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**Songs from a Plastic Water Rat:**  
**An Introduction to the Musical Traditions of**  
**the Yanyuwa Community of the Southwest**  
**Gulf of Carpentaria**

John Bradley and Elizabeth Mackinlay

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### About the Authors

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### Important Note

Readers should be aware that, in some Aboriginal communities, names and photographs of deceased persons may cause sadness or distress, particularly to the relatives of these people. The material (including photographs) presented in this monograph have been approved by members of the Yanyuwa community.

## **Dedication**

*Na-ja na-burruburru nalunga li-wankala, ngalalu barra kala-ninya ki-awarala kulu kalu-yinbayaninya yumbulyumbulmantha wiji bajawarnu barra kalu-malamanhanthannya awara wayathantha wiji yurrngumantha barra janu-linginmanthanima kangka kala-ninya li-wulungu li-mirdan barra.*

These pages are for the old people who lived in the land and sang all kinds of songs and in so doing so held the land completely and totally, they are remembered continually as strong knowledgeable people.

## **Introduction**

In Yanyuwa the water rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) is called *namurr*; it is also called *riyariyayangkangu*. This name is its 'big' or important name. It is by this 'big' name that women sing songs which are said to drive the water rat into the water to frighten away spirit children and thus halt any chance of conception. There have always been women in Yanyuwa society who have had no children and some of them say it is because of the efficiency of the water rat song.

In April of 1999 one of Bradley's children had finished eating a chocolate egg called a Yowie®, within this egg was a plastic bubble which contained a model of a small Australian animal that needed to be assembled. When the plastic bubble was opened, it was found to contain a water rat. When it was assembled, Bradley took it and showed it to some Yanyuwa women who were visiting Brisbane at that time. In Yanyuwa, Bradley said to Dinah Norman Marrangawi who had the water rat as a Dreaming or spirit ancestor: "Here is your most senior paternal grandfather the water rat". Her response was to take the small model and immediately burst into song. As Bradley listened, he realised it was a form of music he had never heard in his 20 year association with the Yanyuwa community. When the singing had stopped, Bradley asked Dinah what the song was. The language was Yanyuwa but the musical style was different from anything he had heard. Bradley was told it was a song style employed by men called *wujuju* and that the last good composer and singer of such songs had had the water rat as his Dreaming. Thus it was that the plastic water rat had triggered a memory of a man who it could be said was descended from a water rat.

This brief musical and cultural exchange was extremely important to both Bradley and Mackinlay's knowledge of Yanyuwa musical traditions, providing the evidence for a song style and filling a gap in performance practice that both suspected existed and had been searching for. Thus the purpose of this paper is to describe the various musical traditions that exist within the Yanyuwa community in the southwest Gulf of Carpentaria in the Northern Territory of Australia, focussing specifically upon performance practice which to varying degrees has carried on from classical to post-

classical Yanyuwa society.<sup>1</sup> Our initial analysis and understanding of these various traditions leads us to believe that while there are similarities with groups in northern and central Australian regions (given the available literature), there is still enough difference in both musical style and cultural significance of the various musical traditions to make this paper an important contribution to our understanding of indigenous music in Australia.

## SECTION ONE

### About Yanyuwa People, Culture and Concepts About Music

The group of Aboriginal people who call themselves Yanyuwa live in the township of Borroloola in the Northern Territory of Australia, situated approximately 970km southeast of Darwin and 80km inland from the Gulf of Carpentaria (Figure 1). Yanyuwa culture is primarily sea-based. Yanyuwa people traditionally identify themselves as island or saltwater people and often use the colourful phrase *li-anthawirriyarra*, or 'people whose spirit belongs to the sea' as a marker of their spiritual and social identity. Four different major linguistic groups traditionally inhabited this area: Yanyuwa, Garrwa, Marra and Gudanji (Figure 2). Garrwa and Yanyuwa speakers are more frequently encountered than Gudanji and Marra in the Borroloola region, Garrwa more so than Yanyuwa. Both Bradley and Mackinlay are currently working with members of the Yanyuwa and Garrwa community.

In Yanyuwa there is no generic term for song or music but rather each specific musical style has its own specific name and sometimes subset of names. Categorisation of song into styles by Yanyuwa people is determined according to a complex set of interrelationships between the origins of songs, the purposes they serve and the people who may participate in their performance. As discussed elsewhere (Mackinlay 2000; Mackinlay and Bradley in prep.), the Yanyuwa have two terms, *kurdukurdu* and *lhamarnda*, which serve to categorise genres of performance. *Kurdukurdu* is often explained by Yanyuwa as a correlate to the Western terms 'secret' and 'sacred' and therefore refers to performance genres labelled as restricted business. *Lhamarnda* is described by Yanyuwa people as free or not secret and sacred and refers to performance genres which are considered to be unrestricted. As with many such words in indigenous languages, however, the terms are multi-vocal and open to many interpretations which are dependent upon time, place and the gender balance at any one moment. It should also be noted that while matters of ceremony are examined in this paper there is no presentation or discussion of Yanyuwa knowledge which is considered by them to be restricted.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper does not include a study of contemporary Yanyuwa music which is also a feature of the Yanyuwa musical tradition. This is partly due to the fact that these songs are as yet poorly studied. In addition, inclusion of contemporary Yanyuwa music was beyond the original aim of this work which was to provide an outline of the more 'traditional' styles of music.

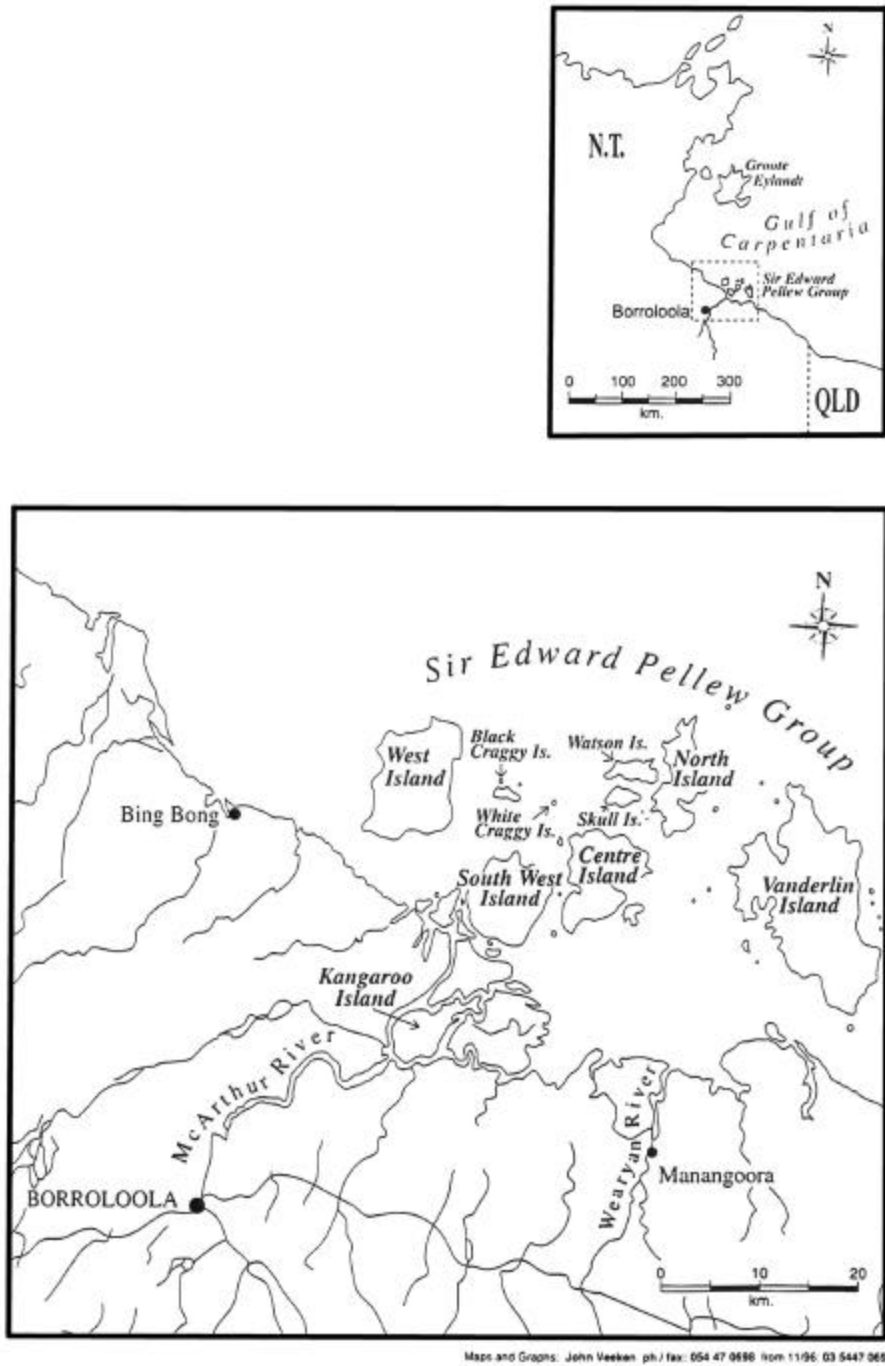
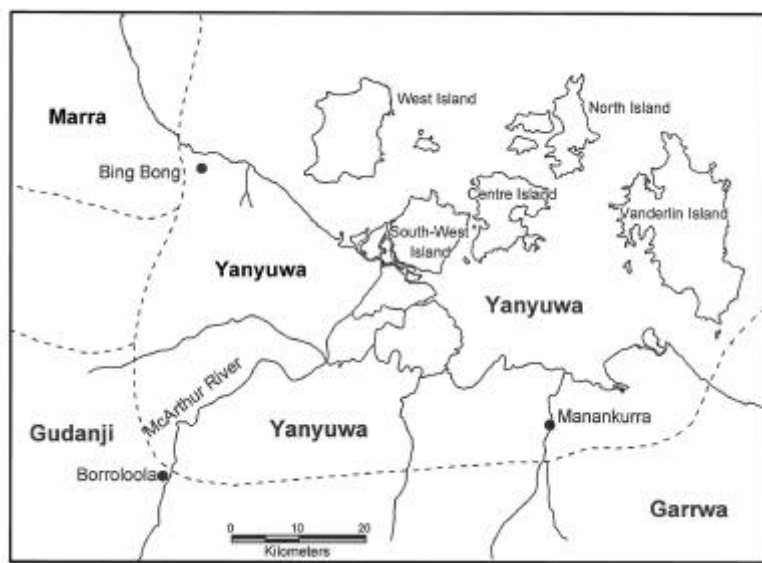


Figure 1. Geographical location of Borroloola.



**Figure 2. Approximate linguistic boundaries in the Borrooloola region.**

Much of Yanyuwa music has its basis in the actions of the Spirit Ancestors. Like the Yanyuwa people of today, the Spirit Ancestors lived their lives by travelling and marking the landscape. The sharpest concentrations of the Spirit Ancestors' powers are found in such marks: places where they created a landform, left an object behind, raised a tree or entered the ground. These are the powerful places, or in contemporary English usage, the sacred sites, the places where important knowledge is said to reside. This knowledge, much of it associated with music and performance, provides a rich soundscape which can still be used by the Yanyuwa to assist in the maintenance of the life-order which is derived from the events of what they call the *Yijan*, a word that generally and confusingly is translated into English as 'Dreaming'.

The term for singing is *yinbayarra* which is employed for all kinds of performance. The term for the tune of a song is called *ngalki*. This term literally means 'essence' (Kirton and Timothy 1977). *Ngalki* is best described as that thing which marks the individual identity or essence of something. It can refer to the taste or smell of food, one's own particular body smell, or the positioning of people, flora, fauna and natural phenomena into the four semi-moieties which exist in Yanyuwa society. When used in relation to song, the term *ngalki* is often prefixed by a descriptive marker which marks the perceived quality of the performance or a person's opinion of the tune which is associated with a song. Thus *yabi ngalki* (literally: good essence) can refer to both a good performance or a song which is seen to have an enjoyable tune; *wardi ngalki* (literally: bad essence) a song that is quite plainly not being well performed; *jirda ngalki* (literally: bitter/bad tasting essence) is a song that is not being performed properly, the tune is incorrect or the singers are discordant; *daburrdaburr ngalki*

(literally: rough/troubled essence) is used to describe a tune of a song which is considered hard to learn and one that requires a long time spent with older accomplished singers. This is a term often used by men, to describe a number of songs associated with various ceremonies and ritual actions. The term has a special relevance to songs which are considered powerful enough to affect other human beings, or impact upon the order of the natural world and where the correct tune is considered to be the conveyer of the song's inherent power or *wirrimalaru*. The term *ngalki* used in a duplicated form (= *ngalkingalki*) is the term for one's own voice. In many respects the term is identifying the special uniqueness of one's own voice.

*Ngalki* as a concept presents the Yanyuwa way of making sense of the complex relationship between the people who make music, the process of music-making and the sound which is music. Translated ethnomusicologically, *ngalki* provides an important framework for understanding the complex relationship between sound, concept and behaviour (see Merriam 1964). In terms of musical structure, the *ngalki* of a particular song is often described by Yanyuwa people as the melody. It also includes the type of beating accompaniment used, the particular types of rhythmic patterns attached to song text, the way in which these are fitted onto a specific melodic shape and the way all three components are combined during the act of musical performance. Thus the correct interlocking of all performance elements gives each Yanyuwa song style its unique identity and it is through the act of performance that the embedded power within genres is given meaning, accessed and utilised by performers.

Broadly speaking, Yanyuwa music is primarily vocal with beating accompaniment, the latter consisting usually of paired boomerang clapsticks (*wakirli*), clapping sticks (*karlwa*) and hand/body slapping. Singing is unison in style, with an organisational song leader and group. Performance of Yanyuwa song comprises short passages of uninterrupted singing, each about thirty seconds to two minutes in duration. In performance, repetition of syllabic song text and rhythmic pattern is presented over a largely descending melodic shape. Hence, the textual and rhythmic structure of Yanyuwa song is similar to that of Central Australian Aboriginal music, while melodically, Yanyuwa pitch structures resemble more closely those used in some parts of north central and northeast Arnhem Land song styles.<sup>2</sup> The rest of this paper will provide a general description of the song genre as they appear under their Yanyuwa headings. Various musical and social features of each song type will be discussed and examples of verses with translations will also be provided along with musical transcription where this is available or seen to be necessary.

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<sup>2</sup> Detailed musical analysis of Yanyuwa song styles is beyond the scope of this preliminary investigation. Research of this kind, however, is currently being undertaken by the authors who hope to publish this work at a later date.

## SECTION TWO

### ***Walaba* and *A-kurija*: Fun Songs Composed by Men and Women**

In Yanyuwa culture, there is an important category of song literature which concerns the actions of human ancestors. These have been termed 'little history' songs by the Yanyuwa. When composed by men, 'little history' songs are called *walaba* and they are called *a-kurija* when composed by women. *Walaba* and *a-kurija* stem from the not-too-distant past of human recollections and experiences and are a social repository of a lived reality. These public songs are believed to have a historical time-scale from those composed by old people a long time ago to others which have been composed by present-day performers and their peers. The repertoire of songs performed today consists of songs which dates from the late 1800s and early 1900s through to song material composed as recently as 1999.

The terminological difference between women's *a-kurija* and men's *walaba* does not relate to a different context but to the unique dialects that the Yanyuwa language system reserves for men and women (see Bradley 1988). Hence, these songs are not gender exclusive; rather, they are gender specific. As described earlier, differences between language forms for women and men and rules of usage also apply to song performance and composition. The song text of an *a-kurija* song (the female form of this song genre), will be in the women's form of language. If the song is to be performed by men, it will be sung in the women's language. Similarly, the song text of a *walaba* song (the male form of this song genre) will use the speech of men, and the song will always be performed in the men's form of language regardless of the sex of the performer(s).

The performance of *walaba* and *a-kurija* is devoid of most performance restrictions often associated with ceremony and may be staged at any place and any time. The only restriction that may be observed is if a well know performer or composer dies where there may be a rest of some six months before songs liked or composed by that person are performed again. For example, performances may develop at informal gatherings where both female and male musicians are present, within the framework of a staged musical performance for interested observers, or in association with indigenous festivals and organisations. Sitting around a campfire on a cool evening, 'talking stories' and reminiscing about times past usually provides an atmosphere which leads to performance of *walaba* and *a-kurija*. These performance occasions are usually accompanied by much frivolity and laughter as the older dancers guide young children in correct performance (Plate 1). Public songs may be composed by one person or a group of people of the same sex or gender. Ownership of song remains with the original composer of the new song or, in the case of group composition, to the main innovators of the song.

An important identifying characteristic of *walaba* and *a-kurija* compositions is subject matter. *Walaba* and *a-kurija* can be divided into a number of categories

according to their subject matter and in accordance with the geographical location from which the songs derive. The Yanyuwa have a body of little history songs which they term ‘island songs’ (Jemima Miller Wuwarlu, pers. comm., 1995). These songs are concerned with life as experienced by the Yanyuwa on the Sir Edward Pellew Group of Islands.<sup>3</sup> Island songs speak of love for the land and the important relationship between people and place while expressing the beauty of the island country. Island songs signify and stimulate immense pride in being Yanyuwa and *li-anthawirriyarra* or people whose spiritual heritage is derived from the sea. A good example of an island song is the composition ‘Li-anthawirriwarra’ (Table 1). This song was composed primarily by Annie Isaac Karrakayn, Eileen McDinny Manankurramara and Dinah Norman Marrangawi during the proceedings of the 1992 Land Claim by Yanyuwa people for Centre, South-West, White and Black Craggy, Skull and Watson Islands. These Yanyuwa women recall that a judge from Melbourne travelled to Borroloola to preside over the hearing. They decided to compose this song to persuade the white judge to return the beloved island country to the Yanyuwa people. The song text describes the intimate spiritual link that Yanyuwa people have with the island country.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1. ‘Li-anthawirriwarra’ or ‘Land claim song’.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Ngambala li-anthawirriyarra</i>	We are the people whose spirit is from the sea
<i>layirli-nganji waliwaliyangka</i>	We are kin to the islands

‘Public’, ‘secular’, ‘unrestricted’, ‘songs for entertainment’ and ‘corroboree’ are all descriptive terms given by both researchers and performers to new songs composed by humans in Indigenous Australian cultures. The term ‘corroboree’ is often used by indigenous and non-indigenous people alike to refer to the public genre of little history songs. Tindale (1937:107-120) referred to this genre as songs which dealt with ‘public opinion’; Elkin (1964:289) used the word ‘corroboree’ in reference to songs with secular or ‘everyday’ themes; Ellis *et al.* (1988:161) refer to this genre of new Central Australian songs as “those concerning the advent of white people or changed circumstances of everyday life”; and Moyle (1977:4) used the interesting and somewhat amusing phrase “made with the brain songs” to refer to newly composed songs from the Kimberley region. The themes of corroboree performances listed by Elkin are mirrored in many Yanyuwa *walaba* and *a-kurija* compositions. Elkin (1964:289) writes:

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<sup>3</sup> This is similar to the association in Yanyuwa culture of island speech with island country.

<sup>4</sup> Eight years after the claim was successfully heard, the Yanyuwa community is still waiting for the land to be formally handed back.

Corroboree themes are usually based on everyday experiences and incidents, both recent and traditional; they include the ways of birds, animals and fish; the movements of the storm, the flood and the sea; gossip, or the doings and escapades of both sexes, though the allusions are indirect, and the dancing; and the Aborigines' experience of, and interests in, European and other non-native objects and pursuits, such as tobacco, the meal-gong, kitchen, engines, aeroplanes, soldiers, stock-work, and card playing.<sup>5</sup>

Elkin (1964:290) further described corroborees or newly composed songs as 'songs of contact', stating that the themes of the songs illustrate the way in which Aboriginal people used the contact situation to serve personal and social ends in the form of song composition.

*Walaba* and *a-kurija* compositions represent the way in which Yanyuwa women and men have responded through music to social change and cultural events which have happened to them and to the community around them. Westernisation may be said to have effected qualitative as well as quantitative social changes for the Yanyuwa such as cultural, economical, political and social alienation, exploitation and impoverishment. Many little history songs reflect the impact cultural contact has had upon Yanyuwa people and the way in which they have responded to those experiences such as road developments, stock work, stolen generations and land claim processes. Little history songs reflect the Yanyuwa response to the imposition of Western culture upon an indigenous Australian reality. A different Yanyuwa society has evolved and with it *walaba* and *a-kurija* songs have emerged as powerful and meaningful symbols of social, personal and cultural identity. Furthermore, *walaba* and *a-kurija* function simultaneously as vehicles of expression and as a means for mediation of conflict as they present the dynamic nature of relationships between people and between people and place. These songs represent one of the few ways in which the Yanyuwa community can identify with its traditional past while embracing, expressing and reinforcing a present and future identity.

A good example of a *walaba* composition is the song commonly referred to as 'Wirndalbirndal' or 'Dugong Hunter' by Yanyuwa performers (Table 2). Composed by Jack Baju, Bradley (1994:48) writes that:

This song tells of the pride the Yanyuwa men felt in being dugong and sea turtle hunters of repute. Their hair is strong and rubbed with dugong oil. The composer is remembered for his songs dealing with the sea and coastal regions of Yanyuwa country and his songs are now regarded by contemporary Yanyuwa people as some of the best among their repertoire.

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<sup>5</sup> See also Goddard (1934), Nketia (1992:189) and Donaldson (1979:64-65) for discussion of songs composed by human beings.

**Table 2. ‘Wirndalbirndal’ or ‘Dugong hunter’.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Wirndalbirndal</i>	Our hair is strong
<i>Ngambala-wada</i>	And thickly oiled
<i>Ndi-ngambala li-wurralngu</i>	We are inhabitants of the sea
<i>li-maramaranja</i>	We are dugong hunters of excellence

This song was composed as a direct response from a distant kin of the composer who belonged to the neighbouring Marra speakers to the northwest. It is said that the Marra person commented:

*li-Yanyuwa li-karinguthunda liyirli-nganji ki-wararru.*

The Yanyuwa people are those people from the north (the islands) who are kin to the black saline mud.

Speaking directly about men’s roles as dugong and sea turtle hunters, this song responded to and rebutted the above insult by asserting Yanyuwa men’s pride in being dugong and sea turtle hunters of excellence. This song establishes an important connection between Yanyuwa men and their attachment to country and reflects how Yanyuwa male composers perceived their social and personal identities. Daily concerns would most likely have centred on such culturally important activities such as hunting for dugong or sea turtle, caring for country and performing ceremonies. Country formed the basis of their existence and was an important part of their worldview. Each composer’s identity derived directly from the country and through the activities and responsibilities associated with country. This song is also performed today by Yanyuwa women with pride and has in many ways become an anthem of their identity as island people.

Yanyuwa people sometimes refer to *walaba* songs by the affectionate term of ‘island songs’ because of their strong association with the island country. In performance, island songs may sometimes be accompanied by didjeridu. The didjeridu, termed *makulurru* or *bambu* by the Yanyuwa, was introduced through trade between the Yanyuwa and their neighbours to the west. The didjeridu came in (to Yanyuwa culture) on the northwestern path, some people say it came first with the Marra people while others say it came from the Marra via Mayili people. It is known that the didjeridu was used in performance by the Yanyuwa at least as early as 1901. This was documented by Spencer and Gillen (1904:705), who collected a didjeridu from the Anula (Yanyuwa) at that time.

The *a-kurija* composition ‘Angry Terns’ is a good illustration of a fun song by Yanyuwa women (Table 3). Composed by Maggie Bukundu and Judy Marrngawi, this *a-kurija* song is about white seagulls or terns and remembers the hunting activities of women as they gathered tern eggs on the islet of Yinijini. In this song, the composer describes how the terns become angry at the women stealing their eggs, crying out “Leave my daughter! Leave my eggs!” (Eileen McDinny Manankurrmara and Jemima Miller Wuwarlu, pers. comm., 1995). In this way, this *a-kurija* song strongly reflects the role that women play in the fabric of social life based upon their own sense of identification with the island country.

**Table 3. ‘Angry terns’.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Jinyamba wunkulma</i>	With wings outstretched
<i>Kiwa-wani jarranymantharra</i>	The terns returned screeching in anger
<i>Yinijini</i>	For their eggs at Yinijini

### ***A-nguyulnguyul***

A subset of the womens’ *a-kurija* tradition is called *a-nguyulnguyul*. The word *nguyul* refers to an amusing person or one who is considered to be a ‘trickster’; the word *a-nguyulnguyulurrinjarra* is used to mean entertaining; and the term *narnu-nguyula* refers to a trick or deception (Bradley 1992:240-266). The word *a-nguyulnguyul* is spoken by both men and women in the same way. The thematic material in a song text is usually a good indicator of whether or not a song is labelled *a-nguyulnguyul* rather than *walaba* or *a-kurija*. For instance, a man racing back from the stock camp to shave so that he will look handsome for his girlfriend, a woman who dances wearing a bra and makes her body beautiful, a hunter looking out over the sea and longing for his country, or a sailor looking longingly at some women out of the porthole of a boat are typical themes of *a-nguyulnguyul* compositions. It may be that *a-nguyulnguyul* songs are only referred to by this term because the composer was considered to be an exceptionally *a-nguyulnguyul* person.

It would appear that *a-nguyulnguyul* songs are given this name by Yanyuwa because they are ‘clever’ or ‘tricky’ enough to move or stir the emotions of people in a passionate way. *A-nguyulnguyul* songs, unlike *walaba* and *a-kurija*, more directly express the dynamics of Yanyuwa relationships with their kin and their country. This definition explains why some island songs which speak about certain parts of island country are defined as *a-nguyulnguyul* by performers while other *walaba* and *a-kurija* compositions do not receive this specific terminological distinction. Songs which speak about traditional land, romantic liaisons between men and women and funny or amusing events are all considered to be *a-nguyulnguyul* because they have the

ability to draw an emotional response from both performers and listeners alike.<sup>6</sup> This idea is reinforced by Jemima who commented: “Yanyuwa [people], when we sing them [*a-nguyulnguyul*] we make them other people cry, this song make them cry” (Jemima Miller Wuwarlu, pers. comm., 1994). The ability of these songs to evoke a passionate response is also related to the fact that many *a-nguyulnguyul* compositions bring back memories of a time that has passed and can never be revisited. Hence, *a-nguyulnguyul* performances are often accompanied by strong feelings of nostalgia (Plate 2).

Amongst favourite *a-nguyulnguyul* compositions performed today are those composed by Nora Jalirduma. Unlike song composition by other female composers, Nora’s *a-nguyulnguyul* song texts speak exclusively about the social and sexual dynamics associated with romantic relations that develop between women and men. None of her songs refer to country or associated activities. Without doubt, however, Nora’s skill in musical expression and her innate sense of language were considered to be quite extraordinary. Importantly, her knowledge of relationships between men and women was thought to be extremely perceptive and profound. The song texts featured below (see Table 4) are four of approximately seven composed by Nora that are often performed as a cycle. The songs are linked by the ideas of unrequited love, desire, sadness and of lovers stealing away together. Her songs are amongst the only recorded examples where a number of players in the arrangements of illicit elopements occur and are mentioned, thus constructing an excellent example of how these relationships were played out. Nora’s *a-nguyulnguyul* song texts reveal much about the nature of the social dynamics associated with romantic relations in Yanyuwa society as perceived by a woman.

**Table 4. Song text from Nora’s *a-nguyulnguyul* cycle.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>ngandarra nya-kaya jina anku</i>	Take this (tobacco) to her and see what she says
<i>ngandarra rra-nykarriya</i>	Listen to her words, so I know what to do
<i>nya-waninjangumaya ngathangkalu</i>	When you return bring something back to me from her

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<sup>6</sup> Dixon and Koch (1996:15) write of a similar song type called *Gugulu* which is performed by Dyirbal speakers of the Cairns rainforest area. Like *a-nguyulnguyul*, *Gugulu* songs most often convey personal feelings and exhibit emotional overtones. Unlike *a-nguyulnguyul*, however, *Gugulu* songs are most often performed by men. See Koch (1987, 1995) for further discussion of Dyirbal song style.

This song is about a man who asked a young girl to take some tobacco to another girl he admired. He said to her: “Take this tobacco to my girlfriend, listen to what she says and then come straight back and tell me!” Her response to the tobacco is a test and acts as a sign to the man about her feelings towards him. The actions detailed in this song are part of a prearranged plan by a middle person, called the ‘mailman’ in Aboriginal English, to bring this man and the woman together.

**Table 4. Song text from Nora’s *a-nguyulnguyul* cycle (cont.).**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>karnandu-yalbanga ki-juwakiyu</i>	She was merely asking me for the swag
<i>winarrku karrnarna-lhaa</i>	I know her well

After learning the response of his girlfriend to the tobacco he sent her, a young man asks his grandfather for his swag so that he could go and sleep with his friend. The grandfather is a wise old man and knows his grandson well. He knows that his grandson really wants his swag so that he can run away and sleep with his girlfriend.

**Table 4. Song text from Nora’s *a-nguyulnguyul* cycle (cont.).**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Bawuji kirna-ralimabumala kaliku</i>	Quickly I will roll up my swag
<i>Bawuji karna-wingkala yarrungkayalu</i>	For I will go and wake her up

In this song a young man speaks to his classificatory mother – the middle person in the first song. He decides that he will go and roll up his swag so that he can then go and wake his girlfriend. The two lovers can then run away *wunji* (elope) together in the night.

**Table 4. Song text from Nora’s *a-nguyulnguyul* cycle (cont.).**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Yalayka barratha ngali-wingkaya</i>	Quickly mother,
<i>rarrinjarra katharramba-wulkanala</i>	we will go (to her)

The young man cries out to his classificatory mother: “Come on! Hurry up Mum! Hurry up! Let’s go quickly so that I can see my girlfriend while we are walking along! I’m going to cry for her from a distance!” The young man can see his girlfriend from a distance and he cries for her, the lovers cautious to meet one another in public.

### **Wujuju**

Just as *a-nguyunguyul* are seen to be a subset of the *a-kurija* tradition of the women, there is a corresponding set of songs named *wujuju* that can be seen as a subset of the *walaba* men's tradition. They are equivalent in genre to the *a-nguyulnguyul* tradition of the women. The main difference, however, is that while the *a-nguyulnguyul* tradition speaks predominately of male-female relationships, the *wujuju* tradition deals with men speaking about men. These songs do not speak of relationships or sexual encounters, but rather perceived humorous events that are the observable idiosyncrasies that men saw in each other's, or their own lives. It is this genre of song which was sung by the women on the viewing of the plastic water rat mentioned at the beginning of this paper. The songs are no longer performed, or composed by men and their knowledge is now held by a number of senior Yanyuwa women. Women do not normally perform this genre in their regular performance setting, and mention them only in passing.

In the following example of *wujuju* (Table 5) composed by Mack Reilly Manguji the song celebrates the news that an old white fellow who had lived in the Borroloola area had passed away in Darwin. The man in question was described as being 'cheeky' who was equal to any Yanyuwa person in his ability to swear and wield a fighting stick and the composer was happy that he would not be returning to Borroloola.

**Table 5. The Saltwater Admiral (Old Blitner) is dead.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Jinangu Ja-mirirri</i>	This growling (old man)
<i>ka-mirrirrinjaninya</i>	he had been ill
<i>Marniwuthu angula</i>	This way to the west (in Darwin)
<i>Kumba-mirra</i>	Now he has died
<i>Kurdardi ka-warninma</i>	He won't be coming back

### **Dreamt Songs: *Kalwanyarra* and *Ngadirdji***

Another subset of the *walaba* and *a-kurija* genre are 'dreamt' or 'dream state' songs often referred to by the Yanyuwa term *almirngantharra* (literally: seeing into dreams).<sup>7</sup> The songs are composed by humans after they have had interactions with spirit visions through dreams. There are two well known dream state songs in

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<sup>7</sup> This phenomenon is not unique to the Yanyuwa and is reported in other indigenous Australian cultural groups such as the Warlpiri in Central Australia (e.g. Wild 1987). However, Yanyuwa people state that the composition of new songs via the dream process does not occur frequently in Yanyuwa culture.

Yanyuwa. One composed by Jerry Brown Ngarnawakajarra (now deceased, see Plate 3) is called ‘Kalwanyarra’ and relates the composer’s experience with a group of spirit beings (*ngabaya*) who took him into the sky and gave him the words, music and choreography for the performance. The second song, called ‘Ngadirdji’ by the Yanyuwa, was composed by Elma Brown Bunubunu (now deceased, see Plate 4) the wife of Jerry Brown, and speaks of her experiences with a group of Mermaid Women on the Barkly Tablelands.<sup>8</sup>

The song text language of Kalwanyarra is Yanyuwa, though much of it is esoteric and archaic in style. Table 6 illustrates two examples from the opening verses of the song.

**Table 6. Kalwanyarra song verses.**

**Verse 1**

**Yanyuwa Song Text**

*Nymbala-nykarriya*

*Kumba-jarrijijimba*

*Akarriya*

**Free Translation**

You two listen!

He (the lead *ngabaya*) is indicating

This way eastwards (the way he will travel)

**Verse 2**

**Yanyuwa Song Text**

*Kumbu-wijuwa*

*li-maluwalanbala*

*nyimbala-karra*

*akarrulu ja-muyamuyabarra*

**Free Translation**

The Spirit people cover themselves

With a shining white nest, rising from the earth

You to look at it

Into the west the spirit people travel

Due to the geographical location of Elma when she received Ngadirdji, the language of the Ngadirdji song is not in Yanyuwa but in Wakaya. The Ngadirdji women revealed the meaning of the language to Elma in the dream. There are a number of keywords which are shared by other language groups throughout the Gulf of Carpentaria making a free translation of the song text possible. Two verses are illustrated below in Table 7.

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<sup>8</sup> A much fuller discussion of this particular song genre can be found in Mackinlay and Bradley (in prep.).

**Table 7. Ngardirdji Song Verses.**

**Verse 1**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Ngadijirri</i>	The tableland women dance as red winged parrots
<i>yakaja mala</i>	Carrying a painted dance board
<i>Malabirra</i>	These the tableland women called Malabirra

**Verse 2**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Mungamunga</i>	The Mungamunga mermaid women of the Barkly Tablelands
<i>rrayakaja</i>	
<i>jarrirri</i>	Meet the Kalungarra saltwater mermaids from the north
<i>Kalungarra</i>	

When the two composers were alive, Ngardirdji and Kalwanyarra and would often be performed 'back-to-back'. In the early 1990s when Jerry Brown was alive, Ngardirdji would be performed first and Kalwanyarra would follow. The reasons for this are unclear. The content of Kalwanyarra is closely aligned with Dreaming beings as they travel across country and in this sense was always performed with a degree of seriousness. Generally speaking, in Yanyuwa tradition it is those songs and ceremonies performed last which are more important than those that come first and the order of Ngardirdji and Kalwanyarra performance may also be closely related to Jerry's authority as a senior man of the Wurdaliya semi-moiety. Today, however, Ngardirdji is more frequently performed than Kalwanyarra. The Yanyuwa community is famous throughout the Gulf region of northern Australia for their performances of Ngardirdji and in many ways this song has become an anthem of Yanyuwa identity and a symbol of cultural strength and pride. These performance occasions range from community festivals across the Top End and Central Australia to local celebrations such as birthdays, culture days at homeland schools in the Barkly Tablelands region, welcoming visitors to their country and sharing their culture with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students on a local and national level.

**SECTION TWO**

***Kujika: Songs from the Dreaming***

In Yanyuwa, song cycles are called by the generic term *kujika*, a word which has widespread use throughout the Gulf region and even into northeast Arnhem Land (Avery 1985; Keen 1994; Merlan 1987; Trigger 1989) and by its cognate form in the

Victoria River region of the Northern Territory (Rose 1992; Wild 1987). In everyday conversational Yanyuwa, song cycles are often called simply *a-yabala*, a feminine noun meaning 'road' or 'path'. When people sing a song cycle they are described as *wandayarra* ('following') or *yinbarraya* ('singing') the road. A person who is seen to be enjoying the singing of a song cycle is described as *jarrilu-ngalkiwunjayarra a-yabala* or: "He is drinking her essence, the essence of the road". We cannot give a reason for why the road of the Dreaming or the song is feminine because the term *kujika* is a masculine noun. We make note here also that many female speech forms can be found in song cycles regardless of the sex of the creator which brought the song into being (Bradley 1988). There is no one term for *kujika* verse in Yanyuwa, people use the Kriol term 'leg', a term also recorded by Merlan (1987). In Yanyuwa, singers or knowledgeable people reference song verses by the content of the actual song verse, in many instances verses have a keyword by which that verse is known (Plate 5). In addition, song verses are also tied to the landscape via named places.

In Yanyuwa, song texts are always described using the present participle form of the verb, thus they are described as *wulumantharra* ('running'), *wingkayarra* ('moving' or 'going') or even in some instances as *wujbantharra* ('flowing'), when the singers near a place name or a particular species it is described as *rdumatharra* ('getting'). The songs are also *windirrinjarra* ('ascending') and *lhankanbayarra* ('descending') and are always accompanied by a cardinal direction marker. When the song is nearing completion it is then described as *yibarrantharra* ('placing').<sup>9</sup>

There is a sense that these songlines are ever-present on the country, like flowing conduits of meaning. If the code is known they can be tapped into and followed, and then voice is given to that which is always on or in the country and the sea. Another feature of the song cycles are their association with natural phenomena and the songs seem to travel with or before them. For example the Dingo song cycle of the Wuyaliya semi-moiety moves continually before a large bush fire, that drives the dingo on. The Mambaliya-Wawukarriya song cycles move on floodwaters and the Spirit People song cycle of the Wurdaliya semi-moiety are driven forward by the cold season wind and the carrying of fire sticks by dancing Spirit People. The Tiger Shark song cycle of the island-coastal Rrumburriya group and the Wawukarriya coastal group are carried on and moved by tidal currents. The song cycles of the Mambaliya-Wawukarriya group are problematic in that there is no one specific Dreaming entity associated with the creation of them. For the Wurdaliya group it is the Spirit Men, for the Wuyaliya group it is the Dingo, for the Rrumburriya group the Tiger Shark. There is no such entity for the Mambaliya-Wawukarriya group. The song cycles contain many references to the Dreamings associated with the group but no one of them is considered the sole creator of them. Pyro Dirdiyalma (pers. comm., 1988), a senior owner of the songs, expressed this in the following way:

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<sup>9</sup> See Bradley and Kirton (1989:580-589) for a similar text.

*Winarrku yiwalumba barra nya-nganunga kujika ja-wingkay kurdarrku  
karrilu-kantharru kurdardi, rra-kilyarrkilyarr kurdardi karranda-kantharru  
kurdardi alunga winarrku ja-wingkayi yiwalumba.*

Merely by itself our song is travelling, it is not carried by the brolga it is not carried by the wedge tailed eagle it is carried by no one, it is merely travelling by itself.

This in itself also raises interesting issues socially, the younger generation of Yanyuwa men and women equate all *kujika* with a dominant Dreaming entity and younger men and women of the Mambaliya-Wawukarriya semi-moiety are now also doing this. They associate the Mambaliya verses of the *kujika* with the Crow, Spotted Nightjar and Wedge Tailed Eagle and the Wawukarriya verses with the Brolga. A text analysis of the song cycle however shows that the most common theme in the song cycle to be freshwater floodwaters for the Mambaliya sections and both freshwater floodwaters and high and low tides for the Wawukarriya section.

As these songs travel over the country there are offshoots from the main path which diverge for a short while to bring into the song all the other stationary Dreamings which belong to a particular patriclan or other patriclans of the same semi-moiety. In these instances both the songs and the creatures or beings within the song are described as *kujika*. Thus in the Rumburriya Tiger Shark song cycle Dreamings from many other Rumburriya localities are included in the song because the Tiger Shark by virtue of his 'power' was able to observe them and incorporate them into the song, a process the Yanyuwa call "bringing into the line" or "making the road straight" (see Figure 3). Thus the reef Wurlma and the bundle of soaking cycad nuts which is said to be present there is brought into the song, though it is many kilometres from the actual path as are other Dreaming entities such as the Hammerhead Shark and North Wind.

The full length of the public song cycle is sung on the night prior to the actual circumcision of young boys, when men dance all night for the initiates. The song is sung verse at a time with rapid staccato boomerang beats (*birlirlumantharra*). It is this beat the men dance to. To fully complete the song cycle may take between 8-10 hours with some breaks, the song is usually completed or 'put down' on or as near to day-break as possible and senior song men are constantly gauging the speed at which the song is being sung.

There are times when the song cycle can be sung without the rapid staccato boomerang beats and the song flows smoothly and the song's journey travels much quicker. The boomerang beating employed is much steadier and rhythmic and is termed *yarraburrumantharra*. This method is employed when men gather together to sing for enjoyment or on the near death of a kinsman. The song cycles are also sung without the rapid boomerang beats to put a young child of the song's same patriclan

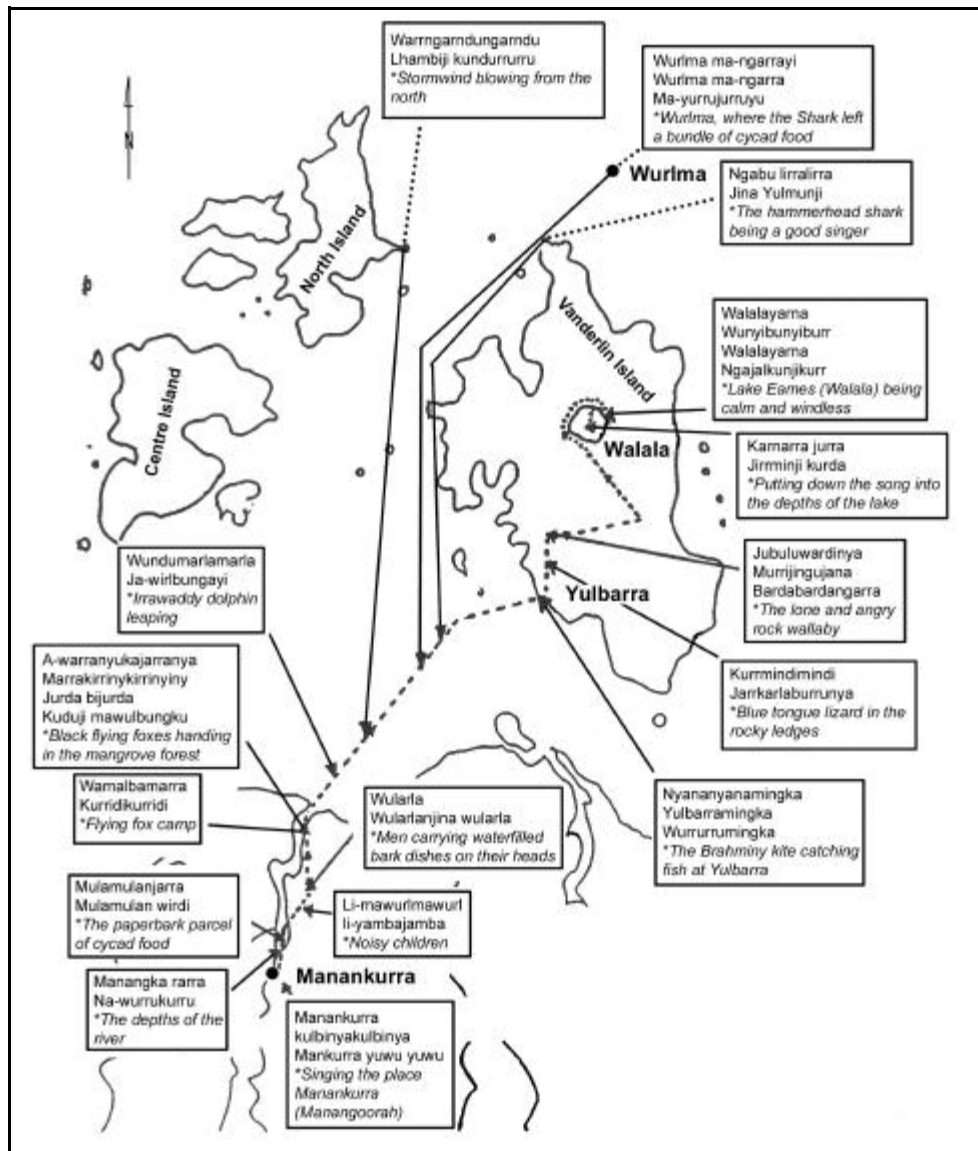


Figure 3. An example of song cycle verses from the Tiger Shark *kujika* and the song lines they travel.

to sleep. These songs can soothe children and heal minor ailments associated with teething or colds and flu. The innate power of the song (*wirrimalaru*) is said to be too strong for a child and thus it soon falls asleep. Thus in this example the song cycles take on the use of a powerful form of lullaby (see Mackinlay 1999). When a song cycle is sung in any of the above forms away from the circumcision rituals it is called *mayjbi*.

In relation to the songs under discussion there is the second category of secret and sacred songs which were sung when the bones of deceased kin were being placed within a hollow log coffin, a practice which has now fallen into abeyance. The songs are still sometimes used when grown men are being decorated prior to the all night dancing for the circumcision initiates. An interesting parallel here is that both the coffin and the performers are being decorated. The men for ceremonial performance, and for the person interred in the hollow log coffin it was seen as the last time that the design would be used for them. Interesting also is the fact that it is the only time that women are ever physically associated with the sacred designs from their country. Figure 4 shows the path of a song cycle employed for circumcision rituals at the all night singing, and the path of the song that is followed when the song is sung for the decoration of a hollow log coffin or the decoration of the dancers bodies prior to all night dancing at circumcision rituals. The song cycles employed for hollow log coffin ceremonies are also sometimes sung, when at the beginning of the circumcision rituals, young boys have a hair string belt tied around their waist. Again this style of singing is called *mayjbi* and is described as ‘half-and-half’ singing, as the song does not travel far and the complete song is not sung.

Generally speaking the sacred but public song cycles do not speak of any great mystical or creative experiences. Rather they speak of what people know of their country such as the names of country and people, the geographic features, they also speak of animals and plants that are well known, of the camps of the old people who did things which their parents and grandparents did, and that people no longer do. Thus the song becomes a place where once common events and material item objects are preserved such as bark canoes and fishing nets. The songs often sing of tides and currents, fire and winds, common phenomena some of which are still the variables which salt water people must take into account when travelling on the sea. Taken at initial face value, and based upon fairly basic translations, the song texts do not appear to say much. At their best the verses allow for but a glimpse of the subject matter, but it is important to note that to the people who own these songs, they have an importance and meaning far beyond its words and music alone. In relation to the importance of the song in indigenous Law, and knowledge structures for the Yanyuwa people, it is the song which is considered the most authoritative, as it is the song, as opposed to the spoken myth narrative, which is the ‘title’ by which people hold country.

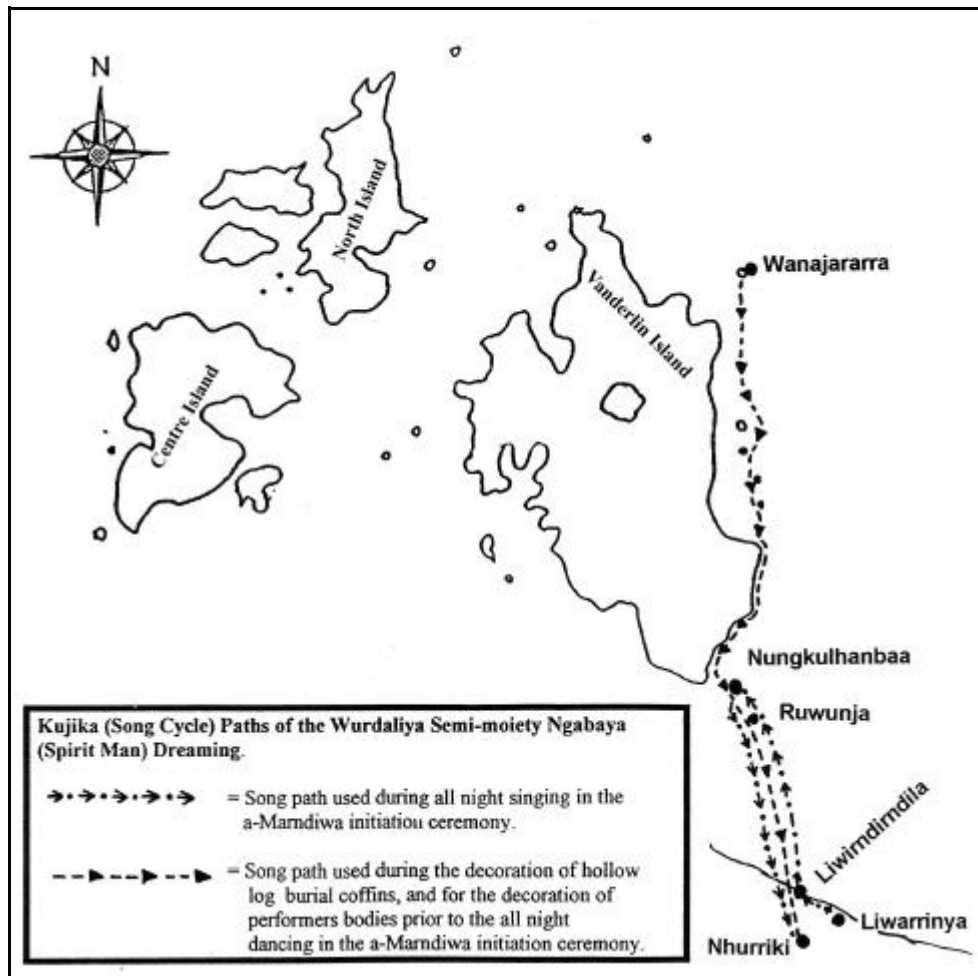


Figure 4. Paths of two song cycles associated with the Wurdaliya (Ngabaya) Spirit People.

The language of this song cycle is said to be all in Yanyuwa, however, there are parts of the verses and whole verses for which the Yanyuwa can give no direct translation. These verses are said to be in the Dreamings' own particular form of Yanyuwa. Other verses are all in Yanyuwa, though sometimes drawing on avoidance dialect terms, archaic terms or sometimes a word is embedded between prefix and suffix elements that have no relationship to the prefixes and suffixes used in Yanyuwa. There are also at times a number of Marra and Garrwa terms which are the neighbouring languages to the northwest and east.

In terms of research there is nothing new in the above statement. Researchers such as Myers (1986), Morphy (1991), Merlan (1987) and Sutton (1987) have all commented upon the 'multivalency' or polysemous nature of indigenous art forms including song texts. Merlan (1987:146) discusses what she calls the opacity of song language generally and Sutton (1987:87-91) discusses this 'multivalency' and opacity in relation to the political significance that song can have in indigenous communities. While agreeing with the arguments put forward in relation to song we believe that there are some other issues which need to be taken into consideration. Keen (1977) and Merlan (1987) speak of the language of some songs coming from other language groups and thus meaning attributed to song is dependant on descriptive glosses given by knowledgeable senior men and women. This is also true at Borrooloola, but it is also compounded by the fact that Yanyuwa is no longer the first language for over half the population, the opacity of verses can be simply because the people listening to the songs no longer have the language skills to decode them. In such an instance, not only are the traditionally opaque verses still opaque, but verses which were originally transparent will be opaque. Associated with this also is the issue of recording of song cycles and transcribing and translating them. A number of younger Yanyuwa men and women put enormous value on these "paper forms of traditional texts". This is an issue that is beyond the scope of this paper but similar issues are discussed by Moyle (1998). Thus degrees of transparency and opaqueness are also dependent on how much background knowledge a person has concerning the song and the related mythology. In general most Yanyuwa song cycle verses are comprised of nouns, both proper and common, and then adjectives and verbs.

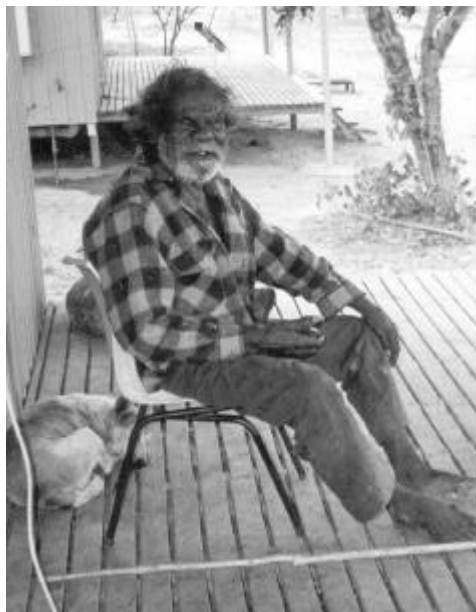
Up until the early 1980s the *kujika* associated with circumcision rituals were also sung on the death of a family member or were begun when the death of a person was seen to be imminent. The *kujika* being sung depended on the semi-moiety affiliation of the deceased, thus Rumburriya *kujika* were employed for Rumburriya people. When a *kujika* was sung in this form it was called *jawala* and was said to ease a person's transition from the world of the living to the world of the dead. The tune employed was that used in *mayjbi* performance. Generally speaking the performance of the *kujika* was very similar, but due to the circumstances of its singing it was often associated with much sadness and crying, especially as the song drew close to certain places associated with the deceased or the names of kin or Dreaming beings within



**Plate 1. Sitting around the campfire singing and talking stories at Wandangula. L-R: Jemima Miller Wuwarlu, Nancy McDinny Ningana, Diandra McDinny, Asher Miller, Dinny McDinny Nyilba (Photo: E. Mackinlay).**



**Plate 2. Myra Rory dancing a-nguyulnguyul at Wandangula (Photo: E. Mackinlay).**



**Plate 3. Jerry Brown Ngarnawakajarra, Wandangula (Photo: E. Mackinlay).**



**Plate 4. Elma Brown Bunubunu (Photo: J. Bradley).**



**Plate 5. Yanyuwa songmen for kujika. L-R: Jerry Brown Ngarnawakajarra, Dinny Mc Dinny Nyilba, Isaac Walayungkuma (Photo: E. Mackinlay).**



**Plate 6. Final evening of Kulyukulyu rituals, performers waiting on ceremony ground (Photo: T. Thorpe).**



**Plate 7. Singing on the Kulyukulyu ground. L-R: Isaac Walayungkuma binds the nalhurrwa percussion pad and Dinny Mc Dinny Nyilba sings with boomerangs (Photo: J. Bradley).**

**Plate 8. Yalkwaru pole and a-Makundurna on ceremony ground at Borroloola (Photo: E. Mackinlay).**



**Plate 9. Dancing with the a-Makundurna during penultimate rituals of the a-Makundurna (Photo: J. Bradley).**



**Plate 10. Old Diamond Kulukuna slams the a-Makundurna to the ground during Yalkawarru singing (Photo: L. Kuipers).**

the song were sung. The biggest difference in performance was associated with the last verses. When the *kujika* are performed for circumcision rituals the final verse of the *kujika* deals with placing the *kujika* back into the ground. Table 8 presents the Yanyuwa song text and free translation.

**Table 8. ‘Putting down’ the *kujika*.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Yarrbada yarrbayarra dunanajada wijkarrarra bardiyu</i>	Song of our ceremony we have taken you and now bring you back!
<i>Wijkarrarra bardiyu juju balya juju balyu</i>	Putting you back a long way down, into the earth, into the earth! We put you back!

When the *kujika* was performed in a Jawala performance the final verse was rendered as such:

*Jawalakurra  
ngadijakurra*

This song text is quite opaque but the general sentiment of what it means may be rendered as:

With Jawala we cover the deceased,  
The deceased who now dances with firesticks into the east.

When this verse was sung it would be near daylight and people would mourn and keen with great intensity. Jawala as mentioned above was meant to ease a person’s transition into the spirit world and it was said that the spirit of the deceased would head west and then turn east towards the spirit world where it would be met by other spirits dancing with firesticks to lead its way fully into the other world.

Table 9 illustrates the detail of Yanyuwa *kujika*, the major Dreaming entities associated with them and the division between inland and coastal and ‘public/unrestricted’ and ‘private/restricted’ versions.

*Nanda-wangirli*

The ceremony of *a-Kunabibi* is a major cult ceremony performed by the Yanyuwa, though during its final stages people from many communities and language groups will be involved. It is a major ceremony of revelation for young men who are secluded for up to three months. The major Dreamings associated with this ritual are the Dreaming Women and the Stranger Rainbow Serpent-Whirlwind, though many other localised Dreamings such as the Brolga, Wedge Tailed Eagle, Dugong Hunters and White Bellied Sea Eagle are celebrated also. This ceremony has been widely documented in other parts of northern Australia (e.g. Berndt 1955; Keen 1994).

During the elaborate rituals of *a-Kunabibi*<sup>10</sup> the male performers sing two major song cycles. Those associated with the Rumburriya semi-moiety sing the Women or Mermaid Dreaming called the *a-Mararabarna* or *a-Kurdangkinya*, those of the Mambaliya-Wawukarriya semi-moiety sing the *Walalu* or Stranger Rainbow Serpent or Whirlwind. These songs are sung near to the main camp during the preliminary opening rituals, with women being in ‘earshot’. This semi-public singing of these sacred song cycles is called *kalalu*. Later, when the rituals move to the ceremony ground proper they are sung there and they are plainly called *kujika*. The term *kalulu* refers to sacred song performance occurring in a near-public setting. During the *a-Kunabibi* ceremony, women have their own ceremony ground some 400m east of the ceremony ground belonging to the men. Here the women respond to various ritual calls of the men called *wirriwirri*, using their own high pitched ululations called *kilili*. During the night they sing their own song cycle which follows the path of the Dreaming Women. In actual fact this song cycle is exactly the same as that being sung by the Rumburriya men on the men’s ceremony ground. This has been deduced from women who have occasionally sung the song to demonstrate it, and also it has been spoken of by men.

The women also can without hesitation follow the path of the song from its beginnings in the sea near the Rosie Creek mouth all the way south to the Barkly Tablelands, the same path as the men’s version of the Women Dreamings travels. The women however do not call their song in this context *kujika*, rather they call it *nanda-wangirli*. The term is prefixed by a female/feminine pronoun meaning her or she, however the term *wangirli* is given no direct meaning except it means “the same as song”. Very broadly then, a translation of the term could be literally “her song”. The pronoun relating to either the Dreaming Women or the *a-Kunabibi* ceremony itself is marked in Yanyuwa with a feminine noun prefix. During the singing of this song the women dance and the rhythm to the song is kept using a role of messmate bark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*). This bark ‘drum’ is called in Yanyuwa *na-ruli*. This ‘drum’ is hit with a short stick. In more recent times plastic water bottles have also been used as the percussion for these rituals.

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<sup>10</sup> See Berndt (1955) for an early ethnographic account of *Kunapipi*.

**Table 9. Yanyuwa *kujika* and the major Dreaming entities associated with them.**

EXPLANATION	CLAN GROUP	
	Mambaliya-Wawukarriya	Rrumburriya
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These song cycles are used for circumcision ceremonies called <i>a-Marndiwa</i>.</li> <li>• In past times they were also used for <i>Jawala</i> or death/dying/funeral song cycles to help send the spirits of the deceased to the spirit world.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Mambaliya (inland)</u></b> – floodwaters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crow – a-Wangka</li> <li>• Wedge-tailed Eagle – a-Kilyarrkilyarr</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Wawukarriya (coastal)</u></b> – tides/floodwaters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brolga – Kurdarrku</li> <li>• Rock Cod – Wangkuwa</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Coastal and Island</u></b> – tides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiger Shark – Yulungurri</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Inland</u></b> – floodwaters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hill Kangaroo – Nangurrbuwala</li> <li>• Saltwater Crocodile – Mardumabarra</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Song cycles associated with secret and sacred rituals.</li> <li>• Many of them were associated with the rituals associated with the interring of bones into hollow log coffins.</li> <li>• Two of them associated with the Mambaliya-Wawukarriya semi-moiety and the Rrumburriya semi-moiety, are associated with the <i>a-Kunabibi</i> ceremony.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stranger Rainbow Serpent/Whirlwind – major song cycle for a-Kunabibi rituals</li> <li>• Spotted Nightjar – Yilayi – song cycle for hollow log coffin burials</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Coastal and Island</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parrotfish – Ngarraburna</li> <li>• Hammerhead Shark – Warriyangalayawu – for coastal/island Rrumburriya hollow log coffin burials</li> <li>• White-bellied Sea Eagle – a-Karnkarnka – short song cycle for exclusive Kundawira rituals.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Inland</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kangaroo – Nangurrbuwala – for hollow log coffin burials</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Joint</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dreaming Women/Mermaids – a-Mararabarna/a-Kurdangki nya – major song cycle for a-Kunabibi rituals</li> </ul>

**Table 9. (continued).**

CLAN GROUP	
Wuyaliya	Wurdaliya
<p><b>Coastal and Inland</b> – fire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dingo – Wurrundurla</li> </ul>	<p><b>Coastal and Inland</b> – firesticks, cold season wind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Nosed Python – a-Bubunarra – for those of Yanyuwa/Marra descent</li> <li>• Spirit People – Ngabaya – for those of Yanyuwa/Garrwa descent</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dingo – Wurrundurla – for inland and coastal Wuyaliya hollow log coffin burials</li> <li>• Dingo – Wurrundurla – short song cycle for the exclusive Bambaruku rituals</li> <li>• Groper – a-Kuridi – for island Wuyaliya hollow log coffin burials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sea Turtle – Wundanyuka – for hollow log coffin burials; especially for those of Yanyuwa/Marra descent. Western edge of the Pellew Islands.</li> <li>• Spirit People – Ngabaya – for hollow log coffin burials; especially those of Yanyuwa/Garrwa descent. Eastern edge of the Pellew Islands.</li> </ul>

Much of what has been written above in relation to the *kujika* of the men also applies to this *nanda-wangirli* of the women. The song is also important to the women in that socially Yanyuwa women represent themselves as seemingly tireless hunters and their hunting activities are seen as a fulfilment of their roles and a basis upon which they have built a powerful solidarity. It is through the land and the powerful image of the Dreaming Women as presented in their *a-Kunabibi* song that the women firmly establish themselves as mothers and women who are as intimately related to the Laws of the Dreaming as the men.

### ***Yarrambawaja***

In Yanyuwa this term is usually translated as a generic term for ceremonies of the sacred but public and of the restricted secret and sacred kind. In relation to musical traditions, however, the term is used somewhat differently. First, the term can be used to describe individual and specific songs associated with particular ritual performances within a ceremony. Thus the individual songs sung as people perform dances within a ritual which is part of bigger ceremony such as *a-Kunabibi* are called *yarrambawaja*. Sometimes these verses are taken from the song cycles or *kujika* and other verses are unique. The verses taken from the song cycles are however sung to different tunes thus marking the difference between the verse when performed in *kujika* or when performed within the context of a specific ritual action.

Second, the term is also used to describe a series of songs called *jamulu* that are specifically associated with rituals to return the spirits of deceased kin back to their country. These rituals are post-funeral rituals and are usually held some two to three years after the death of an individual. At first appearance the series of songs which are quite lengthy have the sound of *kujika*. The difference is that the songs are associated with a very specific site or a small number of sites and the song is specific to the Dreaming being which created it, and also speaks of rituals which are associated with the sending of the deceased spirit back to country. These tunes are also very different from the *kujika* style and also have associated with them a number of different percussion instruments which are discussed below and a number of specialised rituals calls.<sup>11</sup>

There are two specific ceremonies to which this applies. One is the Kulyukulu which is a Brolga Dreaming ritual used by the Mambaliya-Wawukarriya and Rrumburriya semi-moieties and the other is called Yalkawarru which is used by the Wuyaliya and Wurdaliya semi-moieties. Both the names of the ceremony, the rituals and their accompanying song can be called by the term *yarrambawaja* (Figure 5). Both the Kulyukulyu and Yalkawarru rituals use boomerangs as the dominant instruments with

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<sup>11</sup> An in depth musical analysis of this aspect of Yanyuwa musical performance is beyond the scope of this paper and suggests an area for further research.

which to mark the beat of the song. There are also other percussion instruments used during the singing of the songs and the performance of the rituals. In the Kulyukulyu rituals (Plate 6) a tightly bound paperbark pad some 48cm long and 14cm wide is constructed. This pad is called *na-lhurrwa* (Plate 7). During the singing of the songs and performance associated with the Kulyukulyu ritual the pad is beaten at a steady rhythmic rate. The *na-lhurrwa* is seen to be an important part of the rituals and is sung as an important ritual object within the songs associated with this particular ceremony. The song verse associated with this object is illustrated in Table 10.

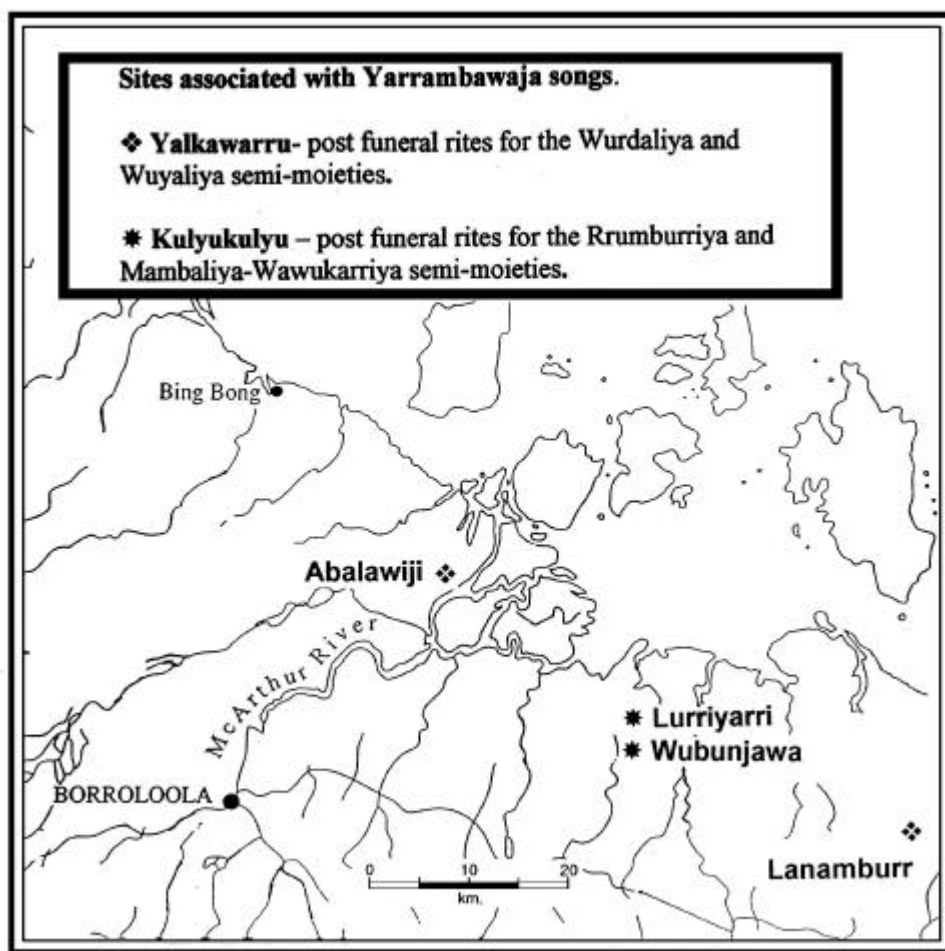


Figure 5. Sites associated with *yarrambawaja* songs: Yalkawarru and Kulyukulyu.

**Table 10. Song for the paperbark pad.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Ja-barndarr</i>	The <i>na-lhurrwa</i> continually calls
<i>na-lhurrwanyngkini</i>	It cuts deeply [into the ground]

The Kulyukulyu ceremony is associated with the sending of the spirit of deceased people back to their country. The heavy thudding of the *na-lhurrwa* as it is used is said to drive the spirit on its desired course.

The percussion instrument used in the Yalkawarru rituals serves a similar purpose though its construction is somewhat more complex. The percussion object used in the Yalkawarru is called *a-Makurnduna*, it is an arcuate-shaped object made by bending a supple stick into a semi-circle and leaving long protruding handles by which it can be grasped (Plate 8). The object is some 60-80cm high and 60cm across. The arch of the bent stick is wrapped with paperbark tied on firmly with string, until it is some 12cm thick at the top of the arch. In contemporary times this bound paperbark is covered with a cloth cover which is tightly stitched on. The object is both carried during the performance of certain rituals associated with the Yalkawarru (Plate 9) and it is also used to punctuate the ending of the song verses as they are sung. At the conclusion of the song verses the object, grasped firmly by its handles is slammed onto the ground two or three times (Plate 10). As with the *na-lhurrwa* used in the Kulyukulyu rituals the *a-Makurnduna* is said to assist in the driving of the deceased person's spirit to their country.

The object is associated with the activities of the Spirit Man Dreaming of the Wurdaliya group and is sung both in the song cycles of the Spirit Man and the Yalkawarru rituals. In the Yalkawarru rituals the song is divided into two distinct verses while in the song cycle the two separate verses become one. The verse from the Spirit Man song cycle is illustrated in Table 11.

**Table 11. Song for the *a-Makurndurna*.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Wajamburna</i>	It approaches, with speed and agility [it is carried]
<i>Jakundumakurndu</i>	The bent one, the <i>a-Makurndurna</i> [is hit onto the ground]

It is also worth noting that there are some ceremonies the Yanyuwa have performed in the past, or still perform, that have no song with all the sound produced by percussion. The Wambuyungu ceremony which is a variant of the ceremony better known in the literature as Yabadurruwa (Elkin 1961) is performed to the sound of

large wooden gongs called *a-karrkarinji*. The no-longer performed Kundawira rituals associated with the White Bellied Sea Eagle Dreaming were performed using *na-lhurrwa* bark pad described above. The Bamarruku rituals associated with the Dingo were performed to the beating of a short stick against a fighting stick or duelling club called *barrku*. In addition, many rituals also rely on rhythmic calls, heavy abdominal breathing to either keep in time with singing or the various instruments being used or to punctuate song verses, or rhythmic percussion beats.

***Yarrngijirri***

*Yarrngijirri* is a specific ceremonial song used during *a-Marndiwa* initiation rituals. Believed to be composed by the male Dreaming being *Yurrunju*, associated with the carrier of fire over the Barkly Tablelands to the south of Borroloola. Fire, amongst other things, is symbolic of strength in Yanyuwa thought. *Yarrngijirri* are sung by men as the hair belt is taken off the initiate or *rdaru* when he is handed over to the women, prior to their all night dancing as they prepare for circumcision.

Both women and men are able to perform *Yarrngijirri*, however they never perform these songs together and various roles that each gender plays during this initiation ceremony controls when they may perform *Yarrngijirri*. The women perform this song as a lullaby for young children in an intimate social context whilst the performance by men is restricted to the ceremony ground. Further, the tune of this song is varied from that of the men's when Yanyuwa women perform *Yarrngijirri*. Powerful unto themselves because of their association with the Dreaming, these songs have the capacity to make the boys relaxed and to put them to sleep so that they will not feel the pain of the circumcision knife. For example, the following texts highlight the inherent power of this song to alter the physical reaction of the young initiates. The song text of Table 12 describes the effect the singing will have on the boys while the song text of Table 13 makes explicit reference to song words lulling the children to sleep.

**Table 12. Making the boys sleep.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Jukumajuka dalaladala</i>	The boys will slump
<i>Jukumajuka walilinydinyi</i>	They will gather and sleep with no pain

**Table 13. Slumbering boys.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Wangarru kurdakurda</i>	The boys who have struck out [referring to act of hitting men with bark clubs so they will dance for them]
<i>Luyunyu yanulbirna</i>	They slumber, lulled to sleep by the words of the song

***Karrayngjala: Yanyuwa Lullabies***<sup>12</sup>

Generally, each lullaby style comes under the generic Yanyuwa term *kurdakurdamanthawu*, which means lulling to sleep. The specific term *karrayngjala* is used for a more specific series of songs that are said to have the power to send children to sleep. *Karrayngjala* songs are said by Yanyuwa to have come from the Dreamings. Because the origins of *karrayngjala* are attributed back to Dreaming said by Yanyuwa people to derive from *wabarrangu ambuliyalu* “a long time ago before living people”, *karrayngjala* can be categorised as restricted. The song texts of this form of Yanyuwa lullaby are not completely translatable and their language, often archaic speech, is said to be that of the Dreamings. Interestingly, although the *karrayngjala* songs are not given any semi-moiety classification or Dreaming association, the origin of these songs is firmly linked back into the ancestral realm through the phenomena of spirit children or *ardirri* who are located across the country and said to impregnate women. Annie Isaac Karrakayn (pers. comm., 1999), a senior Yanyuwa woman, explains:

*Yijan kalu-kanthaninya winarrku nungka nya-alunga li-arduburri ardirri barra*

The Dreaming carried the [lullaby songs] freely, maybe they were for their own children, the spirit children.

The song texts of *karrayngjala* illustrate well the spiritual connection of these lullabies to the Dreamings and more specifically, the power of these songs to influence the behaviour of the child beyond sending them to sleep. In many instances, the song texts of *karrayngjala* refer to making the child grow up to be strong and healthy.

The song text of Table 14 can be sung to either young boys or girls to give them strength.

**Table 14. Lullaby one.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Bingkama</i>	specific term used in the vocabulary of words associated with power songs
<i>Jarralanda</i>	You there in my lap be like this [strong and upright]
<i>Wangkama</i>	specific term used in the vocabulary of words associated with power and healing songs
<i>Jarralanda</i>	You there in my lap be like this [strong and upright]

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<sup>12</sup> See Mackinlay (1999) for an expanded discussion of lullaby songs.

As indicated, the terms *bingkama* and *wangkama* have no meaning as such and are directly associated with songs that are said to contain power. By reciting or singing these words properly, the song, in this case, a lullaby, is given the inherent power to achieve its aim of sending children to sleep and making them strong. Other *karrayngjala* songs however are more gender specific as illustrated by the song text of Table 15 performed as a lullaby for girls.

**Table 15. Lullaby two.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Karnada wardukarra</i>	adolescent girl
<i>Karnada wajijna</i>	carry something on one's hip
<i>Wakirriwakirri</i>	archaic term meaning strong

The general meaning behind the song is to make young girls grow up to be strong and healthy. More specifically, however, the song text refers to the mothering role that young girls will come to play as women and performance of this lullaby aims to ensure that the girl will mature to bear children and carry babies on her hip. Similarly, the song text illustrated in Table 16 refers to the process of making young boys into strong men and ensuring that the baby boy grows up to be strong and active.

**Table 16. Lullaby three.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Yibarrki</i>	adolescent boy
<i>Barrala</i>	early morning
<i>Bawulu</i>	archaic term for walking long distances

Further, some *karrayngjala* songs are associated directly with various Dreaming beings because of that being's specific strength-giving abilities. For example, there are several lullabies of this type associated with the baby emu. When the song is performed, the children's knees are tapped to give them the stamina to walk, run and move with the agility of an emu.

### SECTION THREE

#### **Powerful Yanyuwa Songs: Performance that Controls, Effects and Alters Behaviour<sup>13</sup>**

##### ***Narnu-nyiri*: Power Songs**

This group of songs include those whereby people, through the use of song can have an effect upon other individuals, the productivity or fecundity of the environment and climatic and seasonal variation. A reasonable generic translation of the term *narnu-nyiri* would be ‘power songs’, or songs that from a Western perspective could be called magic. In the Yanyuwa context of magical practices, such as those found in the song genre of the *narnu-nyiri*, magic is probably best described as a set of practices which attempt to use the mysterious forces which are inherent in the environment and the associated power of the Dreaming Spirit Ancestors to alter or effect behaviour. The full mastery of any reality, in this instance the relationship of people to the environment and to each other, will always be beyond human understanding. Thus there will always be people who will attempt to enhance their power and prestige by using forces that animate the land, many of which are hidden to all but special people who possess particular knowledge and skill. In the Yanyuwa context there is no such thing as a community magician – any older person, including men and women, are entitled to possess such knowledge. However, the ways individuals choose to use the knowledge differs according to the character of these individuals. The Yanyuwa do not attempt to explain how such power works; it is enough that such power exists and has been sanctioned and passed down from previous generations. What can be said, however, is that for the Yanyuwa it is both the tune and the words of the song that come together and cause the power to work. During fieldwork there have been many times when Bradley has recorded the words of these *narnu-nyiri* songs and has obtained general glosses or translations. However, the performers would not commit the tune to a tape as this was considered a foolhardy, risky and in some instances, a potentially dangerous thing to do. The language of these songs are rarely in any transparent language form such as Yanyuwa or its neighbours Marra and Garrwa, but owners of the songs still give detailed and consistent translations of the verses.

It is a *narnu-nyiri* song which provides us with the first song ever recorded in the literature on Yanyuwa song and language. It was recorded by Stretton (1893:246) who was acting as a local magistrate at Borroloola in the 1890s and responding to a ‘questionnaire’ sent to him by the South Australian Museum.

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<sup>13</sup> Yanyuwa women’s business such as *a-yawulhu*, *jarrada* and *yilpinji* and Yanyuwa men’s business such as *jarrada* also fall into the Yanyuwa category of song which has the power to control, alter and effect behaviour. Due to the strict rules of secrecy surrounding these gender exclusive rituals, it is not possible to discuss and they are mentioned here to acknowledge that these ceremonies exist in Yanyuwa culture.

If a native chief should be very angry with another tribe, he will “make thunder and lightning” by retiring to a cave or a very secluded spot, where he sings a low-toned chant thus: - “Jaugabangie cowa, Rangagea cowa, Gnaramma, Gnaramma Naragoo” (Thunder come on, lightning come on, kill blackfellow).

A modern rendition of the recorded Yanyuwa is possible and is shown in Table 17.

**Table 17. A modern reading of the Yanyuwa power song recorded by Stretton.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Ja-ngurrbanji kawa!</i>	The noise of thunder come!
<i>Rra-ngajarr kawa!</i>	Lightning come!
<i>Nya-ramaya! Nya-ramaya!</i>	Hit/kill him! Hit/kill him!
<i>Nyarrku</i>	[this] other man

It is rare, given the comments above, that the language of the *narnu-nyiri* songs is anything like everyday Yanyuwa. The song shown above recorded by Stretton can be translated word for word, once the style of orthography used by the recorder is understood. It is more likely that this *narnu-nyiri* song is a commentary on the actual song which was not recorded.

Three other forms of *narnu-nyiri* songs are discussed here in order to demonstrate content. One such song is used in relation to the Pleiades star constellation. These stars are accounted great power by the Yanyuwa in that they have the ability to maintain the fecundity of the environment. The blue-ringed octopus (*Hapalochlaena lunulata*), called in Yanyuwa *li-Jakarambirri*, is the physical earthly form of the Pleiades. It is said that during the day the Pleiades sink into the sea, ‘to look for fish’, and that the octopus is their body. They are also attributed with the creation of many of the smaller creek systems in the McArthur River mouth by dragging their fish nets. The glowing blue rings visible on the body of this creature when provoked are the stars shining on its body. The power associated with the song associated with the Pleiades is described by Annie Isaac Karrakayn (pers. comm., 1985):

My father had song from them stars, old people used to sing them, sing them yalibala [early morning] when it’s cold season, alright they make everything good, make everything new, new grass, new tree, everything get strong, kid too ... they used to get that kid, sing that star, tap them knee same time, kids gets strong.

The words of the song for the Pleiades are still remembered by older Yanyuwa men and women. The words of their song and a commentary translation are provided in Table 18.

**Table 18. Song for the Pleiades.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
<i>Nu-lhambanka</i>	Regenerating,
<i>Lhuwirdinbirnma</i>	Pleiades rocking in the eastern sky
<i>Rlanganyalyarruma</i>	Shining brightly, regenerating
<i>Lhulambanka</i>	The Pleiades that rock in the eastern sky,
<i>Lhuwirdinbirnma</i>	They have been born.
<i>Kalu-yanjarri</i>	

So potent is the power of regeneration caused by the Pleiades that during the cool dry season their ‘fat’, termed *nalu-ngiliny* in Yanyuwa, may be seen floating over the sea. This ‘fat’ is the brown scum, which after periods of rough weather, accompanied by a northerly wind known as *a-Wurrarumu* is often found on the sea and around the coasts of the island and the mainland. It is said of the Pleiades:

That the song makes them throw their fat everywhere because that is their power, they make every thing good, like new (Johnson Timothy, pers. comm., 1993).

The comment highlights the nature of ‘fat’ in Yanyuwa society. Fat is in many ways just as important as flesh. Things poor in fat are not healthy. Thus a landscape that shows signs of being fat is a healthy landscape which in Yanyuwa thought demonstrates the power of songs such as the one described above.

The second song is a healing song used to drive out a harmful spirit from the body of a person. In Yanyuwa there is a specific spirit called *baribari* which comes to the earth in the form of ‘shooting stars’. This spirit is said to enter the body of humans and some terrestrial animals and alter their behaviour. In some instances continued possession by such a spirit can lead to a person’s death. There are also certain older men in both the Yanyuwa and neighbouring Garrwa community who are said to have the power to sing this spirit into people. The following song is one which is said to be able to remove the spirit from people and obviate its power (Table 19).

Healing songs such as these are also associated with the application of the healer’s/singer’s sweat to the body of the person. The song is sung ‘into’ the top of a person’s head and the power is said to spread through the body of the person and drive out the badness. Such songs are sung quietly but in a deep, sonorous register. The term *wanthama* is spoken much louder and with a sudden, urgent increase in tempo and volume.

**Table 19. Driving away a harmful spirit.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
Wanthama bari!	Out! Away! Spirit of the Shooting Star
Yamilyi wirri	I am aware of you, soar fly upwards,
Dungudungu janyi	I am singing you
Bukabuka yabayirri	It is good you will move, you will shift
Mungubayi	When darkness descends
Wanthama!!	Out! Away!!

The third song is one used to stop certain northerly storm winds which are said to have their power drawn from a specific locality on the landscape. Such storm winds are said to be sung by people to cause discomfort to others. The following song is said to still the wind. Control over the winds is deemed a very powerful and sought-after knowledge. The songs which keep the winds captive, rather than turning them loose, are the more desired – to be the keeper of calms as opposed to the maker of winds.

This song is associated with the specific site of Warrijanjala, a large reef on the central east coast of North Island. A specific north wind is a Dreaming Ancestor at this locality. The following song is sung if people deem the north wind to have come from this locality (Table 20).

**Table 20. Song to stop the North Wind.**

<b>Yanyuwa Song Text</b>	<b>Free Translation</b>
Warrijanjala warrijanjala	home of the North Wind
Mulurmuluru	keep back your wind, don't let it out
Ngaranjiyu ngaranjiyu!!	I call you by the name of your mother's people

In Yanyuwa belief, people who call a Dreaming entity mother have a relationship of power over that entity. Therefore in the instance described above it is the power of this group, or even the name of one of the individuals from such a group, that will have the power to reverse the effects of the storm wind (see Bradley 1997).

### **Conclusion**

In this paper we have presented a brief introduction to the musical traditions of the Yanyuwa community at Borroloola. Our discussion has been loosely organised around the way in which Yanyuwa people themselves categorise performance, that

is, according to the origins of song. A distinction is made between those songs which were created a long time ago during *Yijan* (the Dreaming) by the ancestral and spirit beings, those songs created within living memory by human composers and those songs which are given by spirit beings to humans in a dream. We have demonstrated that, in a Yanyuwa cosmological view of their environment, every living thing (for example, birds, animals, fish and plants) has songs and many have dances as do the natural phenomena of the area such as the winds, rain and floods. There are times when this becomes obvious and people make comments on a species' ability to perform their own Law or culture. An excellent example of this is the Brolga (*Grus Rubicundus*) *kurdarrku*. A tall elegant bird with a distinct red head, they gather in large numbers and dance in pairs and call out loudly; a call which travels, at times, many kilometres over the landscape. There are other species which are less obvious but which are also considered to have Law and song. The Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*) *a-jiliwidjiliwid* is an example. Its eerie call at night is said to be calling all other Tawny Frogmouths to come together and dance its specific rituals, thus the common sight of many Frogmouths lined up together along a branch is said to be the birds dancing their rituals; when humans come near, they stop. The Yanyuwa say that this bird species is feminine and the rituals are that of a woman, however, the human performance of these same rituals are performed by men in sacred rites.

Thus for the Yanyuwa there is a strong understanding that songs resonate continually across and within the landscape, becoming a soundscape rich with social, ecological, and spiritual knowledge. Their environment is a constant reminder of the power of song, performance and ritual, because the whole environment is regularly and actively involved with it, as are people. There is no accident in this; much of Yanyuwa song and performance is about landscapes, seascape and the things that inhabit them, whether they are actual physical beings, weather or spiritual beings. For the Yanyuwa to have song, to have performance, is to be a complete person and to come near to having, as far as is possible, a true understanding of the nature of the environment. Song and performance are a powerful medium which bind living people to each other, the living to the deceased and then to all other beings in the environment and the country itself, all of which are considered sentient.

This paper is but an overview of a topic filled with remarkable diversity and complexity and one which is the subject of ongoing research. We have noted that there is not musical transcription, and while acknowledging this lack it is being worked on and it is hoped will be the basis of yet another paper.

**Glossary**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Almirngantharra</i>	Seeing into dreams, refers to the process of 'dreaming' a song.
<i>Ardirri</i>	Spirit children.
<i>a-karrkarinji</i>	Large wooden gong used in performance of Wambuyungu or Yabadurruwa ceremony.
<i>a-Kunabibi</i>	Large secret and sacred rituals, a ceremony of seclusion and revelation for initiated men.
<i>a-Kurdangkinya</i>	Mermaid Dreaming Women; see also <i>a-Mararabarna</i> .
<i>a-kurija</i>	Fun dances composed by women.
<i>a-Mararabarna</i>	Mermaid Dreaming Women; see also <i>a-Kurdangkinya</i> .
<i>a-Marndiwa</i>	First initiation ceremonies for young boys.
<i>a-nguyulnguyul</i>	Subset of <i>a-kurija</i> tradition; funny, tricky or clever songs composed by women.
<i>a-nguyulnguyulurrinjarra</i>	Entertaining.
<i>a-Wurrarumu</i>	Northerly wind.
<i>a-yabala</i>	Feminine noun meaning road or path and a generic term for song cycles.
<i>Bambu</i>	Yanyuwa word for didjeridu, English loan from bamboo.
<i>Baribari</i>	Specific spirit which comes to the earth in the form of shooting stars.
<i>Birlibirlumantharra</i>	Rapid staccato boomerang beats.
<i>Daburrdaburrngalki</i>	Rough/troubled essence, describing a hard tune to sing.
<i>Jarrilu-ngalkiwunjayarra</i> <i>a-yabala</i>	He is drinking her essence, the essence of the road, of someone who is emotionally moved while singing song cycles.
<i>Jamulu</i>	Specific term given to the song cycles associated with Kulyukulyu and Yalkawarru.
<i>Jawala</i>	Song cycles sung at death.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Jirdangalki</i>	Bitter/bad tasting essence, of a song being sung out of tune, or in an ill manner.
<i>Kalalu</i>	Singing of <i>a-Kunabibi</i> songs in a near-public setting.
<i>Kalwanyarra</i>	Dreamt song received by Jerry Brown Ngarnawakajarra.
<i>Karlwa</i>	Clapping sticks.
<i>Karrayngjala</i>	Yanyuwa genre of lullaby songs.
<i>Kilili</i>	Ritual calls made by women during <i>a-Kunabibi</i> .
<i>Kujika</i>	Song cycle, Dreaming track.
<i>Kulyukulyu</i>	Funerary ritual associated with Mambaliya-Wawukarriya and Rrumburriya semi-moieties.
<i>Kurdukurdu</i>	Sacred, restricted, secret.
<i>Kurdukurdumanthawu</i>	Lulling to sleep.
<i>li-anthawirriyarra</i>	Yanyuwa phrase used to describe saltwater and island identity, locally glossed as 'people of the sea'.
<i>Lhamarnda</i>	Unrestricted, free, open, public.
<i>Lhankanbayarra</i>	Descending; term used to describe movement of <i>kujika</i> across country.
<i>Ma-kulurru</i>	Yanyuwa word for didjeridu.
<i>Mambaliya-Wawukarriya</i>	Semi-moiety name.
<i>Mayjbi</i>	Incomplete version of a song cycle.
<i>Namurr</i>	Yanyuwa name for a water rat.
<i>Nanda-wangirli</i>	Women's song cycles performed during <i>a-Kunabibi</i> .
<i>Na-lhurrwa</i>	Paperbark pad used in performance of <i>Kulyukulyu</i> .
<i>Na-ruli</i>	A messmate bark drum used by women in their performance of <i>a-Kunabibi</i> rituals.
<i>Narnu-nguyula</i>	Trick or deception.
<i>Narnu-nyiri</i>	Power songs.
<i>Ngalki</i>	Essence, tune of a song, taste of food, underarm smell.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Ngalkingalki</i>	One's own voice.
<i>Ngardirdji</i>	Dreamt song received by Elma Brown Bunubunu.
<i>Riyariyayangkangu</i>	Yanyuwa ritual name for a water rat.
<i>Rdumantharra</i>	Getting; term used to describe movement of <i>kujika</i> across country, especially as it moves close to a named site of Dreaming entity.
<i>Rrumburriya</i>	Semi-moiety name.
<i>Wabarrangu amuliyalu</i>	A long time ago.
<i>Wakirli</i>	Paired boomerang clapsticks.
<i>Walaba</i>	Fun dances composed by men.
<i>Walalu</i>	Stranger Rainbow Serpent.
<i>Wandayarra</i>	Following; term used to describe movement of <i>kujika</i> across country, or following the road/path of the <i>kujika</i> .
<i>Wardingalki</i>	Bad essence, bad tune or performance of a song or performance.
<i>Windirrinjarra</i>	Ascending; term used to describe movement of <i>kujika</i> across country.
<i>Wingkayarra</i>	Moving, going; term used to describe movement of <i>kujika</i> across country.
<i>wirrimalaru</i>	The inherent power of song.
<i>Wirriwirri</i>	Ritual calls made by men during <i>a-Kunabibi</i> .
<i>wujuju</i>	Public unrestricted song style composed by men.
<i>Wulumantharra</i>	Running; term used to describe movement of <i>kujika</i> across country.
<i>Wurdaliya</i>	Semi-moiety name.
<i>Wuyaliya</i>	Semi-moiety name.
<i>Yabingalki</i>	Good essence, of a song well performed.
<i>Yalkawarru</i>	Funerary ritual associated with Wurdaliya/Wuyaliya semi-moieties.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Yarraburrumantharra</i>	Steady, rhythmic boomerang beats.
<i>Yarrambawaja</i>	Generic word for ceremony; also used to describe funerary rituals.
<i>Yarrngijirri</i>	Specific ceremonial song used during <i>a-Marndiwa</i> initiation ceremonies, when initiates have hair string belt removed.
<i>Yibarrantharra</i>	Placing; term used to describe movement of <i>kujika</i> across country, especially as it related to the arrival of named places on the song line.
<i>Yinbayarra</i>	Singing.
<i>Yijan</i>	Spirit Ancestors often translated as Dreaming.
<i>Yurrunju</i>	Male Dreaming being of Wurdaliya clan associated with fire.

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