WALBIRI ICONOGRAPHY

Graphic Representation and
Cultural Symbolism in a
Central Australian Society

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For the Walbiri
of Yuendumu

Foreword

Recently both the research and theoretical concerns of many anthropologists have once again been directed toward the role of symbols—religious, mythic, esthetic, political, and even economic—in social and cultural processes. Whether this revival is a belated response to developments in other disciplines (psychology, ethology, philosophy, linguistics, to name only a few); or whether it reflects a return to a central concern after a period of neglect, is difficult to say. In recent field studies, anthropologists have been collecting myths and rituals in the context of social action, and improvements in anthropological field technique have produced data that are richer and more refined than heretofore; these new data have probably challenged theoreticians to provide more adequate explanatory frames. Whatever may have been the causes, there is no denying a renewed curiosity about the nature of the connections between culture, cognition, and perception, as these connections are revealed in symbolic forms.

Although excellent individual monographs and articles in symbolic anthropology or comparative symbology have recently appeared, a common focus or forum that can be provided by a topically organized series of books has not been available. The present series is intended to fill this lacuna. It is designed to include not only field monographs and theoretical and comparative studies by anthropologists, but also work by

scholars in other disciplines, both scientific and humanistic. The appearance of studies in such a forum encourages emulation, and emulation can produce fruitful new theories. It is therefore our hope that the series will serve as a house of many mansions, providing hospitality for the practitioners of any discipline that has a serious and creative concern with comparative symbology. Too often, disciplines are sealed off, in sterile pedantry, from significant intellectual influences. Nevertheless, our primary aim is to bring to public attention works on ritual and myth written by anthropologists, and our readers will find a variety of strictly anthropological approaches ranging from formal analyses of systems of symbols to empathetic accounts of divinatory and initiatory rituals.

Nancy Munn's book is an excellent example of William Blake's dictum that "General Forms have their vitality in Minute Particulars." She begins with an acutely observed account of how the basic repertoire of graphic signs used by the Walbiri Aborigines of central Australia is manipulated to accompany the telling of stories. First, she describes women's tales of everyday experience, passing on to their accounts of dreams. Then she discusses how men use the signs in telling the masculine categories of stories, including myths about the ancestors. All these ways of handling the sign system in storytelling are next related to its utilization in various types of ritual, both in bodily decoration and in the manufacture of ritual objects and paraphernalia. Munn demonstrates how each different contextual use of the system is associated with different kinds of combinations of the common stock of sign elements and the meanings those elements assume. In so doing she provides a "generative" account of the structure of the sign system itself: she explains how its elements and combina-

torial rules are employed to generate a potentially unlimited set of specific designs, each with its unique meaning. Munn follows the path trodden by the great Malinowski in moving from description of what at first sight appears to be a relatively marginal sector of culture (the Walbiri system of graphic signs) to a statement of the integration of a total cultural system (including myth, totemic belief, ritual, family life, the social structure of the band, economic life, and the division of labor). But her practice strikingly illustrates that anthropology is indeed a science, cumulative and systematizing, for she brings to her task conceptual tools of a potency and delicacy undreamed of by the ethnological pioneers of Malinowski's period.

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Preface

In 1956 I went to central Australia to study problems in the art and religion of one of the desert Australian tribes. At that time there was little interest on the part of most social anthropologists in the theoretical problems of cultural symbolism, and my own background in the subject was of a very general nature. Nor was I aware that the graphic representations I intended to make the focus of my study might be amenable to some form of structural analysis; that possibility emerged only some time after my field work when I set about attempting to write an adequate and satisfying description of the art and its operation at different levels of the sociocultural system.

My field work was carried out among the Walbiri people at Yuendumu government settlement in the Northern Territory of Australia from November 1956 to March 1957 and from June 1957 to January 1958. Yuendumu is about 183 miles northwest of Alice Springs, where I spent a brief period (August to September 1956) with other central Australian Aborigines at what was then the "Bungalow" government settlement. My initial familiarization with the sand drawing that is discussed prominently in this book occurred in the latter context.

I was supported in this research by a Fulbright grant, which I held from 1955 to 1958. The work was done under the auspices of the Australian National University, and the

writing of the original version was made possible by a grant from the American Association of University Women. Since that time I have published a number of short papers on Walbiri iconography and cosmology (Munn 1962, 1964, 1966). The present study is an almost entirely rewritten and expanded version of the earlier work, and reflects some of my more recent interests.

During the major part of my field research at Yuendumu, I camped about a quarter of a mile from the European settlement. Owing to government regulations I was not able to camp directly in one of the Aboriginal camp clusters, but Walbiri camps were mobile, and during my stay, local groupings as well as camp locales were continually shifting. Sometimes there were Aboriginal encampments in the general vicinity of my camp, but these were not present throughout my stay. I was always, however, within walking distance of all the camps.

My residence in a camp rather than in a house on the European settlement was, I believe, the most important single factor in establishing a satisfactory role for me in my work with the Walbiri. In particular, it improved my status with the Walbiri men and increased their friendliness toward me. Since part of this study refers to data integral to men's cult, which is ordinarily hidden from women (including white Australian women on the settlement), I shall comment further on this matter here.

When I first arrived at Yuendumu in November 1956, I was housed on the government settlement, where I lived for a few months. At first, Walbiri men spoke with me only occasionally, and my time was spent with the women, who took me food gathering, taught me Walbiri, told me their "sand stories" (see Chapter 3), and showed me their *yawalyu* de-

signs (Chapter 4). Women were generally friendly and receptive to my presence, as were of course the children, with whom I also spent quite a bit of time.

During the initiation ceremonies of 1956–1957, Walbiri men would not permit me to see any part of the ceremonies prohibited to women. This experience was, to say the least, extremely frustrating, but as I look back, it appears to me that my compliance with their wishes, combined at the same time with my participation and my good relations with the women and children, were important factors in laying the groundwork for good relationships with the men. Moreover, although I later saw secret ceremonies (and women knew that I did), I was always able to maintain the women's good will. Thus in the second part of my stay (from June 1957), I worked about equally with both men and women.

During the later part of my first months at Yuendumu, men became more willing to talk with me and to teach me. By the end of this period I had begun to have some friendly informants among the younger men (men in their thirties and under) and I had secured the right to sit with men while they were preparing camp ceremonies of a secular kind. These ceremonies are observed by all, but are prepared by men only; initially, I had not been allowed to watch the preparations, although men expressed pleasure at my attendance of the performances.

In March there was no longer room to house me on the settlement, and I had to leave Yuendumu until government permission could be obtained for me to camp. When I was finally able to return to Yuendumu in June 1957 and set up camp, the Walbiri welcomed me; one of the men, Sammy Djangala (a "brother" of mine, since I was classed as Nangala in the subsection system), offered to come and work for me.

He turned out to be a good friend and helpful informant. Men constantly remarked on my new living quarters (a tent), pointing out that I now lived "on the ground" as did the Walbiri. In addition, the difference between me and other women on the Australian settlement was now "spatially" established. In general, improvement of my relations with all the people, but especially with the men, was marked.

From about July 1957 on, I slowly began to be permitted to see men's secret ceremonies. My acceptance at these ceremonies was not always automatic, and I sometimes had to do some political maneuvering on my own behalf to obtain permission; in these instances, I am also undoubtedly indebted to behind-the-scenes maneuvering on the part of my Walbiri supporters.

Although the question of my viewing ceremonies raised special problems, men had begun to give me information on totemic representations, religious concepts, and ceremonies quite early in my work, long before I was actually permitted to see the ceremonies themselves. My use of paper drawing as a major technique in obtaining information (see the discussion below) was an important aid in my relationships with them. Drawing provided a source of casual entertainment, and a number of men of all ages especially enjoyed demonstrating their traditional designs and talking about them.

In sum, my association with Walbiri men was less certain than with the women, but it kept improving over time. By the end of my stay I felt that I had a number of friends among them and that others were well disposed toward me. I had also obtained information that helped me to understand the range of the visual symbol system. In this respect, my work with women was as important as that with the men, but since my relationships with the women were less problematic, I have not commented on them in detail.

During my field work I collected three basic kinds of visual data relating to Walbiri representations. These data form the basis of the illustrations used to demonstrate points made in the text.

1. Sand drawings. These are various kinds of explanatory graphs drawn by Walbiri men and women in the sand during storytelling and general conversation, or as demonstrations of designs associated with ancestors. Illustrations of these drawings are taken from my notebook copies made at the time. I recorded the "sand stories" told by women in the following manner: initially, I concentrated upon learning the repertory of sand signs and their meanings; when I was familiar with the graphs, I concentrated upon recording the narratives, making notes only of those sand graphs that were especially interesting or novel. I also took photographs, but photography had the disadvantage of interrupting narrative sequences.

Most of the stories were recounted to me in or near the Walbiri camps—particularly the single women's camps—while women were sitting around in casual groups and indulging in their ordinary pursuits. There were few days at Yuendumu when I did not listen to at least one of these stories, although I sometimes recorded only a detail of a sand drawing, or the basic incidents of a plot. About fifteen women were my best informants for these stories, but I listened to the storytelling of many others. (Unfortunately, I did not have a working tape recorder with me, so I was unable to make tapes of these accounts.)

2. Paper drawings. I supplied Walbiri with various-sized papers, with pencil crayons, and (in the initial stages of my work) with charcoal, chalks, and watercolors. The pencil crayons worked out most satisfactorily; they particularly pleased Walbiri men, who liked drawing with sharp points and a range of colors.

The majority of the drawings by Walbiri adults are the work of men. Women on the whole did not respond well to the pencil-and-paper medium. Although there were about fifteen to twenty men who were my most regular informants, the work of many others is represented. Much of the drawing was done in or near the single men's camps or further out in the bush well away from the women. Often there were a few men working at the same time. I usually carried drawing materials with me each day, so that if the opportunity arose to obtain drawings, the materials were always at hand. When I did not have extra paper with me, Walbiri often drew in my notebooks.

I used the paper drawings like "visual texts." Through this method I gained not only information on Walbiri iconography, but also a different perspective on the way Walbiri men conceive of their myth and cosmology than I gained from verbal texts.

3. Totemic designs painted during ritual, or that I observed on sacred boards and stones. Women also demonstrated some designs for me by painting them on their bodies. Illustrations derived from these sources are from my photographs and sketches.

Two sorts of line drawings illustrate points made in the text. Some of the illustrations demonstrate general types of elements and arrangements occurring in the graphic system. Others depict particular instances of graphic representation by Walbiri informants. Illustrations of the second sort are redrawn from the originals as accurately as possible, but the main emphasis has been on retaining the *significant* patterning of elements and relationships, rather than minute details. Since I am concerned here with the essential features of the graphic system, reproduction in outline is quite adequate for

purposes of the argument, although it does not do justice to the very fine quality of Walbiri work.

The analysis of the totemic designs is based upon a collection of 237 designs. The collection consists of designs belonging to both men and women, and is derived from all three types of data listed.

It may be useful to indicate the orthography for native terms employed in the text: I transcribe the native plosive, dental, and glottal sounds by the b-d-g series rather than the p-t-k series also used by linguists for Australian languages. A dot under a letter denotes retroflexion.

I am grateful to a number of people for help in the course of this work. Professor David Bidney first interested me in the study of symbolic theory when I was a graduate student at Indiana University. Professor W. E. H. Stanner of the Australian National University provided practical help as well as professional criticism during and after my field work. It was only through his efforts on my behalf that I was able to obtain the necessary governmental permission to camp at Yuendumu. I am most grateful to him for his interest in my work and his encouragement.

At the time of my field work several people provided me with helpful preparatory materials. Mervyn Meggitt made available to me then-unpublished data from his own research among the Walbiri at Hooker's Creek. A. Capell kindly made available his materials on the Walbiri language (at that time the only account by a linguist available). C. P. Mountford and N. B. Tindale generously opened to me their collections of unpublished paper drawings by desert Aborigines.

Field work could not have been undertaken without the permission and cooperation of the Australian Department of

Territories and the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration. I am particularly indebted to R. Marsh and D. McCarthy, then of the former department.

During my field work some members of the community at Yuendumu were especially kind. I am grateful to the Reverend and Mrs. T. Fleming of the Baptist mission at Yuendumu and to L. Wilson, an assistant manager of the settlement during my stay. Without their good will and thoughtfulness, camping at Yuendumu would have been very difficult. They helped me set up camp, provided dry quarters during one or two heavy rains that flooded me out, and rendered me many general services.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Bourner of Alice Springs, and to Mrs. Margaret Koppe, then of Alice Springs. They were very good friends who went out of their way to aid me in times of sickness and stress.

Professor Lauriston R. Sharp made it possible for me to be in residence at Cornell University during the time when I was writing up my field work in 1959 and 1960 and he also was a source of criticism and encouragement. I am indebted to him for taking the time to aid me, as I was not a student at Cornell. Professor Raymond Firth also made some very helpful suggestions on the original version of this study, and some of his suggestions have been incorporated here.

My major debt is, of course, to the Walbiri themselves. They were my friends and teachers, and knowing them has immeasurably enriched my own experience. In the years since I have been at Yuendumu, their culture has continued to fascinate me in its quality and depth. My hope is that this book will make some small contribution to our understanding and knowledge of this intricate society.

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Introduction

Since the turn of the century, when Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen began to publish their research on the Aboriginal peoples of central Australia, the graphic designs used in this area to represent totemic ancestors have attracted widespread interest. Using Spencer and Gillen's data, Durkheim (1915) gave the designs a pivotal function in his theory of the societal infrastructure of "elementary" religious beliefs and rites. In his view, these markings were compact, visible codes that "stamped" the moral authority and social sentiments of the group upon objects embedded in the artifactual and natural, or "profane," world; thus, they translated these objects into the socially grounded realm of the "sacred."

Roheim (1945) was also interested in the designs and attempted to interpret the concentric circles so prominent in them according to the tenets of psychoanalytic theory. Although the result was a Freudian reduction of the complex meanings of the cultural symbolism, Roheim's study (based on his own field work) throws much light on the richness of the cultural symbolism as well as on formal and semantic continuities between different contexts in which the circle and related elements occur.

Other students of central Australian art (for example, Davidson 1937; Mountford 1937–1938; Strehlow 1964) have extended the descriptive literature on the graphic art, but have not advanced a full-length analytic account of its inter-

nal structure and sociocultural significance in a single Australian society. Despite the apparent importance of visual symbolism as suggested by these and related sources for other areas in Australia (see, for example, R. Berndt 1951; Elkin and Berndt 1950; Mountford 1956; Stanner 1959–1961), the topic has been peripheral to the major theoretical emphases of Australian social anthropology.

One reason for this state of affairs has been the generally low level of interest in symbolism among social and cultural anthropologists until recently. Analytic concern with this subject has resurged only within the last decade, and even so the topic of visual representation has received less attention than have other symbolic areas. In addition, the tendency in anthropology has been to view "art" as a special area of study, essentially trivial in comparison with such hard-core problems as kinship and social structure. Only now is it beginning to appear that the framework of symbolic theory can integrate the study of social, religio-cosmological, and aesthetic systems.

In Australia itself, social anthropologists working in the post-Radcliffe-Brownian era concentrated most of their attention on kinship and related topics, even though investigators certainly recognized the significance of religion and visual symbolism (see, for instance, C. Berndt 1963). As Meggitt (1972:65) has recently pointed out: "the exploration of Aboriginal religion still continued, [but] essentially it played a minor role in the investigator's explanatory schemes. Despite lip service paid to Radcliffe-Brownian, and also by then Malinowskian, postulates of functional interaction and holistic integration, emphasis was primarily (often exclusively) on analysing the various systems of kinship because, it was tacitly assumed, these provided the key to explaining the range of

forms displayed by Aboriginal societies." In the late 1960's, however, a return to issues in Australian religion, myth, and cosmology and their relations to the social system has provided an atmosphere more congenial to the exploration of visual symbolism.

The present study attempts to fill a gap in our knowledge and understanding of certain problems in visual art and communication systems through an exploration of the iconography of the central Australian Walbiri. The totemic designs are considered here as part of a wider graphic system, which I examine from two perspectives: as a representational structure and as sociocultural symbolism. The former refers to the internal, formal and semantic structure of the graphic representations; the latter to their significance and function in Walbiri cosmology and society. As I see it, these two problems are interrelated and mutually illuminating.

I would stress in particular that a structural analysis of the representational system is essential not only to an interpretation of the dynamics through which the forms are generated, but also to an explanation of the relation between the graphic system and the wider sociocultural order. I am concerned with the structural analysis not simply as an end in itself, but more fundamentally as a means of throwing light on Walbiri society and culture. Thus for readers familiar with the Walbiri through Mervyn Meggitt's (1962) account of their social structure, the present work may provide both supplementary material on the Walbiri and another perspective on certain aspects of their religion, ritual, and social order. In addition, I hope that the representational analysis will contribute to the literature on visual modes of communication, for contemporary anthropology lacks detailed analyses of representational systems.

It may be useful to explain here why I characterize Walbiri graphic art as "representational." For present purposes, I define a representational system as a system of denotative signs characterized by some iconic regulation of semanticity. Walbiri graphic art consists of representations in that the forms have referential, denotative meaning, and an element of "likeness" or "iconicity" limits the assignment of referents to the sign vehicles. The pictorial properties of the Walbiri system are of the sort often overlooked by western observers, since the elements are for the most part simple forms of the kind misleadingly labeled "geometric" or "abstract." Moreover, the semantic structure involves what I have referred to in a previous publication as "discontinuous meaning ranges"; that is, heterogeneous meaning items are often comprehended by a single visual element (Munn 1966).

The iconography is elaborated in a range of different social contexts; Walbiri themselves distinguish several categories of representation. I attempt to map both the continuities of the system across Walbiri conceptual and social "boundaries" and the differentiating functions and formal-semantic characteristics that mark off separate categories and contexts of use. This overview makes it apparent that the men's totemic designs and the ritual uses of them are the apex of a system operative at different levels of complexity and anchored in narrative communication. Meanings, I suggest, are built into the more complex, specialized representations associated with ritual because the graphs also operate in the nonspecialized substratum of narrative communication.

As in many Australian societies, Walbiri cosmology has embedded within it a cultural theory or folk model concerning visual and verbal signs and their relationship to the social and natural orders; totemic designs, as we shall see, play a sig-

nificant part in this model. This "semiotic" is important, since it integrates key concepts that set out the basic spatiotemporal organization of the Walbiri world. As we shall see, it binds notions such as "ancestors," "country," and "dreams" into a unitary matrix of ideas, and it defines the relations between the present world of proximal, visible forms and the ancestral world that is distal and "out of sight."

Indeed, Walbiri semiotic, as concretely formulated in myth, sign media, and ritual processes, and worked out in specific ideas about life sources and creative origins, is of considerable importance in understanding the wider society. In effect, it constitutes an ordering structure of the kind to which Lévi-Strauss (1953:116) refers when he speaks of "structures which instead of being related to another structure, opening new correlations, are really related to all the structures taken together and help to close the social structure."

In this book I deal in depth with Walbiri graphic signs and their place in this semiotic model. My aim is to examine the multifaceted forms and operations of the graphic system and so to probe its dynamics and significance in Walbiri society.

Ethnographic Background

The Walbiri are a people of the western desert region of central Australia. According to Meggitt (1962:1ff) Walbiri country originally extended from Stuart Bluff range on the south, west and north to Hooker's Creek and east to Central Mt. Stuart. This region is one of typical mulga, eucalypt, and spinifex desert marked by rocky ranges and outcrops and low-lying hills. In this low rainfall area the main sources of surface water are the rock holes and smaller seepages; in addition, Walbiri dig soaks in the sand of the dry creek beds.

Like all Australian Aborigines, Walbiri were seminomadic hunters and gatherers before European contact. In the recent past they were subdivided into four major communities— the Ngalia, Walmalla, Waneiga, and Lander Walbiri— each of which ranged over a region of Walbiri country (see Meggitt 1962: map facing p. 4). The Ngalia Walbiri community, of primary interest in the present study, included different local constellations that were based in specific regions of the wider Ngalia country, although wanderings were not confined to these regions. The constellations were not what Radcliffe-Brown called "patrilocal hordes," but each contained adult males united by various kinship ties. Members of one such local group did not always move together but would break up into larger or smaller bands according to the permissiveness of the season.[1]

[1] There has been considerable argument about traditional Walbiri local organization. My account differs somewhat from Meggitt's (1962), since I consider local constellations within the wider "community" as constituting the basic local units. For recent commentaries

In the daily search for vegetable food and game, these groups moved from water hole to water hole. A common pattern of movement appears to have been that of circling in the rather narrowly defined region that included home base, then occasionally swinging out over wider stretches of the community country, returning finally to the starting point (See Fig. 9, no. 1, p. 129). The movements of these local groups overlapped, and they often met together at various important centers such as Mt. Doreen and Vaughan Springs in Ngalia Walbiri community country.

In Walbiri symbolism this nomadic patterning of life— the movement from water hole to water hole—takes precedence as an organizing focus over other large-scale rhythmic cycles such as that of the rainy and dry season. The small-scale concomitant of this pattern—the daily departure from the camp for hunting and food gathering and the nightly return to the camp—is also of importance.

At the present time Walbiri are living at government and private settlements primarily within or adjacent to their original country. Despite economic changes and the shift to a semistabilized residence, they retained in 1957, when this research was done, much of their traditional culture and social organization.

Yuendumu government station, the locus of this study, is a Walbiri reserve some 183 miles northwest of Alice Springs in a section of Ngalia Walbiri community country. Yuendumu is central to Mt. Doreen cattle station about forty miles to the west, Mt. Allan and Conistan stations to the east. With all these settlements Walbiri at Yuendumu maintain close contacts.

on the problem of Australian (and specifically Walbiri) local organization see Birdsell (1970)—with criticisms by Berndt, Hiatt, etc.; Strehlow (1971:99f). See also note 3 below.
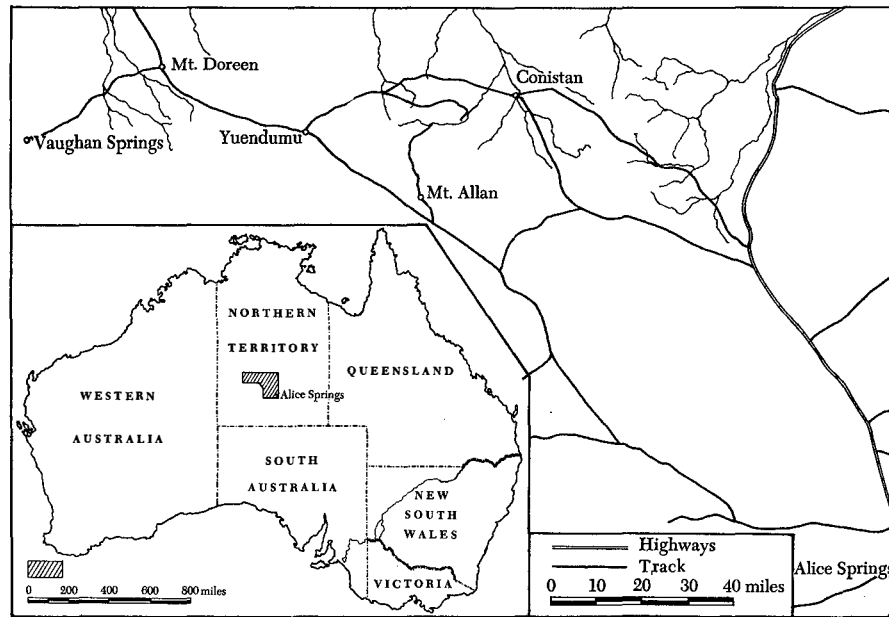
Yuendumu and its environs in the Walbiri region of central Australia

In 1957 there were approximately 375 Walbiri who camped more or less regularly at Yuendumu. The majority of these belonged to the Ngalia Walbiri community country, but (southern) Walmalla and some Waneiga Walbiri were also represented. The present study of Walbiri iconography refers primarily to southern Walbiri, who have strong cultural affinities with the Aranda peoples to the east and the Bindubi to the south and west. I would stress that the time period to which I refer in the "ethnographic present" is between 1956 and 1958 and that certain changes have taken place at Yuendumu since then.[2]

[2] Most notably, there has been an influx of non-Walbiri (Bindubi) peoples, radically expanding the population of the settlement, as well as acculturative changes such as, for example, an increased use of houses by Aborigines.

Except in unusually dry seasons, Walbiri at Yuendumu generally camp within a half-mile radius of the government settlement, moving their camp sites frequently within this limited area. Shelter is of two kinds: the bough hut (commonly supplemented with sheets of tin and odd bits of burlap) or the corrugated iron lean-to. Outside or flanking this shelter is a low semicircular windbreak—of boughs or corrugated iron—in front of which oval hollows in the sand mark the sleeping places of occupants (Plate 1).

Plate 1. A Walbiri camp at Yuendumu (1957). The family sleeps in oval hollows in the ground in front of a low windbreak.

Each such residence shelters an elementary or composite family: a man, his wife (or wives), and their young children. The family is ideally and normally polygynous; the typical polygynous family includes two wives. Several family camps will usually be clustered together, and the whole community

is a loose aggregation of such nuclear groups. The actual constitution of each group often shifts as men commonly change their camping mates. A man might camp variously in clusters containing his own or close brothers, father, sisters' husbands, male cross-cousins or other close kin. There are no stringent residence rules, but it was not uncommon to find brothers-in-law constituting a persistent camp nucleus.

The family camp (*ngura*) is a most important concept in Walbiri thought, and we shall see later that it appears centrally in the iconography and symbolism. As members of one family camp, a man and his wife (or wives) are said to share "one sleep." The reciprocal structure of their relationship is also expressed in Walbiri emphasis upon the food exchanges that take place between them: the husband is said to give his wife meat (*guyu*) and the woman to give him vegetable food (*miyi*, nonmeat foods including, nowadays, damper, canned fruits, and so on). This exchange is part of the wider system of exchanges between affines. A man is expected to give meat to his mother-in-law, while a mother-in-law should give vegetable food in return to her son-in-law. Since a man must avoid his wife's mother, these exchanges take place through the agency of the wife, thus, in effect, confirming the pivot of the affinal relationship between the two families. The bonds of food exchange provide a constant symbolism expressing the affinal bond within the family and between a man and his wife's family.

Thus the conjugal relationship is interlocked with the traditional daily activity of hunting and food gathering, which in the past began in the morning with a departure from the camp—a separation of men and women in their daily activities—and ended in the evening with the return to camp, the sharing of food and sleep. As the locus of the con-

jugal family, the camp is symbolic in Walbiri imagination of heterosexual (marital) relationships, with their economic and procreative functions.

In addition to the family residence, one or more contiguous camp clusters include a women's camp where widows and unmarried girls sleep, and a men's camp for unmarried initiated men (or visitors without their wives) and older boys.

Thus Mt. Doreen, Mt. Allan (and Conistan), and Vaughan Springs are areas that represent for the Walbiri general regions in which different segments of the Yuendumu community based themselves in the recent past (see also Fig. 9, no. 1). The camps of each segment are oriented accordingly: Mt. Doreen Ngalia camp to the west or northwest, and members of the northern community of Waneiga Walbiri camp with them; the Mt. Allan Ngalia (also linked with Cockatoo Creek near Conistan) camp on the east or southeast of the other camps; the Vaughan Springs (and Mt. Singleton) people camp in the southwesterly clusters. The Mt. Allan people are closely associated in the Walbiri view with the (non-Walbiri) Yanmadjari with whom they have intermarried; members of the latter group stay in the Mt. Allan clusters when they visit. The Vaughan Springs people are not sharply distinguished from the community of Walmalla Walbiri, and in fact they often described themselves to me (and were described by others) as being Walmalla rather than Ngalia.[3]

[3] My data are not sufficiently clear on the historical identity of this subgroup. Meggitt (1962: map facing p. 4) places both Mt. Singleton and Vaughan Springs in Ngalia country, but a number of my informants who linked themselves with these regions regarded themselves as Walmalla, and/or were identified by others as Walmalla. Some informants told me that the Walmalla whose descendants are now at Yuendumu moved eastward (perhaps within the last sixty years) and fought the inhabitants of the Mt. Doreen region, after

These people have close associations with the Bindubi, who stay in these camps when they visit. Although camp shifts ordinarily do not interfere with the general orientations of these divisions, the groupings are not marked by sharp boundaries, and in some encampments the clusters of one group may flow into those of another.

Life at Yuendumu is marked by the traditional division between men's and women's daily activities, and by the realignment into family units in the evening. During the day women congregate at the women's camps within their own or a nearby locale. Here they nurse their children, gossip, prepare food, sleep, and play an occasional game of cards. The sand stories dicussed in more detail below are also told in these surroundings. Much of the time that is spent in these camps would in the past have been devoted to food-fathering activities, but hunting and food gathering have ceased to be the source of the staple diet; foraging activities are largely restricted to weekends and holidays, and the Walbiri now depend primarily upon government rations.

The focus of men's activities is the men's camps, or a shady spot in the bush outside the camps where men gather to gossip and play cards, or to prepare a ceremony. The contrast in atmosphere between men's and women's camps is marked. While the latter are usually hot and dusty, beset by numerous children and dogs, the former are more or less free of such distractions and ordinarily placed, as well, in a bit of choice shade.

which they settled down and "became Walbiri." Tindale (1963:363) notes the historical complexity of group composition at Yuendumu and the changing concepts of identity. Unfortunately, I was preoccupied with other matters at the time, and did not pursue these problems.

When going hunting, men and women leave the camps in small foraging groups; women may take with them the small children and girls; older boys generally go together with the men. Women ordinarily gather the wild fruits and vegetables, yams, honey ants, and smaller game. Men track the larger game, such as kangaroos, wallabies, and emus. Occasionally a husband and wife may go out hunting together.

The traditional implements and weapons and the various receptacles have been supplemented (and in a few cases supplanted) by European introductions, but on the whole are still in daily use. The Walbiri water carrier (*ngami*), a high-sided oval wooden scoop, and the shallower oval food scoops (*bili*) have been supplanted by the Australian "billy" (a metal pot with a handle across the top) used for cooking and carrying water and food. The similarly shaped container for carrying children (*baradja*) is, however, still in use. A digging stick is employed for food gathering, and a heavier stick (or the digging stick) for fighting.

Hooked and curved (nonreturn) boomerangs, spears, spear throwers, and oval shields are used by men. A rifle occasionally supplements the boomerangs and spears in hunting. All of these items (except for digging sticks) are made by men, who control the tools and technical knowledge. None are ordinarily decorated except for ceremonial purposes, but they are grooved and rubbed with red ocher.

Social Structure and the Subsection System

Walbiri social structure includes groups and categories built out of patrilineal, matrilineal, and generational principles. Walbiri recognize three types of moiety divisions: patrilineal, matrilineal, and generation moieties. The latter are

Walbiri marriage rule, which prescribes marriage with a form of second cousin (a man and his distant "MoMoBrDaDa" or "FaFaSiSoDa"); as an alternative, Walbiri also approve marriage with a distant cross-cousin.[5]

The kinship terminology provides what Service (1960:417) has called "egocentric" social categories in which "the category of any individual depends on who the speaker is." In addition, Walbiri align kinship terms into a set of eight categories with "sociocentric," absolute names of the sort referred to in the literature on Australia as subsections.[6] Diagram 1 sets out the Walbiri subsection names, the way in which kin are allotted to each, and the principles relating the categories. Readers may find it useful to refer to the diagram [7] in following the comments on this system.

[5] Marriage is actually prescribed with a woman of a particular classificatory kin category. Recently, some anthropologists have questioned the adequacy of interpreting these marriage rules in terms of types of genealogical kin such as MoMoBrDaDa, but these issues are outside my purview here.

[6] The classic study is Radcliffe-Brown (1930). I am not concerned here with the controversies regarding the nature or derivation of the subsection system (see, for example, Lawrence 1937, Goody 1961, Dumont 1966).

[7] My diagram is similar in some respects to that used by Hammel (1966:4). I use this arrangement because it displays the patrilineal subsection couples and moieties more clearly than the traditional diagrams developed by Radcliffe-Brown (1930–1931), and these are the features of the system most relevant to the present study. It is understood that the diagram illustrates the way in which the subsection system defines the ideal structuring of relations. If a woman should marry a man of the wrong subsection, the children's designation would be the same as if she had made a correct marriage, that is, as in other Australian societies, the mother's subsection determines the child's.

The Walbiri subsection system
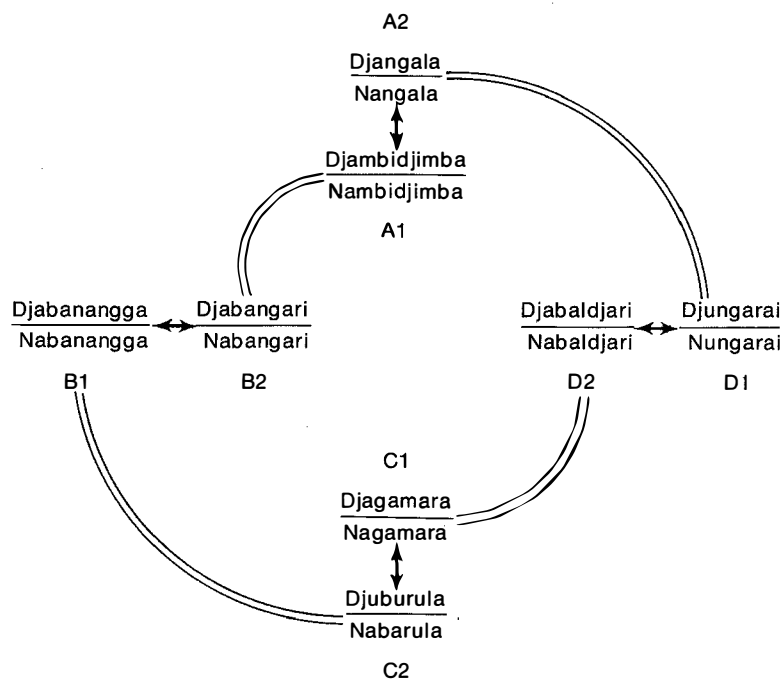
Key: Terms with initial Dj = males of the subsection; terms with initial N = females.

\\ = intermarrying subsections. E.g., Djabangari (Nabangari) marries Nambidjimba (Djambidjimba).

↕ = father-son patricouples (e.g., A1, A2 = one patricouple of subsections).

A and C; B and D = patrimoieties. A and C = one patrimoiety; B and D = the opposite moiety.

1, 2 = matrimoieties. A1, B1, C1, D1 = one matrimoiety; A2, B2, etc., = the opposite moiety.

A2, D1, C2, B1 = one generation moiety; A1, D2, etc. = the opposite moiety.

Each individual belongs to one subsection. The system allocates kin to different categories according to two underlying principles that intersect each other: the sex of the linking relatives, and the generation level. For example, Ego finds his (or her) "father" (*girana*) and "father's sister" (*bimari*) in a different subsection from his own, while his "mother" (*ngadi*) and "mother's brother" (*ngamini*) are in still another subsection, which may intermarry with Ego's father's (but not Ego's own) subsection.[8] A man's child cycles into his father's subsection, but his sister's child belongs to a different category (namely, the category of his or her father's father). A man's son's child cycles back into his own subsection, but his daughter's child is allocated to a different subsection, and so on. Thus a man finds in his own subsection his male and female siblings, son's child and father's father and their siblings —that is, persons of his own and alternate generations who are linked through males. In his father's subsection he finds persons of the adjacent generations to his own who are also linked to the kin of his subsection through males (as, for ex-

[8] It is, of course, the kin relations covered by the categories *girana*, *ngadi*, etc. that are being classed in this way by the subsection rules, not simply particular genealogical kin. Readers not familiar with classificatory kinship terminologies of the Australian type may find it helpful to be alerted to the fact that we are dealing here with a grid of category terms that serves to classify everybody in the society irrespective of genealogically traceable relationships. In these systems, a term like Walbiri *ngadi*, for example, is not only used to refer to individuals who are kin of different specifiable types such as mother, mother's sister, and mother's female parallel cousins, among others, but also may be applicable for other reasons—for instance, because an individual is an older woman of Ego's mother's subsection. In my discussion I refer for convenience and ease of explanation to key types of kin using the convention of designation in the singular (for instance, father's sister rather than fathers' sisters).

ample, brother's child or father's sibling). Two father-son subsections constitute a patrilineal couple, and define a semimoiety.

Ego's patrimoiety is constituted by his own subsection couple or semimoiety, and the patricouple that may intermarry into his mother's father's and his sister's child's subsections (i.e., the subsection couple of his mother's mother and mother's mother's brother, on the one hand, and of his mother's mother's brother's child on the other). Matrimoiety divisions realign the subsections, cutting across the patricouples and patrimoieties, as the diagram indicates. For example, Djangala (A2), Djabaldjari (D2), Djuburula (C2), and Djabangari (B2) belong to one *matrimoiety*; on the other hand, Djangala (A2), Djambidjimba (A1), Djuburula (C2), and Djagamara (C1) belong to one *patrimoiety*. Still a third realignment of the subsections constitutes the generation moieties (see the diagram).

We can see that the subsection system provides a sociocentric way of naming the different moiety divisions recognized by the Walbiri: instead of one name for each moiety, however, it yields four names that list the subsection subsidiaries making up each moiety.[9] In the case of the patrilineal moieties, Djangala-Djambidjimba, Djuburula-Djagamara people (A and C in the diagram) constitute one patrimoiety, and Djabangari, and so on (B and D in the diagram) constitute the other. If Ego is Djangala, his kin will be distributed as follows:

[9] See Dumont (1966:236), who has suggested that the subsection (and section) labels can be regarded as ways of naming the more inclusive social units.

OWN PATRIMOIETY

Djangala (*A2*)   Ego (male), brother and sister; son's child; father's father and father's father's sister, etc.

Djambidjimba (*A1*)   Father and father's sister; son and daughter, etc.

Djuburula (*C2*)   Mother's mother and mother's mother's brother; mother's mother's brother's son's child, etc.

Djagamara (*C1*)   Mother's mother's brother's child; sister's child's spouse, etc.

OPPOSITE PATRIMOIETY

Djungarai (*D1*)   Mother's mother's brother's daughter's child (the MoMoBrDaDa is a potential spouse; i.e., Ego's wife and brother-in-law are ideally in this category); father's mother and father's mother's brother, etc.

Djabaldjari (*D2*)   Sister's child; wife's father, etc.

Djabanangga (*B1*)   Mother's father and sister; mother's brother's child (father's sister's child), etc. Cross cousins are an alternate marriage possibility, so that wife's brother could be in this category.

Djabangari (*B2*)   Mother's brother; son's wife; daughter's husband, etc.

It should be noted that the relationship between the patrimoieties is in certain respects the "type" of maternal and affinal relations, since one's brother-in-law, father-in-law, mother's brother and mother's father are in the opposite moiety to one's own, while father, father's father, and mother's mother's brother are in one's own moiety. I return to this point later.

The subdivision of the patrimoieties into four cycles or couples of father-son subsections (semimoieties) is also of significance in Walbiri thought, since it is used in the classification of the patrilineal descent groups and their associated to-

tems. Each descent group is classed in one of the four subsection couples; in this way it is named and located within the moiety system. The subsections act as a classificatory device, each set of two names (as for example, Djangala-Djambidjimba) comprehending any number of individual descent groups. In this way the general types of kinship relationships that any given group bears to other descent groups in the system are identifiable, and the position of a single group can be defined with respect to *all* the descent groups in the society.

From this perspective, it is apparent that a significant aspect of the subsection system is its provision of a synthesizing code that lays out the articulation of the basic principles of the social structure in a single framework. While on the one hand the system can be translated into the more specific egocentric code for kinship (and vice versa), on the other hand it serves to name and express the semimoiety and moiety relationships that are the widest categorical divisions of the whole society. Thus the subsection code provides a grid on which one can locate or project any egocentrically defined kin relationship between individuals or groups in its relation to the social structure as a whole.

Patrilineal Descent Groups and Cult Totemism

The patrilineal descent group is the important "landowning" unit in Walbiri society. "Ownership" refers to ritual rights exercised by men of the group over a series of ancestral localities and their associated ceremonies, cult objects, and ancestral totemic designs.

Descent groups of different subsection and moiety affiliations are included within a single local constellation, and have rights over named sites in a broad sector adjacent to and including their home base. For example, a Djan-

gala-Djambidjimba group of the Mt. Allan-Conistan region has charge of the rain track from Walabanba (where the rain emerged) west to the area of Yuendumu. Another closely related group of the same subsection couple from Mt. Doreen then takes over and controls the rain track westward through Megindji (near Mt. Doreen) and out into the Tanami desert. On the other hand, an eaglehawk site in the vicinity of Yuendumu (and not far from the track of the rain) is controlled by a Djabaldjari-Djungarai group from Mt. Doreen. As Meggitt (1962:64) points out (and my data confirm) descent groups belonging to different subsection couples and opposite patrimoieties have rights over totemic places in the same general region of the country.

Walbiri descent groups are lineagelike units in that they are small, genealogically shallow groups within which genealogical relations can be traced. There is, however, no hierarchical lineage organization such as characterizes lineage structure in parts of Africa; instead, the subsection and moiety systems constitute supervening classificatory arrangements that express the relationship of each "lineage" to an over-all societal structure.

A typical Walbiri lineage includes about seven to twelve adult men who constitute the male cult group or "lodge" that exercises ritual prerogatives for the lineage as a whole.[10] A boy is initiated into the lodge of his patrilineage through a circumcision rite, nowadays at about the age of thirteen or fourteen. Women of the lineage, although excluded from the

[10] About ten such lodges, representing all four subsection couples, were active at Yuendumu during my stay, although members of additional lodges were also present. Meggitt (1962:206) has estimated that there are about thirty or forty lodges in the tribe as a whole.

lodge, are thought to have corights over the totemic ancestors and sites of which their fathers and brothers are the actual ritual guardians.[11]

Walbiri ancestors are usually personified aspects of the environment such as rain, honey ant, fire, wild orange, yam, and so on. Other ancestors are wholly human in form, and referred to by proper names. There are female as well as male ancestors, but the latter are more common and for the most part more important. Ancestors who are distinctive species are referred to by their species names; as we shall see, the species features are important in the representational forms of the totemic designs.

All of these beings are thought of as having emerged from the ground during ancestral times; wandering through the country they created various topographical features as they moved along lengthy tracks or circled within a more narrowly defined region. Walbiri use the term *djugurba*, which also means "dream" and "story," to denote these ancestral in-

[11] One way in which men conceptualize the unity of the patrilodge is in terms of the notion of "one *bilirba*." The patrilineal *bilirba* is a spiritual essence located in the stomach of a man. Men say that women do not have this *bilirba* inside them, for it is acquired only through lodge membership. As I pointed out earlier, there is also a matrilineal *bilirba*, which Walbiri distinguish from that acquired through patrilineal lodge membership, and which is inside women as well as men.

My female informants were aware of the character of the lodges and some women could list some of the members of the patrilodge to which her brothers belonged. A woman also thinks of herself as having special interests in her husband's patrilodge. Women feel, however, that knowledge of the ceremonies and myths and other information controlled by the lodges belongs rightfully to men. In general, possession of this knowledge is an aspect of masculine role and women regard it as such.

habitants of the country and the times in which they traveled around creating the world in which present-day Walbiri now live.

Djugurba, as the ancestral period, refers in Walbiri thought to persons and events outside the memories of living actors; it is what Schutz (1967:208) has described as the "pure world of predecessors," for none of the persons and events of this world overlap in time with the living. The term *yidjaru*, in contrast, denotes the world of the living, the ongoing present, or events within the memory of the living; the same term also means real or true, and waking experience in contrast to dreaming. Human beings, as distinct from ancestral beings are *yaba* (people) or *yaba yidjaru*. The reasons for the association between ancestors and dreams will become clear later.[12]

The number of Walbiri ancestors is not fixed; it is indefinitely large, and almost any phenomenon can be thought of as an ancestor.[13] This aspect is important in understanding the totemic design system, for as we shall see, the way in which designs are constructed makes it possible to render an indefinite number of different phenomena by means of a relatively simple system of visual forms.

A single patrilineal lodge generally controls a number of ancestors who are associated with a single region or whose tracks intersect at a single site, but it tends to emphasize only the most important of these. In some instances the less important ones appear as satellites of a central ancestor; in others,

[12] I have also discussed the association in two papers: Munn 1964, 1967.

[13] At Yuendumu, I collected from designs and myths, and from information on "conception" totems (see below, p. 28), a list of more than sixty-five totemic species and there are certainly more. Meggitt (1962:205) counted over 150 totems for the Walbiri as a whole.

each is relatively independent in the mythology, although regionally linked.

Thus the lodge which has charge of the rain from Walabanba to Yuendumu, also controls a *yawagi* berry and certain snake and lizard ancestors whose sites or tracks the rain crossed in this section of its journey; these—and the berry in particular—are often treated as satellites of the rain. Rain itself has almost wholly absorbed "lightning" and "rainbow," which are sometimes treated as separate ancestors but appear for the most part as components of the rain complex.

Walbiri speak of ancestors as belonging to one of the four father-son couples of subsections. An ancestor may be referred to, for example, as Djangala-Djambidjimba (A2-A1 in the diagram) meaning that he belongs to this father-son couple. All men of these subsections call him "father" or "father's father," and regard themselves as owners or "masters" (*giṛa*) of the relevant sites and ceremonies. Their rights, however, are based upon the fact that they stand in parallel structural positions in the kinship system to the men of the actual owning lodge: thus, they are "classificatory" masters of the ritual.

In an even wider classificatory sense all men of the same patrimoiety as the lodge owners are also *giṛa* of the rituals, while men of the opposite patrimoiety are *gurungulu* (those who construct the ceremonial objects, "workers"). In lodge ceremonies, *gurungulu* make the ceremonial regalia and decorate the *giṛa* dancers (see Chapter 7). Since lodge members of each moiety are reciprocally masters and workers for each other, members of any one lodge will at different times play each role.[14]

[14] Utilizing Meggitt's data, Peterson (1969:32) has suggested that "workers" do not participate as members of "Fa/son subsection pairs helping the owners" (and so not presumably in their capacity as *pa-*

Ancestral sites, like totemic ancestors, are classified according to the subsections of lodge owners. When tracks belonging to different subsections intersect at the same site, men regard both subsection couples as masters. For example, at Yurudjuruwanu, a site north of Yuendumu, lizard and kangaroo tracks belonging to subsections of the opposite patrimoieties are said to cross each other. Both subsection couples are said to be masters for the site.

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trilodge members), but rather as WiMoBr/SiDaHus to each other (see Meggitt 1962:diagram p. 217). Moreover, "the primary relationship between the owners and the workers is that of WB/SH and MB/ZS." Peterson's view appears to be that since the workers' relations to each other and to the owners are conceptualized in affinal/matrilateral terms, and in a way suggesting their reciprocal interests in the exchange of women, that the workers are participating in the ritual on the grounds of domestic, "secular" relationships and interests rather than on the grounds of politico-ritually defined, patrilineally ordered relationships. My Walbiri informants, however, regarded particular patrilodges of men as especially important *gurungulu* for rituals belonging to closely intermarried lodges of the opposite moiety (suggesting, in effect, that there were "boss" *gurungulu* patrilodges). Similarly, Meggitt (1972:77) states that "a particular lodge of the opposite moiety, frequently that whose senior men are brothers-in-law of the senior men of the performing lodge, should take the lead in the practical preparations of that ritual." Thus I would disagree with Peterson on this point, although I am in broad agreement with much else in his paper. My interpretation is rather that the *relation between the moieties* constitutes a symbolic model on a political-jural plane for the relational principles of affinity and matriliny, as well as for the specific interests in procreation and marital arrangements of the domestic level. That is, in my view the patrimoiety relationships model the domestic relationships. I would say then that the workers are participating in a political capacity (this is the implication of the basic patrimoiety organization), but that this participation is "about" or has as part of its symbolic content their domestic, secular interests and relationships. See the section on "Planes of Sociocultural Structure" (this chapter), and Chapter 7. On the notion of one level of social organization modeling another see Leach (1958:143).

In addition, different ancestors of the same species may each be linked with independent sites, sometimes having different subsection and patrimoiety affiliation. For instance, there are two *yala* (big yam) ancestors in different parts of Ngalia country. One is in the charge of a patrilodge of Djabangari-Djabanangga men, the other in the charge of a Djuburula lodge. It also happens that the lengthy tracks of different ancestors of the same species may intersect at one site. When this occurs, these ancestors usually seem to have the same subsection affiliation in this region of the country.

A single long ancestral track will be controlled by different patrilodges of men along adjacent segments of the route. In the examples available to me, these lodges belong to the same subsection couple. When a track passes into another country, however, changes of subsection and moiety affiliation may occur.

Planes of Sociocultural Structure and the Notion of *Guruwari*

In this study I shall be concerned with two "planes" of Walbiri society and culture, to the extent that these are relevant to the iconographic symbol system. The one plane is particularistic and personal and has its social locus in the conjugal family; the other is cosmic and societal, or sociopolitical, and has its locus in the patrilineal descent groups and patrimoieties.

The family is, of course, the fundamental procreative unit and therefore the nucleus of intergenerational continuity. The patrilineal descent group, on the other hand, is linked in Walbiri thought with what I will call "transgenerational" continuity, that is, temporal continuity in the extended sense, from the ancestors to the present. Thus, men speak of "following" their fathers' fathers, for it is through the patrilineal

lodges that, as we shall see later, ancestors are continuously embodied in ceremony and the fertility of human beings as well as other nonhuman species is symbolically maintained. Through the reciprocal interrelationship of the descent groups, the Walbiri cosmos as a whole is maintained over time.

This parallelism of functions on different sociocultural planes is pointed up by Walbiri notions about the sources of totemic-ancestral associations for the individual. On the one hand, an individual's ancestral identification is defined in terms of patrilineal descent, and for a boy by initiation into his father's patrilineal lodge. Through initiation into lodge activities, a boy is able to take an active part in identifying with and maintaining this group-linked ancestral identity, but for a girl this identity is "guarded" or taken care of by the men of the patrilineage. On the other hand, Walbiri also believe in an ancestral identification derived from the place where an individual is thought to have been conceived.[15] These latter identifications do not necessarily coincide with an individual's patrilineal cult totems and they are not given major expression in the symbolic action of ritual.

The bridging notion between these two sources of ancestral identity is one that will be of considerable importance in this study: it is the concept of *guruwari*, the basic Walbiri term for ancestral designs. I shall, therefore, pause here to consider this notion in a little more detail, but the reader will find that a fuller sense is being worked out through the study as a whole. Indeed, the problem of analyzing what *guruwari* is in and to the Walbiri imagination is one of the central themes of this book.

The term *guruwari* has two basic, linked denotations. On the one hand, it is the name for graphic designs representing

15 On conception totemism, see Elkin (1964:170–171).

the ancestors (primarily designs owned by men) and may be extended more generally to any visual sign or visible embodiment of ancestors such as footprints, topographical features resulting from their imprints or metamorphoses, ceremonial paraphernalia, or design-marked sacred boards and stones left by them in the ground. On the other hand, the term refers to ancestral fertility power, the power of generation, which is an essentially abstract or invisible potency left by the ancestors in the soil as they traveled through the country. *Guruwari* are both the essential visible forms and the essential invisible potency of the ancestors.

As invisible potency, they are thought of as being localized inside the ground or inside the bodies of human beings and other living creatures. Thus, when a woman becomes pregnant, Walbiri say that she has been entered by the *guruwari* of a particular ancestor.[16] The standard explanation is that a small childlike creature (*guruwalba*) who lives in the trees at ancestral sites has thrown a missile (for example, a boomerang) at the woman, and so lodged in her the *guruwari* of the ancestor associated with the site. This *guruwari* is also inside the child when it is born. The *guruwari* of a kangaroo ancestor, for example, is contained in the localities to which he traveled, in living kangaroos, and in human beings whose mothers were impregnated by the *guruwari* of this ancestor.

The ancestral *guruwari* that an individual (male or female) acquires in this way is mediated by bodily ties to the mother, since it is due to his having been conceived at a particular site that he has the *guruwari* of a particular ancestor inside him.

In the context of patrilineal cult, however, *guruwari* as vis-

16 Walbiri are not ignorant of a relation between conception and sexual intercourse; some of my female informants pointed out that the penis makes the child. Moreover, much of the symbolic imagery connected with fertility in the cosmology and myth is quite explicitly sexual.

ible forms representing the ancestors are central. In this context, the bodily identification of a man with the ancestors takes place through sensory contact with ancestral *guruwari* (designs and sacra).[17] I reserve further discussion of this point for a later chapter, but one aspect may be noted in passing: men sometimes likened ancestral generative potency to the fluff that is shaken onto the ground from the *guruwari* decorations of dancers in *banba* (fertility or life-maintenance ceremonies);[18] the implication is that the dancer is wearing the generative potency of the ancestor as the visible emblem of his ancestral identity.

In the stereotypic notions about conception, the throwing of a missile would seem to be a lightly veiled sexual image of erection, ejaculation, and insemination (although my informants did not make this explicit). Indeed, in certain respects the ancestor's *guruwari* as a symbol of fertility appears to be the quintessence of male procreative power, although, as we shall see later, the matter is more complex, for the *guruwari* de-

[17] Walbiri also lay emphasis upon touch. Not only is a man decorated with the designs of his patrilineal ancestors in ceremonies, but the novice may be pressed against the design-covered bodies of others so as to receive the "strength" from the designs; pressing the hands on ceremonial objects such as string crosses may also be part of the instruction process.

[18] When the dancer quivers in the ceremonial performance, fluff from the body decorations shakes off onto the ground. Two of my informants described this ritual quivering as "throwing off" (*gidji-ni*) *guruwari* (see Meggitt 1962:65 and 1966:41). Spencer and Gillen (1904:301) also remark with reference to Warramunga *intichiuma* ceremonies: "This shaking of the body . . . is done in imitation of the old ancestor. . . . The spirit individuals used to emanate from him [when he performed] just as white down flies off the bodies of the performers at the present day when they shake themselves." Roheim (1945:91,97) indicates a direct association between ritual quivering and notions of impregnation.

signs men make include a feminine symbolism (see Chapter 7).

The notion of *guruwari* spans the two different social planes of the personal or familistic on the one hand and the sociopolitical or patrilineal on the other. Personal ancestral identity is mediated through the individual's biological relationship to his mother, since in this context *guruwari* are seen as entering into a woman to vivify the fetus. This maternally mediated ancestral bond affirms the position of an individual within a familial matrix rather than within a descent group. Ancestral identity based on descent-group membership is mediated through the *men* of the patrilineal lodges, and in lodge fertility ceremonies the symbolic procreative process involves men in sensory contact with *guruwari* emblems.

From one point of view, we can say that the heterosexual procreation of the family is transformed into unisexual, symbolic procreation on the sociopolitical plane of male cult and cosmos maintenance. The parallelism of the two planes is, moreover, brought into focus by the activation of the patrimoiety organization in male cult. As I have pointed out, the moiety relationship represents the type of maternal-affinal links, and thus the moiety interdependence expressed in lodge ritual provides, as will become clear later, a model or structural equivalent on a different plane for the interdependence of affines and the family unit with respect to procreation and the circulation of women.

CHAPTER 2

Categories of Ancestral Designs and Their Functions

Throughout central Australia totemic ancestors are represented by graphic designs that are of considerable importance in the visual symbol system focused on ancestral belief. Among the Walbiri, these designs are extensively elaborated, and it is one of my aims to demonstrate that they form part of a wider graphic system with some of the structural characteristics of a "language." In talking about this "language," I shall reserve the term *design* for graphic forms that Walbiri regard as having a special importance derived from their intrinsic ties with ancestors. This importance is expressed in the ascription of "strength" or efficacy to the designs and in the varying degrees of secrecy attached to them.

Each ancestor is associated with one or more designs that are regarded as surrogates for him. A characteristic feature is that the graphs always have explicit semantic reference: they are not merely decorative forms. Therefore, in attempting to interpret their cultural significance and function, we shall later have to consider the content of the communications and the modes of relationship between sign vehicles and content. In this chapter, however, I am concerned specifically with defining the categories of designs and the instrumental functions of each category—the kinds of efficacy attributed to them as parts of ritual complexes.

The intrinsic ties between a design and an ancestor are based in Walbiri thought upon the origin of designs in ancestral dreams or, for certain kinds of designs, in the dreams of contemporary Walbiri in which ancestors give them designs.[1] The label *djugurba* (dream, ancestral times) expresses this connection between ancestors and dreams. The dream origin of designs is also the ultimate grounds for their efficacy since the ancestors are the original sources of potency in the Walbiri world. The designs are forms external to individual subjectivity that are thought of as having originally been part of subjective experience, that is, of the interior vision (dream) of ancestors.

Walbiri describe all designs as *wiri*, a term meaning "strong," "powerful," and also "important." In fact, there are distinct classes of designs that differ in relative importance and power, but the general sense of "efficacious" applies to all of them. The term *guruwari* may be used in a broad sense to cover all classes of designs including those used by women: it conveys the notion of designs as a general category. In strict usage, however, it is applied to designs over which initiated men have rights, with the exception of those aimed at attracting a lover. Designs of the latter type are referred to as *ilbindji*. A separate class of designs controlled by women is called *yawalyu*, and has some functions parallel to men's *ilbindji*.[2]

[1] Not all personal dreams are thought to be ancestral revelations (see, for example, note 3, this chapter). One general theory of dreams is that in them the matrilineal *bilirba* ("spirit") leaves the body and journeys around. In the sexual dreams commented on below (note 3), however, some informants felt that the whole person goes to the desired partner's camp, not just the *bilirba*. The distinctive stereotypes associated with design-yielding dreams are discussed later (Chapters 4, 5).

[2] I do not consider here men's designs representing malicious bush spirits such as the *djanba*, who are not regarded as the totemic ances-

Each design class is connected with a specific sort of efficacy, but can only aid in attaining the ends desired when created in the right contexts and accompanied by the singing of associated songs. The singing is a central feature, for singing and painting (or more generally, the construction of design-marked sacra) constitute the essential core of ritual action connected with the ancestors; it is, in particular, the singing that ensures the efficacy of the designs. Some rites may, in fact, consist of no more than these two concurrent activities, while others include dramatizations, dancing, and large-scale ceremonial cycles such as the lengthy initiation ceremonies.

Yawalyu

Although *yawalyu* are designs over which women exercise rights, and which are used in women's *yawalyu* ceremonies, they refer to the same ancestors as do men's designs. There are no distinctive *yawalyu* tracks.[3] Little secrecy is attached to the designs themselves; they may be seen by married men and by young children of both sexes: Walbiri men regard *yawalyu* as "little" (*wida*), or unimportant, in comparison with their own designs.

Yawalyu can be painted on children (Plate 2) and young girls as well as on married women. No person should cere-

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tors of patrilineal groups and for whom no *banba* fertility ceremonies are performed. No special name seems to be applied to these designs as a class, but their lethal functions make them peripheral to the basic ancestral complex that centers on life maintenance and the ties between the Walbiri people and their country. The over-all structure of these designs, however, is the same as that of other *guruwari* designs. On *djanba*, see Meggitt (1955).

[3] See Berndt (1950), whose northwestern desert women stressed distinctive *yawalyu* tracks associated with *yawalyu* women. I found that the *yawalyu* of northern Bidjandjara women at Areyonga also referred to specific ancestral women.

Plate 2. A child being painted with *yawalyu* designs. The painting is believed to aid in growth.

monially paint or "sing" *yawalyu* alone; some women said that such a person would be *winggi*, a "wrongdoer." This stress upon the basic sociality of design painting is character-

istic of Walbiri attitudes and is one index of the fact that ideally the production of design forms is part of a process relating individuals to each other within the wider social order.

Yawalyu designs are painted on the body with red ocher, charcoal, and a white paste made from a friable stone. A small stick bound with string at one end may be used to apply some of the paints, but the fingers are also employed. Decorations are applied to the breasts and across the shoulders, and to the upper arms, stomach, and thighs. The whole of the back is not painted, but a few designs extend over the shoulders and across the top of the back. It is significant that the body is the only medium for design production in *yawalyu* ritual, since Walbiri men employ a variety of media in their rites and create various symbolic objects that are detached from the body but also serve as design media.

Rights over *yawalyu* are not centered in corporate groups, but in individual women who claim to have dreamed the designs and regard them as their own property. A dreamer in turn extends coownership to her own sisters and cowives, and to her sisters-in-law (husband's sisters and brothers' wives). These women regard themselves as owners of the *yawalyu*, while their daughters have subsidiary rights. A number of my informants stated that at a *yawalyu* ceremony sisters-in-law (*mandiri-langu*, women related to each other as brother's wife —husband's sister) should ideally paint each other, and the same reciprocal relationship should obtain between cross-cousins (*djuga-langu*). In practice, this norm is not rigorously applied and I have observed such kin as a sister, or a father's sister, as well as a sister-in-law or cross-cousin painting a woman. In general, women's ceremonial painting is a social process in which women relate to each other in a dyadic fash-

ion, one woman painting another; while no kinship rule is rigorously applied, the norm refers to affinal relationship.

Women sometimes claimed that designs should be inherited from one's mother, but in fact the majority of designs in common use at Yuendumu were believed to have been dreamed by living persons and to be (in Walbiri eyes) "new" (*djalangu-waṇu*) designs. Older women sometimes remarked that they had forgotten designs belonging to their mothers. While a woman usually dreams *yawalyu* referable to her own patrimoiety ancestors, this is not always the case; occasionally a woman lays claim to a design for an opposite patrimoiety ancestor within her own local country.

Women emphasize that the husband of the dreamer is an important owner of the *yawalyu*, but this must be understood in the sense of "honorary" owner. After a dream, a woman is expected to reveal her new designs to her husband as well as to her cowives. We may note here that the focal notion of *yawalyu* ownership and rights centers in the idea of the family camp. People who share "one camp" are thought of (in a metaphorical sense) as sharing "one sleep" and "one dream"; a woman may rationalize the coownership of *yawalyu* by a husband on the view that since he shares her camp, he shares in her dream.[4] The extension of rights to sisters, cowives, and sisters-in-law (and also to daughters) is consistent with this core notion. The whole matter of sharing one camp and one dream can sometimes be thought of as a literal sharing of a

[4] There are explicit connections in Walbiri thought between dreams and sexuality. It is believed that by dreaming about a person of the opposite sex a man or woman may attract this individual in sleep, or may go to this person's camp in sleep and have intercourse with her (or him). One informant also referred to his wife as his *djugurbanu*. See also the discussion of *ilbindji* in this chapter.

dream: thus, when telling me their *yawalyu* dreams women commonly began by listing the individuals who (they said) were sleeping in camp with them at the time; these persons are thought to have appeared in the dream and are, therefore, in theory, coowners (they are commonly kin of the types noted).

The relation between *yawalyu* and the marital relationship is reiterated in the view that a man may dream *yawalyu* designs that he then teaches to his wives. For example, a set of opossum designs in use during my stay at Yuendumu had been dreamed by a Djuburula man among whose patrilodge ancestors the opposum figured prominently. His senior wife was in charge of the designs. Both man and wife emphasized that these *yawalyu* referred to the same opossum ancestor as the one for which his lodge performed ceremonies.

Moreover, a man is said to teach his wives certain designs already available in his patrilodge with which to paint themselves at initiation ceremonies, or for the decoration of their children. Such designs should not be used in *yawalyu* ceremonies to attract another man. These designs are also called *yawalyu*. Designs are thus channeled from men to women, *via* the marital relationship, but there are no designs that women teach to men for the latter to use in their rituals, an asymmetrical feature that is undoubtedly due to the relatively low ritual status and power of women.

No payments need be made in return for *yawalyu* gifts of this kind; as one informant suggested, such returns are already built into the food exchanges of the marital relationship; the designs have already been paid for. Thus, the relationship between a man and his wife can be referred to as *yawalyu-ngariyu* (*yawalyu*-paid for; that is, two people in this relationship). From this perspective, *yawalyu* appear as part of the reciprocal relationship between men and women centered in the marital unit. I shall return to this point in discussing the instrumental functions of *yawalyu*.

Several designs relating to one ancestor are commonly ascribed to a single dream. They may include more than one design for each part of the body in addition to designs for different body parts. The whole set is linked with the segment of the community country through which the ancestral track runs or where the site is located. It is this general local reference that women usually emphasize, rather than the more specific, named places within the country that are a part of the track.

For example, a set of rain designs had been dreamed by a Nangala woman of Mt. Doreen Ngalia country whose brothers were members of the Mt. Doreen rain lodge. These *yawalyu* were linked with this region of Ngalia country and were being emphasized by a group of Nangala-Nungarai Mt. Doreen women at the time of my field work.

More than one woman may claim *yawalyu* belonging to the same ancestors, or ancestral species. For example, at least four sets of *yawagi* berry designs were available at Yuendumu. Two of these had been dreamt by Nabarula women; one had been taught to a Nabanangga woman by her Djuburula husband. These three sets of designs all had the same local community reference (the Mt. Doreen region), but each woman held them as her own individual property. The fourth had been brought to the Walbiri by a Yanmadjari woman and belonged to a *yawagi* berry in this woman's country.

Five species of ancestors were emphasized in *yawalyu* at Yuendumu: rain, *yawagi* berry, *managidji* (a black berry), honey ant, opossum, and charcoal (fire). While designs for a

number of other phenomena were available, women did not feel that all species need have *yawalyu* representation. Some women were of the opinion that certain species were a little too dangerous to have associated *yawalyu*, and could be represented only in men's designs. In general, the edible species stressed by women in *yawalyu* were associated with their own food-gathering activities.[5] Rain, also stressed by women, has strong feminine associations in Walbiri thought, and the charcoal ancestors depicted in *yawalyu* are female. While women's designs tend to exclude species with strong masculine associations, men's designs include references to all species irrespective of their sex-role linkages. For men control the master keys, so to speak, to the total cosmic order.

In fact, the actual number of readily available *yawalyu* appears to be far more limited than the number of readily available men's designs.[6] This is in accord not only with the limited number of species represented, but also with other features such as the paucity of media, the lack of permanent media, and the fact that *yawalyu* are not in the charge of cor-

porate descent groups. Moreover, women's ceremonies are not regularly performed.

It is possible to distinguish two general types of *yawalyu* ceremonies: one type is performed in conjunction with men's ceremonies, especially circumcision rites, and involves painting in preparation for later dances on the main ceremonial ground; the other is performed independently—primarily to attract men as lovers, but having other aims as well.[7] In addition, the painting of designs may go on in relatively informal contexts, and there are also certain situations in which men may paint *yawalyu* on women. I discuss the various functions of designs in more detail below, and in Chapter 4 I recount a *yawalyu* performed in conjunction with circumcision rites.

The Instrumental Functions of *Yawalyu*

The functions of *yawalyu* cluster around personal sexual and procreative aims and interests, personal health (curing) and the growth of children, especially girls. *Yawalyu* painting is also sometimes thought to promote the growth of wild veg-

[5] It is notable that the one animal of importance is the opossum, a small game animal, and that in fact the design-yielding dream in this instance was attributed to a man. The opossum also appears to have some special connections with *ilbindji* (possibly because of the phallic implications of its long tail). Another design for a small animal, a wallaby, was not of major importance at the time of my visit, but was known by some women. This design, it was claimed, had been taught to women by a man. Although one woman produced a design for a snake, no snake designs were used in ceremonials I observed and some women regarded this species as "too cheeky" to be represented in *yawalyu* designs.

[6] I collected 74 *yawalyu* designs representing 18 different species as compared with 144 *guruwari* designs representing 50 different species.

[7] This second type of *yawalyu* is performed out in the bush, and in theory at least, children are not permitted to be present. These ceremonies were not a regular feature of women's life at Yuendumu during my stay, and none was, to my knowledge, performed. Thus my comments on these *yawalyu* are drawn from women's descriptions. Repeated attempts later in my work to get women to perform these ceremonies were not successful: women felt it was too hot (I did not have any transport to offer and it was by then summer), and occasionally commented that men might accuse them of trying to attract lovers. It seems unlikely to me that women were trying to keep information from me; my impression is that they were relatively uninterested and that both lethargy and genuine uncertainty about men's attitudes were factors. During the same period men were performing ceremonies regularly, but *yawalyu* performances were restricted to those performed in conjunction with men's ceremonies.

etables and other foods associated with women's activities, but when women are discussing the aims of the painting, they give little emphasis to this aspect and refer primarily to sexual and procreative purposes. Thus the painting of designs that represent in large part foods and related phenomena associated with the feminine economic role is intended to achieve feminine sexual, procreative, and other aims connected with the body.

Referring to ceremonies of the sort performed independently of men, women may say that the *yawalyu* painting (and dancing) is for the purpose of attracting a man, a function they explicitly associate with procreation. As one woman pointed out: "It is for a man, it makes the belly large, it makes the breasts large." The fighting stick that is set up in the ground for these ceremonies represents the penis, and some women also equated it with the oval baby carrier and shield.[8]

Although the notion that the women are dancing to attract men may refer to an individual's specific interests in attracting a lover other than her husband, it is also more general, simply reflecting the over-all focus of the ceremonies on female sexuality, and the sexual relationships between men and women. The painting of the body with visual designs is an instrument in achieving the desired bodily satisfactions of sexuality and fertility.

One woman asserted that a woman may sleep with her husband while painted with *yawalyu* designs; the painting is intended to encourage impregnation. According to others, a

[8] Although I did not observe the fighting stick in use at women's ceremonies among the Walbiri (see above, note 7), I did see Bidjandjara *yawalyu* in which the fighting stick was set up on the dancing ground.

girl should have *yawalyu* painted on her breasts when first having intercourse with her husband. Some men and women suggested that the husband would paint the girl with these *yawalyu*. In the minds of some women, this painting was also associated with food-gathering activities: when the new husband and wife woke up in the morning, they should go hunting; the *yawalyu* would then "catch food" for the man's new mother-in-law. I never observed *yawalyu* worn during hunting activities, but one of the *yawalyu* myths contains an account of a husband and wife (male and female opossums) who paint each other with designs as they sing opossum songs, and then go out hunting together. Although it seems unlikely to me that this painting occurs in actual present-day relationships, the myth account again stresses the view that *yawalyu* are elements in the reciprocal relationship between the sexes in marriage and that they express the binding of this relationship in sexual and economic activities, and in food exchanges between a man and his affines.

The procreative effectiveness of *yawalyu* is also emphasized in the painting of the breasts of a young girl to ensure their growth. As one male informant explained, a young married woman, or a girl just before she has sexual relations with her husband, might be painted on the breasts at a *yawalyu* ceremony to "make her breasts large" and to "make the milk come" (i.e., to encourage pregnancy). Thus, he pointed out, when a woman is given to her husband, the two together can "make a child" (*guḍu bala balga-ma-ni*, child the two embody), or as he put it in English "two fellows find kid."

The painting of *yawalyu* to aid the growth of girls' breasts is part of the general procedure of painting girls occasionally from childhood through puberty in order to "grow them up" (*wiri-ma-ni*). I have observed teen-age girls and younger ones

being painted casually at women's *yawalyu* performed in conjunction with men's ceremonies (see Plate 5), and some women said that they had been painted with *yawalyu* as young girls.

Small boys may also be painted with *yawalyu*, for the casual painting of small children is part of the role played by women in caring for them and nourishing them with their milk to make them strong. The same expression, *wiri-ma-ni* (makes big or makes strong), is used to refer to the effects of both activities—that of painting a child and nourishing him—even though at the present time at least women do not apparently attach critical importance to the painting. Similarly, when women paint themselves as part of the circumcision ceremonies, this painting is regarded as part of their role in maintaining the novice's life and strength, helping, therefore, in the process of "growing him up."

The strength of *yawalyu* designs may also be effective in curing and healing, and a few women said that they or others whom they knew had been painted for this purpose in the past.[9] According to some women, the *yawalyu* designs referring to the father's ancestors would be painted on the sick woman. *Yawalyu* might be performed specifically for this curative purpose, but it also seems probable that the same functions could be fulfilled at any *yawalyu* ceremony.

Women stated that *yawalyu* could be performed after a fight to help heal the injured and to make people "happy" again after social disturbance. Walbiri think of all ancestral ceremonial as contributing to feelings of happiness and well-being, and some men compared these functions of *yawalyu* to

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[9] I have observed curing procedures practiced during *yawalyu* performances by northern Bidjandjara women at Areyonga settlement southwest of Alice Springs.

those of the much more important *banba* fertility ceremonies controlled by men. The latter, they said, could be performed after a fight or a period of mourning because people are "sorry too much"; the *banba* would counteract these feelings with those of pleasure and good health.

Ilbindji and Related Designs

Ilbindji are designs that men create for the purpose of attracting a woman as a lover. They may be painted on the body or incised on oval boards as are men's *guruwari*. The designs sometimes refer to special *ilbindji* ancestors. For example, Walbiri recognize an Emu *ilbindji* track which runs north of Yuendumu; this track is distinguished from that of the important emus who traveled to Rugari cave west of Yuendumu. Some types of phenomena are favored as *ilbindji* ancestors: emus, fire, and various kinds of birds appear to fall into this category,[10] but any species may have associated *ilbindji*, and the designs can also refer to regular ancestral tracks. For instance, there is a honey ant *ilbindji* connected with a site called Yulumu, as well as regular honey ant *guruwari* connected with this important place.

The painting of *ilbindji* designs (with the accompanying singing) is thought to literally draw a woman toward her hopeful lover. A man need not paint with the *ilbindji* of ancestors belonging to his own patrilodge, but might use designs representing other ancestors with local associations in his sector of the community country. Men claim that the de-

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[10] In the case of birds, the reason for the special association may well be the sharp beaks with their phallic significance; the special association with fire appears to relate to the view that the smoke of fires may be used to attract a woman in *ilbindji* ritual. See also Peterson's (1969:33; 1971) discussion of Walbiri fire ceremonies for the resolution of conflict.

signs should be painted to attract only women of the right subsections (and kin relationships) for marriage, but one man produced a design that, he pointed out, had the power to attract a woman of the wrong social categories. As with *yawalyu*, the attraction of a lover is associated in men's minds with procreation.

One man told me that he had painted with honey ant *ilbindji* in order to attract the woman who was now his wife. According to his account, he sang for her for one day, and almost immediately "pulled her up." A woman might also hear a man's love songs and see his designs in her sleep; "sick with desire" (*miyalu ga madju ma-ni*, it makes the stomach sick) she will then get up and "follow" the songs and painting to reach him. Therefore, Walbiri say, a man may "lose his wife in sleep."

While *ilbindji* ceremonies involving a number of men are performed secretly in the bush, informal painting for pleasure and to make the individual sexually attractive can also occur fairly close to the camps.[11] Two men who were painting each other with honey ant designs one afternoon just outside of one of the camps claimed that their painting was aimed at making themselves attractive to their own wives, not to other women desired as lovers.[12] A wife of one of the men was standing at a short distance from the scene; an occasional woman and child passing by were mildly told to go away but not harried. The designs were worn back to camp.

Men also distinguish two categories of designs closely re-

[11] Some *ilbindji* ceremonies are simply song fests held in the men's and boy's camps at night. I was able to attend these, but for obvious reasons could not attend the "bush" *ilbindji*. Men did, however, show me *ilbindji* designs, and discussed *ilbindji* with me.

[12] The two men were *magundawaṇu* (members of the opposite matrimoieties) to each other.

lated to *ilbindji* that function primarily in the context of the marital relationship, although they may also be used to attract a lover. Unlike *ilbindji*, these designs, which are called *manguru* and *yangaridji*, may be painted on women; they may also, however, be painted on men to attract a woman, and in the latter context function like *ilbindji*. All three categories of design may be called *ngama-gulu* (female-having) because of the compulsion they are supposed to exert over women.

The designs of any ancestor that a man may paint on a woman in order to keep her faithful to him can be called *yangaridji*. *Yangaridji* used in this way can also be classed as *yawalyu*. Some men explained the term *yangaridji* by demonstrating a man drawing a woman along by the hand as a man is said to take a new (and reluctant) wife in marriage, or to "pull up" a lover.

One informant recounted an incident connected with a *yangaridji* ancestral woman. This woman was married to one man, but another attracted her away from her husband. As punishment for her adulterous behavior, her brother knifed her and now she sits forever hunched over so as not to see another man.

The myth suggests a contrast between the mobility of the woman caused by the propelling power of the other man, and the immobility with which she is finally afflicted in punishment. Similarly, another man stated that painting a wife with *yangaridji* should make her "sit down forever" (*dangna-djugu nyina-mi-ga*) with her own husband, not moving, but wanting only one man. The compulsion of the designs can be used to move a woman away from her husband (draw her up) or to keep a woman "stabilized" within her husband's camp.

A husband may paint a wife with *yangaridji* (*yawalyu*) referring to ancestors of his own patrilodge, or more generally,

of his own locality. As we have seen, designs may be painted on a new wife before intercourse, or at other times when a husband is worried about a wife's fidelity (for example, when men leave women in the camps during initiation ceremonies).

Manguru, while similar to *yangaridji*, are used more specifically for the purification and strengthening of women. Men say that after a woman has had a child and returns to her husband's camp, a husband might paint her stomach with a *manguru* design to make her strong again. These designs are supposed to "cleanse" a woman and may also be used, according to informants, if she has had a lover; in addition, they may aid in keeping a woman from being attracted by other men.

Manguru have special associations with the notion of pubic hair. Certain ancestral women to whom the designs refer burned their pubic hair on the fire and then grew it again. A woman's pubic hair could be burned by her husband (in order to cleanse her) if she has had a lover. The designs are thought to function to clean away the hair and to renew it, the total process being thought of as purifying.[13]

In sum, designs of these categories are imbued with a strength that is supposed to increase men's control over women. *Ilbindji* focus on extramarital affairs, while *yangaridji* and *manguru* are concerned with marital stability. The designs are expected to function in the satisfaction of individual needs and desires; they do not refer to marital stability or sexual-procreative potency in general, that is, with respect to the society as a whole.

[13] *Manguru* seem to consist of special designs of only one or two kinds (see Fig. 4B, no. 3). I have not observed them in use, and not all women were familiar with them; some who were, however, showed me a design rather similar to that obtained from male informants. Peterson (1971:205) records the singeing of (men's) pubic hair in fire ceremonies that may relate to conflicts over women.

The compulsion these designs are supposed to exert is imaged in physical terms: the designs are said to "pull" a woman toward a man or to "make the stomach sick with desire." Men's interests and desires are visually objectified as commands through the painting of these designs.[14]

Guruwari

As I have pointed out, it is Guruwari designs that constitute the wider category of men's designs. For the most part, women are not allowed to see these designs, but in some cases they can observe them from a distance, and less important body paintings may occasionally be seen at close quarters.

In ritual contexts, *guruwari* may be created on a variety of different media.

1. *The body*. Designs may be formed directly on the body through painting by means of red and yellow ochers, a paste from a white stone, and charcoal; these materials are applied over a grease base. Designs are painted on a man's back or chest, but not over the face. The most important body decorations for *banba* increase ceremonies are usually created in red ochred and white bird or vegetable (portulacca) fluff attached with blood drawn from the arm. This creates a kind of masking, for (unlike painting) it obscures the face as well as the torso in a covering of *guruwari* designs.

[14] In the present study, *ilbindji* are exemplified in Figure 4B, and I comment on them briefly in the text. I do not, however, deal with them separately as I do with *yawalyu* and *guruwari*. In terms of underlying graphic structure *ilbindji* do not diverge from the rest of the system. Moreover, although there are some designs that are characteristic of this category, there are others that cannot on the surface be distinguished from typical *guruwari*. The semantic content of *ilbindji* is overtly sexual (designs depict intercourse and male and female genitals), but sexuality is also a theme that, in a more complex, less overt fashion is also important in *guruwari* designs.

2. *Ceremonial regalia worn or carried by dancers.* Dancers decorated with fluff almost always wear headdresses.[15] The headdresses are usually made out of mulga branches wrapped with hair string; red and white fluff designs are then attached over them with arm-blood adhesive, as on the body. Dancers may carry various sorts of decorated oval objects or poles of mulga (see Plate 12), or painted shields. String crosses are constructed in some ceremonies and may be carried in the mouth or on the head. None of these objects are preserved beyond the ceremony for which they are created.

These varied objects extend the symbolic regalia of the dancer beyond the confines of the body; thus they increase the density of *guruwari* symbolism, for when used along with the covering of fluff decorations, they help to overlay the ordinary person of the dancer well beyond the simple body painting, creating an impersonation of the ancestor within which the dancer himself is hidden. A discussion of the significance of this symbolic covering is taken up in Chapter 7. For the present, we may simply note that it is only in masculine cult activities that this degree of symbolic transformation occurs and that it is in these contexts—specifically in the *banba* fertility rites—that we move into the cosmic, transgenerational maintenance of the social order as a whole.

3. *The ground.* Some *banba* ceremonies involve ground paintings of *guruwari* in red and white fluff. The dancers tread on these in the performance and so obliterate them (Plates 14A, 14B).

4. *Boards and stones.* Walbiri distinguish a variety of boards of the "churinga" type upon which designs may be

[15] The one exception I observed was the ceremony for the night ancestor (Plate 12; Fig. 18, no. 3). In this case, however, poles held at the back extended above the dancers' heads.

painted in ochres or incised and then rubbed with red ochre. These boards are made in different lengths and shapes ranging from an essentially rounded oval to a more elongate, narrow form (Plate 8). Although the boards are variously named, they are in some cases difficult to distinguish.[16] In addition, Walbiri decorate bullroarers and oval stones with incised *guruwari* designs.

The incised boards and stones constitute the only permanent media. They are kept at ancestral sites, or hidden in the bush. A man who has attained full adult status (that is, who is married and has a child) may have his own cache of boards.

Boards may be used in ceremonial performances in a variety of ways. In some instances I observed, they were placed into headdresses, and their incised designs covered with fluff decorations that did not refer to the same ancestor as the underlying incised forms. In some ceremonies that men described to me but that I myself did not observe, they are used as part of the configuration of ground paintings, and contemplated. Boards may be used as gifts or symbolic expressions of friendship between two groups (see below, Chapter 5, and Meggitt 1962:230ff) and also in marital exchanges (Peterson 1969:31).

[16] In addition to the list given by Meggitt (1962:228ff), Walbiri at Yuendumu stressed the *yulguruguru*, an oval concave board (on which designs may be painted) having special associations with women's functions. An undecorated *yulguruguru* is used by women to rub the boy at initiation ceremonies to ensure health and growth. Mention of "Yuguruguru" women associated with women's *yawalyu* among the northern Waneiga Walbiri is made by C. Berndt (1950:44). Some women at Yuendumu explained that ancestral *yulguruguru* women had close ties with the fire-charcoal women who are represented in *yawalyu* designs at Yuendumu. Women draw a few other general links between *yulguruguru* women and *yawalyu* designs but have little knowledge of an associated mythology.

5. *Weapons*. Walbiri commonly paint shields with *guru-wari* designs, but only for ceremonial performances. The circumcision ceremony includes a series of *banba* performances that are accompanied by the decoration of shields. In ceremonies I observed, some of these were then carried by performers in the associated performances. Boomerangs are less commonly decorated, but I have observed nonsecret ceremonies that men perform for public entertainment (see below) in which boomerangs were decorated with designs representing the ancestor whose travels were being portrayed.

In all the ceremonies prepared and performed by men, the spatial relationship of women to the ceremonial ground is highly controlled. This control ranges from total exclusion (as in the case of most lodge ceremonies) to limited observation at varying degrees of distance. The following general types of ceremonies employing *guruwari* designs are all performed and danced by men, although in some cases women may be present at the performances.

1. Camp ceremonies (*bulaba*). *Bulaba* are songs and dances performed for public entertainment. They are attended by women and children, but prepared and performed by men. During the preparation of *bulaba*, men work entirely apart from women; the latter are not allowed to be present at the preparations. At the performance, women and girls sit behind the men and boys so that they are further from the performers.[17]

Unlike the designs for lodge ceremonies, *bulaba* designs are not prepared by men of the opposite patrimoiety to the own-

[17] I have at different times sat in both positions, and the difference in the intensity and detail conveyed to the observer is noticeable.

ers of the ceremonies. Rather, men of all subsections may help in the preparation. *Bulaba* designs are believed to have been dreamed by individual, living men rather than by lodge ancestors, and ultimate ownership is vested in these individuals and their patrilineal lodges, even though they may be of different subsection couples from the masters of a particular ancestor.

Bulaba do not have any specific aims beyond general entertainment and the dramatization of *djugurba* events. However, like all Walbiri ceremonies involving painting, singing, and dancing, they are supposed to yield feelings of general well-being.

2. A number of different dramatizations of ancestral events, named according to the particular ceremony. Women are often permitted limited observation of these performances. Some of these ceremonies are organized in terms of patrilineal lodges, others are not.[18] Some have functions connected with life maintenance—others seem to be primarily dramatic in intent.

3. Circumcision ceremonies (*guridji*). Elaborate and lengthy initiation ceremonies are performed for boys in which there are various special song cycles and dramatizations of ancestral events. The rite separates the boy from women and introduces him to the secret cult objects of male ceremonial connected with the ancestors (that is, to *guruwari*

[18] There are also "Big Sunday" ceremonies from which women are totally excluded; these ceremonies are the Walbiri version of the northern *gunabibi* (see R. Berndt 1951) and are connected with two ancestral heroes called *mamandabari*. Distinctive *mamandabari* designs are available at Yuendumu; the ceremonies were not, however, as important at Yuendumu during my stay as among the more northerly Waneiga Walbiri at Hooker's Creek. See Meggitt (1966) for a detailed study of these ceremonies.

in the general sense of the term); it culminates in his circumcision.[19] As a result of this passage ritual, the boy's status is changed from childhood to adulthood, and from child in his family of orientation to potential husband and father in his family of procreation (for through this ritual he publicly acquires a potential father-in-law). At the same time, he is initiated into a patrilineal lodge. The rites thus synthesize a number of social transitions.

4. Fertility ceremonies (*banba*). The major ceremonies performed by the lodges are the *banba* fertility ceremonies. Ceremonies referring to a given ancestor may be performed separately, but a number of *banba* may be danced as part of the circumcision ceremonies.

The *banba* ceremonies are most important in the present study since they express the central aspect of the *guruwari* function: the maintenance of the different totemic species and of life sources as a whole. I have already referred to the procreative functions of *guruwari*, and I reserve a fuller discussion of the relation between *guruwari* construction, ancestral embodiment in ceremonies, and the fertilization and maintenance of species for the chapter on *banba* ceremonies (see below, Chapter 7) where some of the dances themselves are also described.

There are also some less common uses of *guruwari* that do not appear to be part of group ceremonial. In one instance I observed a man who had painted himself with *guruwari* in order (as he explained) to protect himself from being wounded in a major fight then in progress at Yuendumu. *Gu-*

[19] I was able to observe parts of the circumcision ceremonies ordinarily closed to women, but not the circumcision itself, nor a number of the more secret sections that took place outbush. Meggitt (1962) describes the ceremonies in detail.

ruwari may thus occasionally be used for individual protection. One informant discussed *guruwari* designs used for hunting, to aid in the catching of game. I have never observed designs painted for this purpose, but nevertheless the general Walbiri tendency is to elaborate the use of ancestral designs in a variety of contexts where some specific control over a given situation is desired.

Discussion: The Instrumental Functions of Designs

The Walbiri attitude toward designs as valuable instruments for achieving certain ends is summarized in the notion that such designs are *wiri*, effective and strong. This strength and vitality is closely bound up in Walbiri thought with procreative sexuality, for the term *guruwari* refers not only to the visible form, or design, but also to the generative potency of an ancestor. Moreover, in the Walbiri view, all designs have their ultimate origin in dreams, and dreaming, as we have seen, has strong sexual connotations. Designs are charged with dream value; perhaps we may view them as a kind of graphic condensation of the vital qualities of dreams.

This effective vitality of designs may bring about the achievement of specific, objective ends such as nourishing children, attracting a lover, maintaining the fertility and supplies of species, and so on. Designs function as mediate forms which through their "strength" may aid in the movement from the interests or needs of a subject (or subjects) outward to a desired object.

The causal-effective component is directed toward some bodily or biologically related end embedded in social relationships. The different capacities of designs cluster around the closely related desires for bodily health, food, and satisfactory sexual-procreative relationships. The designs all relate

to these ends, but at different planes of sociocultural order, and with respect to different components within each plane. Men's *guruwari* can operate on the societal plane of universe maintainance, utilizing the essence of sexual-procreative potency in connection with societal aims; *ilbindji* (and related designs) and *yawalyu* refer primarily to personal needs and desires at the level of familial and interpersonal relationships.

I would suggest that the Walbiri concept of designs as "strong" and as parts of symbolic processes directing psychobiological or bodily needs toward satisfactory ends expresses their experience of designs as emotionally charged forms. Emotion, some theorists have suggested, is what "makes imagery effective" (Hillman 1960:177). Since it is experienced as a dynamic force or motive power rather than simply as a "state" of being, it can be regarded as the dynamic connective between subject and object; it is a "flow of relation" (1960:149, 153) between the two.

From this perspective, designs may be said to mediate the "flow of relation" between subject and objective end, embedding or containing this "flow" within a social or collective form. Because they are collective, designs are already "given" in individual Walbiri experience as sources, or cachements, of a "motive power" that in its outward dynamic "thrust" relating subject to objective end is interpreted as being causally effective.

In this respect, it is important that designs are sense forms that in one way or another are in contact with the body: their potency becomes part of an immediate sense experience putting individual persons into direct sensual relationship with social means of attaining certain bodily ends. Contact may occur through production itself, or through touching forms that have already been produced as well as through the actual wearing of the designs on the body.

Designs are social forms external to the individual that yet are in contact with the body. In contrast, the dream images from which designs are felt to originate are private experiences locked inside the body, inside individual consciousness. Designs contain the dream potency in a social form that can also channel it back into individual consciousness *via* direct sensory contact.

Moreover, the production of designs is typically a social process usually involving people in direct face-to-face interaction: although an individual may occasionally decorate himself, ordinarily one or more persons decorate another, or two or more people work to decorate a particular object, and so on. Perhaps we may take the dyadic relationship of one individual decorating another, or two individuals decorating each other, as the prototypic core of the social interaction characterizing the design-production process. This interaction can also appear as the reciprocal activity of groups (patrilodges and patrimoieties). It is notable that *yawalyu* painting and at least some *ilbindji* (as well as all *manguru* and *yangaridji*) painting tend to be organized in terms of dyadic, individual painting relationships (for example, one woman paints another, a husband paints a wife), whereas *guruwari* production in *banba* and some other ceremonies is organized in terms of group relationships and tends to involve a number of workers focusing on a set of objects and aiding in the decoration of one or more dancers.

In either case, designs can be seen as social forms moving between persons (individuals or groups) each of which is in a converse relationship to the design forms (the one being the decorator, the other the object of decoration). Designs viewed in this way are elements that traverse the boundaries of the individual body (are detached from it) and yet are constantly being bound back into bodily experience.

3

The Sand Story

Our problem now becomes: what is the form or internal structure of the designs? Here we discover that the designs are not isolates; rather, they have to be examined in relation to a wider graphic art of narration.

The areas of bare sand characteristic of central Australia provide a natural drawing board permanently at hand. Since any continuous conversation is generally carried on by persons sitting on the ground, marking the sand readily becomes a supplement to verbal expression.

Walbiri often contrast their own mode of life with that of the white Australian's by remarking with pride, "We Walbiri live on the ground" (*walya-ngga ga-liba nyina*, ground-on we sit). They regard sand drawing as part of this valued mode of life, and as a characteristic aspect of their style of expression and communication. To accompany one's speech with explanatory sand markings is to "talk" in the Walbiri manner.

The graphic elements that are used in this way are culturally standardized and, as this study attempts to demonstrate, belong to the same basic system of forms utilized in the designs. Indeed, as we shall see, designs or distinctive features of particular designs may also emerge in storytelling or conversation. With some few exceptions, all standardized graphic configurations in the Walbiri repertory exhibit the same char-

acteristic "building block" structure: [1] they consist of one or more discrete, irreducible elements such as a circle, line, or arc. These "ultimate constituents" are combined into standardized arrangements of varying complexity that I call "figures." Each constituent is semantic; that is, it refers in any given usage to some particular item of meaning.

In these contexts graphic forms are media of social interaction in a different sense than they are in ritual contexts: they form part of the discourse through which information is exchanged or experiences and events communicated. The forms themselves are not *wiri*—they are not "condensation symbols" like the ancestral designs, or if they happen to be designs, they are functioning essentially as sign vehicles in narrative communication.

In this and the following chapter, I examine the relation between the graphs women use in storytelling and their *yawalyu* designs in order to define more closely the interlocking of these different graphic genres and its significance for the wider graphic system.

The Sand Story

Both men and women draw similar graphic elements on the ground during storytelling or general discourse, but women formalize this narrative usage in a distinctive genre that I shall call a *sand story*. A space of about one to two feet in diameter is smoothed in the sand; the stubble is removed and small stones plucked out. The process of narration consists of the rhythmic interplay of a continuous running graphic notation with gesture signs and a singsong verbal patter (see Plate 3). The vocal accompaniment may sometimes drop to a mini-

[1] I have illustrated a few of these exceptions in an earlier paper on graphic representation (Munn 1966, Fig. 1a).

Plate 3. Woman marking the sand during storytelling. The fingers may be held in various stylized positions.

mum; the basic meaning is then carried by the combination of gestural and graphic signs. The gesture signs are intricate and

specific and can substitute on occasion for a fuller verbalization.[2]

Walbiri call stories told by women in this fashion by the term for any traditional story about ancestral times, *djugurba.* They point out that only women tell stories in this manner, although all Walbiri are familiar with the method.[3] While the technique is elaborated most systematically in narrations of events ascribed to ancestral times, women also use it in a more fragmentary way to convey personal experiences or current gossip. As a mode of communication it can be activated in narration generally, irrespective of whether the content is supposed to refer to ancestral times or the present. A "proper" *djugurba,* however, is thought to refer to ancestral events.

The social context of storytelling is the casual, informal life of the camp, unhedged by secrecy or ritual sanctions (see Plate 4). The women's camps are a common location. An av-

[2] The term *yira-ni* (to "put," put down, or mark) is used to refer to the process of sand marking. The term for story (*djugurba,* see below) also refers to the sand pictures in this context, although the Walbiri do have a general term for mark, *yiri.* The latter is more commonly employed, however, in connection with ancestral symbols like designs and songs (see Chapter 5). Gesture signs are called *raga raga* (*raga,* hand); Walbiri women make a more elaborate use of these signs than do men (see Meggitt 1954). The verbal patter is referred to as "speaking" (*wangga*), not singing (*yunba-ni* or *yiri-ma-ni*). When I first heard women telling these stories, they seemed to me to be singing; but Walbiri songs have a distinctive structure, and it is these forms that are "sung."

[3] Mervyn Meggitt has suggested to me in conversation that Walbiri women at the northwestern Hooker's Creek settlement did not tell stories in this manner. According to my own observations, women of the Aranda and other central Australian women in the Alice Springs area tell stories similar in method and content to Walbiri tales, and it seems likely that this storytelling is a central desert feature. T. G.

Plate 4. Woman telling a sand story to children.

erage group at one of the camps might consist of three to ten women with their small children and numerous camp dogs.

Strehlow in a personal communication (1958) remarks with reference to the Aranda that "there were a number of stories, probably traditional, during whose telling girls drew figures in smoothed sand to illustrate the action of the tale." Strehlow has also recently described this storytelling in more detail (1964:46ff) and commented on its relation to the wider graphic system. Basedow (1925:43ff) describes sand storytelling by men in which marks are drawn with a stick.

There are certain other storytelling styles in the central and western desert regions that are practiced by girls and women. Bidjandjara women and girls at Areyonga settlement (southwest of Alice Springs) tell stories by combining sand markings with the beating of a wire or stick; the wire is used to beat an accompanying rhythm, or occasionally to carry meanings, such as striking an actor in the tale (Munn 1965:21). A storytelling method involving the use of leaves to represent actors is also known by Areyonga women, but seems to have been adopted from the nearby Aranda at Hermannsberg settlement (see the description in C. Strehlow 1913:6ff).

Even in the hottest weather the women tend to sit close together; without changing her position or making any special announcement, a woman may begin to tell a story. Occasionally an older woman can be seen wordlessly intoning a story to herself as she gestures and marks the sand, but ordinarily a few individuals in the group will cluster around the narrator, leaving whenever they wish regardless of whether the story is finished or not. At any time the narrator herself may break off the story and go to perform some chore, or even go to sleep in the process of narration.

Although my presence undoubtedly increased the frequency of storytelling, there were few married women at Yuendumu who did not have at their command a number of such stories and who could not recount them with fluency, expressiveness, and a skilled use of the sand graphs and gesture signs. Each woman had a fund of stories that she may have learned from any female kin or from her husband. When asked, women sometimes suggested that tales should be transmitted from mother to daughter, but in fact there are no specific rights over these stories; as women said, "everybody" teaches them these tales.

Walbiri children do not tell sand stories as a pastime,[4] but at the age of about five or six they can make and identify the basic graphic forms used in narration. If asked, they can demonstrate this narrative method, but without employing gesture signs. A small child or baby may sit on its mother's lap while she tells a sand story; the observation of sand drawing is thus part of early perceptual experience. Sand drawing is

[4] This contrasts with the situation on other desert settlements mentioned in note 3, where storytelling of this sort or similar to it is a favorite pastime of small girls and teenagers.

not systematically taught, and learning is largely by observation.[5]

At the age of about eight or nine, a child can quite readily tell narratives of his or her own invention. As a girl grows older, she becomes increasingly fluent in storytelling and may use the sand story technique (largely without gesture signs according to my observation) to communicate narratives about personal experiences or that she has herself invented. She may occasionally tell such tales to other girls or younger children. Older boys are more reluctant to use the technique since it is identified with feminine role behavior.

Vocabulary

Figure 1 sets out the graphic elements used in the storytelling, and the meaning ranges of each. As it shows, there are about twelve or thirteen elements regularly used, although coinage should not be thought of as entirely closed; in addition, some elements such as a meander line widely used in other "dialects" of the graphic system occur occasionally in sand story usage.

Each element covers a range of possible meaning items (the second column of the chart); the breadth of these ranges varies for the different graphs, but the over-all tendency is toward a relatively high degree of category generality. For instance, the sand story provides a term for elongate items (actors or elongate objects) in a prone position. The particular class of items meant—such as a spear, a kangaroo, or a man lying down—depends upon narrative context, and specification takes place within the storytelling process.

Various cues besides the verbal may aid in pinpointing the

[5] I observed only one instance of conscious teaching. In this case I noticed a mother casually teaching her small son gesture signs and sand graphs. I doubt if this was a regular procedure.
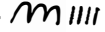
Figure 1. Sand story vocabulary

Element		Range of meanings	Category description
1.		Spear	Elongate, nonmobile objects, or actors in prone position (*ngunami*, lying down)
		Fighting stick, when not upright in ground	
		Digging stick	
		Human actor lying down	
		Animal, e.g., dog or kangaroo lying stretched out	
		Fires when flanking each side of shade	
2.		Actor in motion—walking, running, dancing	Straight (nonwinding' or zigzag) movement of actors, or trajectory of object (spear)
		Spearing	
3.		Actor(s) dancing	A high-stepping (*binyi*, men's dancing) or shuffling (*windi*, women's dancing) movement of actors in dancing
4.		Actor walking	The separate footprints of the actor as he or she moves along
		Actor dancing (one instance only)	
5.		Actor lying down on side, as in sleep	Prone actor, body slightly curved, rather than straight as in 1
6.		Boomerangs	Curved implements (boomerangs). Occurs in plural form only
7.		Bough shade or shelter	Curved place markers partly surrounding or defining area within or near which actors can sit or lie
		Line or grove of trees (see also 8)	

1–2. In the wider system the action line (2) and a line for elongate items tend to blend together. See Fig. 13, nos. 2, 3.

2–4. Arrows indicate motion. Footprints (4) are made by "walking" the fingertips along the sand. I have no record of this use of dot series to depict footprints in Walbiri ancestral designs, but they do appear in designs in other parts of central Australia. See Spencer and Gillen 1938:149; Roheim 1945:242–243.

Figure 1 (continued)

Element	Range of meanings	Category description
8.	Grove of trees	Place marker used for trees only, usually for depicting shade in which a kangaroo is lying
9.	Hut	Enclosure for living
10.	Actor sitting Actor sitting	Actor in static position, i.e., in contrast to 2, 3, 4, but not prone (in contrast with 1)
11.	Creek bed Blanket or "bed"	A striated or somewhat crumpled space on which actor may rest
12.	Food or water scoop Baby carrier Shield Spear thrower Oval "bed" (ngura), hollow in ground for sleeping	Oval, hollow containers, and related forms

5, 7, 9. Arcs vary considerably in deepness, but the tendency is for 9 to be a deep arc, and for 7 to be comparatively shallow, although there are instances in which 7 is fairly deep and overlaps visually with 9. In the wider system it is more difficult to make a distinction between these two "place" markers, and unfortunately I do not have explicit contrasts by informants to resolve this problem.

10. The preferred form of the U shape is a deep arc with a slightly pointed end (see Plate 5), but the shape may vary away from this expressed preference in the flow of narration. When a number of individuals sitting in a line are shown, slurring often takes place, and the U elements are joined together yielding a shape rather like that of no. 3. The more usual meaning for this element is "sitting," but it is also used to depict standing persons. In both cases the ends of the U shape are the legs. Occasionally, a shift from sitting to standing position is expressed by a sort of U mark in which the hand simulates the act of getting up from the sand.

11. The element is drawn with the fingers spread out, and either parallel or zigzag type marks may emerge, although the latter is more usual for the "blanket." The string figure that women regard as representing a bed also shows a zigzag type of configuration.

Figure 1 (continued)

Element	Range of meanings	Category description
13.	Nest Hole Water hole Fruits and yams Tree Hill Prepared food Fire Upright fighting stick Painting material Billy can Egg Dog, when curled up in camp Circling (as, e.g., dancing around), or any encircling object	Closed, roundish items, or encircling, nondirectional movement

12, 13. An oval form is also used to represent a large water hole or rock hole, and as an alternate for a nest or hill, when these are supposed to be large and elongate. A "nest" can take a slightly rectangular form; a "hut" can also vary in this way—curved to angular—without any semantic change. It seems likely that there is no significant contrast between angle and curve in the system, although the curved form is the more usual: the angular shape appears as an occasional variant of the circle, or oval.

13. The circle is usually plain—i.e., not spiral or concentric—but spiral forms occur occasionally, especially, according to my observations, for trees or fire. When concentric circles occur in the sand story they constitute a construction of circles nesting inside each other, each with a separate meaning: for example, a line of women dancing around an upright fighting stick.

Yams. An alternate form for a yam is a circle with wavy strings attached to it—the yam "strings." This little figure specifies a yam and does not have a wide application as does the circle alone.

Fire. A common alternate for the circle in representing fire is a small mound of sand brushed into place by the middle and index fingers. An *earth oven* may also be simulated by digging a hole; a gesture then indicates the placement of meat in the hole; finally, sand is placed over this and a small mound is created.

specific meaning in any given usage. For example, two or more straight lines partly enclosed in an arc representing a bough shade (as in Fig. 2, no. 1) are always actors lying down in camp and not objects. Narrative context or verbal commentary may provide the information as to the identity of these actors. If one line is considerably smaller than the other, it is a child and the line beside it a woman. On the other hand, if a number of elements of a U shape are shown grouped around a line (as in Fig. 3A, no. 18), this figure in itself does not tell us whether the line is an actor or one of the elongate objects for which the element is also used.

The circle is one of the most widely used and most general in the sand story vocabulary; it may serve for any item that can be included in a category of roundish or closed, nonelongate forms. Such items are, for example, the hole of an animal, a water hole, a hill, a particular variety of wild fruit, and so on. Only one such item is relevant in any given usage.

The same class of objects can sometimes be represented by different graphic elements. For instance, a fighting stick when placed upright in the ground is depicted by a circle, but when laid down, as a line. Another sort of variation is due to the availability of more specific alternate terms for a particular item as well as a more inclusive general graph. Thus a circle may be used to specify a yam, but occasionally women draw a circle plus wavy lines (representing the strings or roots) to depict this item.

Graphic elements with a more specific meaning range than the more typical categories of the sand story do occur. Element no. 8 in Figure 1, for instance, refers only to a shade or grove of trees and in fact has a limited distribution; it usually appears in a scene showing a kangaroo lying down in the shade while a hunter is stalking him.

In sum, the relatively high degree of category generalization typical of most of the story vocabulary increases the number of different classes of things that can be conveyed in graphic form while maintaining a relatively small repertory of elements; it also leads to greater dependence upon the storytelling process for the specification of meaning in each usage. Nevertheless, it is apparent that certain kinds of information cannot be carried by the graphs. Some basic, recurrent activities like eating, cooking, and talking have no direct graphic representation.

This fragmentary, dependent character of the graphic signs highlights the fact that they are interlocked with more articulate mediums of communication. In the telling of a story, the graphic channel of communication establishes a kind of visual punctuation of the total narrative meaning.

### The Flow of Graphic Scenes in Storytelling

As I have pointed out, a sand story begins with the clearing of a space. This action prepares the "screen" on which the graphic figures will appear and also serves as a kind of "curtain raiser"; children sometimes respond to this preparation by exclaiming, "*djugurba!*"—that is to say, "Look, a story!"

As the story is recounted, successive graphic elements appear on the sand, their sequence bound directly to the flow of narrative action. But while the sequence of elements reflects the temporal order of the narrative, the arrangement of elements on the sand reflects the spatial positions of actors and objects (Fig. 2). The spatial assemblage constitutes a graphic scene; division between scenes is marked by *erasure*, and a graphic story develops through the continuous cycling of scenes in the manner of a movie.

Each scene is a unified physical setting within which ac-

Figure 2. Sand story scenes—types of scenes and sample graphic settings

1. Camp

a   **b**   **c**   **d**

e   **f**   **g**
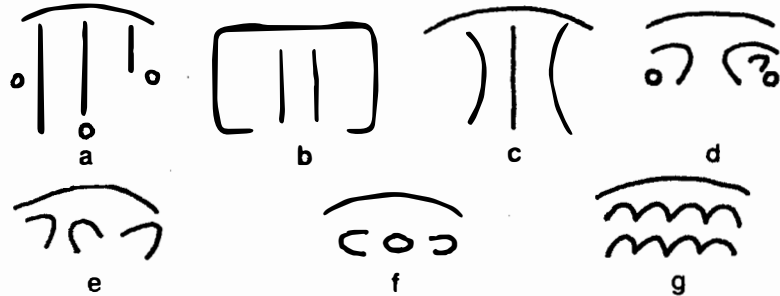
a. Man, woman, and child sleeping in front of a bough shade. The woman is always beside the child (small line). O = fire. *b.* A hut with two persons sleeping in it. The rectangular form is illustrated. *c.* A man and two women (one on each side of him) sleeping in camp. This is a standard way of representing a man and two wives. *d.* A man and woman sitting in camp are often shown facing in different directions. (The arc = bough shade.) A baby (small U shape) sits on the woman's lap. O = fire or food. *e.* Three people sitting in camp. *f.* Two people—e.g., man and wife—sitting in front of fire, eating. *g.* Large number of persons sitting in men's or women's camps.

1A. Ceremonial camp

a   **b**   **c**   **d**

a. Women dancing with a line or grove of trees behind them. *b.* Women dancing around a fighting stick with a grove of trees in the background. *c.* Same as *b;* line of trees is shown by small circles. *d. Bulaba* ceremonial scene. The men are shown dancing in the foreground; singers—men and women—sit facing them.

2. Juncture, and movement to and from scenes with settings
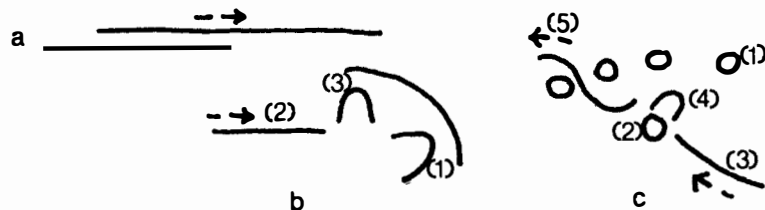
a

b   **c**

Figure 2 (continued)

Juncture, that is, a scene shift, may be marked by erasure of the previous scene; path lines need not be entered next, but the narrator may go directly into the camp or food-gathering scene. Otherwise path lines *(a)* are shown—a man's path ahead of a woman's. *b, c.* Movement to and from scenes with settings. *b.* Individual sitting in camp (1); another person comes in (2) and sits down (3). *c.* When a man and woman are eloping and hurrying on from one place to the next, or a man is following a game animal, scenes of this kind may occur. (1) Line of trees; (2) water hole. An individual comes in (3), sits down by the water hole (4), and hurries away through the line of trees (5).

3. Foraging

a   **b**   **c**
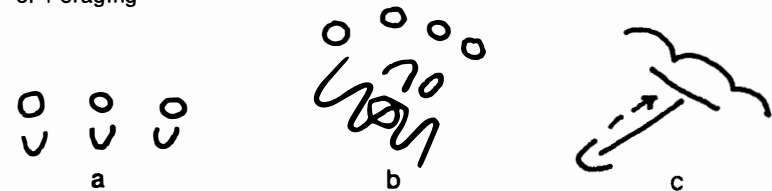
a. A characteristic way of showing a number of women digging for honey ants in the roots of trees. *b.* Z = the creek bed; O = water hole in the creek; OO = trees. UO = woman with water scoop, for example, beside her, drinking from the water hole, or digging it. *c.* Standard depiction of a man spearing a kangaroo. U = man; /= spear being thrown;— = kangaroo lying in the shade.

4. Finale. Going into the ground

a   **b**   **c**   **d**
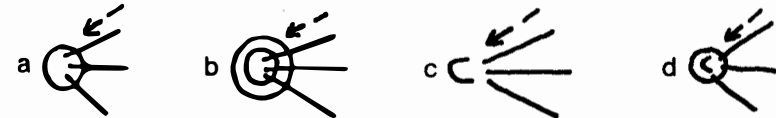
Finale scenes need not always occur, but when they do, they always represent actors coming together and going into the ground. *a.* O = hole. ∥ = paths of actors converging on the hole. *b.* If more than one circle is shown, each circle has a meaning: for example, the inner circle might be a water hole, the outer one a circle of trees. *c.* U = dead man in the ground. People converge on burial place. *d.* Dead man in a hole, with people converging on burial place.

tions take place. As Figure 2 suggests, it is usual to set the scene by drawing in an object or objects signifying the setting, such as a bough shade, water hole, or grove of trees. The narrator often states the name of this object as she draws

it; [6] the word has a deictic function, as if she were pointing to the object saying, for instance, "Here is a bough shade." Transitions between scenes (junctures") may be marked by the movement of actors after the scene has been erased, but the graphs used in these "junctures" do not include a scene setting.

Within a scene, erasure does not usually occur. Thus it sometimes happens that graphic elements may overlay each other. This is most common in my experience in camp scenes where actors may first be shown sitting and eating, and then lying down to sleep (or the reverse sequence, eating after sleeping). In these cases one layer of elements may be drawn over the other, but erasure does not ordinarily intervene.

Generally speaking, the scene (or sometimes the episode within one scene) functions as a configurative unit displaying the spatial relations of actors and objects; but when the scene shifts this set of relations is obliterated. Since by the use of erasure an indefinite number of scenes can be conveyed without expanding the pictorial space (the sand "screen"), the medium itself does not impose limits on the number of scenes that can be depicted for any single story. Accordingly, the number of narrative-graphic scenes in a story may vary indefinitely according to the storyteller's whim. As we shall see, the structure of a narrative is such that a woman may spin the tale out lengthily, or present only the core of incidents, as she wishes.

Since the sand graphs disappear as the scene is changed, the visual, extrasomatic channel is no more time binding than the verbal and gestural ones; all are characterized by "rapid fad-

[6] My impression is that women verbalized more of the story when I was taking notes on it than they would have ordinarily, or than they did when I was just listening and not trying to record the account in full.

ing." A particular story can never be looked at as a unitary whole, and no retelling is likely to reproduce the exact arrangements and scene cycles again. No doubt, this feature in itself reinforces the binding of the act of graphic construction or picture-making to the act of narration, for the graphic stories produced at one time cannot be used mnemonically later to evoke the larger narrative content.

Types of Scenes

The scenes regularly recurring in a sand story can be classified into a few basic types: camp scenes (men's, women's, and family camps) marked usually by a bough shade or hut; ceremonial camps or clearings sometimes including a ceremonial prop, such as an erect fighting stick in the case of women's ceremonies; scenes outside the camp involving food foraging and hunting or digging for water, and often marked by a grove of trees or a water hole; scene juncture (showing movement from place to place and lacking a "setting"); and a finale, which I call a "going-in scene," always marked by a hole in the ground or the depiction of a dead man inside the ground. Figure 2 illustrates these scene types and gives examples of characteristic graphic configurations.

There is no introductory formula for a sand story: any type of scene may be used, but camp scenes are common. The formulaic ending, however, although not a required part of the narration, is of particular interest: both the motif it introduces and the associated iconography have ramifications in Walbiri cosmology. At the end of a tale "all the people" of the story come together and go into the ground. A circle is drawn and the path lines of the actors converge within it. Often a death in the story precedes this event. If this is so, then a U shape may be drawn and the path lines of the actors directed into its open end. Sometimes a particular item rele-

vant to the story—a tree, hill, or fighting stick—may be the object into which the actors enter. In one instance concentric circles depicted a woman's breast and the actors went into the nipple.[7] The standard verbal expression associated with this finale scene is "they became nothing then" (*lawa-djari-dja-lgu*). This means they died; the tale has come to an end.

Scene Cycling and Narrative Content

A regularly occurring type of scene sequence consists of a camp scene, departure from camp (juncture); foraging, hunting, and related scenes; and return to camp. This cycle represents the time period of a day, and revolutions of the cycle suggest the passage of time. In fact, some stories consist of little more than revolutions of this basic cycle with minor variations in content. In others this cycle may function as a kind of framework to spin out the more specific plots. The following example, a fraction of a longer account, suggests the sorts of events that might be contained in the basic cycle and the way in which the cycle can revolve: [8]

Here is a fire burning in a hut. A Djungarai man, two Nangala women and a child are sleeping. They get up. They eat meat. They go hunting. The women dig for yams. Putting meat and yams in the containers, they go to camp. The fire is burning. They cook the yams. Having cooked them, they eat them. They

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[7] Cf. the sexual significance of the concentric circle in men's designs, Chapter 7. See also Munn (1967), on the use of concentric circles.

[8] Occasionally a storyteller provides the particular plot elements without the use of the cyclical frame, and such stories are likely to be brief accounts. The cycle facilitates not only the stretching out of a single plot, but also a kind of additive process in which it is possible to add more specific plots together into a single tale. The two stories in the text are free translations of Walbiri accounts that I have condensed slightly.

put the meat in the hut. They go for water. They drink the water. They give meat to their mother. [After sleeping in their camp and waking up] they go to their mother. They go hunting. Here are yams. The mother digs for yams. [All are shown digging for yams.] They go off to camp. The fire is burning. They sleep. They wake up. The man hurries off hunting. Here stands a tree. The kangaroo is lying down. He spears it. He cuts it open and takes out its intestines. He takes it to the shade. Here is the tree. He digs a hole. He throws twigs into the hole and lights a fire. He cuts off the tail; he cuts the two legs. The meat is cooking [in the earth oven.] He takes the meat off the fire and puts it down. He cuts the two thighs—the two good parts. He takes it to camp. He walks along. Here stands the camp. The fire is burning. Nangala is sitting. Djungarai comes walking and puts down the meat. He cuts it up. They eat . . . [this continues in a similar vein with particular emphasis upon the cutting up of the different parts of the kangaroo].

In most stories more particularized plots are built into this general framework: after the cycle has been repeated for a number of turns, these incidents intervene and shift the cycle or give it a more "unique," specific cast. The plot having run its course, a storyteller may then return to this basic cycle. Sometimes she repeats it for a time and then again embarks on a series of specific events. In the following tale of an emu hunt, the entrance of the emu into the ground marks the end of this incident; usually such an event would end the story, but in this case the storyteller considered events following it to be a part of the same tale. This "serial" treatment is facilitated by the cyclical framework.

Here are yams. A woman walks up and puts down her food container. She digs for yams. She puts the food in the container and walks to the shade. She returns with another woman [her

co-wife] to camp. Here is the hut. The woman sits down. She puts down the container with food. A man [the women's husband] comes in. He sits down. He lies down to sleep. The man sleeps. The two women sleep. The man sleeps by his spears. [After they wake up] the man goes off hunting. The women go off hunting. An emu comes along. The man spears it. Here are many trees with the emu's nest. The man takes the emu eggs. He puts them down. He takes up the emu and the eggs and he carries them off. The man goes to the hut. The two women now sleep. [The next day] the man and women go hunting. The women go for vegetable food. An emu sits on its nest. The man comes and throws a spear at it. The emu flees. The man sings to catch the emu. After pursuing the emu, the man grows tired and lies down to sleep. He [wakes and] follows the same emu. Through a creek bed the emu flees. The man pursues. [This is repeated for a few times to indicate the length of the pursuit]. Here is a big pool of water. The emu goes into it forever. The man goes into it forever.

One of the man's wives follows behind him. She comes upon the same place where the man slept. Here is the water to which the emu fled. The woman goes along crying and beating herself in grief for her husband. Some other women come hunting. They ask her why she is crying. [She answers]: "I have lost my husband." Now she is single. She goes along to the [women's] camps where there are many people. She sits down weeping. Many other women come weeping. They make "sorry cuts" on their heads with digging sticks. [Afterward] she marries another man. They sit in camp. The man sleeps, the woman sleeps. Here is the fire. They wake up. The man hurries off hunting. The woman goes hunting with many of her "sisters-in-law." They dig for yams. They dig and dig. They go to a shade. They go back to camp. The man comes. He sits down. He gives meat to the woman. The woman sleeps. The man sleeps . . . [incomplete].

The actors of the typical sand story are for the most part

anonymous persons referred to by subsection labels, as for example, Djangala or Nangala or simply as "man" and "woman." Occasionally they are called by some typifying name characterizing their role in the story, such as "the immoral one." These individuals are simply ancestral people— the people who lived in those times rather than identifiable ancestors. Stories are not associated with any particular totemic species or ancestors, and they are not localized in geographical space. As the narrator of the emu story said, when asked where the events of her tale took place, "No place— *djugurba.*"

While most of the actors are human beings, some have extrahuman characteristics. Tree women, for example, emerge from a mother tree and are somewhat more powerful than ordinary women. *Ginggi* is an evil sprite in human guise, a cannibal and something of a trickster.[9] There is no single *ginggi* or tree woman whose actions are elaborated in a number of different tales; rather, numerous representatives of each appear in different tales. Much less commonly actors appear who are personifications of nonhuman animal species. These usually have special powers but interact with ordinary human beings.

Occasional tales include behavior of an extraordinary kind, such as the transformation of a man into a snake, which Walbiri do not believe happens today; but such occurrences are

[9] *Ginggi* and tree people appear to be related to characters appearing in the tales of other desert peoples south and southeast of the Walbiri. Esoteric narratives about tree people told by old women at Ooldea (South Australia) are described by R. and C. Berndt (1945:245ff). *Ginggi* also appear in the accounts of Walbiri men, where they may be said to inhabit various sites. Women often drolly imitate their lisping speech, which is sometimes said to be Aranda or Bindubi. Their actions are similar to those of the *kinkin ma:mu* described by the Berndts (1945:15off).

exceptional. A large part of story behavior consists simply of the action patterns of daily life: food acquisition, mourning rites, ceremonies of various kinds. Others are of the individual case type, the substance of gossip: love affairs, fights, personal quarrels, and immoral behavior (particularly incest) and its punishment. Emphasis is placed on activities in which women play a central role. Moreover, food exchanges between a man and his wife (and to a lesser extent, her mother) are reiterated in the sand story as part of the daily round of hunting, gathering, and food consumption.

While all these stories are regarded as traditional accounts of ancestral activities, it is obvious that we have here a narrative projection of the cyclical day-after-day experience of daily routine and a recounting of the sorts of incidents and behavior also possible for the most part in the ongoing present of Walbiri daily life. It is, in effect, this repetitive daily existence that is going under the label *djugurba*, ancestral way of life.

Figure Types and Story Contexts

We can turn now to considering in more detail some features of the sand story iconography of special relevance to the larger graphic system. For this purpose I abstract from the story configurations certain important types of figures (that is, types of element combinations) that recur with high frequency in the graphic narration. These types are found also in other genres of the graphic art, where they may communicate more complex, cosmological notions. Before the significance of these more complex messages can be understood, we have to examine the use of these figures to convey events and contexts of ordinary, daily experience; for it is in such "casual" usages that the semantics of the former are grounded.

Figure 3. Actor-item and enclosure figure types in the sand story

A. Actor-item figures
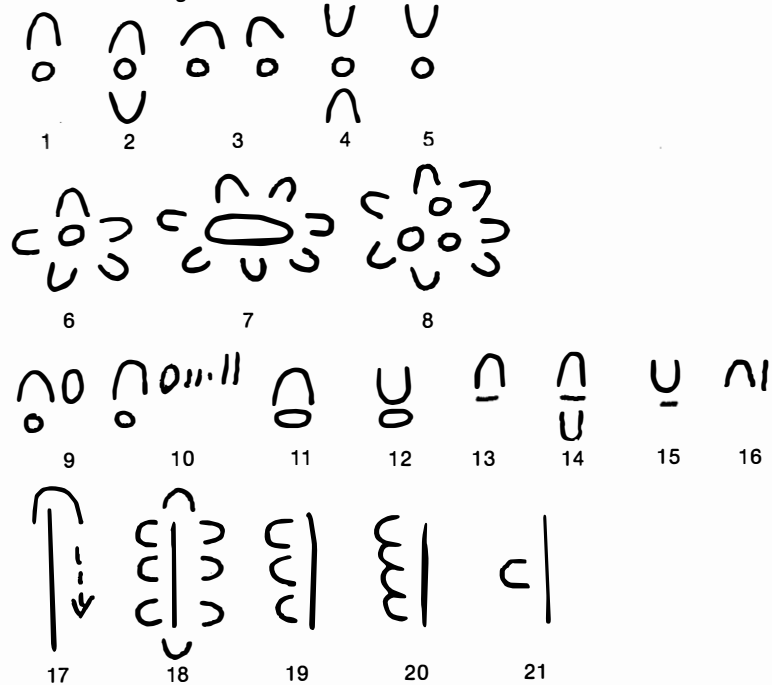
1. A man or woman sitting at a water hole; a woman sitting digging for yams, etc. 2, 3. A man and woman sitting at fires; two women digging for yams, etc. 4, 5. Actors sitting with backs to the "item."

6. A number of actors—for example, women dancing around a fighting stick or people sitting at a fire. 7. Actors sitting around large rock hole (elliptical form of the circle). 8. Women plucking fruit—circles in a group are not likely to be water holes.

9. A woman sitting with water carrier at her side and water hole in front of her, digging for water; a man with his shield, etc. 10. A set of weapons at the side indicates the actor is male. 11. A shield or receptacle in front of the actor. 12. A shield or receptacle at back. 13–16. A stick or spear shown in different positions relative to the actor.

17. An action line: for example, a man throwing a spear. 18–21. Different arrangements of actors around or beside another actor lying down, or, less commonly, around some elongate object (e.g., a large fighting stick). 18. A common way of depicting dancers and singers grouped around an actor (the sleeper) in a dream. 20. Slurring of U element is common when a line of persons is shown.

Figure 3 (continued)

B. Enclosures

1   2   3   4   5   6

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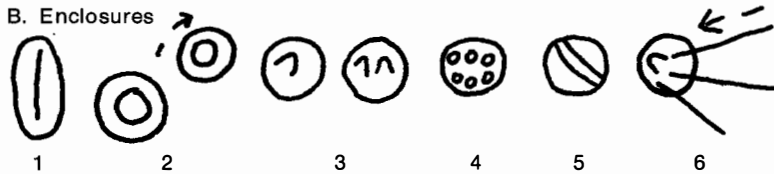
1. Sleeper lying in an oval depression such as characterizes traditional sleeping arrangements, sometimes called "bed" in English. The enclosing line may also be a blanket.
2. Water running around a hill: inner O = hill; outer O = water. The enclosing circle may also be a motion line, for example, paths of actors dancing around a pole.
3. Birds sitting in a nest, or people sitting on a hill, etc.
4. Eggs in a nest.
5. Characteristic way of depicting a dead person laid in a tree (tree burial), but may also have other meanings.
6. An enclosure of the type occurring in finale scenes. See above Fig. 2, no. 4d. A dead man in a hole with actors converging on the hole, and "going in." The hole-path figure that results has analogues in other parts of the graphic system.

Figure 3 provides examples of certain element combinations regularly appearing in sand stories, which I have classed as instances of two different types of figures, or what I shall refer to as "figure types." The most pervasive of these is what I have called the "actor-item" type (Fig. 3A). The U shape in these constructions signifies some individual—an "actor" —in either a sitting or standing position (sitting is the more usual meaning). (See Plate 5.) Another element oriented in front of or behind the actor and sometimes between his legs (the ends of the U shape) refers either to some object in the actor's immediate vicinity with which he is concerned at the time, or less commonly to an action in which he is engaged. The general meaning of the first sort of figure may be summarized as "actor in relation to object" and of the second as "actor-action."

In figures of the latter sort the action may also involve an object: for instance, a line drawn swiftly out from between

Plate 5. A graphic element drawn during storytelling: a U shape representing an actor sitting down.

the legs of the actor can serve to represent a man standing, throwing a spear (Fig. 3A, no. 17). The line is both the spear and the act of throwing it. Thus there is no clear distinction between actor-action and actor-object constructions, and it is convenient to link them both in one overarching figure type with a general meaning that can be stated as "actor (in relation to)-item" ("actor-item").

While the kernel of this figure type is a U shape and another element (most commonly a circle or a line, but also other elements where relevant), the figure can be pluralized; [10] two or more actors may then appear in various

[10] Any element may be pluralized, since number is a feature of the graphs. In sand stories, arrangements consisting simply of several U elements are common (e.g., loose arrangements of these elements representing a number of women sitting mourning). A number of actors sleeping in camp appear as parallel lines that may look like the lists Walbiri use in tallying items (see below, Chapter 6). Dual forms of "actor" elements are common, for example, two actors sitting back to back or sleeping in camp. When one U shape faces the other, there is usually a shared object such as food or a water hole between them.

arrangements (see Fig. 3). (The "item" can also be in plural form, as when a number of emu eggs are the focus of the actor's interest, but this is rarer.)

An actor-item figure is sometimes combined with an additional attributive element or subsidiary figure representing one or more of the actor's implements such as a wooden dish or digging stick, or weapons laid beside him (Fig. 3A, nos. 9, 10, 16). These items can also imply the sex of the actor. For instance, an oval representing a baby carrier placed beside a U shape indicates that the actor is a woman, while lines and arcs depicting spears and boomerangs, respectively, placed in the same position would indicate that the actor is a man. In addition, figures in which an action is depicted often include an object. For example, a kangaroo shown lying down may be the object of the spear being thrown by an actor (Fig. 2, no. 3c).

The actor-item figure commands a wide range of specific situational contexts, for in one or another of its variant forms it is used to convey much of the action of the sand story. In any given instance, it denotes a specific meaning relevant to the story being told. The sorts of specific meanings and narrative situations that these figures might articulate in particular instances of use are exemplified below, and still others are suggested by the commentaries accompanying Figures 2 and 3.

Actor(s)	Item	Narrative situation
Two women sitting	Honey ant hole	Two women digging for honey ants.
Wife, husband	Food	A man and wife eating in camp.
Woman	Fire (food on fire)	A woman cooking food at midday, while out foraging.
Many women dancing	Fighting stick	Some women dancing at a *yawalyu* ceremony to attract lovers.

Actor(s)	Item	Narrative situation
Man sitting	Water hole, shield, spears	A man with spears and shield beside him drinking at a water hole while out hunting.
Three wives	Husband lying down	A man's wives sitting around him while he is sleeping in camp.
Man standing	Spear (being thrown)	A man throws a spear during a fight.
Man sitting	Penis	A man sends his penis underground to have intercourse with a number of distant women. (Incident in one narrative.)

We have here then a relatively homogeneous and simple iconographic formulation for a wide variety of daily activities, essentially activities within a single place or scene. Activities connected with food gathering, hunting and eating, and sexual intercourse can be conveyed by this figure type, which also occurs in all the categories of ancestral designs (Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Actor-item figures in designs

A. *Yawalyu*. After pencil drawing (1); after body paintings (2, 3).


1. Wallaby   2. Opossum   3. Fighting stick

1. Thigh design. O = rock hole. UU = Wallabies drinking.
2. Thigh design. UU = two opossums sitting. According to the associated story, the elements specify a male and female opossum. In the story, the dreamer—a man—and his wife are identified with the opossums. O = meat. The two opossums sit eating meat. This is probably also an allusion to sexual intercourse for which "eating" is a standard metaphor. No explanation was given for the surrounding ovals.
3. U = woman sitting at a *yawalyu* ceremony. / = fighting stick lying down behind her.

Figure 4 (continued)

B. *Ilbindji* and related designs. After design incised on sacred board (1); after man's pencil drawings (2–4).

1.   2   3   4
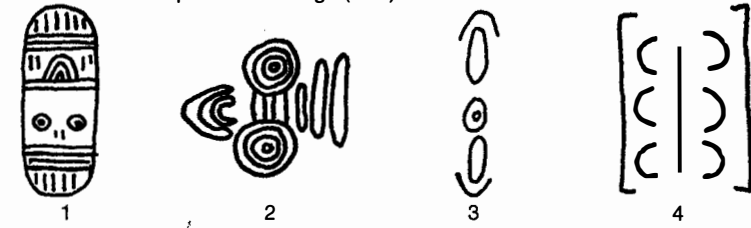
1. Top to bottom: /// = boomerangs. ≡ = spears. U = man sitting with spear throwers at his side. ≡ = man and woman sleeping together. OO = woman's breasts; dashes between are the man's spear throwers. Beneath this are lines showing the man and woman sleeping together, and then a repetition of the spears and boomerangs.

2. Outer U = man. Inner U = woman. OO = woman's breasts; the lines between are the man's cicatrices. Long ovals = man's arms "pulling up" the woman. The informant associated the design with a rain ancestor, but my impression is that an *ilbindji* design of this kind could actually be associated with different ancestors depending on a man's own lodge affiliations.

3. A Manguru design. Only part of the design drawn by the informant is shown. U = woman. Long oval = man, i.e., penis. O = navel of the man and woman—"navel" is probably a euphemism for the genitals. Cf. Roheim 1945:102. Cf. ℂ— ≡ an instance of a woman's story notation showing a man having intercourse with a number of women sleeping in a women's camp.

4. [ ] = shade or hut. UU = women sitting around a man who is lying down. / = the man. Cf. Figure 3, no. 18.

C. *Guruwari*. After pencil drawing (1); after sand drawing (2). Additional actor-item figures in *guruwari* designs are shown in Figure 16.

1. Two Waḷingari men   2. Lizard

1. UU = the two men sitting back to back (repeated top and bottom). O = the water hole they came out of, and also their camp. —— = shield // = spears.

2. O = hill, and also the fruit the lizards are eating. UU = lizards sit eating fruit. After they eat, the hill emerges, and they go inside it. (On notions of metamorphosis and multiple meanings for design elements, see below, Chapter 6.) ⋃⋃ = boomerangs.

In each of the design categories, the figure type tends to take on meanings characteristic of that category. For example, in men's *ilbindji* designs, actor-item figures always carry sexual connotations and may include additional elements specifying male and/or female sexual characteristics. In *guruwari* designs, the figure usually carries a reference to the ancestral camp site (see below, Chapter 6).

A second type of graphic figure that can be observed in the storytelling, and that is of general importance in the system as a whole, consists of a circle enclosing another element or figure. This configuration carries the meaning "a closed or roundish item enclosing another item or items" (Fig. 3B). I refer to it as an *enclosure*.[11]

An enclosure may occur independently or may function as the "item" in certain actor-item figures; that is, it has the same privileges of occurrence as the circle or other elements standing for the "item" in this figure type. Actor-item figures, on the other hand, can also occur inside circle enclosures when the story sense warrants it. The enclosure most commonly carries the meaning "in" or "inside" but it may also mean that the enclosed items are "on" a particular object. For instance, a U shape inside a circle could mean an actor sitting on a hill, or an actor sitting inside a hole. Where an oval encloses a straight line representing an actor lying down, this often specifies the actor lying asleep in a shallow oval sand depression such as is found in front of the windbreak in the traditional Walbiri camp. In each instance the hill, the hole, the shallow depression circumscribes the actor, and indicates a place or locus within which he is situated.

[11] Enclosures may have various spatial values: for example, the enclosed item may be inside or underneath the surface depicted by an enclosing circle, or it may be on top of this surface, and so on. Elsewhere I have discussed these spatial values in some detail, as well as the considerable symbolic significance of enclosures in Walbiri cosmology (see Munn 1967).

In the sand story finale, this type of figure is associated with death: it may be used to represent the dead person sitting inside the ground. In these contexts, the lines (paths of the "people") going toward the circle imply "going in"; although the figure itself need not always involve an enclosure, it implies this notion (Fig. 2, no. 4; Fig. 3B, no. 6).

A type of enclosure of special interest is a circle-within-circle scheme. Although not very common in the sand story, it may occur in various contexts; for example, a circle enclosing a smaller circle may serve to represent women dancing around a ceremonial pole. An example mentioned above in connection with "going-in" scenes involved a circle-within-circle scheme used to represent a woman's breast, with the inner circle as the nipple, and surrounding outer circles representing the breast. The circle does not always carry static meanings, but sometimes may convey the notion of circling movement (in contrast to extended, directional movement conveyed by the line).

Certain recurrent configurations are highly idiomatic. An example is the kangaroo hunting scene illustrated in Figure 2, no. 3c. This figure (one that is especially familiar to children) has a fixed specific meaning: it always represents a kangaroo lying down in the shade with a hunter throwing his spear. To my knowledge it does not recur, however, in the design genres, but is prominent only in the sand story. On the other hand, another idiom—two shallow arcs placed symmetrically on either side of a straight line, representing two women sleeping on either side of a man (Fig. 2, no. 1c)—recurs as a design in women's *yawalyu* (Fig. 6B, no. 12). Thus it serves as one example of the structural continuity between the sand story graphs and *yawalyu* designs that we shall examine in the following chapter.

Discussion

In sand storytelling, the speaker does not enact the events to which a tale is thought to refer, but creates fleeting graphic images of it on the sand as part of the narrative process. Graphs emerge as "attributes" of the sand in close relation to, but detached from, the body of the speaker, and typically as part of a social process in which information said to refer to the ancestral world is communicated. Unlike speech or gesture signs, the graphs are objectivated outside the speakers and listeners in a concrete spatial field that forms the visible focus of their interaction.

The process of forming the graphs is almost wholly absorbed by the temporal processes of narration. This "absorption" undoubtedly accounts in part for the simplicity of the elements and the "productivity" of the graphic structure: with a relatively few, standardized elements an indefinite range of meanings and situational contexts can be graphically expressed. The simplicity also enhances speed and ease of production.

Nevertheless, the graphs are arranged as "pictures"; that is, they are organized not simply in a linear way following speech sequence as is characteristic of a script, but also as images in pictorial arrangements. Moreover, the elements themselves are "iconic" in the sense that they pick out simple perceptual qualities of the forms of objects and acts that they denote, and "translate" these into a graphic media. In fact, the graphic art as a whole can be described as a system of relatively simple iconic elements with the capacity for productivity in communication; in different ways it is always closely linked with verbal expression.

In the sand story, the graphs serve in the communication of

a reality that, while labeled as ancestral, actually blends with the ongoing pattern of daily life. Notable here is the anonymity of the typical actors: they are not specific individuals around which varied tales are built, but simply represent classes of persons who seem to flow through the stereotyped habitual activities of daily life characterizing the sand story events; they are essentially depersonalized "types." Such stories are primarily tales about the *way* ancestors lived (which is essentially the way traditional Walbiri lived), rather than being about *particular ancestors*. The cosmic significance of these stories is limited: reality tends to be presented on the same level as the reality of everyday life, and the stereotypic framework itself expresses the microtemporal cycling of daily life.

Thus in the sand story we see the graphic system bound to meanings connotative of everyday experience. Since this use of the graphs is open to children, exposure to these associations occurs in a casual atmosphere from childhood. If one considers the repetitiveness of typical figures and scenes, one can see how graphs may become redolent of the content and rhythms of the daily life experiences that they denote, and so can come to objectivate them in the imagination.

CHAPTER 4

Yawalyu: Women's Designs

Some of the stories women tell are accounts of dreams in which *yawalyu* designs and their accompanying songs are thought to have been revealed.[1] Women believe that the agents of this relevation are the childlike creatures that men call *guruwalba* (see above, Chapter 1) and women call *yinawuru*, who act as proxies for the ancestors. They regard events in the dreams as ancestral happenings at the same time that they are the personal experiences of the dreamer.

Women stress that a dream of this kind should be revealed to others immediately on wakening and that ideally a *yawalyu* ceremony should then be performed. In the ceremonial the newly revealed designs would be painted while the songs are intoned. This procedure, as we have seen, ensures the efficacy of the design and makes it "strong." Since in Walbiri theory *yawalyu* designs and songs are revealed together in a dream to an individual, they must then be revealed to others by narration and/or public ceremony. In the latter, the coherence of the songs and the designs is expressed by their coordinate production as part of the making process.

Narratives that refer to *yawalyu* dreams are not distin-

[1] As I pointed out earlier, not all dreams are thought to be the sources of designs, and the narrative stereotype described below refers only to the Walbiri concept of *yawalyu* dreams. Women also sometimes ascribe stories not associated with *yawalyu* to a personal dream, although more often they say that such stories were learned from another individual.

guished by name from other narratives women tell, but an aura of greater importance and value is attached to them. In content, they do not differ greatly from other sand stories, and the plots are often built into the same "daily activity" framework. Unlike the ordinary tale, however, the *yawalyu* story has explicit associations with a particular totemic species such as rain, congaberry, or charcoal; the accompanying designs refer to these ancestors.[2] Although women told me *yawalyu* stories in the women's camps without making any special efforts at secrecy, the stories were not narrated quite as freely as the ordinary tale.

As I have previously indicated, the *yawalyu* dreamer is usually a woman, but may also be a married man who then gives the *yawalyu* to his wives to paint. Ordinarily only the dreamer (if a woman) or the wife to whom the designs have been given is thought to know the full details of the story, but there is no explicit sanction against others recounting it (or whatever they may know of it) without her permission. The denotative meanings of the designs seem to be generally known to most of the women of the dreamer's local community who actively participate in the ritual painting, but women do not show as much interest in giving design meanings as do men, and they provided me with considerably less in the way of spontaneous elaboration or metaphoric associations in interpreting designs.[3]

[2] Although the accounts purport to refer to a personal dream, the content is quite obviously traditional and may draw on generally well-known incidents associated with a particular totemic species. For example, the *yawagi* berry dreams of three different women contained allusions to sores that came out on the lips of ancestral women who ate the berries. The same incident is featured in an account of *yawagi* berry ancestors given by two male informants.

[3] In looking over my data again, it seems to me that there may have been more metaphor available in women's thinking about *ya-*

The *Yawalyu* Dream

Women's accounts of *yawalyu* dreams often begin with a list of persons supposed to have been sleeping in camp with the dreamer at the time of the dream. The opening scenes may also include a figure of the actor-item type depicting the *yinawuru* children standing around the dreamer singing and dancing (see Fig. 3A, no. 18). Sometimes these beings are said to "pierce" (*bandi-ni*) the woman and "give" her *yawalyu*. For the Walbiri the dream does not signify the beginning of an actual pregnancy as dreams do for some Australian peoples, but "piercing" nevertheless has procreative-sexual overtones, and a certain parallel between becoming pregnant and receiving *yawalyu* designs is implied.[4]

Throughout the rest of the dream account, the *yinawuru*, the dreamer, and ancestral people are not distinguished. If the narrator is the woman in charge of the designs (and sometimes also if others who closely associate themselves with the dreamer tell the story) she may render her account in the first person; or she may refer to herself and other people in the dream by subsection labels often intended to specify particular living persons whose individual identities can be supplied on request.

Although women generally locate the events of *yawalyu* narratives in some region within the dreamer's subdivision of the community country, site names do not play an important part in most accounts. Since the ancestors themselves are associated with a geographical area (women can usually give

walyu than that for which I have explicit expression. Nevertheless, the difference in women's and men's responses is marked—men often spontaneously elaborated more than one meaning, while women rarely did.

[4] Cf. Roheim 1933:241ff; Elkin 1964:185.

the name of a key site), narratives have a corresponding local association, a feature distinguishing them from the ordinary tale. But localization is not stressed in narration, and in none of these dreams do women follow an ancestor's track, seeing events at specific sites along the way. As we shall see later, an emphasis upon traveling to and from different sites and upon the geographical localization of ancestral events characterizes masculine modes of ordering experience.

The events of a dream may be various, but two types of activities are usually stressed: food gathering and the performance of a *yawalyu* ceremony where the designs of the relevant species are painted and the songs sung. At the end of a dream the actors go into the ground, although (as in the ordinary sand story) the storyteller may not include the "going in" scene in every instance.

Most of the species prominent in *yawalyu* designs are edible (charcoal is the main exception). The association of the actors with the species is commonly expressed by food gathering and consumption. For example, the honey ant narrative refers to the digging and eating of honey ants; *yawagi* berry dreams tell of the plucking and eating of the ripe fruit. The actors in these cases are simply human beings, but in the opossum tale the actors are opossums: the opossum men go out hunting for kangaroo and other meats (including opossum), while female opossums are shown digging for yams. In this case, ties with the species are expressed by an identification of actors with the species involved. In the charcoal *yawalyu* discussed in more detail below, food consumption is not emphasized, but the charcoal used to paint designs on the younger women in the tale consists of the burned bodies of certain old women. Here transformation (of the women into charcoal) and painting with the actual substance of the ances-

tors are the vehicles of identification. Being painted with designs is, however, a standard means of identification with the ancestors, and the specialized events of the charcoal myth merely make the notion particularly explicit.

As I have previously suggested (Chapter 2), *yawalyu* tend to exclude those food sources and other nonedible items that have specific masculine associations. In these dreams identification is made, therefore, either with phenomena embedded in women's activities or with those, like rain, associated with feminine nutritive functions. The dream presents these activities within a frame of reference—a level of reality—where its significance is more than ordinary even though the events themselves may simply be replicas of daily life. While emphasis upon food gathering and consumption is a feature of secular narrative as well as of *yawalyu*, the dream context raises the value attached to the experience to a different level of importance.

In effect, the individual's routine activities are experienced as part of a tradition of feminine activity through which life is maintained. In referring to a honey ant *yawalyu* about ancestral women who dug up large numbers of ants and returned to camp to eat them, one woman remarked, "The ancestors ate food then long ago. We people eat today as a result." [5] The woman who becomes the ancestors in the dream is in this way identifying herself and her ordinary daily activities with the sources of life maintenance, a function also subserved by design painting and its accompanying singing in ceremonial outside the dream.

[5] One of my male informants remarked that the eating of the totemic species by ancestral women led to their increase, that is, to the creation of more women. Thus he linked notions of food consumption with reproductive continuity.

At the same time that the *yawalyu* design is thought to have been seen originally in a dream, it also is regarded as a *representation* of items and events *occurring in the dream*. Behind all Walbiri thinking is the assumption that the ancestors make visual forms and songs that refer to themselves and to the world about them, the things they do and their own shapes and features. Closure is thus effected, for the circularity of this idea ensures both "a point of reference in the past beyond which one need not go" (Cohen 1969:350), and the projectability of the past into the present through transmissible signs.

In women's designs and dreams the same circular notion is expressed: the communicative forms (designs and songs) are themselves revealed within the milieu and the events to which they refer. They are at once a way of "talking about" the milieu and a part of it. The subjective experience of the milieu is in this way objectivated.

Moreover, the dream milieu is itself one in which, in the case of the personal dream, the actors in much of the dream are a kind of blend of the living and the ancestors. In some instances, this was made quite explicit to me by the meanings informants gave for design elements: they identified the U shape representing a sitting actor in certain *yawalyu* designs as being the dreamer or some other living person supposed to be in the dream (see, for example, Fig. 6B, no. 3). Therefore, in representing the dream milieu and the ancestral species, the designs also carried implicit reference to the living, and to the "self" of the dreamer.

Narrative, Song, and Design in Storytelling

A woman telling a *yawalyu* story usually marks the ground in the characteristic sand story style. As she recounts the dream she is often reminded of associated songs. Women who told me narratives would sing them as they came to mind, or as some reference in the narrative jogged their memories. There are no rules of sequence in terms of which songs can be ordered; an ideal, sequential ordering of songs associated with an ancestor characterizes the masculine but not the feminine subculture.

The demonstration of associated *yawalyu* designs, whether on the body, or in sand drawing, is also likely to evoke songs; the singing of the songs, on the other hand, commonly leads to an accompanying explanatory diagram or a sand story segment as part of the song explanation. Some of these explanatory diagrams may in fact be the *yawalyu* designs, and this is also true of some of the graphic figures that occur in the process of telling a *yawalyu* sand story.

Women themselves are generally conscious of this usage. For example, in one instance, a sand drawing of the actor-item type was made for explanatory purposes during the general account of a *yawagi* berry dream. The figure represented a number of women sitting around a central circle (the berry tree); they were plucking and eating the berry. The storyteller and other women present afterward emphasized to me that this figure was a *yawalyu* design for *yawagi* berry.

It is apparent from this behavior that designs may be treated like ordinary graphs—as explanatory devices referring to the content of the story—and that there is no cultural "rule" inhibiting their conscious use in general explanatory contexts. Thus the channels are open for designs to be fed back into the wider communicative system, and conversely for sand story graphs to be fed into the repertory of *yawalyu* designs.

In the communication of *yawalyu* narratives, my inform-

ants often moved between prose, song, and graphic representation (including graphic designs); each form is a potential stimulus for one of the other communicative modes. To give a more specific account of the interplay in women's imaginations between graphic forms, prose, and songs, I shall briefly outline its operation in the case of data I obtained on the charcoal (*burgangga*) [6] *yawalyu* complex.

I first saw a charcoal design drawn in the sand in the form shown in Figure 5A, no. 1. The elongate oval represented the charcoal with which women were painting themselves. My informant then sang two songs, one referring to the preparation of the small stick used to paint *yawalyu* designs on the body, the other to a centipede that had certain associations with the charcoal ancestors (see note 6 below). On another occasion women drew illustrative sand graphs during the process of explaining to me some charcoal songs; these are illustrated in Figure 5A, no. 2, along with the songs. They drew two women painting themselves with charcoal; then a number of women painting themselves; and finally the track they made as they traveled. One informant explained that the track was part of a *yawalyu* design to be painted across the chest. At a later date, one woman recounted a version of the associated dream narrative, using a typical sand story technique. As she reached a point in the narrative where younger women paint

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[6] The term *burgangga* is not the usual Walbiri term for charcoal in use at Yuendumu; the more usual term is *birilyi*. It is possible that the term is not Walbiri. The Bidjandjara term for charcoal is *burgu*, and the owner of this *yawalyu* was a Walmalla woman who was said to have associations with the Bidjandjara to the south. Some of my Walmalla informants referred to the charcoal *yawalyu* as *gunggawara*, a Bidjandjara term for young woman. In addition, this *yawalyu* had some connections with the centipede (*yirindji*) which some of my male informants referred to as *burgalu* or *burga*. A centipede story known to both male and female informants in slightly different versions involved the burning of a woman's breasts which then turned into hills called by one (male) narrator "*burgangga* hills."

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themselves with charcoal that is the burned bodies of certain old women in the dream she said, "They paint *yawalyu* designs," and then drew the graph shown in Figure 5A, no. 3, and identified it as a *yawalyu* design. Each U shape was identified as one of the women in the dream (i.e., other Walbiri who were supposed to

Figure 5. Charcoal *yawalyu* designs and story notations

A. Illustrations drawn in the sand

   1. Demonstration of a charcoal *yawalyu*
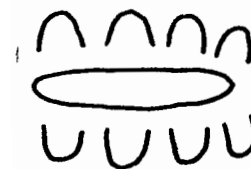
U = women sitting painting themselves with charcoal.
Long oval = charcoal. This design was demonstrated in the sand; it then evoked songs from the charcoal *yawalyu*. See text, Chapter 4.

    2. Graphic illustrations of songs

Song	Graph	Storyteller's comment
"*Yawalyu* charcoal sister-in-law people" [two women related as sisters-in-law paint each other].		The two paint up.
"Painting stick painting stick" [the women prepare the small stick used in painting].		Fire [charcoal] *yawalyu*. They paint up.
"Goes along track" [women travel along the track painted with *yawalyu* designs].		They went then. Along the track they go. They put fat [i.e. they rub themselves with grease and ochers and paint designs]. The storyteller explained that her illustration of the song was also part of a *yawalyu* design and was painted across the chest.

Figure 5 (continued)

3. Design inserted in story
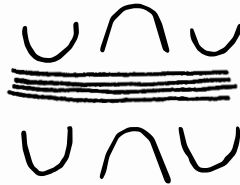
UU = women sitting painting to attract a lover. Each U shape was identified as one of the women in the dream—i.e., Walbiri women who were said to have been sleeping in the camp with the dreamer and who were therefore supposed to have been in the dream.
—— = the design, the charcoal. This figure was inserted into the storytelling of the associated *yawalyu* narrative and was identified as a *yawalyu* design. See text Chapter 4.

4. Design inserted in story

oo = breasts of the women, the charcoal.
UU = women sitting.

B. Charcoal *yawalyu* designs painted by women during initiation ceremonies
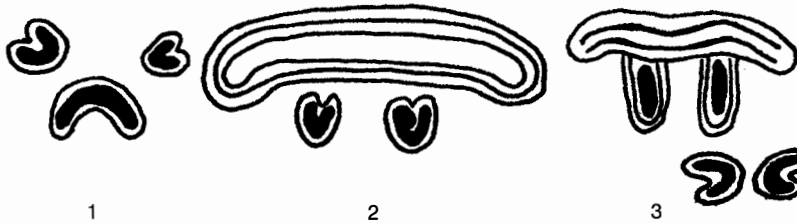
1. UU = women sitting. Painted on shoulders and across breasts (central U).
2. ≡≡≡ = headbands of the women. UU = the charcoal women sitting with headbands in front of them, as did the old women during the actual painting. See text, Chapter 4. Design is painted across the shoulders and on the breasts.
3. ≡≡≡ = *yawalyu* design being painted by the women. It may be that this also means traveling along the track. See A, no. 2, above. The two long ovals are charcoal with which the women are painting. UU = the women. Painted across the shoulders and on the breasts; U painted on thighs.

have been sleeping in the same camp as the dreamer; the charcoal is the "item" between them. After drawing the design the informant explained that the fire (i.e., the charcoal *yawalyu*) attracts a lover. She then drew two sets of designs of the type painted on the thighs, showing women sitting; in one design, charcoal (depicted as small circles on each end of the U shape) was painted on the woman's breasts (Fig. 5A, no. 4).

In sum, verbal forms often elicit graphic ones, while graphic forms in turn elicit verbal communication (songs or prose). Indeed, Walbiri notions that both songs and designs are transmitted in the one *yawalyu* dream, and that the painting of designs in ritual contexts should be accompanied by the singing of relevant songs, symbolically express these close ties between verbal and graphic communication.

A *Yawalyu* Dream Narrative and Ceremonial Painting

During my stay at Yuendumu, the charcoal *yawalyu* referred to above was used by women of the Walmalla camp group to paint themselves as part of a circumcision ceremony for certain Djabangari and Djagamara boys of this community.[7] (See Plate 6.) The charcoal *yawalyu* narrative had been told to me previously by a woman who was a brother's daughter of the dreamer and who thought of herself as having been in the dream. I give the substance of her account here, along with a description of the singing and painting of these designs in the *yawalyu* ceremony.

[7] This ceremonial painting was similar to others I observed, but it was somewhat more formalized and included certain novel features —primarily the use of sacred objects in addition to the body painting. Some women told me that the bonelike objects among the sacra mentioned below were brought to Yuendumu by the Walmalla owner of the charcoal from the Bidjandjara; the Bidjandjara (and also Bindubi) connections of this woman are probably factors in this variation (see also note 6).
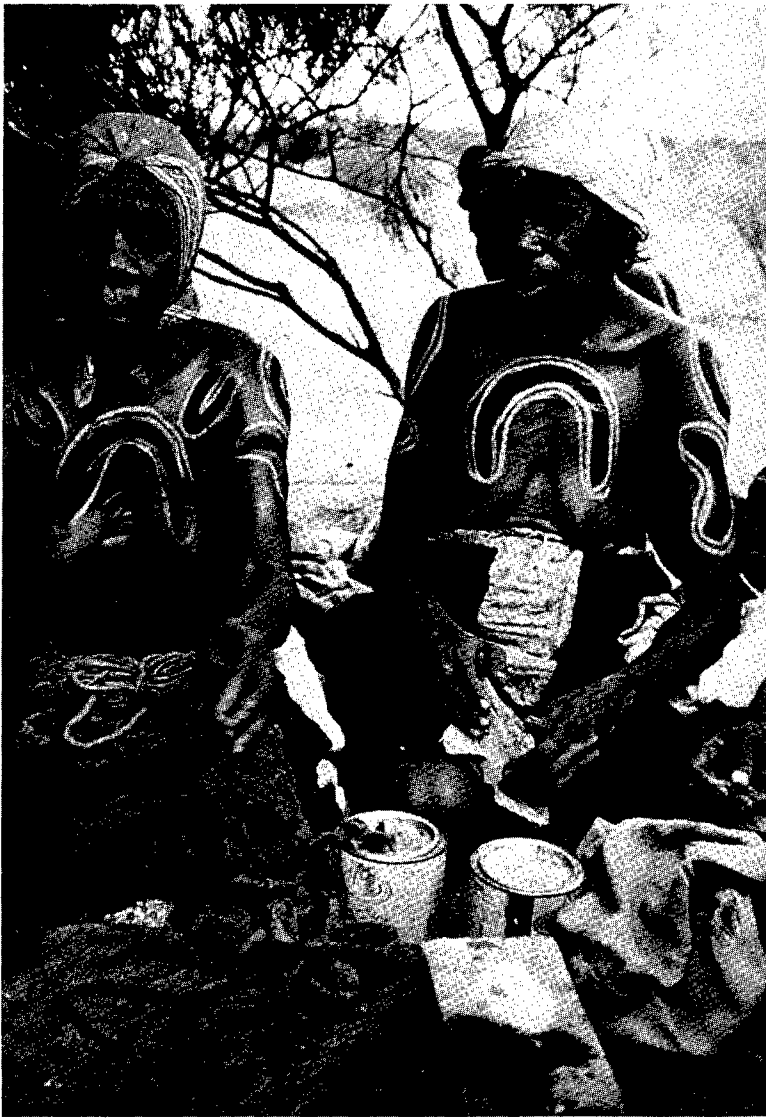
Plate 6. Two old women painted with designs at a *yawalyu* ceremony. The designs represent the charcoal women sitting at a *yawalyu* (see Figure 5B). The woman on the left has just taken the headbands from the stone where they were placed with other sacra during the ceremony; she is preparing to return them to their wrappings.

Several old women (listed by name) are sitting in the shade. They include the chief dreamer (an old woman of the Walmalla community country), the informant's own father's sister. A fire is burning and two fighting sticks stand erect in the ground. The chief dreamer and another woman (or possibly all the old women, the account is not clear) go to the fire and burn on it. As they burn, they sing, going away forever. Two younger women (one of them my informant, the other her sister) come and paint *yawalyu* with the charcoal, the remains of the old women.

Women of the Walmalla camp group gathered in mid-afternoon at a small bough shade just west of the camp cluster where parents of the two novices were camped. About fifteen women sat around informally; several of the women, who were actual and close *ngadi* ("mothers") of the novices, were being painted, while others were merely watching, conversing and joining in the singing. The painting was on behalf of the novices—to aid in "growing them up." Three women who were in the relation of cross-cousin, sister-in-law, and mother's mother (or daughter's daughter) to the "mothers" did most of the painting, moving from one to the other.

In addition to the charcoal designs, one design representing "hair-string head bands" was painted on a young woman who was pregnant with her first child. The old Nambidjimba woman who owned the charcoal designs and was regarded as the dreamer was not painted (possibly because she was not a "mother" to either of the novices, who belonged to the Djagamara and Djabangari subsections). This woman, and two other old Nabarula women who were decorated with charcoal designs, sat in the middle of the cluster of women (Plate 6). In front of these women lay a number of hair-string headbands, freshly greased and rubbed with red ochre, three small yellow bonelike objects tied together with a bit of string, and some sticks of charcoal. The hair-string bands were said to make the circumcision novice "strong" and to help "grow him up"—which was also part of the general purpose of the *yawalyu* painting. The "bones" repre-

sented ancestral women, and the charcoal represented the women who had been burned on the fire. The designs themselves were painted on the body with charcoal.

During the painting there was casual singing of about three or four songs belonging to the charcoal and headband *yawalyu,* but not all the songs were sung. Each was repeated until the singers wearied of it and took up another song. There was no apparent order in the choice of songs, but the woman who was the dreamer generally initiated each song, since she apparently had the best memory for the song cycle. The songs referred to events supposed to have occurred in the dream. One song, for instance, referred to the charcoal that the women burning on the fire enjoin the younger women to take up and use to paint *yawalyu.*

After the painting, women sang as the sacred objects were returned to their wrappings. The ceremony was concluded with a short dance, the decorated women and the undecorated dreamer lining up and shuffling briefly, stopping and "trilling" in a characteristic ritual call. Although other ceremonies of this kind that I had witnessed did not include a dance, women appeared to feel in this instance that it would be incorrect to conclude without it. The whole procedure, including the dance, lasted about an hour and a half.

The dream narrative associated with this *yawalyu* was unique in stressing the intergenerational transmission of *yawalyu* from older to younger women and in the notion that the bodies of the older women become the media through which the *yawalyu* is painted by the younger generation. Nevertheless, we can see here an illustration of the basic structure of the situation: designs seen in personal dreams, and painted in a *yawalyu* ceremony in the dream, are to be painted in waking reality (*yidjaru*) outside the dream. This presentation then evokes, and through the songs and designs, represents events of the dream and ancestral times.

Through the designs and songs the sense of value and tradition bound up with the notion of *djugurba* "surfaces" or becomes publicly visible, and so is integrated into the perceptual field and sense experience of the social world of waking reality. Despite the fact that the whole affair is one of considerable casualness and the body decoration is minimal compared with that of most male-controled ceremonies, we are still dealing with a visible modification of the body that temporarily changes some overt qualities of outer form through which a woman relates herself to the world beyond her body and through which others relate to this individual.
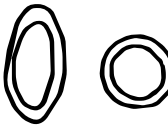
Iconography

Certain continuities between *yawalyu* designs and story graphs have already been suggested. We must now examine the iconography of the designs more closely.

The basic number of elements regularly used in *yawalyu* is considerably smaller than that used for sand stories. About five elements have wide distribution in the 74 designs in my collection, with a few more unusual elements occurring in specific designs. Although there are fewer commonly used elements and there are certain formal ambiguities in the *yawalyu* system (noted in Fig. 6A), the visual categories are essentially those used in the sand story, with the U shape, circle, and elongate elements conveying distinctions like those conveyed by the sand-story elements.

Some of the more obvious differences between typical story graphs and *yawalyu* can be attributed to adjustments induced by the shape of the body. This is especially true of designs painted on breasts and shoulders where some strokes may be elongated or otherwise altered to fit the breasts, or "stretched" from shoulder to shoulder. Adjustments of this
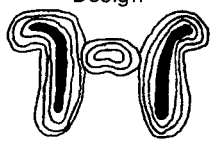
Figure 6. Yawalyu elements and designs

A. Basic elements

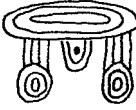| Element	Range of meanings
1.	Actor sitting
2.	Rock hole Hole (as honey ant hole) Other enclosures
2a.	Fruits and vegetable foods Stone Breast
3.	Fighting stick Actor lying down Charcoal Lightning, etc.
4.	Rain falling Yawalyu designs Headbands Paths Teeth, etc.

2, 2a, 3. Rock holes and holes sometimes appear elongated to the point where they resemble the form of 3 (fighting stick, etc.). Vegetables (2a) are represented by smaller concentric or plain circles and do not, in my collection of yawalyu, ever appear in the elongated shape of 2. Fruits are often represented by a grouping of circles.

B. Examples of yawalyu designs and design explanations. Meanings are those given by informants at the time unless placed in square brackets; the latter are my interpolations. For additional yawalyu see Figures 4 and 5.

Species	Design	Meanings given
1. Rain		= lightning = [rock hole?] (enclosure) = rain clouds

1. After painting on torso and upper arms at yawalyu. Rain clouds emerged from the lightning. This design and no. 2 were both painted at the same yawalyu, as part of initiation ceremonies.

Figure 6B (continued)

Species	Design	Meanings given
2. Rain		= rock holes ||| = [rain]
3. Yawagi berry		UU = women sitting. Informant gave names of women, and said "I myself." ||| = teeth biting = food [probably also tree]
4. Yawagi berry		OO = food UU = women painting = yawalyu O (nonconcentric) = food
5. Yawagi berry		= tree, path
6. Managidji berry		O = managidji ||| = digging

2. After painting on torso, at yawalyu. This design belongs to a Waneiga woman, while no. 1 belongs to a Ngalia woman from Mt. Doreen. The design was said to have been taught by a man to his wife.

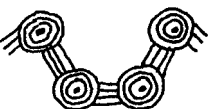3. After painting on torso, at yawalyu. The dreamer and her sister sit eating the berry. The informant explained that she and another woman were eating. The horizontal lines are probably also the berry tree, which is sometimes shown in this way.

4. After sand drawing. The women sit painting the berry yawalyu designs (lines also = tree?). Note the circle and conjoining line arrangement more common in men's designs. Another yawagi design consists of clusters of nonconcentric circles representing the berries.

5. After sand drawing. As the yawagi journeyed along, the berry trees emerged. The design was taught to the informant by her husband. Each of the three yawagi designs (nos. 3, 4, 5) belongs to different women and represents different dreams, even though the narrative accounts contain a similar thematic content.

6. After body painting on torso and upper arms. The managidji women dig for water in the creek bed. From their digging both the vegetable food and the water hole result. The circles probably specify the water holes as well as the berry. Clusters of nonconcentric circles may also be used to represent managidji berry.

Figure 6B (continued)

Species	Design	Meanings given
7. *Managidji* berry		○ = daughters ⊂⊃ (enclosure) = mother
8. Marsupial mouse		○○ = camps /// = [path?]
9. Opossum		☰ = 2 opossum women sleeping on either side of man ∪ ∪ = female opossums sitting
10. Opossum		── = male opossum lying down ∪∪ = opossums sitting
11. Opossum		∪ = opossum sitting. Enclosing line = cave. ○ = ochres on a stone ☰ = creek
12. Man		/ = man)(= women. The three are sleeping together.
13. Honey ant		) = ant ⊃ = burrow or hole of ant

7. Thigh design. The *managidji* daughters inside the mother. The design belongs to the same set of *yawalyu* as no. 6, and was painted on the same person, a young girl.

8. After paper drawing. The Marsupial mouse women danced a *yawalyu* ceremony at their camp, a hill south of Yuendumu.

9. After paper drawing. This opossum is different from those shown in nos. 10 and 11.

10. After torso painting. The opossums sit singing over a male opossum who has hurt himself.

11. After thigh painting. The design belongs to the same opossum dream as no. 10 and as the variations shown in Figure 6D.

12. After thigh painting. Compare sand story Figure 2, no. 1c.

13. After paper drawing of torso designs. Similar honey ant designs were painted at initiation ceremonies.

Figure 6B (continued)

Species	Design	Meanings given
14. Honey ant		○ = burrow or hole of ant ── = ant

14. After same paper drawing as no. 13. Arm design.

C. Types of *yawalyu* design arrangements on torso
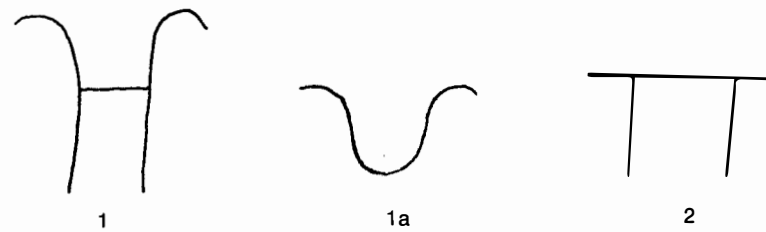
1. Extends from the breasts to or over the shoulders, with additional decoration between the breasts. See for example, B1.

1a. Similar to C1. See for example, B6.

2. Extends across chest, on shoulders, and on each breast. See B2 and B4. The elements on the breasts need not be attached to those on the chest as, for example, in B10.

D. "Involuted" variation in *yawalyu:* varying arrangements of the same elements in a set of opossum designs. For other designs belonging to the one dream, see 6B10, B11. Nos. 1–3 are painted on the thigh; no. 4 on the torso (on breasts and over shoulders).
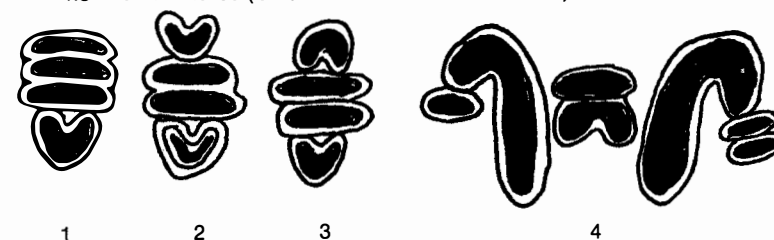
U = opossum sitting. In no. 4 the U is distorted because of its position on the body.

Oval = rock hole.

kind are evident in typical designs for the honey ant (Fig. 6B, no. 13); the hole of the ant painted on the breasts or across the shoulders is elongated, and in the breast design slightly

curved, but that used in the arm designs is of the more usual circular shape. In another instance (Fig. 6D, no. 4), a U shape representing a sitting opossum ancestor was drawn over the top of the shoulder and down the breast; the U shape was correspondingly distorted to fit the form of the body.

In addition, certain characteristic arrangements—again most notably of those designs appearing on the torso—can also be traced to the influence of body shape. The arrangements of elements in torso design are of two basic types, as shown in Figure 6C. The relative positions of the elements do not themselves carry any significance regarding the spatial organization of the items. For example, Figure 6B, no. 1, a rain design, consists of two "lightning" lines (each surrounded by rain clouds) and a rock hole arranged as in Figure 6C, no. 2.[8] This construction does not depict any particular spatial relationship between the rock hole and lightning; it simply aggregates the elements in a standardized decorative arrangement. Such "decorative" formations may also provide stereotypes into which standard figure types are pressed, thus "distorting" the usual positions of elements into more abstract, relatively noniconic arrangements. The elements themselves, however, still retain referential meanings. What may be "lost" or partially fragmented in such cases is the representation of space that characterizes the positioning of elements in the ordinary graphic figure.

Another feature of *yawalyu* designs is the common occurrence of one or more lines surrounding the basic shape. Some of these lines have explicit meanings (in which case the construction is an enclosure, as for example, in the case of the

honey ant hole, Figure 6B, no. 13), but in other instances they appear to be simply decorative elaborations without specific meanings. There is thus a tendency toward decorative emphasis upon the shapes of design figures.

Once these stylistic variations and the effect of the medium upon the formal arrangements are accounted for, it becomes apparent that *yawalyu* designs make wide use of enclosure and actor-item figure types with which we have already become familiar from the sand story. The actor-item type in particular is widely used in *yawalyu* designs. Only two of the most important *yawalyu* in use at Yuendumu during my stay, "*managidji* berry" and "rain," did not include at least one design of this type, while some designs for less prominent ancestors also made use of it.

As in the sand story, the actor-item figure can be used to convey a variety of contexts. Since the content of *yawalyu* narratives centers on food consumption and ceremonial painting, these are the predominant types of narrative situations depicted by the designs. Moreover, the figure type, not being confined to any single ancestor, cuts across situations referring to the different species. For example, the opossums sit at a rock hole, or around another opossum lying down; the charcoal women sit painting charcoal; the *yawagi* berry women sit eating the berry and painting it, and so forth. In each instance the "item" of the "actor-item" figure upon which the actors are focused is the ancestral species or some important features of it.

The figure type thus comprehends distinctive ancestral species and narrative situations within a common pattern. We shall find this sort of integration systematically developed in men's designs, and more will be said about it then. Here we may merely note that it arises rather directly from the possi-

8 Cf. the similar arrangements of lines in men's body designs, Figure 10, no. 14. This sort of arrangement appears to be characteristic of body designs.

bilities of the internal structure of the graphic system where the use of relatively general visual categories and figure types entails the depiction of widely differing specific contexts in terms of a common visual structure.

The type of figure I have called an "enclosure" also has a fairly wide distribution in *yawalyu* designs (Fig. 6B, nos. 1, 7, 13, 14). In addition, two other types may be mentioned. The first is a figure consisting of a circle conjoined to a line (Fig. 6B, nos. 2, 6, 8), which occurs occasionally in *yawalyu* designs. Although a circle-line figure carrying the general meaning "hole-path" recurs in the "going in" scenes of sand stories, this figure type is developed primarily in masculine iconography, where it conveys the general meaning "site (circle)-path (line)" (see below, Chapter 5). In *yawalyu* designs the site-path notion is not elaborated, and my informants did not connect the relatively few occurrences of the circle-line form with specific sites. My impression is that we are dealing in these instances with forms assimilated from the masculine design system; channels for such direct assimilation do, as I have previously pointed out, exist in the norms surrounding the communication and transfer of designs between the sexes.

The second sort of construction involves plurals of the same element; for example, some designs for *yawagi* or *managidji* berry consist of circle clusters representing "many fruits." Repetitions of elements to indicate pluralization are, as we have seen, common in sand stories, and we shall find them again in men's designs, where they sometimes take on a more explicit symbolic value connected with the fertility of species.

In sum, the elements and figure types prominent in *yawalyu* reiterate for the most part those widely used in the sand story: both designs and story elements are grounded in the same graphic system or *langue*. Indeed, the relations between the designs and the wider graphic usages of conversation and storytelling can be compared to the relation between songs or poems or other fixed forms and the wider informal usages of more general, oral narration. We can think of the designs as a genre of the wider system in which the forms are raised to a level of intrinsic importance and have as their essential mode of materialization a ritual or formalized making process.

The Iconography of *Yawalyu* Complexes

As I have pointed out, a single *yawalyu* complex generally includes a number of graphic designs. I found that a woman might demonstrate to me a few designs for a particular ancestor—those she remembered or that happened to come to mind at the time—and that she might even suggest that there were no further designs for this particular ancestor. But subsequent questioning or observation (at *yawalyu* ceremonies for example) often yielded additional designs.

Aside from the vagaries of individual knowledge and memory, a factor contributing to this open-endedness is the productivity inherent in the graphic system. An examination of the range of designs ascribed to a single dream makes it clear that the generation of different designs often takes place simply through differing selections and/or rearrangements of a single set of elements. Thus in the opossum designs of Figure 6D, the U shape, depicting the sitting opossum, and the elongate oval depicting the rock hole (a mark left by an opossum when he lay down) are variously arranged to create separate designs. Figure 5A, nos. 3, 4, and Figure 5B illustrate a similar case of "involuted variation" for the charcoal *yawalyu* discussed above.

Designs belonging to a single *yawalyu* dream generally consist of "variations on a theme." In fact, informants sometimes conceptualized designs in terms of the minimal thematic elements. For example, one woman, correcting another's identification of a design as a rain *yawalyu*, drew in the sand an elongate oval (representing a rock hole) surrounded by a single enclosing line. She explained that *this figure* (and not the other) was the rain *yawalyu*. Typical rain designs actually consist of various plural arrangements of this graphic figure in larger configurations.

Since *yawalyu* designs for a given species consist of assemblages of elements that can be arranged and rearranged in separate designs, one sometimes finds an element from another related *yawalyu* assembled with them as part of the design. For example, in one instance I observed, a circle representing a small berry was painted on the shoulders of a woman being decorated with a charcoal design. Women explained that the berry was associated with the charcoal, although I did not obtain any rationale for this linkage in the songs or associated narrative. The depiction of elements from one ancestor in a design primarily associated with another is an even more prominent feature of men's designs. This pattern of organization is grounded on the one hand in beliefs about the geographical clustering and specific narrative associations of ancestors and, on the other hand, in the structure of the graphic system that makes it possible to treat units of designs as separate pieces that can be assembled in different figures.

Discussion: Designs, Dreams, and Modes
of Subjective Involvement

An analysis of the relation between *yawalyu* designs and ordinary storytelling graphs leads to the conclusion that the

structural differences between them are not critical, and that both are elaborations of the same basic graphic code. Indeed, the very same configurations that appear in one context as part of the storytelling process can appear in another as *yawalyu* designs. The essential shift differentiating designs and ordinary graphic signs involves something other than graphic form and structure, namely, a change in the relation of actors to the signs, rather than a change in the overt forms of the signs themselves. The dream is the catalyst through which the quality or modality of the relationship is altered.

Since the notion that designs originate in dream experiences is, as we have seen, fundamental to Walbiri thought, the *yawalyu* complex is, in this respect, a microcosm of the design system as a whole. Thus it may be useful to consider briefly here the general problem of the qualities accruing to designs in relation to the problem of dream experience, the Walbiri stereotypes for this experience, and the Walbiri concept of *djugurba*.

We have seen that in *yawalyu* dreams, daily experience is, in effect, "rerun" under the guise of ancestral experience. Its meaningful quality here comes to the fore: life patterns are validated by being presented to the dreamer as "tradition," and yet are still constituted directly within her experience. Undoubtedly the nature of dream experience itself contributes to the formation of this stereotype.

In a recent study, one psychologist (Havelka 1968) has suggested that the intense meaningfulness of dreams has a direct relation to their separation from two basic types of waking experience: the experience of detached "comprehension" of events, on the one hand, and that of the kind of direct participation involved in the actual "living" of events, on the other. Although the dreamer appears to be "living" in the dream in the sense that one "lives" waking experience, "a dream

is not experienced as a set of events but 'witnessed' by a part of the mental apparatus which seems to 'listen' to another part which has the role of 'narrator.' Such an organization presumes the presence of a symbol in its general meaning" (p. 70).

In certain respects the Walbiri stereotype for *yawalyu* dreams seems to reflect an experience of this general form. The concept that the *yinawuru* first show designs to the dreamer and sing for her the songs that refer to the events of the dream suggests that the dreamer is in one sense a witness to the dream events.[9] The merging of identity with ancestors expresses the fluidity of identity so characteristic of dream experiences and an experience of participation and involvement with the events of the dream that is yet of a different kind than that characterizing daily, waking experience. If we follow Havelka, these ambiguous "limbolike" qualities in the relationship between the dreamer and his dream are essential to the energetic richness of dream experience:

The symbolic intensification of a dream story seems to be characterized by a bypassing of these two experiences [detached contemplation and the actual "living" of events] in such a way that in it the dreamer is lifted from the level of mere understanding on the one hand, and freed from direct participation [i.e., participation as in the waking world] on the other hand. Beyond these two states there is an inexhaustible universe of possibilities. Thus the symbol does not essentially substitute for reality, . . . but serves to intensify a particular experience of participation in a

[9] This pattern also characterizes men's song- and design-yielding dreams in which the *guruwalba* is said to be the initial agent of the gift (see below, Chapter 5). I gained the distinct impression from both men's and women's accounts that the dreamer felt himself to be both a kind of observer of the events of the dream and at the same time an actor in the dream, identified with the ancestors.

limitless recurrence of events and things, making them permanently significant instead of temporarily evident" [p. 71].

Dreams not only convey a specific content, but they also entail a specific mode of subjective involvement; since Walbiri designs and songs are regarded as components of dream events, we may assume that they are felt to partake of the meaningful qualities generated through this mode of subjectivity. As we have seen, however, these forms are not merely events in the dream, but also *representations* of such events; moreover, they are detachable from the closed totality of the dream and can be used as language codes to refer back to it. Put in another way, the codes for the dream events, having been immersed in the dream (ancestral) experience, are thought to take on the qualities of subjectivity that characterize the experience itself and can serve to control and release these qualities in the intersubjective world outside the dream.

This point may be pursued further by considering the Walbiri term *djugurba* as a category referring to a particular mode of subjective involvement that contrasts with the mode implied by *yidjaru* (the term meaning actuality or truth, waking reality, and the ongoing present). As we have seen, the three primary referents for *djugurba* are dream, ancestral times, and story. All three are situations or events from which the human subject or actor is in certain respects detached; *djugurba* is a field of events that is separated from the presentational field of the individual's waking experience, and which, during waking experience, he can relate to only through the mediation of signs. The actor is, on the other hand, wholly "inside" or "engaged in" the events of ordinary daily experience; he "lives in" them, rather than simply hears or tells about them. From this perspective *djugurba* consti-

tutes a particular mode of relationship between the experiencing subject and events—a mode of knowing, rather than just a specific kind of content.

Thus in storytelling the individual subject is narrator or listener but is not engaging in or acting within the sequence of story events. Story events are not "lived," they are only "learned about," for the subject is detached from the field of sequential actions that make up the story. Story events are "experienced" only indirectly through signs that enter into the presentational field of the narrators and listeners (in the sand story these are not only verbal, but also gestural and graphic). In the language of phenomenology, the story events are "appresented" to the imagination.

Like story events, ancestral events are displaced in relation to the subject: they are outside the memory of the living individual and so are temporally distal. In Walbiri thought these two modes of actor displacement—the displacement relative to story events and that relative to the past—tend to be fused or linked together since Walbiri do not have a notion of *traditional* stories that are essentially fictions; rather, they identify the events of all traditional stories as ancestral.

The dream itself presents a double aspect. On the one hand, as I have commented on above, it is a subjective experience that involves the dreamer in a set of events, a "kind of" enactment, yet one in which at the same time there is an element of passivity. As Schutz (1962:241) has put it, "the dreaming self" does not have the "full attention to life" that characterizes waking experience. On the other hand, the dream as subjective experience is essentially private and totally cut off from the waking social world; in this respect, like the past, it is translated into waking reality only through appresentation in signs. When it enters into remembered ex-

perience, the dream may appear to be "bound to the unified consistent life-process by fewer threads than are ordinary experiences" (Simmel 1959:244).

These general features of dream experience seem relevant to an understanding of Walbiri thought in this matter. The Walbiri view is certainly not that "life is like a dream" but more nearly the opposite: that wherever event sequences are cut off from the world of everyday life so that they seem to constitute a closed totality of their own and can be "talked about" but not "lived through" in the day-to-day involvement of social life, then such events are *djugurba*—stories, dreams, the ancestral past. The location of the waking subject in relation to such events is outside the events themselves, but inside a presentational field that can include signs referring to or "appresenting" these events. Although *djugurba* events are distal to the actor, they are of course most important to Walbiri because the quintessential meaningfulness of daily experience is, in effect, lodged within this cut-off world.

We can now better assess the role of designs and songs from this perspective. Ordinary signs (verbal or graphic) can be used to "talk about" ancestral events; attention is not directed to the form of such signs except in as much as the form, being pictorial in the case of the graphic signs, conveys information about the content. Thus in women's storytelling we see the building up of associations between forms and contexts of meaning as part of a referential system of communication. But referential codes that are defined as having been *intrinsic* parts of the displaced event sequences can also be felt to evoke these sequences more directly within the perceptual, presentational field of the individual: they can help to collapse the separation between the actor and the *djugurba* events because they do not simply refer to these events but

also are felt to be components of them. The form of these signs is therefore significant at another level; it is itself an important part of the meaning.[10]

In ceremonial then, one can bring to bear upon or within the lived-in activities of waking life those qualities and events described as *djugurba* that are otherwise disengaged from these activities. The actor is, in effect, inserted into *djugurba* action or is brought into contact with the qualities of the action through codes that can reintegrate such cut-off ranges of experience within his presentational field. Designs and songs in these contexts function to relate the actor to *djugurba* events in a different way than do signs in the ordinary referential mode of communication: we may say that they reintegrate the actor with *djugurba* rather then simply communicating to him *about* it. There is a different relationship between actors, signs, and sign-denoted events (*djugurba*) than in the referential mode of communication.

In Walbiri thought, dreams and ceremonial constitute a single sequence or notional complex: as we have seen in the case of *yawalyu*, the Walbiri believe that designs originate in dreams and then should be painted in the waking life of ceremonial (see also below, Chapter 5). Dream and rite constitute complementary poles of a single process. The dream works in the private consciousness of sleep, while the ceremonial works in the waking "rational" order of the social world; both structure the relation between actor and event in a different way from that of ordinary experience, for in the latter the subjective integration of the individual with the cut-off *djugurba* range of experience is not central, while in dreams and ceremony this is the key feature.

[10] A distinction between sign and symbol is sometimes used to cover this difference in the qualities of communication codes.
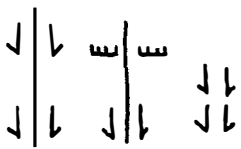
CHAPTER **5**
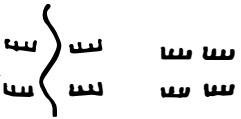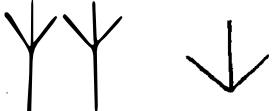
Guruwari Designs, Songs, and Country

In Walbiri thought there is a close relation between graphic forms and the country, or ground (*walya*), since the term *guruwari* can be used in a general sense to refer to any visible mark left by an ancestor in the country, and in addition, *guruwari* in the abstract aspect of "ancestral powers" are lodged in the country. Among the most prominent of the graphs that Walbiri draw in the sand are track prints of animals and birds and circle or circle-line notations referring to places and journeys. An examination of these apparently simple forms can lead us into a closer examination of Walbiri thought concerning the association between *guruwari* designs and the country.

Footprints are impressed in the sand by holding the hand in various special positions (Fig. 7); their production is a casual play activity in which men, women, and children may indulge. The circle or circle-line notation commonly appears during general conversation about journeys and places. The circle signifies a locale and the line a path or movement from place to place; a group of circles may be used to specify the relative orientation of locales (Fig. 9). Although both types of graphs are generally available among men and women, men apply them more widely, giving them a featured place in their storytelling repertory and ancestral designs.

Looked at in the context of the wider graphic system,

Figure 7. Track prints and sand drawing technique *

	Print	Technique
Kangaroo		Hind feet: drawn with index or with the tips of the index and middle finger crossed. Tail: impressed between hind feet with outer edge of hand. Front paws (when shown): claw prints dabbed in with finger tips.
Opossum and Marsupial Mouse		Tail: inner surface of index finger makes smooth, deliberate meander in sand. Paws: same as for kangaroo.
Snake		Same as opossum tail.
Dog		Thumb laid sideways in the sand makes the pad print; finger tip or index and middle finger together make the toes.
Emu		Right: Thumb is held between middle and fourth finger; index is bent behind and resting against middle finger. Hand impressed so that back of index and middle finger, and pad of thumb make the print. Left: standing emu as in Fig. 8C, no. Ia.
Wild turkey		Drawn with index or impressed with side of hand. Claws are dabbed with finger tip. One style of emu print is also made in this way and takes the same form as the turkey print.
Eaglehawk		Large pad: impressed with side of thumb. Toes: impressions of index tips.
Human		Fingers are clenched; hand held half closed. Footprint is made by impressing outer edge of hand in sand. Toe prints added with finger dabs.

* This is not a full list; only a few examples are given. There are variant forms and techniques for some of the prints.

track-print imitations (called *wulya*, "foot," "footprints") constitute a special class of elements and figures, for they are essentially translations of natural sand markings into artifactual ones of human making.

Each element or figure signifies the print made by one or more species, for example, there is one type of print for marsupial mouse and opossum (that is, they belong to a single visual category), another for the varieties of kangaroo, and a third for human beings (Fig. 7). A figure may consist of a number of the same elements (footprints) or of the footprints ranged on either side of a "tail" (a meandering or straight line).

One man impressing track prints on the sand accompanied this activity with a commentary, for example, "the man ran away"; "he ran south." [1] In another instance a man elaborated the depiction of a kangaroo print that he was demonstrating to me into a hunting scene. After the prints were impressed, he drew a circle to indicate the location of the kangaroo sleeping under a tree, and another slightly farther off to indicate the location of the hunter.[2] "He throws a spear!" said the narrator and swiftly drew a line from the hunter to the kangaroo.

Prints used to tell stories in this way carry a standard signification. They convey the species, number (when over three or four, "many"), and direction of individuals moving

[1] I did not often observe men telling stories in this way, but in paper drawings men spontaneously used track prints to depict narrative action (Fig. 8). See Basedow (1929:43ff), who describes track-print stories on message sticks.

[2] A more usual representation of kangaroo hunting shows the kangaroo lying down under a tree (as in Fig. 2, no. 3c), but the use of a circle-line figure to convey action or movement between two points in space follows the pattern of masculine iconography.

through the country. As one young Walbiri man put it, the graphs can be "read." What is "read" obviously replicates the signaling value of the prints in ordinary hunting contexts.

Figure 8A and B illustrates how some men made use of track prints to tell stories in drawings that they made for me on paper.[3] In these typical narrative improvisations the prints are combined with a few additional elements (a water hole, a nest of eggs, a snake) to convey a narrative situation such as "an emu, seeing a snake, became afraid and went away east."

Clearly, a graph that signifies the footprint of a species such as opossum or kangaroo may, when transferred to a narrative about ancestors, signify the footprints of kangaroo or possum ancestors, and this is actually a characteristic feature of men's use of the footprints in storytelling. In the paper drawings of Figure 8B, track prints used to recount ancestral incidents tell us of the number and direction of movement of certain ancestors passing through a particular locale. It happens that in the drawing of Figure 8B, no. 2, the fact that the actors are ancestors is graphically signaled by the presence of a ceremonial string cross in the drawing, but no such graphic cue is available in Figure 8B, no. 1, although here also the informant regarded the drawing as an ancestral scene. The same drawing could equally well have been used to portray a scene of daily life.

In still other cases a man may regard a particular set of prints as a *guruwari* design belonging to an ancestor of that species; as designs, track prints can occur independently or fixed into larger graphic composites (Fig. 8C). When the prints occur independently only extragraphic factors, such as

[3] Illustrations taken from paper drawings that men did for me are used here and in subsequent chapters as "visual texts" in much the way verbal texts may be used in the study of cultural expression and conceptualization.

the medium and social context in which they appear or the informant's assertion that the graph is an ancestral design, cue the difference between instances of this kind and those in which the prints are simply used to recount ancestral movements (without also being regarded as designs). Thus paintings on the cave walls at Rugari, an important emu site west of Yuendumu, are the *guruwari* of ancestral emus who came to the site and walked around there (Fig. 8C, no. 1). At the same time, the prints provide narrative information on their direction of travel and indicate their presence at the site.

Figure 8. Track-print stories and designs

A. Track prints used to tell stories. After charcoal (1, 2, 4) and pencil crayon (3) drawings. The drawings were done by different men, but at the same time. The snake is a traditional form, but water hole and grass (3) are nontraditional in style.
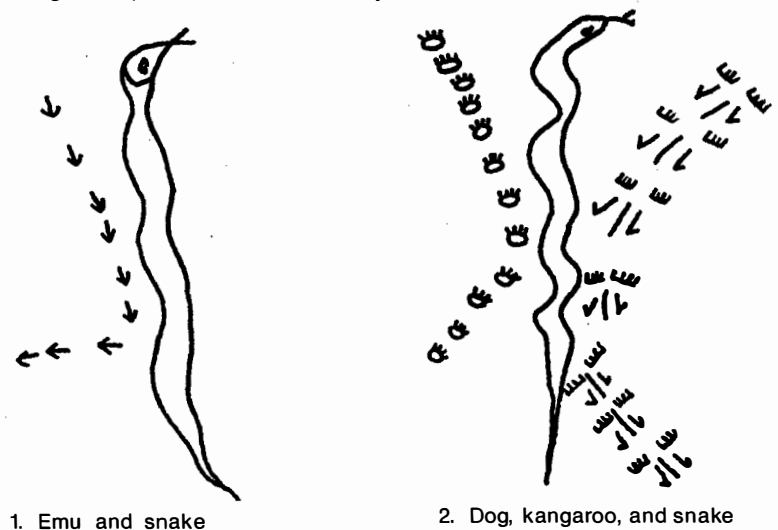
1. Emu and snake   2. Dog, kangaroo, and snake

1. An emu saw a snake and, becoming afraid, ran away eastward. The upper set of prints depicts the emu running away. East is left in this picture.

2. Seeing a snake, a dog turned away westward; a kangaroo also saw the snake and went east. East is right in this picture.

Figure 8A (continued)

3. Kangaroo and emu

4. Emu and eggs

3. A kangaroo and emu come down to the water to drink.

4. An emu, leaving its nest, goes to a water hole. Prints at bottom left apparently indicate the return.
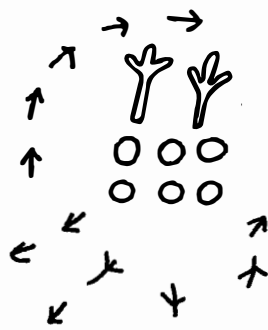
B. Track prints representing ancestral journeys. After pencil crayon drawings.
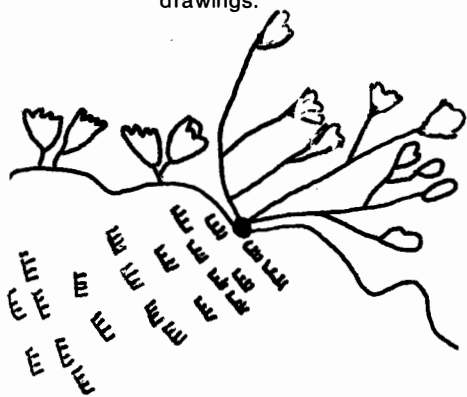
1. Two opossum ancestors

2. A kangaroo ancestor

1. Two opossum ancestors went into the ground at a site called Waraginbiri. The base of the little bush is the point at which they entered the ground.

2. A kangaroo ancestor came to Wanabi, took the large string cross, which is a ceremonial object, out of his body and left it there. A number of other kangaroos who were traveling behind him (not shown in the drawing) came up and saw it. A rocky hill with trees is shown behind the string cross.
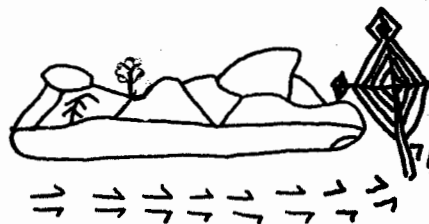
Figure 8 (continued)

C. Track prints as *guruwari* designs

a   b
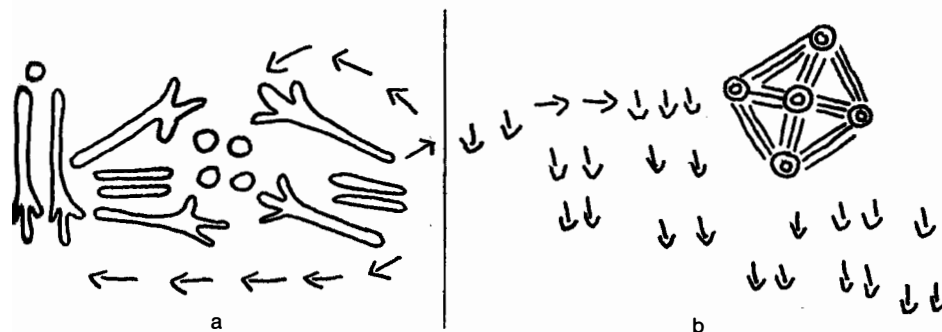
1. Emu *guruwari* on the cave walls at the site Rugari. After cave paintings.

a. Prints of an emu standing over its eggs. Cf. Spencer and Gillen, 1938, Fig. 124.

b. Prints of a large number of emus who came to the site. The circle-line figure signifies that they walked around the site. Each circle is a camp.
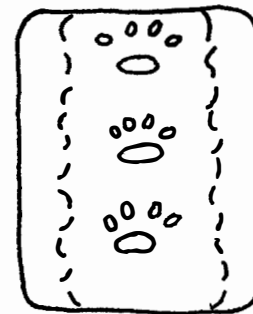
2. Marsupial mouse   3. Wild dog   4. Kangaroo

Designs after crayon pencil drawings (2, 4); after decoration in red and white fluff on box-type headdress (3).

2. O = campsite; S = path / tail.

4.) (= kangaroos lying down (repeated at each end).

Indeed, only a fine line divides the use of the graphs simply to recount ancestral movements and their use as designs, since the term *guruwari* may refer not only to ancestral designs as such but also to the track prints of the ancestor, the actual prints made by him as he travels along. When a man identifies conventional prints as *guruwari*, he may mean that they depict the footprints of the ancestor, and therefore are his *guruwari*, or he may be indicating that the prints are a particular ancestral design. Actually, for Walbiri, the one tends to imply the other: the ancestor's footprints are his designs [4] in the sense that they are among those "marks" or vestiges of his passage in the country through which he is identified and fixed forever in the consciousness of living Walbiri. Here we meet again with the circle of reality and reference so characteristic of Walbiri thinking about designs and ancestral events: designs are among the marks made by ancestors in the country and they also *represent* such marks.

Of course not all designs include track prints, and many species such as *yawagi* berry, witchetty grub, fire, or honey ant would not have such prints. In practice, track prints are stressed in designs for kangaroo, marsupial mouse, opossum, snake, dog, and emu ancestors. In designs for the first three of these species, the tail with its implications of male sexuality (*ngindi* denotes both "tail" and "penis") is a prominent feature.

When footprints and tail prints appear as part of circle-line figures, as they do in some *guruwari*, the tail functions as the path line and the footprints serve as "adjunctive" elements ranged on either side. I shall have more to say about this type of construction later; here I will merely note that the tail-

[4] I have discussed this at more length in another paper (Munn 1964).

footprint figure with its central linear core (the tail) and plural adjunctives (footprints) is not an isolated type of arrangement but can be seen as a subclass of a more general figure type with wide ramifications in the men's design system. Similarly, the footprint plurals can be seen to fit as a special class of plural forms into the general tendency of the system to utilize figures consisting simply of repetitions of the same element.

In the case of the snake, the track print depicts both the body and the mark it makes in the ground as it travels along. Walbiri also create a standard p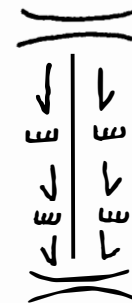icture of a snake in which it is connected to a circle representing its hole. This figure, known to both men and women, is sometimes drawn in the sand as a spiral circle, suggesting the snake coiled in his hole, and then extended in a meander to depict the snake uncoiling and emerging. This representation can be seen as a special case of a circle-line usuage occasionally occurring in sand stories, but in men's *guruwari* designs for snakes the circle always specifies a particular locale (as well as the snake's hole), while the meander is the snake's body and print as it moves along. In other words, the figure is assimilated into locale and journey figures, just as figures of the tail-footprint type tend to be assimilated in this way.

It is notable that the meander line used to represent the snake and the opossum's tail—which functions as a prominent feature in men's designs for these species—is, with one exception,[5] entirely absent from *yawalyu* in the collection, and receives only limited usage in women's sand stories.

[5] One *yawalyu* design in my collection that includes a meander had been taught by a man to a woman. The absence of the meander in Yuendumu *yawalyu* contrasts with the designs reported by C. Berndt (1950) for the northwestern desert, where a meander representing snakes is a prominent feature of the iconography.

Women's opossum *yawalyu* do not stress the tail as an important theme, and the only snake design in the *yawalyu* collection does not contain a meander.

In addition, women's rain designs lack the meander representing lightning that is so important a theme in the men's designs for this ancestor. Even in the single case in which lightning is represented by the women's designs, it does not take the form of a meander line. Yet women's rain songs reflect much the same sort of imagery (including, for instance, the striking of trees by lightning) that is found in the men's songs. In sum, the meander is a feature of masculine iconography that carries with it connotations of masculine sexuality. As will become apparent later, lightning and snakes, as well as "tails," have such associations.

Track prints in general are not common in women's designs or in their storytelling. None of the *yawalyu* designs prominent in ceremonial painting at the time of my visit stressed foot or tail prints. It would seem that this feature can be related to differences in the economic roles of the two sexes: although women engage in the hunting of smaller game, hunting and tracking are conceived of as masculine specialties, while food gathering is an essentially feminine activity. Moreover, food gathering is a comparatively stationary activity (as for instance, in digging for honey ants and yams), while tracking obviously involves mobility and the "following" of game. The importance of these themes will be seen as the symbolism of men's designs unfolds.

Locale and Journey Figures

During descriptions of individual or group movements from one place to another, or of the relative geographical positions of locales, a man may trace on the ground a nota-

tion of circles (places) and lines (paths between places). Such notations may appear when the speaker is referring to the journey of an ancestor or when he recounts the travels of some present-day Walbiri (Fig. 9).

Figure 9. Site-path notations

1. Movements of a Walbiri band

2. Route of a group of ancestral women

3. Locales along an ancestor's route
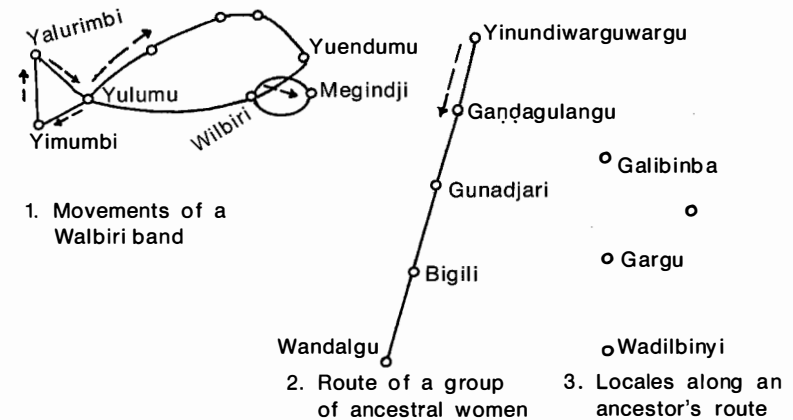
After instances of circle-line notations recorded during conversations. Walbiri terms are the names of the sites mentioned by the informant as the circle was drawn. Arrows show direction of travel.

1. A description of the movements of a group of Walbiri families in the period before the shift to settlement residence. Each circle specifies the place, a water hole or hill, near which the camps were made. According to the informant, the group regularly traversed the region between Conistan (Yimumbi), Yalurimbi (Mt. Allan) and Yulumu. Occasionally longer trips were taken to Yuendumu and Mt. Doreen (Megindji and Wilbiri are near the latter settlement). The sites mentioned as part of the route have various ancestral and subsection affiliations (e.g., Yulumu, honey ant, Djabangari-Djabananngga; Megindji, rain, Djangala-Djambidjimba). See Chapter 1.

2. A stereotypic means of depicting an ancestral route or a series of "line" of water holes. See Figure 10. Circles specify the women's campsites. Site names commonly signify items associated with the ancestral track: e.g., *Yinundiwarguwargu* refers to the bean tree (*yinundi*), associated with the strings of red beans the women wear while dancing.

3. The notation need not involve the use of the path lines. Sometimes locales only are noted. See the list of rock holes in Figure 11B.
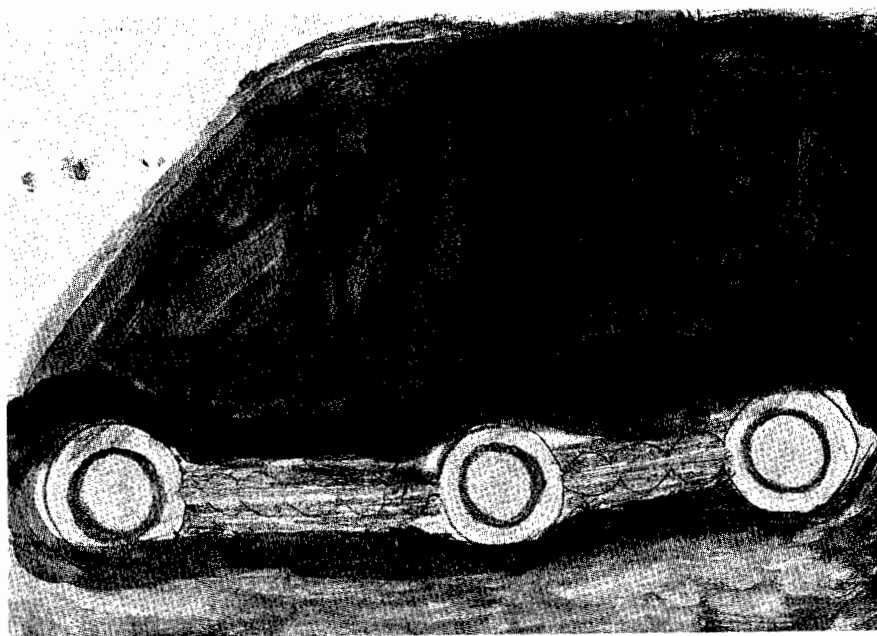
Plate 7. A man's watercolor and pencil crayon drawing of rock holes and conn
tracks. The circle (rock hole) and line (path) figure at the base of the hill is typi
guruwari designs. No meanings were given for the arcs affixed to the path line.

The basic "journey" figure consists of two different ele
ments: a circle and conjoined line. A modified form of thi
figure is prominent in *guruwari* designs, and regularly signi
fies a campsite or place (*ngura*) with the paths (*yiriyi*) of th
individuals in question leading to or from it. Numerous va
iant arrangements are standardized in men's designs, and thes
will be discussed subsequently. I classify them all as member
of a single figure type with the general meaning *site-pat*

Because of men's more extensive and precise geographic
knowledge, circle-line figures are in wider use among me
than women; the close association of this geographical infor
mation with the ancestral routes brings it into the sphere o

knowledge linked with masculine cult. A woman's informa-
tion, on the other hand, is confined primarily to the names of
a few major sites along tracks of ancestors within her own
segment of the community country, or within the Yuendumu
region. She may show particular interest in her own concep-
tion site and its ancestral associations. But her attention cen-
ters upon the various ancestors within her country at large,
rather than upon the details of particular ancestral routes.
Thus when I asked some women for more precise informa-
tion regarding site names and the routes of ancestors, they
said that I should address these queries to men.[6]

The possession of site information is, therefore, an aspect of
masculine role, but except where secret names are involved, it
is not closed to women. A man may itemize the sites of an
ancestral route in the presence of his wife, but will be careful
to exclude any mention of secret boards or other prohibited
details.

The most general premise behind the Walbiri conception
of ancestral times is that all ancestors traveled routes which
can be located in the country. The major topographical fea-
tures are viewed as having been created through ancestral
events, and may be thought of as metamorphoses of parts of
an ancestor's body, or as due to his bodily imprints in the
country. As a result, an ancestor can be "followed" (*bura*, to
follow, as in hunting, to come behind), literally kept track of,
through his site associations. Each ancestral journey begins
with an emergence from the ground and is finalized in a re-
turn to the ground, whether at the site of emergence or at

[6] The difference between Walbiri women and northern Bidjand-
jara women whom I knew at Areyonga was marked in this respect.
Many of the latter had extensive knowledge of the site names and
routes associated with major ancestors.

some place far distant from it. Ancestors are thought to remain today inside the ground.

This concept of locale and journey provides the framework for men's songs and narratives about ancestral events. Some songs consist simply of site names, and the term for song, *yiri*, also means "name," as well as "visible mark." Used in a broad sense *yiri* includes *guruwari* (visible marks of the ancestor), although in a narrower sense it refers to the verbal forms only. A sequence of songs or what the Walbiri call a "line" provides names of the sites associated with an ancestor as well as references to events along the track. Walbiri men think of the songs as having an exact sequence, correlated with the sequence of sites.[7]

Similarly, the typical ancestral narrative is built upon a framework of site sequences, a mode of narrative order which, as we have seen, is not used by Walbiri women, who typically build their stories on a micro-temporal scaffolding of the daily life cycle rather than on the macro-time of the journey. The journey model is the more inclusive, since it can include the daily cycle of activities (for example, some of men's narrative accounts describe daily hunting and gathering activities at the sites along a route).

Some accounts of an ancestral track consist almost entirely of lists of site names connected by phrases indicating the movement of the ancestors between sites. This provides a kind of minimal account of an ancestral journey. The same track may, of course, be rich in events that take place along the route, but the site-path framework is brought into relief by this sort of narration. An abstract from one such minimal account will suggest the pattern:

[7] The sequence is not, however, carried out precisely in ceremonial, and of course the sequence itself is always subject to the vagaries of individual memory.

They slept at Wabaḍi ["small yam"]. The two kangaroos rested. They go on to Bigili [Vaughan Springs]. Afterward they go on to Walguru ["stone axe"]. On they went. The two kangaroos went on. . . . They slept at Ngalyirba. Afterward they went on to Bangunubunda [where] they scooped out wooden dishes. . . . They went on to Winidjara [where] howling dogs pursued them. They fled. . . . Afterward they went to Ganibaguru. They sat down, sat down, sat down [i.e., for a long time]. They went into the distance to another country.

Not only are men's myth narratives constructed through the site-path framework, but so also is the stereotype for dreams in which men may see designs and songs for *bulaba* (public camp ceremonies). The Walbiri view is that a dreamer first hears a *guruwalba* singing on a tree, perhaps while he is still half-awake. Then he follows the ancestor's track from place to place, and the various *guruwari* and songs are revealed to him. In the latter situation he appears to be merged with the ancestor. For example, a snake *bulaba* being performed during my stay at Yuendumu was said to have been dreamed by two Yanmadjiri men at a settlement to the northeast. According to my informants the dreamers followed the track or line of the snake as he moved from site to site. A line of men dancing in the ceremony was also said to "follow up" the track of the ancestor.[8]

This site-path or site-list structuring of experience firmly binds story and dream to particular, spatial loci—actual places which can be directly encountered outside the story (or dream) context. Names are the detachable, linguistic aspects of places that serve to mediate them to individual experience when the visible reality of the place is not directly

[8] Informants used the term *ganari-li*, which they translated as "line up," "we follow'm up."

within the actor's presentational field. An ancestor may thus be "followed" through the listing of his site names (or through a song "line").

The iconographic equivalent of the site-path framework is the circle-line figure type (Fig. 10). Various standardized arrangements of this figure in men's designs depict different kinds of routes, with the circle always specifying the camp of some particular ancestor at a named place. Paths are usually straight lines, but for a limited number of species with special characteristics (as for example, the snake and opossum) the path line takes a meandering form.

A closed, rectanglelike arrangement of lines and conjoined

Figure 10. Typical circle-line (site-path) arrangements in men's designs

Straight path

1   2   3   4
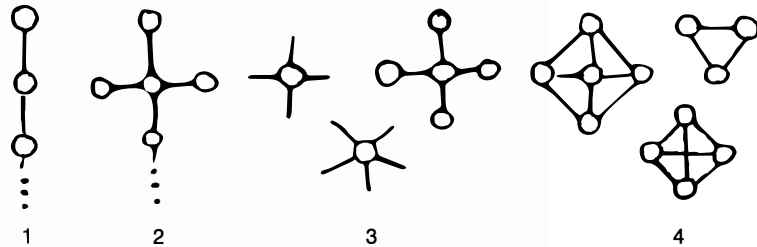
1. List or "line" of campsites with connecting paths. The number of circles can be increased according to the number of sites. Long lists are most common on boards, but shorter arrangements occur also in designs for body and ground. See also Plate 7.
2. Subordinate locales along a main route can be shown by the addition of branching lines with attached circles.
3. Lines attached to a central circle indicate movement toward or away from a central site: e.g., emerging from the ground at the site and spreading outward in different directions; intersection of different ancestral tracks at a single site.
4. "Boxed" arrangements or triangular figures indicate walking around a single region including more than one site.

Figure 10 (continued)

Meander path

5   6   7   8   9   10
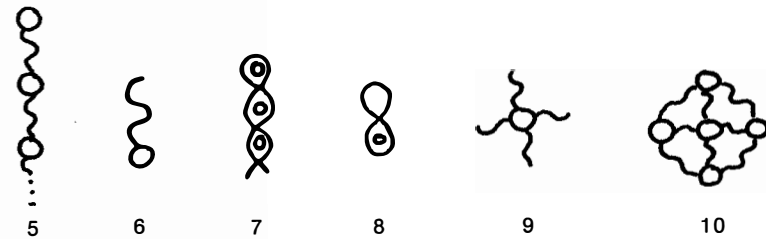
Site circles and path line

11   12   13   14
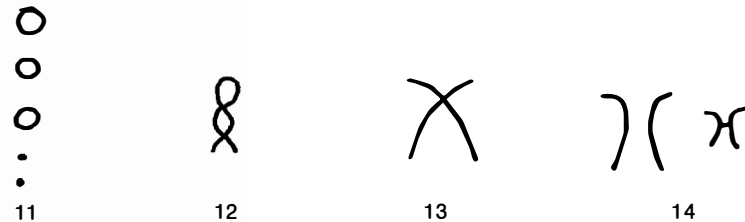
5–10. Meander lines occur for species with winding or meandering paths such as rain, snake, fire, opossum, and kangaroo mouse. In one instance, a meander was used for the paths of women dancing. 7. Crisscrossing of two meander paths: only occurence, for two rain ancestors. The points of intersection represent the intersection of two rain ancestors. 8. Single crossing of path: one instance, for smoke, the path of a fire ancestor.

11–14. Designs may include an arrangement of site circles without path lines; or of path lines without site circles. A single site circle or a single path line may also occur along with other subsidiary elements. Nos. 13 and 14 are common arrangements of path lines in body designs. The crossbar of no. 14 is not a path. See also yawalyu design arrangements, Figure 6C, no. 1.

circles (Fig. 10, nos. 4, 10) may be used to depict a single country around which the ancestor is said to have walked; each circle would then refer to different campsites in the region. Or, the intersection of two different tracks may be

shown by the crossing of two "path" lines. Two lines intersecting at right angles in a central circle (Fig. 10, nos. 3, 9) may depict four separate tracks converging on or emerging from a central locale. A 'line" of sites, that is, the continuous track of a single ancestor, is shown by a line of conjoined circles and lines (Fig. 10, nos. 1, 5). As these examples demonstrate, the variant arrangements are treated by Walbiri as ways of depicting different spatial distributions of locales, and are not simply a decorative play with the circle-line motif. It is for this reason that central Australian designs have sometimes been referred to as "maps."

Circle-line arrangements occur in designs on all media, but are especially prominent on boards and stones and in ground paintings. Certain arrangements seem to be more characteristic of one medium than another, but there is no hard and fast rule.

Since all ancestors are linked with specific locales and routes, any one can in principle be represented by a design including a site-path figure. In practice, many men's designs include separate occurrences of a camp circle or path line rather than the whole figure. A single site may be depicted simply by a circle, and a number of sites by more than one such circle; or the ancestor's path without a camp may be shown. There are, in fact, relatively few *guruwari* designs in my collection that do not include at the minimum either a site circle or a path line.[9] As I suggested in the discussion of track prints, these elements (or the full circle-line figure)

[9] Designs that include either the entire circle-line figure or at least one of these elements comprise about 85 per cent of the *guruwari* collection of 144 designs representing 50 different species. Forty-nine designs include both circle and line, and these represent 33 different species.

often serve as the center or core of a construction in which other plural elements are ranged around them, or are attached to their sides (see below, Chapter 6).

When actor-item figures occur in *guruwari* designs, the focal circular "item" is the campsite, although other meanings are likely to be applied to it at the same time. Thus in *guruwari*, figures of the actor-item type acquire an additional dimension of meaning by amalgamation with the site-path theme (see Fig. 4C and Fig. 16, nos. 1, 3).

In *ilbindji* designs the site-path or journey notion may also express the sexual meanings characteristic of these designs. For example, the path line appearing in these designs usually represents the path of the desired lover as she is drawn toward the man performing the *ilbindji*; the line may also represent the man's penis.

The parallel between the general import of site-path figures and track prints will be readily observed. The print and the path line both signify marks made in the ground by the passage of individuals through the country. Moreover, Walbiri also think of campsites, or the features of the topography that emerged at these sites, as being ancestral marks. Both track prints and site-path figures depict what are in effect vestiges of the ancestor, marks in the country that he has left behind him. Walbiri can in this sense "follow" the ancestors through creating and recreating their *guruwari* designs just as they can follow animals by tracking them.

In certain respects footprints seem to provide the type concept for *guruwari*. They constitute a graphic form that is a point of intersection between the body, productions of the body, and the ground; in this sense, they express a relationship between the body and the ground. In addition, they

evoke a sense of passage, of motion and mobility connected with bodily movement although they themselves, like the features of the country, are static, spatial forms.

Concentric Circles

An important feature of *guruwari* designs is the use of concentric circles or a spiral to represent the campsite rather than a single circle such as characterizes the ordinary notation. Men treat the two forms—the concentric circles and the spiral—as equivalent, and freely alternate them in usage. Since the two are in free variation, I use the one label, "concentric circles," to refer to this graphic form.

Elsewhere I have discussed the significance of concentric circles.[10] Here I will merely indicate that while from one point of view the circles constitute a single element (the site circle), from another, they comprise a figure of the enclosure type: the central area is conceptualized as a hole (or water hole) from which the ancestor emerged or into which he or his progeny went during his travels. The surrounding lines are the campsite itself, sometimes thought of as the paths the ancestor made in walking around. The circles therefore synthesize the notion of a place where the ancestor slept (made camp), and walked around, with concepts of emergence (coming out), procreation (progeny go into the ground), and death (ancestor goes into the ground).[11] Elements of the ancestor's life cycle are thus connoted by the circle-line figure, so that these are fused with the notion of his track in the country.

[10] Munn 1967. See above Chapter 3, n. 11.
[11] See the sand story "going in" scene and its iconography, Figure 2. no. 4.

Designs in Men's Storytelling

We have already seen that men may use illustrative sand drawings in talking about journeys. When a man accompanies storytelling or conversation with sand drawing, he does not use the continuous, running sand notation characteristic of women's behavior, but he sometimes accompanies parts of a narrative (especially an account of ancestors) with illustrative notations of a typical sand story type. These are not, however, systematically interlocked with the storytelling process, nor are they an integral part of the narrative technique as in the sand story. A man may sometimes illustrate his discussion with a more formal diagram: on occasions I have observed, illustrative figures are actually designs relevant to the ancestral narrative, or elements of such designs.[12] This behavior parallels that I have described for women, and it is apparent that the design is closely associated in Walbiri imagination with the ancestor represented and specific narratives or types of narrative content. Thus designs or design motifs may be evoked by discussions involving relevant subjects.

The basic sand story elements are staples of men's usage as well as women's. According to my observations, men make wide use of actor-item figures, enclosures, and circle-line arrangements in their illustrative sand drawings. Examples of these usages are shown in Figure 11, where I have tran-

[12] In one instance I came upon some older men instructing an uninitiated boy of about twelve in the names of sites associated with the rain ancestor belonging to his father's and older brothers' lodge. In the discussion they illustrated their commentary with a circle and meander line showing the travels of the rain. The meander is characteristic of rain designs; the designs themselves would of course have been closed to the boy until initiation, but boys may be taught site names and the outlines of the narratives beforehand.

scribed the sand illustrations used by two informants in telling me stories. For the first of these, (Fig. 11A) the graphic depictions were entirely of the actor-item type; in the second, we see a wider range of figures in use.

The story shown in Figure 11B, concerning a rainbow snake [13] at Vaughan Springs (a site northwest of Yuendumu), was triggered by the informant's demonstration of a snake design. Various combinations of elements into actor-item, enclosure, and circle-line figures were used in the process of narration. After recounting the incident, the storyteller went on to explain the location of rock holes at Vaughan Springs, which he illustrated with arrangements of circles (Fig. 11B, nos. 4, 5). Thus a story incident with a site reference can

[13] This snake is the mythical figure connected with the rain and the rainbow which is widespread in Australian mythologies.

Figure 11. Men's storytelling with sand notations

A. The origin of crows. After sand notations accompanying the account. Numbers indicate drawing sequence.

1   2   3   4
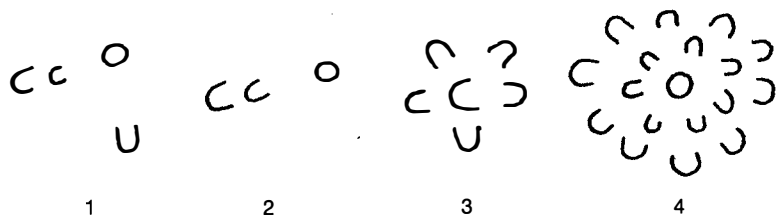
1. A man sits at a water hole with two dogs in front of him; only one U is shown for the dogs. A woman who is mother-in-law to the man comes along and claims the dogs are hers. She is shown sitting outside the man's camp. She tries to call them up to her, since she cannot approach a son-in-law. The man, however, pulls her into his camp. 2. The man and woman sleep together in his camp, after which she leaves, taking the dogs. The brothers of the man learn that he has committed incest with his mother-in-law, and surrounding him (3), carry him off to the fire to be burned. 4. The man burns on the fire (O=fire with man burning on it) while the other men stand around him. After burning, the man becomes a crow and flies away. In other versions both the man and woman are punished. This story is well known in the camps.

Figure 11 (continued)

B. A rainbow snake story. After sand drawings. The story notations accompanying the account of an ancestral incident at Vaughan Springs were preceded by the demonstration of a snake design that suggested the story.

Rainbow snake design   Story notations: a rainbow snake and two men at Vaughan Springs
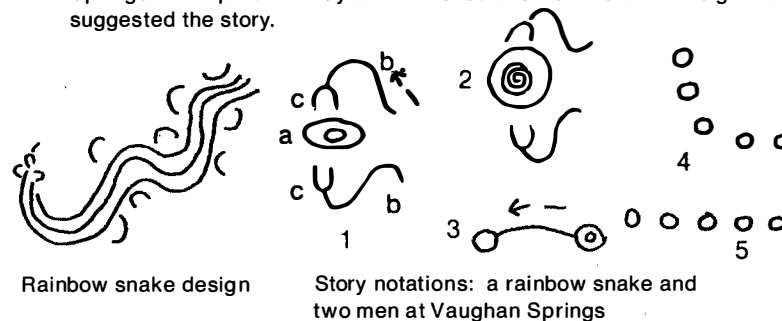
The rainbow snake design. According to Walbiri belief the rainbow snake lives under the water of many major ancestral sites; his body shines with the colors of the rainbow and lightning. See also text discussion, Chapter 6. CC=progeny of the snake. The depiction of the snake with eyes and tongue is a traditional feature.

Story notations. Numbers indicate drawing sequence. 1.*a.* Rock hole with the rainbow snake inside (small circle). *b.* Two men came to one of the rock holes at Vaughan Springs. *c.* Sitting down, they drank the water, then urinated into the rock hole and went to sleep. 2. Second version of the first account, told a few minutes later. Spiral=snake lying down inside the rock hole. After the men drank at the rock hole, the snake emerged and, going first to one and then to the other man, ate each one and returned into the rock hole. Not shown in the illustration: lines were drawn from the circle to show the snake emerging to eat the two men. 3. The son of the first snake emerged from his hole (camp) and went on to the next rock hole at Vaughan Springs. The figure is of a site-path type, used here to specify the snake moving from one place to the next. 4. The storyteller went on to explain the arrangement of the rock holes at the site Vaughan Springs. 5. Following the more exact depiction of their arrangement, the rock holes were drawn in a line.

merge into a locale discussion. The close association between designs and verbal narrative, and the tendency for the one to trigger the other, is also suggested.

In the following case we see another sort of interplay between the use of designs, notations, and the verbal narration of information.

Some men demonstrated for me a honey ant design by drawing it

in the sand. This design (Fig. 12, no. 1) depicted the intersection of two honey ant ancestors at Yulumu, an important Ngalia Walbiri honey ant site near Yuendumu. One track runs westward through Yulumu into the community country of the Walmalla Walbiri; another runs from the south in the country of the Bindubi peoples northward through Yulumu into the country of the Yanmadjari people. The tracks intersect in Yulumu (the central circle of the design). My informants explained that this design

Figure 12. Designs and the intersection of ancestral tracks

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
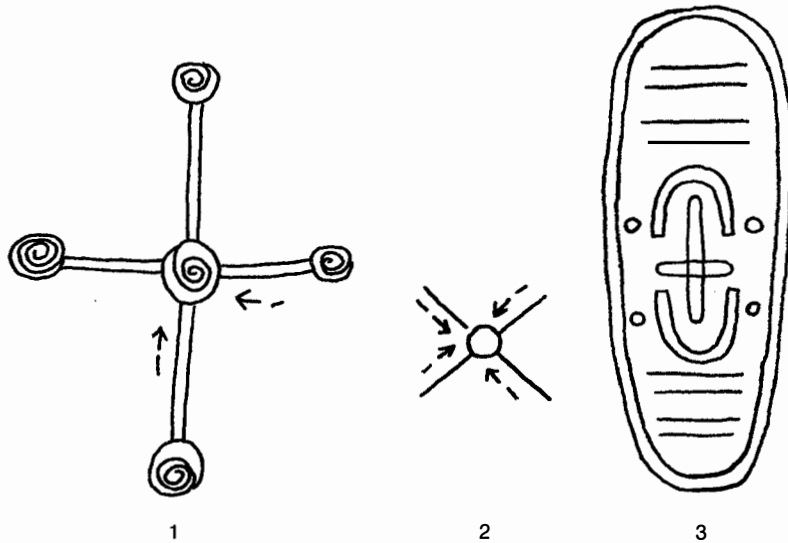
For fuller explanation see text.

1. Sand drawing of honey ant design to be incised on stone or board carried by messenger. Central circle=Yulumu; left circle=Gunadjari; right circle=Limalimi; top circle=Yanmanibundju; bottom circle=Bubanya.

2. Sand drawing sketch used by men to explain movements of honey ant ancestors and location of community countries. O=Yulumu.

3. Man's paper drawing of an oval board with incised designs illustrating the sharing of ancestral countries. X=guruwari. UU=two arbitrators sitting talking. ≡=the people of each community sleeping. Those at the top are from one community, those at the bottom from the other. oo=soil.

"talks against a fight" (gulu-gudjugu ngari-ga, fight-against tells), since it signifies that the communities of people through which the two tracks run have "one guruwari" (guruwari djinda). The design might, accordingly, be incised on sacred boards or stones carried by messengers sent to arbitrate a dispute between these communities.

After drawing this design, these men used it illustratively in the ensuing discussion of camps and directions of movement of the honey ant ancestors whose tracks crossed at Yulumu; the geographical distribution of present-day Aboriginal communities in relation to these tracks; and the journeys of messengers between the specified regions. As the discussion continued and the outlines of the original design became obscured through use, a simplified notation was sketched in the sand (Fig. 12, no. 2), depicting again the tracks coming from opposing directions and their intersection at the central site of Yulumu.

This example illustrates several points of interest to the present argument. First, it demonstrates how a design may function as an explanatory diagram in a discussion, and it suggests as well the overlap between ordinary notations and designs in the communicative process. Second, it underlines the Walbiri assumption that the designs are storage points or codes for verbalizable meanings (the design "talks against a fight").

This view was reiterated to me in the commentary of another man upon the same design, after I showed him my notebook transcription of it. According to him, this figure could in fact be used as a design for any ancestor even though it was linked with the honey ant in this instance. Then he drew a related design (Fig. 12, no. 3) showing it incised on a stone or board. In this design, a set of crossed lines forms the focus of an actor-item figure. The "cross" depicts a guruwari design placed between two actors who are representatives of different

communities. My informant explained: "The *djugurba* says (*wangga*, speaks) 'stop fighting, we are of one country (*walya djinda*, soil one).'" The whole representation refers to a situation in which two men are arbitrating an argument for different communities (the latter symbolized by the lines of "sleepers" behind each arbitrator).

Here again the verbal significance of the designs is stressed, and the standardization of symbolic values associated with the crossed-type site-path figure is clearly suggested. The notion that a *guruwari* design could be used symbolically in a political context of this kind reiterates the Walbiri view that such graphs are part of their communication system.[14]

The relation between the structure of this particular design and its symbolic value bears closer examination. At either end of the figure are placed elements representing the opposing communities whose arbitrators sit facing each other; between the arbitrators, at the central point of the design, lies the crossed-path figure upon which they are focused (that is, it is the item of the actor-item figure). The symbolic unity of the two men is reinforced by the grains of soil (suggestive of "one country," "one soil") placed on either side of them. The opposition of the two communities is mediated by the centrally placed *guruwari* figure, the symbolic expression of the shared interests and values of the two groups.

This point may remind the reader of the earlier discussion of design production; there I suggested that if we consider designs in terms of the social interaction and relationships de-

[14] The carrying of sacred boards or bullroarers and "message sticks" by a messenger to summon other communities to ceremonies is widespread in Australia (see for example, Spencer and Gillen 1899:140–141; Meggitt 1966:46). The use of *guruwari* to express friendship, which my informants described, seems related to this function, although different in purpose.

fined through their production, they then appear as social forms that "traverse the boundaries of the body," and so mediate between persons.

In the case of the representatives of the two belligerent communities shown in the design of Figure 12, no. 3, the *guruwari* between them expresses the common country in which they both are felt to share rights. The country (in the symbol of the crossed path lines) lies between the two arbitrators, mediating their relationship.

It is interesting to consider that the design placed between the two men also suggests sand drawing itself, since in the latter, the field of interaction of the actors (speakers or speaker and listeners) includes sand-drawn markings lying between them. In sand drawing, graphs emerging on the ground form part of the material field of the discourse and aid in the implementation of a common understanding.

The situation in tracking also has certain parallels. In this context, the prints of animals (or other human beings) on the ground may implement the hunter's search since they code information about the whereabouts of the animal or person who made the prints, and so function as mediating forms between a producer and an observer, carrying information about the former to the latter.

Designs and Songs

Walbiri postulate close associations between the *guruwari* designs associated with a single ancestor and the songs detailing the events of his track. The fact that the term *yiri* can cover both verbal forms and visual marks also points to the Walbiri view that designs and songs constitute a single complex. Not only is their association expressed in the norms of ritual behavior, but it can also be observed in the way men

handle the meanings of designs and songs, since they tend to treat them as complementary channels of communication about an ancestor. I have already suggested how this pattern of associations is worked out in the feminine subculture focused on *yawalyu;* it remains to consider the same pattern in men's theories and behavior.

Walbiri men believe that songs and *guruwari* designs (as well as other ceremonial paraphernalia) were generated together in the "sleep" of the ancestor. Except for *bulaba* designs,[15] men do not stress the personal dreaming of designs by living Walbiri. Men give the standard explanation that in ancestral times ancestors dreamed their songs and designs while sleeping in camp. As one informant put it: "he dreamt his track." On getting up, the ancestor "put (*yira-ni*) his designs (that is, he painted them or otherwise gave them material form) and sang his songs. As he traveled along, he sang his journey: he sang the songs for each site, the site names (which are also his names); he sang *of* his journey, the events along the way. In Walbiri ideology an ancestor singing his songs is, in effect, putting his ground marks, or making the country. As one of my informants put it, *guruwari, yiri* (songs), and *walya* (soil, or ground) are all "one thing" (*djinda-djugu*) (Munn 1964:91).

As an ancestor travels along, he creates his verbal, artifactual (*viz.* designs and design-marked sacra) and topographical

[15] Meggitt (1962:227ff) found that body designs for the Big Sunday rituals (see above, Chapter 2, n. 18) were also "still appearing as men dream of novel designs to symbolize the various incidents and sites recorded in the myth." Aside from this and the *bulaba* designs, however, men emphasize the dreams of ancestors with respect to design origins, and they regard most designs as *nyuruwanu* ("old") rather than *djalanguwanu* ("new," newly created in the dreams of living men).

surrogates or identity marks; he leaves a record of himself. Since this record derives from his dream, and is made through and out of his own body or through his personal activities, it is intrinsically identified with him. On the one hand, these visual and verbal records function for Walbiri as surrogates for particular ancestors; on the other hand, they code descriptions or verbal and visual "statements" about the events and characteristics of ancestors and their tracks.

In Walbiri thought verbal and visual forms code complementary information about an ancestral track. Walbiri typically gave me some of the songs of the track as supplementary explanations of the meanings of designs when they were discussing these matters with me. Drawing a particular design on paper might stimulate an associated song, and informants often hummed these songs to themselves while drawing designs. For instance, one man sang the following song while drawing meander lines representing smoke in a design for a fire ancestor:

walunggana	*miraranggana*
fire	"big smoke" [16]

This song was part of a narrative to which the design referred and was in the song line associated with a *bulaba* ceremony currently being performed in the camp.

In another instance, a design being painted on the body of a dancer during ceremonial preparations was explained to me as a depiction of the tail and boomerang (both items specified

[16] Song words often take a special form, or are foreign terms; translation is therefore chancy. My informant gave the meaning "big smoke" for *miraranggana.* According to Kenneth Hale, (n.d.) the term *mirawari* means "mirage"; in my data it also appears as the name of an ancestral site associated with rain, fire, and smoke and thus may, perhaps, be related to the song word.

by a single graphic element) of an opossum ancestor. Men then continued their explanation by singing a song belonging to the ceremony that had been sung during the preparations: "Opossum travels on, opossum tail." Pointing to the design, they added that the opossum walked a long way. Designs and songs are thus treated as complementary channels of communication; each is a repository of narrative meaning, and the production of one may evoke the other. The treatment of *guruwari* designs and songs in this manner is clearly a specialized form of the general tendency to perceive figures in the graphic system as stores of narrative, potentially verbalizable meaning, or to use them in conjunction with verbalization to communicate such meanings. For the Walbiri, graphs do indeed "speak."

The interlocking of verbal and visual-graphic forms is a pervasive feature of Walbiri *eidos*, one which characterizes both the masculine and feminine subcultures; it is operative both in the casual social contexts of storytelling and conversation and in ceremonial contexts where the two forms function as coordinate parts of a construction process through which the qualities and potency of the ancestors are reembodied.

In ceremonials, songs combine with designs to infuse the event with *djugurba* qualities, as well as to represent *djugurba* meanings. Unlike the designs and other visual constructions, songs lack spatial localization and can pervade the activity as a whole. Thus a synthesis of spatially localized and nonlocalized media is required to form the sensual qualities of the event.

Indeed, it seems that in positing the close association of songs and designs in their cosmological assumptions about the nature of the world Walbiri are expressing symbolically the

relation for them of verbal language and graphic or, more generally, nonverbal communication as a whole. Songs are in a sense symbols of oral language, and ancestral designs are symbols of visual or graphic "language." The ancestors are in effect "talking about" the things that happen to them in both visual-graphic and verbal ways, and such "talking" objectivates the world around them, giving it social, communicable reality.

Men's Ancestral Designs: Structure, Semantics, and Differentiation

The outside observer looking at Walbiri men's designs for different ancestors gains the impression of an over-all homogeneity of forms and arrangements on the one hand, and of infinite variation in detail on the other. The basis of this impression can be clarified only by examining the internal organization of the designs and some of the means by which contrasts between different species are made.
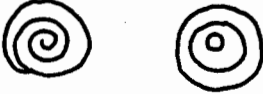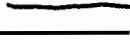
Vocabulary and Figure Types

The elements used in men's designs include many of those that have already been discussed for other segments of the graphic art, but some are more specialized. A list of the most commonly used elements and their category ranges will be found in Figure 13. Different designs are created by varying selections and assemblages of these elements. In my collection, the upper limit of design complexity with respect to the number of *different* elements is five; the lower limit is one element (usually repeated), or an element occurring only in plural form, such as small circle clusters or dashes.

If we set out the basic types of arrangements occurring as separate designs according to successive levels of complexity ("complexity" referring here to the number of *different* elements in a design), certain principles of design structure become

come evident. This is shown in Figure 14, where the vertical columns illustrate successive levels of complexity (1 to 5), and

Figure 13. Guruwari: basic vocabulary

Element	Meaning range
1.	Campsite; circular path (additional meanings according to specific context, e.g., hole, fire, fruit, hill, etc.)
2.	Straight path (additional meanings according to context, e.g., tree trunk, backbone)
3.	Lightning / Snake / Smoke, etc. } meander path
4.	Actor sitting ("actor standing" does not occur in *guruwari* examples)
5.	Cave / Bough shade, hut (rare) / Rainbow
6.	Spears / Arms and legs / Actors lying down / Ribs, etc.

Basic *guruwari* vocabulary elements are shown. There are a few other uncommon elements that are not widely generalized in the system. In addition, *ilbindji* make use of the same elements, but they also employ some idiosyncratic ones, not prevalent in *guruwari*.

1. Concentric circles and spiral are in free variation. For range of meanings see Figure 1, no. 13.

3. In addition to the generalized meander line, a snake may also be represented by a more specific picture with eyes and tongue. In some instances, this is an unbreakable unit, in others it would appear to consist of a meander plus adjunctives, that is, small circles and dash for tongue.

4, 5, 7. May overlap in shape. A cave (5) is sometimes placed at each end of a line of site-path elements.

6. When straight lines occur in adjunctive positions, or at right angles to the core elements (see text, Chapter 6), they do not usually carry the path meaning, and they are ordinarily plural elements like 7–10.

Figure 13 (continued)

Element		Meaning range
7.		Ribs Shells Clouds Burrows, etc.
8.		Rain drops Eggs Ants, etc.
9.		Rain falling Small rain clouds Walking, etc.
10.		Footprints. See Figure 7.

7–9. Plural elements. The same item may be represented by different "plurals" in certain instances, and there appears to be a good deal of shuffling of meanings between the different plurals. On the whole, however, roundish droplike plural items are represented by dots or small circles, semicircular forms by arcs, and so on.

10. Footprints function like other plurals, appearing in adjunctive positions or as separate designs without additional elements. See Figure 14.

the horizontal columns, the basic types of arrangements that can occur at these levels.

It will be seen that the real baseline of the system is level 2, because here we can isolate all the basic figure types that occur at any other level (including level 1). Or put in another way: in increasing the number of different elements in a design beyond two, we do not add to the stock of basic arrangements in the system, we merely combine and recombine the types of this level, or we add to the number of different elements in an already given structural position. Any type of figure that can occur with three, four, or five different elements can also occur with only two.

Turning to the figure types as set out at level 2, we see that they include the site-path, actor-item, and enclosure types already discussed in some detail; two others which I have isolated require further elucidation. Most important are the arrangements I have bracketed as "core-adjunct." They consist of either a site circle or a path line with various plural elements ranged proximal to this central "core." These plurals may be loosely grouped around the core; affixed to it; or ranged on either side of it. Any element (with the possible exception of path lines) may be pluralized and function in this adjunctive position, but the ones most commonly used are the plural elements—circle clusters, dashes, or small arcs. As we have seen, footprints are also common in this position. Plurals function as descriptive modifiers of the central site or path and in this respect are secondary affixlike elements, as can be seen by examining Figures 14 and 15.

A less common figure is one consisting of a series of site circles with a horizontal line "divider" alternating with the circles. I have only a few examples of the type (occurring at varying levels of complexity). Although specific meanings may be applied to the lines, they also may be regarded simply as division markers. In any given instance a specific meaning is always the same for each line in the series. It is also possible, therefore, to regard this type as a list of sites (circles) alternating with a list of some other linear item (for example, actors lying down).

The arrangement is actually reminiscent of a "tally" that Walbiri commonly draw in the sand to list various items in series: the tally consists of sets of parallel lines, each item in the series representing one instance of the item. I have observed lists of this kind used to mark off a series of songs and sites in following the "line" of a ceremonial cycle; in addition, the use of a series or row of circles in men's discussions

Figure 14. Levels of complexity in the construction of men's designs

Number of
different
elements

Cluster or plural   Site list   Path cross   Actor-item

1.

Core-adjunct

Path + 1 adjunctive plural   Site + 1 adj. plural   Site list-divider   Site-path

2.
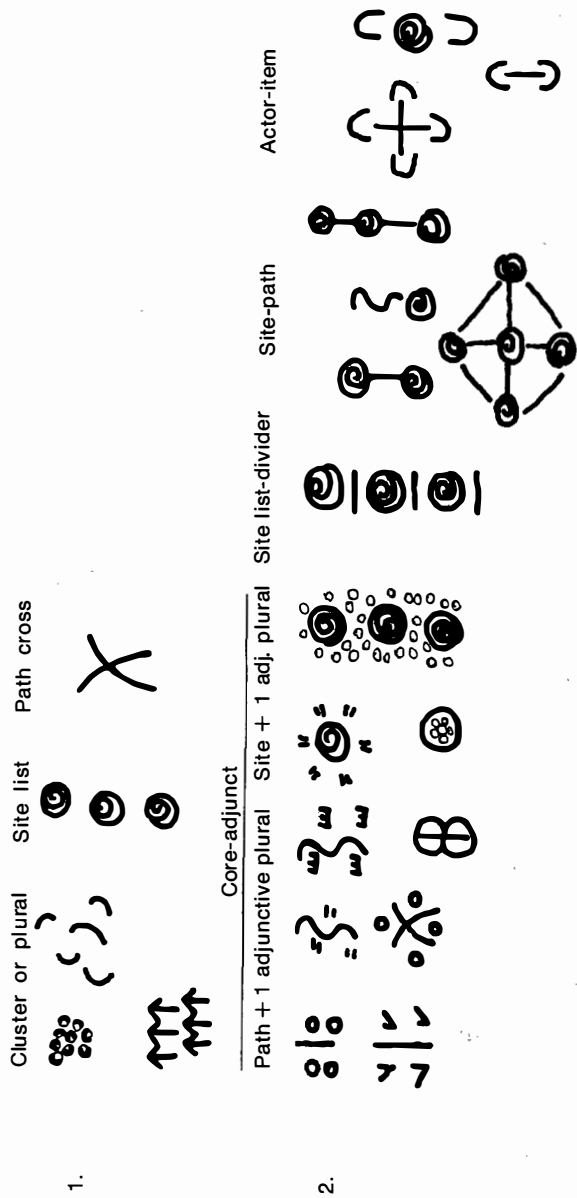
Figure 14 (continued)

Number of
different
elements

Path + 2 adj.   Site + 2 adj.   Site list + div. + 1 additl. element (adj.)   Site-path + 1 adjunctive   Actor-item + 1 adj.   Actor-item + site path   Actor-item + site list-divider

3.
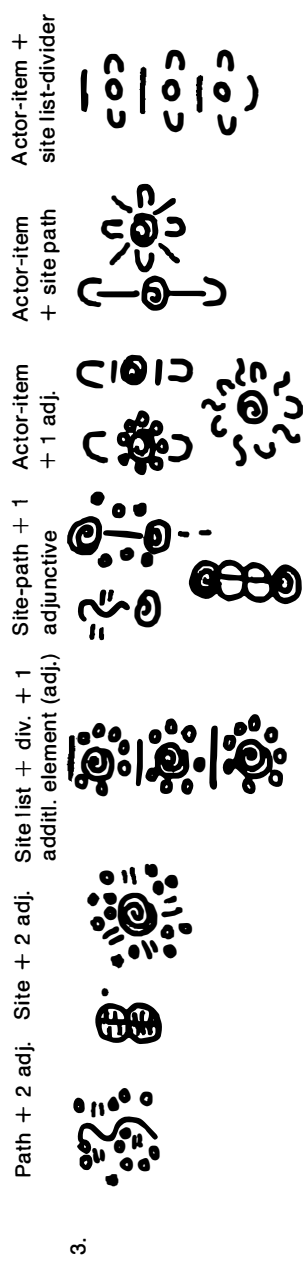
4, 5. Add additional adjunctives to level 3 figures.

The figures shown exemplify the sorts of arrangement that might occur at each level. Most constructions contain two to four elements. All the available types of figures in general use occur at level 2, and those at more complex levels consist either of composite forms of figures at this level (e.g., actor—item/site—path) or of these figures plus additional adjunctives. For examples of arrangements at level 4 and 5 see Figures 15 and 16. For an explanation of core= adjunct arrangements see text, Chapter 6. Adjunctives may be affixed to sides, ranged around the core, or occasionally infixed, that is, placed in the circle. An arc representing a cave can occur partially enclosing a site circle at one or both ends of a site-path figure at any level of design.

of site locations was pointed to in the last chapter. The site list of circles can also occur alone as a single design.

If we turn now to figures involving more than two different elements, we can see that they are created in two basic ways: by the nesting of one figure type in appropriate positions in another (for example, the use of a site-path figure as the item in an actor-item construction); or by the addition of adjunctives up to the number three (rarely more, although four can occur) in core-adjunct constructions.

For example, the site-path figure can occur in any position occupied by the site or path separately in constructions of level 2, except in the "site list divider" type of figure. (The divider seems to function as a substitute for the path line, and is in the position that the path would normally occupy in the typical site-path figure.) Thus we can obtain figures such as [site-path]-adjunctive, where the site-path figure occurs instead of the site or path as the "core" of the core-adjunctive figure. Similarly, a site-path figure can be enclosed in a circle or, as I have just suggested, it can function as the item in an actor-item figure.

The actor-item figure can also occur in any position occupied by a site or path in level 2 constructions, including "site list divider" figures. It can occur in the position of the site in the latter figure, or it can function as the core of a core-adjunct figure (see above Fig. 4c, no. 1), although constructions involving a circle-line core are far more common in my data. An actor-item figure in which the "item" is a site-path figure can also nest in other constructions, since it has the same privileges of occurrence as the simpler actor-item figure.

These examples illustrate how the complexity of designs can be increased through the nesting of figure types. We may, however, also obtain more complex figures simply by adding adjunctives to figures of the core-adjunctive type. For

instance, we may add an adjunctive to the path or site-adjunctive arrangements of level 2, yielding at level 3 a figure with two adjunctives and a simple (one element) core. Similarly, we can add an additional adjunctive to [site-path]-adjunctive figures yielding a construction of level 4 with two different adjunctives ranged around or affixed to a circle-line core. The addition of adjunctives to core-adjunct figures is the primary means of increasing complexity beyond level 3.

These comments are sufficient to suggest the basic characteristics of design structure and the way in which an indefinite number of design forms becomes possible with a limited number of elements and arrangements. We can now better understand how designs are constructed to represent each species of ancestor.

The Construction of Designs
for Individual Ancestors

Each ancestor is generally associated with more than one *guruwari* design. A well-informed man is ordinarily able to supply more than one design for a major ancestor of his own patrilodge, and sometimes for well-known ancestors of other patrilodges. While the different designs belonging to a single ancestor may be associated with different sites or site segments, more than one design may also be linked with one site. Walbiri call these designs "two fires" (*dara-djara*); by this they mean that the ancestor slept more than once at the place, creating different designs in each "sleep." (There may actually be more than two designs involved.) *Daradjara* are generally used on different media (for example, on shields or on the ground) at the same ceremony. A design is not, however, necessarily restricted to one medium or another. In addition to *daradjara*, and to designs which are related to differ-
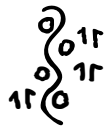
ent parts of a track, an ancestor may also be represented by *guruwari* designs thought to refer to the track as a whole.

For a number of well-known and important species, I was able to obtain sufficient material to illustrate how different designs for one ancestor (or for one species) are made, and what these designs share in common. The basic principle involved in the construction of designs for a single ancestor is the one we have encountered in the construction of women's designs, namely, that of variation on a theme. Each of the designs belonging to the ancestor presents a selection of one or more of the distinctive features of the species; each feature is represented by a different element. There are a limited number of such features shuffled around in the different designs (Fig. 15). They may consist of relevant natural characteristics, track prints, and cultural artifacts. Sometimes the characteristics of linked species are part of the complex; for instance, wallaby and dingo footprints may occur as adjuncts to the path of *yaribiri* snake since they are believed to have crossed this track in ancestral times.

The designs for a single ancestor (or different ancestors of the one species) present variant selections and arrangements of the stock of features (as shown in Fig. 15), and may range in complexity from depictions of only one such item to a more complex synthesis of a number of features. To make different designs for the one species, Walbiri in effect assemble and reassemble, build up and break down, a relatively fixed selection of elements carrying specific meanings (the features of the species) that are more or less stabliized for that ancestor. For instance, small circle clusters used in rain designs specify "rain drops"; used in honey ant or flying ant designs, they stand for the numerous ants. Similarly, the meandering path line of a snake design is always the snake, while that of an opossum design is the opossum's tail, and so on.

Figure 15. The features of ancestors and design variation. Only some of the more characteristic ranges of variation are suggested, that is, the typical features and element representations for each totemic ancestor.

A. *Yaribiri* snake

Features	Element combinations	Design examples
O = snake hole	S – oo – vv	
S = snake. A specific picture of a snake may also be used.	S – : :	
: : = eggs	O – : :	
)), oo, ⚌ = ribs, boards	S –))	Figure 16, no. 10
vv = footprints of linked ancestors	O – S – : : –	Figure 16, no. 9

Designs are all board or shield designs. A picture of a snake may be used instead of the meander line. Wallaby and dingo are linked with the snake; only wallaby prints are illustrated. Two informants also suggested that ovals may be substituted for arcs to represent the ribs (= boards) of the snake.

B. Rain

Features	Element combinations	Design examples
O = rock hole	S – : :	

Figure 15B (continued)

Features	Element combinations	Design examples
S = lightning	S – = =	
SSS = parallel paths of lightning rainbow rain	ʂ – = =	
ʂ = crisscross lightning paths	O – S – = =	
: : = raindrops clouds (rare)	: :	
= =,)) = rain clouds	SSS – : : – = =	Figure 16, no. 16
	S –))	

The first design, the :: form, is a body design; the remainder are board designs, and one ground design. The path line is usually lightning, but sometimes just the rain falling. Lightning can also be treated as a separate ancestor; dashes along the meander are then generally identified as sparks rather than clouds. In one instance a number of parallel lines was interpreted as the rain running in every direction along the ground. In other cases, the parallel lines may each specify a closely associated rain feature. Small-circle clusters are usually raindrops, but in one or two instances were said to specify the clouds. The arc appears to be an alternate for the more usual rain cloud dashes, but tends to be used for the larger rain clouds (*milbiri*) rather than the small strings of clouds (*guḍu guḍu*) usually represented by the dashes. See also Capell's (1953:121–122) Walbiri text describing the rainstorm and its movement across the country.

While one or two rain designs that do not use the meander path line occur in my collection, most of the rain designs the men illustrated are of the meander type.

Figure 15 (continued)

C. Honey ant

Features	Element combinations	Design examples
: :,)) = ant	((	
/ = central passage (underground path) digging sticks of women	/ – : :	
)),)), ☰ = side burrows	/ – ((☰ – , ,	
, , = (linked) vine ancestor	/ – ((((– , , – U	
U = woman digging	O – / – ((((– : :	
O = nest (hole)	O – / – ((((– , ,	Figure 16, no. 8

The first design is a body design; the remainder, except for the second (a headdress design?), are board designs. There is ambiguity in the use of the arcs, but burrow arcs are commonly doubled. The vine and ant arcs are never affixed to the core, but always ranged around it when shown.

It sometimes happens that the same feature may be represented by alternate elements. This occurs especially in the "plurals" functioning as adjunctives. Two informants remarked upon the use of such alternates for the ribs of *yaribiri*

snake (Fig. 15A). They explained that ovals could be substituted for the arcs along the sides of the snake meander without changing the meaning. The two configurations resulting are essentially synonymous graphs. In addition, dashes (or sets of parallel lines) provide a third, somewhat less typical alternate for the same feature, not mentioned by these two informants.

It will be seen from Figure 15 that relative to the design structure the basic features of a species can be divided into two groupings: those features that when assembled in a configuration of the core-adjunct type are always represented in the core position, and those that are represented in the adjunctive position. In terms of graphic elements this means that certain features are always represented by the site circle and path line; while others are represented primarily by plural elements such as arcs, circle clusters, and dashes, or by footprints. The alignment is exemplified for the three species in Figure 15 as follows:

	Core		Adjunct			
	Site O	Path I{	: :	))	=	VV
Yaribiri snake	snake hole	snake	eggs	ribs	ribs	footprints of wallaby
Rain *ngaba*	rock hole (also, cloud)	lightning rain falling rainbow	rain-drops		small rain clouds	
Honey ant *yarimbi*	nest hole	central underground passage	honey ants	side burrows or small ants, etc.		

Note that the site circle and path line take on referential meanings relevant to each context: for example, the campsite
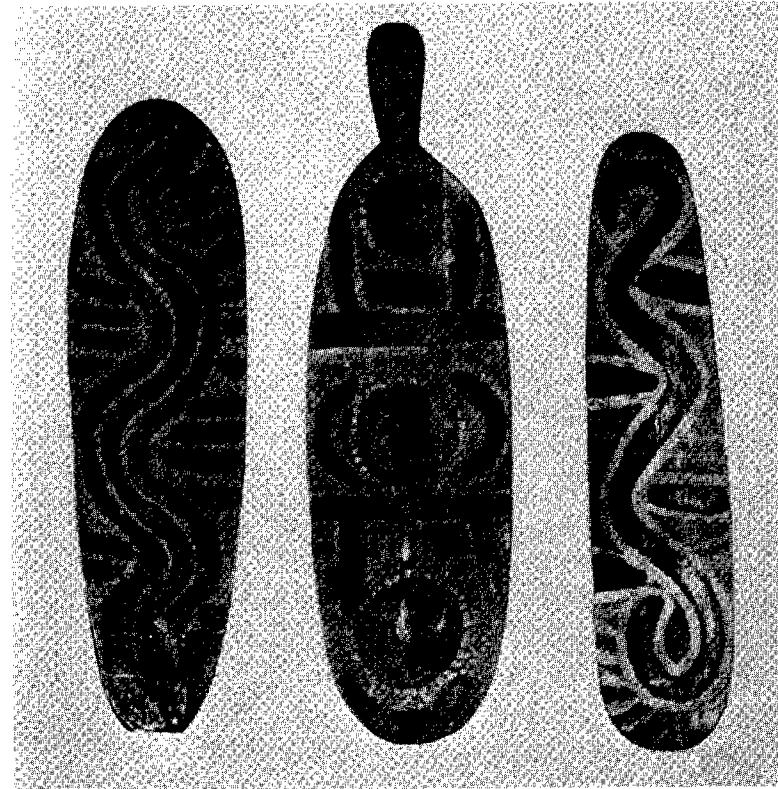
Plate 8. Three boards painted with *guruwari. Left:* a rain ancestor (for meanings see Figure 16, no. 16). *Center:* a *yawagi* berry ancestor. The large circle is the berry (the camp). Small circle clusters are rain clouds or rain drops. Rain has special associations with *yawagi* berry (see Figure 18, no. 6). UU = two women eating the berry. H = the berry tree. This element is rare, but it has analogues in *yawalyu* depictions of trees. *Right:* A typical rain design. S = lightning. ⚌ = rain clouds.

of *yaribiri* snake is the snake's hole, while the path is the snake. Walbiri regard the site-path meanings as constants, at the same time that they may apply specific class meanings to a given design relevant to the particular species involved.

In contrast to the core elements, adjunctive features are

generally numerous, often diminutive features such as ant swarms, grains of sand, sparks, leaves, pearl shells, stems and immature yams, and footprints. In a number of instances these features were explicity identified as the numerous progeny of the species that he "throws off" (*gidji-ni*) or scatters as he travels along, a notion echoing the concepts about ancestral potency being like the bits of fluff shaken onto the soil by dancers in men's ceremonies (see above p. 30). For example, informants regarded small clouds (*guḍuguḍu*) and pearl shells as progeny (*guḍu*) or "little ones" (*wida*) scattered by the rain and rainbow snake respectively (see also Capell, 1953:121n); these elements are represented as adjuncts to the paths of these ancestors. One informant also equated rain drops and progeny with "ribs" when referring to the meanings of one rain design. The link between ribs and progeny is made clear in the designs for *yaribiri* snake, where the ribs are regarded as his progeny, and identified as well with design-marked boards that he carries at times on his head. Small circle clusters used for *yaribiri* designs also represent numerous progeny since they are the eggs of the female *yaribiri* (Plate 9).

Examples indicating this association are found in designs for other species as well. In a design for a dove ancestor that decorated a headdress in one ceremony, short parallel lines placed at right angles to the central line represented the bird's ribs, again identified as children (see Fig. 18, no. 8). This type of design can be used for different species, and is not confined to the one ancestor. In the flying ant ceremony described below in Chapter 7 (and see Fig. 18, no. 5), dashes around the central hole of a ground painting were identified by one informant as "people" (*yaba*), that is, the many people produced by the activities of the ancestor. In still another instance, the central circle of a yam design was described as the

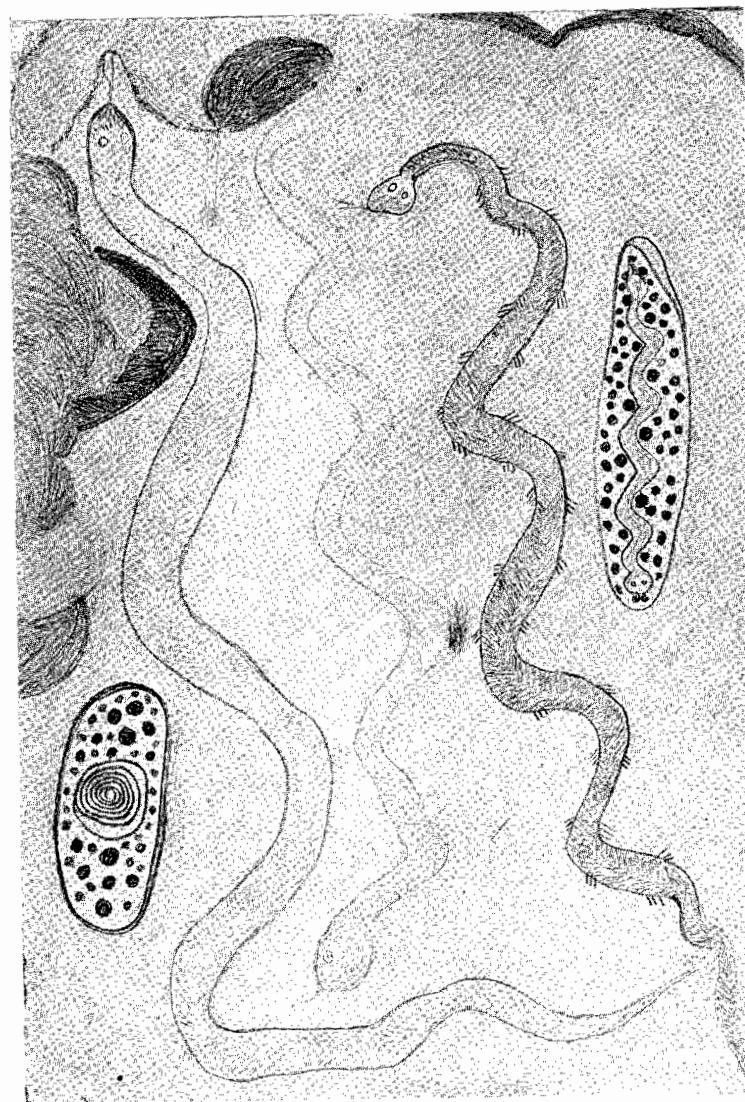Plate 9. A man's pencil crayon drawing of *yaribiri* snakes and decorated boards. On the left is the father; the other two snakes are his sons. The board on the left shows the snake hole (camp) and eggs. The board on the right shows a snake and eggs. A cave is at upper left; a tree stands between the two snakes on the left.

large yam, while the smaller tubers and roots placed as ad-juncts around it were referred to as "children."

It would appear then that the typical plural adjuncts sug-gest fecundity, or reproduction, or, more generally, the no-tion of multiplicity so important to the life-maintenance or "increase" notions central to male cult. Such associations would be consistent with the symbolic significance of the camp and path in Walbiri thought, for as we shall see later, men equate the camp with the female, and the path with the male principle. Hence a core-adjunct figure in which the core was a circle and line would express a complementary sym-bolic whole: the female, the male, and the numerous members of the species or "children" who are created by the activities of the ancestor.

Semantic Complexity in Men's Designs

Men frequently ascribe multiple meanings to a single graphic element in both *guruwari* and *ilbindji* designs. I have already pointed to the occurrences of multiple meaning in the case of the circle-line figure; it is to these core elements that metaphoric meanings are most frequently ascribed. Circle and line (camp and path) may be used as a generalized formula for representing an indefinite range of different-meaning items. The locale and journey theme permeates the more specific images of the various totemic species providing a mode of order and semantic complexity absent from women's designs.

Some examples are given in the design explanations for cir-cle-line designs in Figure 16. For instance, in the yam design (Fig. 16, no. 4) the circle specifies the yam, the camp of the yam ancestor at a place named by the informant. Since the camp became a hill where this food is now found, all these items (hill, yam, camp of the yam ancestor) can be specified by the circle.

Figure 16. Guruwari designs and explanations

Ancestor	Actor	Item	
1. Kangaroo	"sitting here"	camp string cross	
2. Walingari men	"2 men sitting"	decorated shields	
3. "	"	⑥ = water hole, camp, fire /// = spears	
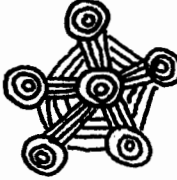
Note: One Yangaridji design that is supposed to be painted by men on women is included (no. 7). The informant's explanation is given except where meanings are in square brackets, which indicate my interpolation. The explanations of eleven men are exemplified in the sixteen designs, but others were sometimes part of the discussion. More than one item may be represented by the same element.

1. After paper drawing. Along their route the two kangaroos carried large string crosses. The design refers to the ancestors. When the two kangaroos finally burned on the fire far to the south in the Rawlinson ranges they left their string crosses behind them on the ground. See above Figure 8B, no. 2. As one man suggested: cross, camp, and place became one thing. Each part of the cross signifies part of the body of the kangaroo. The use of an actor-item figure (sometimes with tail and footprints) appears to be standard for kangaroo designs.

2. After paper drawing. The decoration of shields is a major feature of the initiation ceremonies originated by the Walingari men. Treatment of shield oval as line occurs in other instances.

3. After sand drawing. The two men put down their spears and sit in the shade after hunting meat. The meat cooks on the fire. Spears and camp are handled by the circle-line (site-path) formula, and it seems probable that the spears also depict their paths, although this meaning was not stated by the informant. The spears used by the two men are the tall leafy poles with which men dance at initiation ceremonies. The Walingari took these from their legs, and today they are attached to the dan-cers' legs. In another instance, an informant explained the situation with a sand notation showing the poles or spears being pulled from the legs of the men. He equated spear, penis, and pole.

Figure 16 (continued)

	Site	Path	Adjunctives	
4. Yam	site name camp food hill		leaves	
5. Witchetty grub	site names hill	walked	) = slept : := red ochre 'paints up'	
6. Honey ant	site names digging-stick holes	they "follow"		
7. Honey ant	central circle = breast, site name, other circles = sites from which the birds were attracted to central circle	[paths]	arms	

4. After paper drawing. A yam ancestor at a site east of Yuendumu. The camp of the yam ancestor is the yam; yams are inside the hill at this place.

5. After paper drawing. The witchetty ancestor dreamed his designs while sleeping in camp and then, waking, painted himself—i.e., with the ochres in the design—and sang.

6. After paper drawing. Women sit digging for honey ants at the central site. With their digging sticks they dig for the ants, "following" them along to the different sites.

7. After paper drawing. A honey ant design that the informant said could be painted by a man on his wife. A honey ant woman sitting at the central circle attracted or "pulled up" quails from various surrounding sites. The arms of the woman are shown as the adjunctive. The quail is regularly associated with honey ant ancestors.

Figure 16 (continued)

	Site	Path	Adjunctives	
8. Honey ant	site names camp	"two went then"	' = a vine ((= ant burrows	
9. *Yaribiri* snake	o = hole O = camp	snake track	/ = ribs, marks : := [eggs]	
10. *Yaribiri* snake		snake	ribs, boards children	
11. Opossum	site names "here they dance"	tails "they came and went"	[footprints]	
12. Digging-stick women	breast camp	[paths]		

8. After paper drawing. The vine is associated with the honey ants. The camp is the main hole; the surrounding arcs are side burrows. Two honey ant ancestors traveled along—indicated by two path lines.

9. After board painting. The two paths, one on either side of the camp, indicate in this instance that the snake came back to his camp.

10. The design at Ngama cave; after a paper drawing by the informant. The ribs of the snake became sacred boards that he carried on his head as men do today in ceremonies; these became his progeny.

11. After paper drawing. The opossums moved back and forth between the two nearby sites. Men dance at the site.

12. After paper drawing. The breasts of the women are their camp-sites. The women carry sacred boards and dance along leaving water holes made by their digging sticks.

Figure 16 (continued)

	Site	Path	Adjunctives	
13. Digging-stick women	site names sleeping place dancing ground	[paths]	digging sticks :: = [?]	
14. Emu	stomach camp, home		[?]	
15. Rain	site name rock hole camp	rain lightning rainbow "track then"		
16. Rain		lightning black cloud rain running	small rain clouds trees :: = raindrops	

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13. After board painting. Same as for no. 12.

14. After a cave painting at Rugari. See also above, Fig. 8C. The informant explained that the stomach and camp were the same—the mark made by the emu lying down?

15. After paper drawing. The rain emerges from the rock hole and goes into the sky. Its sky track is usually the lightning, but lightning, rainbow, and rain are sometimes treated as parallel path lines. In this example, the two outer lines on each side are the rain and the lightning; the inner line is the rainbow.

16. After board painting; see Plate 8. Each band (rather than each line) specifies a different feature of the rain's track. The representation of a black cloud by a path line is unusual. The dashes represent both clouds and trees that emerged from the rainstorm.

Similarly, the informant for the kangaroo design of Figure 16, no. 1, said that the concentric circles (the item of the actor-item figure) specify both the camp of the kangaroos and a sacred object, a string cross, which the two kangaroos carried along their route. When they finally burned on a fire far to

the south, they left their string crosses behind them on the ground. As another man suggested, the cross, camp, and place "became one thing."

Men sometimes gave "camp" (ngura), meaning the camp of the ancestor, as the explanation of the circle, or they mentioned some topographical feature (usually a water hole). In other instances, a more specialized item of meaning was given (for example, "yam," "digging-stick holes"), and further comments or my questioning revealed that they identified the item with the campsite. At times informants also volunteered more than one meaning, explicitly equating the items with each other, as in the examples cited. Whether or not a man provided "camp" and "path" as specific meanings in any given instance, this meaning is a general premise and can be elicited with further questioning. The provision of multiple meanings of this sort was not restricted to a few men but appeared as a general pattern of thinking, part of the system of assumptions about designs and the nature of the world to which they referred.

The basic equational pattern of multiple meanings that I obtained for the circle was: (ancestral) camp; topographical feature; special item (relevant to the specific ancestor). This pattern was not, of course, always actualized in any given set of interpretations. Since Walbiri regard all these items as aspects of the country (and both the camp and "special item" may be thought of as literally embedded in the country), the entire complex actually constitutes the substance of the place.

For Walbiri the use of one graphic element to represent different-meaning items simply reflects the premise that these items are "the same thing"; in this sense the circle specifies only one complex entity. We may infer, however, that the standard use of a single graphic element to cover the different items itself reinforces the unitary way of thinking about

them—that it is part of the dynamic through which such conceptions are maintained.

If the semantics of the concentric circles are considered in relation to the wider graphic system, it will be seen that the usage just described combines the typical semantic function-ing of the single circle in the sand story or general storytell-ing with that of its functioning in track and journey discus-sions. In the former, as I have stated, the circle may be used to specify any one of a range of different classes of things de-pending on situational context. Similarly, in *guruwari* designs the concentric circles may represent such items as digging-stick holes, different fruits, women's breasts, snake and ant holes, fire, and other similar roundish items.

The path may also be used to refer to a range of different meanings, although multiple meanings seem to be more elabo-rated for the circle. Lightning, for instance, is the path of the rain ancestor. Static items, such as a tree trunk, may also be compounded with the path notion and thus take on connota-tions of motion.

To the outside observer some of these items seem to be camps and paths in a more or less literal sense; for example, the notion that the snake's hole is his "camp," or that his path is the mark that he makes in the ground as he travels along. Other items, however, seem less literally camps and paths; for example, that the camp of the yam is the yam tuber. It is in cases of the latter type that the formulaic use of the circle-line figure is most apparent. For Walbiri, of course, there is no such distinction between more literal and less literal usages: it was as obvious to my informants that a yam tuber is the camp of the yam as that the hole of the snake is his camp. The point is that there is an underlying productivity in the system at work here and that any species could be worked into the pattern. This is not to say, of course, that for all

ancestors the particular equations that are made are well known and standardized. On the contrary, the presence of an open-ended, indefinitely extendible pattern yields another level of order that creates a constant *potential* for the work-ing of specifics into the common structure.

This feature also helps us to gain a clearer view of one logi-co-aesthetic function that repetitive, generalized shapes may perform in a visual art. Such shapes are flexible: their general-ity makes possible indefinite specific variation within a frame-work of standardized forms, and the inclusion of "new" meanings or content without destroying continuity and order.[1] The experience of sameness and tradition can be maintained while at the same time the system is not fixed to a limited range of particulars in its expression of the phenome-nal world.

Metaphoric meanings can be easily manipulated within this framework since it allows for a density of meanings in con-junction with a simplicity of form. This inverse relationship between semantic density and formal complexity is a general characteristic of visual symbol systems.

Design Differentiation

As the examples of Figure 15 suggest, the contrasts be-tween designs for different species depend in large part upon the selection and arrangement of adjunctive elements. Let us take a simple model of how this works. The meander line may be used in the representation of a number of different species, but its distribution is a specialized one. Rain, vari-ous snakes, fire, opossum and marsupial mouse are species types represented by meanders. If, however, we range foot-prints of the type that can be used for either the opossum or

[1] Goldenweiser (1936) first drew attention to this form of varia-tion, which he labeled "involution."

marsupial mouse as adjunctives on either side of the line, then the design is one or the other of these animals, but not rain, snake or fire. While contrasts are not always so clear cut, this simple example conveys a general principle at work in creating contrasts between designs for different species.[2]

In Figure 15, the reader will observe an immediate gross contrast between the snake and rain designs on the one hand, and the honey ant, on the other, since the latter uses the straight line. Between the two former species the degree and nature of the contrast varies. The snake and rain designs using the combination of meander line and dots or small circles for instance, are close "homographs," but this overlap can be obviated by the use of a species-specific element for a snake—that is, a graph representing the class "snake" only, in contrast to the meander, which can stand for other items such as opossum tail and smoke as well. On the other hand, the fourth rain design with the crisscrossing path and the dashes placed in the interstices does not occur for *yaribiri* snake. Furthermore, the most typical and best-known rain design uses dash adjuncts as in Figure 17, while the well-known *yaribiri* snake painting at Ngama cave employs deep arcs ranged along the meander (Fig. 16, no. 10).

In order to examine this problem of design differentiation

[2] We have to distinguish here between the existence in the graphic structure of standardized contrasts between typical designs for different species, and the individual's ability to accurately identify the species represented by a design, an ability depending in part on individual knowledge. All Walbiri men assume that a totem does have typical, distinctive designs whether or not, in any given instance, they are able to identify the species involved. The typical design features for certain ancestors are, however, widely known. For example, a number of honey ant and rain designs that I showed to several informants of different patrilodges were readily identified by these men.

Figure 17. Differentiation and overlapping in meander designs

Rain Ngaba Djangala-Djambidjimba	Fire Walu Djabangari-Djabanangga	Rainbow snake Wanira Various subsections	Yaribiri snake Djuburula-Djagamara	Other snakes Wana Various subsections
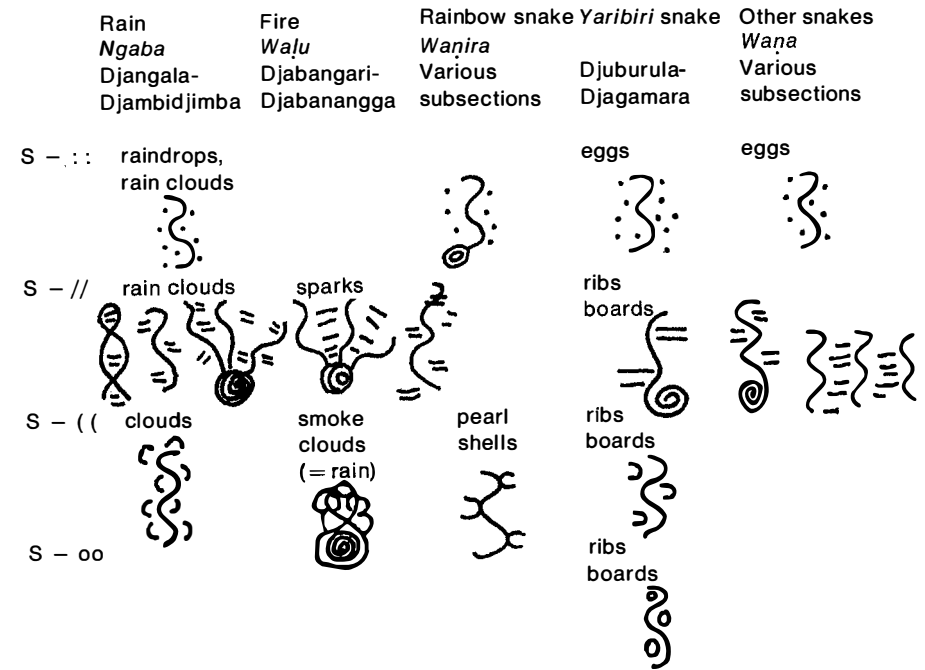
Examples given are drawn from specific instances of these combinations in my collection. Blank spaces indicate that I have no instance of this combination in the collection. The examples do not necessarily indicate all the variants for any particular element combination; they are simply intended to indicate the presence of a design including these adjunctives for a particular ancestor. Where a particular meaning is available for the adjunctive element in each context it is given with the design examples. In the case of the design S–// for "other snakes," the meaning "footprints" was supplied in one instance.

Fire; S – ((. The design refers to the making of fire in ancestral times; the smoke clouds that resulted led to rain. See text, Chapter 6. This particular configuration appears to be distinctively associated with fire.

more closely, I shall look at the network of graphic relationships between designs for certain species typically represented by meander rather than straight lines. Of these, opossum and

marsupial mouse can be immediately distinguished from the others by the use of the footprint adjuncts. Of the remaining ancestors characteristically represented by a meander path, all but witchetty grub have some explicit associations with rain. These phenomena constitute the familiar, widespread Australian rain complex: rain itself (and lightning sometimes treated as a separate ancestor from the rain), the rainbow snake, and fire. For snakes other than that of the rainbow snake one finds less direct associations with rain, but certain suggestive linkages do occur. Designs representing the rain-linked phenomena regularly utilize circle clusters, sets of lines, or dashes and arcs as adjunctive elements. The arrangements of these adjuncts may differ; so also, in some examples —notably for fire—the handling of the meander line may be specialized. The result is a network of overlapping but not necessarily identical designs (see Fig. 17).

It should be kept in mind, however, that marked visual similarities between designs for different species do not necessarily signify specific cosmological or other associations of the ancestors involved. To my knowledge there are no special mythological ties between marsupial mouse, for example, and rain despite the fact that both use a meander line path, and only a limited number of species are represented by this kind of path line. On the one hand, there is the question of specified linkages between the ancestors; on the other, that of design similarities. Whether or not the two are correlated has to be investigated in each case.

When such correlations do occur—as apparently in the rain complex which I shall shortly look at more closely—this does not in itself imply any certain correlation between this ordering pattern and the social structure. The ancestors

that form this complex are distributed among patrilodges belonging to different subsection patricouples and to the opposing moieties.[3] Moreover, each of these lodges controls other species that do not participate in the rain complex.

It is the features of the species themselves that provide the primary external impetus for the form taken by designs. The opossum uses a meander line because, in the Walbiri view, its tail has this sort of shape, and makes a mark like this in the sand. This basis for the design forms—their iconic, representational aspect—provides an independent dynamic for the elaboration of design categories that is not directly bound to the classifications of the social system.

In this respect, the analogy of heraldic devices that Durkheim applied to central Australian totemic designs is not accurate, since in a fully developed heraldry, graphic differentiation precisely codes social segmentation. In the Walbiri case, however, there is no isomorphism "between these two systems of differences" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:77).

In heraldry, as in a pictorial writing system, the iconic qualities linking the visual forms to their meanings tend to be attenuated because of the over-all adjustment of the visual forms to another underlying sociocultural system for which the former constitutes a communication code. In the Walbiri designs, on the contrary, the bond between the design forms and sense experience is central for there is no systematic subordination of the iconic element to a second abstract ordering

[3] As indicated in Chapter 1, rain is controlled by two lodges of Djangala-Djambidjimba men from Mt. Doreen and Conistan. One of the fire ancestors is controlled by a lodge of Djabangari-Djabanangga men from the Mt. Allan-Conistan region, and *yaribiri* snake by Djuburula-Djagamara men from the same region. Rainbow snakes occur at various major sites and belong to the owners of these sites.

system. Thus selected qualities of the phenomenal world, transposed into the simple linear forms of the graphs, are of primary significance in the dynamics of design formation.

"Meander" Designs: The Rain Complex

Walbiri distinguish the designs for rainbow snake and rain, but recognize both graphic and cosmological associations between them; the two are meshed in their thinking, not only because the snake is thought to have the colors of the rainbow on his body, but also because he is thought to give rise to or "send out" the rain. Two informants suggested that designs for rain and rainbow snake share the meander line but could be distinguished by the interchange of dashes (rain clouds) or arcs (pearl shells associated with the rainbow snake) affixed to the side of the meander. They illustrated this point by drawing a meander in the sand with dashes along the sides, and then subsituting for the dashes the arcs of the snake. After this, the comparison of the two phenomena was amplified by the addition of a circle and meander figure beside the original meander to explain that the rain falls down on the surface of the ground, while the rainbow snake (the meander with the arcs) lives underneath the ground.[4]

While arc adjuncts are occasionally used in rain designs primarily to depict large rain clouds (*milbiri*),[5] the arcs do not appear in the same position and arrangement as in the rainbow snake designs (see Fig. 17) in the design collection. The pearl shell (=children) arcs of the rainbow snake are reminiscent of the rib (=children) arcs of *yaribiri* snake, but again,

[4] The rain is also thought, however, to have an underground track (the water running into the earth).

[5] Walbiri distinguish various kinds of clouds. For example, the *guduguḍu* mentioned earlier are small strings of white rain clouds, while the term *milbiri* refers to larger gray clouds.

examples show differences in the typical arc arrangement. For both snakes there is a particular emphasis on "increase" functions, and procreation. Beyond the obvious association between the two because they are snakes (in fact, they are the two most prominent snakes among the Walbiri ancestors) I have no evidence of specific narrative links in the mythology. *Yaribiri* snake did cross the rain proceeding westward from its origin at Walabanba, but this is an association that, as I have pointed out, occurs for many ancestors having no other special conceptual linkages.

Let us look now at rain and fire. Like rain, fire designs can be made with dashes along the sides of the meander (Fig. 17); the dashes are the "sparks," and the meander "smoke." A distinctive fire design, however, uses a single looped meander line. Arcs nesting in and around the top of the loop represent large clouds or an overcast sky from which rain falls. Such arcs may occur also in rain designs and actually refer to a direct narrative link between rain and fire, one that is recorded in the fire design of Figure 17. The latter refers to an ancestral incident involving the making of fire at a site called Mirawari. Two men are said to have made fire here, rubbing a spear thrower against a shield in the traditional method. As the smoke swirled up into the air, clouds formed and it rained. The rain ancestor from Walabanba is also said to have encountered the rain man who was created by the smoke from his fire.

This connection between fire, smoke, and rainmaking is reiterated in another informant's commentary. He described a man making fire as part of an *ilbindji* ceremony to attract a woman: smoke from the fire rose up in a red cloud and turned to rain. My informant illustrated this situation by drawing in the sand an arc closed at the bottom by a horizon-

tal line; this represented the red cloud of smoke, the "home" of the rain. Lines depicting the smoke rising to form the cloud were attached at the bottom of the arc.

Thus links between rain and fire suggested at the visual level in design similarities are matched by explicit linkages and equations in the imagery of related narratives.[6] The arc (=cloud) encloses notions of rain and fire in a single graphic shape. Although my informants did not explicitly equate the meander of the smoke with rain or lightning, it would also seem to be suggestively parallel to these phenomena. Walbiri sometimes personify the smoke as a young man who, in one song, is said to "stand up" (kari) and go into the sky. Lightning may also be personified in this way, and it is common to express his emergence from the water hole camp of the rain and his journey across the sky by saying that he "stands up." Finally, the red smoke rising from the fire and causing the rain to pour down seems to bear an implicit parallel to the brilliant lightning "standing up" and bringing on the storm.

It is also possible to point to some general links between fire and snakes. These appear in the narrative of a bulaba ceremony being performed at Yuendumu during my stay. The protagonist of this narrative was a snake who emerged from the ground as the smoke of a fire. One man's drawing illustrated the fire as a circle from which a number of meander lines arose; the lines had numerous dashes placed between them, and also represented the snake burning (literally going up in smoke!).

The network of associations I have sketched here indicates linkages of varying degrees of explicitness between rain, snakes, and fire. These associations in Walbiri narrative and

[6] Kenneth Hale (1967:6) points out that associations between water and fire are also expressed in a special ritual language used by men.

imagery are matched by graphic linkages in the design system, that is, in the network of overlapping formal resemblances between fire, rain, and snake designs. This evidence may well be even more explicit than I have been able to show from my data. It is, however, sufficient to point to a conceptual and imaginal cluster that is conveyed in the graphic designs through visual similarities.

Discussion: The Synthesis of Country and Species Features in Designs

In this chapter, it has been shown that the graphic structure of designs is used to build up representations not simply of camps and paths, but also of different natural features relevant to each ancestor. The design system treats each species as a selection of features that can be assembled into a whole, or detached from each other, rather than as a unitary, unbreakable form. The result is a ramifying system of different designs for one ancestor created by the process of ordering and reordering a set of basic elements in an "involuted" fashion.

Designs thus keep before the Walbiri imagination thematic elements that convey certain bodily and other related characteristics of individual ancestors, combining these with the general camp-path configuration. This synthesis of "country" on the one hand and species-specific, bodily or personal, characteristics on the other is the essence of the ancestral identity mark.

A similar synthesis occurs in Walbiri notions about the countryside itself, since as we have seen, the country not only contains the bodies of the ancestors inside it, but is also thought of as being the metamorphosed forms and imprints of their bodies, or body parts. We may take guruwari in its visi-

ble aspect to be this amalgam of "country" and "body" through which an ancestor may be "followed." Again, the footprint suggests a simple model of this notion since in it ground and body intersect: the print conveys the features (feet, or feet and tail) of the animal in their form as ground prints.

Guruwari are constituted by the binding of bodily aspects, personal characteristics, and activities of a mobile being, to external space; this "binding" creates the visual forms transcending the individual person through which Walbiri reproductive vitality is felt to be perpetuated over the generations. *Guruwari* provide atemporal, transgenerational modes of inter-relationship between individuals and groups at the same time that they express the fundamental temporal or rhythmic sequences of movement from place to place, which Walbiri use to convey the ancestor's life cycle. Thus the structure of permanence encapsulates the travel experience of irreversible sequence that is also an idiom for the mortal life cycle.

Iconography and Social Symbolism in *Banba* Ceremonies

I shall now extend the analysis of Walbiri iconography to certain aspects of men's ceremonial drama, and to forms of ceremonial paraphernalia. On the one hand, my purpose is to highlight the connection between the internal structure of the design system and certain ritual constructions in three-dimensional space, and on the other to consider how ancestral representations figure in the symbolic transaction between lodges of opposite moieties that constitutes the *banba* (fertility) ceremonies.

Banba Ceremonial Construction

At Yuendumu, *banba* ceremonies generally began just after midday and ended in the late afternoon, before sunset. The ceremony typically consisted of lengthy preparations, involving the construction of ceremonial paraphernalia and the decoration of the dancers' bodies with red and white fluff, followed by a brief dramatization of several minutes duration. Ceremonies take place away from the main camps, in the seclusion of the bush.

As I have previously indicated, dancers in *banba* ceremonies should be members of the owning patrilodge (or barring this, at least of the same moiety as the lodge); these are the *gira* or, as I have called them, the "masters" of the cere-

mony. The men who prepare the dancers should belong to the opposite patrimoiety; they are the *gurungulu*, "workers" for the ceremony. In most of the *banba* I observed, these norms were adhered to, but in some instances lodge owners helped workers in the production of ceremonial objects (as in the flying ant ceremony described below).[1]

During the ceremonial preparations masters and workers generally sit at separate windbreaks or "shades" except when the dancer is being decorated or a headdress being built up on his head. The relevant ancestral songs are sung during preparations, as these are necessary to infuse the objects with strength. When the paraphernalia are ready, they may be brought to the masters for approval. Smaller objects such as circular headdresses are placed in a shield, rocked by the masters, and sung over. Dancers are then decorated at the master's shade, after the ceremonial objects have been readied.

Thus the ceremonial preparation ordinarily entails some initial separation of members of the opposing patrimoieties during most of the construction process, with a convergence of the two groups toward the end as the dancer (or dancers) is decorated. After the completion of construction the dramatizations involve members of both moieties in a common "centering" focus—the dancers themselves.

Banba dramatizations are of two broad types. In one type, one or more dancers crouch and shuffle across a small cleared space while the nondancers (especially workers) surround them giving short ritual calls (*wah! wah!*). This type represents the ancestors in camp. Some variations of this sort of ceremony are described below. In the other type, performers positioned in the bush apart from the other men dance in toward the "audience." This represents the ancestor traveling

[1] I never saw a man of the wrong moiety perform as a dancer in the ceremonies; this agrees with Meggitt's observations (1962:223,224).

along the track or coming into camp. In both forms of ceremony the performance ends with the removal of the dancers' headdresses by members of the opposite moiety. Just as in the *guruwari* design system and the narrative structures of myths, dramatic variation occurs within a general site (stationary) —path (mobile, directional) framework.

Despite the ultimate seriousness in the aim of these ceremonies, there is no uniform tone of awe on the ceremonial ground. On the contrary, Walbiri performances are usually casual, filled with joking, sexual allusions, conversation, and banter. Instructions may be given to dancers, who are sometimes jokingly insulted if they are not performing well. While there are moments of high seriousness, the over-all tone of the ceremony is variable. Preparations may involve casual behavior with some conversation interspersing the singing. During the brief performance, there may be joking, but also apparent is an intense communal interaction involving gathering around the dancer with accompanying ritual calls. The decorated dancers provide the common visual focus for the other men, and it is, of course, the dancers that the two moieties have combined to produce, one providing the work of construction while the other provides the bodily media through which the paraphernalia and decor are coherently assembled and the enactment takes place.

In the construction of ceremonial paraphernalia and the decoration of the dancer, the ancestor is reembodied. The term *balga* is often used in this context. It denotes physical presence, flesh or body, as well as material plenty. Expressions such as *balga-djari*, "to be born," or *balga-ma-ni*, "to bring into being," "make physically present," may be used to refer to the ceremonial construction of *guruwari*.

Referring to a kangaroo ceremony, one man remarked that the patrilineal lodge owning the ceremony might ask the

workers to prepare the ceremonial paraphernalia by saying, "You make meat. It will be born then. It will have fat. I want to eat." He also explained in English, "You make'm father, I want to eat." The ceremonial constructions reembody the ancestor and as part of this process aid in continuing the supply of kangaroos in the country; that is, in effect they reembody the kangaroos as well.

The various ceremonial performances thus involve presentations of ancestral beings. As one informant put it, the ancestor "gets up" (as from sleep); others suggested that he "is coming" (into the performance place) or that ceremonies "pull out" the ancestor from the country. The removal of the headdress marks the end of this ceremonial reembodiment.

Ceremonial construction is then a process of making visible and giving material embodiment to ancestral beings; in this respect, and in its implications for the reproduction of the species (as well as of human beings) it is like the embodiment of birth. Two informants drew a direct parallel between the family camp and the *banba* ceremonial camp on the basis of their common sexual-procreative functions. Moreover, the term *gura-ngga* (sexual intercourse—place of) may be used to refer to the *banba* camp as well as the family camp. These parallels are reiterated in connection with the theme of food production. Many of the totemic species involved in *banba* are edible or food-related (as, for example, rain), so that members of each moiety are producing food for the opposite moiety (compare the expression quoted above, "You make'm father, I want to eat"). Similarly, in the family camp, a man and his wife are engaged in reciprocal food production. Thus, as we shall see in more detail in this chapter, *banba* can be said to formulate the life-maintenance processes of food production and procreation (which have their matrix in the heterosexual relationships of the family) on the sym-

bolic plane of cosmos or universe-maintenance and transgenerational, patrilineal continuity (which have their matrix in unisexual relationships).

The reciprocal structure of roles in ceremonial production may be examined further from this perspective. The ceremonial forms "move" between the two moieties, for they are in effect detached from the hands of the workers and attached to or brought into association with the bodies of the dancers. In any given ceremony, the relationship of each group to these visual symbols is the inverse of the other's, since the former create something that is detached from them, while the latter receive this as a kind of "gift" that they take on in part as a visual covering of their own bodies. Moreover, this gift brings about the identification of the dancer with his ancestors, and so in effect "gives birth" to the ancestors, or reembodies them as a child reembodies essential ancestral *guruwari* powers when it is born. But while a child contains *guruwari inside* his body, the dancer wears *guruwari* on or *over* his body.

The inverse relationship of workers and dancers to the ceremonial paraphernalia seems to project on the symbolic plane the relationship between wife and husband vis à vis their children (especially their sons) in a society where patrilineal descent defines the individual's ancestral identity with respect to ritual group affiliation. Thus the mother gives birth to a child who inherits the father's rather than the mother's ancestral group identity and is a member of the opposite patrimoiety to her own. Similarly, the *guruwari* representing the ancestors of a specific patrilodge should ideally be created by members of lodges of the opposite patrimoiety to the owners (i.e., as the mother "creates" a child of the opposite patrimoiety to her own). These *guruwari* forms, separated from their original "creators," become identified with the bodies of

members of the owning patrilodge, transforming the latter into embodiments of their own patrilineal ancestors. As some Walbiri put it, a man then "dances his own *guruwari*" (Munn 1964:99).[2]

[2] In a more general sense, the ceremonial production process communicates between the moieties symbols of sexuality and procreation, as is indicated by the semantics of the symbols themselves (see below, "Iconography and Ceremonial Forms"), in which male, female, and reproductive elements are combined. Workers are thus making the reproductive capacity of the dancers which they themselves (i.e., the dancers) cannot construct.

In this connection it is of interest to consider if there is not some relationship between the ritual interdependence of the patrilodges on the one hand and the marital interdependence of the matrilineal descent units on the other. As noted in Chapter 1, Walbiri marriage arrangements are primarily the responsibility of the mother's brother and the matriline. Peterson (1969:35) has drawn attention to the impermanence of these matrilineal units, remarking that they are "subject to continual fission"; thus "no permanent exchange relationships can exist" between them. The corporate patrilodges are not directly concerned with the marriage arrangements, but they involve the communication of sexual reproductive capacities at a symbolic level. Put otherwise, the ceremonial production process in which the lodges are involved could be construed as a condensation symbolism expressive in part of marriage exchange: in this way, marital interdependency is transposed into the patrilineal idiom of corporation and permanence.

From this perspective, the *guruwari* transmission between lodges can be seen as condensing both the separation of children from women (as I discuss in the text) and the separation of women (potential mothers) from men (male affines). Both these notions are intertwined in the more general principle of the communication of reproductive capacities. Both the matrilineal organization (involved in the transmission of women) and the family organization (involved in the procreation of children) constitute interrelated social matrices ensuring sexual-reproductive processes and intergenerational continuity. In this sense, the ceremonial transaction of *guruwari* could be interpreted as a condensation symbolism coding both these structures at the level of universe maintenance.

The agnatically defined group identity is, of course, most significant in the case of sons, since it is they who will be initiated into male cult where identification with patrilineal ancestors is continually reenacted. Moreover, in circumcision ceremonies, the social separation of the boy from his mother and his family of orientation is dramatized through his separation from women and his integration into adult masculine society: in these ceremonies, women (especially the boy's own mother) are the focus of separation against which is counterposed the boy's integration with men, and with the symbols of ancestral cult. The boy is "reborn" [3] through this shift in identification. The mother's relationship to her son is one in which identification must be severed—while the father's relationship is the reverse, since it is in part through him that the boy's new identity will be defined.

From this perspective, *banba* ceremonial forms appear in a structural position equivalent to that of the child (particularly the male child): they embody the ancestral identity of the patrilineage of the opposite patrimoiety from those who create the embodiment, and they are separated from the latter in the process of being identified with patrilodge members.

An interesting myth that I have recounted in another context (Munn 1971) supports the analysis offered here. In this myth certain ancestral women are followed from place to place by two men who make assignations with them at the various camps along the route. As they travel along, the women emit feces that are also sacred boards. The men pick up these boards and make ceremonial headdresses out of them; they wear the headdresses as they travel behind the women, but remove them each time they enter the camp to have sexual intercourse. During intercourse the boards are

[3] Walbiri men associate the metaphor of dying with circumcision.

left outside the camp, so as to keep them secret from the women; in the morning, the men pick them up again as they proceed along the route.

In this myth, the boards (feces) emitted from the women's bodies become the men's headdresses; there is also additional evidence that they can be equated with the women's progeny (see Munn 1971:154-155). The women lose the boards to the men, just as the novice is "lost" to women in male initiation ceremonies, and as a ceremonial object is separated from men of the opposing moiety (who created it) and placed on the body of a dancer of the masters' moiety (and lodge). Moreover, just as the objects and ceremonies are kept secret from women today, so the myth shows their necessary separation from the heterosexual context of actual, biological procreation. In effect, the plane of transgenerational continuity associated with the symbols of the patrilodge operates at one level; while heterosexual relationships and the "family of procreation" operate at another. The headdresses themselves provide the pivot of conjunction and disjunction: they code both the symbolic linkage of the two orders and their structural separation.

These features suggest some of the significance of the "masking" quality of the body decorations typical of *banba* ceremonies, where the dancer's face and torso are generally covered with decorations. In this way his personal identity —his physical body—is overlaid by *guruwari*, by forms epitomizing his ancestral, social identity.[4] Put in another way,

[4] On the depersonalizing aspect of facial masking, Edward Tiryakian (1968:83) has suggestively commented, "Everyone can recognize the mask and what it stands for as a social character. . . . The mask is the public medium of expressing and teaching what is most inherently sacred to the collectivity. The mask mediates the visible and the invisible; it relays one to the other. . . . [It is] the social cloak of the face."

his biological-physical being is overlaid by his artifactual or symbolic, ancestral "persona."

The result of this relatively dense symbolic covering is that the reality of everyday life is in effect shifted or inverted since the overlay of *guruwari* makes visible forms (that is, ancestral beings) not ordinarily visible in daily interaction. Through the formation of *guruwari* the *djugurba* area of experience, normally excluded from presentational immediacy (see above, Chapter 4), is integrated into the presentational field of the actor.

The relation between the actors (dancers and observers) and the action in *banba* ceremonial has certain parallels to the relation between the dreamer and his dream in that in both instances the direct presentation of *djugurba* experience is made possible through a shift in the ordinary structuring of the actor-action relationships of daily, "lived-in" experience. In ceremonial, the dancers are partly detached from their own personal identities through body covering implying identification with ancestors, and are engaged in an action that involves, according to Walbiri belief, a reenactment of events supposed to have occurred in another age. We can see such *reenactment* as combining the engagement of "acting out" with the disengagement of "looking at" events from outside them (since they are *re*enactments of *previous* occurrences). This sort of engaged-disengaged structuring of the actor-action relationship typifies the creation of *djugurba* events within the presentational immediacy of the individual's field of experience.

Iconography and Ceremonial Forms

In the typical *banba*, the dancer is decorated with red and white [5] fluff designs extending from the headdress over his

[5] The term for red is *yalyu-yalyu*, a reduplicated form of the term

face and down his body (see Plates 10, 13); he may carry certain additional objects such as decorated shields or a long pole attached to his back. Actors commonly carry bloodwood leaves associated with fertility, which they shake or beat on the ground as they dance, or these leaves may be attached to a central prop as in the flying ant ceremony described below.

Well-informed Walbiri men are themselves quite explicit about the relationship between their design iconography and the forms of certain ceremonial paraphernalia. Their awareness was most forcibly brought to my attention in one instance during the preparation of a circular headdress for a native cat ceremony belonging to a lodge of Djungarai-Djabaldjari men. This was of a circular type used also in some other *banba* I observed. Workers constructed the headdress of mulga branches shaped into a circle and wrapped with hair string. In this stage of preparation, it had a doughnut-like shape with a hole in the center.

As the preparations proceeded, I drew the mulga ring in my notebook. Four workers with whom I was sitting had already assisted me in drawing on my notebook page a design of concentric circles, depicting two camps connected by a meandering path line with footprints ranged along its sides.

_____

for blood. Fluff is reddened with blood, and blood is of course an important part of masculine ceremonies; its sexual connotations are a well-known feature of central Australian ritual. *Yalyu-djinda*, "one blood," is an expression Walbiri men use to refer to the unity of the patrilineal lodge (women do not share this "blood"). But the term is also used more widely, as a general equivalent of "one country" (*walya-djinda*). In its most general sense, "one blood" like "one country" can be used to convey the notion of kinship. The associations of white are less certain; there may perhaps be links with semen or/and milk, but I have no explicit evidence to this effect. Unfortunately, my data are weak on color symbolism, as I did not give it sufficient attention during my fieldwork.

This design represented the ancestor whose ceremony was being performed. Recognizing my second drawing as a picture of the headdress, they insisted that I attach it to the design above by drawing a connecting path (tail) line and ranging footprints along the sides. They identified the headdress as the camp or hole, and also called it *ngami*, a term denoting the deep-sided wooden scoop in which women carried water in the past that is also used to denote "mother" (as in *ngami-langu*, two people in the mother-child relationship). The headdress was regarded as feminine, and the line as masculine (the son of the female circle).

When this headdress was completed, the hole was covered by additional mulga, and red and white fluff was attached in concentric circles around a large central area. It was clear that in the mens' view this form represented the ancestral camp and the animal's hole.

The headdress was then placed on a shield and carried over to three men of the owning lodge. Two of these were old men, but the third, the son of one of them, was a young married man in his early thirties. Each of these individuals took the shield [6] with the headdress in turn and quivering ritually, sang over it. Workers then prepared the younger man (who, my informants pointed out, would be an important leader in this lodge when his father died), to be the performer. A mulga base for the headdress was bound to his head, and the

[6] The shield is, of course, a masculine implement, but its form parallels those of the oval containers used by women. The shield may also be used as a container for ceremonial materials such as fluff or blood. Masculine symbolism closely associates shields, baby carriers, and other containers. My impression is that the placing of the ceremonial object on the shield and its presentation to the masters has overtones suggestive of the baby in the carrier, but I did not think at the time to check this with informants.

headdress attached to it; he was then decorated with red and white fluff designs. During the process he occasionally shook his shoulders in a ritualized quivering.[7]

The design placed on the body was not the one shown to me in the drawing, but consisted of two crossed lines representing the tail and penis (path) of the animal (like the body design for the rat kangaroo, Plate 10). Nonconcentric circles representing testicles [8] were placed around the lines in a core-adjunct arrangement (Fig. 18, no. 1). The dancer was therefore decked out in forms representing both female and male elements, the camp and the path expressed in the combination of circular headdress and linear body design.

The performance was of the "camp" type. The dancer shuffled forward in the cleared space, beating bunches of bloodwood leaves against his legs and alternating this behavior with ritual quivering. The bloodwood leaves are always thought of as life-giving; men explained in this instance that they were "child-having, pregnant." The action as a whole expressed the procreative power of the ancestor who, as one man put it in reference to another ceremony of this type, was "calling up" his children.

The workers in this ceremony made symbols that brought together female and male sexuality (camp and path elements) in a synthesis on the body of the dancer; the dancer's actions symbolized procreation (the standard meaning in dancing of this type). Thus the workers provided the iconography of male and female sexuality through which the dancer asserted

[7] The signficance of ritual quivering has been suggested in Chapter 1.

[8] The circular shape representing the testicles suggests ambiguous male-female associations comparable to the ambiguous quality of the shield, which is a masculine object but oval in form like the feminine containers (see note 6 above).
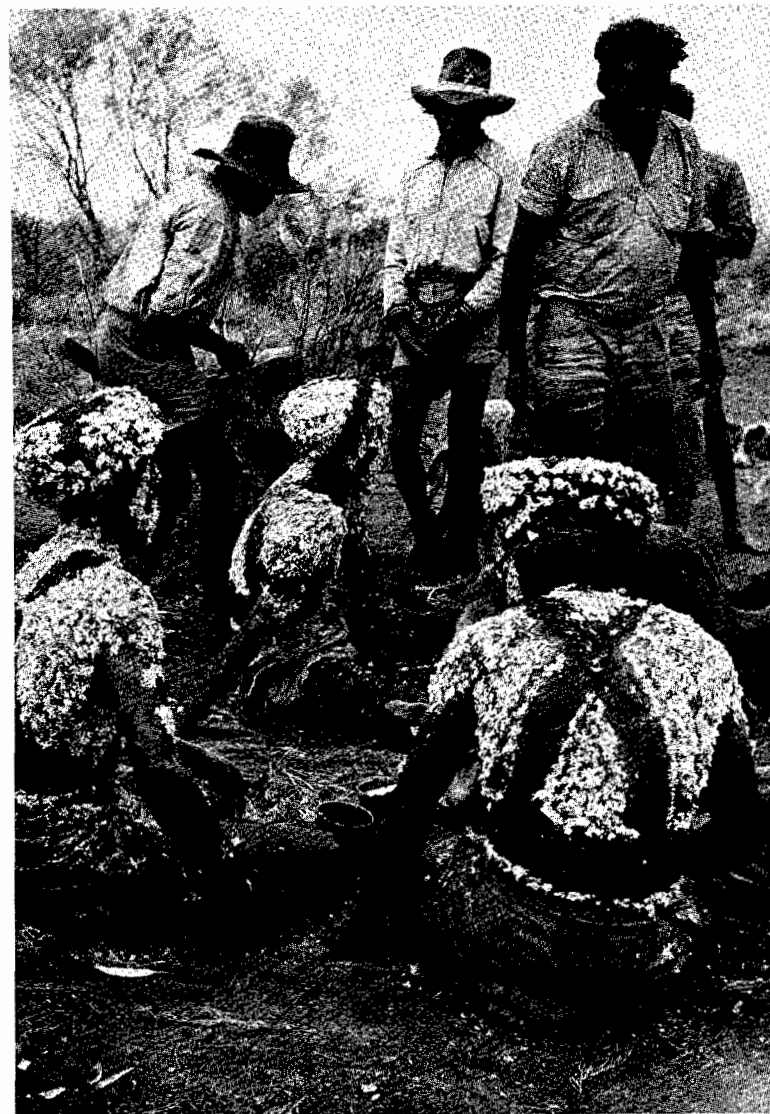
Plate 10. Preparations for a rat kangaroo ceremony. The dancers combine circle and line configurations. See Figure 18, no. 7, for meanings.

Figure 18. The iconography of *banba* ceremonies

	Body design	Object carried, or other ceremonial prop	Headdress	Typ act

1. Native cat (*djadjiri*) Djungarai-Djabaldjari

Arms

testicles   penis (path)

Back

hole camp water-carrier mother

2. Marsupial mouse (*djunganba*) (Plate 11) Djabangari-Djabanangga

path penis tail

Winds over face, torso, and arms

camp hole

3. Night (*munga*) and berry (*yagadjiri*) (Plate 12) Djungarai-Djabaldjari

face

on arms

on upper legs

Night (path)

stars

path, & sleeping in camp

A. Night. No headdress. Pole extends above head

B. *Yagadjiri* berry

stars

baby carrier scoop for food, etc.

Key ("Type of action" and design colors):
ⓒ = Fixed ceremony. Actor shuffles in place (camp).
✗ = Actor dances in toward other men (following track).
   Black areas = red in design unless otherwise stated. Designs were created with red and white fluff, but shields were painted.

igure 18 (continued)

	Body design	Object carried, or other ceremonial prop	Headdress	Type of action

. Kangaroo (*malu*) (Plate 13) Djuburula-Djagamara

paths

Torso and upper arm

scoop in which food is shaken

paths

tail, penis

. Flying ant (*bandjidi*) (Plates 14A, B) Djuburula-Djagamara

path

ribs

small camps

ants

ants flying around = "people"

hole (post set here)

Ground painting

Torso

ants

post = ant hill
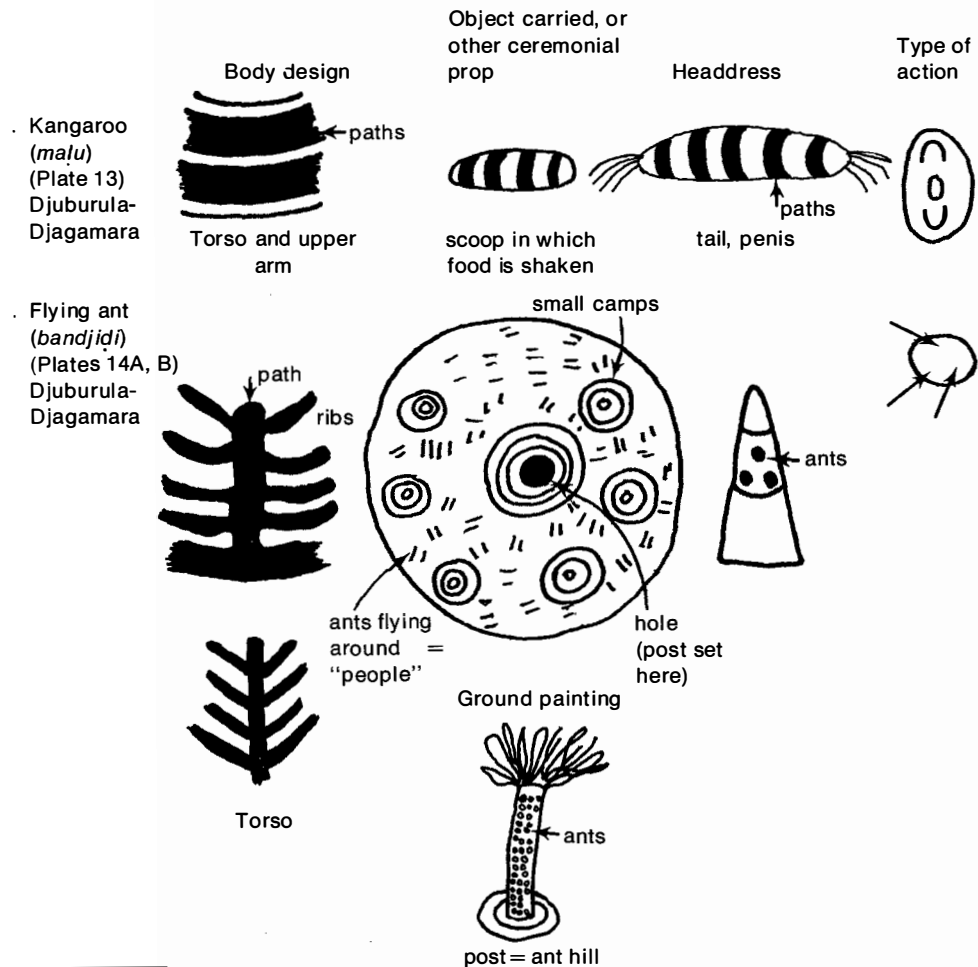
1–5. These ceremonies are discussed in the text, Chapter 7. Except for no. 2, marsupial mouse, all of the *banba* ceremonies illustrated were performed as part of or preliminary to circumcision ceremonies held in late December and early January 1957. 3. The body design for the *yagadjiri* berry dancer is not shown. It included broad horizontal stripes on the chest (possibly representing rock holes?).

Figure 18 (continued)

	Body design	Object carried, or other ceremonial prop	Headdress	Type of action

6. *Yawagi*
berry
Djuburula-
Djagamara

fruit

track of rain

Torso

raindrops

fruit

track of rain

Shield

Circular headdress

7. Rat
kangaroo
(*mala*)
(Plate 10)
Djungarai-
Djabaldjari

penis
tail print

Back & front

8. Pigeon
(*nguri*)
Djabangari-
Djabanangga

ribs=
children

pigeon-
ancestor
lying
down

ancestor
lying down

children

On face

6. This ceremony, like no. 5, was performed after the decoration of shields in the morning. Shields were prepared for both *yawagi* and *bandjidi,* among others, but *bandjidi* dancers did not carry the shields. The *yawagi* performer danced in flourishing the decorated shield in front of him. Shield designs were in charcoal and white. This *yawagi* belongs to a site different from that of the Djangala-Djambidjimba *yawagi* mentioned in Chapter 1.

7. Four dancers crouched facing north; grasping their knees, they held leafy branches in their mouths as they shuffled in place.

8. Another headdress of the same shape as the one shown had red and white horizontal stripes across it; this type was worn by two dancers representing female birds. The one shown here was worn by the "father." The headdress as a whole probably represents the bird's beak, as this meaning was given for a similarly shaped headdress in another bird ceremony. Beaks have phallic associations. The three dancers crouched in a cleared circular space with a small circular depression in the center. The two female dancers shuffled toward each other and sat down, one directly behind the other. The "father" clasped the two "female" dancers, an act that simulated sexual intercourse.
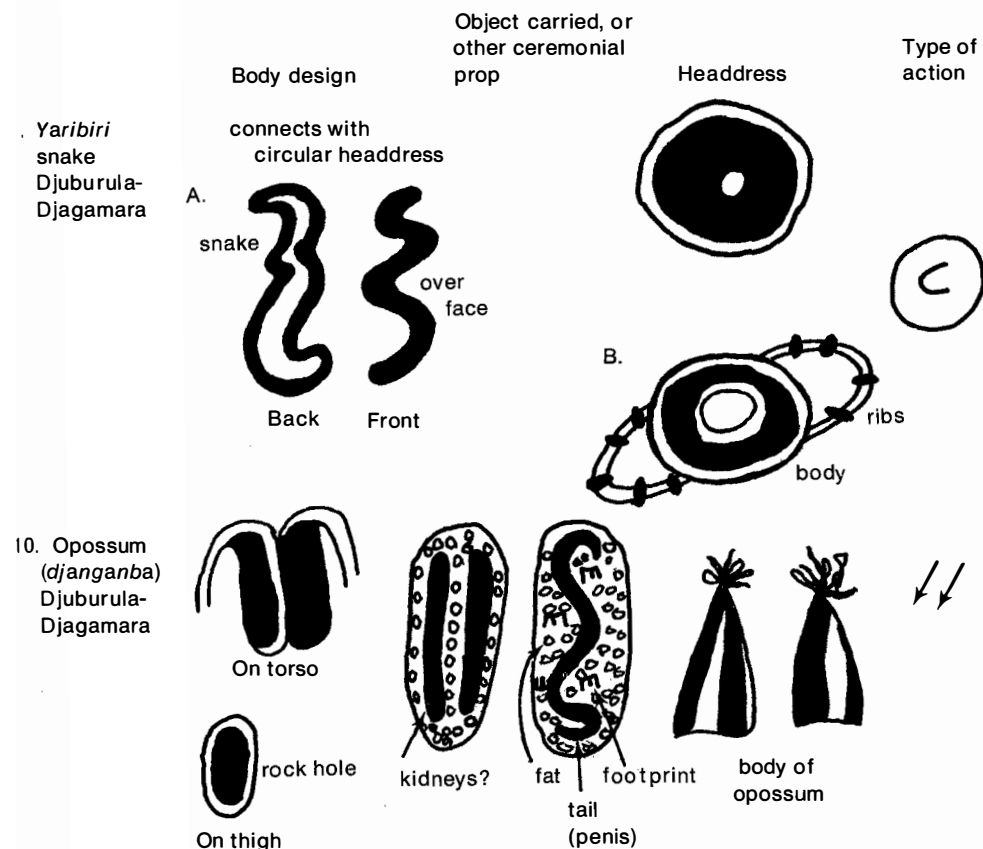
Figure 18 (continued)

	Body design	Object carried, or other ceremonial prop	Headdress	Type of action

. *Yaribiri*
snake
Djuburula-
Djagamara

connects with
circular headdress

A.

snake

Back   Front

over
face

B.

ribs

body

10. Opossum
(*djanganba*)
Djuburula-
Djagamara

On torso

rock hole

On thigh

kidneys?

fat

tail
(penis)

footprint

body of
opossum

9A. The body designs and headdress for a ceremony associated with Ngama cave. See Fig. 16, no. 10. The headdress probably represents the hole of the snake, as well as his coiled body, although meanings were not obtained in this instance. As in the marsupial mouse ceremony (no. 2) the circular headdress connects with the meander lines going over the body so that a typical circle-line figure is built up on the body of the performer. Cf. Mountford (1968), Plate 53a.

9B. The headdress only for a ceremony connected with another *yaribiri* site. Here the ribs of the snake, a prominent feature of the snake designs (see above Fig. 15A), are shown attached to his coiled body. Cf. Mountford (1968), Plate 65d, e.

10. Two performers danced toward the other men picking up the shields as they came. Quivering their shoulders and shaking the emu feathers on their arms, they clashed their shields together simulating a fight between the two opossum men. The shields are decorated with yellow ochre and white dots over a red ochered base.

the fecundity and so the continuity of the species and of his own patrilineal lodge.

This example may be compared with the marsupial mouse ceremony of the same type illustrated in Figure 18, no. 2, and Plate 11. In this ceremony, the elaborate headgear, consisting

Plate 11. Performer decorated for a marsupial mouse ceremony. See Figure 18, no. 2, for meanings.

of two large, circular forms, "pancaked" one on top of the other, represented the hole or nest (the camp) of the mouse where its young are laid. Lines of red and white fluff winding from the headdress across the face and around the dancer's torso represented the mouse's tail (penis and path). A typical camp-path figure was in this way built up on the dancer's body and head.

Another type of assemblage is illustrated in the night and *yagadjiri* berry ceremony (Fig. 18, no. 3; Plate 12) in which
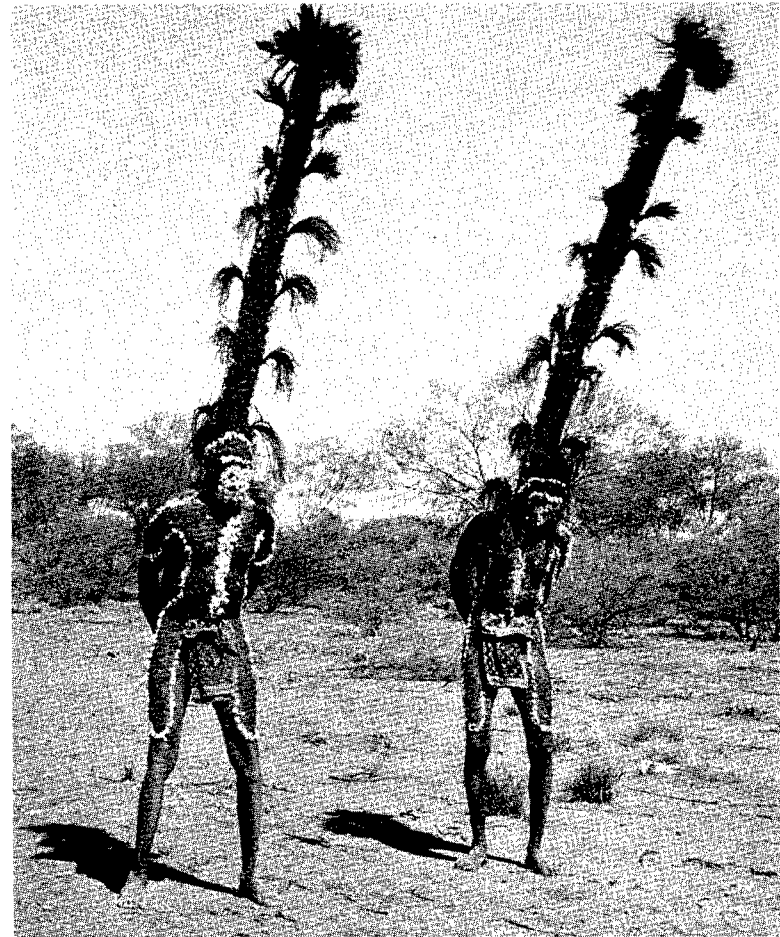

Plate 12. Performers dancing a ceremony representing the night. See Figure 18, no. 3, for meanings.

workers constructed two mulga poles about ten feet long representing the track of the night across the sky, as well as the night ancestor himself "lying down." Tufts of feathers attached to the poles represented stars according to some in-

formants, and were said to have first been men. (Compare the typical plural adjunct along the linear core in men's designs.) An oval headdress of mulga wrapped in hairstring and covered with red and white fluff represented the wooden scoop of the berry woman. Like the pole, the headdress was decorated with tufts of feathers representing stars. Men explained that the woman gathered berries in this scoop; the scoop also represented the food itself and the camp of this ancestor. In contrast to the pole, the headdress was the daytime, and "like a woman."

The ceremony referring to these two ancestors, at a site west of Yuendumu where they met, belonged to a lodge of Djabaldjari-Djungarai men, three of whom performed in the ceremony. Two Djungarai dancers danced with the poles; the third, a Djabaldjari man, wearing the oval headdress, played the part of the berry woman. Men stated that the latter was the "mother" of the night ancestor and identified her as a Nagamara woman (i.e., of the opposite patrimoiety to night itself, and in the subsection of the mother of Djungarai).

The actor playing the woman sat in a cleared space and beat the ground with a stone to simulate the pounding of food. The two night dancers traveled slowly in toward her, at times gesticulating with their hands to indicate that they were coming from a distance. This represented the night men coming to the berry woman to obtain food from her. According to the men's commentary, she then gives food to the night and they have intercourse together from which children result.

In this ceremony, the male and female (path and camp) elements are identified with different ancestors, the one (male) associated with traveling and the other (female) with the fixed "camp" position. The intercourse of the two (in effect the meeting of the camp and path, the joining of the circular and elongate elements) yields progeny.

The reader will have noticed that although the berry woman was described as the "mother" of the two night men, she also had sexual intercourse with them, a feature that did not disturb informants whom I later queried about it. Since night is actually Djungarai-Djabaldjari, the Nagamara berry woman is in fact in the category of "wife" to Djabaldjari men, as well as "mother" to Djungarai men. Perhaps we may conclude that the joining of night and day in intercourse, in food giving and receiving, and in the mother-son relationship synthesizes the different relationships and acts joining the patrimoieties.[9] The berry woman is mother, sexual partner (wife), and source of vegetable food; she condenses the three essential features of feminine role in her person.

Another type of activity was mimed in the kangaroo ceremony shown in Figure 18, no. 4 and Plate 13. The two dancers wore elongate ovoid headdresses; these represented the tail (penis) of the kangaroo. A slightly shorter, flat ovoid object represented the wooden scoop used by women in the past to collect and prepare vegetable foods. The two dancers crouched facing each other with the food container between them, and imitated the pounding, winnowing, and eating of grass seed.

It would be possible to translate this ensemble into the iconography as a typical actor-item type of figure of the kind we have seen commonly used to represent eating scenes in storytelling. Male and female elements are also brought to-

[9] Some informants suggested that the night "put" (*yira-nu*, put down), the moiety to which the Djabaldjari-Djungarai subsections belong, while the sun or daytime "put" the opposite moiety.

Plate 13. Performer decorated for a kangaroo ceremony. See Figure 18, no. 4, for meanings.

gether in this ceremony: the female element is the vegetable food scoop placed between the two actors [10] upon which their attention is focused; the actors themselves are wearing masculine emblems on their heads.

The basic circle-line iconography may be utilized in other kinds of assemblages such as those involving ground paint-

[10] Although the shape of the "container" as constructed in this ceremony was not as round as "female" objects usually are in the symbolism, the winnowing scoop has, of course, feminine connotations. Relative to the headdress, it was, moreover, short and somewhat rounded, more like the oval used to represent containers in sand stories. Thus it contrasted with the form of the masculine headdress.

ings, as in the flying ant (bandjiḍi) ceremony I witnessed that took place as one among a medley of banba type ceremonies.[11] It was performed in a single area by different patrilodges during one day of a circumcision ceremony.

Conical headdresses were made by workers at one shade; a short post was also initially prepared here and then brought over to the second shade where lodge masters were sitting. In this instance, substantial help was given by masters in decorating the post, which was rubbed with red ochre and painted with a cluster of white dots representing ants, while the men sang. A bunch of leaves was attached to the top of the post.

Meanwhile, workers dug a hole in a position roughly central between the shades where the different ceremonies were being prepared. This was to be the dancing ground for the ant performance. After the hole had been dug, water was poured on the soil and blood drawn from the arm was rubbed on it as an adhesive for the fluff decorations. Red fluff was then laid in concentric circles inside the hole and then up and around it on the surface of the ground (Plate 14A). White fluff was added to complete the design.

The conical headdresses, after being prepared by workers at their shade, were then brought to the masters' shade and laid on shields. High-pitched ritual calls preceding this were voiced again after the presentation of the headdresses to the masters.

Four men (two of whom belonged to the patrilodge, and two to the same patrimoiety but not the lodge of the owners) were decorated as dancers (for body designs see Figure 18, no. 5), and the decorated post was placed in the hole at the

[11] See also Munn (1967), in which this ceremony is discussed in relation to the Walbiri concept of "coming-out–going-in."

Plate 14A. Preparing a sand painting for a flying ant ceremony. A hole has been made for a post; workers are decorating the hole and the area around it with concentric circles in red and white fluff.

Plate 14B. The finished post and sand painting for the flying ant ceremony. See Figure 18, no. 5, for meanings.

center of the ground painting (Plate 14B). The dancers crouched on the sand painting, beating the ground with leaves as they converged on the pole. As they shuffled inward, the standing observers clustered around them and surged inward giving the characteristic ritual shouts (wah! wah! wah!) as they did so. When the dancers had approached as close as possible to the post, headdresses were quickly removed; this marked the end of the ceremony.

The concentric circles in the sand painting represented the central camp of the ant; smaller circles and dashes around it on the ground represented subordinate camps and the numerous ants themselves (also referred to as "people") flying around. The ants were also shown climbing up and down the post, which represented an anthill with its life-giving leaves on top.

Men said that when the dancers shuffled on the ground painting they were the ants crawling around their camp; their convergence upon the hole and post represented the ant ancestors going into the ground, while the removal of the headdresses meant that they had "gone in." At the same time, the shuffling on the painting and the movement into the hole expressed the multiplication of the ants, and so also of human progeny.

In this assemblage the props include an elongate form (the post) set into the center of concentric circles. The actors converge into the hole, just as in women's sand stories ancestral people are shown converging on a hole, "going in." Elongate and circular elements as well as the plural elements suggesting fecundity (the numerous swarming ants) combine to create a sexual imagery of fertility that is carried out in the procreative significance of the action.

This procreative significance is synthesized with the notion

of the ancestor's death expressed in his entry into the ground, and in the coordinate removal of the headdress. It is as if the ancestor translates his own embodiment into his progeny: the act of procreation involves the death ("going in") of the genitor. Indeed, the removal of the headdress that closes the *banba* dramas (so ending the ancestor's reembodiment) suggests that this meaning may also be implied in other ceremonies of this type since, as we have seen, all carry the connotation of fertilization even though the idea of "going in" need not be directly dramatized. On this view, the total process of artifact construction and dramatic presentation epitomizes the ancestor's life cycle: the workers create the artifactual forms through which the ancestor is embodied; as the embodiments of ancestors, the masters mime scenes in their lives, or simply depict the ancestors in their camps or traveling in the country. During the dramatizations, they are also generating their progeny, and at the end their embodiment is finished by the removal of the headdress (death).

Discussion: Symbolic and Biological Creation

On the basis of the characteristics of *banba* ceremonies described here, it is possible to suggest that the *banba* production of ancestral forms constitutes a process whereby sexual-procreative resources are transfered from one patrimoiety to the other, and from maternally-affinally linked males into a patrilineal descent group, a process that makes possible transgenerational, cosmic continuity. What the workers make is the *guruwari* of the ancestor, that is, his procreative potency as well as his visual identity marks. Through their performance, the masters realize the generative potential of the ancestral forms: it is as if they change ancestors into descendants, and so maintain the continuity of species and persons.

It is interesting to compare this pattern of symbolic creativity with procreation at the familial level. On the ceremonial plane, masculine construction and dramatic presentation of *ancestral* forms yields *progeny;* on the familial plane, women are the vehicles of male *progeny* who continue the descent line of patrilineal *ancestors*. In certain respects the structure of ceremonial creativity reverses that of the family: the personnel are all males rather then male and female, and the creation begins with the formation of *ancestors* who *then* proceed to the production of their progeny. This set of reversals marks the distinction between masculine, symbolic or social creativity, and feminine, biological creativity.

In initiation ceremonies we find the most obvious point of intersection of these two kinds of creativity, since in them the novice is being shifted out of his status as a child in his family of orientation into adulthood as a potential husband and father in his own family of procreation. This occurs of course in conjunction with his entry into ancestral cult. Thus the transition from child to adult and potential father is mediated by the assumption of identification with ancestors, that is, *ancestral fathers* and procreators. The novice comes into his maturity as a member of an ancestral "line" at the same time that he becomes the potential source of generation of a new family.

This locks him into the social structure with respect both to the traditional past and the personal future. Put in another way, we may say that for a boy the status of potential procreator or parent is split into the two correlative planes of the societal or sociopolitical (ancestral) and personal-familial. His ancestral, symbolic role relates his generative potentiality to the social system at large, while the familial one relates it to his life cycle and personal kin.

The iconography of *banba* ceremonies is largely in keeping with this generative import. Although both the circular and linear (i.e., feminine and masculine) elements are not brought into play in all the ceremonies (just as they are not always found together in any single design), nevertheless there is a tendency for some representation of both to occur in any single ceremony (see Fig. 18). In all the instances of *banba* I observed, at least one of these elements was part of the configuration, and in most of the ceremonies an occurrence of plural elements suggesting procreation was included in the assemblage. The dancers decked out in these ceremonial forms or coming into bodily contact with them (as when there is a painting on which performers dance) are assuming the role of procreators with respect to the socionatural order; they condense the potency of heterosexual relationships within the male constituency of the patrilineal descent group. In this way the biological potency of sexuality is converted into a symbolic communication that asserts the moral-legal nature of heterosexual and affinal interchanges as constitutive of the enduring structure of society.

Conclusion: Walbiri Iconography, a Code for Experience

When we examine collective forms such as myth, ritual action, or iconography as components of social systems, we are directing attention to the various symbolisms that encode social systems and values as persuasive, directly felt "realities" in the personal experience of individuals. The persuasiveness of these collective forms arises in part from their tangible presentation of a diverse load of affective meanings within the immediacy of sense imageries. Their validation in the community where they operate is not derived from empirical testing or logical analysis but from this rhetorical expressiveness through which they may come to map specific desired ends or attitudes on the actor's experience of life situations. To paraphrase a recent comment by G. B. Milner (1969:22), collective representations are among the mechanisms through which the sociocultural structure gets a "grip" on the individual. As Victor Turner has pointed out in connection with ritual, symbols make "the Durkheimian 'obligatory' desirable" (1969:53).

It is, of course, in Durkheim's study of central Australian religion that the notion of collective representations as symbols mediating the authority of the social to the individual imagination was first expounded. Central to Durkheim's argument were the "totemic emblems" that have also been the subject of the present study.

I have attempted to demonstrate that Walbiri totemic designs are part of a widely ramified graphic system that is closely bound up with linguistic communication in Walbiri thought and usage. It would seem that the sustaining groundwork or underpinning of the design iconography lies not simply in the ceremonial and "sacred" uses of designs, but more fundamentally in the casual use of graphic forms in conversation and storytelling. In these latter contexts meanings referring to daily experience and tradition are regularly pumped into the graphs, and so graphic forms enter into the Walbiri imagination as a kind of visual language for ordering meanings in general, rather than simply as a fixed set of forms for representing or referring to totemic ancestors. The simplicity and generality of the visual elements (and their consequent economy) ensures a high degree of repetitiveness; this in turn is a part of the dynamic through which such forms can come to penetrate the imaginations of members of a community.

Since the same visual element may be used for a relatively wide range of meanings, each such element is a kind of visual connective for various different meaning items. In much narrative usage, however, this function is not immediately relevant: only one of the meaning items is denoted at a time. But in the men's *guruwari* design system or, more generally, when the graphs are directly linked in Walbiri thought with the ancestors, then the "connective" function of the visual elements may come to the fore and serve to release boundaries between different meaning items and domains of experience. As we have seen, the most important graphic operators in this sort of release are the circle and line (for not all the elements regularly function in this way). These forms regularly function as visual connectives between the different domains of "country" and natural species.

Metaphoric syntheses of this kind occur predominantly in Walbiri men's (rather than the women's) elaboration of the iconography, just as it is within the corporate operations of male cult that fabrications of ancestral designs effloresce and become sufficiently dense to constitute a body covering, or to appear on the surface of other media in varied visual displays. The apex of visual elaboration and condensation of meanings is reached within the masculine iconography.

This general difference in the semantic and formal complexity of men's and women's iconographies is an aspect of the over-all complementarity of the sex roles with respect to the sociobiological maintenance of life: it is men who are concerned with the societal plane of life maintenance that depends wholly upon the fabrication of symbols; by means of these artifactual forms sexual-procreative energy can be contained and released for the society as a whole. Through the reciprocal operation of the moieties and the different totemic lodges in *banba* ceremonies men continuously exchange procreative symbols of transgenerational continuity, thus binding together the segmentary, patrilineal groups and by this means maintaining the cosmos as a whole.

The feminine role on the other hand, is focused in the personal, biological, and family plane of life maintenance. The part women play in ritual (including their role in men's initiation rites) and the major functions of their own ancestral designs tend to be confined to such matters as female sexuality, personal health, and the growth of children. While men also perform rituals, notably *ilbindji*, with a parallel focus on masculine sexuality, these form only a part of their wider ritual interests.

In addition, women do not have a corporate group organization, and the transmission of ancestral designs is channeled through the dogma of personal dreams rather than through

descent group organization. Rather than the descent group, the individual person is the primary medium of design transmission. Although men also may dream designs, the masculine emphasis is upon the dreams of the patrilineal ancestors.

The difference between men's and women's storytelling is instructive in this respect. Women's stories are focused in the rhythms of family life: the activities of sleeping and eating that are localized in the camp, the separation of men and women for hunting and foraging activities and their reunification at night within the camp. Over and over again the stories reiterate the microtemporal rhythms of the daily cycle.

In men's narratives, on the other hand, the site-path pattern forms a "language" for the macrotemporal rhythms of nomadic movement from place to place "following" the water holes (and implicitly the food and game, since a shifting of locale is required as the water and food of a particular site give out). It is not only that this pattern refers to the wider temporal frame within which the daily cycles are included, but in the graphic form of the concentric circle and line formations of *guruwari* designs this pattern also provides a model at the macrotemporal level for the microtemporal·daily cycle. The circular "camp" connotes the vital activities of eating, sleeping (dreaming), and sexuality of the family camp; similarly, the track line expresses movement toward and away from the camp, with its connotations of following game and food. Thus the basic structure of microtime (an alternation of camp activities with movements away from and toward the camp) is recapitulated in shorthand form through the macrotemporal model developed in masculine narrative and iconography.

In addition, men's narratives bind events to an objective geographical space·through the listing of named places. This

spatial localization yields the basic symbolism of transgenerational continuity, since the sense of continuity over the generations is "carried" in the experience of the country as a network of objectively identifiable places, the prime "givens" of the external environment. Life maintenance at the cosmic level involves the manipulation of symbols of "country," the latter being the fundamental concrete medium of the experience of unchanging permanence. Masculine iconography synthesizes different levels of temporal rhythm in the life cycle with these experiences of permanent reality extending over the generations.

That women's role in life maintenance focuses upon the biological and familial level is again crystallized in Walbiri notions about *guruwari* as a fertilizing potency. Women conceive through the entry of *guruwari* inside them while men refertilize the socionatural order through manufacturing *guruwari* symbolic of heterosexuality and procreation in visible forms outside themselves. It is in this sense that *guruwari* appears to be the essence of masculine generative potency.

On the one hand, *guruwari* are inside the living body, having previously entered into the individual's mother to cause conception. On the other hand, *guruwari* constitute the overt media or artifacts—the visible identity marks made by men—through which the ancestor's body reemerges in perceptual form. Through this reemergence the *djugurba* world, ordinarily beyond the immediate presentational field of the individual, can be brought back within this field.

In this sense, the "shift" from the biological plane of procreation to the cosmic plane is expressed in a shift from the individual's body with its inner *guruwari* powers connecting each person in his personal, familial status to the ancestors, to the artifactual embodiment connecting the individual in his

status as patrilineage and patrimoiety member to the ancestors. In the first instance, the body covers the *guruwari*, the unseen life energy it encloses, and the mode of relationship between the individual and the *djugurba* ancestors is one in which the ancestors are displaced from the actor's presentational field of experience. In the second instance, *guruwari* in effect cover and extend the body, and the ancestors are brought by this means into the actor's presentational field. Moreover, through this second mode of embodiment, *guruwari* potency again goes inside the ground and renews the fertility of humans and natural species.

We may say that *guruwari* are felt to be components of both the inner, individual person and the outer social world of sense experience and social interaction. This pattern of attitudes is reiterated in slightly different ways in other notions about *guruwari* I have discussed. For instance, while *guruwari* are said to have originated in the interior world of dreams (and of the ancestral past), they must be reproduced outside of dreams in the waking, social world (the world of the present day) where they can be observed by others, and where they may function as elements in a construction or decorating process in which actors relate to each other and the ancestors. This "necessary" shift from interior dream to exterior reality suggests the importance of binding the inner imagination to the outer, social world, the inner self to the external social order. This pattern of emphasis holds, as we have seen, for Walbiri design theory in general, not just *guruwari* proper.

In still another way, *guruwari* are seen as binding the body to the external environment, since they are regarded as markings left by ancestors in the country: in this respect, they are formed by the intersection of bodily actions, or the body

with its implications of transience and mortality, and "country," the media of transgenerational continuity. The designs reflect this "intersection" in their semantics, for they commonly depict both bodily features of an ancestor and places in the countryside.

In the concept of *guruwari*, notions about social relationship and external form mingle with those referring to interior experience and invisible sources of life energy. *Guruwari* are the "visual sedimentations" of a movement connecting individual consciousness or bodily being and the outer, social world. They are both the body's interiorized life energy and the "transbodily" social forms that objectify this energy.

In conclusion, I should like to comment on the structure of the men's *guruwari* design system by comparing it with the Walbiri subsection system. Each of these systems constitutes a well-developed, sociocultural code operating with different media, and in different domains, to convert one level of sociocultural order into another. To use Lévi-Strauss's metaphor (1966:136), these codes contain an "adjustable thread" that gives the user the means of "focusing" on different levels of abstraction and social relationship.

As I suggested in Chapter 1, the subsection terminology makes it possible to project egocentrically defined kinship relationships on a generalized sociocentric grid that locates them in terms of the over-all social structure. Like the subsection system, the *guruwari* designs map a particularistic, specific level onto a generalizing, societal one, but in this case the specifics are different totemic phenomena (or species categories) rather than egocentric kinship categories or relationships. On the one hand, each such species can be represented by its own distinctive designs or visual configura-

tions; on the other hand, the common graphic structure and shared visual categories that constitute the means of design construction reorder the species in terms of a common pattern (Munn 1966:946). We have seen moreover, that this order is built out of arrangements of elements constituting the dominant central symbols of transgenerational continuity, namely, the circular camp (female) and the elongate track (male), as well as the less dominant, varied plural elements apparently expressive of the notion of fecundity that constitute the third component of the fertility symbolism. Put in another way, the primary vehicle of this ordering level is the camp-track (circle-line) formula.

These symbols are applicable to all totemic ancestors and therefore express the fertility and continuity of the Walbiri community and its environment as a whole—that is, the total spatiotemporal order. Each design or visual configuration utilizing these elements and arrangements projects the particular shapes and characteristics of different species into generalizing ordering patterns and symbols. In effect, the designs coin representations of distinctive, separate species out of unifying symbols that relate to the social order as a whole. Conversely, they project the general in terms of the imagery of the specific—the unifying symbolism in terms of the particular shapes and qualities of different species.

In an earlier chapter I pointed out that the logic of internal contrasts within the design system does not articulate systematically with the differentiation of any set of social units (whether these be patrilineages, subsection, or moiety categories) in the way that it does in a genuine heraldry. Yet the design structure has an over-all fit with a segmentary social system in that it provides a field for expressing diversity and differentiation within a unifying pattern (or unification

within a "system of differences"). Moreover it is apparent that patrilodge members in "dancing their own *guruwari*" are expressing the segmental differentiation of the patrilodges and at the same time their integration into a unifying societal order.

Obviously, differentiation within the graphic-totemic system is functionally connected with the expression of group segmentation, but the two systems (the social and the graphic) are not structurally isomorphic. Rather, the differentiation of visual forms expressive of species variation is the equivalent within the graphic-totemic system of group segmentation in the social system.

In this respect, it is significant that the designs and totems are owned by the individual patrilodges and not by the subsection couples (semimoieties) or moieties. At the former level of social organization we are not dealing with dichotomous principles, and accordingly the number of social units (that is, patrilodges) involved is irrelevant to the normative structure; on the other hand, at the moiety and semimoiety level the number of units is significant, for here we have categories created by the fixed ordering patterns of binary opposition that subdivide the whole society.

Similarly, within the design code, the number of species represented is indefinite (and irrelevant to the system), as is the number of totemic species itself. The principles of order provide a "languagelike" productivity such that an unlimited number of visual messages about the phenomenal world may be coined. This lack of numerical fixity (or lack of a structure of binary oppositions) at the level of species representation, corresponds, within the design system, to the same feature in the social system with respect to patrilineal descent groupings.

But when we consider the second level of the *guruwari* designs—where differentiation is collapsed into the general categories of over-all societal unity, then indeed binary oppositions and the utilization of a fixed number of basic contrasts become central: the circle-line (female-camp, male-path) opposition constitutes the dominant symbolism through which this level of order is expressed. On this level, then, order is defined by means of complementarity and polarization: the polarities together express wholeness or "unity." This is, of course, also the method for expressing wholeness or unity in the moiety (and subsection) system, since by defining a complementary dualism, one also defines a particular kind of social unity.

It may be noted that the symbolic content of the circle-line opposition (female vs. male) is correlative with the principles underlying the patrimoiety division, since the latter involves both a patrilineal (male-based) principle of segmentation, and an affinal-matrilateral (female) principle uniting the segments in a reciprocal structure. Thus in both types of code a dualism involving the opposition "male vs. female" orders the whole.[1]

In the visual symbolism, however, each species can be portrayed in terms of the image of the bipolarized whole, not classified into one side of the polarity or the other. The visual forms are "multivocal" condensation symbols that can project an image of dynamic societal unity in microcosm. In effect, each phenomenon is treated as a symbol of the social whole.

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[1] As indicated in Chapter 1, the male-female opposition is one of the fundamental principles operative in the allocation of kin to different categories in the subsection system. As the present study indicates, and as other writers have recently emphasized (Meggitt 1972; Peterson 1969), the opposition constitutes a fundamental underlying principle of Walbiri social structure pervasively formulated in different modalities.

It is significant, in this respect, that the circle-line figure is a spatiotemporal icon, condensing both the macrotemporal site to site movement, and the microtemporal rhythms of the daily cycle. It is as if this figure constituted Walbiri life experience in time abstracted to its simplest, most general pattern. In the design system this abstract "shape of space-time" provides the unifying format for the concrete variance of the species world.

This brings us to an important functional difference between the visual symbolism and the verbally expressed subsection code: the design imagery is among the mechanisms for maintaining the individual's *experience* of unity and differentiation in the social order, while the subsection code is a cognitive device for *stating* the framework of the social order. The former is a structure for regulating experience; the latter is a mode of social classification.

Codes that are structures for regulating experience must always be built through the use of sense imageries of various kinds, because these images provide the only possible basis for a presentation of "objective correlatives" for the spatiotemporally structured, sensual formations of subjective experience. Moreover, these correlatives regularly function (as do the Walbiri *guruwari*) as parts of ritual assertions that certain key social relations are "categorically imperative," constitutive of society as such and formed as a kind of natural law. The binding of such codes into the institutions of a society is a crucial feature of social functioning since through them societies create bridging mechanisms between the objective determinations of social order and the subjective determinations of individual experience.

Glossary

Balga	Body; embodiment; physical presence
Banba	Fertility or life-maintenance ceremonies
Bilirba	A spirit entity within the body—of two kinds: the matrilineal *bilirba* possessed by both men and women of one matriline; the patrilineal *bilirba* shared by men of one patrilodge
Bulaba	Public camp ceremony prepared by men
Daradjara	Different designs created by one ancestor at a single place
Djugurba	Ancestral times; dream; story
Gira	Owners of a totemic place and its ceremonies ("masters")
Gurungulu	Workers who prepare a ceremony; men of the opposite patrimoiety to the masters
Guruwalba	A childlike creature who lives at an ancestral site and is said to impregnate a woman by throwing a missile at her
Guruwari	Fertility essence; ancestral marks left in the country; men's ancestral designs
Ilbindji	Men's ancestral designs and ceremonies for attracting women
Manguru	Ancestral designs painted by men on their wives
Ngura	Camp; camping site or place
Walya	Soil; ground; country
Wiri	Strong, powerful, important
Wulya	Foot; footprints

Yaba	People; human beings as opposed to ancestors or animals
Yangaridji	See *manguru*
Yawalyu	Women's ancestral designs and ceremonies
Yidjaru	The present day; true, real, waking, as opposed to sleep
Yinawuru	Women's term for *guruwalba*
Yirani	"Put," in the sense of paint or mark; put down
Yiri	Song; name; mark
Yiriyi	Path or track

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