

NURLU SONGS OF THE WEST KIMBERLEYS

by

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of two Nyigina singers, Butcher Joe Nairjan and George Dyujgayan, who sang their *nurlu* for me.

Plate 1. Butcher Joe (left) and George Dyujgayan, Pandanus Park, 1985.



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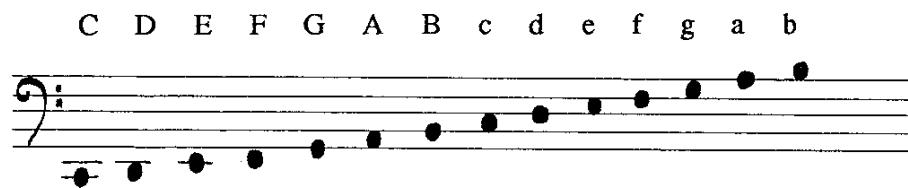
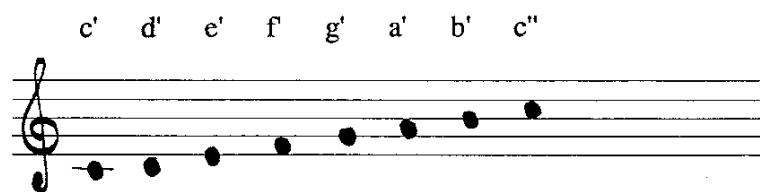
All words in Nyigina and closely related languages appearing in this thesis are written in the orthography shown below. Words in languages other than those outlined above appear in the form in which they have been published (phoneme equivalences appear in brackets).

labial	apical	retroflex	laminal	dorsal
b (p)	d (t)	rd (ɽ)	dy (dj, tj)	g (k)
m	n	rn (ɳ)	ny	ŋ (ng, ng)
	l	rl (ɭ)	ly	
	rr (r)	r (ɽ)		
w			y	

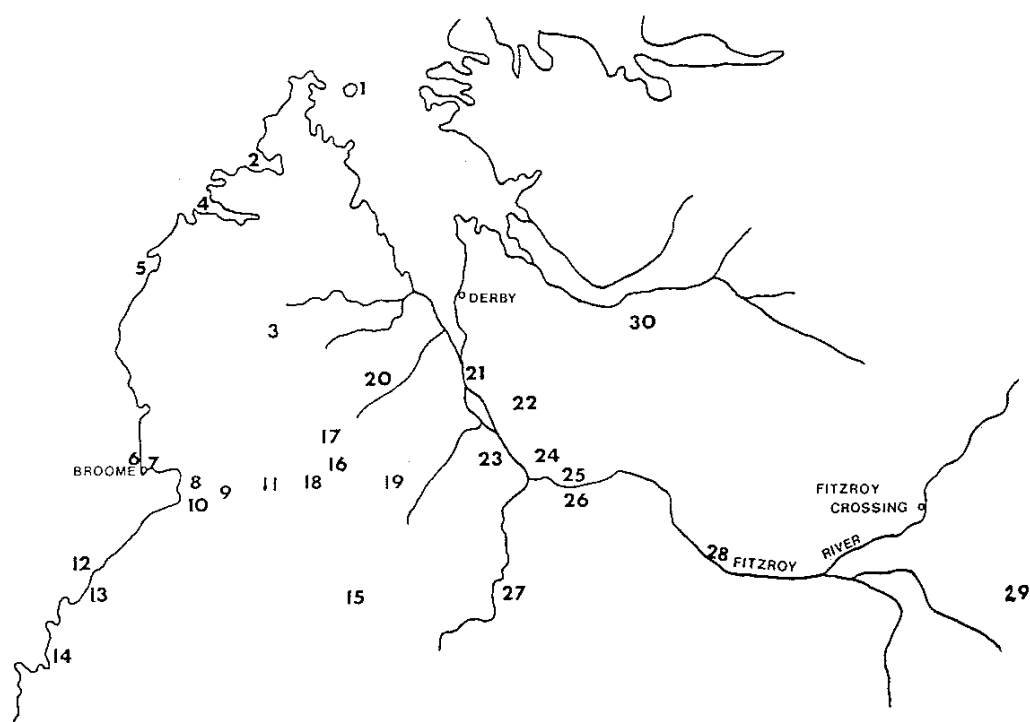
Vowels: a, i, u (vowel length is indicated by either double vowels, as in Baardi and *Nyiinyi*, or a colon (:))

PITCH IDENTIFICATION

I use, whenever possible, the following pitch identification system.



Map 1. The western Kimberleys.



<i>Balgandiyir</i>	22	<i>Malarra</i>	20
Beagle Bay	4	<i>Mandigarrgab</i>	15
<i>Bidan</i>	18	Manguel Creek	19
<i>Bilijurru</i>	6	<i>Mararr</i>	12
Cape Villaret	12	<i>Marrjalagun</i>	6
Dampier Downs	15	Mt Anderson	24
Dampier Land Peninsula	3	Mt Clarkson	20
<i>Dyarrigabu</i>	11	Myroodah	26
<i>Dyarrmanjgunan</i>	9	Myroodah Crossing	25
<i>Dyirrgali</i>	27	Noonkanbah	28
<i>Ganin</i>	7	<i>Numbarn</i>	29
<i>Garrawin</i>	17	Pandanus Park	21
<i>Garrigarigabu</i>	9	Pender Bay	2
<i>Garmurigabu</i>	15	The Pinnacles	29
<i>Gulbunwila</i>	16	Roebuck Plains	8
Kimberley Downs	30	Sunday Island	1
La Grange	14	Thangoo Station	10
Liveringa	25	Udialla	23
Looma	25	<i>Wanydyal</i>	11
		Waterbank Station	6
		<i>Yadugarra</i>	13
		<i>Yalarnbarnan</i>	12
		<i>Yanygaynan</i>	11

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

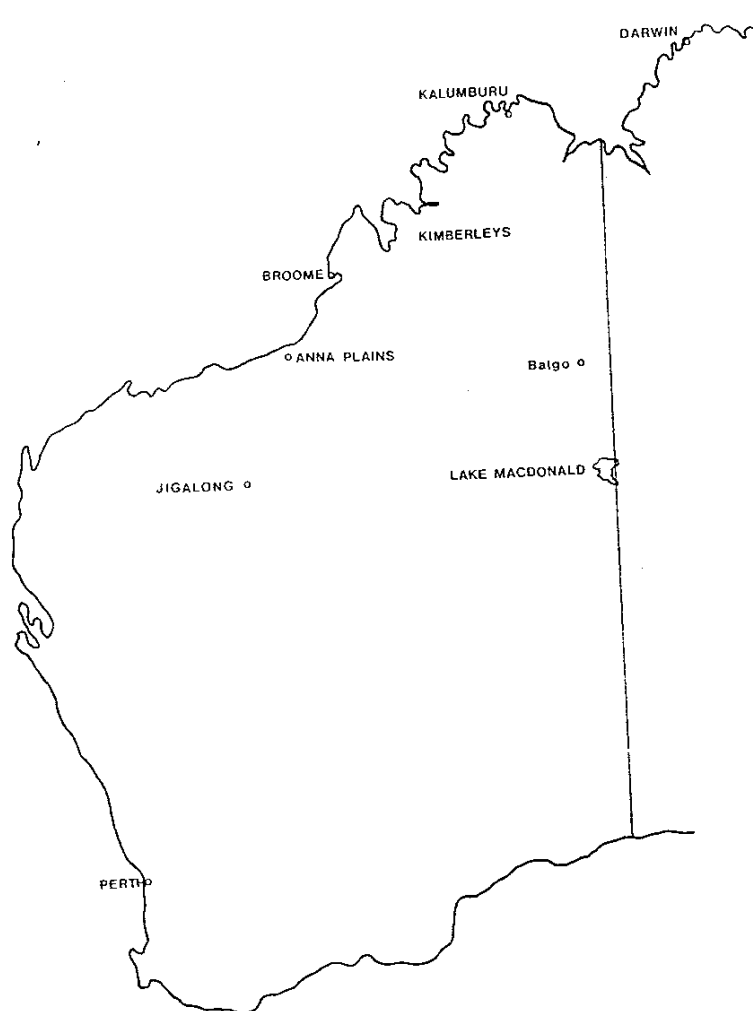
This thesis is an ethnomusicological description of an Aboriginal performance genre from the Broome area, situated in the western Kimberley district in the north of Western Australia (see Map 2 below). The name of the genre in several related languages of the area is *nurlu*; it refers to songs and dances which are performed by men and women in an 'open' context (no restrictions apply to who may participate in or watch performances) and which are believed to have originated comparatively recently, usually as a result of singers being given songs in dream from various spirit beings. The songs and dances usually belong to those same singers, which in all the cases I have documented are male. The songs are accompanied by pairs of boomerangs struck together, and by body percussion. The dances may feature elaborate *wanjgararra*, that is 'headgear' or 'totems', which are worn or carried by the performers.

The discussion undertaken in the body of the thesis (Chapters 2 to 5) focusses on several areas. First, I discuss the cultural and historical setting in which *nurlu* songs and dances have been performed. Secondly, aspects of the formal textual and musical structures of one particular Nyigina *nurlu* series¹ are examined. Thirdly, the discussion attempts to place the genre, geographically situated on the northern periphery of the Western Desert, into the wider context of the performance arts of central Australia. The study does not intend to be an exhaustive treatment of *nurlu*, however. For example,

¹ *Nurlu* are grouped by Aboriginal people into 'series' on the basis of ownership (see further below, Section 2.1). The *nurlu* series which is examined in some detail in this thesis was owned by the late George Dyurjgayan (see Plate 1 above), a Nyigina speaker who spent his life working on pastoral stations in the vicinity of the lower Fitzroy River. Dyurjgayan's *nurlu* is called *Bulu*, and comprises seventeen verses, three (possibly four, see below p. 101) of which accompany dances.

although statements concerning the cultural and historical setting of *nurlu* have been made on the basis of a knowledge of several different series, much of the contextual discussion centres on *Bulu* (that is those *nurlu* songs and dances owned by George Dyurjgayan), as does the textual and musical analysis. Moreover, some aspects of *nurlu* are treated only generally. For example, although observations on *nurlu* dancing are included, a detailed analysis of dance and its relationship to the songs is not undertaken.

Map 2. North west Australia.



This introductory chapter explores the various factors which have influenced the overall scope and direction of this thesis (see Sections 1.2 and 1.3), and presents a chapter by chapter summary (see Section 1.4).

1.2 Background to the research

My interest in the music of the Kimberleys began in 1980 with a decision to undertake a study of Australian Aboriginal music for an Honours thesis within the Music Department of the University of Sydney. Dr Stephen Wild of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) had suggested that the Kimberleys may be a suitable area for research: on the one hand, no detailed analysis of any Kimberleys music had yet been undertaken;² and on the other, an extensive collection of recordings from the Kimberleys was to be found in the AIAS Tape Archive. Under the influence of Merriam (1964), I found that it was necessary for the study of any music to be firmly based on an understanding of the relationship of that music to the society which had produced it. A preliminary aim of the Honours thesis, therefore, was to establish which recordings of Kimberleys music had associated with them documentation which may give some indication of their cultural and social context. On the basis of the anthropological nature and scope of the documentation, I chose a collection of recordings made in Broome during the early 1960s by the anthropologist Peter Dalton. Dalton had produced a Masters thesis on social and cultural relationships in Broome society (1964), as well as several reports on various aspects of Aboriginal life in the Broome area (1963a, 1963b, 1965a, 1965b).

One of those reports (1965a) gave a detailed background to one of the song series appearing on Dalton's recordings. The series, which I do not name here due to possible restrictions, was associated with male initiation. The series was, and still is, restricted; uninitiated persons, including all women and children, may not hear it. As it

² The only musicological account of Kimberleys music was that undertaken by Alice Moyle (1974). Based on fieldwork in 1968, when Moyle travelled to Aboriginal communities throughout the Kimberleys under the auspices of the AIAS, it attempted to classify genres by reference to general musical features. Moyle had also published an L.P. recording of Kimberleys music with an accompanying booklet (1977).

was the most thoroughly documented group of songs in the collection, however, I decided that this series would be the most appropriate one to focus on in my Honours year. It was hoped that by concentrating on one particular series, an analysis based on the models found in Ellis (1967), McCardell (Prabhu Pritam) (1976, 1980) and Moyle (1979) could be undertaken. I wish to point out here that the fact that the series in question was restricted was over-ridden by the Western research concern for the availability of the best possible documentary material. I suggest, moreover, that there was also the implicit assumption that a men's restricted series was more central to Aboriginal society and therefore potentially more rewarding to study than a non-restricted series, such as those *nurlu* series which form the basis of this thesis.

The description of the restricted series undertaken at that time fell into three broad areas:

- (i) the transliteration and translation of the song texts;
- (ii) the transcription and analysis of the songs; and
- (iii) a discussion of the social and historical context of the series.

Concerning the first area, it was found that although Dalton had produced song texts and translations for the series, there were many inaccuracies in them. As I was not literate in Aboriginal languages at the time, the transliteration and translation of the song texts could only be provisional. Concerning the second area, it was found that important questions about the nature of the variability of the musical system could not be investigated, because Dalton had recorded only one performance of each of the seventy verses belonging to the series. Research into centralian songs up to that time had shown that there appeared to be differing attitudes throughout central Australia to the way in which the various texts belonging to a particular series were set to the one melody. For example, Wild's research on the Warlpiri Yam *purlapa* (1979) showed that there was a significant degree of variability in the setting of texts to the one melody. In contrast, Moyle's research into Pintupi music (1979) described a much more rigid musical system. Concerning the series recorded by Dalton, any conclusions about the

setting of the various texts to the melody were based on one performance only of each text, and therefore restricted in scope.

It was perhaps the third area in which the most detailed discussion of the thesis was undertaken. Much of the anthropological literature which I had read in relation to the Kimberleys stressed the importance of the exchange of material and intellectual cultural items, including songs and the ceremonies to which they belonged, in the establishment and maintenance of political relations between groups of people. Within historical times, many Aboriginal groups had moved away from their traditional homelands and had settled in the vicinity of European centres such as towns, pastoral stations and missions. As a consequence of this, Aboriginal groups, who in pre-contact times had maintained little or no political relations, came in close contact with each other. The movement north and west of Aboriginal groups from the northern fringes of the Western Desert into the southern Kimberleys had been well documented, and several writers had suggested that ritual was a significant factor facilitating this move (for example, see Kolig 1973, 1981).

Due to the fact that the restricted series recorded by Dalton in Broome in 1963 belonged to Garadyarri, Nyigina and Marjarla speakers whose traditional territory lay to the south and south east of Broome (see Map 3 below, p. 26), it was postulated in the Honours thesis that the series may have played a significant role in the political interplay between different Aboriginal groups. More research, however, needed to be undertaken in order to clarify the situation.

On the basis of my Honours work, I decided to undertake fieldwork in the Broome area. The research had two broad aims. The first was to investigate the role of music in the formation and maintenance of political, economic and social ties between Aboriginal groups in the area. The second was to investigate the role of music in the formation of Aboriginal title to land. The relationship between songs and ownership of land had been well documented for other parts of Aboriginal Australia. By what means did people who had left behind their traditional territory in the desert to the south and south east of Broome establish ties to new country? Was it possibly through songs?

The intended method of research was to document more fully the restricted series described in the Honours thesis, as well as closely related series which might play a role in both traditional politics and the formation of traditional title to land. At the same time, it was hoped that the recording of several different performances of the same series might facilitate a better understanding of the nature of the variability of musical structure, first examined in my Honours work.

I wish to point out, however, that both the research aims and the intended method of research outlined above (that is, based on a men's restricted song series) had been formulated primarily from my knowledge of the anthropological literature, characterised by an approach often found in association with the social sciences in which researchers effectively distanced themselves from their objects of study. One could talk, for example, of traditional Aboriginal politics without considering the possible importance of the political interplay between Aboriginal people and Europeans in the post-contact situation, and its effect on 'traditional' politics. Politics, economics and belief systems were 'out there', to be viewed and commented on by the researcher from a safe, objective distance. From the perspective of a person of White Australian origin who up until that time had had no direct contact with Aboriginal people, that objective stance did not appear to be particularly inappropriate. The experience of fieldwork, however, changed that perception.

1.3 The field situation

I arrived in Broome in January 1983, during the hot season, and remained there initially for a period of five months. In that time I established a close working relationship with Paddy Roe, a Nyigina speaker, and one of the leaders of the Aboriginal community in Broome (see Plate 2).³ My experience in Broome in those five months, especially with Paddy Roe, significantly altered my original perceptions concerning the scholarly pursuit of Aboriginal music and its place in Aboriginal society.

³ See Roe (1983), Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984).

Plate 2. Paddy Roe, *Mamabulanydyin*, Broome, 1983.



I realised soon after arriving in the field that the objective stance which had influenced both my research aims and the intended methods of research was not appropriate, due primarily to political reasons. By maintaining an intellectual distance, in which one's intended research aims and methods remained uninfluenced by the realities of the field (and therefore remained static tools of the scientific trade), one effectively maintained a political distance from the people one was studying. I was soon struck by the fact that for Paddy Roe, politics was not only a matter of dealing with other traditionally oriented people of the area, but also a matter of dealing with a variety of Europeans, who in many cases were actually or potentially in positions of considerable authority. By maintaining a static set of research goals, I was implicitly aligning myself with many other Europeans with whom Paddy Roe constantly came in contact; I was placing myself at a political distance from him. I decided, therefore, that if I were to undertake research with Paddy Roe, it would be appropriate to establish a set of research goals which had been developed in close consultation with him. By doing so, it was hoped that a much more meaningful dialogue would be established in

the process. Politically speaking, I suggest that the former approach, in which a researcher undertakes a study without adequately consulting with those people he or she is studying, simply maintains a system of disempowerment to which many Aboriginal people have become accustomed in their dealings with non-Aborigines. In contrast, the latter approach, based on close consultation, is potentially a significant, empowering experience for the people concerned.

For Paddy Roe, there were several problems with my initial research aims and methods, perhaps the most significant of which concerned restricted material. As stated above, the song series which I had studied at Honours level, and which was to form the basis of my research methods in the field, had been restricted when Peter Dalton recorded it in 1963. When I arrived in 1983, I found that the same restrictions applied: women and children and uninitiated males were not allowed to hear the songs. Paddy Roe pointed out that the series in question belonged to men from several different language groups, and that no one person could waive restrictions without consultation with the other owners. Paddy Roe also pointed out that since the appearance in several Broome bookshops of anthropological texts, which included in them photographs and descriptions of restricted ceremonies, Aboriginal people had begun to understand the nature of academic research; once material of a restricted nature was given to an outsider, the control over that material was lost, with possibly devastating effects. Moreover, many of those people who over the years had maintained traditional law in the Broome area had now died. Those people like Paddy Roe who still remained had to be careful about the maintenance of restrictions on particular ceremonies, partly because of their weakened political position in relation to the more powerful desert communities to the south (Broome - desert politics are discussed further below, see Section 2.4, p. 62).

A second problem with my research aims and methods, which was related to the first, concerned the politically sensitive issue of land rights. As stated above, one of my initial research aims was to investigate the role of music in the formation of Aboriginal title to land. In the first place, most of those song series which articulated

people's rights over land were restricted, and any attempt to document them would prove to be difficult. More importantly, however, I soon realised that land rights was a highly sensitive issue in the Broome area. Because of government policy, the traditional owners of the land who still possessed traditional knowledge of the country were in direct competition for rights to particular tracts of land with Aboriginal people who no longer possessed traditional knowledge of that country, but who maintained that they were descendents of the original owners of the land (and consequently legally entitled to ownership). It is not surprising to find, therefore, that any research which would make public traditional knowledge about particular stretches of country was viewed by traditionally minded people such as Paddy Roe with suspicion.

In consultation with Paddy Roe, it was decided that, in contrast to my original proposals which were based on groups of songs which were restricted and politically sensitive, my research in Broome would concentrate on a genre of songs and dances which were neither restricted in nature, nor as politically sensitive as those songs which played a legal role in the articulation of people's rights to land. In Paddy Roe's language, Nyigina, the name of the performance genre chosen was *nurlu* (see p. 25).

In my first stay in Broome, I recorded and documented three different groups of 'open' corroboree songs, each of which, however, belonged to a differently named genre.⁴ The first group of approximately forty Nyigina *nurlu* verses, collectively referred to as *Marinydyirinydyi* (see further below, p. 263), belonged to Butcher Joe Narjan, a Nyigina speaker who was born in Broome in about 1900, and who now lived in Paddy Roe's care. Butcher Joe was well known in the area as a singer, raconteur, painter and inscriber of pearlshells, and had collaborated with researchers over many years (see Plate 3).⁵

⁴ The relationship of *nurlu* to other performance genres both within and outside of the west Kimberley area is discussed below (see Section 2.3, p. 51).

⁵ A group of traditional stories as told by Butcher Joe appears in Edwards (1976). Musical aspects of Butcher Joe's *nurlu* are discussed in Keogh (1984).

Plate 3. Butcher Joe Narjan, *Mamabulanydyin*, Broome, 1983.



The second group, comprising sixteen verses, had travelled to Broome in about 1963 (Moyle 1977: 15) from Anna Plains country to the south (see Map 2, p. 2), and was performed in 1983 on two separate occasions by Dyabirr Dyabirr, Garadyarri and Nyarjumarda speakers who were now living in Broome (see Plate 4). This group of songs and dances was generally referred to as *Nyinydyinyinydyi*, and according to Paddy Roe belonged to the *gadaynya* genre.⁶

Plate 4. Performance of *Nyinydyinyinydyi*, Broome, 1983.



The third group, comprising about forty Baardi *ilma* verses (see below p. 54) from several different series, was performed by Roy Wiggin (see Plate 5), a Baardi speaker originally from Sunday Island, and now living in Broome.⁷ Some of the songs, such as those from Ruby's *ilma*, had originated from the time when Roy Wiggin

⁶ Several *Nyinydyinyinydyi* verses appear on the L.P. disc *Songs of the Kimberleys* (AIAS/13) compiled by Alice Moyle. Moyle (1977: 15) states that the *Nyinydyinyinydyi* songs originated in a place called *Winba*. It is interesting to note that Tonkinson describes a series from the Jigalong area which he refers to as *winba* (see below p. 58).

⁷ See Robinson (1973) for a history of the Sunday Island people.

was a boy and living on Sunday Island. Others were of more recent origin; for example, six verses (describing the birth of one of his sons) had been dreamt by Roy only about five years before.

Plate 5. Roy Wiggin, *Mamabulanydyin*, Broome, 1983.



Although Paddy Roe classified himself more as a dancer than a singer, initial discussions suggested that he remembered a significant number of *nurlu* songs, belonging to several different series, and originating from over a long period of time. Paddy Roe also remembered many of the meanings, as well as much of the historical and cultural context of the songs.⁸ It appeared, moreover, that when travelling through the area in 1968, Alice Moyle had not recorded and documented all of those songs which Paddy Roe could remember. In the first period of fieldwork, however, time precluded any detailed work with Paddy Roe on those *nurlu* songs he remembered.

⁸ My experience in relation to the elicitation of the meanings of the *Nyinydyinyinydyi* verses had already shown that Paddy Roe was a skilful interpreter of song texts.

On the basis of my five months in the field, I made tentative arrangements with Paddy Roe to return at a later date and continue working with him on those *nurlu* with which he was familiar. I left the field in June 1983.

1.3 The state of the tradition

Before returning to the field in August 1984, I found it necessary to consider the fact that the performance tradition in Broome of *nurlu* and closely related genres appeared not to be in a very healthy state. Firstly, during my initial field trip, no unelicited performances of any *nurlu* or related genres (with the exception of one *Nyinydyinyinydyi* performance which took place at the launching of Paddy Roe's book *Gularabulu* (1983) (see Plate 4 above)) occurred in Broome. Secondly, in two of three of those performances which I elicited, namely Butcher Joe's *nurlu* and the *ilma* songs performed by Roy Wiggin, no dancing occurred; and in the case of the elicited performance of *Nyinydyinyinydyi*, the only dancing which occurred took the form of a teaching session for several young boys. Thirdly, in all three elicited performances, the number of singers was small and, for the most part, male. In the case of Butcher Joe's *nurlu*, there were only two performers, and one of those performers appeared not to be familiar with many of the verses. In the case of *Nyinydyinyinydyi*, there were four singers; not all singers, however, knew all the songs. And with the Baardi *ilma*, Roy Wiggin performed by himself. Fourthly, most of those *nurlu* singers which Alice Moyle had recorded in Broome in 1968 had died, and it appeared that many of those songs had not been performed for a number of years.

Even allowing for the state of flux which is a natural part of any oral tradition, all the above suggested that the state of the *nurlu* tradition was not good; and that as a consequence of this, the overall scope of my research might be significantly affected. If I remained in Broome, it would be difficult, for example, to undertake research into *nurlu* dancing and its effect on musical structure, or the effect of the women's participation in the singing on the structure of the songs. Moreover, it would be

difficult to determine whether certain aspects of performance were a 'normal' part of the tradition, or a result of its apparent demise.

At that time, therefore, I considered an alternative to returning to Broome, namely to return to the same area, but to find a community where the performance tradition was more intact, and which was willing for me to undertake research there. Upon reflection, however, I realised that influencing my thinking was a stance prominent in the literature of Australian Aboriginal Studies, in which Aboriginal groups which had had the least contact with European society were implicitly the most worthy of study. Let us consider, for example, two editorial commentaries which appear on the covers of Richard Moyle's studies of the Pintupi (1979) and the Alyawarra (1986) (see Map 6 below for the approximate territorial location of both groups, p. 117).

Concerning the former

Songs of the Pintupi is a study of the music of a group of nomads in the western desert region of central Australia. Some of the Aborigines have emerged from the Gibson Desert only after the early 1950s and therefore were among the last to come into contact with Europeans.

Similarly, in the later study

living to the north-east of Alice Springs in Australia's Northern Territory, the Alyawarra people have largely escaped European influences, and their musical and ceremonial traditions have not merely survived but continue to flourish.

I suggest that in both commentaries there is a strong implication that those Aboriginal people who have had the least contact with European society are the closest realisation of Traditional Aboriginal Society as it existed before contact, and consequently more worthy of study. The corollary, of course, is that Aboriginal people who have been affected in varying degrees by contact with European society are less worthy of study, due to the fact that they represent only a watered-down version of what may be considered 'true' Aboriginality.

I have several objections to this way of thinking. First, it denies the validity of people's experience, implying that one person's experience is intrinsically more important than that of another. That is, the experiences of people who have had little or no contact with Europeans are perceived to be of greater value than those of people who

have adapted their society and culture to suit the reality of contact with European society. This attitude is loaded with ironic contradictions, as researchers from the dominant European culture consign to a cultural rubbish heap those who have had contact with their culture, while dwelling with fascination on those who have been fortunate enough to avoid that same contact. Perhaps it is the fact that the more 'traditional' an Aboriginal society appears, the less one has to be confronted with the political realities existing between black and white in Australia that attracts researchers to this position. Second, the above position assumes that we can perceive Traditional Aboriginal Society as an object. I suggest that the separation of the observer from the observed, which is implicit in traditional scientific method, and which has spilled over into social scientific method, is difficult to sustain, especially when those sciences which up until recently have based themselves on objective observation now question that basis. Whatever recent developments in scientific thought may be (such as quantum physics and chaos theory), developments in social scientific theory (see Clifford and Marcus 1986) have strongly questioned the validity of the unbiased observer.

Having considered the above, I decided to return to Broome to record and document as many *nurlu* as possible, in order to write an historical and cultural account of the genre from the perspective of Paddy Roe's life experiences.

In order to facilitate my work with Paddy Roe, I took back to the field recordings of *nurlu* made by Alice Moyle in 1968, together with any documentation such as song texts and their translations.⁹ Moyle's recordings proved to be a valuable asset. In some cases, Paddy Roe had forgotten verses belonging to the various *nurlu* series, and Moyle's recordings acted as a stimulus to his memory. (The fact that Paddy Roe may not have remembered certain verses, except for the intervention of Western research tools, says more about the potential usefulness of those tools within the history of a

⁹ Alice Moyle had collaborated in the field with the linguist Nora Kerr on the preparation of song texts and translations of many of the songs she had recorded (see Alice Moyle 1968).

tradition than Paddy Roe's failure to remember all the songs with which he has ever been associated.)

On the other hand, initial observations (see p. 12) had suggested that Paddy Roe remembered some *nurlu* verses which Moyle had not recorded. This proved to be the case. For example, concerning the *nurlu* called *Gudurrgudurr* (see Appendix 1, p. 264), Moyle had recorded ten verses in 1968; Paddy Roe, however, remembered a further nineteen verses. Concerning *Guway* (see Appendix 1, p. 268), Moyle had not recorded any verses in 1968. Paddy Roe, however, remembered seven verses, although he maintained that originally there were more.

Bulu

During the course of work, Paddy Roe mentioned that he knew several verses from another series not appearing in Moyle's recordings;¹⁰ collectively known as *Bulu*, the verses belonged to his older brother, George Dyurjgayan. Paddy Roe was not willing to discuss the songs in any detail, however, until I had spoken with Dyurjgayan. After several attempts, I met Dyurjgayan (see Plate 1) in February 1985 at Pandanus Park Aboriginal community, approximately one hundred miles east of Broome on the lower Fitzroy River (see Map 1). Dyurjgayan was sick at the time, but expressed an interest in singing his *nurlu* for me at a later date. I returned to Pandanus Park on two further occasions and recorded fifty nine performances of seventeen different verses. (The background to the recording and documentation of the *Bulu* series is discussed in Appendix 2, see p. 271.)

During the first of those recording sessions, it became apparent that Dyurjgayan had difficulty in remembering a number of the songs belonging to the series. On my return to Broome, therefore, I left a copy of the first recording made in Pandanus Park with Paddy Roe in the hope that he might remember more. This proved to be the case; while Dyurjgayan had remembered ten verses, Paddy Roe remembered a further seven.

¹⁰ Further investigation showed that in fact two verses from the series did appear on Moyle's recordings. In the accompanying documentation they were ascribed to Butcher Joe's *nurlu* (see further below, p. 47).

On my second trip to Pandanus Park, I was able to elicit performances of those seven verses from Dyurjgayan,¹¹ as well as further performances of the original ten.

As outlined above (see pp. 1-2), the *Bulu* series features prominently in the discussion undertaken in the body of the thesis; Section 2.2 discusses in detail the historical and cultural context of *Bulu*, while Chapters 3 and 5 examine its formal textual and musical properties. There are several reasons for this: first, Paddy Roe was more familiar with the *Bulu* songs than other *nurlu*; second, the relatively small number of verses allowed detailed textual analysis to be undertaken; and third, most of the *Bulu* songs which had been recorded were performed by Dyurjgayan, who was generally referred to as a good singer. I will discuss each in turn.

Due to the fact that Paddy Roe's first language is Nyigina (and perhaps because of this his knowledge of Nyigina *nurlu* was generally more extensive than for non-Nyigina *nurlu* (see Table 1 below for the classification of *nurlu* by language, p. 27)), it was decided that this study should focus on Nyigina *nurlu*. Although Paddy Roe was familiar with three of those Nyigina *nurlu* recorded and documented in the field (*Bulu*, *Gudurrugudurr* and *Marinydyirinydyi*), he appeared to be most familiar with *Bulu*.

One of the primary aims of the study was to establish a methodology for translating the songs. Of the three Nyigina *nurlu* with which Paddy Roe was familiar, *Marinydyirinydyi*, comprising over fifty verses,¹² was deemed to be too extensive for this purpose. *Bulu*, comprising seventeen verses, and *Gudurrugudurr*, comprising twenty nine verses, were more manageable in size.

Recordings of a significant number of verses belonging to *Gudurrugudurr* (nineteen of twenty nine verses) were restricted to performances given by Paddy Roe. As Paddy Roe classified himself more as a dancer than a singer (see above p. 12), I

¹¹ In each case, I recited the text in question, which in turn prompted Dyurjgayan to perform each verse.

¹² In 1983 I recorded and documented about forty verses belonging to Butcher Joe's *nurlu* (see above p. 9). On my return in 1984, however, I recorded a further ten verses I had not previously recorded.

thought it inappropriate to base the musical analysis on these performances. In contrast, Dyurjgayan had been classified by Paddy Roe as a good singer, and with the exception of one performance each of two verses (verse 4 and 5) recorded by Alice Moyle in 1968 (see below p. 47), was the main singer in all recorded performances of his *nurlu*.

1.4 Chapter synopsis

At the beginning of this chapter, I pointed out that the discussion undertaken in the body of the thesis had several areas of focus. Restated, they are as follows:

- i) some indication is given of the cultural and historical setting in which *nurlu* songs and dances have been performed;
- ii) aspects of the formal textual and musical structures of one particular Nyigina *nurlu* series called *Bulu* are examined;
- iii) the discussion attempts to place the genre, geographically situated on the northern periphery of the Western Desert, into the wider context of the performance arts of central Australia.

In this concluding section to Chapter 1, I wish to describe, by way of a chapter by chapter summary, how each of these areas is manifested within the thesis. I begin with a description of Chapter 2, 'The *nurlu* genre'.

Chapter 2 begins with an introductory section in which the following aspects of *nurlu* are discussed: extent of geographical distribution and association with particular language groups; nomenclature; the individual basis of ownership and the association between those owners and the social category of *mabarn*, ('native doctor'); spiritual origins; particular categories such as *burrb nurlu* ('dancing' *nurlu*), *lirrga* ('cueing song') and *wirdu nurlu* ('big' *nurlu*); the distinction between 'series' and 'lines' and the question of a fixed or variable sequence in performance; and *wajgararra*, ('totems'), associated with the dances.

Section 2.2 discusses in some detail the historical and cultural background to the *Bulu* series. *Bulu* originated from the time when Dyurjgayan was living at

Dyarrmanjungan, a sheepcamp situated on the southern edge of Roebuck Plains (see Map 1, p. xiii). Dyurjgayan was given the songs in dream by the spirit of his deceased father. The name *Bulu* reflects their origin; Dyurjgayan's father's name was Bulu. A discussion of the cultural background of the series centres on the complex association between waterholes (the *Bulu* songs are closely associated with a waterhole called *Wanydyal* - situated to the east of Roebuck Plains - where Bulu's spirit still resides), rainmaking activity, watersnake mythology, Dyurjgayan's skills as a *mabarn*, and the power of The Dreaming.

Section 2.3 examines the relationship on the one hand between *nurlu* and other western Kimberleys performance genres,¹³ and on the other between *nurlu* and groups of songs and dances found throughout extensive areas of the Central and Western Deserts, which in many respects are similar to *nurlu*.¹⁴ In most of those performance genres from the desert areas, however, restrictions concerning the viewing of certain dance paraphernalia apply to women and children. This is in direct contrast to *nurlu* in which no such restrictions apply. The fact that western Kimberleys communities are socially and culturally associated with the Western Desert cultural bloc (see below p. 60), and yet maintain differing attitudes towards the restriction of certain visual designs, is a source of constant political interplay between Kimberleys society and the more austere desert societies to the south. The role of *nurlu* in this political interplay is discussed briefly in Section 2.4.

Chapter 3 presents the texts for, and undertakes translations of, the seventeen *Bulu* verses. Unlike the texts of clan songs of north central and north east Arnhem

¹³ *Nurlu* are distinguished on the one hand from another 'open' genre found in the western Kimberleys which, depending on the language, is called *lilydyin* or *dyabi*. Unlike *nurlu*, *lilydyin* and *dyabi* do not accompany dances. Nor are they believed to have originated in dream (A. Moyle 1977: 4); they are composed without the help of spiritual intervention. On the other hand, *nurlu* are distinguished from songs and dances which form the core of present day ritual, and whose origins are believed to be in *Bugarrarra*, The Dreaming.

¹⁴ The songs and dances originate from individuals' contact with various spirit beings, which according to Wild (1975: 49) 'occupy the interstice between the Dreamtime and the contemporary world'; the songs often describe journeys undertaken by the receivers of the songs while in a state of dream; and there are often underlying mythological references associated with The Dreaming.

Land which may vary from performance to performance, *nurlu* texts are relatively fixed; they comprise several lines, of variable length and internal construction, which in performance are repeated a number of times in a cyclical fashion. They are, therefore, much closer in form to centralian texts.

For each *Bulu* text, two types of translation appear: first, a morpheme by morpheme interlinear translation, based on several linguistic sources (Stokes et al. 1980, Stokes 1982) and my own understanding of Nyigina; and second, an expanded translation which incorporates explanations of the meanings of the texts, given by Paddy Roe, George Dyuyigayan, Butcher Joe and Nellie Nadyuway (a Walmadyarri speaker living at Pandanus Park when I recorded the *Bulu* songs in 1985, see Plate 10 below, p. 48).

The texts and translations (appearing in Section 3.5) are preceded by a discussion of two related topics; namely, the nature of the song language (Section 3.2) and the variability in the interpretations of the meanings of the texts (Section 3.3). (Section 3.1 is a short introduction to the chapter, while Section 3.4 explains the setting out of the texts and translations.) In Section 3.2 it is shown that a high proportion (80%) of words appearing in the texts occur in everyday Nyigina in the same or slightly modified form. Where modifications occur, they are one of three types: first, affixes, especially commonly occurring suffixes, may be attached to words; second, words may exhibit partial reduplication, whereby a section of the everyday word is repeated; and third, some words undergo phonetic modification. Similar modifications are described by Strehlow in relation to Aranda texts. In the majority of cases, those words not occurring in everyday Nyigina appear to belong to a grammatical class described by Stokes (1982:181) as 'verbal pre-stem'.¹⁵

Although the incidence of everyday words in the *Bulu* texts is relatively high when compared to other Australian song poetry, the song language exhibits features of formulaic construction, characterised by a restricted number of recurring verbs whose

¹⁵ Although requiring further investigation, it is suggested here that verbal pre-stems first appearing in song texts may be eventually incorporated into everyday language.

actual form may vary slightly from text to text. A discussion of several studies of formulaic style suggests that the actual shape of formulae and formulaic devices is intrinsically linked to the types of 'patterning' which influence the construction of the texts. With *Bulu*, three such patterns are identified: a rhythmic/metrical pattern; a syntactic pattern; and a word boundary pattern.

Section 3.3 addresses the question of variability in the interpretations of the various *Bulu* texts; five of eleven texts which were interpreted by two or more people were given different meanings. Four areas which may affect interpretations of the *Bulu* texts are isolated. First, the fact that the songs had not been performed for a number of years might suggest that people have forgotten their original meanings. Second, slight differences in people's perceptions of the actual words of the texts, brought about by the oral transmission procedures of the songs, can significantly alter the interpretations of the meanings. Third, characterised by formulaic construction on the one hand, and the use of words which do not appear in everyday language on the other, the *Bulu* song language is imbued with a quality of opacity, described by other researchers of Australian Aboriginal expressive media, in particular song poetry. That research has shown that there is a close relationship between textual opacity and variability of interpretation. Fourth, although people may have forgotten the original meanings of some of the *Bulu* verses, their interpretation of the texts may be seen to be part of a widespread Aboriginal ideology, described by several writers on centralian song, and which I describe as 'decontextualisation in order to effect reinterpretation' (see p. 88).

Chapter 4 describes the formal aspects of music from several different areas of central Australia, and examines various analytical approaches adopted by researchers to describe that music. There are several reasons for the inclusion in this thesis of a discussion of both the formal properties of central Australian music, and the models used to describe it. First, although it has been known for some time that a significant proportion of the music of the Kimberleys exhibits formal properties which are similar to those exhibited by central Australian songs, namely, (i) a short, relatively fixed text, which is rhythmically enunciated in performance to produce a similarly fixed syllabic

rhythm, (ii) a rhythmic accompaniment which maintains a steady pulse, and (iii) a flexible, primarily descending melody whose actual 'layout' (see Barwick 1989: 15) is influenced by the text and rhythmic structure, the exact nature of the relationship between the formal properties of Kimberleys songs and those of central Australian music has never been clearly articulated. It was initially hoped that by including a detailed description of the formal properties of the music from various parts of central Australia, a general model of central Australian music could be established against which the structure of *nurlu* songs could be assessed.

It quickly became apparent from my initial reading of the literature, however, that there was considerable structural diversity in centralian songs, even from one song to the next within the same area, and that perhaps it was inappropriate to speak of uniformity in relation to central Australian style. At the same time, however, it was apparent that the diversity of musical structure described in the literature was matched by considerable diversity in the way in which researchers had gone about describing that structure. The following question arose, therefore: is the apparent diversity of structural organisation in central Australia the result of the music itself, or the models which have been used to describe it? In the light of the above issues, it was decided that any description of central Australian song should also take into account the analytical approaches which underlie that description.

Due to the sheer size and scope of the scholarly writings concerned with the formal aspects of central Australian music, it has not been possible to include a detailed description of all the findings and all the approaches of researchers who have worked in the area. Instead, I have chosen to discuss four issues which occur in the literature and which are relevant for the analysis of the *Bulu* songs undertaken in Chapter 5. Those issues are as follows.

First, if the structural components text/rhythm and melody are defined in terms of each other, a discussion of their inter-relationship risks circularity. In the analysis of the *Bulu* songs undertaken in Chapter 5, therefore, text/rhythm and melody are conceived of, and defined, independently.

Second, in many cases, analyses of desert songs may be perceived as 'descriptions of regularities' (Barwick 1989), whereby significant structural anomalies tend to be overlooked. In the discussion of the formal aspects of the *Bulu* songs, variability is perceived to be an intrinsic part of the musical system, rather than something which can be isolated and marginalised from those performances which may be categorised as 'normal'.

The third issue concerns the way in which researchers have dealt with the problem of identifying those formal properties of desert melodies which allow performers to categorise them to be the 'same' or 'different'. This issue is not particularly relevant for the *Bulu* analysis due to the fact that in those *Bulu* performances analysed the melody is recognisably the same. Nevertheless, the issue may be relevant for future research into *nurlu*, for example when the various *nurlu* melodies are compared.

The fourth issue, touched on briefly above, concerns the relationship between the results of research and the analytical approaches which have produced those results. While it is true to say that the structural diversity exhibited by central Australian music has been due in part to the variety of ways that researchers have approached the music, this diversity can also be seen to be the result of actual differences in the music itself. For example, by using the same analytical method, Richard Moyle found that the Alyawarra and Pintupi repertoires differed markedly from each other in the area of text setting; whereas Pintupi songs were found to be relatively stable in this regard, Alyawarra songs were inherently flexible. Similarly, by isolating the 'central breath group' within a song, Tunstall found that three Western Desert song series exhibited three distinct ways of setting texts. The implication of the structural diversity exhibited by central Australian songs for the discussion of *nurlu* which follows is that it is simply not possible to establish a general model for central Australian music and then measure *nurlu* songs against it. Many of the ways in which *nurlu* songs diverge from specific central Australian styles are analogous to the ways in which these specific centralian styles diverge from one another.

Chapter 5 analyses the formal aspects of the *Bulu* songs performed by George Dyurjigayan, Butcher Joe Nanjan and Nellie Njadyuway at Pandanus Park in 1985. The analysed sample comprises fifty seven individual performances of seventeen different verses performed on two separate occasions. With the exception of two verses (verses 4 and 5) which were performed only once each, the number of performances of individual verses range from two to six. This means that in this analysis, it has been possible to investigate the important question of flexibility within the musical system. Section 5.2 describes the hierarchical organisation of the text and rhythm, while Section 5.3 describes the *Bulu* melody. On the basis of the discussion undertaken in Chapter 4, text/rhythmic structure is defined independently of the melody, and vice versa: text lines are defined primarily by rhythmic criteria, while the sectionalisation of the melody, established in the first place on the basis of statements made by Paddy Roe, are defined by melodic criteria, independent of the text. Section 5.4 discusses the way in which text/rhythmic structure intersects with the melody in performance. Like many central Australian songs, the fitting of the various texts to the *Bulu* melody revolve around what Barwick (1989) calls 'points of fit'. It is at these 'points of fit' that significant boundaries in the text and melody coincide. The *Bulu* performances appear to differ from most other central Australian songs, however, in the number of points within the text cycle which may occur at the melodic point of fit. In most central Australian series, there are at most two points within a text cycle which coincide with the point of fit in the melody - not all text lines necessarily exhibit a point of fit; in *Bulu*, there are as many textual points of fit as there are text lines. Section 5.5 summarises the various ways in which the *Bulu* performances can be seen to be similar to, and different from, the central Australian music described by other researchers. Section 5.6 sets out the musical transcriptions of *Bulu* performances which form the basis of the analysis.

CHAPTER 2

THE *NURLU* GENRE

2.1 Introduction

Nurlu refers to 'open'¹ songs and dances performed by speakers of several related languages of the western Kimberleys, namely Nyigina, Warrwa, Yawuru, Dyugun, Numbarl, Dyabirr Dyabirr and Nyul Nyul.² The approximate location of their traditional territories, along with the location of neighbouring languages of the western Kimberleys (based on Stokes 1982: 10), is set out in Map 3. Table 1 lists the names and associated languages of *nurlu* which have been recorded and documented by researchers, and deposited in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Tape Archive.³ Appendix 1 gives relevant background information on all of those *nurlu* appearing in Table 1, except for *Bulu* which is discussed below.

There are several ways in which performers refer to *nurlu*: by the name of their owner, a proper name, a locality, or by the language of the texts. Several of the *nurlu*

¹ 'Open' refers to the fact that all members of the community may participate in performances. 'Open' ceremonies are distinguished from 'closed' ceremonies which exclude people on the basis of age and/or sex.

² Stokes (1982: 7-8) proposes that the above languages, along with Baardi, Dyawi and possibly Nimanburr, belong to a language subgroup which she calls the 'alternative-prefixing' language subgroup. She classifies the subgroup into two distinct languages: an 'Eastern' language comprising Nyigina, Warrwa, Yawuru and possibly Nimanburr; and a 'Western' language comprising Baardi, Dyawi, Dyabirr Dyabirr and Nyul Nyul. Due to the fact that all knowledgeable speakers of Numbarl and Dyugun have died, Stokes states that it is not possible to categorise them with certainty, although they probably belonged to the 'Western' language. The cognate term for *nurlu* in Baardi is *ilma*.

³ Songs from all of the *nurlu* appearing in Table 1 were recorded by Alice Moyle in 1968 (see above p.3), and/or me between 1983 and 1985 (see Appendix 1 for details). Other researchers working in the Broome area have also recorded *nurlu* songs: Sandra Holmes recorded an unidentified '*nulu*' in 1960 (see Alice Moyle 1966: 79); Stephen Muecke has recorded several performances of Butcher Joe's *nurlu* (personal communication); an early recording of Felix's *nurlu* was made in 1910, and deposited in the Phonogramm-Archiv, Museum fur Völkerkunde, West Berlin (see Moyle *ibid*: 4); in 1967 Nora Kerr recorded several of those *nurlu* recorded by Moyle in 1968.

Map 3. Approximate location of territories belonging to language groups of the western Kimberleys.

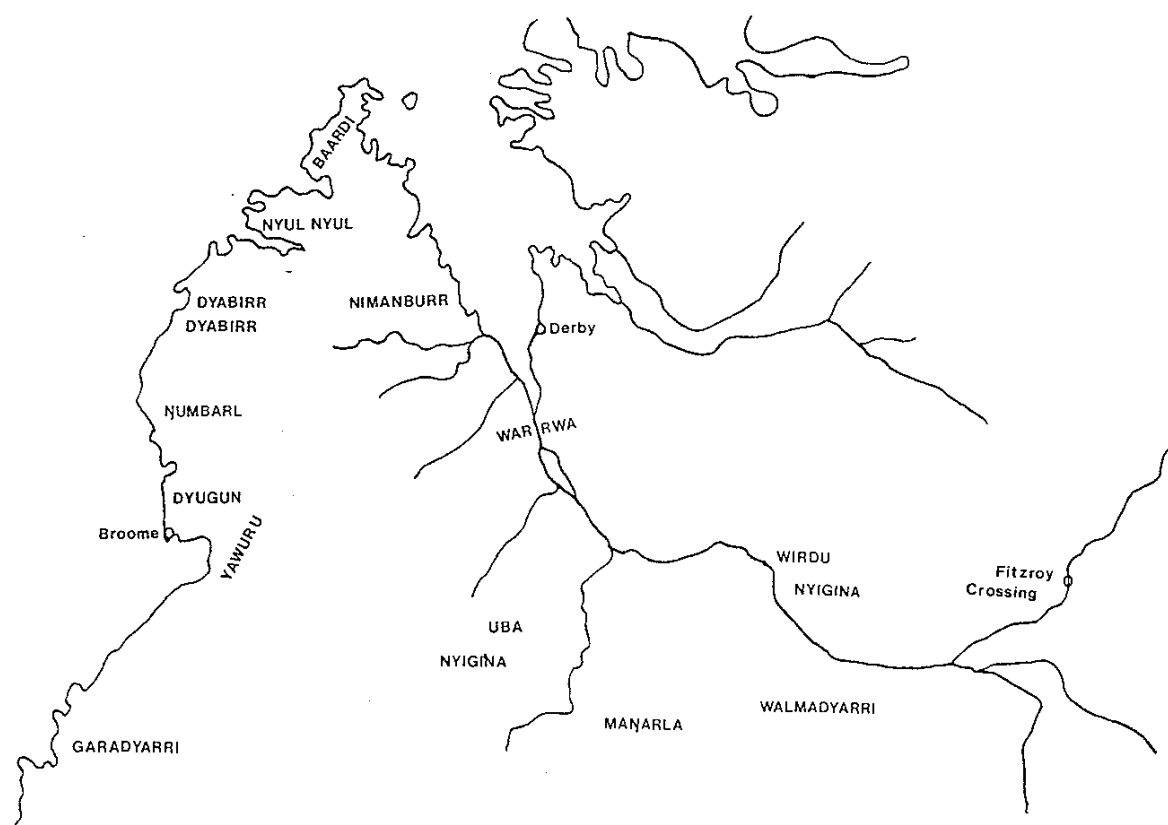


Table 1. Names and associated languages of recorded *nurlu*.

Language	<i>Nurlu</i>
Nyigina	<i>Marinydyirinydyi</i> (Butcher Joe's <i>nurlu</i>) <i>Bulu</i> <i>Gudurrugudurr</i> (Nyularn's <i>nurlu</i>) <i>Malalu</i>
Yawuru	Harry Pickett's <i>nurlu</i>
Dyugun	<i>nurlu</i> from Paddy Dyaguwin's country
Dyabirr Dyabirr	<i>Guway</i> Remi's <i>nurlu</i>
Nyul Nyul	Felix's <i>nurlu</i>

which appear in Table 1, namely Harry Pickett's *nurlu*, Remi's *nurlu* and Felix's *nurlu*, are known only by their owner's names. Others, however, such as Butcher Joe's *nurlu* and Nyurlan's *nurlu*, are also known by a proper name. Butcher Joe's *nurlu* is called *Marinydyirinydyi*;⁴ while Nyularn's *nurlu* is called *Gudurrugudurr*. *Marinydyirinydyi* does not appear to have any meaning apart from being the name of Butcher Joe's *nurlu*, whereas *Gudurrugudurr* means 'to feel sorry' (see Appendix 1, p. 264). Other *nurlu*, namely *Bulu*, *Malalu* and *Guway* appear to be known by a proper name only. These proper names refer to several different things. *Bulu*, the name of the *nurlu* series owned by George Dyurjgayan, is also the name of his deceased father; it is believed that the songs and dances originated from a waterhole called *Wanydyal* where Bulu's spirit still resides (see below, Section 2.2). *Malalu*, the name of a *nurlu* series from Noonkanbah, is also the name of the waterhole from which many of the songs originated (see Appendix 1, p. 265). *Guway*, the name of a *nurlu* series belonging to a Dyabirr Dyabirr man called Day, is also the name of a bird species

⁴ In 1968 it appears that Butcher Joe's *nurlu* was called *Ganany* (see Appendix 1, p. 263). This term was used by Moyle in the booklet which accompanies her disc recording of Aboriginal music of the Kimberleys (1977: 17).

which features in several of the dances (see Appendix 1, p. 268). In 1968, Alice Moyle recorded several songs from a *nurlu* referred to in the tape documentation as 'nurlu from Paddy Djaguwin's country'. According to Paddy Roe, people formerly called the same series 'Dyugun nurlu' (see Appendix 1, p. 268).

In some cases, it appears that particular songs and dances within a *nurlu* series are identified by name. For example, several dances (and their associated songs) in *Gudurrugudurr* were called *Birurrururru* when Nora Kerr documented Alice Moyle's recordings of the series in 1968. The term '*birurrururru*' appears in the texts of two verses which describe Nyulam's experiences in dream at the Fitzroy River. According to Paddy Roe, *Birurrururru* is the name of the *balajan* (see below p. 30) who appear out of the mist at the river. In the case of Butcher Joe's *nurlu*, *Marinydyirinydyi* refers not only to all the songs and dances of the series, but to one particular dance and its associated song.⁵ As is the case with '*birurrururru*', '*marinydyirinydyi*' appears in the text of the associated song and was glossed by Butcher Joe as the "name of that corroboree [dance]". Preliminary investigation suggests that wherever a particular dance is given a name, that term appears as part of the text of the associated song.⁶

Aboriginal people categorise *nurlu* as belonging to one particular language, as set out in Table 1 above. This classification appears to be based on several factors, such as the language of the texts, the owner's language, and the melody to which the texts are sung. It appears, however, that the formal textual and musical properties may be more important than the language of the owner in classifying songs. For example, although *Gudurrugudurr* originally belonged to a Garadyarri speaker, it is called a Nyigina *nurlu* due to the fact that the language of the texts is more closely related to

⁵ Aboriginal people also call the same dance 'opening up grave'. The dance and its associated song commemorate the release of Butcher Joe's mother's sister from her grave on the southern edge of Roebuck Plains by a group of spirits called *ray*. The text and translation of the song in question appears in Keogh (n. d.a).

⁶ In her documentation of Butcher Joe's *nurlu*, Kerr (Moyle 1968: 13-14) states that two of the songs which do not accompany dances were given names. In both cases, the name was taken similarly from the text of the song.

everyday Nyigina, and the melody is said by Aboriginal people to be a Nyigina *niyarra* (that is, 'tune' or 'taste').

Although the following discussion is based primarily on my research into Nyigina *nurlu*, the introductory statements below apply also to those *nurlu* categorised by Aboriginal people as non-Nyigina, unless otherwise specified.

Performance contexts: 'open' songs and dances

Nurlu songs and dances can be performed by all members of the community, in contrast to several performance genres of the western Kimberleys associated with men's initiation, where women and children participate only on the periphery or are excluded altogether (see below, Section 2.3). The songs are sung by men and women; women accompany themselves with body percussion such as handclapping and crotchslapping, while men play pairs of boomerangs or clap their hands. In danced performances of Nyigina *nurlu* that I have witnessed, the dances have been normally performed by men, although on several occasions women relatives of the male dancers joined in.⁷

Nurlu traditionally were performed for the entertainment of the community.⁸ It appears that they could be performed at any time. During initiations, however, when people from a wide area gathered together, *nurlu* were performed in the evenings as an adjunct to the more serious initiation ceremonies themselves. Paddy Roe described how Broome people used to travel to La Grange for initiations when he was a boy; they would take *nurlu* from the Broome country with them to perform. Up until about 1960

⁷ Preliminary investigation suggests that women previously may have taken a more equal role in dances belonging to some *nurlu* from the coastal areas. For example, Paddy Roe has stated that groups of men and women danced in *Guway*, a *nurlu* belonging to a Dyabirr Dyabirr man called Day (see Appendix 1, p. 268). As *nurlu* from the coastal areas have not been performed for about twenty years, however, it is difficult to draw conclusions. In a recent performance of an *ilma* (a related genre belonging to Baardi speakers from the northern tip of Dampier Land Peninsula, see Table 2 below) belonging to Sandy Paddy at the Broome Shinju festival in 1984, women also took principal roles in the dancing.

⁸ The *nurlu* series from Noonkanbah called *Malalu* (see Appendix 1, p. 265) appears to be the only *nurlu* series ever performed in a restricted context. Its performance history requires further investigation.

nurlu were performed primarily for Aboriginal audiences. At that time, however, people decided to perform them for a growing tourist population; Harry Pickett's *nurlu* was first, followed by *Gudurrugudurr*. This tradition of performing for tourists has continued up to the present. Every year within the *Shinju Matsuri* ('Festival of the pearl') several *nurlu* are performed for primarily European audiences.

Song creation

It is traditionally believed that when in a state of dream, or altered state of consciousness, one's own spirit may leave the body and undertake what Tonkinson (1978: 109) refers to as 'dream-spirit travels'. In those travels, one may come in contact with the characters of the spirit world, such as *balarjan* or spirits of the dead, and *ray*, another type of spirit, childlike in form, who was traditionally believed to be the cause of a woman's pregnancy (Coate 1966). Aboriginal people believe that *ray* can change shape at will, often taking on the form of birds, for example pelicans, snipes, mountain doves, ducks and magpie geese. *Balarjan* and *ray* perform songs and dances which the person's spirit may bring back to the everyday world. That person then 'owns' those songs, dances and dance paraphernalia, although their ultimate origin is attributed to the spirit creators. The owner has rights over their use and display, and performances cannot be staged without his permission and participation. In all the *nurlu* I have documented, the owner is male. Moreover, he is frequently a *mabarn*, or 'native doctor'.

Tonkinson (1978: 106-112) describes the various activities of *mabarn* in the desert to the south of Broome: curing persistent illness, recovering missing objects, predicting future events, explaining unusual phenomena and protecting people from non-physical attack.

Nothing in their appearance or demeanor distinguishes Mabarn from their fellows, and as specialists they practice [sic] part-time only, since all their other activities are the same as those of other men. Their distinctiveness lies in their possession of special skills, knowledge, and psychic powers that give them greater and more effective access to the spiritual realm. In their communications with the spiritual world they are aided by spirit-familiars, usually small birds or animals, that assist them in all sorts of ways but are most useful as messengers between

themselves and the spirit-beings that possess limitless magical powers from which the Mabarn draw. (ibid.: 107)

Tonkinson (ibid.: 109) elsewhere states that 'dreams and dream-spirit travels play a major role in their diagnosis and treatment of individuals and in many of the activities carried out by them for the common good'.

The fact that many of the *nurlu* which appear in Table 1 re-enact the dream-spirit travels which Tonkinson describes (see below p. 40 for a description of one such journey) confirms the association of *nurlu* with *mabarn*. *Nurlu* are the living proof, therefore, of a *mabarn*'s special skills in contacting and drawing on the power of the spirit realm. Moreover, the fact that there appears to be a similar relationship between certain performance categories and the activities of *mabarn* both in the western Kimberleys and in the desert to the south, suggests that there may be, or may have been in the past, close social and cultural ties between the two areas. I will discuss further the relationship of western Kimberleys culture to Western Desert culture below.

Series and lines

Nurlu are generally grouped together on the basis of ownership; Aboriginal people speak of Butcher Joe's *nurlu*, Nyularn's *nurlu*, Harry Pickett's *nurlu* and so on (see above p. 27), each of which comprises a number of songs and dances. The actual number varies, however, from *nurlu* to *nurlu*. For example, Butcher Joe's *nurlu* comprises over fifty songs and perhaps twenty dances,⁹ while Harry Pickett's *nurlu* numbers nine songs and four dances. I use the term 'series' when referring to all the songs and dances belonging to an individual.

Nurlu series are not, however, a fixed corpus; their owners may receive new songs and dances by contact with the spirit realm over a period of many years. For this reason, each series may comprise subgroups of songs and dances, each of which reflects a different dream experience. Aboriginal performers refer to these subgroups within *nurlu* series as 'lines'. For example, Nyularn's *nurlu* comprises several lines.

⁹ Due to the fact that I saw few danced performances of *nurlu* described in this study, I am unable to ascertain the exact number of dances belonging to each *nurlu* series.

One line describes Nyularn's experiences in dream with the spirits of dead soldiers from the First World War; another describes a journey undertaken by Nyularn in dream throughout the western Kimberleys (see Appendix 1, p.264). At the same time, however, a *nurlu* series may comprise only one 'line'. For example, all the songs and dances belonging to *Guway* originated from the one dream experience (see Appendix 1, p. 268).

Over a long period of time, old songs and dances may fall into disuse as new ones grow in popularity. Some old songs and dances, however, remain in the repertoire for many years, although their original meaning may change.

The relationship between *nurlu* songs and dances

Those danced performances of *nurlu* I have witnessed were composed of sequences of songs interspersed with dancing. Performers distinguish between several different types of songs, depending on whether they accompany dances, act as cues for dances, or are simply just songs, which neither cue dances nor accompany them.¹⁰

Songs which accompany dances are called *burrb nurlu* in Nyigina, that is 'dancing' *nurlu*. Particular songs are paired with particular dances, as they are representations in different media of the same event.¹¹

'Dancing' *nurlu* are normally preceded by a second type of song, called *lirrga* in Nyigina. *Lirrga* act as a cue; they inform the dancers, separated from the singers by the dance ground, that a new dance is about to commence. In most *nurlu* series I have documented, each *lirrga* and 'dancing' *nurlu* which it precedes form a pair, relating

¹⁰ Preliminary investigation based on a performance of *Malalu* at the Kimberley Cultural Festival in 1984 suggests that certain songs may accompany 'painting up' and the making of *warjagarra*, that is 'headgear' (see below p. 34).

¹¹ For example, the text of one verse from *Gudurrugudurr* (appearing in Keogh 1989: 6) describes how two *balarjan* wanted to pass through Nyularn's camp on the Fitzroy River. They decide to go underground. They make a noise as they enter into the ground, and continue on their way after appearing on the other side of the camp. In the dance associated with this verse, the movements signify that they pass through Nyularn's camp and continue their journey on the other side. Paddy Roe described the dance as follows. Two dancers hold hands as they approach the audience. When they reach the front of the danceground, they throw their arms in the air over the audience as if throwing something away. Then they walk back from the audience.

aspects of the same event.¹² In *Guway* (see Appendix 1, p. 268), however, all the dances are preceded by the same *lirrga*.

A third type of *nurlu* neither accompanies dances nor cues them. I was not given a specific term for this type of song.

The order of songs and dances in a series

The literature on desert music concerning the sequence of songs and dances within a series suggests that there is a degree of variability from area to area, and from series to series; performances of some series appear to maintain a fixed sequence, while others appear to be more flexible. Richard Moyle (1979: 9-10), describing the situation for Pintupi music, states that 'informants were adamant that this order [of songs within a series] was never changed, and that if a particular song could not be remembered readily, songs previously sung would be repeated until the problem one was recalled, whereupon the series could continue. Of the neighbouring groups on which information is available, the Walbiri do not appear to adhere strictly to this same principle'. In Alyawarra music, Moyle (1986: 139) found that 'in some, but not all, series the songs between first and last must be sung 'straight' (*arratja*), that is, in a prescribed order with no deviations . . . Elsewhere, repetition of songs sung earlier in the series is allowed; the singing is described as 'crooked' (*ampirampira*)'. Ellis and Barwick describe the situation for *Inma Ngintaka* as follows:

It is notable that although the correct sequence of places in the line is said by performers to be very important, the actual sequence of small songs varies between several performances said to relate to the same site. It appears that in cases where several small songs relate to the same site, the order of performance is not fixed, and that less important sites on the songline may be omitted provided the sequence of major sites is maintained. (Ellis and Barwick 1987: 47)

¹² For example, a *lirrga* from *Gudurrugudurr* describes how the same *balarjan* as described above appear all of a sudden out of the fog. In the *burrb nurlu* which follows it, the text describes how the *balarjan* dance out of the fog and show themselves to Nyularn. (According to Paddy Roe, in the associated dance, two dancers representing the *balarjan* would appear from the middle of the audience.)

In *nurlu* series, the sequence of songs and dances appears to be determined by whether or not those songs and dances form a 'line'. According to Paddy Roe, songs and dances comprising a 'line' should be performed in a fixed sequence.

In several *nurlu* series, one particular song and dance was given special status by being performed at the end of the evening. Performers refer to such a song and dance as *wirdu nurlu*, that is 'big' *nurlu*, or *dyud nurlu*, that is 'final' *nurlu*.

Marinydyirinydyi, *Bulu* and *Gudurrgudurr* each have a *wirdu nurlu*. Their significance, however, is not clear.¹³ In *Gudurrgudurr*, moreover, another song appears to have been sung at the beginning and end of an evening's performance. According to Paddy Roe, it acted as a signal to the community, calling and dispersing them at the appropriate time. I was not given a special term for this type of song.

Wanjgararra

Nurlu dances may feature elaborate *wanjgararra* (also called 'totems', 'headgear' or 'gear' by Aboriginal performers) which are worn or carried by the dancers. The actual forms of the *wanjgararra* may vary from *nurlu* to *nurlu*. Some *wanjgararra* are similar in construction to 'thread cross' designs found throughout the Central and Western Deserts. Several *wanjgararra* associated with *Malalu*, for example, are of the thread cross type. Paddy Roe described a similar *wanjgararra* associated with one of the dances in Remi's *nurlu* (see Figure 1). Walter (1982: 59) includes a photograph entitled 'Aboriginal Dance Decoration' from Beagle Bay of several Nyul Nyul *wanjgararra* which are of the thread cross type.

¹³ Tonkinson and Prabhu Pritam describe a category of Western Desert songs and dances from the area to the south of the Kimberleys which appear to be related to *nurlu* (see Section 2.3 below). Those series generally finish with one or several dances which display 'sacred objects', requiring women and children to cover their eyes. From my experience in the western Kimberleys, women and children are not required at any time to shield their eyes from the various dance paraphernalia which in the desert to the south are secret. It is possible, however, that the term 'big' *nurlu* is related to a similar situation concerning restrictions which may have occurred in the past, or may reflect the close formal relationships between *nurlu* and similar Western Desert songs and dances. I return below to the question of the relationship between Kimberleys culture and that of the Western Desert.

Figure 1. *Wanjgararra* associated with Remi's *nurlu*.



Other *wanjgararra*, however, are more representational in form. Plate 6 shows a *wanjgararra* (worn by Paddy Roe) associated with *Gudurrugudurr* (see Appendix 1, p. 264); it represents a *balanjan*, that is the spirit of a deceased person, who appeared to the original owner (Nyularn) when he was dreaming.¹⁴ Plate 7 shows a *wanjgararra* associated with Butcher Joe's *nurlu*. It represents a pelican's bill. Plate 8 shows two (rather blurred!) *wanjgararra* associated with *Malalu* which represent rainbows.

In several of those *nurlu* from the coastal areas around Broome, namely Harry Pickett's *nurlu* and *Guway*, dance paraphernalia took the form of various wooden shields, generally referred to as *garrbina*. They will not be discussed here.

Those *wanjgararra* which I have examined closely - belonging to *Marinydyirinydyi* and *Gudurrugudurr*, all of which are representational in form - are constructed in the following manner. A frame is first made of twisted strands of grass which are wrapped in bark. Wooden 'pegs' (made from the (unidentified) *Nanamingil* tree) are then stuck into the frame; the ends of the pegs are whittled. Woollen strands are then threaded between the pegs. These strands, formally made of human hair or possum wool, are now made of commercial wool. Paddy Roe has stated that '*wanjgararra*' means 'spider web'.¹⁵ People believe that the original creators of the

¹⁴ See Keogh (1985b) for further discussion of the *wanjgararra* associated with *Gudurrugudurr*.

¹⁵ Cf. Stokes et al. (1980: 86) who state that the Nyigina term for 'cobweb' is *warjarra*. It is possible, however, that the two terms are related.

designs, the *balanjan* and *ray*, are able to construct dance paraphernalia out of spider webs without damaging them.

I discuss the political ramifications of the use of *wanjgararra* in *nurlu* below (see Section 2.4, p. 38).

Plate 6. *Wanjgararra* associated with *Gudurr-gudurr*, worn by Paddy Roe.

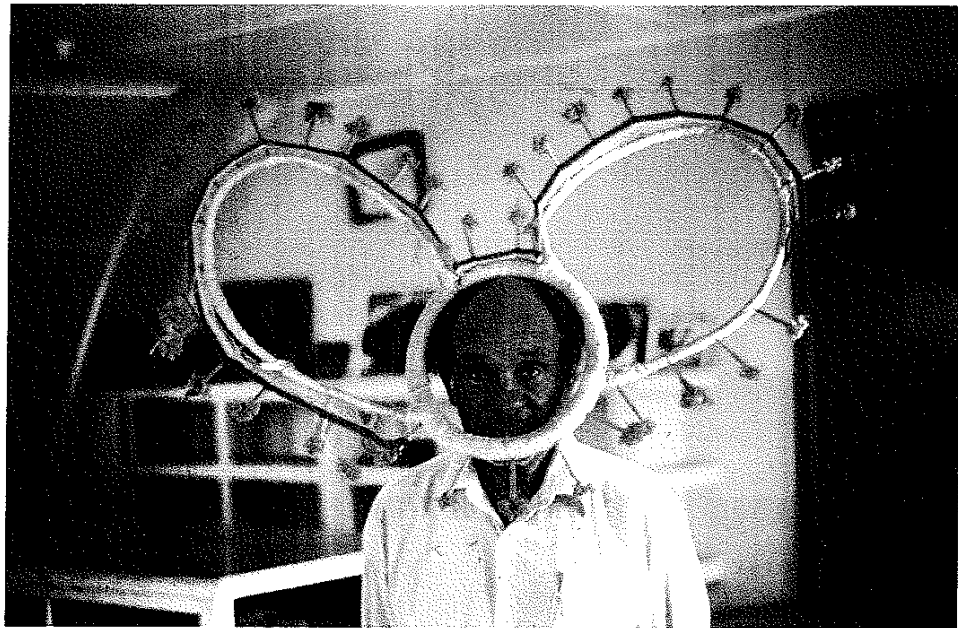


Plate 7. *Wanjgararra* associated with *Marinydirinydyi*, worn by Butcher Joe
(photograph by Roger Garwood).

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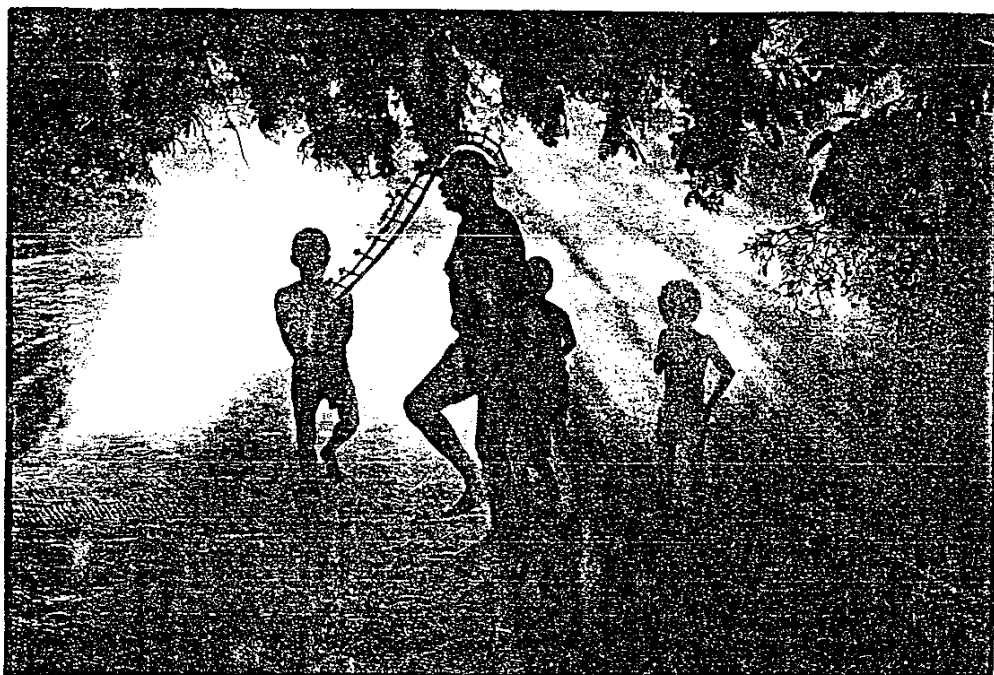
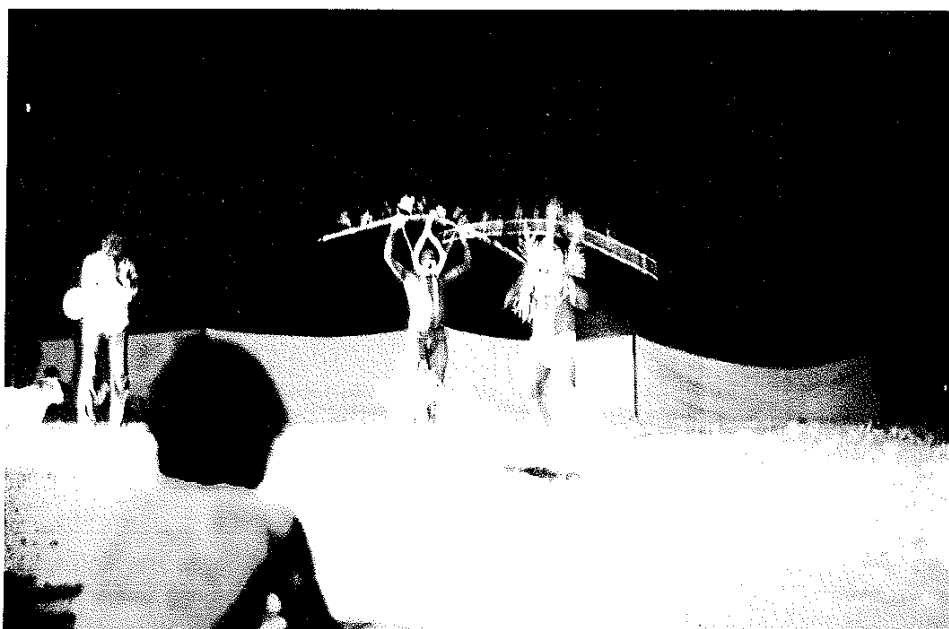


Plate 8. *Wanjgararra* associated with *Malalu*, Numbarn, 1984.



2.2 *Bulu*

Bulu refers to a group of seventeen songs and three dances owned by George Dyurjgayan (now deceased).¹⁶ As this series forms the basis of the musical and textual analysis presented in this thesis (see below, Chapters 3 and 5), it is appropriate to discuss here in some detail its background.

Early history

Dyurjgayan was a Nyigina speaker who was born in *bidan*¹⁷ country to the east of Roebuck Plains in about 1905. Sometime between 1905 and 1910, his father, named Bulu, and his father's brothers moved their families away from *bidan* country to take up residence on European stations to the east and west. While his brothers moved east to the vicinity of Udialla Station, Bulu and his family moved west to a sheepcamp on the Roebuck Plains Station. The sheepcamp, on the southern edge of Roebuck Plains and known to Aboriginal people of the area as *Dyarmarjgunan*,¹⁸ was situated in traditional Yawuru territory. Aboriginal people from several language groups, namely Nyigina, Yawuru, Garadyarri and Marjarla, moved there in the early years of the century; they worked on a seasonal basis for the station in return for European products such as tea, sugar, flour and tobacco. According to Paddy Roe, Bulu pumped water for the station.

There are probably several reasons for the shift away from a pre-European hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a more sedentary existence in centres established by Europeans throughout the Kimberleys, such as sheep and cattle stations, missions and towns. First, Aboriginal people may have grown accustomed to the introduction into their diet of European products such as those mentioned above. A more plausible

¹⁶ Dyurjgayan passed away early in 1986.

¹⁷ *Bidan* country appears to be distinguished by several features, such as red soil and particular types of trees (for example, *Dyarrarjgarr*, a species of Beefwood) which grow in it. It is in traditional *Uba* Nyigina (see below p. 101) country. Dyurjgayan was born somewhere between Manguel Creek and Dampier Downs.

¹⁸ *Dyarmarjgunan* originally referred to a waterhole in the vicinity of the sheepcamp (Benterrak et al. 1984: 36); see further below p. 44.

explanation, however, is that domestic animals introduced by Europeans competed for resources with native species which formed the basis of the traditional food economy, to the point where Aboriginal people found it necessary to turn to alternative food sources. Second, in the case of movement into the Roebuck Plains area, it appears that Yawuru women in whose country the sheepcamp was situated had moved to the rapidly growing pearling centre of Broome, thirty miles to the north-west. Evidence suggests that this move may not have been entirely the choice of the local population.

Western Australian Colonial Secretary's Office records, Aboriginal Department documents and Police reports show that abduction and violent coercion of Aboriginal women for labour on pearling boats and pastoral stations, and for use in prostitution, domestic service and as sexual companions was widespread[.] "At two camps, the natives were lamenting the loss of their women, in each case accusing him of forcibly taking away three of their young women. I have heard from various sources that he has so committed himself for a long time past." - A European settlers [sic] report on a pearler named Coppido, recorded in Colonial Secretary's Office report (Vol. 646. No. 153, 24/2/1869).¹⁹ (Benterrak, Muecke and Roe 1984: 237)

Shortage of women in the Roebuck Plains area would have facilitated the movement of women and their male relatives from country to the east and south (see Paddy Roe's statements concerning the situation in Benterrak et al. 1984: 51-52).

Bulu had four wives. Before moving to *Dyarrmanjgunan*, two of those wives each had produced one daughter and two sons, another had one daughter and one son, and the fourth had one son, namely Dyurjgayan. In about 1912, after their arrival at the sheepcamp, Dyurjgayan's mother gave birth to another son, Paddy Roe, by a European. Paddy Roe and Dyurjgayan, therefore, are half-brothers.

Bulu died in about 1915. Aboriginal people believe, however, that his spirit lived on, and still can be found today at a waterhole called *Wanydyal*, situated to the east of Roebuck Plains.²⁰ The following tells of the power of Bulu's spirit and its close association with *ray*, members of the spirit world (see above p. 30).

¹⁹ The text of a *dyabi* song appearing below (see p. 52) describes the stealing of a Dyabirr Dyabirr man's promised wife, possibly by the same man (Shiburru).

²⁰ *Wanydyal* refers specifically to an island in the middle of one of two claypans which are in close proximity. The names of the claypans are *Dyarrirgabu* and *Yanygaynan*. *Wanydyal* is

Paddy told me a story about the power of the old man's spirit - at a place called *maladya*²¹ - that is, the old man's home - there are trees there that are completely out of place - they are surrounded by Tea Trees [Paperbarks]. He [Paddy] and his old woman were camped there one night by themselves . . . Paddy's old woman got frightened as she saw all these falling stars. "Oh that's the old man". Paddy believes that they were *ray* and that they were trying to see who was there - they were not falling stars, but in fact the lights used by the *ray* to light up the ground. Beautiful! Later that night Paddy was fast asleep, but [was] woken up by his wife - she could hear a car engine. Paddy knew it was the old man again. He referred to these phenomena by the term *mamararra*, which also means fire²² . . . (Field Journal, 26 iii 1985)

The Bulu series

Approximately ten years after Bulu's death, Dyurjgayan, while still living at *Dyarrmajgunan*, received a group of *nurlu* songs and dances from his contact in dream with Bulu's spirit. The songs describe a journey which Dyurjgayan's spirit undertook with Bulu and a group of *ray* in his father's company through traditional Nyigina and Warrwa country (see Map 4). Paddy Roe and Dyurjgayan referred to this group of songs and one dance as a 'line' (see above p. 31). A short description of each verse follows.²³

Verse 1 The first verse refers to *Wanydya*, the waterhole from which all the songs and dances emanate. Bulu and Dyurjgayan contemplate in which direction they will travel.

Verse 2 The two do not travel very far before they see a flock of snipes flying towards them. As they come close, however, Dyurjgayan realises that they are not

found within the former. Paddy Roe's description of the locality of his father's spirit's resting place, from the perspective of Roebuck Plains, appears in Benterrak et al. 1984: 153-154.

²¹ The term *maladya* appears to refer to someone's home country; see explanations for *Bulu* verses 7 and 8 below, pp. 102 to 103.

²² Stokes et al. (1980: 60) give the meaning for *mamararra* as 'spell, type of trance wishing evil on another'. Paddy Roe gives a further explanation in Benterrak et al. 1984: 50.

²³ Translations and explanations for all the *Bulu* verses appear in Chapter 3, p. 92). As will be discussed in Chapter 3, I was given several different interpretations of the meanings of some of the *Bulu* texts. The short descriptions appearing below are based on those offered by Paddy Roe.

birds, but *ray*. The group of *ray* veer away just in time, so as not to collide with the two men. As they turn away, they show their bellies just as birds do in flight.

Verse 3 The two men and the group of *ray* travel south east to *Garmurlgabu* near Dampier Downs homestead, where white ochre, used in body decoration, can be found in abundance. The group do not stop, however. They continue their journey to the north east.

Verse 4 They reach *Balgandyirr*, a strip of gravel country which stretches from the vicinity of Yeeda Station and the Fitzroy River in the west for approximately forty miles to the east. They leave *Balgandyirr* and head westward.

Verse 5 The group see a flock of pelicans; they are all in a line with their heads sticking out in all directions.

Verse 6 The sixth verse describes how the group can see *Malarra*, Mt Clarkson, in the distance (see Plate 9).

Verse 7 They head back towards their *maladya*, that is 'home'. It appears smokey in the distance. Verse 7 is a *lirrga* (see above p. 32) for verse 8.

Verse 8 The group return to *Wanydyal* where a rainbow appears in the sky. They become slower and slower, as they are tired from the journey. Verse 8 is a *wirdu nurlu*, 'big *nurlu*'; a *wanjgararra* (headgear) associated with the dance appears in Figure 2 below (see p. 104).

Map 4. Dyurjgayan's dream-spirit journey.

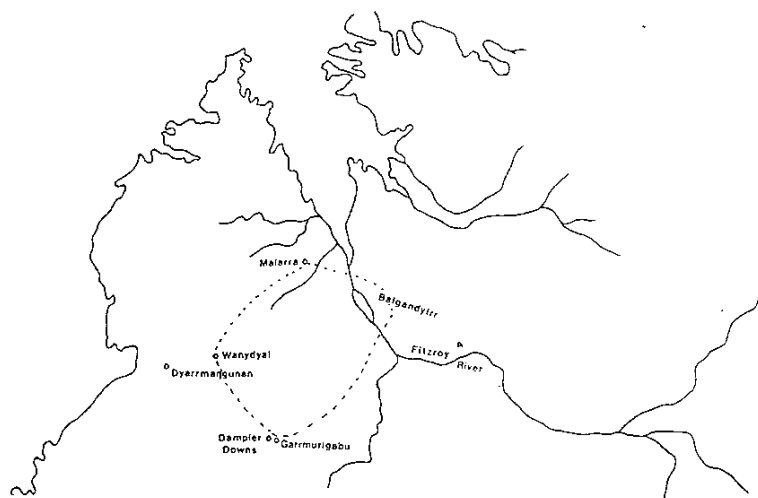


Plate 9. *Malarra* (Mt Clarkson).



Some time after 1929²⁴ while still living at *Dyarrmarjungan*, Dyurjgayan received a number of other songs and dances from Bulu. Although Paddy Roe and Dyurjgayan referred to these later songs and dances as 'another line', they do not describe a single journey as the earlier songs had done. On the contrary, they describe isolated events and natural phenomena, especially concerning the weather, which Dyurjgayan, Bulu or Bulu's *ray* had witnessed. A short description of the later verses follows.

Verse 9²⁵ This verse commemorates the appearance of a comet which passed by without incident. Verse 9 is a *lirrga* for verse 10.

²⁴ According to Paddy Roe, Dyurjgayan had received only verses 1 to 8 before he (Paddy Roe) left the sheepcamp in about 1929.

²⁵ I use a numerical sequence here only for the purpose of identification of individual verses. The use of a numerical sequence is not meant to imply that there was a fixed order in all the songs and dances of the *Bulu* series. Although the order of songs and dances in the first 'line' appears to have been fixed, this does not appear to have been the case with the later songs and dances, except for those which form a *lirrga-burrb nurlu* pair, namely verses 9-10 and 12-13.

Verse 10 At the same time as the appearance of the comet, a crescent moon appeared in the distant sky. Verse 10 accompanies a dance.

Verse 11 This verse describes a rain storm seen in the sky to the south of Roebuck Plains.

Verse 12 A group of *ray* are painted up for a corroboree. Dyurjgayan cannot see them properly, however, as they are a long way away. Verse 12 is a *lirrga* for verse 13.

Verse 13 The *ray* come out and create a lot of dust from their dancing. This verse accompanies a dance.

Verse 14 Two watersnakes appear in the sky to the north. Their 'foreheads' shine in the sun.

Verse 15 This verse commemorates the appearance of a *wudya*, a dangerous cloud, which came near the sheepcamp in about 1920. It passed by them, however, and caused loss of life at several stations on the Fitzroy River to the east.

Verse 16 Bulu's *ray* gave sanction for all the songs and dances of the *nurlu* to be made 'open', that is, public.

Verse 17 I was not able to ascertain the meaning of this verse. The text refers to *bandirr* ('body design, etch') and *murda yarrabanydyina* ('we saw nothing').

Dyurjgayan explained that the verse referred to a *wilany*, a horseshoe-shaped cloud.

According to Paddy Roe, all the songs and dances belonging to Dyurjgayan are called *Bulu*, because the name reflects the fact that Bulu's spirit, now resident at *Wanydyal*, is responsible for giving the entire series to Dyurjgayan.

Rainmaking and watersnake mythology

A significant aspect of a number of the songs and dances of the series is their relationship to various rain phenomena, such as a rainbow (verse 8), a rainstorm to the south (verse 11), rainbow snakes (verse 14), and various cloud formations: a *dyirrbal*, that is, a big rain cloud (verse 8);²⁶ a *wudya*, that is, a dangerous sickness-bearing

²⁶ The *warjgararra* associated with verse 8 is a representation of the *dyirrbal* (see below p. 104).

cloud (verse 15); and a *wilany*, or a horse-shoe shaped (possibly *cumulo-nimbus*) cloud (verse 17). The key to an understanding of references to rain phenomena in the *Bulu* songs lies in local Aboriginal beliefs concerning the power emanating from waterholes, as set down in the Dreaming, which controls weather phenomena, especially rain. That power is articulated through the Aboriginal concept of *yurjurrugu*, translated by Aboriginal people as 'rainbow snake' and 'watersnake'. Moreover, *mabarn* have the power to 'see' rainbow snakes and control them.

In order to contextualise the inter-relationships between Dyurjgayan, his powers as a *mabarn*, watersnake mythology, and the historical origins of the *Bulu* songs, I turn to a 'trustori'²⁷ related by Paddy Roe, and appearing in Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984: 47-52).

Paddy Roe related how a man had once run away with a woman from Mt Anderson to *Dyarrmarjgunan* when Paddy Roe was living there. The woman rightly belonged to a *mabarn*, who sent a *yurjurrugu*, 'rainbow snake', to the sheepcamp to drown the offenders. The woolshed in which everyone at the sheepcamp was staying (it was the wet season, and raining already) began to break apart. The story continues as follows:

So we wake one man up-
that's my brother-
one fella he's *maban* [*mabarn*] too-
when he get up, oh! too late-
but these fellas bin already get up--
this lot [that is *yurjurrugu*, watersnakes] . . . (ibid.: 48)

The man that Paddy Roe refers to is most probably Dyurjgayan, as I was told by Paddy Roe that Dyurjgayan was a *mabarn*; Paddy Roe and Dyurjgayan were also brothers (see above p.16). The story relates how Dyurjgayan was called upon to fight the *yurjurrugu*

²⁷ Paddy Roe distinguishes between three types of story: *trustori* (true stories), *bugaregara* (stories from the dreaming) and *devil stori* (stories about devils, spirits etc.)

... *Trustori* 'is the equivalent of our word "legend" - the characters of the story are human and can be located in time and space, within the memory of the narrator. The heroes of these stories can also perform fantastic acts. (Muecke 1983: vii)

(watersnake) that had been sent from Mt Anderson for the elopers. By the time he was woken up, however, the *yurjurrugu* belonging to the waterhole at the sheepcamp had already taken up the fight.

They know the stranger there-
they all up-
(Laugh)-
all these springs-
all up-

They wanta, chase that fella out-
that's the strange snake-
but they (Laugh) come over the mouth,²⁸ you know get up right up . . .
Right up in the air-

So we get this man to have a look, "Oh"-
he look, oh all the old old fellas bin get up-

They're my [that is, Paddy Roe's] spirits²⁹ . . . (ibid.: 49)

Paddy Roe continued to say that the *mabarn* at the sheepcamp pacified the *yurjurrugu* belonging to the waterhole after they had chased away the stranger. Being a *mabarn*,

he got, one more eye, better than we got . . .
he can see long-
right up to La Grange-
with his eye-
(Laugh)-
see-
it's a thing like that, *maban* - . . .

See³⁰ we don't know what *yungurugu* [*yurjurrugu*] is-
it's only man know is *maban* man (ibid.)

Although only *mabarn* can properly see *yurjurrugu*, Aboriginal people believe that all weather phenomena, especially relating to rain, are manifestations of their presence; hence, a common Aboriginal gloss of *yurjurrugu* is 'rainbow snake'.

Although I am unsure of the exact date of the events described above, they possibly occurred at about the same time as Dyurjgayan received the first songs and

²⁸ That is, they spill over their banks.

²⁹ Due to the fact that Paddy Roe was born at the sheepcamp he believes that he has a close affinity with the *yurjurrugu* (Benterrak et al. 1984: 51).

³⁰ Extended vowels signify duration (see Benterrak, Muecke and Roe 1984: 241).

dances from Bulu.³¹ It is not surprising, therefore, to find references to a rainbow in the final song of the first 'line' (verse 8), as Bulu and Dyurjgayan's spirit return to the waterhole where Bulu's spirit now resides. Waterholes imply the presence of *yurjurrugu*, and the return to the vicinity of the waterhole by the travellers brings about the appearance of one of those *yurjurrugu*, manifested in the form of a rainbow, *midiny*.

The association of the *Bulu* songs and dances with rain mythology was confirmed in a discussion I had with Dyurjgayan and Nellie Njadyuway (a Walmadyarri woman who joined in the singing of several of the *Bulu* songs, see Plate 10 below) concerning the meaning of *Bulu* verse 16.³²

- RK: what's that one [verse 16] about Dyurjgayan?
 Dy: | that a *ray* you know
 NN: | *ray*
 Dy: *dyila* ['waterhole'], *nurlu* bilonga *dyila* you know
 dyila . . .
 NN: | *maladyi* *wila* ['rain, water'] *Narraijgani* ['in The Dreaming']
 Dy: | *maladyi* *yeah*
 that one now *Narraijgani*
 well that one now *dyila* now
 NN: | *gunydyu* ['secret'] *wila* *gunydyu wila dyila*
 Dy: | *gunydyu*

Although the above explanation is difficult to decipher, several points can be made. First, Dyurjgayan states that the *nurlu* belongs to a '*dyila*', or 'waterhole'.³³ The waterhole he is referring to is *Wanydyal*, where Bulu's spirit resides with a group of *ray*. The meaning of *maladyi* is problematic and will not be discussed here. Second, the association of *dyila* with rain and water generally comes from The Dreaming. The term '*gunydyu*' generally means 'secret' but also has a connotation of power - Aboriginal people explained that restrictions on particular ceremonies were upheld

³¹ Paddy Roe left the sheepcamp in about 1929. The events described above must have occurred before that date.

³² The vertical lines appearing after the speakers' initials signify that they spoke together.

³³ Stokes, Johnson and Marshall (1980: 39) gloss *dyila* as 'rainmaking', which suggests that there may be an intrinsic relationship between the two meanings 'waterhole' and 'rainmaking'.

because of the dangerous power associated with them. There is an implication here that Bulu is closely associated with rainmaking activity, due to the fact that his spirit now dwells at the waterhole. I will return to a discussion of the relationship between songs and rainmaking mythology below.

Recent history

I am not sure when people moved away from the sheepcamp on Roebuck Plains; nor have I uncovered the history of the performance of Dyurjgayan's *nurlu* after that time. Due to the fact that Dyurjgayan moved east after leaving the sheepcamp to work on stations around the lower Fitzroy, it appears that *Bulu* was not performed in Broome like other *nurlu* described in Appendix 1.

In 1968, Alice Moyle recorded one performance each of two verses from *Bulu* (namely verses 4 and 5); they were performed by Butcher Joe. In the accompanying documentation, however, both verses were attributed to Butcher Joe's *nurlu* (Moyle 1968: Source 165, p. 14; Source 168, p. 36). I discuss the question of ownership and performance rights below.

I recorded Dyurjgayan's *nurlu* over several months in 1985 when Dyurjgayan was living at Pandanus Park, an Aboriginal community on the lower Fitzroy River. The background to the recording and documentation of the songs is described in Appendix 2. Dyurjgayan stated at the time that he had not sung the songs for many years and that he had difficulty in remembering them all. In fact, Paddy Roe remembered a significant number of songs which Dyurjgayan had forgotten (see p. 271).

There may be several reasons behind Dyurjgayan's *nurlu* not being performed for many years, such as Dyurjgayan's poor health, or the fact that knowledgeable performers from the time of the sheepcamp now lived in several different communities. According to Lucy Marshall,³⁴ a Nyigina speaker who was living at Pandanus Park in

³⁴ Lucy Marshall has collaborated with Stokes in the production of a Nyigina-English lexicon (see Stokes et al. 1980).

1985 when I recorded the *Bulu* songs, she had attempted several times, without success, to persuade Dyurjgayan to teach his *nurlu* to people at Pandanus Park. His reason for not wanting to was that the songs brought back too many memories.

Plate 10. Nellie Nadyuway, *Mamabulanydyin*, Broome 1985.



The question of ownership and performance rights

During the course of eliciting meanings for the *Bulu* verses, several statements by Dyurjgayan, Paddy Roe and Butcher Joe suggest on the one hand, that some of those verses which appear in the above description of the *Bulu* series may have been

owned originally by a person other than Dyurjgayan, and on the other, that other verses not appearing in the above description should do so. I will discuss each case in turn.

At one point during a discussion with Paddy Roe and Butcher Joe about the meanings of the *Bulu* verses, proceedings were halted abruptly when firstly, Paddy Roe did not recognise one of the songs, and secondly, Butcher Joe stated that the verse in question (verse 14) originally belonged to another man, now dead, who had given it to Dyurjgayan to include in his *nurlu*. Paddy Roe maintained that on the one hand he had already left the sheepcamp when the later songs and dances 'came out', and that on the other hand, he was primarily a dancer. Because of this, he did not know what sort of arrangement may have been made between Dyurjgayan and the possible owner(s) of the song(s). He did not want to be responsible for including a verse in Dyurjgayan's *nurlu* which might belong to someone else. For Paddy Roe, the question of ownership was obviously a serious one.

PR: See this corroboree like I said
 I never been with these fellas
 I dunno what, what sort of [ar]range[ment] they make you know
 I was gone from that country
 I went to Waterbank country me
 and these fellas was left there [*Dyarrmanjgunan*, the sheepcamp]
 him [Butcher Joe], and as he's said now nother two more fellas [apart
 from Dyurjgayan]
 so I might push these corroborees belong to somebody else in the one
 man you see
 I dunno
 And when somebody listen to it now
 hey that's my corroboree you see
 well he just come out with this old fella too now
 but he make me wrong
 me, me . . .
 because I was only dancer
 and these fellas were singer
 I dunno what [ar]range[ment] they make . . .

Although the matter was never really finalised in the field, verse 14's possible origin from a person other than Dyurjgayan is supported by its anomalous text/rhythmic structure (see below p. 180 foll.). It appears that after Paddy Roe left the sheepcamp, several men were given one or two songs in dream, which they then gave to

Dyurjgayan to incorporate into his *nurlu*.³⁵ Verse 14 appears to be the only one to have survived.

One verse which Paddy Roe remembered that Dyurjgayan had not performed in the first elicitation session (see Appendix 2, p. 271) concerned a flock of pelicans (verse 5). When asked about it, Dyurjgayan at first maintained that the verse belonged to Butcher Joe. Later, however, he remembered that it was his. Verse 5 was one of two *Bulu* songs performed by Butcher Joe for Alice Moyle in 1968, and which in the accompanying documentation (prepared by the linguist Nora Kerr) was attributed to Butcher Joe's *nurlu* (see above). There appear to be three possible explanations for this. First, if Butcher Joe had stated in 1968 that the songs belonged to him, he may have given the same verses earlier to Dyurjgayan to incorporate into his *nurlu*. Second, Nora Kerr may have assumed that the songs belonged to Butcher Joe because of their obvious textual and musical similarities to other songs from his *nurlu*. Third, Butcher Joe may have 'borrowed' the verses from Dyurjgayan's *nurlu*, and stated that they were his.

The third scenario is supported by the fact that a Marjarla *dyudyu* (see Table 2, p. 54) which I have witnessed from Looma community appeared to be owned by more than one person (see further below in relation to similar ceremonies from the desert to the south, p. 58). The possibility exists, therefore, that in previous times songs and dances from both Butcher Joe's and Dyurjgayan's *nurlu* were performed together.³⁶ This might account for the fact that Dyurjgayan performed on both occasions in 1985 a *mayarda* (pelican) verse belonging to Butcher Joe. The whole question, however, requires further investigation.³⁷

³⁵ Butcher Joe maintained later in the same discussion that the songs were given to Dyurjgayan because he was a *mabarn*.

³⁶ Such a possibility would have been facilitated by the fact that both *nurlu* use a similar melodic structure. The question of the musical relationship between the various Nyigina *nurlu* discussed in this thesis is problematic, however, and will not be examined.

³⁷ I have excluded Butcher Joe's *mayarda* verse from the textual and musical analysis below.

2.3 The relationship of *nurlu* to other performance genres

In the western Kimberleys

Nurlu is only one of three categories of song found in the western Kimberleys. It is distinguished on the one hand from songs which are composed, in the same way as a Country and Western song might be composed, and on the other, from songs which form part of present day ritual, and are said to have originated in *bugarrarra*, The Dreaming.³⁸ The discussion below is restricted to songs of the former category, as songs belonging to the latter may be 'closed' to women and children in the Aboriginal community.

Songs belonging to the former category are called *lilydyin*, *ludin* or *dyabi*³⁹ depending on several factors, such as the language, locality and instrumentation. Alice Moyle (1977: 7) states that the term *lilydyin* was used by Dyabirr Dyabirr and Nyul Nyul speakers, while *ludin* was used by Baardi speakers. *Lilydyin* and *ludin* are accompanied with pairs of boomerangs. The term *dyabi* (or *tabi*) appears to have been used more extensively, from the coastal area north of Broome south to the De Grey district (see McCardell 1970 and Von Brandenstein 1969, 1974). In contrast to *lilydyin* and *ludin*, *dyabi* traditionally were accompanied with a special wooden rasp, also called *dyabi* (Alice Moyle 1977: 17). Preliminary investigation suggests that *lilydyin*, *ludin* and *dyabi* may share several formal structural features, such as a tri-partite textual and musical division. A more detailed discussion of their musical structure and inter-relationship, however, is outside the scope of this thesis.

³⁸ Marett (personal communication) has found in western Arnhem Land that people may state in one context that certain songs are composed just like Country and Western music; in another context, however, they may attribute the same songs to spirits called *walaganda*, depending on who is giving the information and who is receiving it. Marett suggests that the division between song categories based on the origin of the songs may not be as fixed as previously perceived. Wild (1987) and Tonkinson (1978: 102) similarly have described the manner in which recently dreamt songs may be recategorised as originating from Dreamtime Ancestors.

³⁹ In his tape documentation, Peter Dalton (see above p. 3) refers to this category as 'play-about' songs.

Lilydyin and *dyabi* recount everyday events, and Alice Moyle (1977: 14) states that they frequently cause amusement among their Aboriginal listeners.⁴⁰ The *dyabi* whose text appears below describes in graphic detail how Dyagaljurr, the Njumbarl man who composed it, is going to get retribution from the Filipino, Shiburru, for stealing his wife.

warndi gadarmaydyu yangani buyurruju
'he's gone for his life, he's so scared he's pissing himself . . . can't
see him for the smoke'

dyulbarra ganya dyiburru
'that Shibirru's in Dyulbay now'

gadabu yinmanyja
'he's breathing a sigh of relief there'

yangirra milburru
'we're going to hit him . . .'

gunyguny burruni
' . . . [smash] the "brains" from his cock'

yadugarra lurrb yinmanya
'he's in Yadugarra now, hiding'

Shiburru is frightened because he thinks that Dyagaljurr is going to get him for stealing his promised wife. He runs away with the woman to Yadugarra, in Dyulbay Yawuru country, across the bay from Broome, and breathes a sigh of relief. Dyagaljurr plans his revenge!

40 Translations and explanations of several *lilydyin* appear in Moyle 1977: 31-37.

Paddy Roe explained the situation as follows:

- RK: that Filipino man's taken that lady
 PR: he take the lady with im
 RK: and this . . . Numbarl man's singing this song
 PR: he sing song for im
 but he [Dyabaljurrū] didn't want to take im off im or anything but
 he . . . that Filipino man only think because he come too, too many
 time you know all the time . . . he just think [that Dyabaljurrū will
 cause trouble]
 but not the Numbarl man
 Numbarl man give im
 if he wanted to take im he coulda take im back long time you know
 bush, take im away
 RK: but it's just that Filipino man got frightened
 PR: Filipino man got frightened
 he don't want to lose that woman, that all the maid he got . . . so he
 run away with im

Outside the western Kimberleys

In the Kimberleys, Aboriginal people equate several genres with *nurlu*. In all cases these genres are open to, and performed by both sexes, they appear to be received from spirits in dream, they are accompanied with pairs of boomerangs, and the songs accompany dancing. The names of those genres and their associated languages are set out in Table 2.

In the central and northern Kimberleys, open songs and dances which are accompanied by pairs of sticks (in contrast to boomerangs) are called *balganya*, *balgan* or *dyuanbanya* by the Worora, and *balga* by the Wunambal and Urjarinyin (Moyle 1977: 4). Their relationship to *nurlu* will not be discussed here.

Table 2. Kimberley genres related to *nurlu*.

GENRE	LANGUAGE
<i>ilma</i>	Bardi
<i>maru</i>	Garadyarri
<i>dyudyu</i>	Walmadyarri, Marjarla
<i>dyunba</i>	Wunambal, Worora, Ujarinyin (A. Moyle 1977: 4)

Throughout the Central and Western Deserts, groups of songs and dances are found which are recently composed, and whose origin is attributed to various spirit beings. Several writers have examined the ontology of such spirit beings. Tonkinson (1978: 102), writing from the perspective of the north west of the Western Desert, describes them as 'intermediaries between the withdrawn creative beings [from the Dreaming] and the living'. Wild (1975: 49) similarly states that *manparrpa*, the ancestral spirits which reveal new songs and dances to Warlpiri individuals, 'occupy the interstice between the Dreamtime and the contemporary world'.

With the Warlpiri, *manparrpa* reveal *purlapa*, or 'public songs', and occasionally *yawalyu*, or 'women's songs'. Wild (1984: 190) describes the former as 'public songs sung by men and women together in the residential camp area. Purlapa . . . are believed to be received by contemporary individuals from spirit-agents of the Dreamtime'. Like *nurlu*, they are accompanied by boomerangs and body percussion. It appears that men and women may dance to *purlapa* songs. Men only, however, perform 'mimetic dances'; women may 'dance in the standardized non-mimetic style' (Wild 1975: 86).

Purlapa contrast with *nurlu* in several respects. First, where *nurlu* generally are owned by the individuals who receive them, *purlapa* 'do not necessarily belong to the

receiver, and in cases where they do not, the owning subsection patricouple⁴¹ is identified by the *manparrpa*' (Wild 1987: 109). For example, Wild (1975: 54) describes how Spinifex Tjapangari received a *purlapa* jointly from a spirit-agent and the patrispirit of his deceased brother:⁴² 'the song cycle was for the Tjapaltjari/Tjungarayi subsections, which are in Spinifex's own patrimoiety but not the same patricouple' (ibid.). Second, whereas there does not appear to be special performance roles in *nurlu* (I was told that all members of the community could join in), Wild points out (ibid.: 53-54) that the same pattern of rights and obligations apply to public songs as 'to songs and associated ritual in more sacred categories'. That pattern is as follows:

Rights and obligations concerning most Warlbiri ritual performances, including singing, are allocated in decreasing degrees of specificity to patrilineal descent groups, subsection patricouples, and patrimoieties respectively. This means that although the members of a descent group may have clearly defined rights and duties over particular rituals, the members of the wider subsection patricouple and the members of the patrimoiety to which the descent group belongs share these same rights and duties in lessening degrees. (ibid.: 53)

Third, while *nurlu* appear only to be received by males, the receiver of a new *purlapa* may be male or female (1987: 109).

According to Wild, the Warlpiri distinguish generally between songs which are newly received and those which are not. For example, newly received *purlapa* series 'die with their finders, and later . . . may be "rediscovered" shorn of their historical references' (ibid.). Newly received *purlapa* tend to refer to events of immediate personal significance in the life of the receiver; these are described by Wild as 'historical'. One such series, a 'Rain *purlapa*', was given to a Warlpiri man during a period of illness and convalescence. It recounts a journey undertaken by the receiver of the songs and the spirit agent who gave them to him (ibid.: 110-111). In contrast, Wild

⁴¹ In Warlpiri society, local descent groups, or 'clans', are the main corporate units (Wild 1987: 103). Each clan comprises a patricouple pair of subsections (subsections divide society into eight), membership alternating by generations.

⁴² Wild's distinction between spirit-agent and patrispirit appears to be similar to the distinction in the western Kimberleys between *ray* and *balarjan* respectively (see above p. 30).

gives the example of a Yam *purlapa*, originally received by a now deceased man, and later "rediscovered" by his son.

Although I have no record of the original songs, the texts of the rediscovered songs are highly "mythologised", in contrast to other newly received song series which are more "historical", to the extent that at certain parts of the "mythologised" *purlapa* performance women and children are required to hide under blankets because the designs and objects used in the ceremony are restricted to men. (ibid.: 109)

The distinction in *purlapa* between newly received ceremonies on the one hand, and recreated, or rediscovered ones on the other, does not appear to hold for *nurlu*; nor is it the case, at least in those performances of *nurlu* I have witnessed, that women and children are required to cover themselves because of dance paraphernalia (see further below, Section 2.4). The *nurlu* series I have documented appear to be more closely associated with newly received *purlapa* series than with those which the Warlpiri classify as 'rediscovered'.

Richard Moyle describes two desert genres, namely the Pintupi *turlku* and the Alyawarra *ltarta*, which appear to be similar to *nurlu*. Due to the lack of detail in Moyle's discussion of both genres, however, it is not possible to draw conclusions about their relationship to *nurlu*.

Turlku are 'informal song series with occasional dancing', whose principal function 'seems to be one of entertainment' (1979: 18-19).⁴³ All those *turlku*

⁴³ In contrast, Myers' statements concerning *turlku* (1986: 59) suggest that the term has a much wider meaning and significance than that proposed by Moyle. 'The usual word for sacred object, *turlku*, means variously "song," "sacred board," "ritual object," "ceremony," or "story." It is significant that all these referents are classified by the single term, as Strehlow (1947) noted for the Aranda concept of *tjurunga*'. Myers uses two terms referring to ceremonies performed by men and women in the vicinity of Lake Macdonald (on the Western Australia-Northern Territory border, see Map 2, p. 2). *Tjulpurpa* is 'a ceremony in which men, women, and children sing, but only men dance' (ibid: 82). Myers does not state whether the term refers to a genre or to a single ceremony. The second term is *pulapa* (ibid: 85) (see above in relation to the Warlpiri). Myers' historical account appearing below suggests that when people were still living a nomadic existence in the desert, *pulapa* comprised both 'closed' and 'open' sections; women and children participated in the 'open' sections only.

At Yultutjarranya, men, women, and children sang *pulapa* ceremonies. People from Marpurinya, Pinarinya, (to the north and northwest), and Ngalia (Warlpiri) from the northeast all danced . . . During the day, women and children went for food, while men performed secret aspects of the ritual. Women told the children to stay away from the men. In the afternoon, the old men came up, informing everyone to come to the public performance: "We're ready now".

documented by Moyle originated from dream-spirit experiences (ibid.: 58); in most cases, however, Moyle does not specify the inventor of the songs and dances.⁴⁴ Men and women sing, the men accompanying themselves with boomerangs,⁴⁵ and the women 'by clapping hands or (more often) slapping the crotch area'. It appears that ownership of *turlku* is invested in individuals, although Moyle is not clear on this point.

Moyle's description of the Alyawarra *ltarta* is similarly brief. It is 'the only category of Alyawarra open to all members of the community, and the only one in which men and boys dance together' (1986: 72); the nature of women's involvement in the ceremony, however, is not specified. Moyle describes the origin of the songs as follows:

[In *ltarta* and women's *awulya* songs] . . . the categories acknowledged to be of recent origin . . . *utninga*, the spirits responsible for the revelatory dreams, are said to show the dreamer sequences of dramatic events - in which he/she may be an observer or participant - and the dreamer believes that the songs are created at various points in these sequences, sung either by himself/herself as observer or participant or by other characters in the dream.

Thus, the songs may be created by characters in the dream which may or may not include the dreamer him/herself.

The only example of *ltarta* in the Alyawarra repertoire 'is ascribed to the historical past' and was 'dreamt over several nights, then taught to the local residents' (ibid.: 73). Moyle states that it is performed and owned by Kuranja people.⁴⁶ Most of the songs centre 'on the travels of a group of Emu men from Kaititja Territory into Kuranja Country' (ibid.). The songs are accompanied by boomerangs.

Strehlow (1971: 637-646) discusses '*ltata*' belonging to the Aranda. 'They are sung by men, women, and children, and are treated with no reverence whatsoever . . . ' (p. 637). Strehlow points out that the songs relate to Dreamtime mythology. Due to

⁴⁴ In one case, a *turlku* was taught to a man in dream by an eaglehawk (ibid: 59).

⁴⁵ In one series, however, namely the *tarrkarlpa*, Moyle states that the performance was accompanied by beating single sticks on the ground."

⁴⁶ Kuranja refers to an Alyawarra Country, whose members belong to one or more patrilineal clans, all of which belong to a single moiety (1986: 3).

the fact, however, that the myths in question were known only to male members of particular descent groups 'it follows that the majority of the people who sang . . . did so without any comprehension of their real significance' (p. 638). Strehlow states that he could find no evidence to suggest that *ltata* dances 'were based on the dreams of individuals' as Roheim, and Spencer and Gillen had maintained earlier.

These statements [of Spencer and Gillen, and Roheim] could surely have been true only of "modern" *ltata* dances, - that is, of *ltata* dances which had just been improvised. (ibid.: 640)

Perhaps Strehlow's distinction between 'modern', 'improvised' *ltata* and those which relate to Dreaming mythology corresponds to Wild's (more clearly articulated) distinction between *purlapa* which are 'newly received', and those which have been 'rediscovered' (see above).

Tonkinson (1978: 102) states that around Jigalong (see Map 2, p.2), Western Desert people distinguish between two categories of ritual, namely *maṅgunydjanu* ('from the creative period') and *bardundjaridjanu* ('from the dream-spirits'). The former are 'essentially Dreamtime products'. The latter, however, are given to people during sleep.

. . . every few years one or more men will be "given" a new ritual during sleep, when a person's *bardundjari* ("dream-spirit") leaves the body and wanders. Sometimes it encounters spirit-beings who, as intermediaries between the withdrawn creative beings and the living, may reveal a new tune, song, dance or sacred object. Because the Aborigines attach much significance to their dreams, a man usually will disclose his dream to others, but not usually until a half-dozen or more songs and other information have been "found," lest the spirit-beings become angry or jealous and decide against making further revelations. Excited, and perhaps rendered hypersensitive by what they have been told, other men may soon dream about similar happenings or themes and wake up remembering songs or dances that they, too, have been given during their dream-spirit experiences. Women, too, may "find" songs and report these to the men for inclusion in the ritual . . .

The ritual that is finally built up has a distinctive tune, body decorations, set of dances, and thread-cross designs; its songline may have a hundred or more verses . . . Only a small number of the dances, and perhaps songs, are kept secret, and it is with these that the sacred objects are displayed. This occurs at the end of each evening's performance when one of the dancers throws a firestick as a signal to the women and children to face away from the ground and cover their eyes.

. . . They remain the property of the man or men to whom they were revealed, until such time as their "owners" decide to hand them on to another group.

In an earlier paper (1970), Tonkinson describes a ritual 'from the dream-spirits' in some detail.

During the fieldwork period, three different series of dream-spirit rituals were witnessed at Jigalong. The current locally composed series was called *winba* or *dyaramara*, with a theme of lightning, rain, clouds and thunder, and ancestral beings and natural species associated with the rain-making ancestor by whose names the ritual is known . . . The *winba* series was composed early in 1962 at Jigalong, and consists of over 120 songs, contributed by nineteen middle-aged and old men representing several linguistic groups and ancestral totemic affiliations, and widely scattered home territories. Nine of them contributed only one or two songs; three others, all native doctors, composed a total of about sixty-five songs. Several songs were composed jointly by two or more men. A few concerned events (usually lightning strikes) seen during waking hours. (1970: 285)

Tonkinson associates the *winba* series with a body of rainmaking rituals from the same area called *ngaawajil* (see Tonkinson 1972), which 'propitiate Djaramara, the ancestral man from whose home waterhole, Winba . . . all precipitation is said to emanate and whose control over weather phenomena is said to be absolute' (1970: 285). Tonkinson states that although the Ancestral Hero is mentioned only a few times in the *winba* series, 'as are the spirit beings, water birds and snakes that are closely associated with him', almost all the restricted songs and dances 'depict the activities of these beings as seen during the dream-spirit journeys' (ibid.).

Several points can be made from a comparison of *nurlu* with the above ceremonies described by Tonkinson. First, the fact that the *Bulu* series may include several verses from people other than Dyurjayan (see above, p.48) suggests a possible connection to Jigalong practices. The number of active participants in the composition process for *Bulu*, however, appears to have been nothing like that described by Tonkinson. Nor are the numbers of songs involved the same. To my knowledge, women do not participate in the composition of *nurlu* in the western Kimberleys. *Mabarn*, however, appear to be closely associated with both *nurlu* and those ceremonies described by Tonkinson. Second, whereas the viewing of dance paraphernalia is not restricted in the western Kimberleys, the same is not the case around Jigalong; women and children are not permitted to see certain dances (or perhaps listen to certain songs)

which contain 'sacred objects' (see further below, Section 2.4). Third, ownership appears to be slightly different in both areas. While the songs remain the property of the men to whom they were revealed in Jigalong, the above discussion of the *Bulu* series suggests that the receiver of a song does not necessarily remain the owner. *Bulu* appears to be the exception in the western Kimberleys in this regard (at least as far as *nurlu* are concerned). Fourth, the ontological relationship between *Bulu* and the *winba* (or *dyaramara*) series is striking: both relate to rain phenomena, and both originated from a waterhole where a powerful ancestor resides (*winba* is the name of the waterhole where Dyaramara resides). In the case of the Jigalong ceremony, the ancestor in question emanates from the Dreaming, whereas *Bulu*, as a *balanjan*, is of a different status.

The above discussion has shown that, despite differences from one area to the next, several similarities exist between the *nurlu* genre and certain categories of song and dance found throughout the desert areas of Central and Western Australia. In most cases, the songs, dances and visual designs are received in dream from a class of spirits which, according to several writers, bridge the gap between people and the ever-present source of power, The Dreaming. The songs themselves often describe journeys undertaken by the receivers of the songs while in a state of dream. Various writers have reported underlying mythological references associated with the Dreaming. In most cases, it appears that all members of the community may participate in performances; a significant difference is found between the Kimberleys and the desert areas, however, in attitudes to the public viewing of dance paraphernalia.

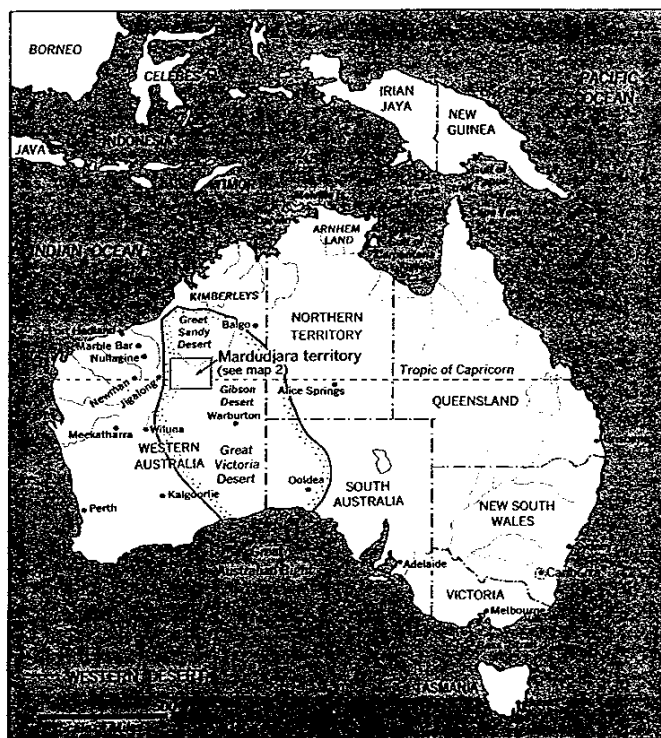
It is not surprising that a class of songs and dances exhibiting the features of *nurlu* is found throughout such extensive areas; researchers have reported widely on the homogeneity of cultural forms in Aboriginal desert society, a homogeneity influenced by the exchange of material and intellectual cultural items (see McCarthy 1939, Akerman 1979a and b, and Keogh 1981). Tonkinson, commenting on the Western Desert cultural bloc (see Map 5 below), states:

All Western Desert people speak mutually intelligible dialects of the same basic language . . . All Western Desert forms of social organisation are basically similar, too, and in the structure and operation of the kinship systems and marriage rules, the range of variation is not great . . .

Significantly, it is in the realm of the religious life that the most striking continuities exist throughout the desert. For many millenia the diffusion of religious and other lore to and from constituent groups and sometimes even beyond the culture area has ensured the retention of homogeneous sociocultural forms. Most of the major rituals performed by the Mardudjara are also part of the ritual life of groups elsewhere in the desert, and show remarkable similarities in structure over time and space. (1978: 27-28)

Examination of Map 5 shows that the western Kimberley area lies on the northern boundary of the Western Desert.⁴⁷ Its physical proximity may explain the particularly close association between *nurlu*, especially *Bulu* and *Malalu* (see Appendix 1, p. 265) with their references to rain phenomena, and those series described by Tonkinson as *bardundjaridjanu*, 'from the dream-spirits'.

Map 5. The Western Desert (from Tonkinson 1978: ii).



⁴⁷ In the western Kimberleys, Garadyarri, Marjarla and Walmadyari (see Map 3, p. 26) are all Western Desert (suffixing) languages. Yawuru and Nyigina form the southern border of non-Western Desert (prefixing) languages.

2.4 *Nurlu* and politics

Perhaps the most significant difference between *nurlu* and performance categories found in the deserts to the south and south east lies in the varying attitudes to restrictions found in relation to dance paraphernalia such as *wanjgararra* or 'totems' (see above, p. 34). In the two most comprehensive discussions of similar groups of songs and dances from outside the Kimberleys, both Wild and Tonkinson state that certain visual objects are hidden from women and children. In the Broome area, however, it appears that similar objects have never been placed under the same restrictions - a fact which has been the cause of continuing political interplay between people from the western Kimberleys on the one hand, and groups to the south, referred to in the Broome area as *warmala*, on the other.⁴⁸ The fact that one of the *Bulu* verses (verse 15) commemorates one event in the history of relations between people from the western Kimberleys and groups to the south, while another (verse 16) stresses that the *Bulu* songs are for everyone to see and hear, confirms the place of *nurlu* in the traditional politics of the area.

A discussion of the history of traditional Aboriginal politics in the western Kimberleys is outside the scope of this thesis. I include here, however, a transcript of a discussion between Paddy Roe and myself on the effect of traditional politics on the manufacture and use in Broome of particular *wanjgararra* associated with Butcher Joe's *nurlu*. Paddy Roe states that elsewhere in the Kimberleys today people have enough power to withstand political pressure from the desert. In Broome, however, all the old people have died.

- RK: you were saying this [*wanjgararra*] is a this is only [for men]
 PR: no he's alright . . .
 but sometime in what oh you can see it
 it's alright in your book you can keep it
 RK: he alright?
 PR: yeah but if I make im you know somebody
 RK: ah *warmala* ['desert side']
 PR: *warmala* people see im yeah
 plenty can make im
 plenty can make these things, all these sorta things too

⁴⁸ One such interchange concerning the Noonkanbah *nurlu* called *Malalu* is described in Appendix 1 (see p. 265).

ah I can make them for this old man [Butcher Joe] too
 but we haven't got power behind . . .
 lotta people make everything now
 but they got power behind
 I mean people

RK: you got nothing here

PR: we got nothing

that's only one old Butcher Joe that's all him

RK: they can do it other places . . .

PR: well er . . . they all got people behind . . .

strong man in Mowanjam . . .

strong man in Kalumburu

strong man in whatname Looma

strong man in Balgo all that lot they're got somebody behind

but we lost everybody bilong to us

so we gotta be very careful

Several weeks before I left the field in 1985, I was working with Butcher Joe on the meanings of several of the songs from his *nurlu*. Butcher Joe remembered the original *wirdu nurlu* ('big' *nurlu*) and the design of the *waijgararra* which was worn in the associated dance. He stated that the *wirdu nurlu* had not been performed for many years; although the design of the *waijgararra* was open in the Broome area - "like roun' this country Njumbarl an' all this Broome, woman can see" - it was "too big" for desert people. Butcher Joe, like Paddy Roe, attributed the changes to his *nurlu* to the fact that all the old people from the country had died.

he got last one to finish up corroboree . . .
 we never show . . . that one too big . . .
 the old people bin go down then we stop
 pass away you see . . .
 old people
 then everything stop

CHAPTER 3

THE *BULU* SONG TEXTS AND THEIR TRANSLATION

Although art may flourish for art's sake, and translation is certainly an art, there is no such thing as translation for translation's sake. No one translates material from one language to another, particularly when the task is as arduous as it is in this field, unless they both value it themselves and feel that at least some speakers of the language they are translating it into will also do so. (Donaldson 1979: 71)

3.1 Introduction

Appearing below in Section 3.5 are the texts and translations of the seventeen verses¹ which comprise the *Bulu* series. Sections 3.2 to 3.4 examine various aspects of these texts. Section 3.2 discusses the nature of the song language. A significant proportion of the words of the songs appear in everyday language but they are modified in song in several significant ways. Moreover, the texts exhibit features of formulaic style. Section 3.3 investigates the question of the variability in interpretations of the meanings of the songs. Four areas are discussed, namely the state of the tradition, the transmission of the songs, the nature of the song language, and the effects of decontextualisation of the songs. Section 3.4 describes the setting out of those texts and translations.

3.2 The nature of song language

A detailed discussion of the relationship between everyday language and that of songs is not possible here, since this would take the discussion into an area of linguistics beyond the scope of this thesis. This discussion is restricted to three areas:

¹ I use the term 'verse' when referring primarily to textual aspects of *nurlu* songs.

first, the lexicon; second, formulaic construction; and third, the obfuscation of the actors and the context of the action.

The lexicon

The *Bulu* texts are composed of a significantly high proportion of lexical items found in everyday language. Forty five of fifty six different words appearing in the song texts (that is approximately 80%) also appear to be part of everyday language in the same or a slightly modified form (see below). Due to the fact that many older people in the Broome area are multilingual, it is possible that those items not appearing in everyday Nyigina are part of the lexicon of neighbouring languages. Discussion with Paddy Roe, however, suggests that this is not the case.

Those lexical items which appear to be part of everyday usage may be modified in the songs in several ways.

a) Words are lengthened in one of two ways:

- (i) by the addition of affixes having no apparent semantic value;² instances of affixing are set out in Table 3;
- (ii) by the reduplication of a section of the everyday form - for example, *dyularra* becomes *dyularralarra* - or by the modification of the ending of a word, and the reduplication of a section of the modified form - for example, *njanbala* becomes *njanbalinbali*. I refer to both cases as partial reduplication (REDUP). All instances of partial reduplication are set out in Table 4. The reduplicated part of each word is underlined.

² Recent analysis by Ellis (1988b) has shown that in the *Ngintaka* series from the south eastern area of the Western Desert, syllabic rhythms are semantically loaded; 'rhythmic prefixes and suffixes', for example, signify aspects of direction.

At the level of the [rhythmic] cells, the information is all related to specific navigational patterns. These pointers occur in a similar way to linguistic usage of prefixes, suffixes and infixes.

The most common prefix is 'short-long' which is associated with the description "at". The suffix 'short-long' is associated with going "away from". (1988b: [4-5])

Nurlu rhythms do not appear to be semantically loaded in this way.

Examination of Table 3 indicates the tendency for non-verbs and inflected verbs³ to attract different sets of suffixes. Only *-yana* occurs with both non-verbs (two cases) and verbs (seven cases).⁴

b) Two words undergo phonetic modifications as follows: *maladyi* becomes *malanydyi* (verse 7), while *milydyidawurru* becomes *milydyidawurrui* (verse 11).⁵

I discuss the significance of the modification to everyday lexical items below (see Section 5.2, p. 157).

Table 3. Modifications to everyday words through affixing.

Instances of affixing with non-verbs (and number of occurrences in sample)	
prefixes	<i>dadyi-</i> (1)
suffixes	<i>-i</i> (2), <i>-il</i> (1), <i>-bi</i> (1), <i>-rri</i> (1) <i>-mirri</i> (3), <i>-jana</i> (3), <i>-yana</i> (2), <i>-dyan</i> (1), <i>-bumirri</i> (1), <i>-dyimirri</i> (2), <i>-burrurru</i> (1)
Instances of affixing with inflected verbs (and number of occurrences in sample)	
infixes	<i>-yal-</i> (1)
suffixes	<i>-dyina</i> (12), <i>-yana</i> (7) <i>-dyinarja</i> (1)

³ In this discussion 'non-verb' refers to all word classes (including verb pre-stems) except for inflected verbs (see further below, p. 71).

⁴ Strehlow (1971: 231-235) discusses the similar use of suffixing in Aranda verses.

⁵ Strehlow (ibid.: 68 foll.) describes in detail similar phonetic modifications to everyday words in Aranda verses.

Table 4. Modifications to everyday words through the addition of syllables and reduplication (REDUP).

everyday form	song form
<i>guway</i>	<i>guwararrirarri</i>
<i>njanbala</i>	<i>njanbalinbali</i>
<i>dyularra</i>	<i>dyularralarra</i>
<i>dyidu</i>	<i>dyidurrudurruy</i>
<i>burarr</i>	<i>burarrirarri</i>
<i>dyunbara</i>	<i>dyunbarambara</i>

Formulaic construction

Due to the fact that the *Bulu* verses have originated within what Ong (1982: 6) has referred to as 'primary orality, [that is] the orality of cultures untouched by literacy', it is not surprising that the texts of the songs exhibit features of formulaic construction of a type found throughout a vast body of material referred to as 'oral literature'.⁶ Perhaps the most significant contribution to research into the nature of oral literature was that undertaken by Milman Parry in relation to the Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Foley (1980b: 487-488) describes Parry's contribution as follows:

Parry argued that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were the work of a *traditional* poet, one whose diction was not his own creation but the product of generations of bards before him, a poet who did not search his mind for *le mot juste* but who inherited a ready-made phraseology suited to his needs in composing hexameter verse. Parry demonstrated clearly that the noun-epithet combinations in the Homeric poems, such as "swift-footed Achilles" or "grey-eyed Athena," were not randomly or consciously chosen juxtapositions but rather examples of a phraseological pattern he called the *formula* and defined as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea." The poetic tradition, as Parry described it, consisted wholly of such substitutable phrases or formulas, some malleable and some constant, which were woven together into the fabric of the poem by the individual poet at the moment of composition.

... Parry added to the theorem of *tradition* the corollary of *orality*. Only under the circumstances of oral performance, he contended, could the formulaic idiom of the ancient Greek poetic tradition have been developed and cultivated.

⁶ See Foley (1980b) for an excellent survey of the field.

Parry's work was continued by Albert Lord, who developed Parry's theory of orality in relation to the Homeric epics, as well as applying the analytical approach developed for the Homeric epics to other oral traditions, such as the still performed south Slavic epic and the Old English *Beowulf* (Lord 1960).

In his discussion of the formula in contemporary Serbo-Croatian epic (1960, Part I), Lord distinguishes between several related terms. He follows Parry in defining the 'formula' as 'a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea' (ibid.: 30). It becomes apparent from his discussion that 'formula' refers only to the exact repetition of a word, or group of words, which either comprise a full line or half line.⁷ Example 3.1 (appearing in Lord 1960: 46) shows one line from the Serbo-Croatian epic entitled 'Song of Bagdad', performed in 1934 by Salih Ugljanin. Not only is the full line repeated in its entirety elsewhere in the performer's repertoire, but also both half lines recur with different half lines from that shown in Example 3.1. There are, therefore, three formulas in Example 3.1: the full line, and both half lines.

Example 3.1. Full line and half line text formulas from 'Song of Bagdad' (Lord 1960: 46).

Pa siljeze / planinama redom 'And crossed the range after another'

Lord distinguishes between 'formula' on the one hand and 'formulaic expression' on the other; he defines the latter as 'a line or half line constructed on the pattern of the formulas' (ibid.: 4). Much of Lord's discussion centres on the description of the underlying 'patterns' which he suggests are at the base of formulaic construction.

⁷ Serbo-Croatian epic is based on a ten-syllable line with an invariable word break between the fourth and fifth syllable. Foley (1980a: 119) represents the Serbo-Croatian 'decasyllable' as follows ('MC' refers to 'Main Caesura', while 's' refers to 'syllable'):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	.
s	s	s	s	MC	s	s	s	s	s	s

In Lord's terminology, a 'full line' comprises ten syllables, while a 'half line' comprises either four syllables or six syllables.

Although it may seem that the more important part of the singer's training is the learning of formulas from other singers, I believe that the really significant element in the process is rather the setting up of various patterns that make adjustment of phrase and creation of phrases by analogy possible. (ibid.: 37)

Lord goes on to describe various patterns in the Serbo-Croatian epic. For example, he describes the metrical pattern as follows: 'the line is syllabic, or better, syllabo-tonic, a trochaic pentameter with an invariable break after the fourth syllable' (ibid.). Within each half line, Lord maintains that there are common word-boundary patterns: in the first half of the line the word-boundary patterns are 2-2, 1-3 and 4, while in the second half of the line, the most common patterns are 2-4, 4-2 and 3-3 (ibid.: 38-41). Then there are 'syntactic patterns'. For example, the syntactic pattern comprising a conjunction followed by a verb is commonly found in the first half of lines (ibid.: 41). With compound tenses, 'the auxiliary appears in the first half of the line and the participle of infinitive in the second' (ibid.: 42).

Related to 'formulaic expression' is the term 'system', which refers to groups of formulaic expressions which have one part of the line or half line in common, with the remaining portion being substituted. For example, Lord describes one system occurring in the first half of lines comprising 'a three-syllable noun in the dative followed by the reflexive' (ibid.: 47) which he represents as follows:

<i>dogatu</i>	<i>se</i>
<i>junaku</i>	

From his discussion, it appears that the substitutable parts of Lord's 'systems' are restricted to the same number of syllables and grammatical class (see 1960: 35).

Since the time of Parry and Lord, research into oral tradition has grown considerably. In order to place Parry and Lord's work into a more recent comparative perspective, I turn to the research undertaken by Foley (1980a) into *Beowulf*.

Other relevant research

In his discussion of the formulaic nature of *Beowulf*, Foley states that many analyses of 'traditional narrative song' have wrongly assumed that 'oral traditional units, both formulas and themes,⁸ have a single archetypal shape and a single uniform dynamics in all traditions, and that these units will therefore answer to essentially the same definitions regardless of linguistic and prosodic idiosyncracies' (1980a: 117). Foley points out that Parry's definition of the formula was based on the rigid structure of the Homeric hexameter: 'though the line may theoretically consist of from twelve to seventeen syllables through dactylic-spondaic substitution [- ♩ / - -], in practice most lines are fifteen to sixteen syllables in length. The complex network of caesurae and diaeresis yields four sub-units, or cola, per hexameter; these word-units are . . . at the foundation of oral composition in the ancient Greek epos'. Foley shows that the Serbo-Croatian pentameter, on which Lord's discussion of formula was based, similarly exhibits a rigid structure (see above). Importantly, he suggests that it is precisely this rigid structure which has produced such a high incidence of formulas.

. . . both poetic lines [the Homeric hexameter and the Serbo-Croatian pentameter] exhibit regular syllabicity and rather complex internal structure, especially with respect to the formation of the metrical colon, a unit which may be said to *encapsulate* utterance. Since both metrical filters [that is, syllabicity and internal structure] impose rather severe restrictions on the verbal components they shape, it is not difficult to imagine how phraseology could be hypostatized or fossilized over time to an appreciable degree - perhaps to the degree we name 'formula'. (ibid.: 120).

In contrast, Foley shows that the Old English 'alliterative line', on which *Beowulf* is constructed, 'depends much less on syllabicity and internal structure than do its counterparts'.

What does remain constant from one line of *Beowulf* to the next . . . is the occurrence of four heaviest stresses per line (along with a variable number of secondarily stressed positions) and alliteration between lines. . . Under the metrical conditions of Old English verse, the stress maximum and secondary stress maximum . . . - and *not* the colon - serve as the fundamental consistency in the shape of the line . . . In

⁸ The 'theme' as defined by Lord (1960: 4) refers to 'repeated incidents and descriptive passages in the songs'.

other words, the primary site for consistency and patterning is in Old English not the colon of syllabic extent and internal structure but the *stress maximum position* and *secondary stress maximum position* . . . In understanding the verbal formula in *Beowulf*, then, we would do better to conceive of a lexical core or kernel at a stressed position and of a looser (and therefore more variable) aggregation of material forming a shell. The result will then agree with what has been observed in Old English: a lower percentage of classically defined formulas and a higher index of variability among systems. (ibid.:120)

Formulaic style in the *Bulu* texts

The *Bulu* texts are similarly characterised by a high incidence of system variability and a low incidence, to use Foley's terminology, of 'classically defined formulas'. For example, while there are only two instances of full line formulas, namely *buyurr yarrabanydyina* (verses 7 and 9) and *murda yarrabanydyina* (verses 9 and 17), the four systems appearing in Examples 3.2 to 3.5 account for forty eight percent of all text lines. In each case, the system comprises a complete text line which ends with a recurring verb. The substitutable part occurs at the beginning of each line. The system set out in Example 3.2 comprises a verb pre-stem composed of two syllables (*larra* and *ɲarjal*) which is followed by the inflected verb *yindina*, 'he did'.⁹

Example 3.2. Formulaic system ending in the verb *yindina*, 'he did'.¹⁰

<i>larra</i> v4	<i>yindina</i>
<i>ɲarjal</i> v5	

⁹ Stokes (1982: 181) states that two large classes of verbs exist in Nyigina:

(i) single unit inflecting verbs, which prefix and suffix as a single unit, e.g.
 yin-BA-ny
 3sg-see-past2
 'he saw'

(ii) double unit verbs, which consist of a non-inflecting verbal pre-stem, followed by an inflected verbal root, e.g.,
 mug yin-DI-ny
 hit 3sg-do-past2
 'he hit'.

¹⁰ I follow Aboriginal English here which does not distinguish between male and female in the third person pronoun.

In Example 3.3, the word preceding the recurring verb *yarrabanydyina*, 'we (exclusive) saw him', similarly consists of two syllables. All words, with the exception of *murda*, 'nothing, no reason', are verb pre-stems.

Example 3.3. Formulaic system ending in the verb *yarrabanydyina*, 'we (exclusive) saw him'.

<i>mind</i> v1		<i>yarrabanydyina</i>
<i>dyidi</i> v2		
<i>buyurr</i> v7,9		
<i>bandirr</i> v12		
<i>murda</i> v17		

The two lines comprising the system in Example 3.4 end with the recurring verb *yimanayana*, 'he went'. The words preceding the verb vary, however, in the number of syllables and grammatical class (*malara* appears to be a verb pre-stem, while *raydyimirri* is a noun).

Example 3.4. Formulaic system ending in the verb *yimanayana*, 'he went'.

<i>malara malara</i> v8		<i>yimanayana</i>
<i>raydyimirri</i> v16		

Although each line in the system shown in Example 3.5 ends with the same verb *yijanydyina*, 'he was there', the substitutable words preceding the verb vary in the number of syllables (from three to six), and word class (nouns or verb pre-stems).

Example 3.5. Formulaic system ending in the verb *yijanydyina*, 'he sat'.

<i>wanydyalmirri</i> v1		<i>yijanydyina</i>
<i>guwararrirri</i> v2		
<i>njanbalinbali</i> v2		
<i>marrarri/barrarri</i> v6		
<i>malanydyirjana</i> v7		
<i>larndyimirri</i> v9		
<i>girridinydyimirri</i> v10		
<i>burarrirri</i> v10		
<i>burarri</i> v12		
<i>bandirrmirri</i> v17		

Thus, while Examples 3.2 and 3.3 conform to Lord's definition of a 'system', the substitutable portions in Example 3.4 and 3.5 exhibit a degree of variability in both syllable count and grammatical class. Further examination of the *Bulu* texts shows,

moreover, that those systems appearing above may be extended by the incorporation of different forms of the inflected verb which appear at the end of each line. For example, although the everyday verb *yirjany*, 'he was there', most commonly appears in the texts as *yirjanydyina*, three other forms, namely *yirjanydyinarja* (verse 15), *yirjana* (verse 5) and *yirjanayana* (verse 15), also appear. Similarly, *yimana*, 'he went', appears as *yimanayana* (verse 8) and *yiyalmanayana* (verse 6). *Yindina*, 'he did', also appears in the form *yindinayana* (verse 12).

In order to explain the variability of formulaic construction outlined above, I first turn to a description of metrical structure.¹¹

In contrast to the fixed length of lines in both the Homeric and Serbo-Croatian epic, lines in the *Bulu* texts vary in length from two to five beats (the beat is maintained by the handclapping accompaniment, see below p.181). Within each beat, however, the number of syllables is restricted to two or three (see below p. 169 for a discussion of rhythmic cells) except for the final beat in each line, which in all cases is two syllables. Due to the fact that the number of syllables within each beat is restricted, the number of syllables within lines of the same duration is relatively stable. In fact, all two-beat lines are composed of five syllables, while the two five-beat lines in the series comprise twelve syllables. Three-beat lines vary from six to eight syllables, while four beat lines vary from eight to eleven syllables.

Although lines in *Bulu* do not exhibit the same invariable internal construction as do the Homeric hexameter and the Serbo-Croatian pentameter,¹² lines of the same duration exhibit a tendency for word boundaries to occur in the same position.¹³ For example, ten of eleven two-beat lines comprise one word only (see Table 8 below, p.

¹¹ A detailed examination of the metrical structure in the *Bulu* songs appears in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2, p. 157).

¹² The Homeric hexameter comprises four sub-units, or 'cola' (see above p. 70) while the Serbo-Croatian pentameter invariably is divided into two half lines comprising four and six syllables respectively (see above p. 68).

¹³ Lines of equal duration together with their syllabic rhythms are grouped together in Tables 11 to 14 (see below p. 164 foll.).

164). Twelve of sixteen three-beat lines exhibit a word boundary within the first half of the first beat; for those lines in duple metre (see below, p. 181) the word boundary occurs between the second and third syllable, while for lines in triple metre (see below p. 181) the boundary occurs between the first and second syllable (see Table 9 below, p. 165). Ten of thirteen four-beat lines exhibit a word boundary at the end of the second beat (see Table 10 below, p. 166). Both five-beat lines similarly exhibit a word boundary at the end of the second beat (see Table 11, p. 168). We may conclude that although lines vary in length, lines of equal duration exhibit regularities in syllable count and internal construction. I will return to a discussion of word boundary patterns and their influence on modifications to everyday words in Chapter 5 (see below p. 173).

I suggest that the formulaic construction of the *Bulu* texts is also influenced by a syntactic pattern, comprising a non-verb followed by an inflected verb. Of a total of forty three lines defined by rhythmic criteria (see below p. 159), twenty eight begin with a non-verb and end with an inflected verb. Examination of the texts shows, moreover, that there are only three instances where inflected verbs occur in positions other than at the ends of lines. They are as follows:

- i) the first line of verse 15, *burrbi yarrmanydyina yijanydyinarja*, includes two inflected verbs, namely *yarrmanydyina* and *yijanydyinarja*. The line still conforms, however, to the syntactic pattern described above, that is, lines begin with a non-verb and end with an inflected verb;
- ii) verse 16 which comprises four lines:

barril yarramanydyina
raydyimirri
yimanayana
dyilabumirri

As verse 16 is the only verse in the *Bulu* series which is composed of more than three lines (all other verses comprise two or three lines, see below p. 161), plus the fact that the third line is the only one in the sample which is composed entirely of an inflected

verb, I suggest that the second and third line may be joined together to conform to the non-verb/verb pattern (see further below p. 192):

barril yarramanydyina
raydyimirri yimanayana
dyilabumirri

iii) in both lines of verse 14 (see p. 112) the verb *yinjanydyina* is preceded by *njujgu*, a non-verb (I discuss the anomalous text structure of verse 14 below, see p. 236).

We may conclude that seventy one percent of lines in the *Bulu* series begin with a non-verb and end with an inflected verb. Moreover, the grouping together of lines of equal duration (see Tables 8 to 11 below) shows that all three-beat lines, and with one exception, all four-beat lines, conform to the non-verb/verb syntactic pattern. In contrast, only two of eleven two-beat lines conform to the non-verb/verb pattern. The other nine two-beat lines are composed of a single non-verb.

Foley (1980a: 120) has suggested that to understand the formula in *Beowulf* 'we would do better to conceive of a lexical core or kernel at a stressed position and a looser (and therefore more variable) aggregation of material forming a shell'. I suggest that in the *Bulu* texts, it is the roots of the inflected verbs which are the lexical core of formulaic construction. Table 5 sets out all instances of inflected verbs in the *Bulu* sample. Examination of the table shows that although the actual form of the verbs may vary, only six verb roots occur in the texts, with the large majority of verbs belonging to one of four verb roots, namely *-ŃA-*, *-BA-*, *-MA-* and *-DI-*.

Table 5. Instances of inflected verbs in the *Bulu* texts.

verb root	inflected verb	number of occurrences
<i>-ŊA-</i> 'sit' (II) ¹⁴	<i>yi-ŊA-ny-dyina</i>	12
	<i>yi-ŊA-ny-dyina-ŋa</i>	1
	<i>yi-ŊA-na</i>	1
	<i>yi-ŊA-na-yana</i>	1
<i>-BA-</i> 'see' (I)	<i>yarra-BA-ny-dyina</i>	6
	<i>yim-BA-ny-dyina-yana</i>	1
<i>-MA-</i> 'make' (I) 'go' (II)	<i>yi (II)-MA-na-yana</i>	2
	<i>yin (I)-MA-na-yana</i>	1
	<i>yi (II)-yal-MA-na-yana</i>	1
	<i>yarra (I)-MA-ny-dyina</i>	1
	<i>yarr (II)-MA-ny-dyina</i>	1
<i>-DI-</i> 'do, say' (I)	<i>yin-DI-na</i>	2
	<i>yin-DI-na-yana</i>	1
<i>-ŊARI-</i> 'leave' (I)	<i>ŋa-ma-ŊARI-nydyi-na-yana</i>	1
<i>-DYARRGA-</i> 'stand over' (II)	<i>yiny-DYARRGA-na</i>	1

Conclusion

I suggest that formulaic construction in the *Bulu* texts may be explained in terms of the intersection of two overall systems of patterning. On the one hand, a significant proportion of lines conform to the syntactic pattern of non-verb/verb. On the other, although lines vary in length from two to five beats, lines of equal duration exhibit firstly, a relatively fixed rhythmic structure which restricts the number of syllables per line, and secondly, a tendency for word boundaries to occur in the same position. Any

¹⁴ Nyigina exhibits two 'sets' of nominal prefixes. Most verb roots take either one of these two 'sets'. For example, the verb roots *-ŊA-* and *-DYARRGA-* take Set II prefixing, while *-BA-*, *-DI-* and *-ŊARI-* take Set I. Some Nyigina verb roots, however, may take either prefixing set. In these cases, the 'set' alters the meaning of the verb. For example, when *-MA-* takes Set I prefixing it means 'to make'. In contrast, when it takes Set II prefixing it means 'to go' (see Stokes 1982: 248-268).

discussion of the formulaic nature of the *Bulu* verses must take into consideration the dynamics of performance. I point out here that the texts of *nurlu* songs are not orally composed in the sense that other oral forms appear to be; compositions such as the Homeric and Serbo-Croatian epics were newly composed for each performance. The act of composition occurred only in performance. The compositional process, therefore, required a ready-made phraseology suited to the constraints of a comparatively rigid metrical structure. There are instances in Aboriginal Australia of the type of oral composition described by Parry and Lord. For example, the texts of clan songs from north central and north east Arnhem Land are newly composed in each performance. *Nurlu* songs, however, belong to a large body of Aboriginal oral literature which appears to be relatively fixed over time.¹⁵

Leaving aside the question of the actual process of composition, which Aboriginal people assign to spirit beings (see above Section 2.1), the formulaic structure of the *Bulu* texts is not designed to facilitate the process of composition at the moment of performance, but appears to facilitate both the compositional process creating a fixed text, and the subsequent re-creation in performance of the same fixed text.

Obfuscation of the actors and the context of the action

In Nyigina, reference to the person and number of the subject of the action is made through a system of pronominal prefixes attached to the inflected verb. Examination of Table 5 above shows that in the *Bulu* texts, the subject of the action is restricted to first person singular (*nja-*) and plural (*yarr-*, *yarra-*) and third person (*yi-*, *yin-*, *yim-*, *yiny-*). In instances of the third person singular prefix, the subject is sometimes identified. For example, in verse 5 (see p. 99) the subject of both verbs *yinjana*, 'he was', and *yindina*, 'he did', is identified in the song as *mayarda*, 'pelican'.

¹⁵ Ellis and Barwick's examination of the *Ngintaka* series (1987, 1988) is a rare example in the field of Aboriginal Australia of a diachronic study. Their research has shown that over a period of sixty years the *Ngintaka* texts have remained remarkably fixed.

In verse 11, the subject of *yinydyarrgana*, 'it hung over', appears to be *milydyidawurru*, the rainstorm from the south. Similarly, in verse 2 (see p. 94) the subject of *yirjanydyina* in both cases appears to be *guway*, 'snipe'. In other verses, however, the third person singular subject is not identified. For example, in verse 7 (see p. 102), the subject of the verb *yimanayana*, 'he went', is not stated. Similarly, in verse 4 (see p. 98) the identity of the actor who "turned back" is not specified. Moreover, in all instances where the pronominal prefix refers to first person, the identity of that person is never stipulated. For example, in verse 4 the third line may be translated as 'I departed from *Balgandyirr*'. The identity of the actor, however, is obscure.

In a similar way, the context of the action described in the texts is also obscured. I have shown above (see p. 40) that a significant number of the *Bulu* songs describe a 'dream-spirit' journey undertaken by Dyurjgayan with the spirit of his deceased father and a group of *ray*. Apart from references to the names of the places which they encounter on their journey, there are no other references in the texts which identify this context.

I discuss the significance of the obfuscation of both protagonists and context of the action below.

3.3 Variability in interpretations of the meanings of the texts

Recently there have been a number of excellent studies of the language of Aboriginal songs (see, for example, Clunies Ross 1978, Clunies Ross and Wild 1982, Dixon 1984, Donaldson 1979, 1984, Hale 1984 and a number of papers in the recently published *Oceania* monograph entitled *Songs of Aboriginal Australia* (Clunies Ross, Donaldson and Wild 1987)). In these studies, however, researchers do not always make explicit the translation procedures which have produced the song translations they present. At the same time, the manner of presentation of translations often suggests that there is a fixed relationship between the song texts and their meanings.

series *Djambidj*. Although Clunies Ross in her introduction recognises that the language of the songs allows for ambiguity of meaning, her discussion and the presentation of texts and translations seen in Example 3.6 implies that there is a fixed relationship in *Djambidj* between song texts and their meanings. In her discussion of the translation of the song texts, however, Clunies Ross (ibid.: 16) states that:

After working for about a year and a half on the texts and translations since the recording was made the authors concluded that no amount of work would exhaust the possibilities for revision, addition and refinement, and so we decided to call a halt.

I would like to suggest that Clunies Ross' difficulties may have arisen not so much from an inability to discover a fixed interpretation as from an intrinsically fluid relationship, which predicates against the discovery of any such fixed relationship.

Example 3.6. Extract from the text and translation of a Crow song from the *Djambidj* series (Clunies Ross and Wild 1982: 52).

FM	1	<i>dauweri nyilei-nyilei</i>	He plays and sings,
FM	2	<i>gaiya barringa</i>	Bird with the important name of Gaiya Barringa,
FM	3	<i>gulba birrirra</i>	cackles as He rubs His firesticks together.
FM	4	<i>wandalanga</i>	See His heavenly track!
FM	5	<i>wardubalma</i>	Member of the seaward clan Wardubalma,
FM	6	<i>garimar bordja</i>	Crow perches upon Hollow Log Coffin,
FM	7	<i>baiguradolga djirnbangaia</i>	eats the long, orange berries of the <i>mangur-doldja</i> bush as He dances,
FM	8	<i>birrirra bordja</i>	rises up to dance and tap His sticks;
FM	9	<i>garimar bordja</i>	Crow perches upon Hollow Log Coffin
FM	10	<i>garanyula-nyula</i>	at His camp Garanyula in the upland forest;
FM	11	<i>warduba' djirnbanga</i>	He, member of the Wardubalma clan, dances
FM	12	<i>badurra bordja</i>	and climbs upon Badurra.
FM	13	<i>wandalanga</i>	See His heavenly track!
FM	14	<i>gurda birrirra</i>	He's dancing up above
FM,FG	15	<i>wag wag wag</i> (refrain)	and calling 'wag wag wag' (refrain).
FM*,FG	16	<i>bianga bordja</i>	A flock of Crows caw to each other as They
			eat, then rise
FM*,FG	17	<i>djirnbanga</i>	and dance.

Merlan (1987) discusses the fluid relationship between texts and their meanings in totemic songs from the western Roper River area of east Arnhem Land. She shows that textual opacity, created by a song language which bears little relationship to everyday discourse both in the realm of syntax and vocabulary, allows for variability of interpretation.¹⁶ Merlan cites three researchers whose work suggests firstly, that opacity is not restricted to the texts of songs but found in a number of Aboriginal expressive media, and secondly, that this opacity allows for variable interpretation. Munn (1973) shows that Warlpiri design elements display a generality and simplicity, and that they are multivocal and productive; that is, each visual element can stand for a wide range of meanings. Morphy's research (1977) into Yolŋu clan designs shows that the geometric ones are the most difficult to interpret; 'the artistic code is oriented to revelation, encoding productively a multiplicity of meanings' (Merlan 1987: 146). Keen's research (1978) in relation to Yolŋu song language shows similar variability of interpretation. Moreover, such variability allows for the establishment and maintenance of an 'economy of religious knowledge', where 'access to valued knowledge encoded in song, dance and design is controlled, in terms of notions concerning its legitimate release, receipt and use' (Merlan *ibid.*). Concerning the notion of legitimacy of one interpretation over others, Merlan states that legitimacy, or 'correctness', of interpretation 'is often inferred directly from legitimacy of its source (not vice versa)' (*ibid.*); that is, the more legitimate the source of knowledge the more legitimate the knowledge itself.

Variability in interpretation of songs texts from central Australia

In a discussion of Aboriginal explanations of central Australian song texts, Ellis (1985: 62-64) describes the phenomenon of levels of meaning: on one level there are

¹⁶ The majority of song words in Merlan's sample have no clear relationship to the words of everyday language. Those song words that are identified with words of the everyday language are not restricted to just one language, but could possibly be associated with a number of languages of the area. Merlan suggests that in many cases, it is not appropriate to speak of a song being in any particular language at all (1987: 144). She does not specify the ratio of song words having a clear relationship to everyday language to those whose provenance is not clear. It appears, however, that the ratio is small.

'false front' meanings, that is, "'outside" information which is normally made available to children'; on another, there may be explanations which may contain erotic material; and finally there are explanations which embody 'the spiritual essence of the small song . . . concerned with the emanation of power from the place described'. Not all songs need exhibit all three levels of meaning. For example, some songs may not exhibit the most esoteric level. Similarly, 'the most powerful songs do not have . . . false fronts and are exclusive in ownership and performance rights'. Ellis maintains that the level upon which an interpretation is based 'depends on the status of the person explaining the song and also on what he or she perceives as the status of the person receiving the information' (ibid.: 64). Elsewhere, Ellis (Ellis and Barwick 1987: 44-45) states that the various levels of meaning are never in conflict with each other; rather, they are 'mutually supportive'. 'In central Australian societies the relationships between the different levels of meaning are never made explicit, but are experienced in performance at the level of understanding appropriate to each member of the group'.

Ellis offers several explanations of how variability in interpretation of the same song text is made possible. First, the text of the song 'is not separated into discrete words in the sung form and it is therefore possible to extract different key words from the one text if it is incorrectly grouped into word divisions' (ibid.: 62-63). In a more recent paper, Ellis suggests that in the *Ngintaka* series, rhythmic segments (see below p. 165) exhibiting particular internal rhythmic constructions may have associated with them several different levels of meaning, irrespective of the content of the text. For example, texts which exhibited one or more rhythmic segments composed of five rhythmic durations were often interpreted by Aboriginal performers as being associated with the following: the preparation of vegetable food or movement through vegetation; a location composed of a 'sacred' tree; a grinding stone which was a 'false front' for a rainmaking stone; and a rainbow, which was a 'false front' for secret rainmaking ritual (Ellis 1988b, Figure 9). Any one of those explanations may be given for a *Ngintaka* text whose syllabic rhythm includes a five-duration segment. Which particular

explanation is given would be influenced by the status of both the giver and receiver of the information.

Other research

Not all Aboriginal song texts necessarily exhibit the degree of variability of interpretation as those described by Merlan and Ellis. For example, Donaldson (1979: 65) describes the language of Ngiyampaa songs from western New South Wales as follows.

The words of the songs . . . usually consist of up to half-a-dozen economically evocative sentences. The lines do not form a narrative sequence, but include a high proportion of questions, imperatives, exclamations and suppositions as well as plain statements. They are not formally different in any way from spoken sentences of the language either in grammar or vocabulary, though the singers never spontaneously isolate the words from their music as I have had to do here.

Presumably, due to their close relationship to everyday language, Ngiyampaa songs exhibit a comparatively fixed relationship between the texts and interpretations of them by Aboriginal speakers. Donaldson, however, does not discuss the nature of this relationship. Let us now examine explanations of the meanings of the *Bulu* verses.

Variability in the interpretations of the *Bulu* verses

As stated above, several of the *Bulu* verses were given different interpretations by Aboriginal speakers. Let us consider here the interpretations of verse 3 given by Butcher Joe, Paddy Roe and George Dyurjgayan. The text and interlinear translation of verse 3 is shown in Example 3.7. A transcript of Butcher Joe's interpretation appears in Example 3.8.¹⁷

¹⁷ See Appendix 2 below p. 271 for a discussion of the elicitation procedure of the *Bulu* songs and interpretations of their meanings.

Example 3.7. Text and interlinear translation of *Bulu* verse 3.¹⁸

mawula-ɾjana galydyi/galdyiri-yana/ɾjana
place name-Ø white ochre/type of snake-Ø

guwarrawarra
Ø

dirrin yin-MA-na-yana
right through 3sg-make-past-Ø

Example 3.8. Butcher Joe's interpretation of verse 3.¹⁹

BJ: snake
dyurru yimana mawula galdyiri dyurru [the snake went to *Mawula* (a
claypan), *galdyiri* snake] . . .
in *Mawula* that one in *Dyirrgali* [Geegully Creek] side . . .
Mandigarrgabū [the waterhole at Dampier Downs Station]. . . *Mawula*
and *galdyiri* bilong to *marduwarra* ['river'] . . .
snake name *galdyiri* . . . he's there . . .
bilong *yujurrugu* [belongs to 'watersnake']
yujurrugu all that (GDy: bilong *yujurrugu*)

Butcher Joe's interpretation of verse 3 centres on his understanding of one of the song words to be *galdyiri*, a type of tree snake found in Pandanus palms. He states in Nyigina that the *galdyiri* snake went to *Mawula*, a claypan in *Dyirrgali* country (*Dyirrgali* is a creek to the east of *Mandigarrgabū*, the name of the waterhole at Dampier Downs, see Map 1, p. xiii). Butcher Joe states that the snake belongs to *marduwarra*, that is, 'river'. This is not surprising as Pandanus grow among other places along river banks. His last statement, "bilong *yujurrugu* / *yujurrugu* all that" associates the verse, however, with watersnake mythology (see above p. 43).

Let us now consider Paddy Roe's interpretation, a part of which appears in Example 3.9.

¹⁸ Section 3.4 discusses the setting out of the song texts. Table 7 (see p. 91) lists the abbreviations, and their meanings, used in the interlinear translation.

¹⁹ The setting out of the transcripts appearing below is described in the introduction to Appendix 3, see below p. 276.

Example 3.9. Paddy Roe's interpretation of verse 3.

PR: *galydyi* ['white ochre'] dat one *Garmurlgabu* [that verse refers to the place called *Garmurlgabu*] ...
country name *Garmurlgabu* ...
galydyi they bin see im ...
but they pass, they pass ...
ray [spirits] with that old man [Bulu] too, all travelling

In contrast to Butcher Joe who perceived one of the words of the text to be *galdyiri*, Paddy Roe maintained that the same word was *galydyi*, 'white ochre'. Moreover, Paddy Roe stated that Butcher Joe was wrong. I quote from the same discussion:

RK: so what's that one?
PR: that's the *galydyi*
galydyi dat one *Garmurlgabu*
country name *Garmurlgabu* ...
galydyi dat one
galydyi they bin see im ...
but he not, he not snake, *galdyiri*
he not snake that's the *galydyi*
RK: what's *galydyi* then?
PR: *galydyi* is white paint ...
not *galdyiri* snake, he [Butcher Joe] got im wrong in this tape ...

Thus, whereas Butcher Joe interpreted the text to be about a snake associated with watersnake mythology, Paddy Roe maintained that the text described how Bulu's group were travelling near a place called *Garmurlgabu* where white ochre can be found (see further below p. 96).

Let us now consider George Dyujgayan's interpretation of the same verse which was elicited after that of Butcher Joe and Paddy Roe. It appears in Example 3.10.

Example 3.10. George Dyujgayan's interpretation of verse 3.

GDy: an what this one we look im, we look im for im for white white
thing longa ground white [sings verse 3]
RK: *galydyi*
GDy: that *galydyi* that one wipe out you know
we paint im *galydyi*

In the text shown in Example 3.10, Dyujgayan confirmed Paddy Roe's interpretation of the word in the first line of the song text to be *galydyi*, 'white paint'. Although his interpretation is somewhat cryptic, Dyujgayan's statement, "we look im, we look im

for im for white white thing longa ground white" suggests that Dyurjgayan and others were travelling in an area where white ochre can be found. This also concurs with Paddy Roe's interpretation. Re-examination of Butcher Joe's explanation (see Example 3.8), however, shows that at the earlier elicitation session Dyurjgayan also confirmed Butcher Joe's statement about the song's relationship to watersnake mythology: "bilong *yurjurrugu*". Before attempting to explain these apparent contradictions, let us turn to the wider sample.

Table 6 sets out the concordances and differences in the interpretations of the meanings of the seventeen *Bulu* verses given by George Dyurjgayan (GDy), Paddy Roe (PR) and Butcher Joe (BJ). Examination of the table shows that variation in

Table 6. Concordances and differences in interpretation of the *Bulu* verses.

song no.	GDy	PR	BJ
1	c	c	-
2	c	c	-
3	c	c	d (see p. 96)
4	-	x	-
5	-	x	-
6	d	d	- (see p. 100)
7	-	x	-
8	-	x	-
9	d	d	- (see p. 105)
10	c	c	-
11	c	c	-
12	-	x	-
13	c	d	c (see p. 111)
14	d	d	- (see p. 112)
15	c	c	-
16	c	c	-
17	x	-	-

Notes to Table 6.

c signifies concordance in interpretation.

d signifies difference in interpretation.

- signifies that an interpretation was not offered by that person.

x signifies that the interpretation in question was the only one offered for that song. Page references are given to where the differences in interpretation are discussed below.

interpretation is not restricted to verse 3; different interpretations were given for five of the seventeen verses (verses 3, 6, 9, 13, and 14). Of the remaining twelve verses, six were given the same interpretation (although not all verses were explained by all three men); the remaining six verses were interpreted by only one of the three men.

Conclusions

What conclusions may be drawn from the above discussion about variability of interpretation? I suggest that at least three factors obviously have affected the stability of textual interpretation in the *Bulu* songs, namely, the state of the tradition, the transmission procedure, and the nature of the song language. I discuss each in turn.

(i) The state of the tradition. The fact that the *Bulu* songs had not been performed on a regular basis for possibly many years (see above Section 2.2) may explain some of the differences in interpretations given by the Aboriginal people concerned. Dyujgayan, for example, had considerable difficulty in remembering a significant number of the songs; it is feasible, therefore, that he also experienced some difficulty in remembering their 'original' meanings (see further below). I suggest, however, that the state of the tradition is not the only factor affecting the variability of explanations.

(ii) Transmission procedure. In the *Bulu* verses there are several instances where variability of interpretation occurs due to different perceptions of the texts themselves. For example, Paddy Roe's interpretation of verse 3 is based on his understanding of one of the words of the text to be *galydyi*, while Butcher Joe's interpretation of the same verse is based on his understanding of the same word to be *galdyiri* (see above). Similarly, Paddy Roe understood one of the words of verse 6 to be *marrarri*, while Dyujgayan interpreted the same word to be *barrarri* (see below p. 100).

Concerning the transmission of centralian songs, Hale (1984: 259) states:

In effect, one does not really learn the songs by rote; rather, one *re-creates* them on the basis of the evidence made available by the choral singing and associated (often piecemeal) mythological narrative . . . It is analogous to the situation, say, of a builder asked to replicate,

exactly, a house on the basis of a view of the structure itself, without a blueprint, and with only hampered access to its interior. The achievement of success in such an endeavour is highly satisfying.

From Hale's description it is easy to see how one performer may perceive the text of a song slightly differently from another performer, which will in turn affect his or her understanding of its meaning. That such variety is possible, however, may also reflect the state of the tradition.

(iii) The nature of the song language. I have shown above (see Section 3.3) that the language of the *Bulu* songs is characterised by formulaic construction and oblique references to both the actors and the context of the action. Thus, while the song language is related to everyday language, it is imbued, albeit to a lesser degree, with a similar quality of opacity described by a number of authors in relation to Aboriginal expressive arts generally. In cases where a word within the text of a song is perceived slightly differently by Aboriginal performers, it is precisely the nature of the song language which allows for such a significant degree of variability of explanation.

Similarly, the placement of a particular song in two different contexts may considerably alter performers' perceptions of its meaning.²⁰ For example, Dyurjgayan's interpretation of verse 9 as a description of the Morning Star derives from his apparent interpretation of the verse as belonging to the original journey undertaken by himself and *Bulu*.²¹ In contrast, Paddy Roe did not include verse 9 in the original journey; he maintained that the verse commemorated the appearance of a comet in real life.

Two questions still remain to be answered in relation to the *Bulu* interpretations. First, have the *Bulu* songs always exhibited the degree of variability of interpretation as

²⁰ Ellis and Barwick (1987: 48) describe verses called *inma katinyi* ("carrying" small songs) whose texts and rhythms are the same, but whose meanings are dependent on their position in the overall songline. In this case, it is primarily the context which determines the meaning of the verse.

²¹ In one of the elicitation sessions, Dyurjgayan sang verse 9 and verse 10 (for which verse 9 is a *lirrga*, see p. 32) immediately before verse 7 (see Table 19 below, p. 274). Due to the chronological sequence of the journey, and as verse 7 describes the sunrise, it is not surprising that Dyurjgayan interpreted 'star' in verse 9 to mean the Morning Star.

was found in 1985, or did the songs at the time of their origin exhibit a more stable relationship between the texts and their explanations, which over time became less stable? Secondly, was Paddy Roe right in saying that Butcher Joe was 'wrong' about verse 3 (see above p. 84)? Although neither question can be answered conclusively at this point in time, I suggest that the *Bulu* songs did exhibit a more stable relationship between the texts and their explanations at the time of their origin than was found in 1985; this is possibly what prompted Paddy Roe to say that Butcher Joe had "got im wrong". Paddy Roe more consistently remembered the texts of songs than either Dyunḡayan or Butcher Joe, which suggests that he more consistently remembered the original contexts of the songs as well.

To say, however, that Butcher Joe was simply 'wrong' overlooks an important aspect of Aboriginal culture, that which might be called 'decontextualisation in order to effect reinterpretation'. Tonkinson (1978: 102) describes a comparable situation in the desert to the south.

[Dream-spirit rituals] remain the property of the man or men to whom they were revealed, until such times as their "owners" decide to hand them on to another group. With this transfer, their travels begin, and most significantly, the magic of time and space operates to transform them from *bardundjaridjanu* ['from the dream-spirits'] to *mangunydyjanu* ['from the creative period']. To the groups hundreds of miles away on the opposite side of the desert they are attributed to the Dreamtime, stripped of all information regarding the circumstances of their relatively recent creation in the process of diffusion. They rapidly become timeless and imbued with all the power that a Dreamtime origin connotes. This process is almost certainly how most of the huge corpus of Aboriginal rituals originally came into being.

Although the circumstances are different from that described for the *Bulu* songs - Tonkinson speaks of 'the magic of time and space' [emphasis mine] - the same process of 'decontextualisation in order to effect reinterpretation' can be seen to operate.

Wild similarly describes how the Warlpiri distinguish between *purlapa* songs (see above p. 54) which are newly received and those which are not; 'the process by which the former becomes the latter seems to involve "rediscovering" and "recreating" song series received earlier. New song series die with their finders, and later they may be "rediscovered" shorn of their historical references' (1987: 109).

In one sense, Butcher Joe may have been wrong in his interpretation of verse 3; perhaps it was not the original meaning of the song text remembered by Paddy Roe. In another sense, however, his reinterpretation of verse 3, in which 'historical' references have been replaced with references of a more 'mythological' nature, may be related to a widespread tradition in which songs and their meanings are transformed. It is perhaps in this context that Dyurjayan confirmed Butcher Joe's statement, namely "bilong *yurjurrugu /yurjurrugu* all that".

3.4 The setting out of the texts and translations

The text and translation of each *Bulu* verse which appears in the following section comprises an interlinear translation and an expanded translation. I will discuss each in turn.

The interlinear translation

Within the interlinear translation for each verse, there appears several lines of song text, and below each line, a morpheme by morpheme translation. Concerning the former, morpheme boundaries are indicated by hyphens, and word boundaries by spaces. Verb roots appear in upper case. Sometimes, two versions of the Nyigina text were elicited; where this is the case, the two versions appear separated by a slash (/). For example, in the first line of verse 3 (see p. 96) two versions of both parts of the second word were elicited: *galydyi* and *galdyiri*, and *-yana* and *-ɾjana*. The second word appears, therefore, as follows: *galydyi/galdyiri-yana/ɾjana*. The morpheme by morpheme translation appearing under each line of song text is based on Stokes, Johnson and Marshall (1980), Stokes (1982) and my own understanding of Nyigina. Verb roots are underlined in the second version.

In some cases, I was unable to establish the meanings of particular words of the text: my elicitation of the meanings was inconclusive, and the words do not appear in the Nyigina-English lexicon (Stokes, Johnson and Marshall 1980). Where this is the case, a question mark appears below the word in the Nyigina text. For example, in the

second line of verse 1 (see p. 92), I was unable to establish a gloss for *mind*; a question mark appears, therefore, below it.

In other cases, I elicited a possible meaning for particular morphemes from Paddy Roe, although they do not appear in the Stokes lexicon. Where this is the case, a question mark appears before the gloss below the Nyigina text. For example, in verse 11 (see p. 108) discussion with Paddy Roe suggested that *dyalbirrimbirri* may have the meaning of 'storm building up'. As *dyalbirrimbirri* does not appear in Stokes et al. (1980), however, I could not confirm this meaning. The gloss 'storm building up' is preceded, therefore, by a question mark.

Where two versions of the Nyigina text were elicited, such as *galydyi/galdyiri* in verse 3, two glosses also appear. The glosses for *galydyi* and *galdyiri* in verse 3 are 'white ochre' and a 'type of snake' respectively. They appear below the Nyigina text also separated by a slash.

In some cases, Paddy Roe stated that particular stretches of text had no meaning. Where this is the case, the symbol $\emptyset$ appears below the word or morpheme in question. The verb suffix *-dyina* is slightly problematic: when attached to the verb *NjA-*, 'sit', it appears to have no semantic value (see verse 1, p. 92, first line); when attached to other verbs, however, it may mean the third person object pronoun 'him' (see verse 1, second line), or the third person indirect (dative) pronoun 'to/for him' (see verse 15, p. 114, first line).

Explanations of abbreviations appearing in the interlinear glosses below the song texts are set out in Table 7.

The expanded translation

I include below each interlinear translation a line by line commentary. For most verses this is followed by a description of Paddy Roe's explanation of the meaning of the text,²² which in some cases is followed by explanations given by George

²² Paddy Roe offered an explanation of the meaning of all *Bulu* verses except verse 17 (see p. 115).

Dyurjgayan, Butcher Joe and Nellie Nadyuway. The description of speakers' interpretations is based on two sources: first, discussions with all of the above were recorded on tape (edited transcripts of some of these discussions appear in Appendix 3, see below p. 276); and second, several discussions with Paddy Roe were recorded in written form in Keogh (n.d.b) and my field journals.²³ In several of the *Bulu* verses there are significant differences from one speaker's explanation to another. I include in the expanded translation, therefore, a comparison of the various explanations, setting out the points of concordance and difference between them (see previous section).

Table 7. Abbreviations used in the interlinear translation.

Ø	no meaning
?	meaning not established
?[+word]	possible gloss; the word does not appear in Stokes et al. (1980); gloss from Paddy Roe
1sg	1st person singular (subject)
3sg	3rd person singular (subject)
1+m	1st person plural exclusive (subject) ²⁴
3sgOPro	3rd person singular object pronoun
3sgDatPro	3rd person singular dative pronoun
pres	present tense
past	general past tense
past ₂	recent past tense ²⁵
INTp/s	introspective verbal prefix/suffix (reflexive)
REDUP	partial reduplication
Dat	Dative suffix

²³ The overall elicitation procedure for the *Bulu* songs and their meanings is described in Appendix 2 (see p. 271).

²⁴ Nyigina distinguishes between first person plural 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' forms; the first includes, while the second excludes, the listener. The exclusive form only is found in the *Bulu* texts.

²⁵ Stokes distinguishes between the two past tenses in Nyigina as follows: 'the general past tense tends to be used for the more distant past, contrasting with -ny, which identifies the more recent past' (1982: 299). The distinction between the two past tense forms in the *Bulu* texts does not appear to alter the meaning, however. Speakers stated that both forms referred generally to the undifferentiated past.

3.5 *The Bulu* texts and translations

Verse 1

wanydya1-mirri yi-NJA-ny-dyina
place name-Ø 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

mind1 yarra-BA-ny-dyina
? 1+m-see-past₂-3sgOPro

In the first line, *Wanydya1* is the name of the waterhole to the east of Roebuck Plains where Bulu's spirit resides, while *-mirri* is a commonly occurring suffix having no meaning (see above p. 65 for a discussion of modifications to everyday words in the song texts). The second word in the line, *yijanydyina*, is a modified form of the everyday *yijany*, 'he was there'. At times, Paddy Roe glossed *yijanydyina* as "he was there". Sometimes, however, he stated that it did not mean anything, and that it was "just for song". This may be due to the fact that *yijanydyina* is a commonly occurring formulaic expression whose significance is often more structural than semantic (see above p. 71).

In the second line, I was unable to translate the first word *mind1*. The recurring verb *yarrabanydyina* in everyday Nyigina means 'we (exclusive) saw him'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole of the second line as "think about which way we go; we wait . . . what's going to come out".²⁶

Paddy Roe explained the meaning of the verse as follows. This is the first verse of the series. Bulu and his *ray* come out from *Wanydya1*, a waterhole to the east of Roebuck

²⁶ In the following pages I have found it necessary to distinguish between a speaker's 'gloss' of a particular stretch of text and a 'translation' of the same text. This is due to the fact that at times speakers' glosses are more a commentary on the context rather than the content. That is not to say that a speaker's gloss may not also be an appropriate translation; the relationship between the two, however, is not necessarily a straightforward one.

Plains and contemplate the direction in which they are going to travel around the country. Dyurjgayan is with them in a state of dream.

Dyurjgayan's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 277) concurred with Paddy Roe's. It refers, however, only to the fact that the song is the first in the line (see above p. 31 for a discussion of 'line').

Butcher Joe did not offer an explanation for the meaning of this verse.

Verse 2

guwararrirarri yi-NJA-ny-dyina
snipe[+REDUP] 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

dyid-i yarra-BA-ny-dyina
stop-Ø 1+m-see-past₂-3sgOPro

ñanbalinbali²⁷ yi-NJA-ny-dyina
lie on back[+REDUP] 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

In the first line, *guwararrirarri* is a modified version of the everyday form *guway*, 'snipe'. *Yiñanydyina* is the commonly occurring formulaic expression 'he was there' (see explanation to verse 1 above).

In the second line, *dyidi* is a slightly modified version of the everyday form *dyid*, 'stop'. *Yarrabanydyina* is the recurring verb meaning 'we (exclusive) saw him'. Paddy Roe stated that the second line referred to the fact that Bulu and Dyurjgayan could see the snipes coming towards them: "they bin look, he coming too".

In the third line, *ñanbalinbali* is a modified version of the everyday form *ñanbala*, 'lie on back', while *yiñanydyina* is a commonly occurring formulaic expression (see the explanation of verse 1 above). Paddy Roe glossed the third line as "*ñanbala*, he fall down . . . belly up".

Paddy Roe explained the meaning of the verse as follows (a transcript of part of Paddy Roe's explanation appears in Appendix 3, p. 277). Bulu and Dyurjgayan were together when they saw what Dyurjgayan thought to be a flock of snipes flying towards them. As they came close, however, he realised that they were a group of *ray*. The *ray* veered away from the two men just in time so as not to collide with them. As they did so, they turned over on their bellies just as birds do when they turn in flight. The incident occurred near *Wanydyal*. Dyurjgayan's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 277)

²⁷ *Ñanbala* appears in Stokes et al. 1980:74 as *ñambala*.

concurred with Paddy Roe's. It refers, however, only to the everyday movements of snipes. Butcher Joe did not offer an explanation for the meaning of this verse.

Verse 3

mawula-rjana galydyi/galdyiri-yana/rjana
 place name-Ø white ochre/type of snake-Ø

guwarrawarra
 Ø

dirrin yin-MA-na-yana
 right through 3sg-make-past-Ø

The first word of the first line is a modified form of *Mawula*, the name of a claypan near *Dyirrgali* (Geegully Creek) located to the east of Dampier Downs.²⁸ I elicited two different versions of the second word in the first line. Paddy Roe and Dyurjayan stated that the word was *galydyi*, 'white ochre', while Butcher Joe maintained that it was *galdyiri*, a type of snake.²⁹

In the second line, Paddy Roe stated that *guwarrawarra* had no meaning.

In the third line, *dirrin* means 'right through'.³⁰ The second word is a modified version of the everyday form *yinmana*, 'he made'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole line as "he's gone, he pass im", that is, he did not stop.³¹

28 Paddy Roe was not sure of the reference to *Mawula* in the first line. It is the name of a claypan near *Dyirrgali* (Geegully Creek) located to the east of Dampier Downs; maybe the group headed off in that direction. '*Mawularjana*, might be they bin going to *Mawula*'. At the same time, however, he said that the name of another claypan very close to *Garmurlgabu* was *Yawula*. 'I don't know which one he wanted to get proper . . . there was two place name'.

29 Paddy Roe gave the meaningless suffix at the end of the line as *-rjana*; Dyurjayan, however, clearly sings *-yana*.

30 Stokes et al. (1980: 31) gloss *dirrin dirrin* as 'right through chest'. Paddy Roe's gloss of the whole line "he's gone, he pass im" (see further below) suggests that *dirrin* may have a more general meaning here of 'travelling without stopping', that is 'right through'.

31 The verb root *-ma-* belongs to a group of Nyigina verbs whose meaning changes, depending on the 'set' or class of the pronominal prefixing which is attached to it (see Stokes 1982: 248-268). With one set of pronominal prefixes, *-ma-* means 'to make' or 'to put', while with the second set it means 'to go'. As the verb in the third line of verse 3 exhibits the first prefixing set, I have translated *-ma-* as 'to make'. Paddy Roe's gloss of the whole line suggests, however, that the meaning of the verb root *-ma-* is 'to go'. This is supported by the fact that in his explanation of the meaning of the verse, Paddy Roe gave the plural form of the verb as *dirrin yirrmana*, 'they went right through'; in this case, the pronominal prefix belongs to the second set.

Paddy Roe gave the following explanation of the meaning of the verse (an excerpt of the transcript of his explanation appears in Appendix 3, p. 278). Dyurjgayan, Bulu and Bulu's *ray* have travelled inland from the vicinity of *Wanydyal* (see verses 1 and 2) to *Garmurlgabu*, a few kilometres east of Dampier Downs Station (*Mandigarrgabu*). The group does not stop, however, but continue their journey to the north east.

White ochre, *galydyi*, is found in abundance at *Garmurlgabu*; *galydyi* is also called *garmurl*. It is used for *bandirr* (body designs) in ceremonies and for *ramu* (etchings) on wooden artefacts such as boomerangs and shields.

Paddy Roe was not sure of the reference to *Mawula* in the first line. He suggested that perhaps the group headed off in that direction (east): "*Mawulanjana*, might be they bin going to *Mawula*".

Butcher Joe's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 278) differed from Paddy Roe's, due to the fact that he interpreted the second word of the first line to be *galdyiri*, a type of snake found in Pandanus trees growing along the banks of rivers. In his interpretation, the snake went to *Mawula*. Butcher Joe associated *galdyiri* with watersnake mythology (see above, p. 43).

At the first elicitation session (see Appendix 2, p. 271), Dyurjgayan confirmed Butcher Joe's statement concerning the verse's association to watersnake mythology (see Appendix 3, p. 278). At the second elicitation session, his explanation of the verse concurred with Paddy Roe's (see Appendix 3, p. 278).

Verse 4

dyularralarra
white gum[+REDUP]

larra yin-DI-na
dodge behind something 3sg-do-past

balgandyirr nja-ma-NARI-nydyi-na-yana
place name 1sg-INTp-leave-INTs-past-Ø

In the first line, *dyularralarra* is a modified version of the everyday form *dyularra*, 'White Gum' (taxonomic classification unknown).

In the second line, *larra* means to 'dodge behind something', while the second word means 'he did'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole of the second line as "he turned back".

In the third line, *Balgandyirr* is the name of a strip of gravel country in Nyigina territory, which stretches in an east-west direction from the vicinity of Yeeda Station and the Fitzroy River in the west to where the Great North Highway passes between two stony outcrops in the east, a distance of approximately forty miles. The second word in the third line is a slightly modified version of the everyday reflexive verb form *njamajaryindyina*, 'I left behind [something]'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole of the third line as "I leave in that country [that is *Balgandyirr*]".

Paddy Roe explained the meaning of the song as follows. The group continued their journey from *Garmurlgabu* towards *Balgandyirr* to the north east. *Dyularra*, a species of white gum, grows on the ridges in that country. The group did not reach *Balgandyirr*. They turned back and left that country behind for Mt Clarkson to the north west.

Neither Dyurjayan nor Butcher Joe offered an explanation for the meaning of this verse.

Verse 5

mayarda dirrbín yi-NÁ-na
 pelican ? 3sg-sít-past

dyidu-rrudurrúy
 hide behind[+REDUP]

ɲaɲɲal yin-DI-na
 ? 3sg-do-past

In the first line, *mayarda* means 'pelican'. I am unable to offer a translation of *dirrbín*, due to the fact that it does not appear in Stokes et al. (1980), and my discussion with Paddy Roe were not conclusive. Paddy Roe glossed it as "very close, mixed up" (see above p.92 for a discussion of the distinction between 'gloss' and 'translation').

Yinjána is an everyday verb form which means 'he was'.

In the second line, *dyidurrudurrúy* is a modified version of the everyday form *dyidu* 'hide behind'. Paddy Roe glossed the line as "in a straight line" (a group of people hiding behind a person in front of them creates a line; in this case, it is a line of pelicans).

In the third line, I am unable to offer a translation of *ɲaɲɲal*. *Yindína* is the everyday verb form meaning 'he did'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole line as "his forehead stuck out"; that is, the heads of the pelicans stuck out in all directions (see below).

Paddy Roe gave the following explanation. On their way from *Balgandyirr* to Mt Clarkson, Bulu's group saw a flock of pelicans. They were in a straight line and close together. Their "foreheads" were sticking out in all directions.

Neither Dyurjgayan nor Butcher Joe offered an explanation for the meaning of this verse. Dyurjgayan at first maintained that it belonged to Butcher Joe (see above).

Verse 6

malarra dyid yi-yal-MA-na-yana
 place name stop 3sg-Ø-go-past-Ø

marrarri/barra-rri yi-NJA-ny-dyina
 ?/sun, day-Ø 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

In the first line, *malarra*, according to Paddy Roe, was the name of Mt Clarkson.³² Dyurjgayan maintained, however, that *malarra* referred to another place, whose identity was not established from our discussion. *Dyid* means 'stop', while *yiylmanayana* is a modified version of the everyday verb form *yimana* 'he went'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole of the first line as "Mt Clarkson, he's standing up".

I elicited two different versions of the first word in the second line. Paddy Roe stated that the word in question was *marrarri*, which he glossed as "can't see properly". I am unable, however, to offer a translation (see above, p. 92) of *marrarri*. In all performances, however, Dyurjgayan sang *barrarri*, which is a slightly modified version of the everyday form *barra*, meaning 'sun', 'sunrise' or 'day'. Dyurjgayan's understanding of the word in question to be *barrarri* was confirmed when he stated "that a sun, sun you know, he come out, well dat one" (see Appendix 3, p. 278). *Yirjanydyina* is a commonly occurring formulaic expression meaning 'he was there' (see the explanation to verse 1).

Paddy Roe gave the following explanation of the meaning of this verse. The group travelled north west from *Balgandyirr* country towards Mt Clarkson (see verse 4), which they saw standing in the distance. They were not able to see it properly, as they were a long way away.

Dyurjgayan's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 278) differed from Paddy Roe's in several respects. First, Dyurjgayan's reference above to the sun suggests that the

³² Stokes et al. 1980: 67 give the Nyigina term for Mt Clarkson, however, as *Mulgurrurju*.

event commemorated in the verse occurred at sunrise. This is supported by the fact that the only two performances of verse 6 occurred directly after verses 9 and 10 (see Table 19 below, p. 274). Dyurjgayan interpreted verse 9 to refer to the Morning Star, while verse 10 refers to the crescent moon (see below). The Morning Star appears just before sunrise. (In this discussion, I have followed Paddy Roe in placing verses 9 and 10 after those verses describing Dyurjgayan's original journey.)

Second, in his explanation Dyurjgayan stated that "... he got gear on too". His reference to "gear" suggests that the song accompanied a dance. Paddy Roe, however, made no reference to such a dance.

Third, when questioned about Paddy Roe's reference to Mt Clarkson, Dyurjgayan maintained that the verse referred to *Garrawin*, a ridge to the west of Mt Clarkson (see Paddy Roe's explanation for verse 7); and that *Malarra* was different from Mt Clarkson. Dyurjgayan sang *malarra*, however, in all performances.

GDy: *Malarra*, he call im *ɲadyal*, *ɲadyal*, *ɲatha*, *ɲatha* [another] place,
 you know *Malarra*, *Malarra* *ɲatha*, *ɲatha* place
 but he, we longa *Garrawin* you know ...
Garrawin now

Mt Clarkson lies in Warrwa country. Paddy Roe stated that Warrwa and Nyigina people were close socially and culturally, similar to the relationship between Big and Small Nyigina (see Stokes 1982: 2). Nyigina people had full rights to Warrwa country and Warrwa people had full rights to Nyigina country.

Butcher Joe did not offer an explanation for the meaning of this verse.

Verse 7

malanydyi-njana yi-NjA-ny-dyina
 ?home-Ø 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

buyurr yarra-BA-ny-dyina
 make a haze 1+m-see-past₂-3sgOPro

In the first line, *malanydyinjana* is a modified version of *maladya*, a possible meaning of which is 'home' or 'resting place'. Paddy Roe glossed *maladya* as "home, like a country" (see transcript to verse 8 in Appendix 3, p. 278).³³ *Yinjanydyina* is a recurring text formula meaning 'he was there' (see explanation to verse 1).

In the second line, *buyurr* means 'make a haze',³⁴ while *yarrabanydyina* is a commonly occurring formulaic expression meaning 'we (exclusive) saw him'.

Paddy Roe explained the meaning of the verse as follows. Bulu's group headed back towards *maladya*, their home. The country appeared hazy to them from the height of Mt Clarkson and *Garrawin*, a line of rocks which runs in a north westerly direction to the south west of Mt Clarkson. *Garrawin* crosses the main highway approximately ninety kilometres from Broome.

Neither Dyurjgayan nor Butcher Joe offered an explanation for the meaning of this verse.

This song is a *lirrga* ('cueing' song, see above p. 32) for verse 8.

³³ The Nyigina term *maladyi* appears in Stokes et al. (1980: 61) with the meaning 'tree designated as magic'. Paddy Roe's explanation of *maladya* in Appendix 3 (see p. 278) certainly has magical connotations. See also Dyurjgayan and Nellie Nadyuway's explanation of verse 16 in Appendix 3 (p. 281) below.

³⁴ *Buyurr* appears in Stokes et al. 1980: 27 as *bulyurr*.

Verse 8

midiny-burrurru
rainbow-Ø

malara malara yi-MA-na-yana
? 3sg-go-past-Ø

In the first line, *midiny* means 'rainbow', while *-burrurru* is a meaningless suffix.

In the second line, I am unable to translate *malara*. *Yimanayana* is a modified version of the everyday form *yimana*, 'he went'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole line as "he slowed down".

Paddy Roe gave the following explanation of the meaning of the verse. Bulu's group arrive back at their *maladya* where they see a rainbow. Their journey is now complete. They are tired from the journey, and their feet drag as they get slower and slower.

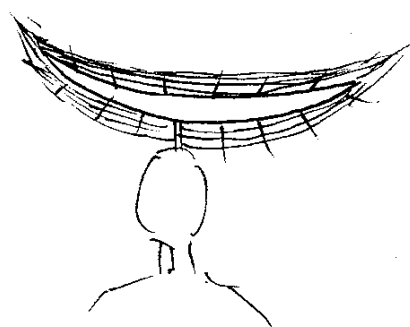
This is the last verse in this part of the series, and is called *wirdu nurlu*, that is 'big *nurlu*'. The song accompanies a dance (which was not performed, however, during my stay in the field). Paddy Roe stated that Bulu imbued this dance with special power which could cause sickness. Dyujgayan, as owner of the corroboree, was the only man in former times who performed the dance. More recently, Paddy Roe, as younger brother of Dyujgayan, was given performance rights to the dance. A *waijgararra* (headgear) was worn by the dancer (see Figure 2 below). It represents the rainbow and an associated storm cloud, or *dyirrbal*, seen by the group when they returned to the vicinity of *Wanydyal*.

Neither Dyujgayan nor Butcher Joe offered an explanation for the meaning of this verse.

Figure 2. *Wanjgararra* worn in the dance associated with *Bulu* verse 8.



Figure 3. *Wanjgararra* worn in the dance associated with *Bulu* verse 10.



Verse 9

larn-dyimirri yi-NjA-ny-dyina
 star-Ø 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

murda³⁵/buyurr yarra-BA-ny-dyina
 nothing/make a haze 1+m-see-past₂-3sgOPro

In the first line, *larn* is the generic word for 'star', while *-dyimirri* is a commonly occurring meaningless suffix. Paddy Roe stated that in the context of this verse it referred to a comet; in contrast, Dyurjgayan stated that it referred to the Morning Star (see Appendix 3, p. 279). *Yinjanydyina* is a recurring formulaic expression meaning 'he was there' (see explanation for verse 1).

I elicited two different versions of the first word in the second line. Paddy Roe stated that the word in question was *murda*, meaning 'nothing'. Dyurjgayan, however, sang *buyurr*, meaning 'make a haze' in all performances. *Yarrabanydyina* is the commonly occurring formulaic expression meaning 'we (exclusive) saw him'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole line as "we bin go look im nothing".

Paddy Roe gave the following explanation of the meaning of the whole verse. It commemorates the appearance of a comet which passed by the sheepcamp without incident: "they only bin look im, *murda yarrabany* . . . nothing happened" (see Appendix 3, p. 279).

Dyurjgayan's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 279) differed from Paddy Roe's in two respects. First, he interpreted *larn* to refer to the 'Morning Star' rather than the comet described by Paddy Roe. Second, the order in which he sang the song (verse 9, followed by verse 10, followed by verse 6, see Table 19 below p. 274) suggests its inclusion in the original journey with Bulu. Although not stated by Dyurjgayan,

³⁵ *Murda* appears in Stokes et al. 1980: 66 as *muda*.

perhaps Bulu's group, while still on their journey, saw the Morning Star and the crescent moon (see verse 10) just before sunrise (see verse 6).

Dyungayan did not comment on the meaning of the text of the second line as sung by him. Butcher Joe did not offer an explanation for the meaning of this verse.

This verse is a *lirrga* (see above p. 32) for verse 10.

Verse 10

girridiny-dyimirri yi-NjA-ny-dyina
 moon-Ø 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

burarrirarri yi-NjA-ny-dyina
 dim[+REDUP] 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

In the first line, *girridiny* means 'moon', while *-dyimirri* is a commonly occurring meaningless suffix. *Yijanydyina* at the end of both lines of the text is a recurring formulaic expression meaning 'he was there'.

In the second line, *burarrirarri* is a modified version of the everyday form *burarr*, meaning 'dim'.

Paddy Roe explained the meaning of the verse as follows. It describes how the people saw a new moon in the sky at the time of the appearance of the comet described in the previous verse. Like the comet, the crescent moon appeared a long way away. Paddy Roe stated that the text referred to the fact that "we can just see the moon". The song accompanies a dance. The *wajgararra* (headgear, see above p. 34) worn by the performers in the associated dance represents the crescent moon (see Figure 3 above).

Dyurjayan's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 279) concurred with Paddy Roe's. It refers, however, only to the moon and the fact that the song accompanies a dance.

Butcher Joe did not offer an explanation for the meaning of this verse.

Verse 11

milydyidawurrui
rainstorm from south

dyalbirrimbirray
?storm building up

ɲarany ɲarany yiny-DYARRGA-na
place name 3sg-stand over-past

In the first line, *milydyidawurrui* is a slightly modified version of the everyday form *milydyidawurru*, meaning 'rainstorm from the south'.

In the second line, a possible translation of *dyalbirrimbirray* is 'storm building up'. Paddy Roe glossed the second line as "cloud all heap up" (see above p. 92 for a discussion of the distinction between an interlinear translation and speakers' 'glosses').

In the third line, *ɲarany* is the name of a waterhole somewhere in *nawrdu* Garadyarri country.³⁶ The verb *yinydyarrgana* means 'it stood over, it waited, it hung over' (Stokes, personal communication). Paddy Roe glossed the whole of the third line as "it's raining in *ɲarany*".³⁷

Paddy Roe explained that this verse describes how it rained at *ɲarany*, a waterhole in *nawrdu* Garadyarri country near Dampier Downs Station. Dyurjgayan knew because clouds built up to the south of Roebuck Plains (see Appendix 3, p. 279).

Dyurjgayan's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 279) concurred with Paddy Roe's. It refers, however, only to the fact that he saw the clouds.

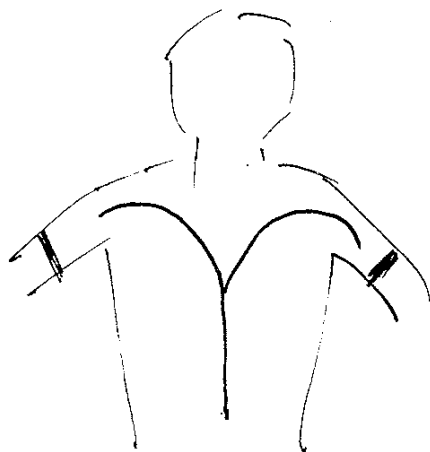
Butcher Joe did not offer an explanation for the meaning of this verse.

³⁶ McKelson (1979: 215) states that *nawrdu* Garadyarri, one of three dialectal groups, lived 'north-west of Nadya Nadya [another of the dialectal groups which inhabited the coast around present day La Grange] in a territory adjacent to that of the Mangala, who roamed southward from the Fitzroy River (Maduwara) to the desert hinterland'.

³⁷ Most of Paddy Roe's glosses are not an exact translation of the text. For example, in this case his gloss does not take account of the past tense of the verb.

The song accompanies a dance. Neither Paddy Roe nor Dyurḡayan could remember its *lirrga*, however.

Figure 4. Body designs associated with *nurlu* dancing (see verse 12).



Verse 12

bandirr yarra-BA-ny-dyina
body design 1+m-see-past₂-3sgOPro

burarr-i yi-NjA-ny-dyina
dim-Ø 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

dyalal yin-DI-na-yana
? 3sg-do-past-Ø

In the first line, *bandirr* refers to 'body design', while *yarrabanydyina* is a recurring formula meaning 'we (exclusive) saw him'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole line as "we seen *bandirr*".

In the second line, *burarr* means 'dim'. Paddy Roe glossed *burarr* as "can't see proper . . . long way". *Yirjanydyina* is a recurring formulaic expression meaning 'he was there' (see explanation to verse 1).

I was unable to establish a translation for *dyalal* in the third line. *Yindinayana* is a modified version of the everyday form *yindina*, meaning 'he did'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole line as "he come out from dark".

Paddy Roe gave the following explanation. A group of *ray* were painted up with body designs in preparation for a corroboree (see Figure 4 above). They used white ochre, *galydyi*, for this purpose (see verse 3 above). Dyurjgayan saw them come out from the dark in his dream. They did not come close, and he could not see them properly.

Neither Dyurjgayan nor Butcher Joe explained the meaning of this verse.

This song is a *lirrga* for verse 13.

Verse 13

dadyi-wurrurruy
 Ø-?large group of people

dyunbarambara
 dust cloud[+REDUP]

ganal yim-BA-ny-dyina-yana
 ? 3sg-see-past₂-3sgOPro-Ø

A possible translation of *wurrurruy* is 'large group of people'. Paddy Roe glossed it as "big mob". He stated that *dadyi-* meant "nothing, to make that corroboree" (see above p. 65).

In the second line, *dyunbarambara* is a modified version of *dyunbara*, meaning 'dust cloud'.

In the third line, I am unable to translate *ganal*. *Yimbanydyinayana* is a modified version of the everyday verb form *yimbanydyina*, meaning 'he saw him'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole third line as "he [the dust] come to nothing".

Paddy Roe gave the following explanation of the meaning of this verse (see Appendix 3, p. 280). The *ray* described in verse 12 came out in full view and began to dance. As they stamped on the ground, the dust rose from their feet in clouds. The wind blew the dust away, however; it came to nothing. The song accompanies a dance.

Butcher Joe's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 280) differed from Paddy Roe's in several respects. Whereas Paddy Roe maintained that a group of *ray* came out to dance, Butcher Joe's explanation suggests that Bulu himself was the dancer. Moreover, Butcher Joe related the verse to an historical event; a group of people were travelling from Beagle Bay when they saw a lot of dust caused by somebody dancing. But when they looked, the dancer, Bulu, had gone. Dyurjgayan confirmed Butcher Joe's explanation.

Verse 14

yalgu-dyan gudyarra yi-NjA-ny-dyina njunju
 standing-Ø two 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø ?

yawan baliny baliny yi-NjA-ny-dyina njunju
 north shiny 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø ?

In the first line, *yalgudyan* is a modified version of the everyday form *yalgu*, meaning 'standing'. *Gudyarra* means 'two'. *Yinjanydyina* in both lines is a recurring formulaic expression meaning 'he was there' (see explanation to verse 1). Paddy Roe glossed *njunju* as "open eye". I am unable to confirm Paddy Roe's gloss, however, as a possible translation.

In the second line, *yawan* means 'north'. *Baliny baliny* means 'shiny'. Paddy Roe glossed *baliny baliny* as "forehead" (see below).

Paddy Roe explained the meaning of the song as follows. Bulu and Dyunjgayan saw two watersnakes, *yurjurrugu*, standing up (see above p. 43 for a discussion of watersnake mythology). They came from the north and were facing south when the two men saw them. Their "foreheads" shone in the sun (see Appendix 3, p. 280). At first, Dyunjgayan could not see them properly, but he opened his eyes and the two snakes became clear.

At the first elicitation session, Dyunjgayan stated that he, Bulu and Bulu's *ray* ("mipella") were 'on top', that is, above the ground (see Appendix 3, p. 280). This explanation is not inconsistent with Paddy Roe's. At the second elicitation session, he interpreted the reference to 'two' in the first line of the text as "two kids" that "go along a tree". The "two kids" may refer to *ray*.

Butcher Joe did not offer an explanation for this verse.

Verse 15

burr-bi yarr-MA-ny-dyina yi-NjA-ny-dyinarja
 wish evil on-Ø 1+m-go-past₂-3sgDatPro 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

 dyirrbal yi-NjA-na-yana
 big rain cloud 3sg-sit-past-Ø

In the first line, *burrbi* is a modified version of the everyday form *burr*, meaning 'to wish evil on'. *Yarrmanydyina* is an everyday verb form which means 'we met him'. *Yinjanydyinarja* is a slightly modified version of the recurring formulaic expression *yinjanydyina*, 'he was there' (see explanation to verse 1).

In the second line, *dyirrbal* refers to a large rain cloud, while *yijanayana* is a modified version of the everyday verb *yijana*, 'he was there'.

Paddy Roe explained that this verse commemorated the appearance of an unusual cloud which came near the sheepcamp on Roebuck Plains in about 1920. Three *mabarn* men (doctors) living there at the time realised that it was a *wudya*, a dangerous sickness-bearing cloud. They met the cloud and through their special powers made sure that the cloud passed them without causing harm.

The cloud was not meant for the people at the sheep camp, however. Aboriginal people living on three stations on the Fitzroy River at the time - Myroodah, Lulungui and Sandfly - had sent destructive lightning to a community living south of Port Hedland. The cloud had been sent back in compensation. The cloud killed all the people at Myroodah and caused sickness and death to some of the people at Lulungui and Sandfly (see above Section 2.3 and 2.4 for a discussion of politics between people of the western Kimberleys and groups to the south).

Dyurjayan's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 281) concurred with Paddy Roe's. It refers, however, only to the dangerous cloud as "sickness on top", which was sent somewhere to the south.

Butcher Joe did not offer an explanation for this verse.

Verse 16

barr-il yarra-MA-ny-dyina
 open eyes-Ø 1+m-make-past₂-?3sgDatPro

ray-dyi-mirri yi-MA-na-yana
 spirit-Dat-Ø 3sg-go-past-Ø

dyila-bumirri
 rain making-Ø

In the first line, *barril* is a modified version of the everyday word *barr*, meaning 'open eyes'. *Yarramanydyina* is an everyday verb meaning 'we made for him'. Paddy Roe glossed the whole first line as "we made everything open [for him]".

In the second line, *ray* refers to the spirits that accompanied Bulu and Dyurjgayan on their journey (see verse 2), while *-dyimirri* is a commonly occurring meaningless suffix. *Yimanayana* is a modified version of the everyday verb *yimana*, 'he went'.

In the third line, *dyila* means 'rain making' and 'waterhole', while *-bumirri* is a meaningless suffix.

Paddy Roe gave the following explanation of the meaning of this verse. Bulu's *ray* gave sanction for all the songs, dances and the associated paraphernalia of this song series to be made public; that is, to be performed without restrictions on who can see and hear them (see above p. 58 for a discussion of restrictions found in relation to similar songs in the desert to the south).

It is difficult to interpret the precise meaning of Dyurjgayan's and Nellie Njadyuway's statements about this verse (appearing in Appendix 3, p. 281). It appears, however, that the association of the *nurlu* with waterholes and rain making (*dyila*) places it into the realm of the restricted (*gunydyu*) and reflects a close relationship to the Dreamtime (see above p. 46 for a discussion of the relationship of *nurlu* to the restricted sphere). Dyurjgayan's and Nellie Njadyuway's explanation is not inconsistent with Paddy Roe's.

Verse 17

bandirr-mirri yi-ŋA-ny-dyina
body design-Ø 3sg-sit-past₂-Ø

murda³⁸ yarra-BA-ny-dyina
nothing 1+m-see-past₂-3sgOPro

In the first line, *bandirr* means 'body design' while *-mirri* is a recurring meaningless suffix. *Yinjanydyina* is a recurring formulaic expression which means 'he was there' (see explanation for verse 1).

In the second line, *murda* means 'nothing'. *Yarrabanydyina* is a commonly occurring formulaic expression which means 'we (exclusive) saw him'. In verse 9 above (see p. 105), Paddy Roe glossed an identical line as "we bin go look im nothing". Paddy Roe stated, however, that he did not know the meaning of this verse.

Dyurjayan's explanation (see Appendix 3, p. 281) makes reference to a *wilany*, a horseshoe-shaped rain cloud: "we look im you know, rain . . . *murda yarrabany* we say" (see above p. 43 for a discussion of the relationship of the *Bulu* songs to rainmaking mythology).

³⁸ *Murda* appears in Stokes et al. (ibid.: 66) as *muda*.

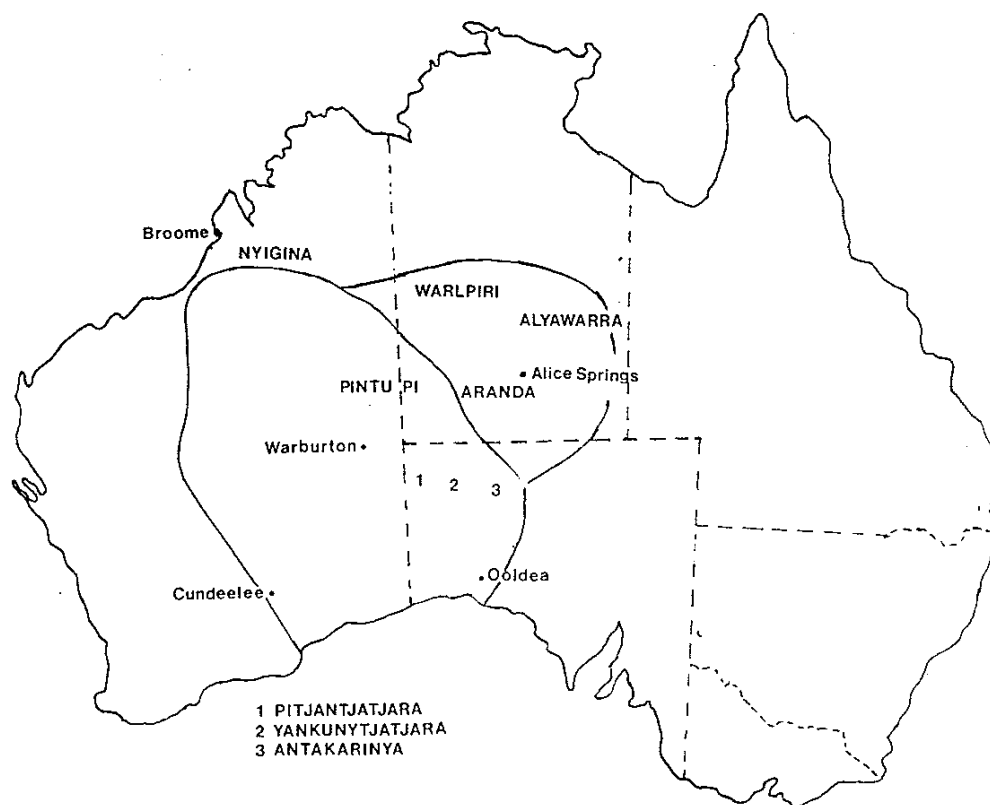
CHAPTER 4

ANALYTICAL ISSUES IN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL DESERT MUSIC

4.1 Introduction

A number of people have conducted research of an analytical nature into the music of central Australia: Linda Barwick, in collaboration with Catherine Ellis on the analysis of a song series performed by Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antakarinya people (Barwick 1988, 1989, Ellis and Barwick 1987, 1988); Catherine Ellis primarily with the Pitjantjatjara and related language groups of northern South Australia and the Aranda of central Australia (1964, 1965, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1988a, 1988b); Antony McCardell at Cundeelee, close to the western perimeter of the Western Desert cultural bloc (McCardell 1976, Pritam 1980); Richard Moyle with the Pintupi and Alyawarra (1979, 1986); T. G. H. Strehlow with the Aranda (1971); Guy Tunstill primarily with the Pitjantjatjara (1987); and Stephen Wild with the Warlpiri (1979, 1984). The approximate locations of the traditional territories of Aboriginal groups with whom researchers have worked, as well as the geographical extent of the Western and Central Desert cultural blocs, are indicated on Map 6.

As stated in the introduction to this thesis it is not possible, due to their sheer size and scope, to undertake here a detailed description of all the scholarly writings on formal aspects of central Australian music. Instead, I have chosen to discuss in this chapter several important issues which have arisen in the literature. It is hoped that this discussion will facilitate two broad objectives: first, the establishment of an appropriate model to describe the formal elements of *nurlu* songs (to be taken up at the end of this chapter); and second, the placement of *nurlu* songs within the overall context of central Australian musical style (to be taken up at the end of Chapter 5).



Before I begin discussion of these issues, however, I wish to outline the general structural features of central Australian musical style.

4.2 Central Australian musical style

Nurlu songs share structural features with songs found throughout extensive areas of the Central and Western Deserts of central Australia. This is not surprising, given the homogeneous nature of central Australian society and the geographical proximity of the western Kimberleys to the Western Desert cultural bloc (see above pp. 60-61). Structural features which *nurlu* songs share with Centralian songs are as follows:

- i) a short text cycle which is repeated several times in the performance of a song, and which may be divided into several smaller text phrases;
- ii) syllabic rhythm, produced by the rhythmic enunciation of the syllables of the text, which exhibits several distinct levels of isorhythm - at the level of the text cycle

and at the level of the text phrase. While the syllabic rhythm always exhibits isorhythm at the level of the text cycle, it need not necessarily do so at the level of the text phrase.

Due to their fixed relationship the text and its associated rhythm are conceived by researchers as being two facets of the same structure (see Barwick 1989: 13);

iii) a rhythmic accompaniment which generally maintains a fixed relationship to the text and its rhythm;

iv) a flexible, primarily descending, melody whose form is influenced by the structure of the text and rhythm.

The ways in which texts and melodies intersect in central Australian songs appear to vary considerably; from area to area, from one song series to the next, even from one performance of a song to the next. It is perhaps because of this inherent flexibility that researchers have found the exact nature of the relationship between the two components, text/rhythm and melody, difficult to conceive.

In this thesis, I refer to songs with the above features as exhibiting 'desert', or 'central Australian' musical style. That is not to say that 'desert style' songs are found only in the desert areas of Australia. To the contrary, songs exhibiting features of this style are found throughout extensive geographical areas outside of central Australia: in the Kimberleys, Arnhem Land, Queensland and New South Wales.

In order to exemplify the above features of 'central Australian style', I have chosen a performance of a verse from the Pintupi *yunpu* series,¹ a transcription of which appears in Example 4.1.

¹ Moyie (1979: 18) categorises the *yunpu* series as a *tulku* (see above p. 56).

Example 4.1. Performance of a Pintupi *yunpu* verse (appearing as Example 17 in R. Moyle 1979: 78).

yunpu series

ngunytjukumpa nyara wantitira nyangu mitjin kara nyangu

ngunytjukumpa nyara wantitira nyangu mitjin kara nyangu

ngunytjukumpa nyara wantitira nyangu mitjin kara nyangu

ngunytjukumpa nyara wantitira nyangu mitjin kara nyangu

ngunytjukumpa nyara wantitira nyangu mitjin kara nyangu

Example 17 Repetition of word group throughout song.

The text cycle

The text in Example 4.1 consists of a repeating text cycle, beginning with the word *ngunytjukumpa* on each new line in the transcription. Researchers determine the beginning of the text cycle in various ways: from statements made by performers; by reference to text repetition patterns within the text cycle (see below); by breath intakes; and by reference to the melody. In Example 4.1 the establishment of the beginning of the text cycle appears relatively straightforward because the performance begins at the text cycle boundary. Not all central Australian song performances, however, commence at the beginning of the text cycle. In fact there is a tendency for them to begin somewhere within the text cycle. Example 4.2 is a transcription by McCardell²

² McCardell had changed his name to Prabhu Pritam when this transcription appeared. I have deleted from the original transcription (i) a Warburton Ranges version of the text/rhythmic cycle and (ii) a listing of the number of times each *Mamu* verse occurred in the performance.

of a performance of an *Inma Mamu* verse³ from the south west of the Western Desert. The text cycle appears at the top of the transcription, beginning with the phrase *nyampilunyampilulanyi*. This particular performance begins with the phrase *lumaluma*, that is three quarters of the way through the text cycle.

In his analysis, McCardell uses several criteria, namely breath intakes, text and melodic structure, to establish each text cycle boundary. In the following quotation he refers to the text cycle in terms of its rhythmic component, that is 'rhythmic cycle'.

For researchers in Western Desert music the breath is an excellent indicator of the rhythmic cycle boundary . . .

If one examines the melody in these *Mamu* verses there is one point where the singers suddenly transpose down one octave . . . to begin a new repetition of the melody. I will elaborate on the melodic

Example 4.2. *Inma Mamu* verse 1 (appearing as Transcription 2 in Pritam 1980: 30).

Transcription 2

Mamu verse 1(4), 10* A2313a** 02:12***

TEXT
 n'ampi luma npilu tanli mamu n'i n'i luma luma

phrases 1 2 3

single sticks beaten on the ground

notated G♯ G# MM ≈ 168

group (no solo)
8va alta + bassa

8va bassa only

* = verse 1, fourth attempt, i.e. third repetition of same verse. Verse 10 is a reprise of verse 1.
 ** Archive Tape Number (Aust. Inst. of Aboriginal Studies)
 *** time location in minutes and seconds

³ *Inma Mamu* is a series performed by adults for children (*mamu* refers to a class of malevolent spirits) (Pritam 1980: 11).

cycle later, but the main point is that its boundary nearly always coincides with the rhythmic cycle boundary located by examining the text and the breaths . . .

In the verse as illustrated . . . the octave break is between *luma* and *nyanpi*. Coupled with the breath it marks the beginning of the rhythmic cycle . . . (Pritam 1980: 16)

If we were to use the same criteria as McCardell in determining the text cycle boundary of the *yunpu* verse in Example 4.1 we would need to place it at a slightly different position from that proposed by Moyle, namely at the point where the melody begins to repeat itself in the lower octave (where the melody falls from f to d in the last line of the transcription). Apparently Moyle determines the text cycle boundary by considering other factors such as the internal rhythmic makeup of the cycle (in Moyle's description each text phrase ends in a long duration - see further below) and the fact that the repetition of the tonic f coincides with the text cycle boundary (at the beginning of lines 2 and 4) as does the rise to g before the final repetition of the melody in the lower octave (at the beginning of line 5). The fact that McCardell and Moyle need to use different criteria to establish the text cycle boundary highlights the sorts of problems faced by researchers of central Australian music when attempting to establish an analytical methodology which allows comparisons to be made across the area. Such is the diversity and complexity of central Australian musical style that researchers have simply not been able to apply the same analytical methods to all songs.

Text phrases

Within the *yunpu* text cycle shown in Example 4.1, there are three smaller text phrases, namely *ngunytjukumpa nyara*, *wantitira nyangu* and *mitjin kara nyangu*, which in the transcription are separated by barlines. Not all text cycles in central Australian songs necessarily divide into three text phrases; the number of phrases per text cycle varies considerably, although the most common number appears to be between two and four (R. Moyle 1986: 256-257).

Researchers may use several criteria to establish the boundaries of text phrases within the text cycle. For example, text cycles in central Australian songs commonly exhibit internal repetition patterns, the most common being AABB. Barwick (1989:

18) refers to this type of text as a 'doubled text' comprising two 'text line pairs'.

Example 4.3 shows a 'doubled text' from the *Inma Langka* series.⁴

Example 4.3. Doubled text from the *Inma Langka* series (appearing in Ellis 1985: 212).

miniri panyanpa miniri panyanpa
walunku ngarangu walunku ngarangu

When the text cycle exhibits internal text repetition patterns, the division of the text cycle into text phrases is relatively straightforward (as is the position of the text cycle boundary because the cycle can be seen to begin at either text line pair). If, however, the text cycle does not exhibit internal repetition patterns, as is the case in Example 4.1 where the words of the three text phrases differ from each other, researchers generally turn to the rhythm or to performers' statements in order to establish text phrase boundaries.

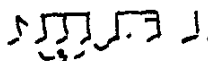
The rhythmic cycle and rhythmic phrases

In performance, the rhythmic enunciation of the syllables of the text produces a recurring (iso)rhythmic cycle, whose boundary coincides with the boundary of the text cycle. Examination of Example 4.1 shows that the rhythmic cycle is identical from one enunciation of the text cycle to the next.⁵ As stated above, due to their fixed relationship, text and rhythm are regarded by researchers in the field as 'two facets of the same structure' (Barwick 1989: 13).⁶

⁴ See Ellis (1985: 76-81) for a description of this series.

⁵ In several cases, the final syllable of the text cycle is lengthened by a semi-quaver, while the first syllable of the text cycle which follows it is subsequently shortened by a semi-quaver. I suggest, however, that such variation is allophonic (see further below a discussion of allophonic variation in relation to the syllabic rhythm in the *Bulu* series, p. 171).

⁶ Some central Australian texts, however, may exhibit two clearly identifiable syllabic rhythms (see Ellis and Barwick's discussion of 'text styles', 1987: 50-51). As pointed out by Ellis and Barwick, the phenomenon has been noted by several researchers: Strehlow (1971: 26-7, 29, 133); McCardell (1976: 139-140); Wild (1984: 193); and Ellis (1968: 38).

The rhythmic cycle may be divided into several smaller rhythmic phrases. In Example 4.1 the rhythmic cycle (beginning on each line) divides into three (iso)rhythmic phrases, each of which exhibits the same rhythm, namely . It appears therefore that Moyle establishes the three text phrases of the *yunpu* text cycle on the basis of repetition patterns in the rhythm. Thus while on the basis of morphology the text does not exhibit clear cut boundaries, the rhythm does.

Researchers generally agree that isorhythm is an important feature of central Australian style. In Example 4.1 we may distinguish between two levels of isorhythm, one at the level of the rhythmic cycle and one at the level of the rhythmic phrase. Although all central Australian songs exhibit isorhythm at the level of the rhythmic cycle, only some (the *yunpu* verse of Example 4.1 may be included in these) exhibit explicit repetition patterns at the level of the rhythmic phrase.

The *Inma Mamu* verse shown in Example 4.2 is one of those central Australian verses which does not exhibit explicit repetition patterns at the level of the rhythmic phrase. McCardell nevertheless divides the rhythmic cycle into three rhythmic phrases (shown at the top of the example) each of which exhibits a different rhythm (and text) from that of the other two.

A rhythmic cycle is composed of two, three or four subdivisions which I call phrases, and the text may therefore be labelled 'couplet', 'tercet' or 'quatrain' . . . Sometimes the phrases are plainly delineated . . . where all the phrases are of equal length and practically the same rhythm, but unequal length and rhythm are the norm in the Western Desert. Musical features enhance the boundaries of phrases in different ways so that they are usually made clear, whatever the rhythmic structure of the syllables. (Pritam 1980: 16)

And later:

The sharply defined beginnings of melodic descents in conjunction with other marked features such as heavy stress indicate phrase beginnings while long duration and breaths usually mark phrase endings. In addition to these musical features the phrase is also a word grouping in the text. (ibid.: 17)

We can see from the second quotation that McCardell uses several criteria to establish phrase boundaries: melodic structure (the beginnings of descents); heavy stress; long

durations; breaths; and text. He points out, however, that 'the musical feature which most clearly supports the phrase boundaries is the melody' (ibid.:18). This is because divisions made on the basis of the other criteria are not always unequivocal. For example, accents may occur mid-phrase. Likewise, long durations may occur mid-phrase while short durations may occur at the ends of phrases. Concerning text, McCardell points out that :

The phrase cuts which I have indicated in the texts of the *Mamu* verses . . . have been made on the basis of my knowledge of the morphology of the language and on my limited knowledge of the meanings of the text words, at least in terms of recognisable suffixes and in some cases whole words. As many researchers are aware song language is a difficult area. (Pritam 1980: 16-17)

Text morphology and problems of interpretation are discussed at length in Chapter 3.

Returning to the *Mamu* verse in Example 4.2 we find that the beginnings of phrases coincide with abrupt rises in the melody, while ends of phrases are marked by long durations. (Although two long durations occur within the first phrase, McCardell points out that to propose a word boundary for every long duration would mean that the first word is 'completely dismembered across boundaries' (ibid.: 17).⁷)

I will return to the question of defining text phrase boundaries by reference to melodic structure below, arguing that in the analysis of central Australian song the structural components of text/rhythm and melody should be defined independently of each other (see p. 134). I wish to highlight the fact, however, that McCardell turned to the melody in order to define text phrase boundaries only when faced with considerable difficulty in defining text/rhythm in its own terms.

Other levels of the text/rhythmic hierarchy

While all researchers agree that the text/rhythmic structure operates on at least two levels, namely the text/rhythmic cycle and text/rhythmic phrase, some researchers

⁷ Barwick has the same approach to long durations marking phrase boundaries. In her analysis of the *ngintaka* series (see Ellis and Barwick 1987: 45-48 for a description of the series), 'rhythmic segment' boundaries are defined 'by the coincidence of a long note of a dotted crotchet duration or more with the end of a meaningful text string' (1989: 18) (see further below).

incorporate further levels into their discussion. In her *ngintaka* analysis, Barwick (1989: 17-18) distinguishes between four levels within the text/rhythmic cycle: text line pair, text line, rhythmic segment and beating cell. Barwick defines the units at each level of the hierarchy as follows:

In hierarchically descending order: *text line pairs* and *text lines* are both defined by internal repetition of the textual material; text lines consist of either one or two *rhythmic segments*, whose boundaries are marked by the coincidence of a long note of a dotted crotchet duration or more with the end of a meaningful text string; and rhythmic segments consist in turn of either two or three *beating cells*, which are organised around accompaniment beats, with the percussive stroke falling in the second half of a cell. (1989: 18)

We can see from the above quotation that in contrast to McCardell, Barwick has been able to define units at all levels of the text/rhythmic hierarchy independently of melody.

Example 4.4. Hierarchical organisation of the text/rhythmic structure of *Ngintaka* verse 29 (appearing as Figure 6 in Barwick 1989: 17).

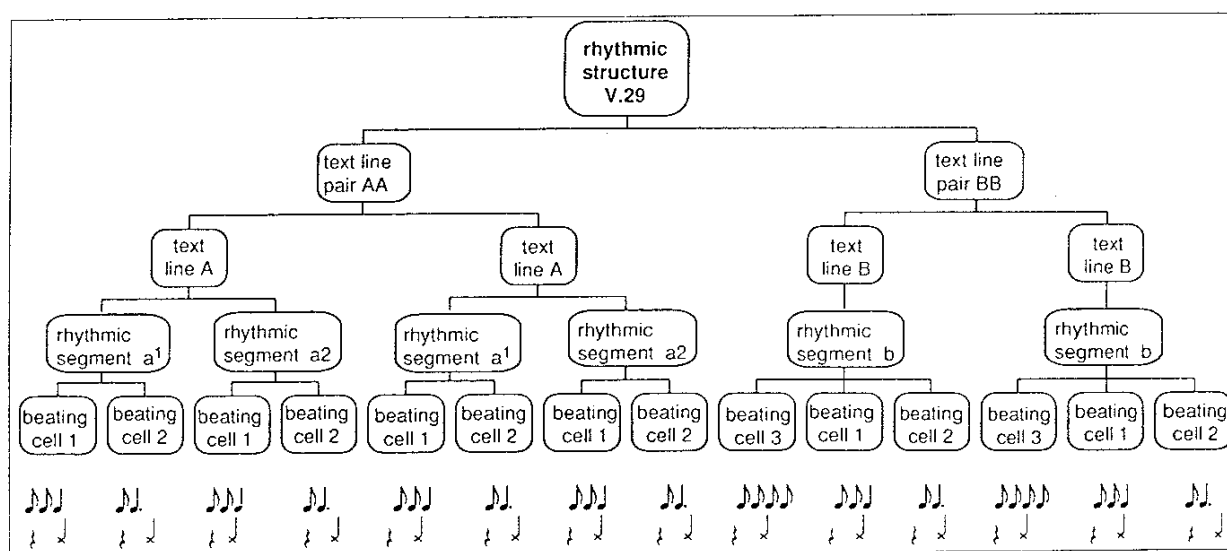


Figure 6
Rhythmic organisation of the text V.29, showing hierarchical organisation of the pattern into text line pairs, text lines, rhythmic segments and beating cells.

Rhythmic accompaniment

The third feature which *nurlu* songs share with central Australian songs is a rhythmic accompaniment. Returning again to Example 4.1, the rhythmic accompaniment is maintained by pairs of boomerang clapsticks (and women's

handclapping, R. Moyle 1979: 117) which begin in the second line just before the second text phrase. Researchers generally agree that the relationship between the accompaniment pattern and the text/rhythmic cycle is fixed.

Not all central Australian songs necessarily exhibit a constant rhythmic accompaniment: some verses are always unaccompanied, while others may or may not be accompanied on the basis of the 'style' of the text (see Ellis and Barwick's discussion of text styles, 1987: 50-51).

Melody

Perhaps the most concise statement concerning central Australian melody appears in Ellis (1980: 723).

There are three separate, closely related aspects of melody: melodic shape in general, particular melodies, and the intervallic structure on which these are based.⁸ Melodic shape in both the central Australian and Western Desert styles is one of continuous descent - terraced melodies. Within this broad framework there are many ways in which the various descents can occur. The essential feature which distinguishes the 'flavour' of a particular totemic ancestor is the pitch distance between main pivot points and the length of time spent within the ambit of these tonal pivots; the individual decorations that occur in the descent from upper to lower extremes of each section are variable.

At the centre of Ellis' concept of melody is the Pitjantjatjara term *inma mayu*. Ellis states that *mayu* means flavour or sound, and 'when used in association with the songs transmitting the 'history' of a totemic ancestor . . . literally means the total sound linked with a specific ancestor, but is generally used to refer to the melodic shape which is a permanent record of the 'flavour' or personality of the ancestor' (ibid.).

The *yunpu* melody in Example 4.1 consists of several repetitions of a melodic descent which occurs over the range of a sixth, from d^b to the tonic f. The descent begins with undulating movement between the pitches d^b and c', descends through several pitches to the tonic f, and ends with an extension of the tonic, articulated by

⁸ Ellis (1965) suggests that the basic interval from which all others are derived is one of a small but constant difference in the number of cycles^{per second} between pitch frequencies of successive steps in the series. 'This constant difference generates a series of equidistant frequencies some of which are selected for the principal notes' (1980: 724). Ellis herself describes the theory as controversial. I will not discuss it here.

undulating movement to the pitch g. The final repetition of the melodic descent occurs in the lower octave. In this instance it is preceded by a more prominent rise to g (appearing at the beginning of the last line of the transcription) which is possibly a cue to the performers signalling the final repetition of the descent in the lower octave (see further below). The performance ends before the extension of the lower tonic F begins.

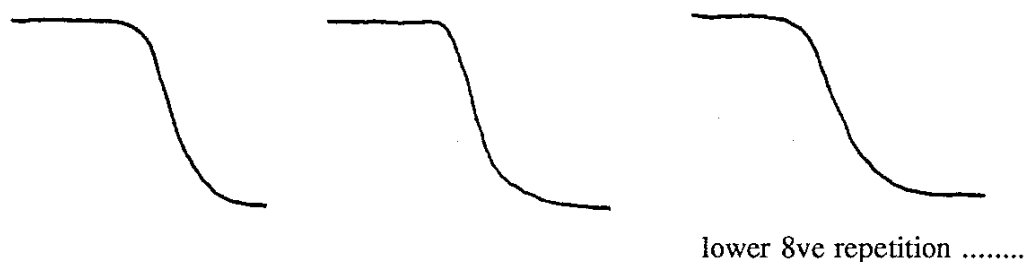
If one assumes that the descent described above is conceptually the same whether it appears in the upper or lower octave, the overall form of the *yunpu* melody may be described as 'cyclical'. In this case, the periodicity of the cycle is approximately equal to two text/rhythmic cycles (the last melodic cycle being incomplete). If one distinguishes between the upper and lower octave occurrence of the descent, however, the melody may be described as 'linear', consisting of several repetitions of a descent in the upper octave before it finally descends to the lower octave.⁹ It is useful to note that the status of the pitch g at the beginning of the last line of the transcription may change depending on how the melodic form is conceptualised. If it is conceived as cyclical, the g may be seen to be part of the articulation of the tonic f occurring at the end of the cycle. If the melody is conceived as linear, however, the g may be seen to occur at the beginning of the final descent to the lower octave. The two possible ways of conceiving the melody are shown in Example 4.5.

Regardless of which way one reads it, a comparison of ten different *yunpu* performances (appearing as Musical Notation 5 in R. Moyle 1979: 117-118) shows that the overall form of the melody is stable. The only difference exhibited by the ten performances is the third and fourth line of Example 4.1 may be repeated; that is, the number of repetitions of the melodic descent in the upper octave is variable before its final repeat in the lower octave.

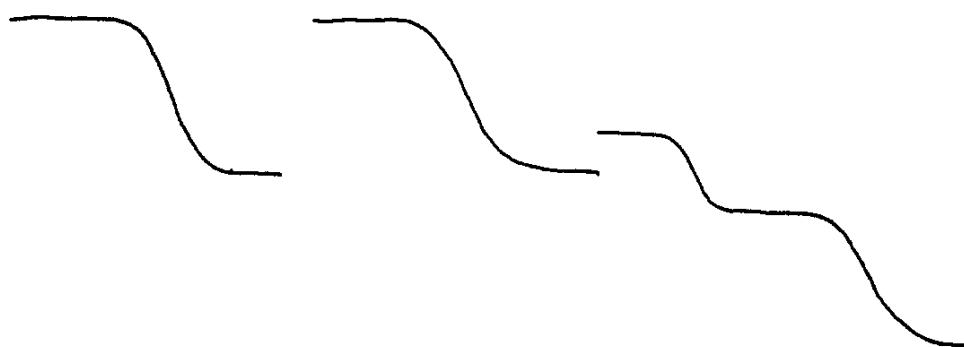
⁹ I follow Barwick's use of the terms 'cyclical' and 'linear' here; see Barwick 1989: 15-16.

Example 4.5. Two possible ways of conceiving the *yunpu* melody, cyclical and linear.

CYCLICAL



LINEAR



When compared to other central Australian melodies, the *yunpu* melody is relatively straightforward. Central Australian melodies may consist of a number of melodically distinct sections as well as exhibiting several different formal layouts. Example 4.6 sets out three different forms of the *Inma Ngintaka* melody (appearing in Barwick 1989: 14). The linear form begins with an introductory section in the upper pitch area, is followed by one or two descents over the range of a fifth (the example shows two descents), and finishes with a concluding section in the lower pitch area (ibid.: 15). A comparison of the linear and cyclical forms shows that they have much in common; both begin with the introductory section before descending once or twice to the tonic c. While the linear form ends with 'level centric movement in the lower pitch area', the cyclical form continues with a transitional section before it begins to repeat the original melodic sequence (ibid.: 15). Examination of the transposing cyclical form shows that it comprises 'successive downward transposition of a single melodic section descending over three (or rarely two) pitch areas . . . This

characteristic descent may here be thought of as abstracted from the absolute pitch placement and from the stretches of level centric movement that frame it in the other [linear and cyclical] melodic forms' (ibid.: 16).

Example 4.6. Three forms of the *Inma Ngintaka* melody (appearing as Figure 2 in Barwick 1989: 14).

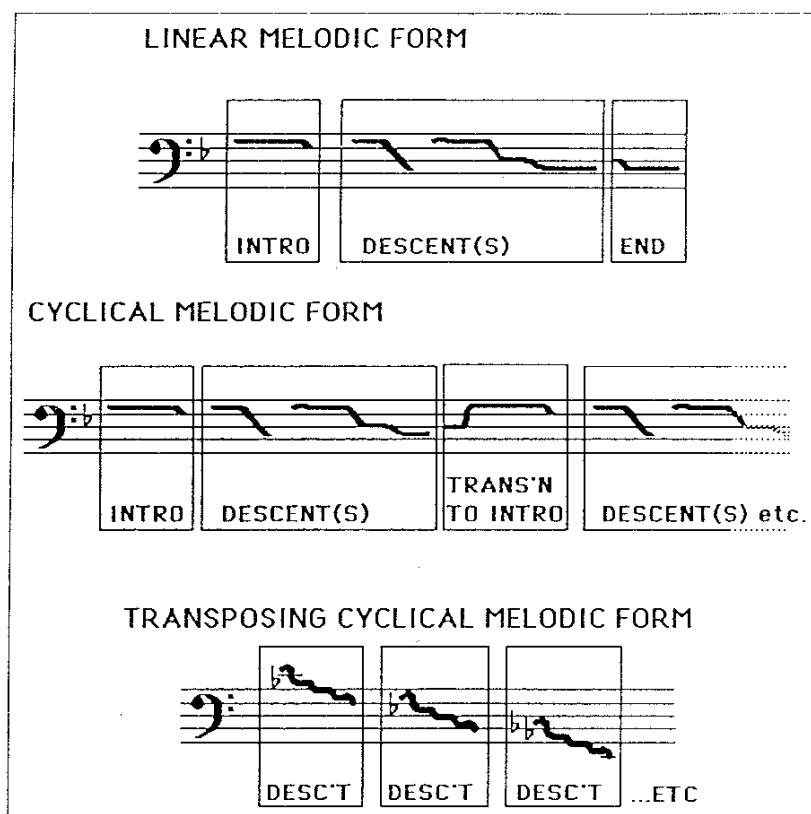


Figure 2
Examples of linear, cyclical, and transposing cyclical melodic form.

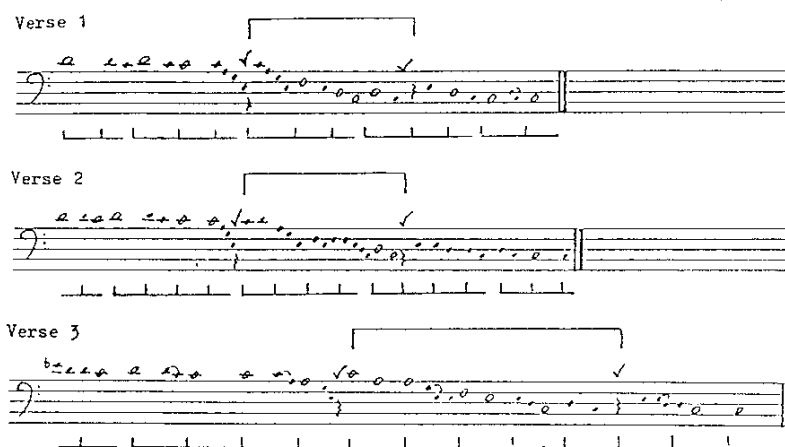
Let us return now to the question of the internal sectionalisation of the melody. Researchers use various criteria in this regard, such as melodic direction, breath intake, upward vocal glides (see Ellis 1985: 107), melodic repetition patterns and text structure. For example, Barwick (1989: 15) divides the three forms of the *ngintaka* melody into sections on the basis of melodic direction: 'each [form of the melody] can be subdivided into melodic sections defined by an upward leap in pitch, which in all cases coincides or almost coincides with a significant subdivision of the relevant text

... Ascents other than flexures between adjacent tones within one pitch area occur only between melodic sections'. Barwick (ibid.: 16) points out that McCardell defines his 'high-level melodic units' in the same way; that is, by the direction of the melody.

In his analysis of three Western Desert series, Tunstill (1987: 126) divides each melody into several sections on the basis of breath intakes. He states that 'a breath is always immediately followed by a rise in the melody, although not every melodic rise is immediately preceded by a breath' (ibid.). Example 4.7 (appearing in Tunstill 1987: 138) sets out the melodic contours of three *Ngiyari/Langka* verses.¹⁰ Tunstill divides each contour into three sections, the central section of which he brackets above each stave in the example. Tunstill refers to this central section of the melody as the 'central breath group' (ibid.: 126). (The example also indicates (below the staff) the placement

Example 4.7. Melodic contour in relation to breath groups and rhythmic-textual structure in three *Ngiyari/Langka* verses (appearing as Figure 8 in Tunstill 1987: 138).

Figure 8: Melodic Contour in Relation to Breath Groups and Rhythmic-Textual Structure in Three *Ngiyari/Langka* Verses



Source: Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music, recording of 15 September 1977, items 31, 16, 26 (verses 1-3). (See also Tunstill 1977: diagram 7).

Notated a major 3rd lower than sung.

¹⁰ The *Ngiyari/Langka* series is the same as that referred to by Ellis as *Langka* (see above p. 122).

of the text/rhythmic structure onto the melody for each performance (see further below).)

In the discussion of the *yunpu* melody undertaken above, I have used two slightly different sets of criteria to produce the two possible forms of the melody. While the criterion of melodic direction is used to establish melodic sections in both forms, in the cyclical form the repeating nature of the descent overrides the fact that the final descent may be conceived to begin with the pitch *g* at the beginning of the last line of the transcription.

In contrast, Richard Moyle divides up the *yunpu* melody on the basis of the placement onto the melody of the various *yunpu* texts. Example 4.8 (appearing as Example 39 in R. Moyle 1979: 97) sets out Moyle's sectionalisation of the *yunpu* melody. Moyle refers to this melodic construction as the 'basic melodic contour' (see further below). In the example, the thick bar lines signify the position of the beginning of each text/rhythmic cycle while the thin bar lines signify the position of text/rhythmic phrase boundaries. The bracketed section marked 'A' refers to the part of the melody which may be repeated in performance. An examination of the positions in the melody where Moyle's major melodic section boundaries occur (indicated by the thick bar lines) shows that they do not always coincide with significant rises in pitch. For example, the beginning of the first repetition of the melodic descent (defined by a leap in pitch from the tonic *f* to *d'*) occurs after the beginning of the third melodic section.

Example 4.8. Sectionalisation of the *yunpu* melody on the basis of the text/rhythmic structure (appearing as Example 39 in R. Moyle 1979: 97).



Example 39 Basic contour for *yunpu* songs.

I will return to the question of defining melodic section boundaries by reference to the text/rhythmic structure below (see p. 134). As has already been noted in relation to the text/rhythmic structure, I will argue that the structural components of text/rhythm and melody should be defined independently of each other. It will be shown that if these structures are defined in terms of each other, discussion of their inter-relationship risks circularity.

One other aspect of Example 4.8 which requires mention is the fact that the pitch *g* occurring just before the final descent to the lower octave in Example 4.1 has been deleted by Moyle in his construction of the basic melodic contour. Moyle (1979: 94) describes the basic melodic contour for each Pintupi series as follows:

... By reducing the contour of each individual song to a series of pitch changes and plotting these according to the rhythmic divisions of the word group... and also by eliminating those pitches or pitch sequences which are not found in a majority of songs, it is possible to produce a 'basic' melodic contour to which most of the songs will adhere...

Presumably if the pitch in question does not appear in Example 4.8, it does not occur in the majority of performances. An examination of Moyle's transcriptions of ten *yunpu* performances (ibid.: 117-118), however, shows that the pitch in question appears just before the fall to the lower octave in nine of the ten performances. I will return to Moyle's construction of basic melodic contours for each Pintupi series below (see p. 151-152).

The relationship between text and melody

A comparison of the three melodic descents in Example 4.1 shows that the relationship between the text and each descent is the same. Each descent begins at, or very close to, the same point in the text, namely within the first text phrase, and with the exception of the third repetition of the cycle, spans two complete text cycles. At the same time, the progression of the melody within each descent, in terms of which pitches occur within text phrases, is also the same. For example, although it begins slightly differently in each case, the first text phrase of each melodic cycle ends with movement from *d'*^b to *c'* (occurring an octave lower in the third melodic cycle). The

second text phrase similarly comprises movement between d' and c', while in the third, the melody descends to the tonic f. When present, the fourth, fifth and sixth text phrase comprise movement between the tonic f and the g above. Thus, within this one performance, each melodic descent exhibits the same relationship to the text.

Turning to the wider sample, Moyle maintains that all *yunpu* texts are set to the melody in the same way; and it is on the basis of this stable relationship between the various texts and the melody that he constructs the *yunpu* basic melodic contour (shown in Example 4.8). Thus regardless of the changes in the actual words and rhythms of the various texts, each text cycle and the phrases within it are apportioned the same pitches, and sequences of pitches, in the melody (1979: 167).

Not all central Australian songs and song series exhibit such a stable relationship. Barwick, commenting on text setting throughout the area states:

The parameters of flexibility in text/melody relationships appear to vary between different groups. In this respect, the Pitjantjatara, Antakarinya, Yankunytjatjara, and Pintupi music that has been studied by Ellis, Tunstall, and R. Moyle appears to have a much higher degree of regularity than that of the Alyawarra studied by R. Moyle and the Warlpiri studied by Wild (1984). (1989: 23)

As a point of comparison, Moyle finds in his investigation of Alyawarra music (1986) that songs which have cyclical melodic structures do not necessarily exhibit the same text/melody relationship from one occurrence of the melodic cycle to the next. This is because the repetition of the tonic at the end of the melodic cycle may be lengthened or shortened by one or two text phrases. The point in the text where the melody jumps up to recommence the melodic cycle will differ, therefore, from one repetition of the melodic cycle to the next. Similarly, in a discussion of the relationship between the various musical elements within a Warlpiri Yam *purlpapa* series,¹¹ Wild states:

Textual strings [text cycles], melodic rhythms, and accompaniment patterns are freely matched with the melodic descent of the series: the melodic descent may begin on any textual unit, and the accompaniment patterns and the point at which the accompaniment begins are chosen by the performers in each occurrence of the melodic descent. (1984: 196)

¹¹ For a description of this series see Wild 1984: 190. See also pp. 54-56 above.

4.3 Issues arising from analyses of central Australian music

Having exemplified the major features of 'central Australian style', I now turn to a discussion of several important methodological issues which occur in the literature. Let us begin with the issue of the definition of structural components.

The definition of text/rhythmic and melodic structures and the problem of circularity

In the previous section, it was shown that researchers define text/rhythmic and melodic structures in various ways. Some researchers define the structures in their own terms, while others have found it useful to turn to one structure to help define the formal boundaries in the other. We have seen, for example, that McCardell turns to the *mamu* melody to support text phrase divisions made on the basis of other criteria. We have also seen that Richard Moyle divides up the *yunpu* melody on the basis of *yunpu* text/rhythmic structures. I wish to argue here that when text/rhythm is defined in terms of the melody, and vice versa, a discussion of their inter-relationship risks circularity. Further, although the definition of one structure in terms of the other does not necessarily mean that the argument is circular, it does mean that the strength of the conclusions concerning text/melody relationships is significantly weakened (as in the case of McCardell's analysis of *mamu* and other Western Desert series).

In order to articulate the methodological problem outlined above, I have chosen Richard Moyle's analysis of a Pintupi *tingarri* series (see Moyle 1979: 76-95).¹² The series in question is significant as it forms the basis of Moyle's analytical method for the whole of the Pintupi repertoire.

¹² *Tingarri* songs and their associated rituals are secret and for initiated men only (see Moyle 1979: 26-27). Berndt (1964: 224) states that *tiṅgarri* refers to a group of mythical beings who traversed the Western Desert, particularly in the area of the Canning Stock Route; 'hundreds of songs relate their wanderings and allude to the rituals they introduced, often called by the name *gurangara*'.

The *tingarri* analysis

Let us begin with Moyle's description of rhythm.

Moyle (1979: 77) maintains that 'the key to the structural and conceptual organisation of Pintupi music appears to be its isorhythm'. He distinguishes between two levels of isorhythm: (i) an isorhythmic unit which is the same length as the text cycle (Moyle refers to the text cycle as the 'word group', *ibid.*); and (ii) subdivisions of the word group isorhythm which are themselves isorhythmic. Within the second level, Moyle distinguishes eight different types of isorhythm found in the *tingarri* series, as set out in Example 4.9 (appearing as Example 26 in Moyle *ibid.*: 83). Isorhythmic types 1 to 3 divide the rhythm of the word group into four explicit isorhythmic units, while types 4 to 7 divide it into two. The last, type 8, divides the word group into three, the first and third of which are the same. Moyle maintains that the divisions within the word group rhythm established on the basis of repetition patterns do not cut through words of the text; 'in each division, whole words are the linguistic units' (*ibid.*: 81). At the same time, however, Moyle claims no expertise in the area of song texts and offers little analysis of them. He comments: 'the subject of song texts is a thorny one, not just in matters of translation but even, in some cases, to the point of identifying individual words' (*ibid.*: 93).

Although only the first three isorhythmic types shown in Example 4.9 exhibit four explicit isorhythmic units, Moyle maintains that all eight types may be divided into four, stating that the redefined subdivisions similarly do not break up whole words of the text. Moyle's redefined subdivisions of isorhythmic types 4 to 8 appear in Example 4.10 (see 1979: 88).

Example 4.9. Types of isorhythmic organisation in *tingarri* songs (appearing as Example 26 in R. Moyle 1979: 83).

1 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

2 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

3 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

4 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

5 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

6 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

7 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

8 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

Example 26 Variety of isorhythmic organisation in *tingarri* songs.

Example 4.10. Changes to the internal division of isorhythmic types 4 to 8 (appearing in R. Moyle 1979: 88).

4 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

5 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

6 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

7 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

8 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

Significantly, Moyle's division of all eight *tingarri* isorhythmic types into four is made primarily by reference to the *tingarri* melody. In order to examine how he goes about this, let us return to the original divisions which were made on the basis of explicit isorhythms (see Example 4.9). Moyle begins by plotting the boundaries of the first three isorhythmic types, that is those which exhibit four explicit isorhythmic divisions, against the *tingarri* melody (written out in terms of pitch changes only) as shown in three different performances (see Example 4.11, appearing as Example 25 in Moyle, *ibid.*: 83). In the example, Moyle vertically aligns the three melodies so that the melodic similarities within each isorhythmic division can be seen. Moyle describes the similarities as 'striking'.

Example 4.11. Melodic contours of three *tingarri* performances with isorhythmic units in vertical alignment (appearing as Example 25 in R. Moyle 1979: 83).



Example 25 Notated melodic outlines of three *tingarri* songs with isorhythmic units in vertical alignment.

Moyle then superimposes all eight isorhythmic types onto the melody (see Example 4.12) stating that

The similarities observed earlier between the melodic contours of the three examples whose word groups each contained four isorhythmic units are evident here too, though in a more generalised sense due to the apparent disparity of word group divisions - some have four, others two, and one other three. (1979: 81)

Example 4.12. Melodic contours of eight *tingarri* songs with isorhythmic units in vertical alignment (appearing as Example 28 in Moyle 1979: 85).



Example 28 Notated melodic outlines of eight *tingarri* songs with the respective isorhythmic units in vertical alignment.

Moyle suggests, therefore, that the divisions of types 4 to 8, namely those which exhibit two and three explicit isorhythmic units, may be 'refined' as follows:

By referring to the melodic movement in each successive division of examples [types] 1-3 in the original transcriptions . . . it is possible to subdivide each of the present divisions [that is types 4 to 7] into two to give a result in which the melodic movement matches closely, if not always exactly, that of each of the four-part divisions of these first three examples . . .

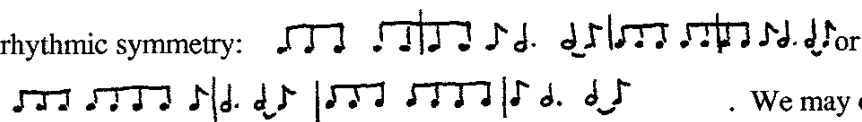
It will be observed that subdivision in this manner does not break the rule observed earlier of treating whole words in the word group as the linguistic unit within each rhythmic unit. (ibid.: 88)

And a little later:

Subdivision of number [type] 8 in the same manner, and still retaining whole words as the linguistic unit, is also possible . . . (ibid.)

Moyle offers two other pieces of information to support these subdivisions.

First, he maintains that the redefined subdivisions, as shown in Example 4.10 above, do not break up whole words. Moyle offers no morphological analysis, however, to substantiate this claim (see above). Secondly, he points out that in several cases the redefined subdivisions create rhythmic symmetry. For example, in isorhythmic type 4 subdivisions 1 and 3, and 2 and 4 are identical. Those redefined subdivisions, however, are not rhythmically differentiated. For example, although type 4 is ABAB in form, one could redefine A and B by shifting the barline without affecting the rhythmic symmetry:



. We may conclude therefore that in five of eight isorhythmic types (types 4 to 8) the division of each word group into four has been made primarily by reference to the melody.

The circularity of Moyle's argument becomes evident when we turn to his discussion of the *tingarri* melody and the way in which it is regulated by the isorhythmic divisions within each word group.

. . . despite differences in the rhythmic construction of each of the eight examples, melodic construction is identical, involving the division of each word group the same number of times in each song, and the allocation of a particular portion of the overall melodic contour to each division. In this particular song series there are four such divisions, but although the precise number may differ in other series, the above statement appears to outline the basis for the structural framework of Pintupi music as a whole. Whether or not such a situation should be labelled isorhythm, or any other term, seems relatively unimportant; what *is* important, however, is that:

- (a) the rhythm of the word group as a whole appears to consist of four units;
- (b) regardless of whether or not isorhythm occurs in two or more of these units, the four divisions function identically in each individual song - to separate the melodic contour into compartments and thus regulate melodic movement. (1979: 89)

Moyle's compartmentalisation of the *tingarri* melody is set out in Example 4.13 (appearing as Example 34, ibid.: 94).

Example 4.13. *Tingarri* basic melodic contour (appearing as Example 34 in R. Moyle 1979: 94).



Example 34 Basic melodic contour for *tingarri* songs.

Thus we have seen that in the case of isorhythmic types 4 to 8 Moyle divides each word group into four primarily by reference to the melody, and then compartmentalises the melody by reference to those same divisions. This is truly circular.

I wish to point out here that the validity of Moyle's statements concerning the regular intersection of those texts exhibiting four explicit isorhythmic units in the word group with the melody in the *tingarri* series is without question. What is questionable is the validity of Moyle's attempts to force a structure which holds true for only a number of *tingarri* songs onto all *tingarri* songs.

Although space precludes further discussion here, I would suggest that McCardell's analysis of *Inma Mamu* and other Western Desert series also suffers from the fact that in a significant number of cases verse structure is established primarily by reference to the melody. A problem arises when McCardell states that texts of similar structure are set to the *mamu* tonal pattern in the same way. Again, it is not that those texts exhibiting explicit divisions in each text cycle cannot be shown to relate to the melody in a particular way; it is that all texts in a series cannot be shown to relate to the melody in a particular way.

Let us now turn to the second methodological issue, namely that researchers generally attempt to describe structural regularities within related groups of songs, possibly overlooking potentially significant 'irregularities' (Barwick 1989).

Regularity of structure within related groups of songs

Barwick has recently pointed out that most analyses of central Australian music are 'descriptions of regularities', whose usefulness 'lies in piecing together a more general picture of variability of Central Australian music, whether this applies to a

single geographical/linguistic area (as in R. Moyle's analyses of Pintupi and Alyawarra music), or whether it is to arrive at characteristics peculiar to particular song series, as in Tunstill's work. There is no doubt that such analytical work has revealed substantial differences in the degree and type of regularity in text/melody relationships' (1989: 23).

Barwick goes on to say that in their attempts to arrive at such universally-applicable models, however, researchers have tended to disregard potentially significant anomalies. She shows, for example, that in Tunstill's analysis of three Western Desert series (1987), the general rule formulated by him to describe the setting of the various texts to each of the three melodies does not always hold.

The 'absolute' time duration for *nyiinyii* of 'about 8 seconds' appears from the examples presented in the accompanying cassette to range from 6.1 to 8.9 seconds, and Tunstill indicates that the other rules proposed for melodic setting of *amiwara* and *ngiyari/langka* apply only to 'most' of the verses (a figure of 81% is given for *amiwara*). (ibid.)

Similarly, although Moyle claims that Pintupi music exhibits a unity of structural organisation Barwick points out that 'no one series appears to be entirely consistent in this respect' (ibid.: 24).

In this section, I wish to describe one way in which Moyle ignores significant data in order to articulate a set of structural rules which holds for the entire Pintupi repertoire.

As was the case with the *tingarri* series described above, Moyle found that most Pintupi series were composed of word groups which could always be divided into the same number of isorhythmic units. In some series (such as the *tingarri* series), all word groups could be shown to exhibit a four-fold isorhythmic structure, while in others (such as the *yunpu* series) the word groups exhibited a three-fold isorhythmic structure. Due to this uniformity of text structure, moreover, Moyle found that songs within a series exhibited an identical relationship between texts and melodies. In a similar way to that shown above, Moyle was able to construct a 'basic melodic contour' for each series which outlined the regular intersection of the uniform text structure with the melody. Significantly, Moyle found that in those series which exhibited a cyclical melodic structure the melodic cycle generally spanned whole

numbers of word groups. This meant that the beginning of each melodic cycle coincided with the same word of the text.

In contrast to the majority of Pintupi series whose texts exhibited either a three-fold or four-fold isorhythmic structure, Moyle found that several series consisted of texts whose word groups exhibited different numbers of isorhythmic units; within the one series, some word groups divided into three, while others divided into four. Turning to the melodies of these series, Moyle found that their overall form remained the same, regardless of the number of isorhythmic units within the word group. For example, let us suppose that a melody consists of several repetitions of a melodic cycle which spans eight isorhythmic units. In Pintupi music, that melodic cycle will always span eight isorhythmic units, regardless of the number of isorhythmic units in the word group. Turning to the inter-relationship of text and melody in the same hypothetical series, we find that as some of the texts exhibit a three-fold isorhythmic structure while others exhibit a four-fold structure, two different structures of text *vis-à-vis* the melodic cycle occur. Those verses whose texts have a four-fold isorhythmic structure will exhibit a stable relationship between text and melody from one repetition of the melodic cycle to the next, while those whose texts have a three-fold isorhythmic structure will not.

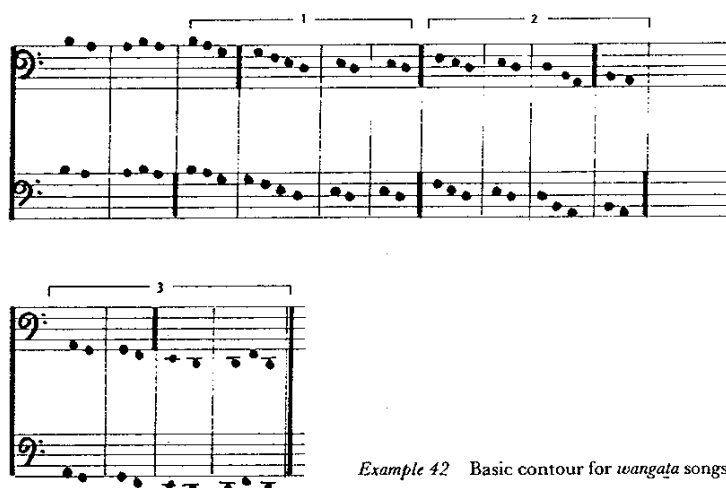
One such series whose texts exhibit both four-unit and three-unit isorhythmic structures is the *wangata* series.¹³ Example 4.14 (appearing as Example 42, 1979: 98) shows two basic melodic contours for the series. The first reflects a three-unit isorhythmic structure, while the second reflects a four-unit structure.

Moyle divides the *wangata* melody into three sections (indicated in the example by the numbers 1, 2 and 3), 'the third being a lower octave repetition of the first, and the second providing a link between the other two' (ibid.). Moyle's sectionalisation of the melody on melodic grounds, however, is not entirely satisfactory. Although Moyle

¹³ Moyle (1979: 20) categorises the *wangata* as an *yilpintji*, that is a men's 'love magic' ceremony.

maintains that the third section of the melody is a repetition of the first, examination of the contour shows that the third section starts on the pitch a, whereas the first section starts on b. I would suggest that the *wangata* melody is cyclical, consisting of a melodic descent from b to d which is followed by a smaller descent from f to d. The repetition of the cycle occurs in the lower octave. Nevertheless, concerning the relationship between the text and melody, Moyle points out that 'only in those four part isorhythms does the lower octave repetition of the melody [melodic section 3] commence with the same word as for the start of the upper octave section [melodic section 1]' (ibid.).

Example 4.14. Two basic contours for the *wangata* series, exhibiting three and four-fold divisions of the word group respectively (appearing as Example 42 in R. Moyle, 1979: 98).



Example 42 Basic contour for *wangata* songs.

As shown above, Moyle maintains that a significant feature of Pintupi musical style is that all songs of a series exhibit the same relationship between the various texts and the melody. Those series such as the *wangata* whose texts have two distinct isorhythmic structures are problematic, however, as they exhibit a variable text/melody relationship. Moyle attempts to explain this situation in terms of the songs' origins. He states that those Pintupi series exhibiting a variable relationship between text and melody (*wangata*, *tingarri*, *mungamunga*, *wantjiwantji* and *ngalungku*) are not owned in their entirety by the Pintupi, and that the songline extends beyond the geographical

boundaries of Pintupi territory into neighbouring territories. Moyle postulates, therefore, that songs in those series which exhibit anomalous text/melody structures 'are, or were at some time in the past, non-Pintupi, in terms of the geographical territory referred to in their texts or in the associated sections of the myths' (1979: 167). Concerning the *wangata* series, Moyle suggests that songs with four part structures 'are considered Pintupi, while those with 3-part structures are considered non-Pintupi'.

Thus, in order to establish one set of structural rules for the Pintupi repertoire, Moyle excludes songs which exhibit different text/melody relationships from the majority of songs in each series, arguing that they are non-Pintupi in origin. In his more recent discussion of Alyawarra music (1986), Moyle himself appears to re-assess the notion of the structural unity which he put forward in his examination of Pintupi music. Commenting on the structures exhibited by the music of several central Australian groups, Moyle (1986: 256) states that Pintupi musical structure is 'basically 4-unit, with up to a third of the songs in any series being 3-unit'. Although not stated explicitly, those verses exhibiting a different isorhythmic structure from that found in the majority of songs within a series, which in the earlier Pintupi analysis had been excluded, now appear to be included. Moyle (*ibid.*: 257) still cites the earlier theory in attempting to explain '3-unit songs within predominantly 4-unit structures'; that is, '[in the Pintupi repertoire] there was a conformity of boundaries of territory and musical structure'. He points out, however, that in the Alyawarra sample 'such conformity exists in some cases but not in others' (*ibid.*).

In contrast, Barwick (1989) has recently explored the type of variation which occurs in the setting of texts to the *ngintaka* melody. In doing so she suggests that we may come to 'a better understanding of the parameters of flexibility of the musical system' (*ibid.*: 14). Concerning variability in the measurement in terms of units of the text/rhythmic structure of the 'main descent'¹⁴ she states that

¹⁴ Barwick points out that both the linear and cyclical forms of the *ngintaka* melody (see Example 4.6 above) 'may include either one or two descents covering the whole tonal range

In my analysis of *ngintaka*, I have found that there is a vast amount of variation in the precise details of the melodic setting, even though in all the performances the realisation or manifestation of melodic settings of texts is carried out with reference to the textual criteria outlined earlier [see Example 4.4 above]. Although one might validly generalise from this 'data' to claim that the most common melodic realisation sets three text lines over the main descent (see Ellis and Barwick 1987), it is not possible to arrive at a single schema that covers all performances in the sample because in different performances the melodic setting may take into account either *different numbers* of rhythmic/textual units (eg some performances show a preference for four rather than three text lines over the main descent), or *different hierarchical divisions* of the text (eg some performances show a preference to measure rhythmic segments rather than text lines). (1989: 20-21)

Barwick goes on to show in some detail the variation found in the setting of 'fast doubled texts' (see Barwick 1989: 19) over the main descent of linear melodies. Not only do different performances 'conserve regularities at different levels of the rhythmic/textual hierarchy' (ibid.: 21) - for example, in the examples given the main descent spans either '3 text lines plus one beat', '5 segments' or '12 beats' - but the numbers of units within those levels may also vary. Barwick gives the example of two performances whose main descents both span twelve beats. In one case, these twelve beats equal six rhythmic segments. Barwick found in the same ceremony a performance whose main descent similarly equals six segments, here measuring eighteen (and not twelve) beats (see Barwick 1989: 21-22 for a more detailed discussion of the measurement of the main descent).

Rather than ignore the significant anomalies found in the *Ngintaka* sample, or suggest they are 'irregularities' in a system of 'regularities' (see Barwick's discussion of Sutton, ibid.: 12, 27), Barwick proposes that the variability of the system is the outcome of performers' decisions made 'in the course of performing the melodic layout of a particular text' (ibid.:25). These decisions may not be conscious; Aboriginal music is taught through repeated performance over many years, rather than through a theoretical explanatory model of the musical system. Barwick suggests that variability in the text/melody fit is not chaotic in nature; on the contrary, it is 'systematic in the

of approximately a perfect fifth'. She continues to say that the two descents have 'different text setting characteristics' and that 'it is clearly the second melodic descent that corresponds to the single descent in one descent melodies: these have accordingly been labelled the "main descent"' (1989: 15).

sense that it is constrained by the interplay of hierarchical boundaries between the rhythmic and melodic dimensions of the music' (ibid.). Hence, irregularities at one level of the hierarchical system may highlight regularities at another level.

Barwick also suggests that the variable nature of the system, requiring the constant shifting of attention from one level to another, paradoxically keeps it intact.

I suggest that one reason for the success of a non-literate culture in conserving such fine detail is that each act of performance involves constant checking at all levels of the rhythmic and melodic hierarchies in the course of making decisions about fitting the text on the melody. This feat may be easier to perform than it is to analyse, because only one decision need be made at any one point in the performance. In other words, it is the very flexibility of the system of textual and melodic relationship that promotes the conservation of what may seem to be very inflexible rhythmic and melodic structures. (1989: 27)

Barwick's response to the variability of structure in the *Ngintaka* sample has been not to ignore anomalous structures, but to explore the type of variation exhibited by them (1989: 21). Barwick's approach from a performance perspective does much more than simply come to terms with the parameters of flexibility within the system; it attempts to articulate the musical processes, rather than simply describe the structures which those processes create. One is reminded of the paradigmatic shift in oral literature studies brought about by Parry and Lord's discussion of the Homeric epic. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were no longer perceived as static texts, but examples of a highly creative, constantly evolving tradition. Barwick's model raises important questions concerning the appropriateness of analytical models which give the perception of a static musical tradition, in which performances differing from a fixed form are perceived to be 'irregular' or 'incorrect'.

Let us now turn to the third issue arising in the literature. This concerns central Australian melody.

Melodic variability and performers' perceptions of melodic sameness and difference

The third issue arising in the literature which I wish to discuss concerns researchers' attitudes to the question of melodic variation and performers' statements concerning melodic sameness and difference. Ellis states that

In the long songlines that tell of the Dreamtime ancestors, the melody is supposed to cross tribal boundaries and follow the ancestors' original journey. It is difficult to identify the essentials of performances of the one song in different areas and to be able to say without hesitation that the same melody is used. (1985: 106)

Sometimes melodies which appear to the outsider to be similar are said by performers to be different, and at other times melodies which appear to be distinct are said by performers to be the same (ibid.: 105). The *ngintaka* sample is a good example of the latter situation. We have seen above (p. 129) that there are three different forms of the *ngintaka* melody, linear, cyclical and transposing cyclical, and that within the linear and cyclical forms there may be one or two descents. Moreover, these melodic forms are spread over several differently named ceremonies (see Ellis and Barwick 1987: 45).

In addition, Ellis shows that even those melodies which performers identify to be the same and which are recognisably the same to an outsider may exhibit melodic variation from one performance to the next.

In the Langka series we have been examining in this chapter [Ellis 1985, Chapter 4], the melodies of the small songs throughout the ceremony are virtually identical, and are said by performers to be the same, yet to look at any small song [song item] in musical transcription is to find it differing melodically in many respects from the preceding one. (1985: 105-106)

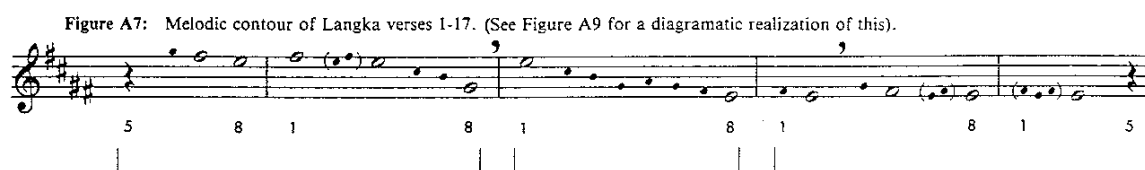
If we return to the *Mamu* performance in Example 4.2 (see p. 120), an examination of pitches occurring at identical points in the melodic cycle (beginning on each new line of the transcription) shows that there is likewise a degree of variability. For example, three pitches (c', d and e) occur at the beginning of the text cycle, two pitches ($b\frac{7}{2}$ and f) occur at the beginning of the second text phrase *mamunyinyi*, and three pitches ($b\frac{7}{2}$, a and c') occur at the beginning of the third text phrase *lumaluma*. Nevertheless, the overall shape of the melodic cycle is maintained.

In this section I wish to outline approaches to the types of melodic variability outlined above - variability in overall melodic form as well as at a more detailed level of melodic construction - which have been adopted by three researchers, namely Ellis, McCardell and Richard Moyle.

Example 4.15 (appearing as Figure A7, Ellis 1985: [219]) is the *Inma Langka* melodic contour, arrived at from thirty four consecutive performances of songs from

the series (1983: 139). Ellis divides the melodic contour of *Langka* into three sections (indicated below the staff): 'The first section identifies the upper main notes; the second . . . contains the main melodic descent; and the third section identifies the final note' (1985: 104). The numbers below the staff refer to the position of each text cycle in relation to the melody.

Example 4.15. *Inma Langka* melodic contour (appearing as Figure A7 in Ellis 1985: [219]).



Ellis argues that although the beginning and end may vary considerably from one performance to the next, it is the central section of the melody which is recognisably the same to an outsider. Ellis offers two pieces of evidence from series other than *Langka* to support the argument.

The first is based on the *Urumpula* series. Ellis maintains that, although the songline crosses several tribal and musical stylistic boundaries, performers say that it has the same melody. Example 4.16 (appearing as Figure A8 in Ellis 1985: [219]) shows three versions of the *Urumpula* melodic contour: the first is an Aranda version, while the second and third are Arabana and Antakarinya versions respectively. Ellis points out that although the beginning and end of the contour differ from version to version, the central descending section remains the same. Examination of the three versions shows that the part of the melody which remains the same is not restricted to melodic section 2; much of melodic section 3 is also the same for all three versions.

Example 4.16. Three versions of the *Urumbula* melodic contour (appearing as Figure A8 in Ellis 1985: [219]).

Figure A8: Shows three different versions of the *Urumbula* series. They conform closely to the one melodic shape despite the fact that they cross tribal boundaries, have different performers, different texts and different rhythms. The melodic shape here is, presumably, the sameness of this melody, the "taste" of *Urumbula*. It would not have been possible to identify the "sameness" of this melody without applying the analytical techniques outlined in chapter 4.



The second piece of evidence from outside the *Langka* series derives from several performances of a women's restricted song. 'It is clear from all the examples that Melodic Section 2 . . . constitutes the essence of the melody for this particular song, and in a few brief examples, little more than this is sung' (1983: 142).

Ellis's identification of the central descending section of the melody is significant, as it is in this section of the *Langka* contour that she describes regularities in the relationship between the text and the melody.

For Ellis, Western Desert songs are intrinsically associated with the creative power of the Dreaming. Ellis maintains that Aboriginal ceremonies have the potential to alter an individual's perception of time 'in order to re-evaluate real time and the individual's place in it' (1984: 183). An important way of effecting this perceptual change is by the correct interlocking of various structures in performance. She maintains that in the *Inma Langka* songs, this interlocking occurs between the text and the melody at the level of the segment (ibid.: 173). Although the interlocking of text and melody at the level of the segment appears to occur throughout the *Langka* melody, Ellis centres her discussion on Melodic Section 2.

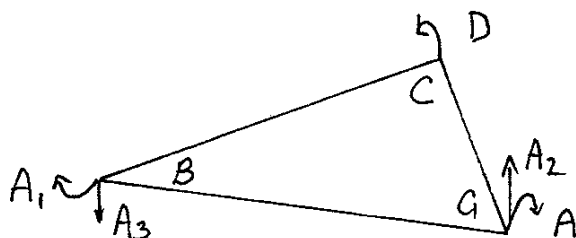
The crucial identifying section seems to be the middle descending section, which in all the material I have so far examined, falls over *four rhythmic* segments (unless the text has only three segments), even if the division of the rhythmic presentation of the text covers six or eight segments. As the text is always based on a couplet, either one of the lines of the text may commence this descending passage. (1984: 181)

Due to the fact that the duration of the text, and rhythmic segments within it, may vary from one song to the next, the duration of the melodic sections and individual pitches within those sections may also vary. In response to the question of the sameness of a melodic contour throughout a songline, Ellis suggests that it is the proportion of time spent on particular parts of the melody which remains the same (see Ellis 1985: [221], Figure A9).

Ellis' approach to the *Langka* melody has important ramifications for her later work in collaboration with Barwick, and relates closely to Tunstall's analyses of three Western Desert series. In all cases, a section of the melody is isolated which in turn forms the basis for the researchers' description of regularities of text setting. In *Ngintaka* the particular section of the melody so identified is the descent which normally falls over the range of a fifth, while in the three series analysed by Tunstall it is the 'central breath group'. Similarly, the analysis of the relationship between text and melody in the *Bulu* series appearing in Chapter 5 (see below p. 190 foll.) centres on the measurement of the central section of the melody (section 2) in terms of units of the text/rhythmic structure.

In attempting to explain variability in pitches at comparable points in a melody from one performance to the next, McCardell adopts a linguistic model while Richard Moyle adopts a statistical model. McCardell suggests, for example, that pitch differences occurring at similar points in the *Inma Mamu* melody from one performance to the next are perceived by performers to be the same, by virtue of the sameness of their syntactic position in the overall melodic cycle. McCardell (1976: 86) represents the syntactic, that is grammatical, units of the melody for *Inma Mamu* and songs constructed on the same tonal pattern by the following diagram.

Example 4.17. Syntactical structure of the melody belonging to *Inma Mamu* and several other series (appearing in McCardell 1976: 86).



Apart from the stable tonic *g*, the slightly less stable *c'*, and the unstable *b* (varying between *b* ^h and *b* ^v) (represented inside the triangle by *G*, *C* and *B* respectively), he distinguishes between five ornamental pitch areas (represented outside the triangle by *A*, *A*₁, *A*₂, *A*₃, *D* and a series of arrows). He states that the note names 'are not meant to represent absolute pitches but rather, taken as a whole, relationships between pitches' (ibid.). McCardell distinguishes between *A*, *A*₁, *A*₂ and *A*₃ on the basis of their position in the melodic cycle. 'Though etically similar (i.e., sounding at about the same pitch) these . . . manifestations must be classed as separate emic units on account of their differing functions depending on the context' (1976: 89). A similar example in English is the distinction between the definite article 'the' as it occurs before a vowel, and the old English second person object pronoun 'thee'. Their semantic value is determined by their syntactic position. Similarly, although the actual pitch *c'* may occur as the *A*₂ unit, it would not be confused with the *C* unit, because its position is identical to the *a* of *A*₂ and not the *c'* of *C*.

In contrast, we have seen above that in his construction of basic melodic contours for Pintupi series, Richard Moyle excludes pitches or pitch sequences which do not occur in the majority of performances in order to produce a melodic contour to which 'most of the songs will adhere' (1979: 94). Moyle's approach, however, precludes any detailed discussion of the parameters of melodic flexibility, since it

removes the very data which may be significant in that discussion. Consequently, his model gives the overall impression of regularity and fixity.

The relationship between analytical methods and the results they produce

The fourth and final issue which I wish to discuss concerns the relationship between the results of research and the analytical perspectives which have produced those results. The discussion of central Australian song undertaken thus far has undoubtedly created a picture of a music resembling a mosaic of extraordinary diversity. Due to the fact, however, that each researcher has brought to the area their own analytical approaches, shaped by particular theoretical backgrounds, it is difficult to decide the extent to which this musical mosaic is a result of actual differences in the music or differences in the analytical approaches. Ellis and Barwick (1987: 42) articulate the problem as follows:

There is sufficient evidence to indicate that many formal properties of the music are held in common across this area [central Australia] (for example, isorhythm, flexible descending melodic contours). However, there have been considerable difficulties in generalising about the relationship between musics from different areas because of the variety of ways in which these formal structures are interrelated in any one songline; the complexity of the musical system is such that the use of different methodologies, terminologies and analytical techniques by different researchers working on similar, or identical, songlines may completely obscure the similarities of the samples.

Without doubt, the different methodologies adopted by researchers have contributed to the picture of complexity and diversity exhibited by central Australian songs. Barwick (1989: 23) has shown, for example, how Ellis (1984, 1985) and Tunstill (1987) adopt slightly different criteria to establish significant boundaries in the melody of the *Ngiyari/Langka* series; this in turn affects their findings concerning the measurement of the central section of the melody in terms of the number of text/rhythmic units. Ellis shows that the central 'identifying' section of the melody measures one complete text/rhythmic cycle (unless the text/rhythmic cycle comprises more than four rhythmic segments, in which case it measures four rhythmic segments) (see Example 4.15 above), while Tunstill finds that the 'central breath group' spans one complete text/rhythmic cycle plus the next 'phrase' (see Example 4.7 above).

We have also seen in Section 4.2 that when the methods adopted by one researcher are applied to a group of songs described by another researcher quite different results may emerge. For example, McCardell used the fact that in Western Desert songs the melody often jumps down an octave to help define the text cycle boundary. When this criterion was used in relation to the *yunpu* performance in Example 4.1, however, we found that the position of the text cycle boundary, as determined by Richard Moyle, changed. Similarly, Barwick and McCardell have used melodic direction to determine structural boundaries within melodies in the repertoires they were studying. When this criterion was used in relation to the *yunpu* melody, we found that melodic section boundaries, as determined by Richard Moyle, also changed. This change to the internal sectionalisation of the melody, moreover, affects the way in which text setting in the *yunpu* series is conceived.

Nevertheless, the evidence showing that the complexity and diversity of central Australian style is in fact a result of the music itself is overwhelming. We have seen above that regardless of differing methodological approaches the morphology of the structural components of songs varies considerably throughout the area, as does the way in which those components intersect in performance. Concerning texts, for example, some series exhibit clear-cut phrase boundaries while others do not. In addition, some series exhibit uniformity of text structure - in terms of the number of phrases per text cycle - while others show significant variability in this regard. Concerning melodies, we have seen that some series exhibit one relatively stable melodic form while others show several distinct forms.

In order to highlight the diversity of structural inter-relationships exhibited by central Australian music, I outline here various ways in which texts are set to one particular type of melody, namely the cyclical melody. Cyclical melodies are found throughout central Australia. It appears, however, that the fitting of texts to those melodies differs from one particular melody to the next. For example, in Alyawarra music Moyle maintains that melodic cycles span a variable number of isorhythmic units and may begin at different points in the text/rhythmic cycle. In Pintupi music,

however, melodic cycles span a fixed number of isorhythmic units and generally begin at the same point in the text/rhythmic cycle. In those series exhibiting cyclical melodies described by McCardell, although the number of rhythmic phrases per melodic cycle varies, as does the internal composition of the melodic cycle, the beginnings of melodic cycles always coincide with the beginnings of rhythmic cycles; that is, the actual form of the melody - in terms of the numbers of rhythmic phrases - varies, but the melodic cycle begins at the same point in each text (1980: 20). Lastly, Tunstill maintains that in *Inma Nyiinyi*, the central breath group comprising one melodic cycle is constructed by reference to absolute measures of time; that is, without reference to the text/rhythmic structure. The most detailed discussion of variability in text/melody intermeshing within the one series appears in Barwick (1988, 1989).

I wish to point out here that it is partly because of the differences in the music in the area that researchers have had to adopt differing methodological approaches when describing particular repertoires of music. That is, the methods can be seen to be generated, in part at least, by the particularities of the music itself.

4.4 Conclusions

In the introduction to this chapter, it was stated that the discussion to be undertaken in the body of the chapter had two broad objectives. In this conclusion to Chapter 4, I wish to address the first of those objectives, namely the establishment of an appropriate model to describe the formal elements of *nurlu* songs. The second objective, namely the placement of *nurlu* songs in the overall context of central Australian musical style, will be addressed in the conclusion to Chapter 5.

Section 4.3 has raised four specific issues in relation to the literature concerning central Australian music. On the basis of that discussion, I would suggest the following for the *Bulu* analysis.

Concerning the first issue, namely the definition of text/rhythmic and melodic structures and the problem of circularity, I have argued that it is important to maintain the independence of the text and rhythm versus the melody. Consequently, in the

analysis of the *Bulu* songs which follows, formal divisions in the text have been defined in the first place by rhythmic criteria (long durations mark the ends of lines, see p. 159). It will be shown, moreover, that those divisions made on the basis of rhythmic criteria, are confirmed by text morphology (see p. 162). Formal divisions in the melody have been made primarily by reference to several statements made by Paddy Roe. It will be shown that those divisions in turn are melodically differentiated (see below p. 186 foll).

Concerning the second issue, namely regularity of structure within related groups of songs, it has been shown that it is important to incorporate all performances in one's analysis because it is those performances that one is tempted to exclude which might offer valuable insights into the workings of the musical system. In the following analysis of the *Bulu* series, it will be shown that although the structure of the melody is relatively stable from one performance to the next, the setting of the various texts to that melody is inherently flexible. Although texts exhibiting similar structures are generally set to the melody in the same way, such is the variability of text structure within *Bulu* that no one set of rules can adequately explain all situations. Rather than exclude irregular settings, or manipulate data to fit into a universal set of rules, the analysis of the *Bulu* series starts from Barwick's premise that 'each performance is a creative act in that it is a unique realisation of the twin conceptual structures of text and melody' (1989: 21).

Concerning the third issue, namely melodic variability and performers' perceptions of melodic sameness and difference, it has been shown that there have been several different approaches to melodic variation. In the *Bulu* series, the melody exhibits neither the degree of variability in overall melodic form nor the same degree of variability of pitches occurring at comparable points of the melodic cycle as do some of those melodies described by other researchers. It will be shown, nevertheless, that in *Bulu* pitches vary from one performance of the melody to the next, albeit to a lesser extent than, for example, *Inma Mamu*. Rather than exclude those pitches from the

analysis as does Moyle, they are incorporated into the overall discussion of flexibility within the system.

Concerning the fourth issue, namely the relationship between analytical methods and the results they produce, it has been shown that the diversity of central Australian music is not only due to differing methodological approaches but is a fact of the music itself. The *Bulu* analysis that follows this chapter can be seen therefore to shed further light on a diverse musical tradition albeit from the perspective of the far northwest.

CHAPTER 5

MUSICAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the formal aspects of two performances of George Dyurjgayan's *nurlu*, recorded in the field in 1985. On the basis of the discussion undertaken in Chapter 4, this analysis conceives text/rhythm and melody in the *Bulu* performances to be two separate structures, each of which may be defined independently of the other. Section 5.2 describes the hierarchically ordered text/rhythm component, while Section 5.3 describes the *Bulu* melody. Section 5.4 examines the variety of ways in which these two distinct structures intersect in performance. Section 5.5 returns to the question of the extent to which the formal elements of the *Bulu* songs may be seen to be part of a wider central Australian tradition. Finally, Section 5.6 sets out the musical notations for the seventeen *Bulu* verses which form the basis for the analytical description undertaken below.

5.2 Text and rhythm

The text cycle

The text of each *Bulu* song comprises several repetitions of a fixed string of words called here the 'text cycle'. In Musical Notation 1 (see p. 215), for example, the text cycle is made up of the following words: *wanydyalmirri yinjanydyina mindi yarrabanydyina*. Comparison of recordings of *nurlu* songs which accompany dancing with those that do not suggests that the number of repetitions of the text cycle may be affected by the presence or absence of dance; songs within danced performances tend to exhibit a greater number of repetitions of the text cycle and are longer than those which do not accompany dance. The *Bulu* performances discussed in this thesis did

not accompany dancing. The number of repetitions of the text cycle per song performance ranges from one to eight; most songs, however, comprise between five and seven.

The rhythmic pattern

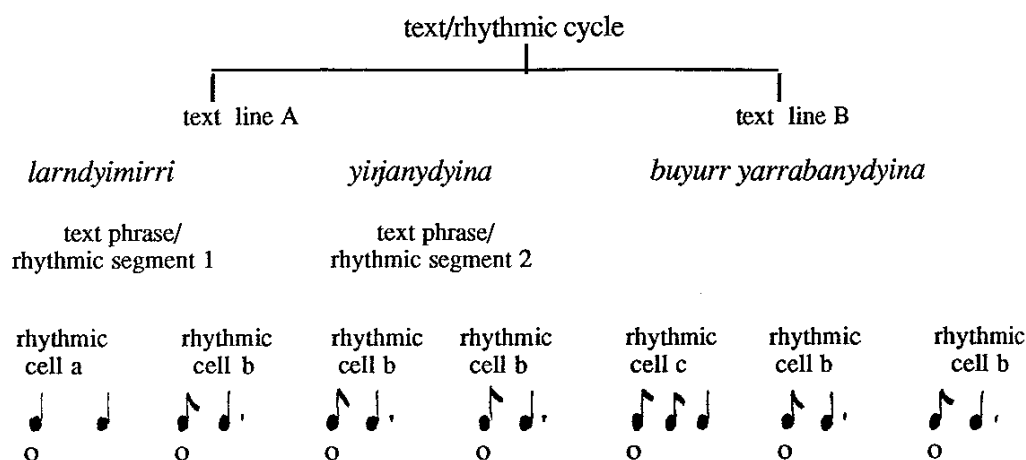
In performance, the syllables of the text are enunciated rhythmically. I follow Ellis and Barwick (1987: 43, 48) in calling the rhythm associated with each text cycle the 'rhythmic pattern'. In the *Bulu* songs the relationship between the text cycle and its associated rhythmic pattern is generally fixed. Examination of the musical notations (see below p. 213), however, shows that there may be minor variations in the rhythmic pattern from one repetition to the next; I will argue that such variations are structurally insignificant, perhaps analogous to allophonic variation in languages (see further below p. 171).

The text/rhythmic cycle

Due to the fixed relationship between each text cycle and its rhythmic pattern, I follow other researchers of central Australian music in treating the text and syllabic rhythm as two interdependent aspects of the one structure. I refer to this bi-partite structure as the 'text/rhythmic cycle'.

Each text/rhythmic cycle can be divided into several hierarchically ordered levels, first described by McCardell (1976, 1980) and later refined by Barwick (1989). The hierarchical structure of the text/rhythmic cycle of a typical *Bulu* verse (verse 9) is shown in Example 5.1.

Example 5.1. Hierarchical structure of the text/rhythmic cycle of *Bulu* verse 9.



o signifies the pulse maintained by handclapping and crotchslapping (see below p. 181)

Text lines

- a) The establishment of text line boundaries.

Each text/rhythmic cycle may be divided into several lines. As described above (see p. 125), Barwick defines lines primarily by the internal repetition patterns of the text, due to the fact that many Western Desert verses exhibit an AABB structure; 'text line pairs and text lines . . . are defined by internal repetition of the textual material' (Barwick 1989: 18).

Bulu verses, however, do not exhibit such internal textual repetition patterns. In my analysis, lines are defined in the first place by rhythmic criteria;¹ in *Bulu*, ends of lines are marked by a long duration. The long duration is equal to at least a dotted crotchet in duple metre (see below p. 181) and at least a minim in triple metre (see below p. 181). Example 5.2 sets out the text/rhythmic cycle of two *Bulu* verses; Example 5.2(i) (verse 4) is in duple metre and Example 5.2(ii) (verse 11) is in triple. Both are composed of three text lines.

¹ As will be shown below, however, text morphology supports line divisions defined by rhythmic criteria.

Example 5.2. The division of the text/rhythmic cycle of two *Bulu* verses into text lines.

(i) verse 4

text line A	text line B	text line C
<i>dyularra - larra</i>	<i>larra yindina</i>	<i>balgandyirr ŋamarjarindyina- yana</i>
		
o o	o o	o o o o

(ii) verse 11

text line A	text line B	text line C
<i>milydyidawurruy</i>	<i>dyalbirrimbirray</i>	<i>ŋaranyŋarany yinydyarrgana</i>
		
o o	o o	o o o o

Where there is a succession of long durations separated by no more than one beat - a beat is equal to a minim in duple metre and a dotted minim in triple metre - it is the last that marks the end of the line. In Example 5.1 above, the ends of both text lines are so marked (line A exhibits three long durations, while line B has two). Where a succession of long durations occurs, either a recurring short-long rhythmic cell or long-short rhythmic cell is established (see below p. 169).²

I was first alerted to the fact that long durations may be significant in the marking of line divisions in *nurlu* songs by statements made by Paddy Roe about the text of a song from Butcher Joe's *nurlu* (see above p. 10). The text/rhythmic cycle of the song in question appears in Example 5.3. Part of our discussion of the text appears in Example 5.4.

² The fact that the ends of lines are marked by a long duration is unaffected by the placement of the accompaniment beats, which may or may not coincide with the long duration. In Ex. 5.2(i), the long duration begins after the accompaniment beat, while in Ex. 5.2(ii) it coincides with the accompaniment beat.

Example 5.3. Text/rhythmic cycle of *Marinydirinydyi* verse 1983: 21.

text line A	text line B
<i>binydyabinydyadya</i>	<i>ɲjalawurr - ɲjala</i>
text line C	
<i>gurr-gurr mindimindi- mindarurr- maney</i>	

Example 5.4. Discussion with Paddy Roe about textual modifications and rhythm in *Marinydirinydyi* verse 1983: 21.

- RK: How else would you use that *ɲjalawurrɲjala* . . .
 PR: *binydyabinydya yirgan ɲjalawurrɲjalawurr*³ I say in Nyigini
 but he got im *ɲjalawurrɲjala*
 he gotta make that *ɲjala*:⁴ for the song . . .
 to go back to the other one

In our discussion, I was attempting to establish the meaning of *ɲjalawurrɲjala* and its use in everyday language. I asked Paddy Roe how he would use *ɲjalawurrɲjala* in a different context. He constructed a Nyigina sentence, showing that *ɲjalawurrɲjala*, as it appears in the song, is a shortened form of *ɲjalawurrɲjalawurr*. Of direct relevance to the present discussion is Paddy Roe's statement concerning the rhythmic significance of the textual modification, namely "he gotta make that *ɲjala*: [he lengthens the vowel] for the song . . . to go back to the other one". That is, the long duration on the second syllable of *-ɲjala* signals a boundary, and I suggest that "the other one" referred to by Paddy Roe is a textual line, in this case text line C.

All text/rhythmic cycles of the seventeen *Bulu* verses divide into two or three lines, with one exception (verse 16) which I now discuss. The text/rhythmic cycle of verse 16 appears in Example 5.5.

³ Literally, 'pearlshells he carries hanging'; that is 'he's got pearlshells hanging all over him'.

⁴ The colon indicates a lengthening of the preceding vowel.

Example 5.5. Text/rhythmic cycle of *Bulu* verse 16.



By using the above criteria to establish text line divisions, namely the occurrence of a long duration, or succession of long durations, verse 16 exhibits four text lines as follows:

text line A	text line B	text line C	text line D
<i>barril yarramanydyina</i>	<i>raydyimirri</i>	<i>yimanayana</i>	<i>dyilabumirri</i>

The division of verse 16 into four text lines on the basis of rhythmic criteria, however, raises several questions. I have established in Chapter 3 (see above p. 74) that when verbs appear within lines, they never appear at the beginning of lines. Two verbs appear in verse 16, namely *yarramanydyina* and *yimanayana*. In text line A *yarramanydyina* is preceded by *barril*. Text line C, however, is composed entirely of a verb; that is, it does not conform to the non-verb/verb form. I suggest, therefore, that the line structure of verse 16 may be perceived in two ways: on the basis of rhythm it comprises four lines exhibiting an unusual text structure, or on the basis of text morphology it comprises three lines with an unusual rhythmic structure.⁵ I will return to the question of line structure of verse 16 in the discussion of text/melody fit (see below p. 192). For the present, however, I treat it as comprising three lines, with an unusual rhythmic structure:

text line A	text line B	text line C
<i>barril yarramanydyina</i>	<i>raydyimirri yimanayana</i>	<i>dyilabumirri</i>

⁵ The rhythmic structure is unusual because a long duration, when followed by a series of relatively short durations, normally signals the end of a line. In the case of verse 16, however, the long duration occurs mid-line.

b) The length of text lines.

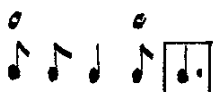
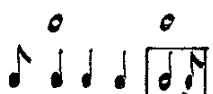
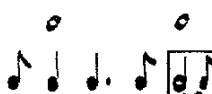
In contrast to the small degree of variation in the number of lines per text/rhythmic cycle, the length of those lines shows a significant degree of variation. In *Bulu*, text lines can be measured in whole numbers of beats; beats are equal to a minim in duple metre and a dotted minim in triple metre (see below p. 181 for a discussion of duple and triple metre). Lines vary in length from two to five beats. Lines which are five beats long, however, are rare; two lines only in a sample of forty two are five beats long (see Table 11 below, p. 168). The remaining text lines in the sample are fairly evenly distributed: eleven are two beats long (see Table 8, p. 164); sixteen are three beats long (see Table 9, p. 165); and thirteen are four beats long (see Table 10, p. 166).

Text phrases/rhythmic segments

In *Bulu*, text lines of four beats duration may sometimes be divided into two further explicit textual and rhythmic units, called here 'text phrases' and 'rhythmic segments' respectively. They are defined by the coincidence of a long duration - at least a dotted crotchet in duple metre, and at least a minim in triple metre - with the end of a word in the text. Barwick (1989: 18) has described a similar situation for *Inma Ngintaka*; text lines (apparently only those which are over three beats long, see Ellis and Barwick 1987: 53) may be divided into rhythmic segments 'defined by the coincidence of a long note of a dotted crotchet duration or more with the end of a meaningful text string'.

Let us examine all text lines in the *Bulu* sample to identify the coincidence of a long duration (at least a dotted crotchet in duple metre, and a minim in triple metre) with the end of a word, at points other than at the end of a line. Tables 8 to 11 set out all text lines in the sample, with their associated syllabic rhythms. Text lines of the same length are grouped together: two, three, four and five-beat lines are found in Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11 respectively. Within each table, lines exhibiting the same syllabic rhythm are grouped together, while lines in duple metre are separated from those in triple.

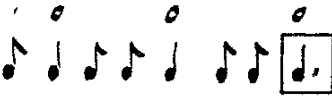
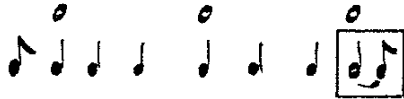
Table 8. Two-beat lines and their syllabic rhythms.

duple	 <i>guwarrawarra</i> (v3) <i>dyularralarra</i> (v4) <i>larra yindina</i> (v4) <i>dyilabumirri</i> (v16)	 <i>dyidurrudurrui</i> (v5) <i>njarjal yindina</i> (v5)
triple	 <i>milydyidawurrui</i> (v11) <i>dyalbirrimbirray</i> (v11) <i>dadyiwurrurrui</i> (v13) <i>dyunbarambara</i> (v13)	 <i>midinyburrurru</i> (v8)

 signifies long duration

Examination of two and three-beat lines (see Tables 8 and 9) shows that, apart from the ends of lines, there are no coincidences of long durations with the ends of words: in Table 8, there are no instances of long durations within lines; although in Table 9 there are several instances of long durations within lines (long durations are marked in boxes), they all appear mid-word.

Table 9. Three-beat lines and their syllabic rhythms.

duple		
	<i>mindī yarrabanydyina</i> (v1)	<i>wanydyalmirri yijanydyina</i> (v1)
	<i>dyidi yarrabanydyina</i> (v2)	
	<i>dirrin yinmanayana</i> (v3)	
	<i>barrarri/marrarri yijanydyina</i> (v6)	<i>brarri yijanydyina</i> (v12)
	<i>buyurr yarrabanydyina</i> (v7)	
	<i>buyurr/murda yarrabanydyina</i> (v9)	
	<i>bandirr yarrabanydyina</i> (v12)	
	<i>dyalal yindinayana</i> (v12)	<i>mayarda dirrbīn yijana</i> (v5)
	<i>dyirrbal yijānāyana</i> (v15)	
	<i>barril yarrabanydyina</i> (v16)	
	<i>murda yarrabanydyina</i> (v17)	
triple		
	<i>ñarany ñarany yinydyarrgana</i> (v11)	
	<i>ganal yimbanydyinayana</i> (v13)	

Examination of four-beat lines (see Table 10) shows that a significant number of long durations occur in places other than at the ends of lines (appearing in boxes). Only those at the end of the second beat, however, coincide with the ends of words. Eight of thirteen four-beat lines (marked with •) exhibit the coincidence of an explicit textual and rhythmic boundary with the end of the second beat. I suggest, therefore, that those lines can be divided into two two-beat units called here 'text phrases/rhythmic segments'. 'Text phrase' refers to textual aspects, while 'rhythmic segment' refers to the rhythmic aspects. For the purpose of this analysis of the *Bulu* series, a text phrase/rhythmic segment can be defined as always being two beats long and occurring in pairs in a significant number of four-beat lines.

Table 10. Four-beat lines and their syllabic rhythms.

duple

•*ijanbalinbali* *yiŋjanydyina* (v2)
 •*malanydyiŋjana* *yiŋjanydyina* (v7)

•*larndyimirri* *yiŋjanydyina* (v9)
 •*bandirrmirri* *yiŋjanydyina* (v17)
 •*mawulanjana* *galydyiyana /iŋjana* (v3)

guwararrirarri *yiŋjanydyina* (v2)
malarra dyid yiyal- manayana (v6)

•*raydyimirri* *yimanayana* (v16)

balgandyirr iŋamaŋarinydyinayana (v4)
burrbi yarrmanydyina yiŋjanydyinaŋa (v15)

triple

malara malara yimanayana (v8)

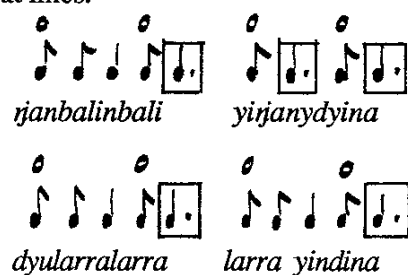
•*girridinyinydyimirri* *yiŋjanydyina* (v10)

•*burarrirarri* *yiŋjanydyina* (v10)

For an explanation of • see p. 165.

I wish to point out here that there are two major differences between four-beat lines which are composed of two text phrases/rhythmic segments and pairs of two-beat lines: the first concerns rhythmic criteria; the second concerns the different way the two structures are fitted to the melody. While the first rhythmic segment within a four-beat line is indistinguishable from the first line within a pair of two-beat lines (both end in a long duration), the second rhythmic segment of a four-beat line exhibits a long duration in the first beat, whereas the second line within a pair of a two-beat lines does not (see Example 5.6). A four-beat line comprising two rhythmic segments always exhibits a succession of three long durations;⁶ in a pair of two-beat lines, however, the succession of long durations is broken at the beginning of the second two-beat line.

Example 5.6. A four-beat line comprising two text phrases/rhythmic segments, and a pair of two-beat lines.



Moreover, I will show below (see p. 190 foll.) in relation to the fitting of the text to the melody that a pair of two-beat lines is conceptually different from a four-beat line composed of two text phrases/rhythmic segments. This difference may be characterised as follows: it is only the beginnings of text lines which coincide with the 'point of fit' in the melody, namely the beginning of the second section within each major descent. Thus, while the beginning of both lines in a pair of two-beat lines may occur at the point of fit, it is only the first text phrase/rhythmic segment in the case of four-beat lines composed of two text phrases/rhythmic segments which occurs at the point of fit.

⁶ The second line of verse 16 is an exception (see above p. 162).

Let us now turn to five-beat lines. There are only two five-beat lines in the *Bulu* series, both of which are found in verse 14. Examination of Table 11 shows that within both lines, a long duration coincides with the end of a word (namely at the end of *yirjanydyina*), suggesting that both lines may be divided into two smaller explicit text/rhythmic units, four beats and one beat long respectively. As described in Chapter 2 (see p.49), however, verse 14 was the cause of considerable debate between Paddy Roe and Butcher Joe. Although the issue was not entirely resolved in the field, it appears that verse 14 was dreamt by another man and given to Dyurjgayan to incorporate into the *Bulu* series. Analysis of its text/rhythmic structure supports this view. First, it is the only verse comprising five-beat lines; all other *Bulu* verses are composed of two, three and four-beat lines. Secondly, it is the only verse in which the verb *yirjanydyina* occurs at a point other than at the end of a line. Thirdly, verse 14's rhythmic pattern contains a rhythmic cell found nowhere else in the sample (see Table 12 below; the cell in question is cell 2).

Although the coincidence of a long duration with the end of a word occurs within both five-beat lines, I suggest that neither line may be divided into two explicit text phrases/rhythmic segments. It is not surprising that verse 14 exhibits anomalous divisions within the text/rhythmic structure, given its probable different origin, and anomalous text and rhythmic structure.

Table 11. Five-beat lines and their syllabic rhythms.

duple		
	yalgudyan gudyarra	yirjanydyina njurjgu (v14)
	yawan baliny baliny	yirjanydyina njurjgu (v14)

Rhythmic cells

As indicated in Example 5.1 above (see p. 159), text lines and text phrases/rhythmic segments can be divided into rhythmic cells, organised around accompaniment beats (see Barwick 1989: 18, Prabhu Pritam (McCardell) 1980: 26-27). Barwick (1989: 18) has shown that in *Inma Ngintaka* the accompaniment beat falls in the second half of the cell. In *Bulu*, however, it falls at the beginning. Tables 12 and 13 set out rhythmic cells found in the *Bulu* series. Table 12 shows cells in duple metre, while Table 13 shows those in triple metre.

Table 12. Rhythmic cells in duple metre and occurrences in *Bulu*.

rhythmic cell		occurrences		
		beginning of line	mid-line	end of line
	o			
1		5		
2		1		
3 (a)		23	9	
(b)				
(c)				
4		3	2	
5 (a)			29	29
(b)				
6				3

Table 12 identifies six rhythmic cells in duple metre. Two of those cells (cells 3 and 5) exhibit several variations (labelled 3(a), 3(b) and so on) from one repetition to the next. Variation within rhythmic cells will be discussed below (see below p. 171). Examination of the table shows that the position of rhythmic cells within lines is

restricted: cells are found either in one position only (cells 1 and 2 are found only at the beginning of text lines, while cell 6 is found only at the end),⁷ or at the beginning and middle of text lines (cells 3 and 4), or in the middle and at the ends of text lines (cell 5). We may conclude that both the beginnings and ends of text lines in duple metre are marked by particular rhythmic cells; cells 1 to 4 are never found at the end of lines, while cells 5 and 6 are never found at the beginning. Examination of the number of occurrences of individual cells indicates that cells 3 and 5 are by far the most common.

Table 13. Rhythmic cells in triple metre and occurrences in *Bulu*.

rhythmic cell		occurrences		
		beginning of line	mid-line	end of line
	o			
7 (a)		10	3	
(b)				
8 (a)			2	
(b)				
(c)				
9 (a)			3	10
(b)				

Table 13 identifies three rhythmic cells in triple metre which fall into two broad categories: cells 7 and 8 are composed of three durations, while cell 9 comprises two. In performances, those cells exhibit several variations, labelled 7(a), 7(b), 8(a), 8(b) and so on (see further below). Examination of the table shows that the position of rhythmic cells in triple metre is similarly restricted within lines: cells are found either in

⁷ As has been described above, long durations indicate the ends of lines. In the case of rhythmic cells 6 and 9, the final short duration is an anacrusis for the line which follows.

one position only (cell 8), or at the beginning and middle of lines (cell 7) or in the middle and at the ends of lines (cell 9). We may conclude that whether verses in *Bulu* are in duple or triple metre, the beginnings and ends of text lines are marked by particular rhythmic cells. In the case of rhythmic cells in triple metre, cells 7 and 8 are never found at the ends of lines, while cell 9 is never found at the beginning.

Rhythmic cell variation

Variation within a rhythmic cell is deemed to occur when the precise form of the rhythmic cell occurring in the same position in relation to a text line is varied from one repetition of the text line to the next, either within a verse or between verses. Example 5.7 sets out three occurrences of the same text line from three performances of *Bulu* verse 10, showing three variants of rhythmic cell 8 (they are marked with a bracket in the example). Two facts suggest that such variation is not significant, and is perhaps analogous to allophonic variation in languages. They are: (i) the position of the syllables in relation to the main beat, which falls at the beginning of the boomerang clapstick pattern $\overset{x}{\text{---}} \overset{!}{\text{---}}$, is not affected by the variation within the cell; and (ii) variation within a cell is composed of the smallest durational values found in the musical notations.

Example 5.7. Occurrences of variants of rhythmic cell 8.

gi rri dinydyimirri yi nany - dyina

gi rri dinydyimirri yi nany - dyina

gi rri dinydyimirri yi nany - dyi-na

The preceding discussion has shown that while text lines in the *Bulu* series may vary considerably in length (that is from two to five beats, see above p. 163), they exhibit a uniformity of rhythmic cell construction. Not only is the number of individual rhythmic cells in the sample restricted to nine, with the large majority of verses constructed with four of those nine (that is rhythmic cells 3 and 5 in duple metre, and rhythmic cells 7 and 9 in triple metre), but the beginnings and ends of lines are marked by particular rhythmic cells: rhythmic cells 1 to 4, 7 and 8 are never found at the ends of lines, while rhythmic cells 5, 6 and 9 are never found at the beginnings.

The uniformity of rhythmic cell construction found in the *Bulu* series is significant in two ways: first, it helps in understanding how the songs are constructed in reproduceable form and secondly, it is a powerful factor in the compositional process. Concerning the former, Ong (1982: 34) states that rhythmic patterning in oral cultures is part of a complex system for the retention and retrieval of ideas.

In primary oral culture, to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thought, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns, shaped for ready oral recurrence. Your thought must come into being in heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns [emphasis mine], in repetitions or antithesis, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulaic expressions, in standard thematic settings . . . , in proverbs which are constantly heard by everyone so that they come to mind readily and which themselves are patterned for retention and ready recall, or in other mnemonic form.

Concerning the second point above, namely that the uniformity of rhythmic cell construction is a powerful factor in the compositional process and subsequent performance, I suggest that when composing a verse, the creator must constantly refer to the rigid metrical/rhythmic matrix characteristic of all verses in the series so that the textual material may be easily retrieved in performance. That matrix may be characterised as follows: (i) the number of syllables within lines of equal length is relatively stable; (ii) within each beat the number of syllables is restricted to two or three; and (iii) the last beat of each line always comprises two syllables.

Needless to say, recurring formulaic expressions in the text (see above p. 71) facilitate this compositional process, as well as performance, as they already exhibit a

relatively fixed rhythm and metre. I suggest, moreover, that modifications to everyday words in the song texts (first described in Chapter 3, see p. 65) may occur, partly because of the underlying metrical/rhythmic matrix. Let us now turn to an explanation of those modifications in the light of the above discussion.

Rhythmic patterning, word boundary patterns and the significance of modifications to everyday lexical items in songs

In Chapter 3, I described the way in which words found in everyday language may be modified in song in one of several ways: by the addition of affixes having no apparent semantic value; by reduplication (partial and complete); and by phonetic changes. In most cases, everyday words are lengthened in song. In this section I argue that such modifications are the result of two systems of patterning, namely rhythmic cell patterning and word boundary patterning. It will be shown, moreover, that the word boundary patterns are themselves influenced by the recurring, formulaic verbs which are found at the ends of a significant number of text lines in the *Bulu* songs.

I begin this discussion of the significance of modifications to everyday lexical items with several statements made by Paddy Roe. Example 5.8 is a transcript of a discussion held between Paddy Roe and myself over the meaning of *larn* (verse 9, see above p. 105) and its modification in song to *larndyimirri*.

Example 5.8. Discussion with Paddy Roe about modifications to everyday words in *Bulu* verse 9.

RK: Does that *larn dyi mirri* does that have any meaning?

PR: yeah *larndyimirri larndyimirri larndyimirri*
I dunno how I could say this in English,
larndyimirri, larn ['star'] we, we bin go see that *larn*,
we, we bin go see that *larn* you know

RK: so does that

PR: yeah, he's well he's more only just to make a corroboree too

Paddy Roe at first gave the meaning of *larndyimirri* to be "we bin go see that *larn*".

He then says, however, that "he's [the suffix *-dyimirri*] more only just to make a

corroboree too".⁸ That is, he appears to be saying that *-dyimirri* is there for reasons to do with the construction of the song ("to make a corroboree") rather than as a semantic element. The exact significance, however, of Paddy Roe's interpretation is not clear without further analysis.

In order to understand the significance of the above statements made by Paddy Roe, let us first examine the positions within lines of the modifications to everyday lexical items, and their associated rhythmic environments. Tables 14 to 17 set out all *Bulu* text lines (lines of equal duration are grouped together), and their syllabic rhythms. Textual modifications are underlined, as are their associated rhythmic realisations.

Table 14. *Bulu* text lines of two beats duration and the incidence of modifications to everyday lexical items.

	o	o
<i>guwarrawarra</i> ⁹ (v3)		
<i>dyularralarra</i> (v4)		
<i>larra yindina</i> (v4)		
<i>dyilabumirri</i> (v16)		
<i>dyidurrudurrui</i> (v5)		
<i>ŋarjal yindina</i> (v5)		
<i>midinyburrurru</i> (v8)		
<i>milydyidawurrui</i> (v11)		
<i>dyalbirrimbirray</i> (v11)		
<i>§dadyiwurrurruy</i> (v13)		
<i>dyunbarambara</i> (v13)		

For discussion of § see p. 180.

⁸ Similarly, in a discussion of the meaning of *dadyiwurrurruy* in verse 13 (see above p. 111) he maintained that the prefix *dadyi-* meant "nothing"; it was there "to make that corroboree" (see Appendix 3, transcript to verse 13, p. 280).

⁹ Two words in Table 14 appear not to be part of everyday language, namely *guwarrawarra* and *dyalbirrimbirray*. These nevertheless exhibit partial reduplication; the reduplicated section of each word appears, therefore, underlined with a wavy line.

Table 15. *Bulu* text lines of three beats duration and incidences of modifications to everyday lexical items.

		o	o	o
§wanydyal <u>mirri</u>	yijanydyina (v1)			
mindī	yarrabanydyina (v1)			
•dyidī	yarrabanydyina (v2)			
dirrin	yinmanayana (v3)			
†barrarri/marrarri	yijanydyina (v6)			
buyurr	yarrabanydyina (v7)			
buyurr/murda	yarrabanydyina (v9)			
bandirr	yarrabanydyina (v12)			
dyalal	yindinayana (v12)			
dyirrbal	yijanayana (v15)			
•barrī	yarrabanydyina (v16)			
murda	yarrabanydyina (v17)			
†brarri	yijanydyina (v12)			
mayarda	dirrbin yijana (v5)			
§jarany	jarany yinydyarrgana (v11)			
ganal	yimbanydyinayana (v13)			

For discussion of § see p. 180.

For discussion of • see p. 178.

For discussion of † see p. 179.

Table 16. *Bulu* text lines of four beats duration and the incidence of modifications to everyday lexical items.

		O	O	O	O
• <i>njanbalinbali</i>	<i>yijanydyina</i> (v2)				
• <i>malanydyijana</i>	<i>yijanydyina</i> (v7)				
• <i>larndyimirri</i>	<i>yijanydyina</i> (v9)				
• <i>bandirrmirri</i>	<i>yijanydyina</i> (v17)				
• <i>mawularana</i>	<i>galydyiyana /jana</i> (v3)				
• <i>guwararrirri</i>	<i>yijanydyina</i> (v2)				
• <i>malarra dyid</i>	<i>yiyaalmanayana</i> (v6)				
<i>balgandyirr</i>	<i>njanjarinydinayana</i> (v4)				
<i>burrbi</i>	<i>yarrmanydyina</i>				
• <i>raydyimirri</i>	<i>yimanayana</i> (v16)				
• <i>malara malara</i>	<i>yimanayana</i> (v8)				
• <i>girridinyinydyimirri</i>	<i>yijanydyina</i> (v10)				
• <i>burarrirri</i>	<i>yijanydyina</i> (v10)				

For discussion of • see p. 178-179.

Table 17. *Bulu* text lines of five beats duration and incidences of modifications to everyday lexical items.

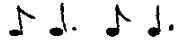
		O	O	O	O	O
<i>yalgudyan</i>	<i>gudyarra</i>					
• <i>yawan baliny</i>	<i>baliny</i>					

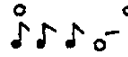
For discussion of • see p. 179.

With several exceptions (which will be discussed below, see p. 180), modifications to everyday lexical items (underlined in the tables) occur either at the ends of lines, in order to accommodate rhythmic cell patterning (see, for example, lines 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 11 in Table 14, lines 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13 and 16 in Table 15, and all lines in Table 16), or within text lines, in order to accommodate word boundary patterning (see, for example, lines 3 and 11 in Table 15, and lines 1 to 6, and 10 to 13 in Table 16).

Turning first to modifications at the ends of lines (modifications within lines will be discussed below), examination of the tables shows that those modifications comprise either two or three syllables. Seven of eleven two-beat lines in the sample are modified in this way (see Table 14). In Table 15, seven of sixteen three-beat lines exhibit modifications at the ends of lines. Similarly, in Table 16, all thirteen four-beat lines end with a two or three-syllable modification. I will discuss the two five-beat lines below (see p. 180-181).

Concerning those two-syllable modifications, I have already shown that, regardless of length, all text lines end with a short-long duration pattern. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that in some cases words at the ends of lines are modified by the addition of two-syllable suffixes, apparently to supply text to articulate the pattern (for example, see lines 1 and 2 in Table 14). If the modification were not made in such cases, the line would not end in a short-long duration. In other cases (for example, see lines 4, 5, 9, 10 and 13 in Table 16), two-syllable modifications at the ends of lines exhibit a short-long duration, but do not appear to be necessary for the rhythmic cell patterning; a short-long duration would have occurred, irrespective of whether the modification had been made or not. Although a short-long duration must occur at the ends of lines, I suggest that in lines which are more than two beats long, there is a preference for a series of short-long durations to occur; twenty three of thirty one lines which are three or more beats long end in a series of short-long durations

(). In these circumstances, the modification appears to arise from this preference.

In the case of three-syllable modifications at the ends of lines (for example, see lines 4 and 7 in Table 14), it is only the second and third syllable which accommodate the short-long pattern. The first syllable, 'filling in' between the end of the meaningful lexical item and the short-long duration, appears to accommodate the rhythmic cell pattern immediately prior to the short-long duration. For example, in the text line *dyila-bumirri* (see Table 14, line 4), *-bu-* completes the rhythmic cell  , while *-mirri* articulates the final short-long duration. If *-bu-* were not present, either *dyila* would have to exhibit the following rhythm  , or *-mirri* would have to begin before the beat:  . In all other circumstances, however, *-mirri* begins on, and never before, the beat. Although the rhythmic cell  is present in the *Bulu* sample (see rhythmic cell 1, Table 12) there appears to be a preference for lines to begin with rhythmic cell 3 ().

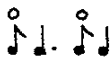
Concerning modifications within lines, I have already shown in Chapter 3 (see p. 73) that lines of the same duration exhibit a tendency for word boundaries to occur in the same position: ten of eleven two-beat lines comprise one word only (that is, there is a tendency for no word boundary to occur), twelve of sixteen three-beat lines exhibit a word boundary within the first half of the first beat (lines in duple and triple metre are slightly different in the exact placement of the word boundary); ten of thirteen four-beat lines exhibit a word boundary at the end of the second beat, as do both five beat lines. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that many modifications to everyday lexical items occurring in positions other than at the ends of lines do so in order to lengthen words so that the word boundary occurs at the appropriate place for that line. For example, in three-beat lines (see Table 15), two of six modifications (marked • in the table) appearing in positions other than at the ends of lines occur just before the second half of the first beat. (The remaining four will be discussed below.) In four-beat lines (see Table 16), eleven of twelve modifications (marked • in the table) appearing in positions

other than at the ends of lines occur at the end of the second beat. Similarly, in five-beat lines (see Table 17), one of the four modifications (within the line marked •) occurs at the end of the second beat.

In forty one of fifty cases (that is 82%), modifications to everyday lexical items occur in order to accommodate either rhythmic cell patterning, or word boundary patterning. Let us now turn to a discussion of the remaining nine cases.

Several of the remaining instances of textual modifications may be explained through an understanding of the relationship between word boundary patterns and commonly recurring verbs. I have shown above that lines exhibit a tendency for word boundaries to occur in the same position, and that that position varies depending on the duration of the line; that is, three-beat lines exhibit a tendency for a word boundary to occur at the second half of the first beat, while in four-beat lines a boundary occurs in many cases at the end of the second beat. An examination of the verbs which follow these word boundaries suggests that there is a close relationship between particular verbs and the position of the word boundaries which precede them. Perhaps the best example is the verb *yijanydyina* ('he was there'). In the large majority of cases in duple metre,¹⁰ *yijanydyina* begins on the beat, and exhibits the following rhythm:



. In four-beat lines this means that the word boundary preceding *yijanydyina* must occur at the end of the second beat. In three beat lines, however, the word boundary preceding *yijanydyina* (when it occurs in the rhythm )¹¹ must occur at the end of the first beat. Thus, in two three-beat lines (marked † in the table), namely *barrarri/marrarri yijanydyina*¹² and *brarri yijanydyina*, modifications to everyday lexical items occur as a result of the commonly recurring verb which follows.

¹⁰ Those cases in triple metre are slightly different, and will not be discussed here.

¹¹ The line appearing at the top of Table 15 also ends with the verb *yijanydyina*. In this case, however, it appears in a slightly different rhythm. *See further below.

¹² See above p. 89 for a discussion of the appearance of two different words at the beginning of the line.

A similar example may be found in the four-beat line *burrbi yarrmanydyina yijanydyinarja*. In this case, the text line exhibits a modification which is normally associated with word boundary patterning in three-beat lines. Examination of the verb which follows the modification shows that it exhibits the pronominal prefix *yarr-* ('we (exclusive)'). All other instances of this particular prefix occur with verbs found in three-beat lines; and in all cases the verb in question begins half way through the first beat. In this four-beat line, therefore, it is the prefix of the verb which influences the position of the word boundary, which in turn necessitates the modification of the preceding word.

Thus, although several modifications cannot be explained in terms of the word boundary patterns occurring in lines of the same duration, they can be explained in terms of the verbs which influence those patterns.

Excluding from the discussion for the moment those modifications which appear in the two five-beat lines in the sample (see Table 17), only three modifications to everyday lexical items (marked § in the tables) cannot be explained in terms of rhythmic cell patterning, word boundary patterning, or by the influence of particular verb forms on the formation of word boundaries. They are *dadyiwurrurruy* (Table 14), *wanydyalmirri yijanydyina* (Table 15) and *njarany njarany yinydyarrgana* (Table 15). I suggest that these three instances may be generally explained in terms of the conventions of the rhythmic construction of the songs described above; namely, although the length of lines varies considerably, the number of syllables within each beat is restricted to two or three (see p. 172). Moreover, the large majority of lines are based on a small number of rhythmic cells: rhythmic cells 3 and 5 in duple metre, and rhythmic cells 7 and 9 in triple metre. Thus, the above three modifications are made in order to accommodate commonly occurring rhythmic cells, which themselves are regulated by the number of syllables within each beat.

Verse 14 (see Table 17) contains several textual modifications which are slightly more problematic. Although the suffix *-dyan* may be explained generally in terms of

the conventions of the rhythmic construction of the songs, and *baliny* has already been explained in terms of word boundary patterning (see above), the two instances of *-dyina* are the only two occurrences in the sample where the meaningless suffix *-dyina* occurs at a point other than at the end of a line. I have already shown above (see p. 168), however, that verse 14 exhibits several other structural anomalies, which reflect a possible different origin from the other *Bulu* verses. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that verse 14 exhibits a dissimilarity from the other sixteen *Bulu* verses in the realm of modifications to everyday lexical items.

Let us now reconsider Paddy Roe's statement concerning textual modifications, namely "well he's more only just to make a corroboree too". Analysis has shown that in order "to make a corroboree", the creator of the song texts must adjust everyday words in accordance with several organising principles. On the one hand, rhythmic patterning influences textual modifications, especially at the ends of lines where a short-long duration must occur. On the other hand, recurring verbs create word boundary patterns within lines; in these cases, everyday words are normally lengthened in order for the word boundary to occur at the appropriate place.

Accompaniment beats

Nurlu songs are accompanied by pairs of boomerangs (*garli*) and handclapping, performed by men, and handclapping or crotchslapping, performed by women. Handclapping and crotchslapping by either sex produces the same regular beat, indicated in the above examples by a circle.¹³ That beat, however, is divided in two different ways by the boomerangs. Performers refer to the boomerang clapstick pattern which divides the beat into two even durations as *dyirrm dyirrm* ($\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$), and that which divides the beat into two uneven durations as *dyirrm* ($\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{4}$). *Dyirrm dyirrm* and *dyirrm*, therefore, distinguish between duple and triple metre.¹⁴ Those verses

¹³ The beat maintained by handclapping and crotchslapping appears to be called *gurrb*.

¹⁴ Performers refer to another boomerang clapstick pattern called *lirr*. It refers to a tremolo, produced by rapidly striking together the ends of the two boomerangs. Boomerang clapstick patterns are closely associated with dance steps. That relationship, however, will not be discussed here.

indicated above in duple metre are always accompanied with *dyirrm dyirrm* ($\frac{1}{x} \frac{1}{x}$).

Likewise, verses in triple metre are always accompanied with *dyirrm* ($\frac{1}{x} \frac{1}{d}$). For the sake of clarity I have indicated the main beat only in the examples above, excluding the duple and triple division of that main beat by the boomerangs.

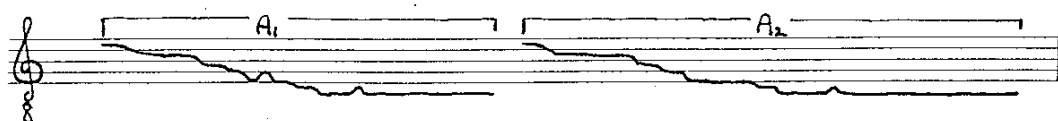
Successive performances of each *Bulu* verse exhibit the same relationship between the text/rhythmic cycle on the one hand and the boomerang and handclapping accompaniment on the other. It can be said, therefore, that this relationship is fixed.

5.3 Melody

Largescale melodic form

In most cases, *Bulu* songs are composed of two melodic descents over the range of a ninth or tenth, each of which exhibits, with minor variations (see below), the same melodic structure. I refer to these repeating melodic descents as Descent A₁ and Descent A₂. Of a total of fifty eight performances recorded, fifty six comprise two descents, while the remaining two comprise one descent. The performances composed of one descent, however, appear to have been stopped prematurely.¹⁵ We may conclude, therefore, that the minimum number of descents acceptable in performance is two. A graphic representation of the melodic contour of a typical *Bulu* performance comprising two descents is shown in Example 5.9.

Example 5.9. *Bulu* melodic contour comprising two descents.



¹⁵ In one instance, Dyurjgayan could not continue because of coughing (see Musical Notation 2), while in the other he broke off before the completion of the first descent, maintaining that the song belonged to Butcher Joe (see Musical Notation 5).

The internal division of the *Bulu* melodic cycle

Each recurring descent in *Bulu* can be divided into three sections, called here Sections I, II and III. These divisions will be substantiated below by reference to statements made by Paddy Roe (see p. 186 foll.).

Section I is an introductory section. In many cases, it comprises a descent from a third above the upper tonic to the upper tonic, henceforth e' to c' ¹⁶ (see below for a more detailed discussion of the melody).

Section II is a descent to the lower tonic. In many cases, it comprises a descent from a to c via g , e and d , which is followed by a rise in pitch to d before returning to c . Section II ends with the commencement of the repetition of the lower tonic.

Section III is a concluding section, comprising repetition of the lower tonic.

Example 5.10 shows the division of the descent into three sections, and the main tones (see below) within those sections.

Example 5.10. Internal division of the *Bulu* descent with main tones.



Examination of the musical notations (see p. 213) shows that the melody may differ from that appearing in Example 5.10. Section I may differ as follows. First, the descent from e' to c' is frequently preceded by d' , and is often followed by a rise in pitch to d' before returning to c' (see Example 5.11).

¹⁶ In performance the pitch of the tonic varies from song to song by approximately a tone, that is from approximately e to d . For the purposes of comparison, all tonics in the musical notations have been transposed to c .

Example 5.11. Variation in Section I of the *Bulu* melody.



Secondly, in several cases e' is excluded, in which case the melody begins the descent from d' (see Example 5.12). In this case too the descent may be preceded by a rise in pitch to d' before returning to c'.

Example 5.12. Variation in Section I of the *Bulu* melody.



Thirdly, the descent in Section I is infrequently excluded altogether, in which case the melody begins on c'. When this occurs, c' is always followed at least once (and sometimes more than once) by a rise in pitch to d' before returning to c' (see Example 5.13). Section I always ends on the upper tonic.

Example 5.13. Variation in Section I of the *Bulu* melody.



Section II may also differ from that shown in Example 5.10. First, in rare cases, a is preceded by b or g (see Example 5.14).

Example 5.14. Variation in Section II of the *Bulu* melody.



Secondly, in many cases e is followed by a rise, the actual pitch or pitches of which vary from c' to f, before returning to e (see Example 5.15). The rise in pitch is often, but not always, preceded by a breath intake.

Example 5.15. Variation in Section II of the *Bulu* melody.



Thirdly, several undulations may occur between e and g (see Example 5.16).

Example 5.16. Variation in Section II of the *Bulu* melody.



Fourthly, depending on the length of the text line being sung at this point in the melody (see below p. 198 foll.), the "articulation" of the lower tonic by movement to the d above may occur twice (see Example 5.17).

Example 5.17. Variation in Section II of the *Bulu* melody.



Concerning variation in Section III, in a few cases Dyurjgayan articulates the lower tonic with a rise to d after the beginning of Section III has been established (for example, see Musical Notation 11, performance iii, p. 242). Such occurrences, however, are rare.

Criteria for the sectionalisation of the *Bulu* descent

In this analysis, the boundaries between sections in the *Bulu* melody suggested above were established on the basis of several statements made by Paddy Roe concerning song structure. In a general discussion about regional song style, which included an explanation of differences between various *nurlu* of the area,¹⁷ I elicited several vernacular expressions describing the melodic structure of Butcher Joe's *nurlu*. In order to ascertain the point in the melody which each Nyigina expression referred to, I sang through the *nurlu* melody a number of times. When I had reached a particular point in the melody, Paddy Roe would stop me, and give the vernacular expression which best described that part of the melody.

Due to the fact that there is a close similarity between the melodic form of Butcher Joe's and Dyurjgayan's *nurlu*, I have drawn upon those expressions in this analysis of the *Bulu* melody. Those expressions are as follows:

- a) *yulumba walandirjany*, which Paddy Roe glossed as "get him from the front!".¹⁸ Paddy Roe maintained that when used in relation to songs, this referred to the beginning of Descent A₁ (indicated in Example 5.18 by the letter 'v₁').

¹⁷ 'Desert corroborees (including Nyigina) were seen as being "heavy" as opposed to Bardi corroborees . . . which were seen by Paddy to be light' (Field Journal 1983: 64). Paddy explained one ramification of this distinction for performance:

. . . it was hard for non-Bardi people to pick up . . . [Baardi] singing . . . they were just too fast (compared to his own singing). This meant that they [non-Baardi] were left behind, both in singing, and therefore in the stick beats. He said that this produced the unco-ordinated sound one could hear in ceremonies. (Ibid.: 65)

¹⁸ *yulumba wal-ANDI-rjany*
?beginning 2sg(fut)-pick up-TOG

- b) *garliya dyidilarra yiman*, which Paddy Roe glossed as "he goes down now".¹⁹ Paddy Roe maintained that this referred to the beginning of Section II in both descents (indicated in Example 5.18 by the letter 'w₁' and 'w₂').
- c) *gunarjanadyan*, glossed by Paddy Roe as "last one; he's gone down now".²⁰ Paddy Roe maintained that this referred to the beginning of Section III in both descents (indicated in Example 5.18 by the letter 'x₁' and 'x₂').
- d) *ɲumigalbu yinman*, which Paddy Roe glossed as "he makes him [the melody] higher", and *ɲumidab yinandin*, which he glossed as "he catches him [the melody] again".²¹ In song, this referred to the beginning of Descent A₂ (indicated in Example 5.18 by the letter 'v₂').
- e) *budurrgabū yinandinɲany*, which Paddy Roe glossed as "he gets him from the middle".²² Paddy Roe maintained that the "middle" referred to the point in the song where the text/rhythmic cycle began to repeat itself.²³ On the basis of text repetition, the "middle" of the song in *Bulu* performances may coincide with the beginning of Section II, but does not always do so.

19 *garliya* *dyidilarra* *yi-MA-n*
alright, finished down 3sg(II)-go-present

20 I am unable to offer an interlinear translation of this expression. Bronwyn Stokes (pers. comm.) suggests that it may be in Nyul Nyul.

21 *ɲumi-galbu* *yin-MA-n* *ɲumi-dab* *yin-ANDI-n*
?-above 3sg(I)-make-present ?-catch 3sg-pick up-present

22 *budurr-gabu* *yin-ANDI-n-ɲany*
middle-ABL 3sg-pick up-present-TOG

23 At this point, all singers would join the song leader. Due to the fact neither Butcher Joe nor Nellie Njadyway appeared to be completely familiar with the *Bulu* songs, I am not able to examine here Paddy's statement concerning group entry at the 'middle' of the song.

Example 5.18. *Bulu* melodic contour comprising two descents.



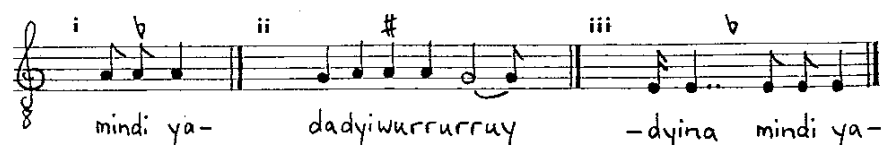
Thus, Paddy Roe highlighted several points in a *nurlu* melody, namely (i) the beginning of each descent, (ii) the point where the melody drops from the c' to a and (iii) the repetition of the lower tonic, which in this analysis have been referred to as Section I, II and III respectively.

As will be shown below (see p. 192 foll.), in *Bulu* performances, the beginning of Section II almost always coincides with the beginning of a line of the text, while the beginning of Section III coincides with text/rhythmic divisions at the level of the line, rhythmic segment or rhythmic cell. Before examining the relationship between the text and melody in the *Bulu* performances, however, I turn to a discussion of the variability of pitch as it, too, helps to confirm the division of each descent of the melody into three sections.

Pitch stability

Examination of the musical notations below (see p. 213 foll.) shows that, apart from the tonic which remains comparatively stable, Dyungayan commonly "bends" the actual pitch of main tones in the *Bulu* songs in two distinct ways. On the one hand, the pitch may be slightly raised or lowered before returning to the original pitch. Example 5.19 sets out three instances of this type of bending of the main tones. In Example 5.19(i) (appearing in Musical Notation 1, performance iv, see p. 215) a is slightly lowered before returning to the original pitch, while in Example 5.19(ii) (appearing in Musical Notation 13, performance iii, see p. 248) it is slightly raised. In Example 5.19(iii) (appearing in Musical Notation 1, performance vi, see p. 215) e is slightly lowered before returning to the original pitch.

Example 5.19. Instances of pitch instability in the *Bulu* melody.



In addition, main tones are frequently connected to each other by a descending vocal glissando, which may occur over one or more syllables. When the glissando occurs over several syllables, a pitch somewhere between the two main tones may be articulated by one or more of the syllables. For example, *f* may be articulated by the syllabic rhythm within a glissando between the main tones *g* and *e* (see Example 5.20(i) (appearing in Musical Notation 10, performance iii, see p. 239). Similarly, pitches approximating *a^b* and *e^b* may occur between the main tones *a* and *g*, and *e* and *d* respectively (see Example 5.20(ii-iii) - Example 5.20(ii) appears in Musical Notation 1, performance iii, see p. 215, while Example 5.20(iii) appears in Musical Notation 1, performance iv, see p. 215). As glissandi do not always occur between any two main tones (although they frequently do) I have not included them in Example 5.10 above.

Example 5.20. Vocal glissandi in the *Bulu* melody.



It is significant that the only positions in the melody in which main tones are almost never connected by a descending glissando are (i) at the division between Sections I and II, and (ii) at the division between Sections II and III of each descent. Concerning the former, *c'* and *a* are connected only once by a glissando. In many performances Dyuŋgayan stops the vocal sound altogether at that point (indicated in the musical notations below by (')). Concerning the latter, the final return to the lower

tonic from the note above occurs with a glissando in only five per cent of cases. I suggest the consistency described above of not joining pitches with glissandi at significant divisions in the melody helps to confirm the melodic structure outlined above.

5.4 The relationship between text and melody

Point of fit

In each *Bulu* performance, there are several places, or 'points of fit' to use Barwick's terminology (Barwick 1989: 19), where significant boundaries in the text and melody coincide. In the melody, the point of fit occurs at or very near to the boundary between Section I and II within each descent, that is where the melody falls from c' to a.²⁴ As there are two descents in most *Bulu* performances, there are two points of fit in the melody.

Let us now turn to the text and the textual point of fit. In contrast to many of those series described in Chapter 4 whose texts appear to have only one, or at most two textual points of fit (for example, see Barwick's discussion of the fitting of doubled and undoubled texts onto the *Ngintaka* melody, 1989: 19-20, and Moyle's discussion of text reversal, 1979: 89, 95), the textual point of fit in *Bulu* may occur at any text line boundary. This means that in the *Bulu* verses there are as many points of fit in the text as there are text lines. Thus in verses composed of two lines, there are two possible points of fit in the text, while in verses comprising three lines, there are similarly three possible textual points of fit.

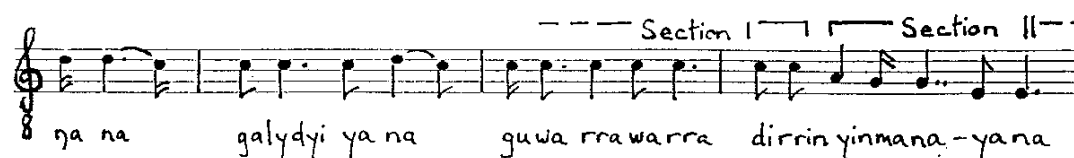
Example 5.21 shows the second major descent (Descent A₂) of three performances of *Bulu* verse 3, up to and including the beginning of Section II (appearing in Musical Notation 3, performances i, ii and v, p. 223). In each case, a

²⁴ In most cases, the beginnings of text lines coincide with the pitch a. In some cases, however, they coincide with the pitch c', before descending to a (see Example 5.20 above). In all cases, however, the descent to a occurs no more than half a beat after the beginning of the line.

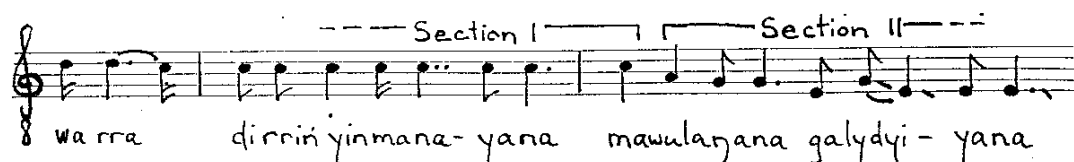
different text line occurs at the melodic point of fit (text line boundaries are indicated by bar lines).

Example 5.21. The coincidence of all three text lines with the beginning of Section II in *Bulu* verse 3.

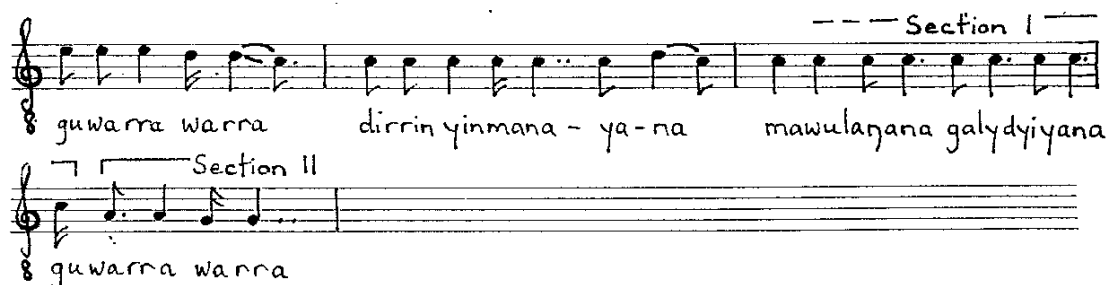
(i)



(ii)



(iii)



Significantly, in nine of sixteen verses in the sample²⁵ (verses 1, 3, 6, 8-11, 14 and 17), all text lines begin Section II of the melody, either in the first or second descent, or both. Moreover, two of those nine verses (verses 3 and 11) are composed of three lines, thus confirming the above statement that verses comprising three text lines have three possible textual points of fit.

²⁵ Verse 5 has been excluded from the discussion due to the fact that the only performance is incomplete (see Musical Notation 5, p. 228).

Nevertheless, within performances of the same verse, the *Bulu* songs exhibit a tendency for particular text lines to always occur at the first point of fit in the melody, that is at the beginning of Section II in the first descent. For example, in all six performances of verse 17 (see Musical Notation 17, p. 259) the text line *bandirrmirri yinjanydyina* occurs at the first point of fit. Of fifteen verses in the sample which were performed more than once, eleven exhibit the same text line at the first melodic point of fit in all performances. The second point of fit in the melody (at the boundary between Sections I and II in the second descent), however, does not exhibit the same tendency. Of the fifteen verses performed more than once, only four (verses 7, 8, 13 and 15) begin Section II of the second descent with the same text line in all performances.

Verse 16

In Section 5.2 above (see p. 161) I pointed out that the line structure of verse 16 could be perceived in one of two ways; on the basis of rhythm it comprises four lines exhibiting an unusual text structure, while on the basis of text morphology it comprises three lines with an unusual rhythmic structure. Examination of the text at the melodic points of fit in the two performances of verse 16 (see Musical Notation 16, p. 257) shows that the line *barril yarramanydyina* occurs three times, while *raydyimirri yimanayana* occurs once. The fact that *yimanayana* does not appear at the melodic point of fit suggests that Dyurjayan perceived the line structure of verse 16 as follows:

text line A	text line B	text line C
<i>barril yarramanydyina</i>	<i>raydyimirri yimanayana</i>	<i>dyilabumirri</i>

This means that in those performances which I have at my disposal, verse 16 appears to exhibit a normal text structure, and an anomalous rhythmic structure.

The significance of the point of fit in the *Bulu* songs

Barwick describes the significance of the point of fit in *Ngintaka* songs as follows:

Although an item of singing need neither begin nor end at significant boundaries in the rhythmic/textual cycle, there is always at least one internal

point in the sung item at which the major rhythmic/textual and melodic boundaries coincide . . . Other points of transition between melodic sections tend to coincide with significant textual structural boundaries (ie line, segment or cell), but do not have to do so. The fitting of the various texts onto the melody, then, can be considered to revolve around these central points of structural coincidence, which are both melodically and textually defined. (1989: 19)

As is the case with the *Ngintaka* songs, the fitting of the *Bulu* texts onto the *Bulu* melody can be seen to 'revolve around these central points of structural coincidence'; the point of fit in each descent is the only place where there must be a coincidence of significant textual and melodic boundaries. Other significant divisions of the melody may coincide with significant divisions of the text/rhythmic structure, but they do not necessarily have to. For example, songs may begin and end anywhere in the text/rhythmic cycle. Similarly, the transition between each descent, that is where the melody jumps from the lower tonic to one of several pitches in the upper octave, need not coincide with significant divisions in the text, although it sometimes does. The division between Section II and III of each descent, that is where the melody comes to rest on the lower tonic, coincides with boundaries at various levels of the text/rhythmic hierarchy; in many, but not all cases, the beginning of Section III coincides with text line boundaries.

Example 5.22 is a transcription of a performance of *Bulu* verse 3 (appearing as performance ii in Musical Notation 3, see p. 223). Apart from the boundary between Sections I and II in each major descent (marked w_1 , w_2), the only significant place in the melody which coincides with a text line boundary is the beginning of the song (marked v_1). All other 'points of transition' in the melody coincide with text/rhythmic boundaries, but at lower levels of the text/rhythmic hierarchy. For example, in the first major descent, the boundary between Section II and III of the melody (marked x_1) coincides with a rhythmic segment boundary, while the end of Section III (marked y_1) also coincides with a rhythmic cell boundary. In the second major descent, apart from the boundary between Section I and II (that is the second melodic point of fit, marked w_2) which coincides with a text line boundary, all other 'points of transition', namely the beginning of the descent (marked v_2), the boundary between Section II and III

(marked x_2) and the end of Section III (marked y_2), coincide with rhythmic cell boundaries.

Example 5.22. Performance of *Bulu* verse 3.

The musical score for *Bulu* verse 3 consists of eight staves of music, each with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 3/8. The lyrics are written below the notes, and structural markers are placed above the staves.

Staff 1: The first staff begins with the tempo and key signature marking "T85/3:18 c = $\flat$ ". It contains the lyrics "gu-wa-rra-wa-rra" and is marked with V_1 above the staff.

Staff 2: The second staff contains the lyrics "di-rrin" and "mawu-la-ga-na".

Staff 3: The third staff contains the lyrics "gu-wa-rra-wa-rra", "di-rrin", and "mawu-la-ga-na". It is marked with W_1 above the staff.

Staff 4: The fourth staff contains the lyrics "gu-wa-rra-wa-rra" and "di-rrin yin-ma-na-ya-na". It is marked with X_1 above the staff.

Staff 5: The fifth staff contains the lyrics "mawu-la-ga-na" and "galy-dyi". It is marked with Y_1 above the staff.

Staff 6: The sixth staff contains the lyrics "wa-rra". It is marked with V_2 above the staff.

Staff 7: The seventh staff contains the lyrics "di-rrin", "mawu-la-ga-na", "gal-dyi", and "ya-na". It is marked with W_2 above the staff.

Staff 8: The eighth staff contains the lyrics "gu-wa-rra-wa-rra", "di-rrin", and "mawu-la-ga-na". It is marked with X_2 above the staff.

Staff 9: The ninth staff contains the lyrics "gal-dyi", "ya-na", "gu-wa-rra-wa-rra", and "di-rrin yin-ma-na". It is marked with Y_2 above the staff.

The measurement of Section II

In order to understand something of the way in which the text/rhythmic structure and melody inter-relate before and after each point of fit in the *Bulu* melody, I first turn to an examination of Section II. Due to the fact that each descent does not appear to exhibit different text setting characteristics (see above, however, p. 192), I do not distinguish in the following discussion between Section II of the first descent and Section II in the second.

On the basis of (i) the number of text lines per text/rhythmic cycle (*Bulu* verses divide into either two or three lines, see p. 161) and (ii) the length of those text lines in beats (lines vary in length from two to five beats, see p. 163), I have grouped the texts of all the *Bulu* verses into six types, as set out in Table 18.

Type A texts are the most common, comprising two lines which are either three or four beats long. Verses 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 15, and 17 belong to this category.

Type B texts comprise three lines, which are similarly either three or four beats long. Verses 2 and 12 belong to this category.

Type C texts comprise three lines, two of which are two beats long, while the third is either three or four beats long. Verses 4, 5, 11 and 13 belong to this category.

Type D texts comprise three lines which are two, three and four beats long respectively. Verses 3 and 16 belong to this category.

The one Type E text (verse 8) comprises two lines which are four and two beats long respectively.

The one Type F text (verse 14) comprises two lines, each of which is five beats long.

Table 18. *Bulu* text types.

text type	number of lines per text/rhythmic cycle	length of lines in beats	number in sample
A	2	(3+3), (3+4), (4+4)	7
B	3	(3+3+3), (4+3+4)	2
C	3	(2+2+3), (2+2+4)	4
D	3	(4+2+3)	2
E	2	(4+2)	1
F	2	(5+5)	1

Let us now examine how Section II of the melody is measured when set to the various text types. When set to Type A texts, Section II commonly spans the complete text/rhythmic cycle comprising two text lines. Depending on the length of those text lines, Section II varies in duration from six (3+3) to eight (4+4) beats. In over half the performances of verse 1 (exhibiting a 3+3 line structure), however, Section II (either in the first or second descent, or in both) spans the complete text/rhythmic cycle plus one or two beats. In these cases, Section II measures either seven or eight beats.

When set to Type B texts, Section II similarly spans two text lines, varying in length from six (3+3) to eight (4+4) beats. Due to the fact, however, that Type B texts comprise three text lines of either three or four beats duration, Section II never spans the complete text/rhythmic cycle.

With Type C texts (as with Type A texts), Section II commonly spans the complete text/rhythmic cycle, which in this case, however, comprises three lines. Here the descent varies in length from seven (2+2+3) to eight (2+2+4) beats. In some cases, however, namely in some performances of verse 11 and all performances of verse 13 (each of which exhibits a 2+2+3 line structure), Section II spans the complete text/rhythmic cycle plus one two-beat line, that is nine beats.

The fitting of Type D texts, comprising three lines of unequal duration, to Section II of the melody is slightly more complex, because any one of the three lines, each of a different duration, may coincide with the melodic point of fit. If the line occurring at the point of fit is three beats long, Section II measures two complete lines ($3+4=7$ beats). If, however, the line occurring at the point of fit is two or four beats long, Section II measures two complete text lines plus a fraction of the third. More specifically, if the line occurring at the point of fit is two beats long, Section II measures two complete lines (2+3 beats long) plus two beats of the following four-beat line, totalling seven beats. Similarly, if the line occurring at the point of fit is four beats long, Section II measures two complete lines (4+2 beats long) plus two beats of the following three-beat line, totalling eight beats.

With the one Type E text, depending on which line coincides with the melodic point of fit Section II measures either three complete lines (2+4+2), or two complete lines (4+2) plus two beats of the four-beat line. In both cases, Section II is eight beats long.

When set to the one type F text (verse 14), Section II either spans one complete text line equalling five beats,²⁶ or one complete text line plus between one and two beats of the next. In the case of the latter, Section II varies in length from six to seven beats.

The above discussion has shown that, when compared to a number of series described by researchers of central Australian music,²⁷ the *Bulu* performances exhibit a significant degree of variability, when one particular section of the melody (namely Section II) is measured in terms of various units of the text/rhythmic structure. No

²⁶ In two performances of verse 14 (performances i and iv), Dyurjgayan lengthens the duration of the five-beat line spanning Section II by one beat and a half-beat respectively, because he takes a breath mid-line.

²⁷ For example, see Ellis' analysis of the central, identifying section of the *Inma Langka* melody (p. 149 above), and Tunstill's analyses of the central breath group in *Nginyari/Langka* (p. 152 above). As Barwick points out, however, several of the analytical approaches seen in relation to central Australian songs are characterised by the 'description of regularities' in which some anomalous settings of texts are eliminated from the discussion.

matter which level of the text/rhythmic hierarchy is examined, Section II varies considerably in length from one performance to the next: from less than one complete text/rhythmic cycle to one complete text/rhythmic cycle plus a fraction of the next; from one to four lines; and from five to nine beats.²⁸ Moreover, that variability cannot be explained in terms only of the different text types in the sample, as sometimes the same text is set in several different ways. For example, when set to the one type F text, Section II sometimes spans one text line, and at other times spans the same text line plus a fraction of the next. Similarly, when set to text types A and C, Section II very often spans one complete text/rhythmic cycle, but may also span one complete text/rhythmic cycle plus a fraction of the next.

The placement of lines within Section II

How might the variability in the measurement of Section II be interpreted? Let us firstly consider the placement of text lines onto the melody within Section II. On the basis of the regular placement of lines of varying lengths onto the melody, Section II may be divided into four subsections, as set out in Example 5.23: subsection i is characterised by movement from a to g; subsection ii by level movement on e, with optional undulating movement between e and g; subsection iii descends from e to c (e may be preceded, however, by one or more pitches above it, and may be followed by a rise to g before returning to e); subsection iv is characterised by undulating movement between d and c.

Example 5.23. Division of Section II of the *Bulu* melody into four subsections.



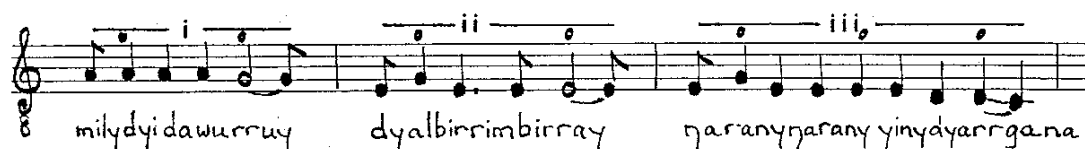
²⁸ Due to the fact that text phrases/rhythmic segments occur only in some four-beat lines (see p. 165) I have not found this level of the text/rhythmic hierarchy particularly useful in describing the intermeshing of the *Bulu* texts with the melody.

- a) The setting of two-beat lines.

Turning first to the placement of two-beat lines onto Section II, two-beat lines often coincide exactly with one subsection of the melody. Example 5.24 shows the overlaying of two two-beat lines onto Section II of the melody. In Example 5.24(i) the two-beat lines coincide exactly with subsections i and ii, while in Example 5.24(ii) they coincide exactly with subsections iii and iv.

Example 5.24. Overlaying of two two-beat lines and one three-beat line of a Type C text (2+2+3) onto Section II of the *Bulu* descent.

- (i) Verse 11, performance ii, Descent A₂



- (ii) Verse 11, performance ii, Descent A₁



Sometimes, however, the correspondence between two-beat lines and subsections of the melody within Section II is close, but not exact. As a general rule affecting lines of all durations, the final pitch of subsections i and iii - that is g and c - may be extended over a text line boundary by up to half a beat. In Example 5.25(i), instead of falling to e at the text line boundary (indicated by a barline), g extends over the boundary of the two-beat line for the value of half a beat (that is, a dotted crotchet in triple metre); in this analysis the pitch f is considered ornamental, and still within the ambit of g (see above p. 188 for a discussion of pitch instability in the *Bulu* melody). In Example 5.25(ii), c extends over the text line boundary for the value of a quaver.²⁹

²⁹ In a similar way, the final pitch of Section I - that is c' - may also be extended over a text line boundary by up to half a beat (see Example 5.24(ii)).

Example 5.25. Extention of pitches over text line boundaries.

(i) Verse 11, performance v, Descent A₂



(ii) Verse 11, performance i, Descent A₁



Thus, allowing for a degree of flexibility at text line boundaries, there is a consistent correspondence between lines of two beats duration and the subsections of the melody within Section II.

b) The setting of three and four-beat lines.

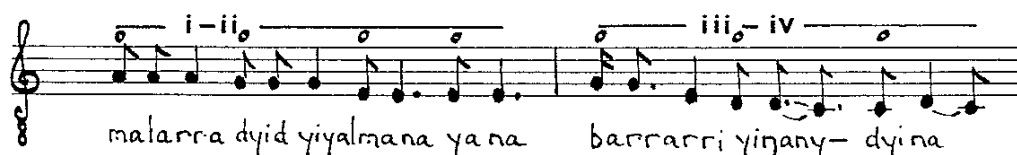
In contrast to two-beat lines, lines which are three and four beats long normally span two subsections of the melody, irrespective of where they fall within the section (there are several exceptions to this, which will be discussed below). In performances which use text types A and B (see Table 18 above, p. 196), the beginnings of lines coincide with the beginning of subsection i or iii (text lines may begin on the upper tonic c' before falling to a; in such cases, however, c' is no more than half a beat in duration). In these circumstances, three and four-beat lines span subsection i and ii, or iii and iv. Example 5.26 shows the overlaying of the text of *Bulu* verse 6 (exhibiting a 3+4 line structure) onto Section II of the melody in two separate performances. In Example 5.26(i) the three-beat line appears first, while in Example 5.26(ii) it is the four-beat line which appears at the beginning of the section. Regardless of which line appears first, the first line spans subsections i and ii, while the second spans subsections iii and iv.

Example 5.26. The overlaying of three and four-beat lines onto Section II of the *Bulu* descent.

(i) Verse 6, performance i, Descent A₂



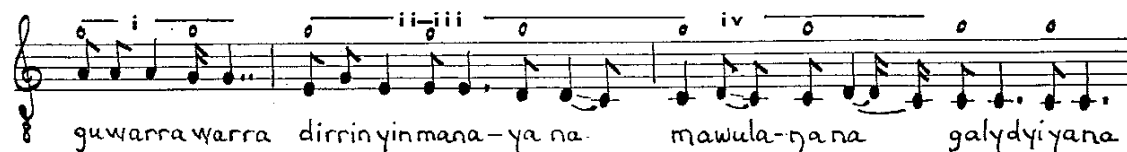
(ii) Verse 6, performance ii, Descent A₂



In performances of text types C, D and E (see Table 18 above, p. 196), three and four-beat lines may span subsections different from that shown in Example 5.26, due to the fact that a two-beat line may appear at the beginning of the section. Regardless of where they fall within the section, however, three and four-beats lines still normally span two subsections of the melody. Example 5.27 shows several different combinations of text lines of varying length being set to Section II. In Example 5.27(i) a two-beat line spans the first subsection, a three-beat line spans subsections ii and iii, and a four-beat line spans subsection iv plus the first two beats of Section III. In Example 5.27(ii) a two-beat line spans subsection i, a four-beat line spans subsections ii and iii, and the same two-beat line spans subsection iv. In Example 5.27(iii) a four-beat line spans subsections i and ii, a two-beat line spans subsection iii, and a three-beat line spans subsection iv plus the first beat of Section III.

Example 5.27. Intermeshing of lines of varying duration with subsections of the *Bulu* melody.

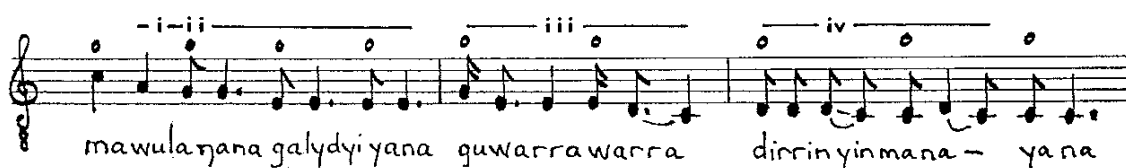
(i) Verse 3, performance iii, Descent A₁



(ii) Verse 8, performance ii, Descent A₁



(iii) Verse 3, performance i, Descent A₁



As described above, three-beat lines normally span two subsections of the melody, irrespective of their position within Section II. In certain circumstances, however, namely when a three-beat line which includes only one long duration (long durations are discussed above, see p. 159) coincides with subsection iii of the melody, that three-beat line will only span one subsection of the melody, namely subsection iii.

Example 5.28 shows the syllabic rhythm of two three-beat lines, which together make up the text of verse 1. The first line includes one long duration (appearing within the box), while the second includes two.³⁰

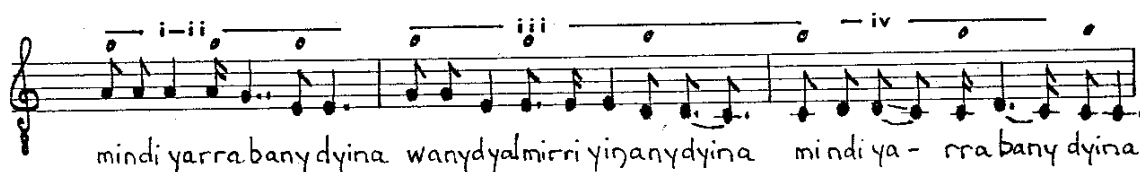
³⁰ Four verses in the *Bulu* series (namely verses 1, 5, 11 and 13) exhibit three-beat lines comprising only one long duration.

Example 5.28. Syllabic rhythm of two three-beat lines which exhibit one and two long durations respectively.



In most circumstances, the text setting characteristics of the above three-beat lines are identical; they normally span two subsections of the melody. When the text line *wanydyalmirri yijanydyina* coincides with subsection iii of the melody, however, it always spans only that one subsection. Example 5.29 shows part of a performance of verse 1 (see Musical Notation 1, performance iii, Descent A₂, p. 217), in which the text line *wanydyalmirri yijanydyina* coincides with subsection iii. In this performance, the line in question spans only subsection iii.

Example 5.29. The overlaying of a three-beat line which exhibits only one long duration onto subsection iii of the *Bulu* melody.



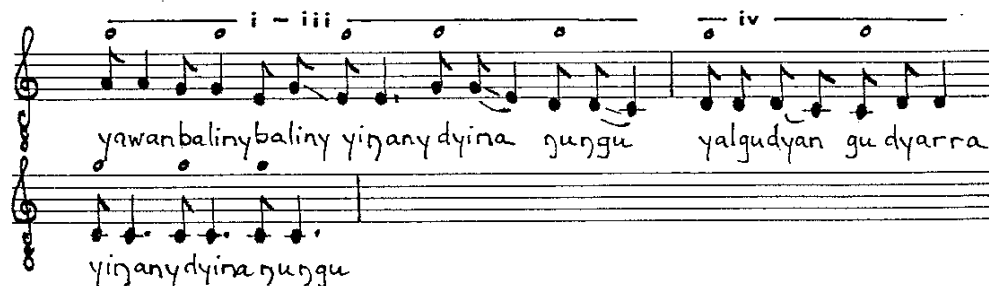
In summary, in all cases where three-beat lines which include only one long duration are set to the *Bulu* melody, they always span two subsections, except when they coincide with subsection iii, in which case they span only one.

c) The setting of five-beat lines.

Turning to lines which are five beats long, in the majority of cases five-beat lines span three subsections of the melody, namely subsections i, ii and iii; subsection iv, coinciding with the beginning of the next line, varies in length from one to two beats. Example 5.30 (see Musical Notation 14, performance iv, Descent A₂) shows

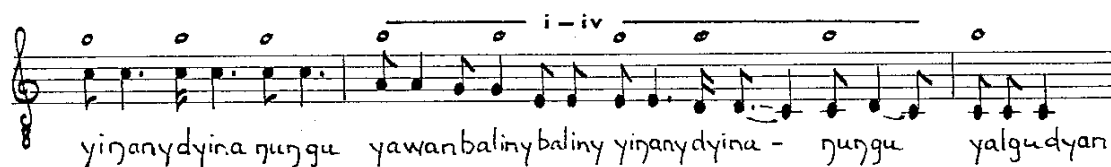
how five-beat lines are commonly set to Section II; one line spans subsections i to iii, while the following line spans subsection iv plus part of Section III.

Example 5.30. Overlaying of five-beat lines onto Section II of the *Bulu* melody.



In a third of cases, however, five-beat lines span four subsections, that is the whole of Section II. Example 5.31 (see Musical Notation 14, performance vi, Descent A₁) shows one such instance of a five-beat line spanning the whole of Section II.

Example 5.31. Overlaying of a five-beat line onto Section II of the *Bulu* melody.



Conclusions about the setting of texts in Section II of the melody

The above discussion has shown firstly, that text lines in the *Bulu* performances appear to intersect, or 'interlock' to use Ellis' terminology (see p. 149), with subsections within Section II of the melody; and secondly, that they appear to do so in a regular manner.

Regardless of where they fall within Section II, two-beat lines always span one subsection of the melody, while four-beat lines always span two. Three and five-beat lines may be set in several different ways. Three-beat lines usually behave like four-beat lines, in that they span two subsections of the melody. When a three-beat line

which exhibits only one long duration coincides with subsection iii of the melody, however, it spans only that one subsection. Concerning five-beat lines, in two-thirds of cases they span three subsections of the melody within Section II; in the remaining third of cases, they span the whole of Section II, that is four subsections.

Despite the fact that text lines intersect with the melody in regular ways, the fact that three and five-beat lines may be set in several ways is obviously tantalising, in view of Barwick's discussion of irregular settings in the *Ngintaka* sample (see above p. 145). Further analysis of the *Bulu* series (which will not be discussed in detail here) has shown that these 'irregular' settings of three and five-beat lines reveal a system of underlying patterns, or musical processes, which together regulate the layout of the melody: firstly, there is a preferred melodic layout which limits the degree to which the melody may expand and contract; secondly, there is a preference for both the beginning and end of Section II to coincide with text line boundaries; and thirdly, at a detailed level of the melodic layout, although the initial fall to the lower tonic may occur within a relatively long duration, there is a preference for it to occur within a long duration. The analysis that reveals these underlying patterns is necessarily complex, and for reasons of time, has been excluded from this thesis.³¹

Text setting in Sections I and III

Having discussed Section II in detail, let us now turn to the intermeshing of the text/rhythmic structure with the melody in Sections I and III of the *Bulu* descent. In general, Sections I and III of each descent (shown in Example 5.10 above) are characterised by a greater degree of flexibility than Section II. Section I varies in length from three beats (verse 3, performance iii, Descent A₁) to over nine beats (verse 9, performance iv, Descent A₂), while Section III varies from six beats (in several performances of verses 1 and 8) to twelve beats (in several performances of verses 1 and 14). Moreover, the regularity in the intermeshing of text lines exhibited in Section

³¹ The detailed description of these underlying patterns will form the basis of a future article.

II does not appear to be working in Sections I and III. Concerning Section III, the repetition of the lower tonic does not have sufficient melodic features to say whether interlocking is working or not, but variability in the measurement of this section suggests not. Although Section I is melodically more differentiated than Section III, it still does not exhibit the regular intersection of text units with distinctive subsections of the melody.³²

It is not entirely unexpected, in view of the findings of several researchers into central Australian music, that the fitting of the texts to the melody is more regular in the central section of each *Bulu* descent than in those sections which frame it. In her analysis of *Inma Langka*, Ellis concentrates on the central, 'identifying' section of the melody in order to articulate the rules by which the text structure regulates melodic movement (see above p. 149). Similarly, Barwick's discussion of the interrelationship between text and melody in *Inma Ngintaka* centres on the preliminary and main descent (see above p. 145). Finally, in his analyses of three Western Desert series, Tunstill identifies the 'central breath group' as the most relevant section to view regularity in text/melody intermeshing (see above p. 130). All three approaches suggest that it is the central sections of those song series analysed which will exhibit the most stable relationship between the text/rhythmic structure and the melody, and that the sections of the melodies which frame those central, identifying sections exhibit a much more variable relationship between the text and melody.

The breaking of the text/rhythmic cycle between descents

One last aspect of the *Bulu* performances requires brief examination. As described above, the vast majority of *Bulu* performances comprise two major descents over the range of a ninth or tenth (represented graphically in Example 5.9, see p. 182). Where this is the case, a breath intake always occurs between the end of the first descent and the beginning of the second. In two thirds of performances, Dyunjayan

³² In many, but not all cases, the fall to the upper tonic (see Example 5.10) occurs within one text line, while the repetition of the upper tonic extends for one line.

maintained the text/rhythmic cycle through the breath intake, as if he were singing it through in his head. The maintenance of the text/rhythmic cycle through breath intakes appears to be a feature of the music found throughout central Australia. Tunstill (1987: 126) describes the situation for Pitjantjatjara music as follows:

In group singing everyone takes a breath at the same time, or at least within a couple of syllables of each other. The rhythmic flow is preserved across the resultant gap as though it had been imagined to continue despite the absence of singing, and despite losing a syllable or two during inhalation.

In a third of those *Bulu* performances which comprise two major descents, however, Dyurjgayan broke the text/rhythmic cycle during the breath intake. Sometimes the point in the text/rhythmic cycle at which he recommenced singing was only half a beat 'out' (for example, see verse 9, performance iii, p. 235). More commonly, however, it appears that, at the commencement of the breath intake, he jumped to the beginning of one of the text lines within the cycle and continued to sing that line in his head while taking the breath. The subsequent place within the text at which singing recommenced was at a point close to the beginning of the line to which he had jumped during the breath intake.

The breaking of the text/rhythmic cycle during breath intakes is found not only in the *Bulu* performances analysed in this thesis; many performances of Butcher Joe's *nurlu*, for example, exhibit a similar treatment of the text. Although requiring further investigation, this suggests that the breaking of the text/rhythmic cycle may be a significant feature of western Kimberleys performance practice.

5.5 Conclusions

In Chapter 1 (see p. 1), it was stated that one of the areas of focus of this thesis was to place the *nurlu* genre into the wider context of the performance arts of central Australia. In Chapter 2, the interrelationships between *nurlu* and similar desert genres was explored on a social and cultural level, while in Chapter 3, interrelationships were investigated primarily within the area of textual interpretation. In Chapter 4, a detailed description of the formal musical elements of songs from various geographical

locations of central Australia was undertaken. The discussion showed that it is perhaps inappropriate to speak of one, unified central Australian musical style, except at the most general level; this is because central Australian songs exhibit a significant degree of variation, both in the form of their structural components, and the way in which those structural components intersect within performance. Because of this stylistic diversity, it is simply not possible to set up a stylistic boundary between central Australian songs on the one hand, and the *Bulu* performances analysed in this thesis, on the other. Nevertheless, insofar as *Bulu* exhibits certain characteristics found in most, if not all central Australian music, it can be said that the *Bulu* songs fall broadly within the central Australian tradition.

At the same time, the structure of the *Bulu* songs appears to differ in several respects from the central Australian tradition, such as in the breaking of the text/rhythmic cycle between descents and the much more flexible arrangement of text lines at the melodic points of fit. On the basis of the above analysis, however, I suggest that those differences are not great enough to constitute a distinct musical style.

In this concluding section to Chapter 5, I wish to draw out some of the similarities, as well as articulate some of the differences, which occur between *Bulu* and those series within the centralian tradition described in Chapter 4.

Text/rhythmic structure

Section 5.2 establishes the hierarchical basis of the structure of the *Bulu* texts and their associated syllabic rhythms. Turning first to the level of text lines, it has been shown that text line structure in the *Bulu* verses is clear-cut. Explicit divisions can be made on the basis of rhythm alone: lines end with a long duration, or succession of long durations. Moreover, it has been shown that, in the vast majority of cases, divisions made on the basis of rhythm are supported by text morphology: verbs never appear at the beginning of lines, and in most cases appear at the ends. The *Bulu* verses appear to be similar in this regard to a number of central Australian verses discussed in Chapter 4. For example, Barwick has shown that text phrases in the *Ngintaka* series

can be defined by the coincidence of long durations with the ends of words. The *Bulu* verses differ, however, from many other central Australian verses which do not appear to exhibit clear-cut divisions on the basis of text and rhythm alone.

While the *Bulu* verses exhibit repetition patterns in both the text and rhythm, those repetitions patterns appear to be different from those exhibited by other central Australian verses. For example, in many central Australian verses, the basis of repetition patterns appears to be at the level of repeating textual and rhythmic phrases within a verse, such as in AABB structures (what Ellis and Barwick call 'doubled texts'). While the *Bulu* verses exhibit, to a degree, rhythmic repetition patterns within a verse, the doubled text structures commonly found throughout the desert areas is absent. It has been shown that text repetition patterns in the *Bulu* verses operate primarily at the level of recurring formulaic verbs which appear at the ends of lines. Thus, while the *Bulu* texts tend not to exhibit repetition patterns within verses, they do so between verses. This repetition between verses acts as a unifying element in the series.

Below the level of text lines, it has been shown that four-beat lines sometimes divide into two explicit text phrases/rhythmic segments, which are always two beats long. Although rhythmic segments have been adopted by a number of researchers in the analysis of central Australian music, I have not found this level of the text/rhythmic hierarchy particularly useful in describing the structural organisation of the *Bulu* songs. It has also been shown, moreover, that in some of those analyses which utilise this level of the text/rhythmic hierarchy to explain regularity in the intermeshing of the text and melody, they do so by way of a flawed methodology. In his analysis of the Pintupi *tingarri* series, Richard Moyle argues that the basis of the structural organisation of the songs lies in the division of each text into four 'isorhythmic units' (which appear to be synonymous with my 'text phrases/rhythmic segments'), and that regularity in the fitting of the various texts to the melody may be seen to operate at this

level. In a significant number of cases, however, it has been shown that Moyle's four-fold isorhythmic division of the texts is artificially conceived (see above p. 135 foll.).

As shown in Chapter 5 (see p. 169), underlying the rhythmic construction of each text line is a metrical/rhythmic matrix which operates at the level of rhythmic cells. *Bulu* text lines are constructed on a relatively small number of rhythmic cells which always consist of either two or three durations. Moreover, regardless of length, text lines exhibit a uniformity of rhythmic cell construction; that is, particular rhythmic cells are found at the beginnings and ends of lines - those rhythmic cells appearing at the beginning of a line are never found at the end, and vice versa. The uniformity of rhythmic cell construction of verses belonging to the same series has been reported from at least one other area of central Australia (see McCardell's description of the uniformity of rhythmic cell construction in Darbin's *inma*, Pritam 1980: 26-27). Unlike McCardell, however, who did not find 'this level of analysis very useful in most cases' (ibid.), the above discussion has shown that this underlying rhythmic/metrical system significantly influences the way in which everyday lexical items are modified in song.

Let us now turn to the level of the text/rhythmic cycle. In many of those series discussed in Chapter 4, researchers have found that one point (or sometimes two in the case of 'doubled texts') in each text/rhythmic cycle appears to be structurally more significant than any other. For example, in many central Australian series the same word of a text will always appear at a significant boundary in the melody. Similarly, in some of those series which exhibit cyclical melodies, the same word of the text will always appear at the melodic cycle boundary. Because of this, researchers talk of a definite beginning and end to the text/rhythmic cycle, and have conceived the text/rhythmic cycle itself to be an important factor in the structural organisation of a song. McCardell (1980: 20) has shown that in those songs which he analysed from the Western Desert, the melody expands and contracts in order for melodic cycle boundaries to coincide with text/rhythmic cycle boundaries. In the *Bulu* performances,

no one text line appears to be more significant than any other. For example, any text line within the text/rhythmic cycle may coincide with Section II of the melody. I suggest, therefore, that the structural unit of the text/rhythmic cycle is less influential in the organisation of the *Bulu* songs than it is in other central Australian series.

Melody

When compared to the overall form of other central Australian melodies, the *Bulu* melody is relatively simple, comprising several cyclical repetitions of a descent over the range of a ninth or tenth.³³ Each descent exhibits a structure typical of many other central Australian melodies, namely an introductory section which defines the upper pitch area, a central descent which appears to be intrinsic in identifying the particular characteristics of the melody, and a concluding section comprising repetition of the lower tonic. While there is a degree of variability in the pitch of main tones (main tones may be 'bent' in performance), and several different ornamental pitches may occur at various points in the melodic cycle, the pitch structure of the *Bulu* melody is relatively stable when compared to other desert melodies. The whole question of pitch stability/flexibility in *nurlu* remains open, however, due to the fact that most of the songs analysed were performed by one singer only.

The relationship between text and melody

Finally let us consider the text/melody relationship. Although the exact details of the intermeshing of the *Bulu* texts with the melody are different from that exhibited by other desert series similar principles appear to be operating on several levels.

Firstly, like many central Australian series, text/melody intermeshing in the *Bulu* performances revolves around central points of structural coincidence, which Barwick calls 'points of fit' (see above). In the melody, this occurs in each descent at the boundary between Section I and II. As no one text line appears to be structurally more significant than any other (in contrast to the situation found, for example, with

³³ The fact that the *Bulu* cycle never occurs in the lower octave (unlike many cyclical melodies from the desert) is perhaps due to its relatively wide range.

doubled texts in which the first of each repeating text unit is structurally more important than the second), it is not surprising to find that there are as many points of fit in each *Bulu* text as there are text lines. Although obscured by a very different analytical approach (Moyle (1986) works from the premise that in Alyawarra music, the relationship between the text and melody is, theoretically speaking at least, fixed), the flexibility in the settings of texts in Alyawarra songs appears to be very similar to the situation described above for the *Bulu* performances.

Secondly, as is the case with many central Australian series, it is the central section of the melody which exhibits the most stable relationship between the texts and the melody, while the sections of the melody which frame the central portion of the melody tend to be much more flexible. Concerning text setting in the central section of the *Bulu* melody, the discussion undertaken in Section 5.4 has shown that, while the variability in the measurement of Section II might suggest that the relationship between the various *Bulu* texts and the melody is inherently flexible, the way in which text lines are placed onto the melody is relatively stable. If one takes into account the variable structure exhibited by the *Bulu* texts, the regular interlocking of text lines within Section II may be seen to very similar to the situation described by Ellis for text setting in the *Langka* series.

At this point, perhaps we might consider the fact that the analysis of the *Bulu* series undertaken above occurs at a time when the *nurlu* tradition is rapidly waning. Two of the three men who I worked with in Broome are now dead, and the third does not consider himself a singer. Aboriginal songs within certain categories have always come and gone, even within the lifetime of their creators. It has also been reported that certain songs may be 'rediscovered', albeit in a mythologically more complex context (see Wild 1987). Such is the nature of tradition. Perhaps the *nurlu* songs described in this thesis will never be performed again in the way described here, but I am not sure even of this. At the same time, perhaps their influence on Aboriginal tradition has already been made, a tradition which will form part of an Aboriginal future.

5.6 The Musical Notations

The Musical notations which follow include all performances of the *Bulu* songs appearing on field tapes T85/3, T85/4 and T85/5, as performed by George Dyunjayan [GDy], Butcher Joe [BJ] and Nellie Njadyuway [NN]. For the sake of clarity the following decisions have been made.

Sequence of songs

All performances of each verse have been grouped together, thereby changing the original sequence of songs. (The original sequence appears in Table 19 below, see p. 274).

Text

The complete text appears only in the first performance of each verse. Thereafter only the first word of each line appears, unless there is some confusion in which words are sung, or the words are different from that shown in the first performance.

Text line boundaries are indicated by bar lines, while text phrase/rhythmic segment boundaries are indicated by half bar lines.

Ellipsis points (. . .) appearing at the end of major descents indicate that a performer continues to sing a pitch for a short period of time without, however, articulating any words.

Pitch

The pitch of the tonic of each performance has been transposed to c. The relationship of the transposed pitch to that of the original appears at the beginning of each performance. For example, 'c = d' indicates that the original pitch is a tone higher than written.

An accidental appearing in front of a pitch applies to all occurrences of that pitch up to the following bar line. An accidental appearing above a pitch applies only to that

one occurrence. The symbol $\sharp$ signifies slightly sharper, while $\flat$ signifies slightly flatter.

Where two pitches are performed simultaneously, the larger note heads indicate those pitches sung by Dyurjgayan.

Vocal glides are indicated by the symbol $\sim$.

Rhythm

Boomerang clapsticks ($\overset{|}{x} \overset{|}{x}$) and handclapping ($o \ o$) accompaniment appear above the stave.

An arrow above a note indicates that that note is performed slightly before ($\leftarrow$) or after ($\rightarrow$) the beat.

Breath

A breath intake is indicated by the symbol ' .

A glottal stop is indicated by the symbol (') .

Handwritten musical notation for Bulu verse 1, consisting of two systems of six staves each (i-vi).

System 1:

- i:** T85/3:6 $c = e^b$
- ii:** T85/3:7 $c = e^b$ yi-gany-dyi-ney min-di ya-rra-bany-dyi-na
- iii:** T85/4:6 $c = d$ rri yi-gany-dyi-na min-di
- iv:** T85/4:7 $c = d^b$ yi-gany-dyi-na min-di
- v:** T85/5:9 $c = d^b$ -rri yi-gany-dyi-na mindi wanydyal mi- rri
- vi:** T85/5:10 $c = d^b$ [unmeasured] -i- rri yiganydyi-na mindi

System 2:

- i:** wanydyal mi- rri yi-gany-dyi-na min-di ya-rra-bany-dyi-na
- ii:** wanydyal mi- rri min-di
- iii:** wanydyal mi- rri min-di dyi-ney
- iv:** mindi wanydyal mi- rri
- v:** wanydyal mi- rri mindi ya [talks] mindi
- vi:** wanydyal mirri mindi

Musical Notation 1. *Bulu* verse 1.

i wanydyal-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na min-di ya-rra-bany-dyi-na

ii wanydyal-mi-rrri min-di

iii wanydyal-mi-rrri mindi dyiney

iv mindi ya-rra-bany-dyi-na wanydyal-mi-rrri

v wanydyal-mi-rrri mindi ya-rra-bany-dyi-na

vi wanydyal-mi-rrri mindi

i wanydyal-mi-rrri yi-gany

ii wanydyal-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na

iii wany-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na

iv mindi ya-rra-bany [NI] continues without words -rrri yi-gany-dyi-na

v

vi wanydyal-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na [mindi ya]

i rri yi-ganydyi-nay min-di ya-rra-bany-dyi-na (2)

ii rra-bany-dyi-na wanydyal-mi- rri [+B3]

iii min-di dyi-nay wanydyal-mi- rri (2)

iv mindi wanydyal-mi- rri (2)

v -rri yi-ganydyi-na mindi (2)

vi -rra-bany-dyi-na wanydyal-mi- rri (2)

i wanydyal-mi- rri yi-gany-dyi-na min-di ya-rra-bany-dyi-na

ii min-di wany-dyal-mi- rri

iii min-di wany-dyal-mi- rri

iv mindi wanydyal-mi- rri [+B3]

v wanydyal-mi- rri mindi [+B3]

vi mindi wanydyal-mi- rri

i wanydyal-mi- rri yi- gany-dyi-na min-di ya- rra-bany- dyi-na
 ii min-di wanydyal-mi- rri
 iii min-di wanydyal-mi- rri
 iv mindi wanydyal-mi- rri
 v wanydyal-mi- rri mindi
 vi mindi wanydyal-mi- rri

i wanydyal-mi- rri yi- gany-dyi- nay min-di ya-
 ii min-di wanydyal-mi- rri yi- gany
 iii min-di dyi- ney [~NG] wanydyal-mi- [oh, throat no good]
 iv mindi [~NG] wanydyal-mi- rri yi- gany
 v wanydyal-mi- rri mindi ya- rra-bany-dyi-na
 vi mindi wanydyal-mi- rri yi- gany-dyi- na

i T85/3:11 c=e
 dyi-na dyidi ya-rra-bany-dyi-na (2)

ii T85/3:12 c=e
 rri-ra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na dyi-di (2)

iii T85/3:13 c=e
 i-ra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na dyi-di (1)

iv T85/4:10 c=d^b
 rri-ra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na dyi-di (2)

v T85/4:11 c=d^b
 rri-ra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na dyi-di (2)

i gan-ba-lin-ba-li yi-gany-dyin -a gu-wa-ra-rrri-ra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na (+B1)

ii gan-ba-lin-ba-li gu-wa-ra-rrri-ra-rrri (Dy. wags) 3

iii gan-ba-lin-ba-li gu-wa-ra-rrri-ra-rrri (B1)

iv gan-ba-lin-ba-li gu-wa-ra-rrri-ra-rrri (B1)

v gan-ba-lin-ba-li gu-wa-ra-rrri-ra-rrri (B1)

Musical Notation 2. *Bulu* verse 2.

i
dyi-di ya-rra-bany- dyi-na gan ba- lin- ba- li yi- gany- dyi- na

ii
dyi-di [tr] gan- ba- lin- ba- li

iii
dyi-di [tr] gan- ba- lin- ba- li

iv
dyi-di [tr] gan ba- lin- ba- li yi- gany

v
dyi-di gan ba- lin- ba- li

Handwritten musical score for "The Song of the Weaver" in staff notation. The score consists of five systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are in Indonesian.

i gu-wa-ra-ri-ra-ri yigany-dyi-

ii gu-wa-ra-

iii gu-wa-ra-ri-

iv [coughs; doesn't continue]

v gu wa-ra-ri-ra-ri

[ny:dyidi-ya-rabanydyina nambatin]

i
-rra-bany- dyi-na gan-ba-lin- ba-li yi-gany-dyi-na

ii
ya-rra-bany- dyi-na gan-ba-lin- ba-li

iii
yi-gany-dyi-ney dyi-di

v
-rra-ra-rra yi-gany-dyi-na dyi-di

i
gu-wa-ra-rra-rra yi-gany-dyi-na dyi-di ya-rra-bany- dyi-na

ii
gu-wa-ra-rra-rra dyi-di

iii
gan-ba-lin-ba-li gu-wa-ra-rra-rra

v
gan-ba-lin-ba-li gu-wa-ra-rra-rra

i
gan-ba-lin-ba-li yi-nany-dyi-na gu-wa-ra-rra-rra-rra yi-nany-dyi-na

ii
gan-ba-lin-ba-li gu-wa-ra-rra-rra-rra

iii
dyi-di gan-ba-lin-ba-li

v
dyi-di gan-ba-lin-ba-li yi-nany-dyi-na
[Hh] dyi-di ya-rra-bany

i
dyi-di ya-rra-bany-dyi-...

ii
dyi-di gan-ba-lin-

iii
gu-wa-ra-rra-rra-rra yi-nany

v
[Hh] gu wa ra
dyi]

T85/3:17 c=e

i gu-wa-rra-wa-rra

T85/3:18 c=e^b

ii gu-wa-rra-wa-rra

T85/3:19 c=e^b

iii

T85/4:16 c=d^b

iv gu-wa-rra-wa-rra

T85/4:17 c=d^b

v -rra-wa-rra dirrin

i di-rrin yin-ma-na-ya-na mawu-la-ga-na galy-dyi-ya-na

ii di-rrin mawu-la-ga-na

iii ya-nei galy-dyi-ya-na gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin

iv di-rrin mawu-la-ga-na

v mawu-la-ga-na gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin

Musical Notation 3. *Bulu* verse 3.

Handwritten musical score for five voices (i-v). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from an indigenous language. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words hyphenated across measures.

i gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin yin-ma-na-ya-na mawu-la-ga-na
ii gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin mawu-la-ga-na
iii mawu-la-ga-na qu-wa-rra-wa-rra
iv gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin mawu-la-ga-na
v mawu-la-ga-na qu-wa-rra-wa-rra

Handwritten musical score for five voices (i-v). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from an indigenous language. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words hyphenated across measures.

i [gal-dyi-ni] ya-na gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin yin-ma-na-ya-na
ii gu-wa-rra-wa-rra [di-rrin yin-ma-na-ya-na]
iii di-rrin mawu-la-ga-na galydyi-ya-na
iv gu-wa-rra-wa-rra
v di-rrin mawu-la-ga-ney

i
ga-na

ii
mawu-la-ga-na galy-dyi

iii
wa-rra
gu-wa-rra-wa-rra

iv
gu-wa-rra-wa-rra

v
gu-wa-rra-wa-rra dirrin

i
galy-dyi-ya-na gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rin yin-ma-na-ya-na

ii
di-rin mawu-la-ga-na galy-dyi ya-na

iii
di-rin mawu-la-ga-na [galy-dyi-ri-] ya-na

iv
di-rin mawu-la-ga-na (2)

v
mawu-la-ga-na gu-wa-rra-wa-rra dirrin

Handwritten musical score for five voices (i-v). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from an indigenous language. The notation includes notes, rests, and bar lines.

i mawu-la-ga-na [gal-dyi-ri] gal-na gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin yin-ma-na

ii gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin mawu-la-ga-na

iii gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin mawu-la-ga-na

iv gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin mawu-la-ga-na

v mawu-la-ga-na gu-wa-rra-wa-rra

Handwritten musical score for five voices (i-v). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from an indigenous language. The notation includes notes, rests, bar lines, and some performance markings like [-B3] and [-N7].

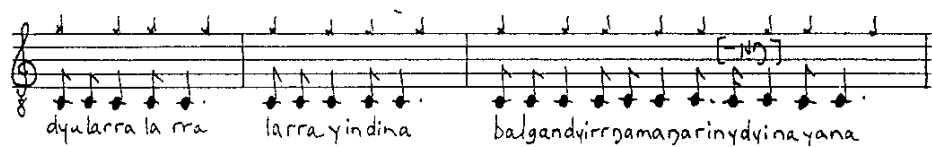
i ya-na mawu-la-ga-na [gal-dyi-ri] ya-na [no words]

ii gal-dyi ya-na gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin yin-ma-na

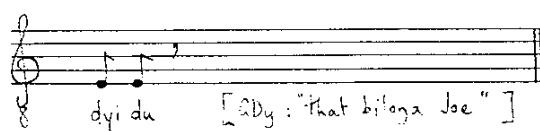
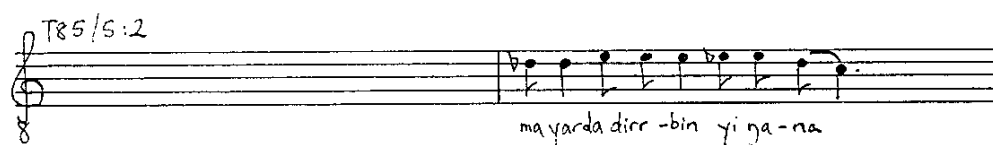
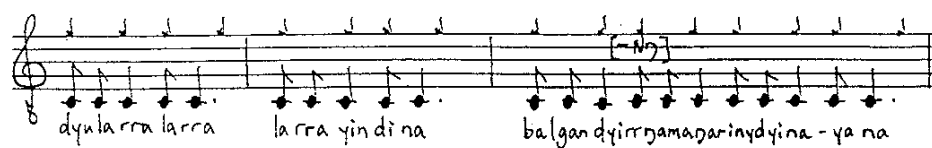
iii [gal-dyi-ri] ya-na gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin yin-ma-na

iv gu-wa-rra-wa-rra di-rrin yin-ma-na ya-na

v di-rrin mawu-la-ga-na gal-dyi-ya-na



Musical Notation 4. *Bulu* verse 4.



Musical Notation 5. *Bulu* verse 5.

i $T85/5:7$ $c = d^b$
 dyid yi-yal-ma-na-ya-na barrarri [spits] yi-ganydyina
 ii $T85/6:8$ $c = d^b$
 dyid yi-yal-ma-na-ya-na barrarri

i
 malarra dyid yi-yal-ma-na-ya-na barrarri yi-gany-dyi-na
 ii
 malarra barrarri

i
 na-la-rra dyid yi-yal ma-na-ya-na barrarri yi-ganydyina
 ii
 malarra barrarri yi-gany-dyina

i
 malarra [dyi yi-yal] -ma-na-ya-na
 ii

Musical Notation 6. *Bulu* verse 6.

i
 barrarri yiganydyi-na malarra dyid yiyal-mana- yana

ii
 dyid yiyal-ma-na- ya-na barrarri

i
 barrarri yigany-dyi-na malarra dyid yiyal- ma-na- ya-na

ii
 malarra barrarri

i
 barrarri yiganydyina malarra dyid yiyal-mana- ya-na

ii
 malarra barrarri

i
 barrarri

ii
 malarra dyid yiyal

i 785/5:14 C = d^b

ii 785/5:15 C = d^b

-dyi-gana yigany dyi-na buyurr ya-rra bany-dyina

-i-gana yigany-dyi-na buyurr

i malanydyigana yiganydyina buyurr ya-rra bany-dyi-na

ii malanydyigana buyurr

i malanydyigana yiganydyina buyurr ya-rra bany-dyina

ii malanydyigana buyurr ya-rra bany-dyina

i -gana yiganydyina buyurr ya-rra bany dyina

ii -gana yiganydyi-na buyurr

Musical Notation 7. *Bulu* verse 7.

i
malanydyi-gana yiganydyina buyurr yarabany-dyi-na

ii
malanydyigana buyurr

i
malanydyigana yiganydyi-na buyurr yarabanydyina

ii
malanydyi-gana buyurr

i
malanydyigana yiganydyina

ii
malanydyigana yi

i $T85/5:11$ $c = d^b$

ii $T85/5:12$ $c = d^b$

mi ainy bu-rru-rru ma-la-ra ma-la-ra yi ma-na-ya-na

yi ma-na ya-na midiny ma-la-ra

i midiny bu-rru-rru ma-la-ra ma-la-ra yi ma-na-ya-na midiny bu-rru-rru

ii midiny ma-la-ra midiny

i ma-la-ra ma-la-ra yi ma-na-ya-na midiny bu-rru-rru

ii ma-la-ra midiny ma-la-ra

i -a ma-la-ra yi ma-na-ya-na midiny bu-rru-rru

ii ma-la-ra yi ma-na-ya-na midiny

Musical Notation 8. *Bulu* verse 8.

i
malara malara yimama-ya-na a midiny bu-rrurru malara mala ra

ii
malara a midiny malara

i
yimama-ya-na midiny bu-rru-rruy mala-ra mala-ra yimama-ya-na

ii
yimama yana midiny malara malara yimama-ya-ney

i
midiny bu-rru-rruy

i T85/3:26 c = e^b
 mi-rrī yi-gany-dyi-na bu-yurr ya-rra-bany-dyi-na (a)
 ii T85/3:27 c = e^b
 mi-rrī yi-gany-dyi-na bu-yurr
 iii T85/5:3 c = d^b
 -dyi-mi-rrī yi-gany-dyi-na bu-yurr
 iv T85/5:4 c = d^b
 dyi-mi-rrī yi-gany-dyi-na bu-yurr

i larn-dyi-mi-rrī yi-ga- dyi-na bu-yurr ya-rra-bany- dyi-na
 ii larn-dyi-mi-rrī bu-yurr
 iii larn-dyi-mi-rrī bu-yurr
 iv larn-dyi-mi-rrī bu-yurr

Musical Notation 9. *Bulu* verse 9.

Handwritten musical score for a four-part vocal setting. The score is written on four staves. The first staff has a key signature change to B-flat major, indicated by a bracket and "Bb". The lyrics are: "larn-dyi-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na bu-yurr-ya-ra-bany-dyi-na". The second staff has the lyrics: "larn-dyi-mi-rrri bu-yurr". The third staff has the lyrics: "larn-dyi-mi-rrri byyurr ya-ra-bany-dyi-na". The fourth staff has the lyrics: "larn-dyi-mi-rrri bu-yurr".

Handwritten musical score for a four-part vocal setting. The score is written on four staves. The first staff has a key signature change to B-flat major, indicated by a bracket and "Bb". The lyrics are: "larn-dyi-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na". The second staff has the lyrics: "larn-dyi-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na". The third staff is empty. The fourth staff has the lyrics: "larn-dyi -i yi-gany-dyi-na".

Handwritten musical score for four staves (i, ii, iii, iv). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from a South Asian language. The notation includes treble clefs, time signatures, and various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Staff i: ya-rra-bany- dyi-na larn-dyi- mi- rri yi-gany-dyi-na

Staff ii: -rra-bany- dyi-na larn-dyi- mi- rri

Staff iii: -dyi-mi- rri buyurr

Staff iv: buyurr larn-dyi-mi- rri

Handwritten musical score for four staves (i, ii, iii, iv). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from a South Asian language. The notation includes treble clefs, time signatures, and various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Staff i: bu-yurr ya-rra-bany- dyi-na larn-dyi-mi- rri yi-gany-dyi-na

Staff ii: bu-yurr larn-dyi- mi- rri

Staff iii: larn-dyi-mi- rri buyurr

Staff iv: buyurr larn-dyi-mi- rri

i
 bu-yurr ya -rra-bany-dyi-na larn-dyi-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na

ii
 bu-yurr larn-dyi-mi-rrri

iii
 larn-dyi-mi-rrri buyurr

iv
 buyurr larn-dyi-mi-rrri

ii
 bu-yurr ya -rra-bany-dyi-na

iii
 larn-dyi-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi

iv
 buyurr yarra-bany-dyi

T85/3:28 c = e^b

i - rri yi-gany-dyi-na bu-ra-rra-ra-rra yi-gany-dyi-na

T85/3:29 c = e^b

ii - rri yi-gany-dyi-na bu-ra-rra-ra-rra yi-gany-dyi-na

T85/5:5 c = e^b

iii - rri yi-gany-dyi-na bu-ra-rra-ra-rra

T85/6:6 c = d^b

iv - rri yi-gany-dyi-na bu-ra-rra-ra-rra

i gi-rra-diny-dyi-mi-rra yi-ga yi-na bu-ra-rra-ra-rra yi-gany-dyi-na

ii gi-rra-diny-dyi-mi-rra bu-ra-rra-ra-rra

iii gi-rra-diny-dyi-mi-rra bu-ra-rra-ra-rra

iv gi-rra-diny-dyi-mi-rra bu-ra-rra-ra-rra

Musical Notation 10. *Bulu* verse 10.

i gi-rrri-diny-dyi-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na bu-ra-rrri-ra-rrri [B.J. continues without words]
 ii gi-rrri-diny-dyi-mi-rrri bu-ra-rrri-ra-rrri gi-rrri-diny
 iii gi-rrri-diny-dyi-mi-rrri bu-ra-rrri-ra-rrri yi-na
 iv gi-rrri-diny-dyi-mi-rrri bu-ra-rrri-ra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na

i -dyi-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na bu-ra-rrri-ra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na
 ii -rrri yi-gany-dyi-na bu-ra-rrri-ra-rrri
 iii -ra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na gi-rrri-diny-dyi-mi-rrri
 iv -dyi-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na bu-ra-rrri-ra-rrri

i
gi-rr-diny-dyi-mi-rr-i yi-gany - dyi-na bu-ra-rr-i-ra-rr-i yi-gany- dyi-na

ii
gi-rr-diny-dyi-mi-rr-i bu-ra-rr-i-ra-rr-i

iii
bu-ra-rr-i-ra-rr-i a gi-rr-diny-dyi-mi-rr-i

iv
gi-rr-diny-dyi-mi-rr-i bu-ra-rr-i-ra-rr-i

i
gi-rr-diny-dyi-mi-rr-i yi-gany dyi-na bu-ra-rr-i-ra-rr-i yi-gany- dyi-na

ii
gi-rr-diny-dyi-mi-rr-i bu-ra-rr-i-ra-rr-i yi-gany- dyi-na

iii
bu-ra-rr-i-ra-rr-i gi-rr-diny-dyi-mi-rr-i

iv
gi-rr-diny-dyi-mi-rr-i bu-ra-rr-i-ra-rr-i

iii
bu-ra-rr-i-ra-rr-i

iv
gi-rr-diny-dyi

Handwritten musical notation for Bulu verse 11, consisting of two systems of five staves each. The notation includes notes, rests, and lyrics in a non-Latin script.

System 1:

- i** T85/3:14 c=e
rany yiny-dyarr-ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray
- ii** T85/3:15 c=e
-dyarr-ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyalbirrim-bi-rray
- iii** T85/3:16 c=e
yiny-dyarr-ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyalbirrim-bi-rray
- iv** T85/4:18 c=db
ga-ranyga-rany yinydyarr-ga-na milydyi-da-wu-rroy
- v** T85/4:19 c=db
yiny-dyarr-ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyalbirrimbirray

System 2:

- i** ga-ranyga-rany yiny-dyarr-ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray
- ii** ga-rany mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyalbirrim-bi-rray
- iii** ga-rany mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyalbirrim-bi-rray
- iv** dyalbirrim-bi-rray garany milydyi-da-wu-rroy
- v** garany milydyi-da-wu-rroy dyalbirrimbirray

Musical Notation 11. *Bulu* verse 11.

Handwritten musical score for five voices (i-v). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from an indigenous language. The notation includes treble clefs, stems, and notes with lyrics written below.

i ga-rany ga-rany yiny-dyarr-ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray
ii ga-rany mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray
iii ga-rany mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray
iv dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray ga-rany mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy
v ga-rany mily-dyi-da-wu-rroy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray

Handwritten musical score for five voices (i-v). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from an indigenous language. The notation includes treble clefs, stems, and notes with lyrics written below.

i ga-rany ga-rany
ii ga-rany ga-rany yiny-dyarr-ga-na
iii ga-rany
iv dyal-bi-rrim-..... [Dy: wila I lookim ... the rain]
v ga-rany ga-rany yiny-dyarr-ga-na

Handwritten musical score for five voices (i-v). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from a Pacific Island language. The notation includes treble clefs, 8/8 time signatures, and various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The lyrics are written below the staves.

i ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rruy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray

ii -wu-rruy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray ga-rany

iii yiny-dyarr-ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rruy dyalbirrim bi-rray

iv milydyida-wu-rruy dyalbirrimbi-rray garany

v milydyida-wu-rruy dyalbirrimbi-rray garany

Handwritten musical score for five voices (i-v). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from a Pacific Island language. The notation includes treble clefs, 8/8 time signatures, and various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The lyrics are written below the staves.

i ga-rany ga-rany yiny-dyarr-ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rruy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray

ii mily-dyi-da-wu-rruy dyalbirrim bi-rray ga-rany

iii ga-rany mily-dyi-da-wu-rruy dyalbirrim bi-rray

iv milydyida-wu-rruy dyalbirrim birra garany

v milydyida-wu-rruy dyalbirrimbirray garany

i *ga-rany ga-rany yiny-dyarr-ga-na mily-dyi-da-wu-rruy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray*
 ii *mily-dyi-da-wu-rruy dyal birrim bi-rray ga-rany*
 iii *ga-rany mily-dyi-da-wu-rruy dyal birrim bi-rray*
 iv *milydyida-wu-rruy dyal birrim-bi-rray garany*
 v *milydyida-wu-rruy dyal birrim bi-rray garany*

i *ga-rany ga-rany*
 ii *mily-dyi-da-wu-rruy dyal-bi-rrim-bi-rray*
 iii *ga-rany*
 iv *milydyida-wu-rruy dyal birrim bi-rray ga-rany garany yinydyarr-gana*
 v *milydyida-wu-rruy dyal birrim-bi-rray garany garany*

i $T85/4:1 c = e^b$

ii $T85/4:2 c = d$

yi gany dyi-nay dya-lal yin-di-na-ya-na

yi-gany-dyi-na dya-lal

i ban-dirrya-rra-bany-dyi-na bra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na

ii ban-dirr bra-rrri

i dya-lal yin-di-na-ya-na ban-dirrya-rra-bany-dyi-na

ii dya-lal ban-dirr

i bra

ii bra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na

Musical Notation 12. *Bulu* verse 12.

i
yi-gany-dyi-na dya-lal yin-di-na-ya-na

ii
-i-na-ya-na ban-dirr

i
ban-dirr ya-rra-bany-dyi-na bra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na

ii
bra-rrri dya-lal

i
dya-lal yin-di-na-ya-na ban-dirr ya-rra-bany-dyi-na

ii
ban-dirr bra-rrri

i
bra-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na dya-lal yin-di-nay

ii
dya-lal ban-dirr ya-rra-bany

T85/4 : 3 c=d

i da-dyi wurru-rruy dyunbaramba-ra ga-nal yimbanydyina-ya-na

ii da-dyi dyunbaramba-ra ga-nal

iii da-dyi dyunbaramba-ra ga-nal

i da-dyi wurru-rruy dyunbaramba-ra ga-nal yimbanydyina-ya-na

ii da-dyi dyunbaramba-ra ga-nal

iii da-dyi dyunbaramba-ra ga-nal *Speeds up in relation to staks*

i da-dyi wurru-rruy dyunbaramba-ra ga-nal yimbanydyina-ya-na

ii da-dyi dyunbaramba-ra ga-nal

iii da-dyi dyunbaramba-ra ga-nal

Musical Notation 13. *Bulu* verse 13.

i
da dyi wu-rru-rruy

ii
da dyi wu-rru-rruy

iii
da dyi wu-rru-rruy

i
-ba-ra ga-nal yim-bany-dyi-na-ya-na

ii
-ba-ra ga-nal

iii
da dyi wu-rru-rruy dyunbaramba-ra ganai

i
da dyi wu-rru-rruy dyunbaramba-ra ganai yim banydyina ya-na

ii
da-dyi dyunbaramba-ra ganai

iii
da dyi dyunbaramba-ra ganai

i

dadyi wurrurruy dyunbarambara ganal yimbandyina - ya - na

ii

dadyi dyunbarambara ganal

iii

dadyi dyunbarambara ganal

[speeds up in relation to sticks]

[rit.]

Handwritten musical score for three voices (i, ii, iii). The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely from a South Asian language. The score is written on three staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are:
 i: dadyi wurru-ruy dadyi wurru-ruy ganal yimbandyina
 ii: dadyi wurru-ruy
 iii: dadyi wurru-ruy

Handwritten musical notation for Bulu verse 14, consisting of six staves (i to vi) with lyrics in Indonesian.

Staff i: T85/3:20 c = e^b
 dya-rra yi-gany - dyi-na gunggu

Staff ii: T85/3:21 c = e^b
 gadyarra yi-gany - dyi-na gunggu

Staff iii: T85/3:22 c = e^b
 gu-dyarra yi-gany - dyi-na-gunggu

Staff iv: T85/4:20 c = b
 -iny-baliny yi-gany - dyina-gunggu

Staff v: T85/4:21 c = d^b

Staff vi: T85/4:22 c = d^b
 -ba-liny yigany - dyina gunggu

Handwritten musical notation for Bulu verse 14, continuing from the previous system, consisting of six staves (i to vi) with lyrics in Indonesian.

Staff i: ya-wan ba-liny-ba-liny yi-gany-dyi-na gunggu yal-qu-dyang-gu-dya-rra yi-ga- any dyi-na gung-gu

Staff ii: ya-wan yal-gu-dyang-gu-dyarra yi-gany-dyi-na gunggu

Staff iii: ya-wan yal-gu-dyan

Staff iv: yal-gu-dyan ya-wan

Staff v: gu-dyarra yi-gany-dyi-na gunggu ya-wan

Staff vi: yal-gu-dyan ya-wan

Musical Notation 14. *Bulu* verse 14.

i
ya-wan ba-ling-ba-ling yi-gany-dyi-na ngungu yalgudyan gudyarra yigany-dyi-na ngungu

ii
ya-wan yalgudyan

iii
ya-wan yalgudyan

iv
yalgudyan yawan

v
yalgudyan yawan

vi
yalgudyan yawan

i
ba-ling-ba-ling

ii
ya-wan ba-ling yi-gany-dyi-na ngungu

iii
ya- iny-ba-ling yi-gany-dyi-na ngungu

iv
-iny yi-gany-dyi-na ngungu

v
ba-ling-ba-ling yigany-dyi-na ngungu

vi
ba-ling-ba-ling yigany-dyi-na ngungu

i yi-gany-dyi-na gungu yalgudyan gudyarra yi-gany dyi-na gungu

ii yalgu-dyan gudyarra yigany dyina yawan

iii yalgu-dyan yawan

iv yalgu-dyan yawan

v -dyan gudyarra yi-gany-dyi-na gungu yawan

vi yalgudyan yawan

i ya wan ba-liny-ba-liny yigany-dyina gungu yalgu dyan gudyarra yi-gany dyi-na gungu

ii yalgu-dyan ya-wan ba-liny-ba-liny yi-gany-dyi-

iii yalgu-dyan ya wan ba liny ba liny yi gany

iv yalgu dyan yawan

v yalgu dyan yawan

vi yalgu dyan yawan

The image shows a handwritten musical score on three systems of staves. Each system consists of a vocal line and two piano accompaniment lines. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written in a stylized script below the notes.

System i:

Vocal line: *ya wan ba-ling-ba-ling*

System iv:

Vocal line: *yalgudyan gudyarra yigany-dyina*

System v:

Vocal line: *yalgudyan gudyarra yigany-dyi-na*

System vi:

Vocal line: *yalgudyan gudyarra yigany-dyina*

The piano accompaniment lines feature rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The lyrics are written in a stylized script, possibly representing a specific dialect or language.

i $T85/4:12$ $c = d^b$
 ii $T85/4:13$ $c = d^b$

-many-dyi-na yiganydyi-na-gana dyirrbal yi-ga-na-ya-na
 -manydyina yiganydyinana dyirrbal

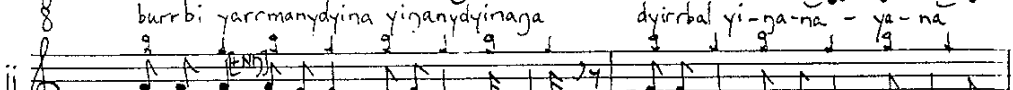
burrbi yarrmanydyina yiganydyi-na-ga dyirrbal yi-ga-na-ya-na
 burrbi dyirrbal

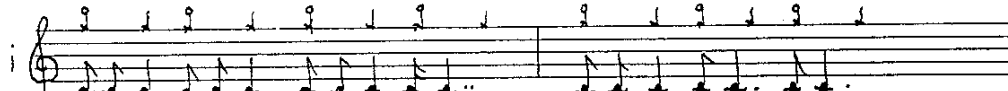
burrbi yarrmanydyina yiganydyinana dyirrbal yi-ga-na-ya-na
 burrbi [coughs] dyirrbal

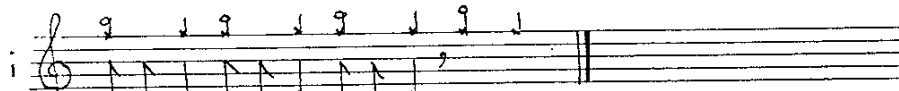
burrbi yarrmanydyina yiganydyi-na-ga

Musical Notation 15. *Bulu* verse 15.

i 
 ii 
 -manydyina yiganydyinaga dyirrbal yi-ga-na-ya-na
 -manydyina yiganydyinaga dyirrbal

i 
 ii 
 burrbi yarrmanydyina yiganydyinaga dyirrbal yi-ga-na-ya-na
 burrbi dyirrbal

i 
 ii 
 burrbi yarrmanydyina yiganydyinaga dyirrbal yi-ga-na-ya-na
 burrbi dyirrbal

i 
 ii 
 burrbi yarrmanydyina yiganydyi
 burrbi dyirrbal yi

i T85/5:17 c = d^b

ii T85/5:18 c = d^b

dyi-mi-rrri yimana-ya na

ya rra many-dyi na raydyi mirri

i dyila bu mirri barril ya-rra manydyi na

ii dyilabu-mirri barril

i ray-dyi-mirri yimana-ya na dyilabu-mi-rrri barril ya rra many dyi na

ii raydyi mirri dyila bu-mi-rrri barril

i raydyi mirri yimana-ya na dyila-bu-mi-rrri

ii raydyi mirri yi-ma-

Musical Notation 16. *Bulu* verse 16.

i

ii

i

ii

i

ii

i

ii

i

ii

Handwritten musical notation for Bulu verse 17, measures 1-6. The notation is written on six staves (i-vi) with lyrics in Indonesian. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/8.

Staff i: T85/3:9 c=e

Staff ii: T85/3:10 c=e

Staff iii: T85/4:8 c=d^h

Staff iv: T85/4:9 c=d^h

Staff v: T85/4:11 c=d^b

Staff vi: T85/4:15 c=d^b

Lyrics: mi- rri yi- gany- dyi- na mu- rda ya- rra- bany- dyi- na

Lyrics: -irr- mi- rri yi- gany- dyi- na murda

Lyrics: -irr- mi- rri yi- gany- dyi- na murda

Lyrics: -drr- mi- rri yi- gany- dyi- na murda

Lyrics: -mi- rri yi- gany- dyi- na murda

Handwritten musical notation for Bulu verse 17, measures 7-12. The notation is written on six staves (i-vi) with lyrics in Indonesian. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/8.

Staff i: ban- drr- mi- rri yi- gany- dyi- na mu- rda ya- rra- bany- dyi- na

Staff ii: ban- drr- mi- rri mu- rda

Staff iii: ban- drr- mi- rri murda

Staff iv: ban- drr- mi- rri murda

Staff v: ban- drr- mi- rri murda

Staff vi: ban- drr- mi- rri murda

Musical Notation 17. *Bulu* verse 17.

i
ban-dirr mi- rri yi-gany-dyi-na mu-rda ya- rra-bany-dyi-na

ii
ban-dirr-mi- rri mu-rda

iii
ban-dirr-mi rri mu-rda ya- rra-bany- dyi-na

iv
ban-dirr-mi- rri murda ya- rra-bany- dyi-na

v
bandirr- mi- rri murda

vi
ban-dirr-mi- rri murda

i
ban-dirr mi- rri

ii
ban- dirr mi- rri

iii

iv
ban- dirr

v
ban dirr- mi- rri any-dyi-na

vi
ban [NH] continue without words

i mi-ri yi-gany-dyi-na mu-rda ya-rra-bany-dyi-na

ii gany-dyi-na mu-rda

iii mi-ri yi-gany-dyi-na murda

iv -dirr-mi-ri murda

v murda bandirr mirri

vi mi-ri yi-gany-dyi-na murda

i ban-dirr-mi-ri yi-gany-dyi-na mu-rda ya-rra-bany-dyi-na

ii ban-dirr-mi-ri murda

iii ban-dirr-mi-ri murda

iv ban-dirr-mi-ri murda

v murda bandirr mirri

vi bandirr-mi-ri murda

i
ii
iii
iv
v
vi

ban-dirr-mi-rrri yi-gany-dyi-na mu-rda ya-rra-bany-dyi-na

ban-dirr-mi-rrri mu-rda dyi-ne

ban-dirr-mi-rrri murda

ban-dirr-mi-rrri murda

murda bandirr-mi-rrri

bandirr-mi-rrri murda

i
ii
iii
iv
v
vi

ban-dirr-mi-rrri yi-gany

ban-dirr-mi-rrri yi-gany

ban-dirr-mi-rrri yi-gany

ban-dirr-mi-rrri yi-gany

murda bandirr-mi

bandirr-mi-rrri murda ya

APPENDIX 1

DESCRIPTIONS OF *NURLU*

*Marinydirinydyi*¹

Marinydirinydyi is the name of a group of over fifty songs and a lesser number of dances owned by Butcher Joe Najan (now deceased), a Nyigina speaker who was born at *Ganin* (Fishermen's Bend, to the east of the Broome town site) in about 1900. The first songs and dances originated from about 1933 when Butcher Joe was living at *Dyarrmarjgunan*, a sheep camp on Roebuck Plains Station. Butcher Joe attributed these early songs and dances to his contact in dream with a *balanjan* named Dyabiya, the spirit of his mother's sister, who died some time before 1933. They portray the release of Dyabiya's spirit from her body and her journey from the grave through the spirit world. Many of the early songs from *Marinydirinydyi*, including those outlined above, describe events which occurred in the Roebuck Plains area.² Many of the later songs, however, describe events associated with country from a much larger geographical area. For example, many songs describe events which occurred in Nyigina country to the south of the Fitzroy River around Myroodah and Dampier Downs cattle stations. One reason for this may be that Butcher Joe left

¹ Alice Moyle recorded a significant number of songs from Butcher Joe's *nurlu* in 1968 which appear in the AIAS Tape Archive (A2672, A2678, A2692, A2693, A2703), referred to in the accompanying documentation as Butcher Joe's *nurlu*. When Moyle was recording in the field, she collaborated with the linguist Nora Kerr who produced texts and translations of many of the songs recorded. Kerr maintained that at that time Butcher Joe's *nurlu* was also called *Ganany*. 'Joe's Nurlu is called Ganany, meaning 'digging stick' which refers to Joe's mother . . .' (Moyle 1968: 13). Songs from *Marinydirinydyi* appear on the following field tapes recorded by myself in the Broome area between 1983 and 1985: T83/1, T83/50-54, C83/1-2, T85/1-3, T85/18, C85/20-22. Stephen Muecke (personal communication) has also recorded several performances of Butcher Joe's *nurlu*.

² Translations and explanations of five of those verses appear in Keogh (n. d.a).

Dyarrmanjgunan some time after 1933 and worked as a drover in the country to the east and south of Roebuck Plains.

*Gudurrugudurr*³

Gudurrugudurr refers to a group of twenty nine songs and perhaps eighteen dances originally owned by Nyularn, a deceased Garadyarri man from La Grange to the south of Broome. *Gudurrugudurr* may have originated in La Grange as early as 1918 as Paddy Roe remembers performances of it at La Grange when he was a young boy. It would not be much older than this as two of the songs and an associated dance - those which Nyularn first received - refer to events in the First World War.

Gudurrugudurr proved to be a popular *nurlu*, as it was transmitted to Broome via Thangoo Station and *Dyarrmanjgunan*, the sheep camp on Roebuck Plains. Four men owned the *nurlu* in the Broome area: Tommy Roe (Yawuru), Jack Lee (Garadyarri), Harry Pickett (Yawuru, see below) and Jimmy Dawidyi (Yawuru). Paddy Roe maintained that the criterion of ownership was based on the men's ability to remember and perform the songs and dances properly.

It would be incorrect to conclude that the events depicted in *Gudurrugudurr* were those experienced by Nyularn, the original owner of the *nurlu* in the physical world. It can be said, however, that Nyularn's association with two men had some influence on *Gudurrugudurr*. Both were Europeans for whom Nyularn worked as a stockman. The first, unnamed, fought as a soldier in the First World War. Two of the songs describe Nyularn's meeting in a dream with the spirits of soldiers who had been killed in the war. According to Paddy Roe, *Gudurrugudurr* means 'feeling sorry' ('sulk', cf. Stokes et al. 1980: 53); it reflects the sadness felt by the singer and the spirits which

³ Alice Moyle recorded ten verses belonging to this *nurlu* in 1968 (A2672, A2678, A2693), referred to in the accompanying documentation as 'Nyulan's song', 'Nyulan's *nurlu*', and 'birurrururu'. In a footnote to the translation of one of the verses, Kerr states: 'It is part of Birurrururu, a *nurlu*, properly called guduR-guduR [*Gudurr Gudurr*]' (Moyle 1968: 31). Kerr had also recorded several of the same verses belonging to *Gudurrugudurr* in 1967 (A1335, 1336). I elicited from Paddy Roe a further nineteen verses not recorded by Moyle or Kerr (C84/1-2, C85/26).

accompanied him in the dream when they saw that so many soldiers had been killed on the battlefields.

According to Paddy Roe, the second European, Tom Nyoolan (from whom Nyularn received his name), travelled as a stock agent between cattle stations in the western Kimberleys in the early 1900s. Nyularn accompanied him on these trips. Many of the songs and dances describe Nyularn's journeys while in dream to places throughout the western Kimberleys, and his meetings with the spirit beings who belonged to those countries: Fitzroy Crossing, Kimberley Downs, Liveringa, Dampier Downs and sites between Dampier Downs and the coast.

Malalu ⁴

Malalu is the name of a waterhole in traditional *Wirdu* Nyigina ('Big' Nyigina) country⁵ found to the east of Noonkanbah homestead; it also refers to a *nurlu* series associated with that waterhole. A number of the songs describe the rain-making activities of a *yujurrugu* ('watersnake') which belongs to the waterhole. Others describe various animal species, such as barramundi, catfish, turtle, freshwater crocodile, goanna and rainbirds from the surrounding countryside (Noonkanbah borders the Fitzroy River). I am not sure of the original owner (or owners) of the series. Two Nyigina men living at Noonkanbah, Joe Warnma and Bob Malilybi, appear to be the present owners.

Paddy Roe stated that *Malalu* was once brought to Broome to be performed for tourists, but had caused trouble with Strelley people from the south, as the *wanjgararra*

⁴ Performances of songs belonging to *Malalu* appear on the following field tapes: Keogh T84/12-14, T85/26, T85/37).

⁵ There are two named dialects in Nyigina, described by Stokes (1982: 2) as follows:

(a) Small Nyigina, spoken around Mt Anderson and Liveringa, which is considered "light" to the ear (that is, rather staccato and sharp), and
(b) Big Nyigina (which used to be widely spoken at Noonkanbah), considered "heavy" to the ear (that is, rather slurred and soft).
The terms "Small Nyigina" and "Big Nyigina" are literal translations of the words used in Nyigina . . .

associated with it were secret in the desert. Paddy Roe maintained that originally the *nurlu* had also been restricted in Noonkanbah.

Paddy said that the Noonkanbah *nurlu* about the *dyila* [water-hole] and rainbows [that is, *Malalu*] was the one that caused a lot of trouble when it was performed in Broome some time ago. It had been secret, for men only, until its original owner had died and had passed it on to his son. The son decided to make it public and make some money out of it. Strelley people attempted to disrupt the performance put on for tourists and Paddy and Donald . . . [Paddy's grandson-in-law] had to do some fast talking to get the performance allowed. They decided to have a meeting the following day in the bush. The Strelley men turned up with chains to take Paddy and Donald back to Strelley. Paddy pointed out to them however that the chains were from white men. He said that they had to use their own Law to chain himself and Donald, before they would go back to Strelley!! He said the Strelley men broke the Nyigina owner's leg and that because the other leg was wooden, the man was finished. (Field Journal, November 1984)

The content and context of this *nurlu* require further investigation in the field.

Harry Pickett's *nurlu*

The nine surviving songs from this *nurlu* ⁶ describe various encounters Harry Pickett had in dream with *ray* from his own country around *Mararr* ⁷ (Cape Villaret) to the south of Broome. Most describe dances which the *ray* performed for him. Four of the songs appear to have accompanied dances.

Harry Pickett grew up in Thangoo country. According to Paddy Roe, he came to Broome after World War II and worked for a European called Harry Pickett who operated a lemonade factory on the site of the present day Seaview Supermarket. Aboriginal people used to call the Aboriginal Pickett "Pickett-*mayar* " ('Pickett house'), as the European Pickett gave him a house to live in. According to Paddy Roe, he died in about 1969, just after Alice Moyle recorded his *nurlu* in 1968.

⁶ Alice Moyle recorded seven verses belonging to Harry Pickett's *nurlu* in 1968 (A2672 and A2693), referred to in the accompanying documentation as 'Harry Pickett's *nurlu*' and 'Harry Pickett's corroborreee'; I elicited two further verses from Paddy Roe not recorded by Moyle (Keogh C85/1).

⁷ *Mararr*, belonging to *Garrardiyunu* Yawuru people, is also called *Yalarnbaman*. Aboriginal people distinguish between three Yawuru groups: *Larjanydyunu* (coastal, north), *Garrardiyunu* (coastal, south) and *Dyurlbay* (eastern).

The *nurlu* probably originated around 1920, as Paddy Roe was a child when he first saw it. It was the first corroboree in Broome to be made public in about 1960 for the tourists.

Nurlu from Paddy Dyaguwin's country⁸

Paddy Roe believes this *nurlu* originated from a Yawuru man "from *Yalarnbarnan* side" (Cape Villaret), but that people used to refer to it as a "Dyugun *nurlu*".

Dyugun and Yawuru not very far apart
but really he's bilong to Dyugun people
because it's it's different tune
different tune to *Yalarnbarnan* corroboree Yawuru people . . .
different tune, you can hear that one eh . . . yeah that's right

One verse describes how the owner of the *nurlu* sank to the bottom of Roebuck Bay. It was there that he came in contact with *njadyay* spirits⁹ who gave him the songs. Another song describes the way in which a mother dugong suckles her baby. She carries it *dyandula*, a term which refers to the way a person carries a baby on one's hip, with one leg in front and one behind. The third surviving song describes how an Aboriginal woman wants to go with the Asian man who gave her a red dress, referred to in the song as 'rid wan [red one]'. She has to trick her Aboriginal husband to get away.

Paddy Roe maintained that there were more songs in this *nurlu*, but that he was only a baby when it came out. He learnt these verses when he was about fifteen. At the time, he worked in Broome for a pearling master called Captain Gregory. Paddy Roe also said that this *nurlu* was a popular one, travelling "everywhere". He only named Beagle Bay, however, as one of the locations it had travelled to.

⁸ Alice Moyle recorded two verses belonging to this *nurlu* in 1968 (A2672, A2677), referred to in the accompanying documentation as 'Nurlu from Paddy Djaguin's country'; I elicited one further verse from Paddy Roe not recorded by Moyle (Keogh C85/22-23).

⁹ Paddy Roe stated that *njadyay* were similar to *ray*, but that they belonged to the coastal areas around Broome.

Guway

Guway comprises seven verses¹⁰ which were dreamt by a Dyabirr Dyabirr man called Day in about 1938. Paddy Roe maintained that the *nurlu* originally had more songs, but that he could not remember them. Those which survive describe how *njadyay* spirits appeared to Day in dream, at a reef called *Marrjalagun* on Cable Beach in Broome. They came out of the sea just as snipes do. *Guway*, the name of the series, means 'snipe'. Six of the verses accompanied dances; the seventh acted as a *lirrga* for all six dances.

The first two dances were performed by a large group of people. In the first dance, two lines of dancers held hands as they progressed up the dance ground. They resembled snipes with their wings out. In the second, the same group danced with their hands behind their backs. The third and fourth dances were performed by *dalurr*, that is old, venerable men. The text of the third dance describes how they dance "very low", typical of old people, while the text of the fourth refers to the fact that they look "very pretty", due to the fact that they have *bandirr*, body designs, painted on. The fifth dance represents a spirit being from Pender Bay country to the north. The dancer danced with boomerangs. In the last dance, the group of *njadyay* returned to their home in the sea.

Paddy Roe learnt the *nurlu* when he was working at Waterbank Station, just to the north of the Broome town site. At that time, Day and his Njumbarl wife lived in the vicinity of *Bilinjurru*, a waterhole behind the sandhills at Cable Beach. Day died just after the Second World War.

¹⁰ All seven verses were elicited from Paddy Roe in 1985 (Keogh C85/9-10, C85/28). No other recordings of *Guway* appear in the AIAS Tape Archive.

Remi's *nurlu*

Six verses belonging to Remi's *nurlu* appear in the AIAS Tape Archive.¹¹ As I was unable to elicit much contextual information from Paddy Roe concerning the songs (see Keogh C85/30), I am not able to discuss their meanings here. The songs appear to be in a mix of Nyul Nyul and Dyabirr Dyabirr language.

Paddy Roe maintained that Remi Balgalai (his Aboriginal name was Irrimi) was a Nyul Nyul speaker originally from Beagle Bay country. Alice Moyle, however, states (1977) that he was a Dyabirr Dyabirr man. Due to the fact that Remi was still living in 1968 when Moyle recorded and documented his *nurlu*, and that Paddy Roe did not know the songs as well as others, I have categorised Remi's *nurlu* as Dyabirr Dyabirr (see Table 1).

Paddy Roe maintained that Remi lived in Broome from an early age, and only returned permanently to Beagle Bay towards the end of his life. Most of the *nurlu* originated from the time when he lived in Broome. Several 'came out', however, after his return to Beagle Bay. A photograph of Irrimi appears in Moyle (1977).

Felix's *nurlu*

Only four verses belonging to Felix's *nurlu* appear in the AIAS Tape Archive.¹² The first two describe the activities of a type of sea bird, *garrirl*, near the coast around Beagle Bay and Carnot Bay. The third describes a *ray* taking flight from a barracuda. The fourth verse makes reference to a travelling *dinjarri* character and his dog who appear in stone near *Yabay*, a lake in Nyul Nyul country (between Beagle Bay and Mt Clarkson). Felix's *nurlu* is at least eighty years old as an early recording of it was made at Beagle Bay in 1910. Paddy Roe remembers performances of it when he was a boy, as Nyul Nyul people used to travel to Warrwa territory on the lower Fitzroy River for initiation ceremonies.

¹¹ All six verses were recorded by Alice Moyle in 1968 in Broome (A2672, A2678) and Beagle Bay (A2677), referred to in the accompanying documentation as 'Remi's song' and 'Remi's *nurlu*'.

¹² Alice Moyle recorded three verses in Broome in 1968 (A2672, A2678), referred to in the accompanying documentation as 'Felix's song' 'Felix's *nurlu*' and 'Nurdinyburu'; I elicited one verse from Paddy Roe, not recorded by Moyle (Keogh C85/2, C85/27).

Paddy Roe described Njurdinyburu (Felix's Aboriginal name) as a "very big man in that Nyul Nyul country", as he was a leader in the *guranjarra* Law (see Worms 1942); *dinjarri* characters are associated with *guranjarra*. A photograph of Felix and one of his many wives appears in Walter (1982: 130). Butcher Joe married one of his daughters.

APPENDIX 2

THE BACKGROUND TO THE RECORDING OF THE *BULU* SERIES

In September 1984 I discussed with Paddy Roe the various *nurlu* series which he been in contact with over the years, and which I believed he could tell me something of their performance history, general context and meanings. *Bulu* was one of those series. I was particularly interested in this series as it was one of the few Nyigina *nurlu* to which Paddy Roe made reference that Alice Moyle had not recorded in the Broome area while on her fieldwork trip throughout northern Australia in 1968. Paddy Roe stressed at the time, however, that I would need to contact Dyurjgayan to record the songs on tape before he could talk at length about them.

After several unsuccessful attempts, I met the now late Dyurjgayan in February 1985 at Pandanus Park, an Aboriginal community on the Fitzroy River approximately one hundred and sixty five kilometres east of Broome. He was not in good health, however, and did not feel well enough to sing his *nurlu* for me. He suggested that I return in a few weeks at which time he hoped to be able to perform for me.

I returned to Pandanus Park two weeks later with Butcher Joe. Butcher Joe was a countryman of George Dyurjgayan (they had lived for many years together at *Dyarrmarjgunan*, a sheepcamp on the southern edge of Roebuck Plains southeast of Broome), and had some knowledge of his *nurlu*. Dyurjgayan sang eleven songs from the *nurlu*. He stated at the time, however, that it had been a long time since he had performed them and could not remember all of them. Butcher Joe sang along with those songs which he remembered as well as singing several songs from his own *nurlu*. During the elicitation session, both performers gave brief descriptions from time to time of the meanings of the songs. As I did not want to interrupt the flow of the

performance, I asked a minimum of questions concerning the meanings of the songs. The order in which the songs were performed is set out in Table 19 below.

On returning to Broome I gave Paddy Roe a copy of the tapes. A week later, I recorded a discussion with him on the texts and meanings of eight of the songs that Dyurjgayan had sung. The session came to an end, however, when Paddy Roe did not recognise the ninth song (verse 14). Butcher Joe maintained that the song in question belonged originally to another man, now deceased, who had given Dyurjgayan the performance rights. Paddy Roe did not know the type of arrangement that had been made between Dyurjgayan and the original owner. Paddy Roe said that he would not go on with the discussion of the songs until the matter of ownership had been cleared up. Before returning to Pandanus Park to discuss the matter with Dyurjgayan, however, I was able to discuss the songs once more with Paddy Roe. I elicited the texts and meanings of nine of the songs that Dyurjgayan had sung as well the texts of six songs that Dyurjgayan had forgotten. Unlike the first session with Paddy Roe, I did not record the second.

I returned the next day to Pandanus Park primarily to record those songs whose texts I had elicited from Paddy Roe which Dyurjgayan had not remembered. At the same time, I hoped to discuss the meanings of the songs with Dyurjgayan and clear up the question of the ownership of the contentious song text. I quote from my field journal:

I filled up T85/4 and about two thirds of T85/5 with the same songs as he sang last time plus the songs Paddy had recalled in the *nurlu*. I found it quite difficult to get the meanings of the songs from him - this was partly due [to] the heat knocking him out a bit, plus me not wanting to push things too much.¹

¹ I suggest here that Dyurjgayan's reticence at passing on the meanings of the songs to me was due to several factors, two of which were the heat and his bad health. Due to their senior status in the Aboriginal community, and in some cases their proximity to European settlements, many Aboriginal people such as Paddy Roe and Butcher Joe have worked closely with researchers for many years. In that time, they have developed an understanding of the expectations that researchers may have about the modes of transmission of knowledge. Researchers' expectations of Aboriginal people's imparting of knowledge to them, however, can be at odds with traditional Aboriginal modes of transmission. In many cases it is the Aboriginal people, and not the researchers, who adapt. With Dyurjgayan, expectations on both sides had not yet been established. I was partly conscious of this situation when I noted that I did not want 'to push things too much'.

The last part of the story of the elicitation of *Bulu* occurred approximately six weeks later when I discussed with Paddy Roe various aspects of the songs and dances which still puzzled me: the meaning of some song words; the location of sites named in the songs; the question of the original order of the songs, and so on. This conversation was not recorded.

I summarise here the important details in the elicitation of translations and interpretations of the *Bulu* songs over that period of approximately two months:

- i) March 14: elicitation of eleven *Bulu* songs (each performed several times) from George Dyurjgayan and Butcher Joe. Interpretations of some of the songs were given by both men. A tape recording of the session was made (T85/3-4).
- ii) March 20: elicitation of texts and interpretations of eight of the above songs from Paddy Roe. Performance by Paddy Roe of two songs from the same series not previously elicited. A tape recording of the session was made (C85/3-4).
- iii) March 26: elicitation from Paddy Roe of texts and interpretations of six songs from the same series not previously elicited from George Dyurjgayan. A tape recording of the session was not made.
- iv) March 27: elicitation of the seventeen *Bulu* songs (most performed several times) from George Dyurjgayan and Nellie Njadyuway, a Walmadyarri speaker. Interpretations of some of the songs given by Dyurjgayan and Nellie Njadyuway, both elicited and unelicited. A tape recording of the session was made (T85/4-5).
- v) May 8: elicitation of contextual information, including the interpretation of the meanings of the above songs from Paddy Roe. A tape recording of the session was not made.

I distinguish above between sessions which were recorded on tape and those which were not. Although all conversations with George Dyurjgayan were recorded, only one of three with Paddy Roe was. The method of recording information in those sessions with Paddy Roe which were not taped was as follows:

- a): the use of a field note book in which texts and glosses of stretches of text were written down; and
- b): the use of a field journal in which the previous day's activity was described and information synthesised.

Table 19 sets out the order of the *Bulu* verses on T85/3-5 as performed by George Dyurjgayan, Butcher Joe and Nellie Nadyuway.

Table 19. Outline of the order of the *Bulu* verses, T85/3-5.

T85/3	song item number	
March 14	1-5	Five verses from Butcher Joe's <i>nurlu</i>
	6-7	<i>Bulu</i> verse 1
	8	One verse from Butcher Joe's <i>nurlu</i>
	9-10	<i>Bulu</i> verse 17
	11-13	<i>Bulu</i> verse 2
	14-16	<i>Bulu</i> verse 11
	17-19	<i>Bulu</i> verse 3
	20-22	<i>Bulu</i> verse 14
	23-25	One verse from Butcher Joe's <i>nurlu</i>
	26-27	<i>Bulu</i> verse 9
	28-29	<i>Bulu</i> verse 10
T85/4		
March 14	1-2	<i>Bulu</i> verse 12
	3-5	<i>Bulu</i> verse 13
	6	<i>Bulu</i> verse 1

T85/4 continued

March 27	7	<i>Bulu</i> verse 1
	8-9	<i>Bulu</i> verse 17
	10-11	<i>Bulu</i> verse 2
	12-13	<i>Bulu</i> verse 15
	14-15	<i>Bulu</i> verse 17
	16-17	<i>Bulu</i> verse 3
	18-19	<i>Bulu</i> verse 11
	20-22	<i>Bulu</i> verse 14

T85/5

March 27	1	One verse from Butcher Joe's <i>nurlu</i>
	2	<i>Bulu</i> verse 5
	3-4	<i>Bulu</i> verse 9
	5-6	<i>Bulu</i> verse 10
	7-8	<i>Bulu</i> verse 6
	9-10	<i>Bulu</i> verse 1
	11-12	<i>Bulu</i> verse 8
	13-15	<i>Bulu</i> verse 7 (first item fragment only)
	16	<i>Bulu</i> verse 4
	17-18	<i>Bulu</i> verse 16

APPENDIX 3

TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERPRETATIONS OF THE *BULU* TEXTS

Appearing below are transcripts of explanations for many of the *Bulu* verses which were recorded on tape from Paddy Roe, George Dyurjgayan, Butcher Joe and in the case of verse 16, Nellie Nadyuway (see Appendix 2). Due to considerations of space and clarity of meaning, the transcripts have been edited. Omissions from the original are indicated by ellipsis points.

There are several reasons for the inclusion of the transcripts here. First, they let Aboriginal people speak for themselves. Many published translations of Australian Aboriginal songs give no indication of how those translations were arrived at, nor the performers' preferred modes of explanation. In a discussion of the opacity of totemic songs from the Roper River in east Arnhem Land, Merlan (1987: 146) states:

The textual opacity of Aboriginal songs forces the learner (whether outside analyst or local person) to rely largely, even entirely, upon knowledgeable interpreters (and usually, ones who are recognised for some reason as being legitimately so, for others may refuse to comment). Given this, it is important to try to characterize Aboriginal notions of the "meanings" of such song-texts, and the modes of transmission of such meanings.

Second, where there are several transcripts, a comparison of the interpretations can be made. Such comparison indicates that there can be a significant degree of variability in interpretation from one person to the next; see, for example, interpretations given by Butcher Joe, Paddy Roe and Dyurjgayan for verse 3. The variability in interpretation of the meanings of the *Bulu* songs is discussed in detail in Section 3.3 above.

In some cases a vertical line appears in the margin of the transcript. It signifies that the lines in question were spoken together. For example, in verse 2 the last two lines of Paddy Roe's explanation were spoken together. The spacing in time is reflected approximately by the spacing of the words on the page. Thus, I began with

"*guway* but . . .", overlapped by Paddy Roe with "yeah but he's only *ray*". I finished with "they were *ray*".

Line divisions in the transcripts have been determined by a falling intonation pattern.

Verse 1

GDy: *wanydyalmirri yijanydyina* that's the start from there now

Verse 2

- PR: *ray* and all that lot
 ah that's, he was standing up,
 him and the old man [Bulu] was standing up and these *ray* come (RK: yeah)
 but they only *ray*, that, not bird proper [laughs]
 RK: what he thought they were *ray* did he?
 PR: yeah, they wanna come straight, and then they lay over (RK: ah)
 njanbala (RK: *njanbala*) *njanbala* he's [rhythmicises words]
 njanbalinbali yijanydyina
 they bin come straight you know straight for these two
 RK: and he thought that ah, Dyurjgayan thought they were
 PR: *guway*
 RK: *guway* but they were they were *ray*
 PR: yeah but he's only *ray*

GDy: *guway* (RK: snipe) you know im? (RK: snipe bird)
 yeah, walk longa salt water, that one,
 longa sand pits ['sand beds'] you know all they go, sand pits

Verse 3

BJ: snake
*dyurru yimana mawula galdyiri dyurru*¹ . . .
 in *Mawula* that one in *Dyirrgali* side . . .
Mandigarrgab . . . *Mawula*
 and *galdyiri* bilong to *marduwarra* ['river'] . . .
 snake name *galdyiri* . . . he's there . . .
 bilong *yurjurrugu* ['water snake']
yurjurrugu all that (GDy: bilong *yurjurrugu*)

PR: *galydyi* dat one *Garmurlgab* . . .
 country name *Garmurlgab* . . .
galydyi they bin see im . . .
 but they pass, they pass . . .
ray , with that old man [Bulu] too, all travelling

GDy: an what this one we look im, we look im for im for white white thing longa
 ground white [sings song]

RK: *galydyi*
 GDy: that *galydyi* that one wipe out you know
 we paint im *galydyi*

Verse 6

GDy: that a sun, sun you know, he come out, well dat one
 well he got gear on too . . .
 we longa *Garrawin* you know
Garrawin now

Verse 8

PR: well that's the last in the corroboree
 RK: does that happen back at *Wanydyal* or?
 PR: might be there in *Wanydyal* . . .
 or must be in *maladya*
maladya you know we call im . . .
 home, like a . . . country . . .
 just like a *barni* ['goanna'] too we
 anybody look around for anything
 but somebody hide im away, he go back to *maladya* . . .
 nobody can find im *barni*

¹ The snake went to *Mawula* , *galdyiri* snake'.

Verse 9

PR: I bin tell you that star with a tail, we bin see im . . .
 they only bin look im, *murda yarrabany* . . .
 nothing happened
 they didn't want to know what that thing is an all that you know
 they only just seen it *murda yarrabany* he pass . . .
 that's the first time we seen it . . .
 everybody seen it
 so he made a corroboree out of that too [laughs]

RK: | what's that one about, *larn* star?
 GDy: | *larn* you know star
 earlys, early early time you know he come out [morning star]

Verse 10

GDy: dancing one now
 that one, that the moon

Verse 11

PR: rain from this way [south] . . .
milydyidawurru we call im rain
 anytime cloud come we call im *milydyidawurru* . . .
 [rhythmicises words] *milydyidawurru dyalbirrimbirray*
 ah he: making up you know *dyalbirrimbirri* . . .
 rain they bin see im, from long way too

GDy: *wila* ['water, rain'] I look im all the rain

Verse 12

PR: that one, something bin come out *bandirr* ['body designs'] . . .
bandirr bilongu corroboree you know *bandirr* . . .
dyalal yindina he come out, from dark, you know other side . . .
 he come out in open . . .
burarr yijanydyina means, oh,
burarr, he stop long way, can't see im proper you know *burarr* . . .
 he just come out and he can only just see im that *bandirr* . . .
ray bin come out dancing . . . in dream

Verse 13

- GDy: this one *nurlu* I bin get im long time ago
 when I was a young, young fella
 BJ: that old man name Bulu . . .
 that from *Wanydyal* . . .
 an he sing for, sing an dance
 that one now *dadyiwurrurru*
 he make dust . . .
 one time we come from Beagle Bay run to that place there [?Roebuck
 Plains] . . .
 somebody dancing there
 we look he dancing
 . . . *marlu ginya murda* he gone² . . .
 GDy: well that one now
 PR: he come out now this fella
 [rhythmicises words] *dadyiwurrurru dyunbarambara*
dyunbarambara means he bring dust you know . . .
 with his foot . . .
 he come to nothing
 but he bin dust coming out *dyunbarambara*
ganal yimbanydyina and he come to nothing
 when he's high up, wind blow im away you know,
 you can't see any more dust . . .
 RK: so what's that *dyadiwurrurru* , *wurrurray* ?
 PR: *dadyiwurrurru* that's them people [ray] coming out the,
 for dance, they're dancing *dadyiwurrurru* . . .
wurrurru yinjan . . . like a big mob coming . . .
dadyi nothing, to make that corroboree

Verse 14

- GDy: we on top now *mipella*³
 an we on top too
 RK: *galbu* ['above']
 GDy: *galbu*
 PR: that's the snake proper, *yunjurrugu* ['watersnake'] . . .
 two pella bin get up . . .
 this one get up [indicates forehead] *baliny baliny*
 RK: oh forehead
 PR: forehead, *yawan* ['north']

2 ' . . . not him, nothing; he's gone'.

3 'us [without the listener]'.

GDy: two two kids I look im
 he go alonga tree, two pella, small ones 'bout that high [indicates about
 three feet] . . .
 two pella go longa tree
yalgu , we call *yalgu*
 two pella bin stand up you know

Verse 15

GDy: sickness
 sickness when I bin look im
 sickness on top come up this way . . .
 we goin inside
 sickness was was they send im from that country [from the south]

Verse 16

RK: what's that one about Dyunjayan?
 Dy: that a *ray* you know
 NN: *ray*
 Dy: *dyila* ['water hole, rain making'], *nurlu* bilongu *dyila* you know
dyila . . .
 NN: *maladyi* *wila* ['rain, water'] *Narranjani* ['in the Dreaming']
 Dy: *maladyi* yeah
 that one now *Narranjani*
 well that one now *dyila* now
 NN: *gunydyu* ['secret'] *wila* *gunydyu wila dyila*
 Dy: *gunydyu*

Verse 17

RK: which one is that one?
 GDy: that one *bandirrmirri* . . .
wilany ['horseshoe shaped rain cloud'] we look im you know rain,
 cloud you know cloud
murda yarrabany ['we saw nothing'] we say

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