA.

Age, 9/9/80

Eight trade unionists were arrested yesterday when they tried to block the convoy of trucks carrying an oil drilling rig to Noonkanbah.

Age, 11/8/80

The Transport Workers Union says it knows the identity of each driver in the Noonkanbah convoy because it has its own man in the contingent. The TWU would ensure that Australia-wide bans were placed on these drivers.

West Australian, 11/8/80

That rig, had certain unions wanted it, could not have moved from Eneabba. It could have been stopped at three or four places in the Pilbara. Instead of congregating at a spot in Roeburne where Blind Freddie and his dog could have halted the convoy, they gathered on one of the longest and straightest stretches of the North West Highway where even a Panzer division would have had its hands full trying to slow it down.

Bishop Howell Witt in *Anglican Messenger*, September, 1980

4. Stirrers

[But] the sacred site proliferation needs fair-minded testing. The manipulators of modern Aboriginals will sell the guilt-ridden white community the Sydney Harbour Bridge as blandly as any super-salesman who sights a sucker. Do we buy it until we find out whether the deal is genuine?

Max Harris, *The Bulletin*, 16/9/80

Dr P. O'Brien (senior lecturer in politics, University of WA) is quoted as saying of white activists:

Their commitment is to the Socialist Myth. Consequently they are interested not so much in protecting alleged 'sacred Aboriginal sites' but in preventing the further desecration of Australian soil by capitalism – the great cause of the world's evil in their view. They want to drive the spirit of capitalism from the land and are prepared to exploit Aborigines and their rights in the attempt to do so.

Age, 3/10/80

Media Statement by Mr S. West MHR, shadow minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

The so-called 'threatened violence' (by the Aborigines) seemed to amount to warnings that in Aboriginal religious belief, future natural misfortunes might affect those responsible for drilling. (3/4/80)

Noonkanbah: The Facts (issued by the WA Government, September, 1980)

The cause of the confrontation at Noonkanbah was the interference of outside influences, partly Aboriginal but mainly European. They persuaded some of the leaders of the Yungngora community that they could gain far more for themselves if they declared total control of the property and banned all exploration.

An Alternative

Taken from *Aboriginal Land Rights in the Northern Territory: What it Means and How it will work*, Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

The Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) 1976:

- provides for Aborigines to gain title to existing reserves and legal machinery for them to claim vacant Crown land on traditional grounds. (p.1)
- mining can take place only with their [the Aborigines'] consent and there is no limitation on the extent of any financial reward for consent to mining. (p.2)
- should Aboriginal consent be withheld, the Government may allow mining or exploration to proceed if it is considered essential in the national interest, subject to disallowance of such a decision by either House of the Government Parliament. (p.2-3)
- expresses the distinctive right of Aboriginal people to retain – through their relationship with the land – their identity and culture. (p.8)

Effects of Act:

Since the granting of land rights to Aborigines in the NT we have witnessed a resurgence of what is now called 'Aboriginality' – a renewed sense of identity, renewed vigour and a revival of interest in traditional culture among Aboriginal people. (p.11)

Apartheid

Integration is the ultimate goal of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. However they believe they need voluntary separatism first, to build a reservoir of confidence and dignity which can be drawn on when there is the later participation in the wider society.

Short term separation of an oppressed people, to give them the ability to achieve a long term integration on more equal terms is very different from apartheid imposed on a powerless people.

C. Forsyth & D. Tiranti, 'Aborigines and Mining – the Conflict',
New Internationalist, No. 77, July, 1979

The freedom to integrate Australian culture with Aboriginal culture is facilitated by the programme of self-management:

It requires that a group of people should get together and recognise common interests to achieve common aims which perhaps individuals alone might not be able to do. It also requires that the group should then accept responsibility for the decisions and actions it takes.

It gives the option of wholly or partially adopting a European lifestyle, as well as the right to retain their social identity.

Self-management aims to allow Aboriginals to determine their own goals. Within these goals they may decide their own priorities in the allocation of finance and other resources, evaluate the effectiveness of existing programmes and formulate new programmes. Through this process, a state of self-sufficiency should gradually be achieved.

Department of Aboriginal Affairs, *op. cit.*: p.19

With the establishment of a school at Noonkanbah the children were not only being educated in their own culture and traditions, but also 'white man's' culture. There is an integration of the two, which enables the Aboriginal to cope with our culture and maintains a uniquely historical Australian culture.

Church Involvement

- ... to bring the good news to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted and give sight to the blind. (Luke 4:18)
- '... the mission of the Church is fulfilled by that activity which makes her fully present to all men and nations.' (*Ad Gentes*, ch. 1)
- Pope John Paul II, addressing Indian chiefs in Brazil, asked authorities to:
 - ... recognise the right to live in peace and serenity, without the fear or the true nightmare of being thrown off their lands to benefit others, and to be ensured of vital land, which will be a base not only for their survival, but also for the preservation of their identity as a group.
- 'International ecumenical community deeply concerned about reports that armed police including police aircraft are being used to support AMAX petroleum drilling of Aboriginal sites. Urge immediate personal intervention to halt drilling pending negotiations requested by Noonkanbah people. If mining proceeds in sacred sites the very survival of Aboriginal people is at stake.' (Cable to Australian Prime Minister from World Council of Churches)
- 'Australia's Catholic Bishops have warned that Aborigines could be crushed by the thrust of mining companies into their traditional homelands.' (*Age*, 4/9/80)
- 'Four churchmen were each fined \$16.50 when they appeared in the Fitzroy Crossing Court yesterday on charges of obstructing traffic on the access road into Noonkanbah station.
[Those fined were] Rev Don McCaskill of the Uniting Church, Subiaco; the Rev Bernard Clarke, assistant general secretary for the Commission for World Missions; the Rev Martin Chittleborough, of the Australian Council of Churches; and Pastor C. Harris, an Aboriginal of the Uniting Church, Brisbane.' (*West Australian*, 14/8/80)
- Other church personnel at Noonkanbah: Mr Peter Mullins (South Australian and Northern Territory representative on the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace); Rev Robert Stringer; Mr George Barnsley (Treasurer of the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church); Rev Anthony Rayapan (Uniting Church).

- ‘The principle of national interests in relation to minerals should be safeguarded . . . The government has a positive obligation to safeguard the Aboriginal way of living.’ (Extracts from a statement by Bishop Jobst, *Advocate*, 4/9/80)

Conclusion

Australia is the only former British colony not to recognise native title to land. The Aboriginal people have been continually forced to surrender land. There was no recognition of Aboriginal land ownership, no compensation for dispossession, no treaty, despite the resistance of the Aboriginal tribes to their conquerors.

At the present time the land the Aboriginal people do possess on the whole is land that nobody else had found useful. But now, at Noonkanbah, they are even forced to surrender that. While it is true that oil was discovered, latest reports indicate that it is not feasible to continue research and the contractors are preparing to fill in the holes drilled.

At the basis of the problem is a clash of culture. Aboriginal people are metaphysical in the sense that they have a similar perspective on life to that of the early Greek philosophers: leisure is more important than work. For the Greeks leisure was needed for communal interaction (a characteristic of Aborigines) and to contemplate their existential being. Thus the work ethic with its materialist influence (so much a part of our present age) was unimportant. The excuse for mining on Noonkanbah was our (material) need for oil; to maintain our consumer way of life.

But this excuse was not the only motive of the Court Government. It used Noonkanbah as a test case for future land rights and mining deals. As well as the information in ‘The Motives’ section of this article, it should also be remembered the Government attempted to disband the ALS after it supported the Yungngora community, used its authority (which it had never done before) to direct the Museum to consent to drilling, and has since amended the Heritage Act reducing the Museum to an advisory capacity.

The people of Noonkanbah had begun an effective programme to maintain their ‘Aboriginality’ while educating their children in the ‘white-man’s ways’. They never wanted mining on their land and the Museum affirmed the authenticity of the religious connections to the land. When the State Government refused to listen to the anthropologists, the Yungngora community appealed to the Federal Government and finally were reduced to begging for overseas support.

Noonkanbah wasn’t just another problem. It was a plain exercise of the axiom ‘might is right’.

Annex

On 30/9/80, oil was discovered 2640 metres below the surface.

On 20/11/80, it was reported on the radio that the drilling holes were to be filled in.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF
'TRANSCENDENCE' ETC.

REPLICATION (*Dan O'Donovan OCSO*)

Djarinjan (Lombadina)
8 September, 1980
birthday, Mother of God

Dear Martin,

I have read your reply to my 'Open Letter', (*Compass*, June '80).¹ Many thanks for it.

If I read you correctly, you are saying that Aboriginal religion has the insight of transcendence, or even, of a Transcendent (Nugumanj).

That is interesting to me, as your interpretation of the data you have studied.

You well distinguish 'insight' and 'expression'. In dialogue like this, however (with a presumed Aboriginal interlocutor), it is only through his/her 'expression' that you or I can arrive at any sort of perception of the 'insight'. Evidence is the only thing one has to work on.

In your letter you adduce one piece of what may be evidence in favour of your contention.

As this represents for me the clearest statement of your position, we might take a closer look at it.

Like most people (you say) they may not have the word 'transcendent' in their vocabulary (nor even a clear *concept* of it), but they indicate it in a figurative way when they say something like, 'All the dreamtime clan spirits like Kunmanggur, Karwadi and the rest *had the same stories about* Nugumanj as we (ordinary human) people have'. That is, Nugumanj is above the dreamtime, i.e. the realities of clan and 'totem', of human beings, culture heroes and the countryside. (emphasis yours)

Now, in that last sentence, the words, 'That is', introduce *your* inference. I ask myself, would a Murintjabin 'official' make it his or hers?

It is possible that, as a result of various influences — even in pre-contact times, such influences were at work, as Stanner and others observe — the Murintjabin might now have taken the leap you suggest. You would be in a better position than I to know that.

In view, however of what appears to me as the unanimous opinion of the anthropologists who have spoken of the Aboriginal Dreaming, Nugumanj would in that case still be an exception and not typical. Whereas it is the typical we are looking for, I think, rather than the exceptional when we try to prepare the ground for a theological dialogue.

¹ Dan O'Donovan OCR: 'Open Letter to Author of *New, Old and Timeless*' (*Nymuna*, No. 4, 1980: 1-6; *Compass*, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 1980: 32-36).
M.J. Wilson MSC: 'Reply to Fr Dan O'Donovan's Letter' (*Nelen Yubu*, No. 4, 1980: 36-38; *Compass*, same issue, pp.36-38).

The typical Dreamworld, as I understand it, is unitary, and does not know of an 'above'.

Of course, as is obvious, both my term 'outside' — 'Aboriginal cosmography has no outside . . .' — and yours, 'above', are not spatial terms. To clarify the idea, Raimundo Panikkar's words may be helpful.

Between these two aspects of reality, the temporal and the timeless, oscillate not only the whole of Vedic wisdom but also the universal thinking of mankind. Monodimensional Man, as also monodimensional reality, means death and stagnation. Indeed, the balance is not easy to maintain and a dichotomy is no less harmful than a monistic vision. A subtle form of such a dichotomy, and perhaps one of the most harmful, consists in conferring upon the nontemporal some of the characteristics of temporality; so as to imagine, for instance, that 'eternal' life comes 'after' this temporal one or that it is 'beyond', 'behind', or whatever other spatial or temporal word we may use to approach that which by very definition transcends both space and time.

(*The Vedic Experience, Mantramānjari*.
Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1977, p.221)

At this stage, therefore, Martin, I must address you this question.

Do you have any first-hand evidence which would indicate the presence of the 'insight' of transcendence in any one Aboriginal line of tradition? By 'first-hand' I mean simply coming directly, in whatever form, from an aboriginal spokesperson. If you do, it would be useful for us to know it. And, in the case of Nugumanj, is 'above the dreamtime', with the weight you are attaching to that expression, really what the Murintjabin understand to be the truth?

If not, then, in default of evidence, I will continue to stand by my conjecture, which is shared by Fr Kevin McKelson SAC of Lagrange. Kevin, as you know, has been working among the Garadjeri people for some 20 years, speaks their language, and is much loved by them. I would say he probably knows more about that people than does Dr Helmut Petri, the accepted expert. Hence, I value his word of agreement.

The difference between a christian speaking about 'heaven' and 'ascension' and a person doing so who has not yet acquired the transcendence insight, is that the christian knows, or ought to know, the language to be figurative, the other does not. That was what I had in mind when, in the first part of our discussion, I said, 'We ourselves, with our long christian heritage, never become immune to the beguilings of our fantasy'.

Needless to say, throughout all this, there is never the slightest question of Aboriginal 'pauperism'. We are searching for simple facts with a view to promoting the truth. The richness of Aboriginal (religious) culture is now well-established.

It will certainly happen, on the other hand, that many poverties of ours will have to be purified away by our contact and communion with Aboriginal wealth. Both will be the richer for the dialogue.

The question is thus not whether the aborigines are to enter the Kingdom as paupers, but precisely what are they to bring over with them, what alter and adjust, and what discard as superceded? Similarly, for us the question would be, in our search for the Aboriginal Kingdom, which is also our Kingdom, what are we to pass on as essential, how weave that organically into the genuine Logos of the Dreaming, what alter and adjust, and what discard as useless baggage?

I believe transcendence to be an essential. Without it, we're all sunk. Trapped, beyond reprieve, in the monodimensional cage, which is even less interesting than being bound to the

karmic wheel. Furthermore, in the world as it now is, it would become increasingly stuffy and unbearable.

The pastoral import of this issue is that, if it is true that indeed Aboriginal Dreaming is without the insight of transcendence, then it would be natural for 'the new Aborigine', losing confidence in the stories of his elders, to gravitate, as by affinity, towards the corresponding secularist monodimensionality. Now, that seems to me to be exactly what is happening, opening the way, for the traditionally so religious Aborigine, into what Panikkar, as quoted, sees to be a 'death and stagnation'.

The preventive, I feel, is to articulate transcendence loud and clear in the christian pastoral ministry among Aborigines, and with it a pure christology. 'Immanence' (if one may call it that without its counterpart) is a connatural awareness in the Aborigines, in which we, of the 'west' have much to learn from them. This Aboriginal awareness you rightly commend.

Dreamtime Christology

I think our dialogue may be the gainer if we consider a few of the consequences of the Dreamtime Christology you propose, which you extend to the christian sacraments.

The Aboriginal Dreaming, as described by the anthropologists, is aimed at the perpetuation of the 'status quo' of things as they have been from the beginning. This is not an accidental feature of Aboriginal religion. It is its very *raison d'être*. Nor is that 'beginning' a Golden Age or Paradise, in which case there might possibly be question of perpetuating some primeval innocence. The beginning is what the now is, or rather, the now is what the determinative beginning is. Not was; is. In terms of the sacred time we call the Dreaming, all is the now of THEN. It is good and evil, want and plenty, heartbreak and heartmend and heady joy. No change, forever and ever.

Where does Christ, one asks, fit into this Picture? What exactly is Christ anyway? Would he agree to be taken for a(nother) 'Dreamtime figure'?

That this is no mere academic question is shown by the following small local incident which occurred some two months ago.

A religious Sister who has recently come to work at Lombadina mission, spent some time visiting the people's quarters and trying to learn from them the Bardi language. One day, a Bardi man, whom I would guess to be about 45, called her over. 'Sister', he said, rather confidentially, 'you come in'. She went inside. Pointing to a traditional picture of the Sacred Heart which was hanging on the wall, he said, 'Galalan, Sister. I pray all the time to Galalan, and going to bed at night I teach my children to pray to Galalan.'

Galalan is the earliest remembered culture-hero or law-bringer of the Bardi, although Djamar has long replaced him as the principal cult figure. In between (all in less than a century) there have been Minau and Djanba (from the E. Kimberley desert). One might say that today Djamar is the 'accepted' story.

What in this case, as a christian missionary, ought Sister have said? 'Good man, Henry. You keep up those prayers to (Christ-) Galalan'? Or, ought she to use the occasion for a piece of catechetical (or kerygmatic, or prophetic) instruction?

Do we bring the Dreaming into Jesus Christ or Jesus Christ into the Dreaming? Are we sure, in the latter case, that he will come? For my part, I believe he will not come. Were it a fact that he *could* come into the Dreaming acceptingly, then the Dreaming would not need him in the first place, having realised his Truth before.

But if we bring the Dreaming into Jesus Christ, then the Dreaming will metamorphose into the Awakening, and there will be 'a new thing'. (The Greek verb *egeirō* = awaken, belongs to the New Testament resurrection terminology.)

Secondly, there is the question, more relevant than ever today, of 'faith' versus 'religion'.

Is christianity 'a religion' in the same sense that all other historical manifestations of man's religiosity are 'religions'? Or is it something wholly new and different?

You say (beautifully) 'I am not trying to reduce christian sacramentalism to Aboriginal, but I am searching for an internal consistency between them'.

Even allowing the insight of transcendence, is there something in the two things, christianity and Aboriginal religion, which might *ground* such consistency?

St Paul speaks of a grafting of the (new) wild olive onto the old stock. Did that stock remain itself while transmitting life to the olive graft? Did not Christ christify Israel in being the Christ? It was not an unchristian stock that the olive was grafted onto and lived off. The ground of the consistency there, the reason the graft *took*, was *Christ*: pointed to, longed for in the stock, realised in the wild olive. (Actually, this stretches Paul's image a bit, but no matter. He probably borrowed it from somewhere else himself!)

Here too, in Aboriginal religion, the ground of consistency can only be the Christ, hoped for, longed for, pointed towards there, in the people's 'Law' or 'the Dreaming'; realised in the Word made flesh.

As one might expect, finding the Christ hidden in 'the Law' of Aboriginal tradition is not going to be as easy as finding him in the torah and the Old Testament prophets. That is why I said in my earlier letter that the comparison of the two 'Laws' is a 'poor' one.

I'm afraid it will not be the 'sacramental' side of their religion (your term) which will offer us the Christ-ground of consistency.

I certainly believe the Aborigines of traditional religion have a most profound instinctual understanding of signification; and that this will enable them easily to appreciate the christian sacrament 'post factum', to interpret and embellish it in a hundred original ways.

But the Aboriginal 'sacramental action' fails to provide the required 'internal consistency'. The reason is that any apparent (sacramental) comparable one may choose to take in the Aboriginal corpus, is *inextricably embedded in a particular story or dreaming*. What it is understood to mean in that story or dreaming, that is its meaning, neither more nor less. Now, there it is not christic, in however broad a sense. It looks with hope towards nothing. It enacts, and ritually accomplishes, the perpetuation-law which is its sole interest and content.

Were we to graft our wild olive onto a tjurunga, it would not take.

If there *is* a consistency, it is of a purely structural kind: an outer, not inner, consistency.

More promising perhaps, in the way of inner consistency, is the powerful Aboriginal LIFE-insight.

For, the perpetuation philosophy itself, from first to last, is an attempt at understanding and controlling LIFE, seen as good and unconditionally desirable, but most mysterious. Though content with their lot, and content with the particular story which explained it for them, one suspects there was always latent in the Aboriginal mind/soul the tacit acknowledgement of the provisional and incomplete nature of that story, with the unspoken supposition: there must be something more; and a certain awaiting of the heart for any other which could improve on it, or even, maybe, show the way to LIFE of a fuller kind.

This seems indicated particularly by its openness to outside (overseas) influences, which anthropologists have noted. If one is *totally* satisfied with the truth one has, one shuts off outside influences as not necessary.

Now, this *looking outward for LIFE*, increases of LIFE, better understanding of LIFE and consequent mastery of it, appears to me to be the christic element we are looking for, as offering 'internal consistency'. One might describe it as a silent eschatology. Here the wild olive will take, because the stock is sound. In taking, it will christify completely what is already partly christic. 'I am come that they may have LIFE, and have it to the full . . .' 'I am the LIFE.' ('I am' = *ego eimi*, the 'Name' of the all-Transcendent of Exodus 3:14.)

The death Aboriginal religion has to go through is the price of the sought-for LIFE. It has been the price demanded, historically, of all who have approached the one who himself 'bought us at a great price'. The 'fidei obsequium'.

Where the price has not been paid, or been paid and taken back, the result has been the hybrid 'popular religions' in which christian terms are retained, but the Christ-thing has been lost.

To avoid this futureless blind alley, and plant their feet firmly on the open road leading into the bright tomorrow, there is need at this time for Aboriginal religious spokespersons (such as your evangelical friend), poets, maestros, creators of all kinds. Minds and hearts which have well understood Jesus Christ, and are concerned to lead their people forward in his name, happy with a new happiness, the recompense of spiritual liberation.

Fr Kevin McKelson remarked to me not long ago: I sometimes ask them, 'Broncho (or Jack, etc.), what is your dream?'

Lovingly,
Dan.

REJOINDER (*M.J. Wilson MSC*)

Nelen Yubu Missiological Unit,
Santa Teresa,
Via Alice Springs, NT 5751
9 February, 1981

Dear Dan,

Debate by correspondence has a circular tendency, because, I suppose, the correspondents would not have bothered to write it all out in the first place unless they were already convinced of their own original positions.

Dichotomy

I think you and I are each representing one of the two factors whose vectorial opposition determines the actual path that the process of christianisation describes in any particular culture. I mean: newness and fulfilment. Newness has to do with grace, supernaturality, the unmerited and unmeritable free gift. Fulfilment is the continuation of what already is the case, the complete actualisation of nature, the bearing of the fruit that was immanent in the flower, the bud, the branch, the stock and ultimately the seed.

Christ the Omega Point, is both inside and outside of world processes. If he were not outside, then his coming was nothing special, just another event in the whole ancient series. But if he were not already inside, then nature was dedicated to futility from the beginning and the Creator had no right to take his spell when he did – the dichotomy that de Lubac and Teilhard de Chardin have struggled with.

Baldly stated in our present context, the dichotomy looks like this: If Aboriginal religion were not already pointing towards Christ, then it wasn't true religion. But if it already contained him, then he wasn't the real Christ, the free gift of the Father.

I feel that you, Dan, are stressing the discontinuity between Christ and Aboriginal religion, the grace aspect; whereas I am stressing the continuity – though neither of us denies the validity of the other's central point.

Whatever one might want to say about 'obediential potencies' and the like in a purely theoretical discussion, in the particular case of an historical religion like the Australian I see the general solution of the dichotomy in the belief that in dealing with traditional Aboriginal religion we are not faced with an instance of purely natural religion, which after all is simply a theological construct. 'The Holy Spirit was already active in the world before Christ was glorified' (*Ad Gentes*, n.1095): particularising this general principle, we must surely believe that He was active here on the Australian continent. Like other non-christian religions, we must expect that Aboriginal religion was also 'impregnated with innumerable "seeds of the Word"' (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n.53). Christ had not yet arrived in person, but he was well on the way!

Test Cases

I doubt if either of us is going to convince the other. By the nature of the argument no apodictic evidence is possible. The clearest evidence for my side would be a statement from an Aboriginal informant to the effect that christianity completes the main tendency of their traditional religion. You would say that he was already looking at it from the christian standpoint. For your side: a categorical denial by an Aboriginal informant that traditional religion had the remotest relationship to Christ, the slightest inkling of transcendence. And I would wonder if such an informant had any real idea of what he was talking about.

In other words, we each interpret any evidence, for or against our case, from our own original stand-point.

Let me illustrate. In my reply to your first letter, I thought I reported as good a statement about transcendence in Aboriginal religion as one can expect from men who don't use the word (to the effect that the culture heroes had the same sort of stories about Nugumanj as we have – *Nelen Yubu*, No. 6, p.37) – but you discount that now as *my* inference. Indeed it is, but that was the whole context of our discussion on that day with the Murintjabin people at the Daly River Centre! If you need a clearer 'official' statement from a Murintjabin, then we had better wait until one has finished a theology course.

A Joust or Two

I shall take issue with you on several points:

1) You state early in your letter:

In view, however, of what appears to me as the unanimous opinion of the anthropologists who have spoken of the Aboriginal Dreaming, Nugumanj would in that case still be an exception and not typical . . .

I observe in reply:

- If one reads Eliade's account of the controversy on the status of the Australian 'High Gods' (*Australian Religions*, 1973:8-41), one knows that such an amazing unanimity amongst anthropologists is simply not the case – unless, of course, one is prepared to define 'anthropologist' stipulatively as only those who hold your opinion in this matter!
- I wrote about Nugumanj because I had personal experience of evidence about belief in him which went beyond published sources and qualified some published conclusions. From what I have read about Djamar, Baiame, Bunjil, Daramulun etc. (the range crosses the continent), I would propose a similar interpretation also in their regard.
- Our attitude towards anthropologists' writings need to be differentiated. One accepts gratefully their ethnographic reports (and hopes they haven't missed a key feature – which is not impossible); one gives attentive hearing to their sociological interpretations, which one might use at least as working hypotheses; but when they essay forth into philosophy and theology, one should keep in mind Max Gluckman's editorial remarks in his (1964) *Closed Systems and Open Minds: the limits of naivety in social anthropology*. In their community studies anthropologists often have to cover more fields than they can possibly be expert in: law, agriculture, political philosophy, art, genetics, botany, biology, animal husbandry, economics, administration, military tactics, psychology, medicine . . . and, of course, religion. A certain naivety is permissible – until they start so to dogmatise in another field that they annoy an expert, who proceeds to take them to task if their sociological presentation has been good enough to provide him with enough empirical information! When editing Fr E.A. Worms' posthumous essay on Australian religions, Helmut Petri (1968: 278-9; 1972: 333-4) underlined the importance of Fr Worms' study of religion as a main theme in the midst of the whole concert of 'sociologising' studies in which it has been treated as a theme marginal to sociology. Social anthropologists generally aren't theologians, and vice-versa. Hence, I am disinclined to be impressed in a theological discussion by a block presentation of the views of social anthropologists. It smacks of the good old fallacy, 'argumentum ad auctoritatem'.

2) You invite me to take up an Elijah stance, an absolute test case: dinky-die first-hand evidence of transcendence in any one Aboriginal tradition.

In view of what I said earlier, I do not accept the test as legitimate. For another thing, I don't have Elijah's sort of backing. The authority you go on to adduce has acknowledged to me that he and I differ on the general theme of the relationship of 'pagan' religion to christianity. I have much respect for his experiential knowledge, but that is quite a distinct matter.

However, if I were to nibble at your dare, I would refer you to what Deacon Boniface Perdjert of Port Keats wrote, published as the after-piece in the 1978 Social Justice statement (p.22):

. . . like Him [Christ] we have a deep sense of God in nature. We like the way that He uses things of nature to teach, and the important part nature plays in the Sacraments.

We have Dreamtime figures who formed the world, who gave us law and ceremony and life creatures, from where our spirits come.

We find it easy to see in Christ THE great Dreamtime figure, who, more than all others gave us Law and Ceremony and life centres, and marked out the way we must follow to reach our true country.

We have certain things in nature for our dreaming. We call some of these brother or sister. They not only represent our dreamtime figure but in some way they are him.

In some way he lives in them and is them. So he is ever present. So it is not over difficult to realise that Christ is with us always . . . the same yesterday, today and forever.

I know that the foregoing quotation will not 'prove' anything to you, as you have already objected to this line of statement in other correspondence. That's what I mean by our difference in interpretative stance: if my evidence is too strong, you disqualify it!

3) Finally, a comment on the Galalan incident you wrote about.

I think the Sister should have been aware (1) that it is not her duty to make dogmatic decisions on the spot; (2) that she was being honoured with an invitation to gain a deeper insight into Bardi spirituality; and (3) that she was presented with an opportunity to mediate in the meeting-up of Christ, the Logos Spermatikos, with Christ, the Word made flesh.

But you didn't tell us what she *did* say.

Envoi

So much of what you write, especially about 'lifé', is stuff that I would have been glad to have composed myself. I suppose in practice we do and say much the same things. Our correspondence has probably achieved its purpose if it has helped towards awakening further interest in the issue of Aboriginal religion vis-à-vis christianity — but if we go on much longer we might produce the opposite effect!

Yours sincerely,
Martin J. Wilson MSC.

P.S. Being editor, besides correspondent, has some advantages. While proof-reading your letter I noticed afresh your point that the introduction of Christ into the Dreaming might metamorphose it into an Awakening. I would like to draw your attention to what I wrote about the 'Dreamtime' terminology in the course of the review I put together of Stanner's *White Man Got No Dreaming* (published at the end of this issue) after I had composed my Rejoinder to your letter.

I wonder if our white man's attitude to Aboriginal culture would have been dramatically different if we had realised that the Aborigines have been dreaming all the time about a great Awakening that, being the case once when the nature of the world was being set, can be so again. It is standard theory for us to acknowledge, in response to what the Aborigines have told us, that the *djalu*, the creative force released then (I am using Fr Worms' presentation), is still potent: subdued but potent. Is its quiescence rather more like that of some Vesuvius or Etna than of a coma that is trailing off into death?

And more importantly, I wonder also if there would have been, or can yet be, a difference in the Aboriginal stance towards the dynamics of culture contact if they had not apparently interiorised a self-image that we have mistakenly projected onto them?

I hope to make more of this at a later date. But in the meanwhile, when you align this fashion of thought with the Aboriginal emphasis on life which you have described, does your applied Christology take on a new direction and begin to feel the excitement of a quickening pace? And may not this be the deep-down font of the resurgence of Aboriginality that we are witnessing today?

REVIEW NOTICE

WHITE MAN GOT NO DREAMING: essays 1938-1973

W.E.H. STANNER (1979) ANU Press, Canberra, pp.389 + xv; ISBN 0 7081, HB \$25

In 1979 Professor Emeritus William Edward Hanley Stanner published through the ANU Press a collection of eighteen papers which he had composed as occasional pieces or public lectures between 1938 and 1973.

Stanner's importance, both academic and real (in the sense of influencing national policy and the opinions of fellow countrymen, not just his academic peers) cannot be measured by the common yardstick of the number of his publications. His technical papers string out through the years, especially in *Oceania*, but he has not been a writer of books. This one is itself a collection of papers. The only other one I know of *On Aboriginal Religion* (1966) appeared first of all as a series of articles in *Oceania*. I suppose one could add his *After the Dreaming*, the 1968 Boyer lectures which the ABC have put out as 63 pages between two covers – and it appears, quite rightly, as one of the items in this collection of public addresses. Even his doctoral thesis, *Economic Change in North Australian Tribes* (1938), only became available recently for consultation as a microfilm held by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.

Some academics exercise a profound influence on the course of their own subjects in spite of a minimal list of published works to their name. One thinks, for instance, of G.E. Moore's effect on English (hence also Australian) philosophy. I would not know what assessment his colleagues in anthropology will make of W.E.H. Stanner's influence on their subject. Personally I hope his contribution might turn out to be a major determinant of development. His criticism of what he properly calls 'sociologism' and 'psychologism' (cf. p.142) are not made either lightly or from the outside. He was trained in the heady times when functionalism gave anthropology its early, specific charter and when Durkheim's influence was paramount in the field of what was to become the sociology of religion (cf. pp.204, 224). The fifth essay, 'Religion, Totemism and Symbolism' (1962) gives some indication of how his thought sloughed off those influences when they began to constrict the growth of his philosophic mind as it endeavoured to cope with the range of facts presented in intensive field work. (His academic account is to be found in a paper not included in this volume, 'Reflections on Durkheim and Aboriginal Religion' in M. Freedman, ed., *Social Organisation*, 1967: 217-240.) One might hope that his will be seen as one of the major influences in bringing anthropology to face the analysis of religion, specifically Australian Aboriginal religion, as a major theme to be treated in its own right with a theological method that is innovative, sensitive and powerful, and no longer reductively as an epiphenomenon of society or one of the vagaries of primitive consciousness.

Outside the narrow confines of his academic field, Stanner has shouted strenuously in the midst of what he has tellingly described as 'the great Australian silence' (p.207ff.). Consideration of the advisory and staff positions he has held over a period of forty years (cf. dust jacket) and of the type of audiences he has addressed in many of the papers in this collection gives some indication of the influence he has exercised on our national consciousness. Undoubtedly there

has been a complex dynamic at work: all the same a decisive factor in it has surely been his own voice, which along with those of men like the late Professors Elkin and Strehlow have helped turn the silence into a chorus of sounds that are pretty mixed, of variable quality, but are being heard increasingly throughout the continent.

It is intriguing to compare the first essay with the last. In the first (1938) a key phrase is 'We know that the Aborigines are dying out' (p.19). The last hinges on the demographic fact that the overall rate of increase in the Aboriginal population in 1973 was 3.4 per cent (p.373). As he points out himself (p.376), the recent situation is like a mirror-image of the early 1930s.

The collection's title indicates its main focus: white-black interaction here in Australia in a context of mutual ideological ignorance. White Australia is still in the early stages of becoming aware of the religious philosophy that permeated Aboriginal society; and it will be surprising if appreciation of it ever goes very far amongst that large group of white men who have no ideology of their own to live by, unless having a good time and making more money can be dignified by the philosophic label of 'crude materialism'. However, Stanner's overall message is a realistic optimism (cf. p.381). For his own part, he seems pleasantly amused, and satisfied on the balance, with the 'rather radical role' he has played, being, as he says (p.ix), 'a man of naturally conservative mind'.

Stanner has had a close relationship with Catholic Missions in the NT, especially with Port Keats: he went in with the founding luggers in 1935, and has returned often over the succeeding years. His appreciation has been valued, and his criticisms have been attended to more, probably, than he himself would think. This has been possible because he has always matched the quality of his insights with the instincts of a gentleman.

We know that Stanner uses the term 'dreaming' because, as he says (p.23), the Aborigines do. He goes on to acknowledge that it is a puzzle why they have picked on this English word to designate the primordial mythic time. The puzzle takes a twist when one reads T.G.H. Strehlow's (1964/1978) defence of his father's use of the Aranda term 'altjira' against attack from Spencer and Gillen who in the process of misrepresentation of Pastor C. Strehlow apparently misunderstood the Aranda idiom for 'to dream'. It looks as if this discreditable bit of anthropological history may have a lot to do with the widespread use of the English word 'dream' for the Aboriginal terms for the creative era. Fr E.A. Worms in a long essay we hope to publish in English translation gives a very different analysis of the Aboriginal terms. Stanner himself acknowledges (1976) that he was 'the first to write about it with a capital T and a capital D'. While he has done an immense service to white Australians (and so to the black ones) in bringing them to some awareness of the philosophic richness of Aboriginal religious ideology, it may have been better if he could have called it 'The Awakening' instead. Men have to 'dream' it now, that is, think back on it, re-enact it, keep it going, but in itself it was a time of violent activity. The sleeping came before and after.

Needless to say, *White Man Got No Dreaming* is highly recommended for all Australians, especially for those working with Aboriginal people. Most of the papers were composed with non-anthropologists in mind: they are free of technical jargon, and if Stanner sometimes indulges his apparent love for the crudite word, a good standard dictionary will give sufficient enlightenment. It is a pity that its price (\$25) may put many potential buyers off.

MJW

