

a site on Indian Island is likewise called Gabarl, after his maruy. Gracie Binbin or Bidbinbiyirrg (wife of John Biyanamurrg) is called so from her maruy, a place of that name. Stephen Fergusson and David Woodie were born at Binbinya, and that makes their maruy Wudud, the Frog, which is now a rock near Binbinya.

Clear explanations about maruy associations today came from our informants Roy Burrburr or Bigfoot, and Olga Singh. Roy has lived most of his life away from centres like Delissaville and Darwin. Today he maintains two camps, one at Balgal, on the mainland opposite Peron Island, and one on Dum-in-mirrie Island. Consequently, most of his children were born away from a hospital. His daughter Deborah, born on Dum-in-mirrie, has a maruy from there, a watersnake, because Roy "killed a watersnake at that place. That's the place I bin dream him, that place". Lyn Bigfoot was conceived and born at Ngalberawany. Roy dreamed her when he saw a big carpet snake up a little creek near Micah Beach.

Before each of his children were born, John Singh had been hunting. He caught a turtle (inggarany) before each of his daughter's births, and a dugong (mamerandjarmul) before his son Jason's birth. Thus these are their maruy. Their durlg is his, inggarany. These children were all born in hospital.

As we collected information from informants on their durlg and maruy and associated natural species and features, we noticed that what was a maruy for a man, could become a durlg for that man's children. Thus among the durlg belonging to Olga Singh (née Lyons) associated with the claim area, is djalawa, or king-brown snake. This was a maruy for her father. Similarly wilar, the cheeky yam dreaming near Rankin Point, was her father's father's maruy and is now one of her durlg.

A similar feature is found among the patrilineal clans of

Melville and Bathurst islands. There a man may compose songs about natural species or new phenomena in his environment. His children inherit his songs and call their subjects rigani or dreamings, belonging to them. In time these become associated with that patrilineal descent group. Such is the case with horse, buffalo and sailing ship, for example, as well as older features of the environment.

in our opinion this feature could be used to segment existing lineages if the numbers in the parent clan became too many.

Summary of durlg and maruy.

Durlg is used with the following meanings by people in the claim area:

1. "a conception totem" (Elkin 1950b:75)\*;
2. "a dream totem, being a person's symbol in other person's dreams" (ibid.);
3. a "totem", or "dreaming" or "shade" or "spirit" - a spiritual association between a person and a natural species or feature, for example danggalaba or crocodile. This association is inherited through the male line of descent and any one person can have more than one such association with natural species;
4. the common spiritual association with a natural species or feature, shared by a group of people related in the male line of descent, for example, the danggalaba clan.

(The suffix -nyini attached to common nouns like winga [the red plum] distinguishes them as a place with some spiritual association. Similarly -nyini can be attached to proper nouns like Waryni and Mangenda to refer to the place where mythological characters are now located, for example Warynyini and Mangendanyini.)

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\* But maruy is the more usual term, he adds.

5. the place where the "spirit" of the species referred to in meanings three and four is located, for example Wilarnyini durlg;
6. a place with a story from the creation time, for example, Ngalwadnyini durlg, Warinyini durlg;
7. a place associated with the notion of "plenty"\* for a particular species, for example Winganyini durlg;
8. The Great Spirit or Monster or Whale or Rainbow which journeyed through the claim area in the creation time; and
9. an ordinary whale, or rainbow.

Maruy is best understood as a particular kind of durlg, a "conception totem" (Elkin 1950b:75). People in the claim area often translate this as "shade". It is personal and derives from a person's father through the mother during the time of one's conception and birth. A man's maruy may become a durlg for his children in the claim area (and this has implications for land ownership in the future, we feel, given that no males in the danggalaba clan today have children). For members of the danggalaba clan their maruy are located in their own territory. For the members of other durlg groups, who now live outside their territory, their maruy are located in the territory of another group.

#### Durlg sites in the claim area

A durlg group, such as the danggalaba clan, holds a primary spiritual responsibility to the territory in which their durlg or common spirit is located.

The sites and areas associated with the danggalaba clan are the following:

1. An area located in Ivel Creek and touching upon Bagadjad and Milig, where the crocodile durlg swims about. This mythological being has rocks or oysters on its head, connected with Windir, the place where the Star dreaming begins, west of Dum-in-mirrie Island;

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\* Often referred to in anthropological literature as "increase centre".

2. that crocodile is also called kenbikenbi, after which this land claim is named. Kenbi also means "didgeridu" and "bamboo", and is the underground tunnel linking the islands to the west of the claim area with Indian Island and the Cox Peninsula. From Belyuen it crosses to Kalalak in the Darwin area, where the traditional owners, the Secretary family, now live;
3. an area in Bynoe Harbour and on the coast nearby which is the track of the cheeky yam, or wilar. This durlg goes through to Brabin on the Peron Islands. Another place on the track as it crosses Bynoe Harbour is Djiringili, an island where the mythological yam was first cooked and treated. The area is considered dangerous and has connections with the gulida ceremony once very important in this area (see chapter seven).

#### Other durlg sites in the area

Not all places for which we have names in the claim area are said to be durlg sites.

Many others, though, are named as dreaming places, for example Muldja, the white plum dreaming place near Point Charles, and Bulbul, where there is wild passionfruit durlg.

No local descent group of people living today are associated with these sites, apart from the danggalaba clan who are said to be the owners. We assume that other groups, whose durlg they were, owned them once. Given the events in chapter four and the consequent dislocation of people in the area, it is not surprising that patrilineal groups became extinct in the area and were not replaced because of lack of numbers. It seems that the danggalaba clan incorporated these in ways that are well-documented in anthropological literature (see Peterson et al. 1977 and Williams 1978:2-10, 3-34). Whatever were the mechanisms used, it was done with full public approval, since no one disputes the danggalaba clan as owners.

### Durlg groups with sites outside the claim area

Members of clans, other than the danggalaba are living in and near the claim area. They belong to Wadjiginy, Kiuk, Ami and Manda language groups. They all assert their durlg sites are well outside the claim area and to the south (towards the Daly River and Port Keats). Yet many of the species associated with these groups - inggarrany (sea turtle), garngarn (sea-hawk), muyin (wild dog) and others - have dreaming sites within the claim area. But those groups do not claim these sites. They are said to be the responsibility of the danggalaba clan.

### Durlg group responsibilities to sites

Given that only one durlg group is recognised as owners in the claim area today - that is with members descended only in the male line - their responsibility is onerous. It includes those purposes stated by Stanner (1978:25) and quoted earlier in this chapter. It also includes protection of the sites, the transmission of knowledge about them to younger members of the clan, the rights to forage and the choice of giving to others the right to exercise these responsibilities (as noted elsewhere by Williams 1978:4-31 for land-owning units in Arnhem Land).

### Mother's land

The bases upon which people have been chosen to exercise these responsibilities are Aboriginal conventions, part of how people relate to land throughout Aboriginal Australia. For example, speaking of one of these conventions, Williams (1978:2-7) says:

Two orders of continuing links to land, one patrilineally derived and one matrilineally derived, define a complex set of interlocking rights and duties, and provide the structure for a comprehensive set of checks and balances in the control and utilisation of land.

The people of Belyuen affirmed the importance of one's mother's country during our research. They do not assert that one

is a member of a mother's durlg group, but they do assert that one can "help", "hold", "care for" the sites which are animated by the same spirit, durlg, as one's mother.

Apart from those children of women in the existing danggalaba clan, there are children of women who belonged to durlg that are now extinct or nearly so, who have an interest in sites in the claim area.

One almost extinct durlg group is the inyarany, or Itchy dreaming, which is associated with a site located at Bagalg on the Cox Peninsula. Other durlg associated with inyarany are emu, possum and sea-hawk. The sole living representative is a woman Ababa or Harriet, who is deaf and dumb and consequently not able to communicate very well with us about these matters. It could well be that the two garngarn sites in the claim area are associated with this woman, but no one ever told us of that association, if it exists. We found no emu or possum durlg sites in the claim area.

Ababa married a European and had two daughters, both of whom have children. Ababa's sister married the father of Bobby Secretary, a traditional owner of the claim area.

Another group of people descended from a woman who came from the claim area are the Cubillo family. Beyond the knowledge that Belyuen was her country, no other information about her durlg associations has been handed down, nor survived the events of the years.

Undoubtedly there are others descended from women of extinct durlg groups who would have an interest in the claim area and we have attempted to locate them. All of these would have a non-Aboriginal male in their ancestry, however, and so would have been removed at an early age from their mother's environment. Those who have been able to maintain their links in such detail as

Lorna Tennant and her brothers, Margaret Rivers and her sisters, are rare indeed.

However, in relation to land, not only one's durlg and maruv are significant.

#### Burial site of a relative

For the Tiwi speakers of nearby Melville and Bathurst Islands, a father's grave at a site gives ownership rights to his children. In the claim area grave-sites of all close relatives including a father are important. Thus the island of Duwun has significance for Roy Yarrowen because his mother's mother is buried there. Similarly Rusty Moreen's mother is buried on Indian Island, as is Olga Singh's father's father. Her mother's father is buried at Muldja, near Point Charles lighthouse. Tommy Burrinjuck's sister is buried at Milig. Many relatives of Delissaville residents are buried at Wanggigi (Mandorah).

These include two brothers of the Singh family but are too numerous to mention here. It was obviously a favoured burial area before the founding of Delissaville Settlement. Surviving relatives have rights of access and forage to areas where relatives are buried. Tommy Burrinjuck, for example, wanted one to live at Milig, and this was not questioned by the danggalaba clan because of his sister's grave there.

#### Residence

Residence in an area gives opportunities to gain access to knowledge about it. At a public meeting on 3 July 1979 at Belyuen, Bobby Secretary, a ceremonial leader of the danggalaba clan, speaking for his brother and sister, openly gave permission to residents in the claim area to give us information about the area. "They live here and they have been looking after it," he said, conceding thereby and explicitly that they knew its details. (As youngsters the Secretary family lived on the Cox Peninsula and

participated there in clan ceremonies, but for some years have taken up residence in the Darwin area, where their concern for other traditional territory of their clan has been well noted, in the media among other ways.)

On the basis of marriage and residence, knowledge and consequent attachment, birth and birth of their children in and near the claim area, people such as Roy Burrburr, Margaret Rivers, Kitty Moffat, Roy Yarrowen, Betty Bilawug, Alice Djarug, Maudie Bennett, the Singh family and others, have been asked to "look after the country". "Looking after" includes not only protecting it, but transmitting knowledge about it and using it for hunting and foraging.

It became very clear to us during the research that, while no one disputed the danggalaba clan as owners, both the members of that clan and others were anxious that all people with ties to land in the claim area be considered. "We wish we could make this claim as a community", they told us once at Belyuen. The traditional owners have always been at pains, too, not to exclude others who have been exercising rights and responsibilities in the area, and have always referred us to them.

#### Marriage

Marriage partners have also been asked to care for the land of the danggalaba clan. Thus Norman Harris or Barral, Maudie Bennett and John Singh all have a good acquaintance with the claim area. Maudie, in particular, holds knowledge for her daughter, traditional owner Olga Singh, and exercises rights of forage in the claim area. Marriage, for a man, of course entails ceremonial duties towards his brothers-in-law.

#### Ceremonial initiation and progression

Larrakia clan leaders of the past used rituals as a way of recruiting custodians for their land. So well did they imbue a



sense of responsibility in these men that even today Wadjiginy men, like George Munggalu, and his nephews John Biyanamurrug and Roy Madbulg and Kiuk men like Norman Harris, are often identified as "Larrakia".\*

We want to look now at some particular instances where people in the claim area were given rights to knowledge and rights to transmit knowledge about it.

#### Ceremonies - historical

Ceremonies of death and initiation are closely linked to land in the religion of the people of the claim area, as elsewhere in Aboriginal Australia. A ritual occasion brings together people from diverse groupings, for example, language, kin, and territorial, as well as ceremonial. But all are able to trace their relationships with each other through one or other of these ways. As one informant, Harry Singh, put it (on 23 June 1979): "In the past the Larrakia gave some ceremonies to the Wagaidj, and the Wagaidj to the Larrakia and that made them like one". (Parkhouse 1895b:642,157; and Elkin 1947-8; 1950b:77, are among those who have noted the "mixing" of people at ceremonies.) In 1947 at an initiation ceremony involving some of the claimants Elkin noted (1947-8:170) that a "Brinken" method of circumcision was used during a "Wagait" ceremony at Delissaville. He also noted the use of Larrakia words for certain ritual procedures during the initiation of "Wagait" boys (1950b:77). These were used mainly to introduce a lad to the "Dreamings" of the area (1947-8:193). We have noted in the section called "Strength of attachment" other examples of "mixing" of people on ceremonial occasions.

#### Transmission of rights

Attending and participating in ceremonies is of course one way of gaining knowledge about the charters, sacred or secret or both, which sustain the cosmic order in general, and convey information

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\* On this matter Wild says of Hooker Creek (1975:148): "Ownership of rituals associated with estates constituted a legitimization of..

about the land in particular. Taking over responsibility for this knowledge with the rights to transmit it is, of course, a different matter from merely witnessing it. Participating in signing or dancing or by playing the didgeridu or clapsticks confers more rights of access, but still does not give rights of transmission. Such rights, which appear very authoritative rights indeed throughout Aboriginal Australia, are handed over during secret-sacred ceremonies by progression through ritual statuses or by a clear statement made in public.

Thus Tommy Lyons, or Imabulg, who was the senior man of the danggalaba clan before his death in late 1978, is said by his wife and daughter, among the claimants, to have given his rights to call his clan's ceremonies and sing its songs to John Biyanamurrng, a Wadjiginy-language man, who was initiated by Imabulg. Biyanamurrng is also the nephew (classificatory son) of George Munggalu now widely acknowledged as the senior ceremonial man for the claim area. Biyanamurrng is on that account, too, heir to the danggalaba clan knowledge. George Munggalu, in his turn, called Imabulg "father".

Munggalu takes seriously his responsibility as ceremonial leader to pass on what information he can to Imabulg's daughter, Olga. At the key site of Wariny on 1 August 1979 he made a public statement that he was leaving his knowledge of the claim area, including the records we had made of his information to Maudie Bennett and to her daughter Olga, his "sister": "They are the bosses now. Anybody who wants to see, ask them".

George Munggalu said he had received these rights from a senior man of the danggalaba clan, Crab Billy Belyuen (of dariba status) grandfather to the claimant Dolphin or Kathy. ✕

Imabulg also gave rights to sing some clan songs and to make songs in the claim area to Tommy Barradjab, or Burrinjuck.

\* ... estate ownership and the right to its economic use ... . The Warlpiri today are, in the same way, legitimizing their occupation and economic use of the new Hooker Creek reserve, an area outside traditional Warlpiri territory.

### Public knowledge of sacred matters

Not all religious knowledge is secret. Much of it, particularly that concerning the landscape, is open and public knowledge. What we have gathered, nonetheless, to document this claim, comes on the whole from people outside the danggalaba clan, who have been extended the right to it and to transmit it by a senior person of the danggalaba clan. In this connection Maudie Bennett, Betty Bilawug, Peggy Wilson, Alice Djarug, George Munggalu, Roy Burrburr and Roy Yarrowen spring particularly to mind.

Maudie Bennett, widow of Imabulg, sees her role primarily as custodian of the knowledge for her daughter, Olga. Bilawug's husband and father were participants in danggalaba clan ceremonies, as was Peggy Wilson's father and his brother, George Munggalu. Roy Burrburr's father spoke the Ami language but lived throughout his life in the claim area and Roy "was brought up by Wadjiginy at Point Charles lighthouse, and we should really call him a Wadjiginy" (Margaret Rivers). Similarly Roy Yarrowen was born in the claim area and grew up there. Both these men have children born in the claim area, and grandchildren. Burrburr, in particular, was told some years ago, as was Margaret Rivers by danggalaba men, Bobby Secretary and Tommy Lyons, to "look after the island" and this directive included safeguarding and transmitting knowledge of the land- and sea-scapes.

### Ownership

As investigators for a land claim we have asked the question: "Who owns the claim area?" and have been told that the danggalaba clan owns it. When we sought to understand what "own" meant, we asked such questions as : who can give a person permission to camp here? to hunt here? then again danggalaba clan members Olga Singh, Prince of Wales, Bobby Secretary and Topsy Secretary are named.

In answer to the question: who can hold ceremonies for this country? who owns the ceremonies here? we were told George Munggalu, John Biyanamurrug, Bobby Secretary, and Norman Harris ("but he is too old now"). To the question "Who cares for, looks after this country - for example - Dum-in-mirrie Island? names such as Margaret Rivers and Roy Burrburr are given.

We asked: who does not have to seek permission to live here? (for example, Binbinya) and were told different names again (for example David Woodie and Stephen Fergusson, who were both born in that place and whose maruy is there. These men however cannot give to others - unrelated to them - rights to live there).

The concept of ownership is such an intricate social\* affair that it is not useful if viewed as an absolute - anywhere in Aboriginal Australia or anywhere else. If owning a ceremony, for example means that one can "call" that ceremony, but not perform it without managers, what does ownership mean? It is certainly not a complete right of itself.

A more accurate view of the situation is to see that different groups have certain but differing and complementary rights in a ceremony, or in the performance of it. It is similar in the claim area as regards land, in our view. Once we look at what rights different people have in the sites on the country, the whole picture of how the land is "owned" becomes clearer.

Danggalaba clan have the final word

Thus the danggalaba clan appear to be the final point of reference in crucial moments, for example, such as a land claim.

They have transmitted, largely, to others through ceremonies and public statements, rights and responsibilities for the land and the sacred heritage to which it is a key. This has happened through ritual progression, by marriage and by residence.

Others again by being born or dying on the land have forged

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\* Concepts of ownership have been devised within established legal systems in various parts of the world but these legal concepts are not being discussed here.

spiritual links and associated rights with it - for themselves and for their descendants.

"Land ownership" appears to be a matter of established complementary rights to custodianship rather than inalienable or alienable possession. (We are indebted to discussions with Professor W.E.H. Stanner and to Sutton 1978:57 for this definition.) The critical point in this definition is that custodianship is established, either by right of birth in a durlg, or through maruy, as in the case of the danggalaba clan and people born in the claim area, or by the authoritative transmission of the rights and responsibility of custodianship to a person or persons named by those with established rights. "The Dreaming" or "The Law" establishes the rights of the local descent group, but these rights may be delegated by members of a group so established to others who may exercise them.