

STANNER AND MUTJINGGA:
A REINTERPRETATION OF MYTH

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Stanner and Mutjingga: A Reinterpretation of Myth

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ABSTRACT

F.E.H. Stanner's (1963) analysis of the Murin'bata myth of Mutjingga is one of the most famous anthropological analyses of a native text. In his account, Stanner argues that the myth focuses on the way in which men as social beings are related to and made congruent with the cosmos.

It is my contention here that Stanner's exegesis fails to account for some of the significant elements of the myth-- principally the social and symbolic nature of women--and that his interpretation can remain only because he ignores those elements and concentrates on a limited sphere of symbolic elements. The purpose of my thesis is to highlight these elements which Stanner ignores and to show their fundamental position in the myth.

To do so I adopt a structuralist methodology (see Hymes 1971; Leach 1971; Levi-Strauss 1971), which will allow me to analyse the social and symbolic relations between the myth's characters, the spatical context of the myth's action and the structure of the myth's symbolic motifs, areas which Stanner does not deal with systematically.

In the thesis, I point out that it is a mistake to exclude women from consideration when one is analysing a statement about the role of humans in the universe, and that the role of men in the universe makes sense only in the context of its juxtaposition to the role of women. In the myth, women are central characters

who instigate and propel the course of actions, and it is as the basic causal force that women function in Murin'bata society. Thus, men can be seen not so much as ritual actors than as ritual reactors. Furthermore, I show that while the myth stands as an ideological statement of men's ritual superiority to women, it also states that rituals, both social and religious, exist only within the context of male-female relations. Thus, the transformations that occur in the myth define the transformations of social relationships of men and women as they enter adult life.

In short, though Stanner states that there is an opposition between analyses of myths that see meaning in social terms and those that emphasize the myth's ontological aspects, what I show is that both types of interpretation can be encompassed under a single analytical rubric--that social referents are thought about in philosophical terms, and not in opposition to philosophy.

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CHAPTER 1

STANNER AND MUTJINGGA

Introduction

This thesis examines the role of women in myths and rituals that are the exclusive property of men. The thesis is a reinterpretation of the central myth of a male initiation cult, "Mutjingga, The Wrongful Turning of Life." (1) The ethnographic focus of the thesis is W.E.H. Stanner's (2) analysis of the male cult of Karwadi found amongst the Murin'bata of the Northern Territory of Australia.

The Murin'bata occupy the coastal area between the Fitzmaurice River and Port Keats. During the time of Stanner's study (1932-36 and 1957-59), they were undergoing radical change in the social and economic spheres. Traditionally a hunting and gathering people, they were being incorporated into the European farming economy of the area. During this period of change the myth of Mutjingga was recorded by Stanner (1960), J. Falkenberg (1962) and R. Robinson (1966).

Stanner presents the myth of Nutjingga as an essay on the continuity of social life by the invocation of forces beyond it. The meaning is in the relationship that this brings about between society and the cosmos, as an expression of the "ontological reality" perceived by the Aborigines. It is an expression of a belief in an authority that exists outside of society and at the same time can be joined with it.

Elder men offer unruly boys as a sacrifice to a sacred being, Karwadi, The All-Mother. Through this offering the initiates are taught the principle of life that good and evil rest together.

It is to this political nature of the myth and ritual that the reinterpretation will address itself. The view taken here is that the myth of Nutjingga is an expression of the political and economic relations of men and women. Among the issues raised by the myth is a conflict over the creation and maintenance of Life and order. The conflict is framed as one between men and women to retain control over that process; the Old Woman through treachery becomes a threat to the development of male children, and the men, through the act of murder, avenge that treachery, saving Life. By focusing upon the fertility and symbolism of women in the myth and ritual, men secure the continuity of Life, the traditions which are crucial to it, and symbolically legitimise the nature of their authority.

Whereas Stanner looks at the myth and ritual as statements about the metaphysical realm of the Murin'bata, I propose to look at the myth and ritual as fundamental statements regarding the nature of authority in society.

The question of the position of women in society is a central issue to the growing body of literature on women in anthropology. The position of women is a question in two parts; first, it is analytical. By this is meant that the conceptual tools that are used have been seen to obscure the dynamic of sexuality in society rather than reveal how women as a "sex" are participants in society (see Rubin 1975; Ortner 1973; Ardener 1972). What Ardener terms the 'technical' problem further complicates analyses of women. Access to women as informants and the subsequent incorporation of their perspectives is often limited. The dynamic of sexuality is often reduced to a presentation of what men do and say about themselves and society, and what women are seen to do.

Of concern to Ardener is the symbolic expression of the status of women, particularly those symbols which serve as a basis for authority for one or the other sex (Giovannini 1978). Amongst the Murin'bata, (3) the exclusively male cult of Karwadi provides the basis for a sacred distinction between men and women which extends into the secular realm. In the ethnographic material on the Murin'bata presented by Stanner (1936, 1937, 1963, 1964) and Falkenberg (1962), men are made sacred,

and ultimately socially powerful, by symbols which represent a woman. Why this should appear in the context of a male dominated society is particularly significant to the analysis of power relationships between the sexes.

The core of Murin'bata religious activities is the cult of Karwadi, The All-Mother Karwadi. She is known by two names, Nutjingga, a public name used in the context of the myth, and Karwadi, a secret name known only to men who have been through the rites of initiation. It is to her that mature men turn in order to become religious men, 'kadu punj', and learn the mysteries that govern their existence. Women are systematically excluded from knowledge regarding her purpose and significance for men. According to Stanner in On Aboriginal Religion (1963), because of male knowledge about Nutjingga, women face a ritual and social devaluation which is inconsistent with their functional or ontological position. Women are excluded from the high rites of the culture, appearing only in the 'negative' role of audience. The nature of knowledge as a condition of social participation is tied to the issue of the status of women.

According to Stanner, women are "excluded" as a result of the actions of beings in The Dreaming, the mythical past of Aboriginal tradition. In this period the actions of the culture heroes defined how men were to live for all times. The Nutjingga myth tells how Nutjingga and, as it shall be shown, all women became a threat to men and children, and of the resulting

restrictions placed on women and their activities. Women are subject to severe sanctions in regards to their participation in any ritual or sacred clan or camp activity. Stanner interprets this exclusion as a 'negative' valuation of women supported by men through their participation in the cult of Karwadi.

After reviewing Stanner's analysis, I was struck by his inference that women are "devalued" because of their "exclusion" from the secrets of the rites. A woman appears in the myth as the dominant character and women have significance as actors within the rite. This is confirmed by Berndt (1951) who indicates that, despite the restrictions on their participation in secret male rites, women are "directly responsible for the efficacy of a whole series of ceremonies" (Berndt 1951:xxvii). What is then significant is, given this importance of women, how then is their "devalued" status derived and how they are responsible for the "efficacy" of the rites?

Stanner's presentation of the Mutjingga myth raises questions of particular significance to the issue of women and sexual stratification. The first is the expression of the dynamics of sexual stratification here examined as the exclusion of women and its correlation with their "devaluated" status. Ortner (1973) in her discussion of the "universal" devaluation of women equates exclusion from social arrangements with the devaluated status of women. Statements defining women as devaluated are significant indicators as to the basis and legitimacy of power relationships within society. Layton's (1976) analysis

further this by suggesting that men must exclude women in order to ensure the proper ritual condition of some types of rites. In dealing with initiation rites for men it is important to exclude women. When, however, the rite is about fertility, it is most important to involve women. How women are involved in either type of rite is crucial to its success.

Another question addressed to the myth relates to the social roles used in the narrative. If, as Stanner repeatedly stresses, the social models impart no meaning, why are women excluded from the rites on the basis of the actions of a woman in the myth? Stanner's analysis claims Mutjingga is a power, not a representation based on any social entity. I contend, however, that Mutjingga is a representation of women. What she does makes her a model for men of all women. Her actions, and the actions of others in *The Dreaming*, established patterns of behaviour for those of the Here-and-Now. They are social models of potential behaviours, both those that are desirable and those types of behaviours that are not. Part of the meaning of the myth to be discerned is the nature of the relationship between the mythic characters and their real social counterparts.

In reinterpreting the myth I will attempt to show that the issues of knowledge and the sexual dynamic in the Murin'bata ideology is bound to the notion of exclusion. The exclusion of women from the myth and rite of Karwadi takes only a partial form. Women, who are the initiates' mothers, appear at the end

of both the myth and the ritual as the audience. I interpret this role to be crucial to the action and the meaning of the myth as a whole.

The reinterpretation presented here stresses these questions and the ideological implications of the myth as it defines men and women. Myth is seen here as a medium through which conflicts that arise in society can be ideologically mediated. In the myth of Mutjingga, conflict arises from the violation of social obligations.

Mutjingga appears to be an essay on the consequences of female authority in society. It is a sign to women of male authority and to men of their own necessary role in the maintenance of life.

The issues raised here are not fully resolved within the reinterpretation of the myth. There does appear to be sufficient cause to pursue the issue of women in the context of the Murin'bata material. The interpretation presented by Stanner is in many respects a classic (see Hiatt 1975). His interpretation is an expression of a male view both in terms of the ethnographic basis and the analytical presuppositions.

In presenting a reinterpretation, I will begin with an examination of Stanner's own thesis to determine the theoretical basis for his devaluation of women. From there I will proceed to an examination of the ethnographic material to explore the nature of male/female relations within the Murin'bata social and

cosmological network. Using Stanner's own interpretation and additional ethnographic material I will present a reinterpretation of the myth of Mutjingga as it relates to the relations between men and women. This interpretation stresses the ideological rather than metaphysical implications of myth.

Notes

1. Stanner 1963:41-42. Stanner wrote six articles on the Murin'bata religious complex which appeared in Oceania between December of 1959 and June of 1963. The articles were subsequently collected to form the monograph On Aboriginal Religion (1963). All references to the articles in this text refer to the monograph.
2. Stanner is currently an emeritus professor at Australian National University. He has conducted research in the Daly River area on separate occasions between 1932/1936 and again between 1957/1959, and has worked extensively in East Africa and the southwest Pacific.
3. Stanner and Falkenberg, the primary Murin'bata ethnographers, do not always agree on the orthography of the Murin'bata language. In this text where the authors disagree on the spelling, the term will be used as found in Falkenberg's material.

CHAPTER 2STANNER

The myth and its relation to ritual, as statements of an "ontological reality," are central to Stanner's theory of religion and his self-perceived conflict with theories established by Durkheim. Stanner saw the myth as revealing certain themes regarding the position that the Murin'bata felt they held in the universe and the principles they envisioned as guiding their lives--their "ontological reality." His interpretation was based on the belief that religion is not a contemplation of society but of the ultimate realities.

A. The Myth: Mutjingga, The Wrongful Turning of Life(1)

Mutjingga, the Old Woman, slept there until morning. The people said, "We shall leave the children with you while we find honey; you look after them." The Old Woman said, "Yes, I will keep them here." The people spread out to hunt.

The Old Woman called to the children, "Go and bathe in the water there, and then come to lie down in the sun to dry." She showed them how to do so. When they were washed they came ashore, and ran close to her wanting to sleep. The Old Woman, herself truly wanting to sleep, made a sleeping place in the shade.

She took one child by the arm, saying, "Kaniru, I will look for lice in your hair. Are you itchy?" The child said, "Yes, you look for me." The Old Woman pretending, said, "You look too for my lice." Then she swallowed the child, letting it go entirely into her own body. Then she said to a second child, "Kaniru, I will make you sleep." This way, the child disappeared, swallowed like the other. (The myth then relates, in much the same phraseology, how eight more children, making ten in all, were swallowed.)

A man and his wife, thirsty for water, came back to the camp from hunting. The woman swore violently at her husband, "I see no children here. Where are they? What did she do with them? She swallowed them! There are no children. Come quickly!" The husband, from a distance, quickly ran to her. The woman, seeing tracks, then said, "Ah yes she went that way." Then, pointing to the water she said, "You run quickly the short way." Both ran calling out in alarm, by different ways, in the direction in which the water flowed.

All the people, alarmed by the cries, now came together running. They gathered spears and womerahs from every place. Among them, calling out, was a nature man, Left Hand. "That way, that way."

Five men ran one way, five another, to come together later at a shallow water-crossing. There was no one there. The water was clear. They ran again as before, and again met. Still the clear water gave no sign. Again they ran and met to no avail, finding clear water only.

The river now went crookedly. The people thought the Old Woman might have crawled along it. Dividing again, they searched as before. Now meeting, they saw that the water was no longer clear. Ah! The murk stirred up by her dragging fingernails could be seen. Again they divided and ran, meeting to search again. Ah! The water was more clouded still. They divided and ran on the sand to Manawarar. Ah! Here the water was heavily clouded. They were overtaking her. Good!

Now all told Left Hand, because of his great skill, to take spear and Right Hand to take club; the two men ran, one to each side of the water to block the Old Woman's road.

They came together and looked. No one! Good! They waited and waited...then they saw big eyes coming, and out came the Old Woman throwing water from each side. Mutjingga was here!

She kept coming, not seeing the men. When she was close Left Hand threw his spear. Du! It hit and pierced both her

legs. Yakai! The Old Woman cried, "From whom is this?" Left Hand answered, "From yourself! Yours was the fault!" Right Hand jumped into the water and with his club broke the Old Woman's neck. There, it was done! The men looked. Her belly was moving! Then, slowly, holding her up, they cut her open with a knife of stone. There, in her womb, the children were alive! They had not gone where the excrement was.

Left Hand and Right Hand now pulled the children one by one from the womb, washed them, and came with them to the fire to dry them in the smoke. Then they painted the children with ochre and put on their foreheads the kutaral which is the mark of the initiated. Then Left Hand and Right Hand took them back to the camp where they now saw their mothers.

Joyfully, the mothers cried, "They are alive, they are alive. See, the men are bringing them now," and hit their own heads so that the blood flowed. "O, children, alas, alas! What did she do to you? She swallowed you!"

The Rite

Stanner's analysis of the Punj complex focuses on elements which are expressive of the process of relating the participants with the cosmic realm. The tale of "Mutjingga: The Wrongful Turning of Life," is presented in the second of his articles,

"Sacramentalism, Rite, and Myth" (Oceania 1963:25-59). (2)

Stanner focuses his discussion of the myth upon several features: (i) the relation of the myth to the rite, (ii) the exegetical explanation offered by informants as to the myth's importance, (3) and (iii) the myth as an allegory involving people.

Stanner's analysis of the myth hinges upon his presentation of the rite of Punj, (the Secret), with which it is associated. (4) At the time of his early fieldwork, Punj was still a major initiation ceremony. It took place a few years after circumcision when the elders determined that the initiates were ready to learn the constraints of adult life. For the initiated men knowledge of the myth was not crucial, though at several points Stanner indicates that one cannot "know" the rite without knowing the myth.

At the time of Stanner's work there were three major rites which marked the life of men in Murin'bata society. The first was Djaban which occurred before puberty in order to prepare initiates for the complex of rites to follow. Stanner found the rite of circumcision to emphasize matters of secular importance, such as trading. It was not intended to make initiates "understand," as the subsequent rites of Punj and Djaban were, but to mark the transition of status in a temporal and secular forum.

Both the myth of Mutjingga and rite of Punj were part of the initiation into the cult of the bullroarer. The cult was conceived of as a male secret, although women could know of some of the rites associated with it. There was "something" differentiating, a mystery involved with knowing about both the myth and rite which changed men from kadu, to kadu punj "one who holds something in the ear." Penalties for women who came to know the "secrets" of Punj included death.

Several years after circumcision the youths were asked to submit themselves to the discipline of Punj. The ritual leader, the kirman, would institute the ceremonies which would last from one to two months, depending on the number of initiates and the resources available. Clans representing the two patrilineal moieties, Kartjin (kite hawk) and Tiwungu (eagle hawk), are both to be present, having critical functions to perform for the other during the ceremony. The roles of leader, senior assistants, singers, instrumentalists, dancers, the initiate's escorts and audience must be filled by members of both moieties.

Punj, according to Stanner, provided an opportunity for the largest gatherings in the area. Performance of the rite and cross-moiety obligations brought together clans not only from different moieties but from different language groups as well. Camps for spectators and participants are arranged "as a huge circle of nuclear families divided by fires" (ibid.:6). The main ceremonial ground, nadanu, is set away from the camp. Surround-

ing it are smaller sites where the most secret operations of the rite take place.

The initiates are taken to the ceremonial ground usually by a classificatory father, (il:e), the real fathers being prohibited from participating in the rite with them. (5) There they find the adult men, (kadu punj), from whom they will learn the secrets. The first secret is revealed while young men sit in a circle, they hear a song in which Karwadi is revealed to them as the secret name of Nutjingga, The Mother of All. (6)

At nightfall, the youths and their escorts return to the the camp. The initiates are not permitted to speak to kin. (7) They eat and sleep by themselves in a circle set within the circle of family fires. At daybreak, they go back to the ceremonial grounds before the others in the camp awake. Singing, accompanied by joking (the custom of tjirnumuk), goes on between members of the moieties. It is particularly common between cross-cousins, wife's brother/sister's husband, wife's father /daughter's husband, and mother's brother/sister's son. This occurs between classificatory rather than "real kin," and initiates observe rather than participate in the behaviour. Frequent joking behaviour includes: pushing one another, stealing small items, and shouting of obscenities. The joking is likened to birds fighting for food.

From the main grounds, the initiates move to the secret place under the pretext of looking for food. (8) Heavy social

restrictions are placed on the initiates that remain in force throughout the ceremonial period. Their personal names are no longer used, instead they are referred to as "flesh" or "wild dogs." All ornamentation is also removed. This is done in preparation for the act of swallowing by Mutjingga, which they are warned will take place shortly.

The initiated prepare the ceremonial grounds while the initiates wait at the secret place. All the initiates are then led back there in a line with their heads bent. Initiated men sit in an excavation and enact the mime-of-the-blowfly, Karanuk. Singers positioned beyond the pit chant a song of the mime for each time it is repeated. The boys are brought into the centre of the circle and instructed to do the same mime and song.

The boys now stand in front of men who stand to them as potential wife's brother and therefore members of the opposite moiety. It is these men who smear the initiates with their own blood, which they say is the blood of The All-Mother. While smearing the blood the men "Break into a rhythmic chorus of sound, somewhat reminiscent of birdsong and animal noise. As soon as the blood has been applied fully the youths are told to stand in the heat and smoke of the fire until they are dry" (Stanner 1959:113). For the duration of the celebration of Punj the joking and the mime-of-the-blowfly will be repeated at the start of the day.

It is now near sunset and all return to the main camp with loud cries and songs, including the song of Kukpi (the snake-woman) to the All-Mother, which is sung just prior to entering the camp. The initiated men leap over the heads of people in the camps and engage in joking. When the women and children seem to be asleep the initiates are brought into the circle and again hear the songs of the initiated men.

In the morning they return to the ceremonial ground and men in hiding sound bullroarers crying, "The Old Woman is calling." The potential wife's brothers present the boys with a bull-roarer. They rub it on the initiates' bodies marked with their blood and then insert it between the boys' legs like a penis. (This too is repeated on subsequent days.)

In addition, a series of totemistic mime dances are performed to be learned by the initiates. The day before the ceremony is to end the customs are said to reach their heights in beauty and vigour. On the final day the initiates are taken a short distance from the ceremonial ground and given the marks of adult status. At the main ceremonial camp the female kin and affines of the boys sit in an arc. The initiated men stand in moiety lines with their backs to the camp, now referred to as the mununuk (gifts waiting). The youths crawl towards their mothers between the legs of men of the opposite moiety. Each sits in front of his mother, but with his back to her while she wails and lacerates her head. (9) The boys return through the legs of the men and everyone rushes away.

After a week the initiates are washed, marked with the

signs of the bullroarer, and return to normal life. Two years or so pass before they can marry.

Stanner suggests that the myth was recently derived from the rite. The themes and form presented in both are consistent (See Diagram 1 below). The rite is seen as a consistent and rigid representation of the events of The Dreaming, while the myth is more fluid. Imagery in the rite is said to evoke an interpretation which involves the whole of society. While the myth's imagery, Stanner suggests, is that of a "macro-experience," Mutjingga is an expression of a metaphysical truth, "at the centre of things social, refuge, and rottenness are found together" (Stanner 1963:44). The rite is a symbol of that metaphysical truth. It is an operation upon the initiates preparing them for the transformation into kadu punj. It prepares them to understand the metaphysics of life.

Diagram I

Myth and Rite Events(10)

Rite of Punj	Myth of Punj
a secret agreement	public agreement
b	parents to hunt
c isolation in secret place	isolation with trusted cognate
d guard and secret return to camp, tjimauk, mine of blowfly	acts of treachery search for lice
e swallowing by old woman	invitation to sleep swallowing to the interior of old woman
f washing, gifts and partial exclusion	washing adornment, return to mothers parents to hunt

From Stanner Table I 1963:47

Mutjingga, The All-Mother, is the central character in both the myth and rite. It is through her that the transformation of the initiates is accomplished. Her actions shaped reality for men at the beginning of institutions. They perform the Punj to celebrate that experience. The bullroarer is her symbol. It was created by Kudapun, the Apostle bird, after her death for use in place in the rite. (11) The roaring sound it makes is her voice indicating her presence at the site. She is a supernatural being who was once kadu, a human. Her existence now as the bullroarer shows her as being both human and spiritual simultaneously.

Her death was expressed as a "sad finality," brought about by her own actions. Stanner claims her actions were wrong, but only because they were done too early, the boys were not ready to become kadu punj. Had she done it at the proper time, the People would not have had to kill her. They did so in order to perpetuate the lives which she had mysteriously sought to destroy.

The unity of Mutjingga as both human and spiritual being reflects what Stanner refers to as the unity of the visible and invisible forces recognised to control all beings (ibid.:10). As a "trusted" cognate, Mutjingga was bound to care for the children. (She stands to them as mother's father's sister.) Her actions were the result of the intrusion of her invisible self on the social being left to guard the children. The motivation of the invisible being is not of concern, only the

results of its intrusion into the social one. According to Stanner, in swallowing the children, Mutjingga creates a symbol of a "metaphysical" truth of human relations.

Stanner concludes his discussion of Mutjingga with the assertion that, since Aboriginal thought is metaphorical, "the myth of the Old Woman is a story about one thing under the guise of another, and that the story is thus an allegory" (ibid.:51). It is an attempt to relate the intuitions of the metaphysical realm to the existing social order through analogy. "It is an allegory made up of extended metaphor formed from analogies of resemblance" (ibid.). To demonstrate his assertion, Stanner presents a possible allegorical sequence:

- 1) Childhood in fear of death from a private motive.
- 2) Mysterious female power using seniority to spoil a necessary trust.
- 3) Wrongdoing being concealed in the flow of life.
- 4) Life becoming tortuous and secretive.
- 5) Wrongdoing once obscured becoming identified.
- 6) Opposed but complementary units of life by agreement and diverse means attain the objective.
- 7) The assertion of male authority, justice and retribution.
- 8) The persistence of life but its powerlessness to save itself.
- 9) The avoidance of contamination.
- 10) The cleansing and restoration of new life. And finally,
- 11) The return to those who have power over life. (12)

Stanner himself admits that this analysis is somewhat 'arbitrary' and 'unverifiable' but asserts that it rests on "informed knowledge of aboriginal symbolism" (ibid.). In the allegorical sequence he produces symbolic elements not previously noted. The symbols given as the basis of the allegory represent a 'dialectic' between elements of both myth and rite. Stages (3) through (6) introduce symbolic elements regarding the representation of Life. The water is in the allegorical interpretation the symbol of Life. The Aboriginal basis for the symbols is not given, nor is why the social order is used to express the unknown.

Recurrent in all explanations is the dependency of human life on that which exists outside itself. This dependence appears as a response to the 'injury' incurred at the time of the beginning of life. Mutjingga's act and its consequences, which left men with only the bullroarer, is that of primal injury.

In his analysis of the myth of Mutjingga, Stanner presents the myth as an essay on the attempt to guarantee the continuity of life through a sacrifice made by men to those forces beyond society that control it. Social control is the outcome of the tying together of men and the cosmic realm rather than the intent of it. Elder men offer unruly boys to a sacred being, Karwadi, The All-Mother. Through this offering the initiates are taught the principle of life that good and evil rest together.

Stanner's Theory

Stanner's theoretical intent is to bring about a synthesis of theories of myth and ritual to overcome what he feels are serious faults in the discipline. Much of his work is a critique of Emile Durkheim's theory of religion as put forth in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1915). Stanner objected to Durkheim's thesis that religion was society becoming conscious of itself (Stanner 1967). He contends that religion is best studied as itself, as the realities "within what could be called an ontology of life" (Stanner 1963:24). He states that "to make Murin'bata society religion's source and object would be to treat as ultimate what is only proximate, and to deny a patent fact: that in their rites the aborigines had 'some' objects beyond themselves, beyond egotism, and beyond social gain" (ibid.:154). The analysis of Murin'bata religion is aimed at defining the ontological referent of religion, rather than a study of the social idiom through which it is expressed.

Stanner's definition of religion emphasizes the behaviour of individuals. "The essential definition of natural religion is 'the expression of a sense of dependence on a power outside ourselves', 'a spiritual and moral power'" (Stanner 1958:21-22). Stanner contends that what religion 'is' is the behaviour of people, "the content of a devotional life" (Stanner 1963:vii). Religion in the Murin'bata tradition is then the contemplation

of the injury done to man by Nutjingga's actions. Through both the myth and the ritual men are able to guarantee the continuity of life despite her disruptive actions.

Stanner's argument that religion is the ontological reality is distinctive. He states that questions regarding the perception of ultimate realities are not reducible to the ordering of social relations in society. Though the explanation of ultimate reality is made through images of the social order, the metaphysical object is the basis of meaning.

Hiatt (1975) questions "whether 'ontology of life' is a legitimate or even meaningful expression, in so far as ontology is usually defined as that branch of speculation concerned with the most general features of reality. Possibly 'philosophy of life' in the layman's sense would come closer to expressing Stanner's meaning" (Hiatt 1975:19). Hiatt is however incorrect in presuming that "philosophy" would fit Stanner's conception.

Stanner rejects the term philosophy in favour of ontology for two reasons. First is his assertion that there are no philosophers in the society; philosophy here implies a "class of scholars or detached intellectuals...who...ask the 'how' or 'why'--questions from philosophical motive" (Stanner 1963:19). Philosophy implies to Stanner a European-based tradition related to the works of Aristotle and Hume. Philosophy can exist only metaphorically outside of the traditions of European thought. The second reason, an extension of the assumptions of the first,

rests on the distinction he makes between methods of explanation employed by Aboriginal thought and European thought.

Aboriginal minds are guided by the laws of aesthetic development "guided perhaps only by the intuitive fitting of a symbolistical form to a mystery, which in the first place is perceived through analogy" (ibid.:14). Explanation is derived through an intuitive process rather than by rationalistic means. Under these conditions a philosophy could not develop. Issues which are derived from concerns of philosophy such as "belief" and "meaning," Stanner feels, are not possible in the tradition. He accepts the Murin'bata definition of the underlying ontology of life "a joyous thing with maggots at the centre" (ibid.:37). It is "a complex sense of their dependence in a ground and source beyond themselves. That sense...is one of perennial good-with-suffering, of order-with-tragedy" (ibid.:70).

Stanner modified Durkheim's proposition of the sacred and profane on the basis of Arnold van Gennep's thesis, The Rites of Passage (1975). (13) Van Gennep's thesis also provided the basis for the introduction of an intermediate category, that of the "mundane." (14) Stanner also proposed a modification of van Gennep's thesis through the addition of a metaphysical dimension within the phase of incorporation.

In many respects, the presentation of the cult of Karwadi in Stanner fits the classic model of initiation described by van Gennep. Van Gennep's thesis defined originally three major

phases--separation, transition, and incorporation--which could be found in varying degrees and sequences in rites such as those of initiation. Even Stanner's addition of a phase is contiguous with van Gennep's presentation.

Karwadi, as described and analysed by Stanner, can be seen to include those phases. By removing the initiates from the main camp the separation from their ordinary existence was accomplished. The "wild dog" phase of the rite Stanner equated with van Gennep's transition stage, the initiates having been removed from "social humanity" by the loss of their names and personal ornaments. The wild dogs, like the imagery of rotting of the mine of the blow fly express the liminality of the initiates.

Stanner found that the phases mentioned by van Gennep could not explain what he perceived to be a phase between those of transition and incorporation. He found an intermediary "phase of token return before incorporation" (Stanner 1963:138). The swallowing of the boys, Stanner felt, accomplished a return within the context of the transformation to a continuity with the beings of The Dreaming. This becomes an element of their identity, the unity with The Dreaming, and the later incorporation into the social world by their return to the camp designates two distinct movements in the myth according to Stanner. Initiates were now part of the continuity of life established in The Dreaming, a feature which held more significance for the rite than their new social status as kadu punj that marked the change.

In Stanner's view, symbols representing the social order are recurrent in myths because they are part of a readily identifiable system common to the makers. Symbols maintain a position within the changing rites and myths because of their continuing metaphysical significance.

Stanner rejects the notion that the empirical referent of a symbol is its ultimate meaning. When a symbol is valued for itself such as the bullroarer is, this "obscures" the value which is its true referent.

It is significant that Stanner suggests that the "clearest expression" of the symbolism of The Dreaming is in language. Any construction attempting to account for the philosophy must begin with the basis of that in the language. Murin'bata language, according to Stanner, had nine classes which he regards "as existence-classes, i.e., as existential or ontological conceptions, which divide all significant entities in the world into classes which are mutually exclusive" (ibid.:74).

The classes, "embody the character and significance of things that constitute and co-exist perennially in the world, and are thus symbolical. Each class is a distinct and incomparable set of existences" (ibid.:76). The moral order of society brought about by totemism used these classes as their foundation. Each class includes positively and negatively valued entities.

The value-contexts are technical, magical, religious, and social....They are also, at least in part, groupings of functions in that the entities have a determinate place in the scheme of life, and of "powers," in that the entities have efficacies of one kind or another. At the same time they are generic concepts (ibid.:115-116).

Objects are named, not simply as objects but as dualisms consisting of the primary reference and a 'pattern within'. "The pattern is relational and one capable of holding contraries in unity" (ibid.:10). Each class is significant to men in that through the patterns of events of The Dreaming, that which comprises the 'external objects of living', took final shape for them.

SUMMARY

Stanner's intent in his analysis of the cult of Karwadi is to show that while the ceremonies are 'initiations'--being described as such by the Aborigines--they are also 'more'. That more consists of a cosmic focus expressed "as a liturgical transaction, within a totemic idiom of symbolism, between men and a spiritual being on whom they conceive themselves to be dependent" (ibid.:4). He stresses the myth and rite as making society and cosmos correlative. This is accomplished by uniting men with a supernatural woman.

The world-view Stanner sought to elicit from the Murin'bata religion was not one limited to functions of the socialisation of individuals or of the legitimatisation of social phenomena. Yet the knowledge imparted through Karvadi is expressed for the understanding of males, to extend or transcend their vision of the limits of the world's reality. Stanner presents a world-view created for men. He does not indicate that this view is held in any way by women or even known by women to express the meanings he discloses. What he presents is an image created by men that shows the powerful evil in life as being destructive women. Stanner's presentation fails to account for the meaning in the view of women, and thereby fails to account for the "ontological reality" of society since women are part of that society.

The basis of Stanner's interpretation can be found in his own ethnographic material and in that provided by Falkenberg. In returning to that material, Stanner's interpretation of the myth fails to include many lines or apparent lines of evidence. Stanner's analysis ultimately emphasizes the power of men in society without accounting for development of that power within society. He leaves unexplored symbolic meanings which he finds essential to his allegorical statement and further he fails to account for the "primal injury" which the cult and myth are said to represent.

Notes

1. Stanner 1963:41-42. See Appendix I for other versions of the Nutjingga myth.
2. The analysis of Punj appears in the first article "The Lineaments of Sacrifice," Stanner 1963:2-24. Originally Oceania, Vol. XXIX, #2, Dec., 1959.
3. Stanner follows V. Turner (1975) in his use of the term exegesis--it implies an explanation given by an informant rather than one derived by the analyst.
4. The myth of Nutjingga is not told as a feature of rite. Stanner indicates that it is however essential to the understanding of the complex.
5. Stanner does not offer any indication as to why the "real" fathers may not participate with their sons.
6. The phrasing of the song is "Karwadi, Yoi!" It is sung by the elder men.
7. Stanner does not indicate which kin the initiates are forbidden to talk to. Presumably this would include those in the camp who are not participants in phases of the rite previously mentioned.
8. The pretext of looking for food is used in other rites. It also appears in the myth.
9. Those are the same actions of women at the death of a male kin.
10. Stanner 1963:47.
11. See Appendix I for the myth.
12. Stanner 1963:51-52.
13. van Gennep, A., 1975. The Rites of Passage. Chicago: Phoenix Press.
14. The use of a "mundane" class within the Sacred/Profane schema is not restricted to Stanner's work. Roheim also applied this term in his analyses. (see Roheim 1974).

CHAPTER 3ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The Murin'bata domain is situated on Australia's Timor Coast in the Daly River District of the Northern Territory. Their territory at the time of Stanner's fieldwork extended from Port Keats in the north to the Macadam Range and south to Keyling Inlet at the mouth of the Fitzmaurice River. This extensive area made them one of the largest saltwater groups along the coast. From the coast, the territory extended inland approximately 20 miles to be bounded by other aboriginal groups; in the north, the Nagati'ge, the east the Mari'nar, the southeast the Wumeri, and the south the Tjain'djun. The territory also falls between two great culture areas. It marks what were the northern limits of the subsection system and the southern limits of the subincision areas. During the period documented by Stanner, the Murin'bata had recently absorbed a subsection system and had given up subincision in favour of circumcision. This incorporation of the other Aboriginal culture traits was almost complete by the mid-1930's but was still significantly recent to be unknown by some Murin'bata.

Detailed ethnographic surveys of the area have been carried out by two ethnographers: Stanner and Falkenberg, who spent a year in the area during the early 1950's. (1) Both authors' primary focus was the dynamics of social organisation in societies which were experiencing rapid change. Stanner's entrance into the Daly River area came as a result of a meeting with linguist Gerhardt Laves, who indicated that there were there still "unspotted savages," ones "who spoke no English and who were wholly uncivilised" (Stanner 1964:74). Rather than finding a pristine aboriginal environment, Stanner found the impact of European contact had been substantial. Populations in the area had shifted greatly. Yearly migrations through clan territories now included regular stays near European settlements. Stanner saw the Karwadi cult as being at once a "messianic" movement, part of a native attempt to adjust to new colonial institutions, and an aboriginal cult which had its roots in an earlier Murin'bata tradition.

A. Contact in the Daly River District

Contact between aborigines and colonials in the Daly River area came rather late despite the early mapping of the coastline by Dutch explorers in the seventeenth century. English explora-

tion in the area began in the early nineteenth century, when explorers such as Philip Parker King in 1819 visited the coast, marking places such as Pearce Point. It was not until Capt. J. Lort Stokes and the crew of the Beagle made landings between 1837 and 1843, that any substantial information was collected. Stokes' diary of the journey includes accounts of sightings of natives and their camps as well as reports on wildlife and vegetation.

The lush vegetation of the northernmost tip of Australia recedes into a more desolate environment along the Timor Coast. Sandstone hills were barren with only the occasional white gum or mangrove stand. Towards the southern limits of his voyage, near the Kimul, (also known as the Fitzmaurice), the vegetation again became green, grassy hills were abundant, with kangaroos becoming more common. Creeks in the area were filled with curlews and alligators.

Accounts such as Stokes', though sparse in detail, do indicate substantial occupation of the area by aboriginal groups.

Crossing the flat on returning to the boat, I was much struck by one particular spot on the border of a creek. I came suddenly upon a number of flat stones placed in rows, one upon the other. Though altogether covering about ten yards of ground, there was no appearance of any shape in their arrangement. I am still puzzled to determine whether they were merely the results of childish amusement or had performed their part in some magical incantation or religious ceremony of the natives. I am more inclined to think it was the latter, as there was a native grave near covered with the same kind of flat stones to a height of about three feet (Stokes, in MacKnight 1969:114).

Stokes' party encountered aborigines on numerous occasions during the survey, which included a skirmish between them and a group at Teacherous Bay during which Stokes was wounded.

Occupation of the area by colonists was substantial and of varying success during the late nineteenth century. Jesuit missionaries on several occasions attempted to establish settlements in the area, all of which closed due to lack of resources. Economic exploitation by pearling operations along the coast also proved doomed to failure. Other enterprises such as a sugar plantation, copper mine and smelter and government research farms closed.

Farming was by far the most successful undertaking, with peanut farms and sheep stations being most prevalent. By Stanner's appearance in 1932, the Daly River settlement consisted of nine peanut farms and a police station scattered over a ten mile area. The Darwin-Alice Springs Railway connected the settlement to those at Adelaide River and Brock Creek. Farms provided a focus for Aboriginal-European relations, each farm employing and providing workers with some rations and tobacco. Both men and women attached themselves to particular farms in hopes for some return, though often the farmers themselves were destitute. Rations and security from intertribal conflict were the main attractions of the farms. Farmers found themselves in conflict with each other in order to secure dependable workers, and control aboriginal poaching of sheep and livestock from the

farms. (2) Though the exchange of resources between these groups was often minimal it did not discourage aborigines from increasing their attachment to the farmers.

Police records for the area from 1898 to 1911, indicate that contact between colonials and aborigines and between various tribal groups had not been peaceful. Relations between tribes were in a constant state of terror and conflict. Two intertribal coalitions existed which maintained relative peace. These groups had need of each other for ritual purposes, but most of their interaction was based on a fear of warlockry and poisonings. Farms became sanctuaries at night for those caught away from their camps. Police activity during the period was largely devoted to attempting to control the use of witchcraft, and apprehended those who were accused of its use and of ritual murders.

Although police control in the area was reportedly minimal, with the aborigines using their own law to sanction their activities, numerous men from many different groups had served time at the gaols in various places in the Daly River and Victoria River districts. Many men served long periods of up to a decade away from their own groups. Often these same men became the contacts between the police and their own groups upon their return. Stanner indicates that numerous trackers employed by the government had been in the gaols at one time or another.

The aborigines blamed the conditions developing in the settlement for the disappearance of their culture hero, Kun'manggur, the All-Father. (3) Women were no longer fertile, many suffering from syphilis (one of the many European diseases that were decimating the population). Game was disappearing from areas around the settlements due to extensive hunting carried on by both aborigines and Europeans. All of these were signs that the Rainbow Serpent had deserted the people. The increasing dependence on European goods brought about a constant state of conflict between the law established by the Rainbow Serpent in The Dreaming and the new order brought by the Europeans. Being unable to renew the continuity which the Rainbow Serpent had established, Murin'bata society underwent serious changes in their social and ritual order. A new cult developed after Kun'manggur's disappearance. This one was the cult of The All-Mother, Karwadi.

Missionary influence in the district had been minimal since 1935 when Jesuits established a mission at Port Keats. (4) This mission was able to expand to include a school and hospital complex by 1947. (5) The mission served as the Australian government's local agency for aboriginal protection, interceding between aborigines, farmers, and the government. Like the farms, the mission furthered the changing nomadic patterns of the Murin'bata. Residence alternated between the mission station and the bush as dependency upon European products and services in-

creased. Providing the aborigines with work, and such goods as sugar, flour and tea, the missionaries were able to establish economic relations before attempting to convert them to Christianity.

The Jesuits began their program of conversion with the children, establishing a convent for girls early in their residence here on a permanent basis. Parents alternated between camps surrounding the station and migration through their traditional clan territories in the bush. "Among the consequences of the separation of the children from other members of the group, was the almost complete discontinuation of the boys' initiation ceremonies" (Falkenberg 1962:19). Circumcision ceremonies also ended about the same period with the establishment of the hospital and maternity care, because a "local missionary alarmed by a supposed risk to life or well-being from loss of blood and septicaemia persuaded the elders to let him perform the operation on several boys" (Stanner 1963:108). (6) Without circumcision, the boys were withheld from other rites that secured their position within the group. Marriageable age for girls was also delayed one age-grade as a result of this separation.

Missionaries in the area fought many traditional institutions including 'pagan rituals' initiations and traditional punishments for women who had violated the secrets of the men, and polygamy. (7) The pressure they brought to bear through

economic sanctions and "the decay of the external structure of tribal life, and the onset of a general sophistication" (ibid.: 149) encouraged a process of change which had begun to affect all aboriginal institutions.

Murin'bata society was undergoing substantial changes due, in part, to European-Australian contact. Other changes in the realm of social organisation were also taking place. These were the result of contact with southern aboriginal groups who possessed a different social order than the Murin'bata.

B. The Murin'Bata

The tribal name Murin'bata refers to the language spoken, "Bata" meaning good and "Murin" meaning language, reference to other Murin'bata, usually equates tribe with language affiliations. (8) Smaller tribes, the Murin'tjabin, Murin'go, Murin'mantha, Mari'dan, Mari'Manindji, Mari'tjamin, Mari'wumin and Mari'gan, who had entered the area from the northeast, were also linguistic groups consisting of a collection of clans. (9)

Social Organisation

Historically the Murin'bata had a dual organisation consisting of two exogamous patrilineal moieties. These moieties, the Kartjin and the Ti'wungu, are the framework for a complex social matrix of networks. The moieties consist of exogamous patrilineal local totemic clans and local patrilineal hordes. The kinship was a modified Kariera type, with marriage with one's own cross-cousin being prohibited. Due to changes, the "kinship and marriage systems are altering in a radical way, new totemic associations are forming, and the system of subsections is being superimposed" (ibid.: 187) on the existing moiety system.

Tribal membership is not exclusively determined by differences of language affiliation, though all references to different tribes in the area are based on this distinction of language and often of dialect within a language. Local clan membership and the attachment of one's spirit to a clan territory are crucial tribal boundaries. As a tribe, the Murin'bata recognise no common ancestor. Genealogical relations are as close between tribes as they are within, as seen by the dispersal of women between territories.

Falkenberg refers to the tribal boundary as a "protective wall" around the culture. With regards to the insurgence of the subsection he states, "that after the subsections had been first integrated into the society by a marginal Murin'bata group, they spread like wildfire through the whole Murin'bata territory and

the diffusion of the subsections stopped only when the tribal boundary was reached" (Falkenberg 1962:17).

Distinctions between tribes are not made strictly as 'tribal' divisions, but as a complex of divisions including language, moiety, age-set, clan and subsection. (10) Tribal areas are divided into clan and horde territories. Clan areas are composed of different totemic sites (nogu'mingi) which represent the various totems (nakunal) held by the clan. (11) Membership in a clan is determined in part by one's relations to these sites.

"The 'horde' territory is connected territory surrounding the totem sites of a particular local clan" (ibid.:22). Through reference to the camp or territory in which one lives, membership in a horde territory is established.

At the time of Stanner's research there were eight proper clans and three marginal clans. By the time of Falkenberg's study these three had largely been absorbed. Murin'bata clans included: the Idiiji; the Wendek Na'naie; the Maninj; the Manu Kultjil; the Kura'bakal; the Jarere; the Madje lindi; the Norga'minjin, formerly a Murin'wumeri clan and the Muru'nal:a and Mai'wann, two half Murin'bata, half Mari'nar clans (these clans claimed equal rights membership in both tribes). Members of a clan are related by that membership "as brothers and sisters ...even though they actually use other kinship terms to each other" (ibid.:49).

Clan totems include both male and female entities and are classed, depending upon sex, as brothers (nat:an), or sisters (munuk). The sites which are often found in association with the totems may be referred to by different names. Among its totems, the Madje'lindi lists Wale'muma, a female goanna associated with Wa'ranjin, Big Hill. Kultjil and Kura'bakal share Kun'mangur, The Rainbow associated with Gundar, Big salt-water pool. Idiiji and Naninj clans share Ku'dapun, a small black hawk and Na'jini, creek and bush site. Though each clan has numerous totems, only one is considered to be its chief. For the Murin'bata clans these were: Il:olol, excrement, (Madje'lindi); Jakpa, fresh-water crocodile, (Kultkil); Minu, fresh-water turtle, (Manu); Tjitai, sugar-bag, (Idiiji); Noit, non-poisonous water-snake, (Jarere); Wal'gutgut, a bird, (Kura'bakal); Ku'lanu, millet, (Naninj); La'wanga, a wallaby, (Wendek Ma'naie). (12) Chief totems, when classed as female, may be referred to as either sister or father's sister.

The clan is divided into three groups, each with varying rights of access to their horde and clan territories:

...the initiated men have free access to their own clan area with its surrounding horde territory. The uninitiated children are not allowed to visit their clan area, but they live in the horde territory which surrounds their own clan area. Finally the married women live far away from their own clan area. They may visit the horde territory which surrounds their own clan area, but they are not allowed to enter into their own clan area (ibid.:25).

Clans average in population between 26 and 27 members, with an almost even sex distribution. Without initiation a male's membership is incomplete, although an individual is ascribed a clan affiliation before birth. It appears that there is an element of choice in entering the sacred clan membership. A man's choice of clan must, however, coincide with the clan affiliations of his father and with specific moiety relations. The system of recruitment is not closed given the decline in population of some local clans and their inability to recruit kirman (men of knowledge) to perform initiation ceremonies which permanently linked males with a particular local clan.

Kinship relations present in clans fall into two categories. One group consists of clans with the same relations present as are found in one's own clan, the other group is a class of 'foreign' clans. Relations present in the local clan for a male ego, and those of one class of 'other' clan are the same, corresponding for the most part to those found below.

TABLE I

Clan Kin Terms

FF, ffsr,	kangul	fsr	bip:i noitnan
Son's children			
MHB, mm,	kawu		
sr's D children		B	nat:an
F	il:e	sr	munmak
WMB	il:e ninar	son, d	wakal

From Falkeberg 1962:40 (13)

During the period of Stanner's research, a man, his mother-in-law and his wife's mother's brother could belong to the same local clan, but with the spread of the subsection system this declined as it was felt they should belong to a foreign clan, though not necessarily a 'distant' one. Falkeberg reports that during his fieldwork it was felt that in addition to these, mother's brother who is also wife's father, should come from another clan. This was not always the case, particularly for those men who had been initiated prior to 1935. The taboo on conversation with wife's mother's brother, proved to be inconvenient in local clans given their small size. Only conversation between ego and wife's mother's brother, who are distantly related, is still strictly forbidden.

In the group of foreign clans which is not considered to be 'one's own,' the following relations--given a male ego--will most likely appear as follows:

TABLE II

Clan Kin Terms

MF, DSon	tamoin	m	kal:e
dd		w	purima
fm	manga	WB	nangun
WF	kaka kapi	cross-cousins	pugali
MA	kaka noitnan	sr's sons	mulok wakal
sr's d	nawoi wakal		

From Falkenberg 1962:44(14)

A man should not have wife, wife's brother, or wife's father in his mother's clan under the rules of the subsection. Again this is conditional upon factors of size and other relations.

One's social relations with the two groups of alien clans and his own mother's clan vary. Although the behaviour is in some ways predictable depending upon the terms of address used, bonds of affection, frequency of interaction and conflicting social interests influence the relations. It is with one's own mother's clan and its country that one finds the closest connections being developed. Socially, mother's full brother is the closest non-resident relation. One can reside in one's mother's clan country indefinitely and exploit its resources, though the clan retains its rights to redistributions of resources used by any foreigner. There is also a prohibition in this territory on the visiting of clan totemic sites by the sister's son.

Local clans are exogamous. Females are removed from the home territory post-marriage, while males generally remain within it. (15) Formerly the Murin'bata recognised a form of the Kariera type of kinship, with a variation in reference to the cross-cousin, based on a distinction of one's own versus classificatory. This was possible by extending the terms for mother and mother's brother to one's own cross-cousins.

Marriage patterns have come under serious pressure to change with the introduction of the subsection system. Stanner dates the entrance of the system at about 1915, from the Djamin'djun, south of the Fitzmaurice River. Even during Falkenberg's investigation there were those who could remember the time when it was not in operation.

Heggitt (1972) suggests that the importance of the subsection system is as a 'social category' that combines one's membership in a patrimoiety and matrimoiety and makes equivalences between alternating generations.

Patrilineal ideology, which dominates the descent rules, often conflicts with the "indirect matrilineal subsections." In order to resolve this conflict, Stanner indicates that the implications of this were suspended in each subsequent generation. Marriages in anomalous cases are arranged in order to restore regularity to the over-all system. The result of this was a system of patrilineal descent of the subsections that runs through four generations instead of two.

The introduction of the subsection system brought with it the 'nulu' totemism, a matrilineal social totemism which was "non cult, non-local, and directly matrilineal in descent" (Stanner 1935:196). The nulu clan represents a social bond conceived of as a biological one. This dispersed group is scattered even beyond the subsections' and tribes' boundaries. Such totems may be possessed even by individuals of opposite moieties and may also appear as moiety totems.

The subsections are referred to as spearthrowers (nuni'pun) or skins. These were introduced according to mythology, by Kukpi, the Snake-woman; "She is reputed by some to have given men five out of the eight 'skins' and to have told them to 'workout' the system for themselves which they did" (Stanner 1963:127).

Clans are affiliated to one or the other moiety, although within a local clan group members of both moieties are usually represented. The Kartjin is by far the dominant Murin'bata moiety, having Wendek Na'naie, Maninj, Manu, Kultjil and Kura'bakal clans affiliated with it. The Jarere clan is attached to Ti'wungu, while Idiji clan has equal attachment to both moieties. Clans participate in marriage exchanges beyond the tribe on the basis of their moiety affiliations.

Moiety affiliations are reckoned patrilineally, with each being referred to as either father's moiety or mother's father's moiety. An individual will refer to the totems of the moieties as either father, if they belong to one's own moiety or mother's father if they belong to the opposite moiety.

Totems for both moieties are usually birds. (16) When referring to the name of the moiety, one will usually refer to the dominant totem and not to the bird totems associated with it. (17) The Ti'wungu moiety also has Ku'dapun, the little black hawk, as a totem. Kartjin moiety has Tjinimin, the bat, as a totem. (18)

Myths relating to the moiety totems show the opposition and complementarity which exists between them both. In the Dream-Time, only the Kartjin, the coastal moiety had water, while only the Ti'wunga inland, possessed fire. Kun'manggar enabled the two to exchange their possessions after which Ti'wunga and Kartjin became birds, while Kun'manggar became the Rainbow

Serpent. Both moieties are associated with symbols that represent either land or water. Ti'wunga moiety is represented by the buffalo, a land creature, while Kartjin is represented by snakes which are associated with water. These primary totems are seen as male. Clans are represented by totems that are both land and water related.

Social relations are also ordered by age-grades, which employs a sexual division as well as one of age. In this system age is measured in relation to physiological changes. "The age-grades are important because they express social status. They normally indicate whether a person is married or unmarried, initiated or uninitiated" (Falkenberg 1962:184). At two periods in life, the titles of the age-grades correspond for both males and females; konun'ganga, the youngest grade and kake, the first which marks full adult status for both sexes.

TABLE III

Age Grades

men		women
	Konun'ganga	
nanai		madinboi
kaqai		nal:aru
kadu		palnun
	Kake	
nal:andar		kunu'gun:u
pul:e		mutjingga

From Falkenberg 1962: 177(17)

For women, it is the size and development of the breasts which marks the movement through the age-grade system. The first stage, "a little bit milk" is the Madinbai, the beginning of development. (20) When the breasts are fairly big, approaching full development, "big milk," the woman is nal:ari. This was traditional, the age for a girl's marriage. Palsun, is next, at about 18 years, when the breasts are beginning to droop. (This is now marriageable age.) Kake is marked by "pendulant breasts," at the threshold of old age which begins with Kunu'gun:a. Kunu'gun:a may be used interchangeably with Nutjingga. Nutjingga implies extreme old age and is a burden to society. Both are considered almost sexless. The implications are those of strangers to the group, who have no social value beyond the nuclear family unit.

For men it is puberty and the colour of their hair that marks their movement through the system. A boy enters the namai grade, when he begins to imitate the adult male's skills. It is marked by the boy receiving a spearthrower. The boys are said to be on their way into the womb of the All-Mother at this point. Kigai is the age-grade which marks puberty socially. This is the beginning of ceremonies to make him into Kadu, a man. Special privileges are accorded a Kigai, sexual access to the opposite sex is allowed, though marriage will not occur until much later

when one is Kadu. A man becomes Kake when his hair starts to turn grey, at this age one can demand and expect great respect. During the next grades, Hal:anader and Pul:e, this declines until one is generally ignored beyond the family.

The Murin'bata share with many other Aboriginal groups the belief that children enter the world as spirits through women. These spirits are gifts from Nogomain. They enter women through mysterious means and are then 'found' by men who confirm the child's link with the local clan group. Women act to bring the children from the spirit to the corporeal world.

Individuals in Murin'bata society find life to be a web of numerous and often conflicting relational systems which operate simultaneously within the camp. It is a highly mobile group which experiences periodic adjustments of population. The camp is the basis of local organisation. Here the terms and relations previously discussed take on full significance. As the temporary locus of all clan and horde activities, it has implications for descent, for resource exploitation and for the demarcation of territory. In descent terms, it indicates a man's father's father's horde and its country; in its extended meaning it includes all the territories of the patrilineal totem clans associated with the horde. Kanatfi, also a term for camp, indicates a man's mother's father's horde country, and carries with it all the implications of da.(21)

Each camp usually has a dominant clan plus members from other clans. Rights to the resources in the area of the camp are contingent upon clan and moiety relations previously mentioned. Distribution of gain, which takes place primarily within the camp, is also conditioned by the same relations and by relations between different camps for the dispersal of gifts associated with marriage exchanges. (22)

Camps usually consist of nuclear family groups divided by fires. Within the nuclear family itself, divisions take place depending upon the stage of the marriage, children and the general make-up of the camp itself. Isobel White's (1975) analysis of the family unit in a camp relates the changes which take place in the social relations of a nuclear family fire: (23)

A newly married couple (where there is only one wife) builds a small dwelling, shares one fireBut from the moment the first child is born, the arrangement begins to change. The mother now sleeps on one side of the fire with the child, the husband on the other...for a couple with several children the camp may come to look like two separate units, the main part with several fires, occupied by the mother and young children, the other with a separate fire, by the husband....If the youngest child is a boy, he is likely to sleep in his mother's embrace until he leaves for the bachelor's camp at the age of twelve or thirteen. A young girl...will leave the family camp in her early teens...to live in the widow's and single women's camp (White 1975:134-135).

Avoidance relations previously indicated often disperse family members in conversation with others away from the family fire. "Groups consisting of sisters or mothers and children, brothers, brothers-in-law, fathers and sons, or mother's brother's and sister's sons" (ibid.:136) and sisters-in-law, are most frequently the residential units within the camp. For youths, age-grade and sex divisions are crucial in their residence patterns within the camp. Each social network compounds to make an ever increasingly complex residential unit within the camp.

The Murin'bata social organisation emphasizes the rights of men over and through women. These rights include access to resources in foreign clans, rights to ritual secrets and "complete" membership in their own clan. Men exchange women in order to reaffirm relationships existing between them.

Economic Activities

For most of the investigation by Falkenberg and Stanner, the bush life was still the dominant Murin'bata economic activity; the occasional supplements coming from casual labour, the mission station or the farms were becoming increasingly more frequent due to diminishing natural resources. (24) Stanner reported that, "Time and again the hunters fail, and the search for vegetable food can be just as patchy" (Stanner 1964:69). Primary food-

stuffs included: fish, goannas, birds, wallaby and kangaroo. These were supplemented by secondary sources such as: grubs, roots and honey and other 'tid-bits'. The main hunting tools were spearthrowers, spears and string traps, with the digging stick being the main gathering tool. (25)

Economic resources are controlled primarily by clans, through rights of access within a territory. Camp members vary in rights to resources within specific territories depending upon their sex and their individual links with the dominant clan in the camp. A man generally has the same rights to resources in his mother's local clan territory as he does in his own, this might not, however, extend to the redistribution of gain. The economy of any group "is to some degree dependent on the composition" (Falkenberg 1962:139) of it. Falkenberg indicates a camp with few women has a more difficult time in fully exploiting local resources. Groups of relations are often associated depending upon the food resource being exploited, (26) with sisters-in-law or the women of a brother group forming a primary gathering unit. Other sets of relations such as "a man and his wife or wives, or a group of brothers and their wives, or a group of brothers...may leave the camp together to provide food" (ibid.:140).

There is no absolute sexual division of labour, though men usually hunt large game and fish, "while women provide the staple food: roots, fruits, honey, crabs and small game," (ibid.:139).

Distribution of collected food depends on a variety of relations which exist both within and without the local collecting group. (27) The 'tartar', a gift related to marriage exchanges, is given by a man to his wife's father, wife's mother, wife's mother's brother and wife's brother. Men are also expected to give gifts of food to persons they call mother and father. These generally do not live with ego and are given gifts less frequently than those within the camp. Men have obligations to provide a share of finds or catches to their wives, brothers and their wives, and to all children who reside in the camp. Women have obligations to provide for their husbands, his brothers, and all children in the camp. Outside of the group, women are expected to give food to their mother and father. Boys are expected to reciprocate gifts of food in later life.

"Through the institution which the Murin'bata call 'nandji kulu', the horde is also able to make contacts with alien hordes" (ibid.:142). (28) The kulu trade network which exchanges ceremonial and other goods, (29) is connected to the trade routes of the northern Daly River groups, and to southern networks beyond the Fitzmaurice River. For goods from around these primary routes, Kulu relations are crucial to hordes and the individuals in them. Male participants are fixed in the network after circumcision.

Kulu goods may appear at any time of year, regardless of the season. Virtually anyone may participate in the exchange except

for the very oldest and very youngest members of age-grades, and women and children when especially secret items are passed on. Individuals in the exchange have "only direct kulu relations with two other individuals. Goods pass from one individual to the next individual within a horde, and from the last man in one horde to the first man in the next horde" (ibid.: 107). Except in the case of ritual items, goods are passed from man to woman to man to woman within the horde. Certain goods travel in only one direction in the system, for example, items such as red ochre and wool for hair-belts which follows from lumbu tjiltji, while ritual items such as the churinga travel in all directions.

Involvement with the economies of the farmers was not regularly on a cash basis. Labourers received foodstuffs, tobacco and clothing at periodic intervals. Employment at the mission and the police station was also conducted in this manner. Though marginally important to the total aboriginal economy, during Stanner's early fieldwork, these economic relations became more significant as, through constant exploitation, settlement areas gradually depleted the surrounding flora and fauna.

The Dreaming

The aboriginal view of the universe and man's place in it, is referred to by Stanner as The Dreaming. It is "many things in one. Among them, a kind of narrative of things that once

happened; a kind of charter of things that still happen; and a kind of 'logos' or principle of order transcending everything significant for aboriginal man" (Stanner 1965b:294).

The myths of The Dreaming are concerned with 'how the universe became a moral system', the genesis of social institutions, and the continuity of those institutions with ones which already existed in The Dreaming. Ritual myth, mime and dance and totemic relations are means through which The Dreaming exists in the Here-and-Now. Each has a symbol pattern which expresses the reality of The Dreaming for the Murin'bata that Stanner interprets as the dependency of man upon a source which exists outside of himself.

Beings of The Dreaming

The culture hero, Kun'manggur, The Rainbow Serpent, existed as a man in The Dreaming, "who was unified somehow with what is now the animal kingdom" (Stanner 1963:264). He is said to have been a huge person, one who created and still cares for the people. He was kadu re, man as he was before man as he is now. Two other names are used in referring to him: Kanangek, "habitually spitting in the water," and Dingek, the common term for rainbow. It is generally believed that he is of the Kartjin moiety, though Stanner does indicate that clans who reside close to Nangioneri or Wagaman groups tend to refer to him as a member

of the Ti'wunggu society. While generally referred to as a 'he', Kun'manggur is also said to have had some female characteristics such as large breasts. (30) He became a serpent after one of his exploits.

Myths relating his adventures vary in accounts of his capabilities and relations to other Dream-Time persons. Though not associated with any major rites, his presence is expressed through a wide range of mystical beliefs. In one myth recorded by Stanner, Tjinimin, the Bat, Kun'manggur's son, killed him. Kun'manggur visited numerous sites while dying, at some performing feats of wonder. His last feat was to take the fire into the water, but Kadpun, the Butcher Bird, snatched it from his head-dress. (31) This last feat is marked by the place known as da lurutj kalegale, place/mighty, strong/mother, mother/intensive particular/mother, mother. (32) It was he who enabled Kartjin and Ti'wunggu to exchange their possessions of fire and water establishing their interdependence. After this act he became a serpent "with sharp protuberances on his spine and a long tail that curved scorpion-like over his back," (ibid.:97).

At times Kun'manggur is considered to be Kulaitj, the first and oldest man, at others, he is said to have had parents. Other contradictions are found in relation to his state of being as to whether or not he was: 1) a self-finding or self-subsistent being, or 2) an ancient man with supernatural powers, kadu mundak, or 3) the first and oldest man, or 4) a man who had

parents. Most agree that he was married, though numbers and names of his wives were in disagreement. As well as having Tjinimin the Bat as his son, he is said to have had at least one daughter. (33)

His position vis-a-vis other Dream-Time beings was also somewhat ambiguous. He was more powerful than Nutjingga, but his relationship to Kukpi, the Snake woman or Woganain, the Sky-dweller is left unclear.

Kukpi, The Snake Woman, who gave man the subsection system is also "the great song-maker and giver of spring-waters." (34) She too is a self-subsistent being and kadu re, though in time she appears later than Kun'manggur. Whether she was ever truly human is uncertain (though this does not imply she could not have been kadu re). Affiliated with the Ti'wunggu society she is often referred to as Kun'manggur's wife. Like Nutjingga, her story consists of the destruction of males by her hand. She is also like Kun'manggur, in that she is a wanderer, though where she travelled is unimportant. Nothing is known of her path except that it crossed that of Kun'manggur at two resting places, and that she carried with her during her journey the digging stick, the symbol of women.

Kukpi is loosely connected to Nutjingga through the rite of Punj. During the secret phase of Punj, at least one song is explicitly attributed to her. "The song is made from a repetition of three phrases-- (1) pambara badinya, (2) dilwarawara, (3)

yelyayene--in an unknown language" (ibid.:58). Also when the initiates are returned to the open camp at night, the escorts sing a song which Stanner suggests indicates part of Kukpi's journey.

As with Kun'manggur, though generally seen to be female, she is also identified as a male as well as a female black snake. "She was half woman, half-snake" (ibid.:86). Kukpi is also a supernatural sea-being, more powerful than Mutjingga.

Nogamain, the Sky-Dweller, provider of honey and beautiful children is a pure-spirit. There is disagreement as to whether or not he lived of his own will (mane mukuna), without kin or with a wife and son. Those who contend the latter claim he had a son who is symbolised through the hunting spear (tjanba). A hunter's success with the spear is suggested as ultimately being linked to Nogamain's influence. Informants claimed in times of hunger the elders would call to Nogamain to bring luck in hunting or in honey collecting. This is the only being who is invoked in such a way.

Ambiguity in Nogamain's identification rested in the relation of the pair of sky spirits known as Tanggamau, and the being Kangalmai. Informants also associated him "with the man in the moon, and one of the smaller marks on the moon (was) often pointed to (me) as the dog" (ibid.:162).

Numerous other beings permeate the tales of The Dreaming as related at length elsewhere. Two other beings of particular

interest are Kudapun, the Apostle Bird and Padurutj, a man in the Kukpi myth. Kudapun, after the death of Mutjingga, made the first bullroarers to stand in her place. (35) He was never a man, but always a bird who lived at the same time as Mutjingga. (36)

The Kukpi myth, as it is told in some areas in the south of the Murin'bata domain, becomes fused with the tale of Kudapun's creation of the bullroarer. This occurs after Padurutj attempts to solve the mystery of the deaths in the tale. Padurutj became "the first kirnan or wanangal (in that context implying both 'wise man' and 'warlock')" (ibid.:63). Like Kudapun, he is associated with the making of the first bullroarer, being said to have received it from Kukpi's son and later having taught the men to make them.

Rites of The Dreaming

Celebration of the events of The Dreaming is done through religious rites that "simulated events of the founding dramas, though in covert ways often difficult to perceive through the complex and crecive symbolism....Each ritual occasion vivified in the minds of celebrants the first instituting of the culture, deepened the sense of continuity with men's beginnings and reaffirmed the structures of existence" (ibid.:153). Most ceremonials took place in the winter dry season, from April to October, when food was less plentiful and groups were forced to

reside close to rivers and billabongs, creating closer and more enduring associations.

The major rites to which Stanner refers were sacred "initiation" rites for males. (37) Women were excluded from performances and from knowledge of the rites, though this varied depending on the rite itself. This was grounded in the principle that in The Dreaming men had to take power from women, because they sought to destroy life.

Tjimburki, the oldest rite Stanner found reference to, had last been performed before 1900. It was an initiation rite with more power and significance than Punj, taking much longer to perform and combining religious celebration with the secular celebration of initiation. When the rite took place was a point of contention amongst informants; some believing it to have begun with the 'new grass time', Tjarke, late September/early October and end in the 'burning grass time', Wir, late April/early May. The rite 'belonged' to the very old men. There were prohibitions on intercourse and talking, though not on singing, placed on the participants for the duration of the celebration. Participants remained at the ceremonial grounds until the rite was completed.

Styles of the dances and the ceremonial ground for the rite were very reminiscent of the death and bullroarer rites which appeared later, though the scale was much greater than these later rites. (38) Dances in the rite are remembered to have been about Pulupulu, a hawk and a poisonous sting-ray. Some features

of the rite have either vanished or been adapted for use in other rites. The bag swung over the participant's head by the kirman was no longer in use during Stanner's work, neither was the encircling rope, however the central red and white pole "was occasionally used in a secular dance known as Halgarin" (ibid.:111).

Evidence indicates that preceding Tjimburki there were two preliminary rites, Ngangula and Jandurtji, which have since been discontinued. (39) It appears that Tjimburki was a rite without any validating or accompanying myth, not even any which were attributed to the hawk or the sting-ray.

The decline of Tjimburki was the result of strong religious influence from the Djamindjung and other southern groups, who had the bullroarer cult. Stanner indicates that the adoption of "four elements--circumcision, the cult of the bullroarer, the abstract scheme of subsection organisation, and matrilineal totems...required some adaptations of the northern ritual complex" (ibid.:143). Along with adopting circumcision as a rite for mature men, the Murin'bata began to alter other features of the ritual complex. The spearthrower, which was a central symbol in altering the status of initiates was replaced by the bullroarer, just as it earlier had replaced the dilly bag. Black and white, the dominant colouring of the Tjimburki remained. Following these changes, the rite became known as Maggawila.

At this time boys at puberty were initiated "at a rite known as Karmala, which did not require circumcision" (ibid.:245).

With the change in the senior rites came changes at this stage with the introduction of circumcision. Karamala became a preliminary rite for even younger boys. It prepared boys to leave the fire of their nuclear families in the camp for the bachelor camp. Stanner describes it as a secular rite, emphasizing the boys' social position. At the end of the celebration, the boys give their fathers gifts. The fathers passed the articles into the kulu exchange system, giving the boys a place in it. The rites' structure and movements were similar to later circumcision rites.

Tjimburki, under the name Manggawila, underwent more changes as the influence of the bullroarer cult spread. Black bull-roarers became red ones marked with incised patterns, secret songs and dances not previously performed arose, as did a complex of myths associated with the developing rite of Punj. Manggawila became Djaban and replaced Karamala, which was then discarded as a prepubic rite.

Djaban was a dry season ceremony held when several clans were gathered together. On the pretext of hunting, the initiates were separated from the rest of the camp. As in the Punj, the initiates became known as 'wild dogs', ku were. A rite with a mood more somber than that of Punj, it forms, according to Stanner, a continuous movement between Karamala and Punj, combining the "secular field of circumcision, and the religious field celebration" (ibid.:147). Of significance is the increasing

separation of males and females established through the rite. Previously only a secular division, with the advent of Djaban it assumed religious sanctions much earlier in the lives of the initiates.

There were other changes within the ritual complex during the development of Punj, such as an attempt to couple Punj with Wilili, the tiny bullroarer Djamiadjung rite, which "made women overcome with sexual desire" and was seen as "somewhere between shame and amusement" (ibid.:151). At one point there was also an attempt by some elder men to make a Djaban for girls, this was not maintained. Stanner does not indicate any rites of initiation existing for women. Women, as well as lacking independent rites, are excluded from the mortuary ceremonies performed for men. These are never performed for women. Women do, however, perform mourning songs marking the separation of the deceased's body and soul from the camp. (40) "In the case of more mature persons, both male and female, immediate disposal (of the body) was by exposure on a platform outside but at no great distance from the place of death" (ibid.:119). The total complex of mortuary rites would take several years and the participation of many clans to complete. Stanner's analysis of the complex breaks into six phases, which were to break the tie of the deceased's spirit to its social identity and the body from its material form.

The distinguishable phases were as follows: (1) Isolation of the body outside of the camp of death; its exposure on a platform to await decay; a ban on any mention of personal name(s) of the dead; and abandonment of the locality. (2) Breaking up of a dead man's chattels preparatory to their later destruction by fire. (3) Sending away of his hair and stone-axe. (4) Dismemberment and cremation of the dried corpse. (5) Celebration of a funerary feast (magindit) over a fire in which the broken chattels were burned at the same time as cognates gave food to affines against a counter-gift of valuables. (6) Final internment of the body-ashes at a ceremony (mulunu) held in a deadman's clan-estate (ibid.:118-119).

Five categories of primary kin (kadu manda) were noted by mourning terms; "kuli (father and father's sister), nuryir (mother and mother's brother), mikmunir (spouse of either sex), minartji (children of both sexes) and daiguda (siblings)" (ibid.:120). Those of the daiguda category were subject to an avoidance taboo, lagarin, which prohibited them from touching their sibling's body or possessions. Any food collected by the deceased before his death was also considered taboo for close kin and was set aside for affines. Mourning by close kin was also marked by their wearing designs of white paint. Female kin displayed grief through mourning songs, the observance of taboos and by lacerating their heads.

The deceased's hair is cut by a mature male who is not lagarin, it is used in part for divination. Disposal of the hair was usually carried out by a male agnate. Female cognates who were not lagarin removed the bones of each forearm. (41) The burning of the corpse and the smashing of all remaining bones

takes place at this time, done by male affines. (42) One of the mother's class bundles the ashes and cares for them until their final internment.

The magindit feast prepared by cognates for agnates includes the transfer of valuables referred to as nandji-mimbi (43) which means 'things, lice', from the agnates to the cognates. Cognates prepare vegetable foods only for the feast, as that is the way the deceased wishes it. Siblings of the deceased may assist in the preparation but not the consumption of the food, neither may the widow. The final phase of the ceremony consists of the mulunu rite, a rite which was bigger than Punj. Participants came from not only the deceased's clan but from groups beyond, including other clans, kulu partners, and even alien tribes. (44) Clans in attendance were often organised in kulu positions. At this last ceremony only the men danced. A solitary singer, tjanbanai, would sing a song known only to him, unaccompanied by drone-pipes or tapping sticks. The singer would continue at intervals through the night. This marked the final separation of the spirit from the living.

Due to rapid depopulation of clan territories, the length of time and resources involved in the mortuary ceremony, the decline in frequency of the full rites was almost complete by the period of Stanner's fieldwork. He records that the last full performance of the rites took place in the late 1930's. Despite depopulation of areas, hundreds were said to have taken part. The

rites of burial were gradually assumed by the missionaries as deaths became more frequent.

Stanner indicates that the ritual calendar for the Murin'bata was filled with numerous feasts and observances. Those of initiation and mortuary were of the most significance in that their performance entailed the largest gathering of people and resources.

The Kirman

Falkenberg attributes declining clan populations to several causes, including the absence of a kirman who is instrumental in "fixing" one's position in the clan through initiation. The men of a local clan who are co-resident in a camp, form a corporate group which makes decisions regarding the clan participation in rituals. Initiated men within this group select a ceremonial leader, a kirman, who becomes the custodian of their tradition. "Often a relatively young initiated man is chosen as ceremonial leader...and he may remain in this office as long as he is mentally and physically fit" (Falkenberg 1962:47).

A kirman:

...must have intimate knowledge of the mythology and have the ability to arrange and direct all the ceremonies in which the clan participates. He must know all the stages of the different ceremonies and must have detailed knowledge of the

sequence in which they come. He must know the songs word for word, and act as chief singer at the ceremonies (ibid.:48).

Care of the secret churinga and the site that it is kept at are also part of his duties. (45) Although the kirman has no real political power, he is the one who organizes a group for social purposes. This includes often the appropriation of resources necessary to the performance of those rituals. He is expected to deal with problems connected with the care of the ritual complex. It is he who hands out punishment for those who are seen to violate the secrets of the group. Cases are presented by him to the group of initiated men at meetings. Meetings of the group take place at night outside of the camp. The kirman wears a ceremonial dress consisting of "two wilgi (hooked boomerangs) pushed under his hairbelt on each side of the body, and he holds a bundle of spears in one hand" (ibid.).

It is the kirman who safeguards the continuity which exists between man and The Dreaming.

Summary

The cult of Karwadi developed during a period of massive change. It emphasized the decline of the power of the male culture hero, Kun'manggur, and the rise of a female mythical figure, Nutjingga. The introduction of the bullroarer cult into

the northern areas accompanied the introduction of the subsection system. These religious and social changes in the society are attributed to the actions of two supernaturally powerful women.

Stanner's material raises numerous questions pertaining to his interpretation of the Karvadi cult. The first is the issue of "contact" and its impact on the development of the cult itself. While indicating its potential importance (1964:79-80) to history of the area he does not return to it specifically in his analysis of cult except to indicate that he could not see any correlation between Christian symbols and those found in the myth and rite. Although the Europeans had been successful in curtailing religious activity, Stanner does not see this as having any impact on the meaning of those remaining religious activities. This is in part due to his own thesis in which he contends the various rituals and myths are but different statements of the same essential meaning. It does not however exhaust the potential meaning derived from the colonial experience.

The issue of cultural change is not restricted to colonial impact but also to the changes brought about by the introduction of the subsection system. Following Meggitt's analysis of the subsection system it would appear that the sexual ambiguity of the identities of the mythic characters of The Dreaming could be related to a resulting social ambiguity of category brought about by a conflict between patrilineal ideology of descent and the

indirect matrilineal descent of subsection affiliations. Thus the myth at one level would be a resolution of social ambiguity in lineage relations. Stanner's material does not preclude the option of the myth as meaning as a lineage statement--as a statement about relations between men. This does not solve the issue raised here which is how men conceive of these relations.

Several features of the social order appear particularly relevant to the myth. The first of these is the age-grade system. Falkenberg points out that age grades are significant as expressions of social status. Not only is Mutjingga's name that of a category within that system, her characteristics are those of a woman who is 'mutjingga'. The symbol that transforms men into the religious men in the rite is also known by the age-grade term.

Moiety relations are crucial in the definition of rituals. Participants from opposite moieties must be present in order to ensure the success of rites. The exogamous nature of the two patrilineal clans reinforces the ritual dependency in the secular realm. Moieties exchange women in order to continue society. The appearance of moiety figures in the myth confirms the social dominance of the system.

Notes

1. Falkenberg's writings on the Murin'bata appear in both English and Norwegian. To date only Kin and Totem (1962) is available in English.
2. Stanner attributes the poaching to the decline in natural game numbers in the area, when sedentary population was increasing.
3. The All-Father is known by many names throughout the area. The term Angamunggi is the name used by the Mangioneri, the Muria'bata term being Kun'manggur.
4. The dynamics of missionary influence among the aborigines has been noted at great length in the works of other authors. Of note is Robert Tonkinson's work The Jigalong Mob: Victors of the Desert Crusade (1974) Menlo Park: Cummings Publication Company.
5. Both Stanner and Falkenberg credit the missions with having kept the aborigines from deserting their territories. At Port Keats the opening of the mission brought the return of some groups which had moved north.
6. For a description of the treatment of initiates after circumcision see Knut Dahl 1895:122-123.
7. Punishments for women, particularly those deemed to be guilty of violating ritual taboos were severe. Sentences for offenders included: death by removing the kidney, rape by the men seen harmed by the violation and the payment of a collective gift from the women to the men wronged. Both Stanner and Falkenberg note beatings as being common punishment in domestic quarrels.
8. During his initial field work in 1932, Stanner concentrated on these other groups. It was not until 1934/35 that he specifically directed his attention to the Murin'bata. By the time of Falkenberg's study in 1950, they had been largely absorbed into the Murin'bata.
9. Many of these have virtually disappeared with only one or two speakers remaining.

10. The terms used for the analysis of local social organisation vary between Stanner and Falkenberg. Estate in Stanner's writings refer to "the traditionally recognised locus...of some kind of patrilineal descent group forming the core or nucleus of the territorial group" (Stanner 1965:2) and is equivalent to Falkenberg's 'country'. Stanner also uses the term 'range' as "the tract or orbit over which the group including its nucleus and adherents, ordinarily hunted and foraged to maintain life" (Stanner 1965:2). 'Domain' includes both range and estate. The variation in the use of terms rests on the work of A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and his term 'horde'. Stanner, by using the terms of estate and range, is seeking to expand the concern of social organisation concepts to include ecological relations, an objective which Falkenberg does not pursue.
11. Falkenberg gives an extensive list of totems and totem sites for local clans on pages 50-80 in Kin and Totem.
12. Falkenberg was unable to confirm the chief totems for Jarere, Kura'bakal, Maninj and Wendek Wa'naie clans.
13. Falkenberg 1962:40.
14. Falkenberg 1962:44.
15. Residence out of the clan territories by both men and women increased after the end of the 1930's. Falkenberg reports that of 195 individuals surveyed, "72 of those lived in Murin'bata domain, 19 in alien tribal territories, 49 on the mission station, 3 at the lepers' hospital on Channel Island, 49 on cattle stations, and 3 in places whose location is not known" (1962:15).
16. Falkenberg indicates that these might well be of recent origin, replacing male and female kangaroos. See Falkenberg 1962:185-186.
17. Falkenberg 1962:189-190.
18. Sex totems held the same set of birds as symbols as did the moieties. The gradual disappearance of the sex totems has been linked by Falkenberg to the increasing importance of the moiety totems after the advent of the subsection system.
19. Falkenberg 1962; :177.
21. Falkenberg points out that this is also the term for a small churinga.

22. Stanner does not indicate the nature or quantity of the gifts used in marriage exchanges.
23. Stanner indicates the word for camp, da, was of recent innovation and now customary, with the word noinoi having been previously used. Other terms yag and murin were also indicated as being interchangeable with noinoi.
24. Neither Stanner nor Falkenberg give any indication as to the precise relation and significance of bush products or European goods in everyday life. The latter, by the period of Falkenberg's visit, have been incorporated into the Kulu trade.
25. Camp here indicates 'fire' or 'hearth', within the camp. This is a smaller unit of analysis than that used by Falkenberg or Stanner.
26. Although most did not possess guns, Stanner indicates that by 1935 they could use them successfully. The spear-throwers and hunting tools represent symbols of masculinity, while the digging stick is seen as female. In the myth of Kukpi, Stanner emphasizes that she carries the digging stick as a sign of her femininity.
27. For further discussion, Falkenberg 1962. The frequency of the exchanges of the type mentioned here are not noted. It would appear that in-camp exchanges are most frequent and significant to the total economy of the camp.
28. See White 1975:129.
29. The significance of kulu relations in the transfer of 'new' ritual knowledge has been extensive. Stanner's informant Durmugan for instance "learned of the religious cult of Kunabbi....He was given his first bullroarer....He was also 'placed' immutably in a fixed locus in the system of eight subsections" (Stanner 1962:77), during a trade trip.
30. Further analysis of existence-classes depends, according to Stanner, upon a morphemic analysis of the whole language.
31. The merging of characteristics of femininity and masculinity in Kun'manggur are not meant to indicate sexual ambiguity as is the case in Rainbow Serpents amongst other groups. See Radcliffe-Brown 1933:342-347.
32. Falkenberg reports a similiar myth, 1962:192-193.
33. This site is thought to be along the Kimul according to Stanner.

34. Stanner's tale includes two daughters, Pilitman, the Green Parrot Women, while Falkenberg's indicates only one, Nolpi, Pelican Duck.
35. Stanner presents the myth of Kukpi in 1963:125-127. Also see 1964:67 for the Dingiri songs.
36. See Appendix I.
37. In Falkenberg's tale Ku'dapun is listed as a man.
38. It must be remembered that it was Stanner's intent to show that initiation rites implied more than the secular meaning of the change of social position.
39. For instance, in the Tjimburki, the singers are positioned in a ring-shaped hollow, similiar to the positioning of the dancers and initiated in the Punj nine-of-the-blowfly.
40. Stanner was unable to discover more than this about these rites.
41. See C.H. Berndt 1950:283-332.
42. Stanner suggests that previously other bones including the skulls were kept. This is based on sites which he says contain these bones.
43. The gifts "were all valuables (merkat) of the kind that entered into intertribal trade. They passed into, and through, the hands of the primary class of bereaved people in very much the fashion followed in that system of trade" (Stanner 1961:95).
44. For a description see Stanner 1964:97-99.
45. Falkenberg 1962:270.

CHAPTER 4A SECOND INTERPRETATION

Myths are narrative dramas comprised of symbolic units. "Each... involves a number of dramatis personae who stand in a particular configuration of relationships at the beginning and a different configuration at the end" (Leach 1971:23). The transformation of these relationships is the process of movement through the myth's sequence. Meaning is derived from the relations of these transformations to a set of underlying themes. A function of myth is to legitimise institutions and to explain the moral basis of society.

In examining the myth of Mutjingga several lines of evidence will be investigated. The first is that of the nature of the actors. Characters and their actions have symbolic capacity in other concepts. Their nature within the myth is contingent upon meanings defined in other contexts. What is problematic is how this relationship is expressed and its import to the meanings of the myth.

A second line of evidence is that of the geographical framework. In Murin'bata myths, the emphasis on place is significant. Place acts to define relationships of the actors, thus

it has significance for the transformation of their relationships. A further significance of the geographic framework develops from the fact that events are situated in space. Space serves to link actors to events and the events themselves.

The third line of evidence presented is that of the agents of the transformations. In the myth and rite images of the transformations are recurrent. The bullroarer in the rite and the river in the myth alter the nature of the actors. The discussion will show how these images are related to the actors and their impact on the myth's meaning.

The interpretation offered here examines the tie between the ideological expression and sociological implications of myth. This contrasts with Stanner's interpretations which reject this link, finding it to be neither a causal nor a necessary condition in the development of meaning.

The Actors

Stanner's concern is with the social order as a means through which the ontological reality is expressed (Hiatt 1975:10-13). The social content of symbols is seen as having little if any significance to their meaning. As a result he rejects any implication that the social relations between actors is of any significance. Hiatt supports Stanner and pursues this notion in suggesting that in the myths

...the social order is conspicuous only by its almost complete absence. In many cases formal relationships and affiliations are left unspecified. And when kinship is mentioned, it is either incidental to the story or there to be violated (ibid.:15).

In his analysis Stanner is only concerned with Mutjingga. All the other actors are merged into a single category regardless of the differences between them. The result is that Stanner views the conflict between the actors as that between a supernatural entity and society as a whole. Within that framework the symbolic significance of the actors is diminished.

The presence of a social order in myth and its relation to the social order of society has long been of significance to the analysis of myth. Malinowski's theory of myth as a charter assumes a direct relation between both orders (see Leach 1971). Rigby (1977) shows how the violation of the social order in ritual acts to return the system to its proper order.

In the myth of Mutjingga, the social order is presented as relations within a camp. Actors assume the attributes of differing types of relations possible within the social order. Of note are the moiety, age-grade and kinship ties indicated through names and the actions of the actors.

Following Hymes (1971:49-80), the identification of the actors presents a significant line of evidence in the interpretation of the myth. In his discussion, Hymes suggests that actors are named and titles presented not simply to isolate myths from one another but, rather, "are structurally motivated, and give

evidence of underlying relations implicitly grasped by the makers of the literature" (ibid.:60). Hymes' reinterpretation of the actors makes explicit the nature of meaning of the myth through the conflicts between the actors. The action in myth brings about a transformation in these conflicts such that relationships between the actors assume different configurations through the course of myth. Each actor's status and goal helps to shape the course of the transformation.

Names, according to Stanner's informants, "are thought to partake of the personality which they designate" (Stanner 1937:301). (1) Although Stanner notes this he does not pursue it in the analysis of myth. They provide significant information regarding the characters when this is applied to those who appear in the myth of Mutjingga. There are numerous other named actors mentioned in the myth of Mutjingga. Information about these characters can also be inferred from their actions and their names as well as from the informants' statements provided by Stanner. Reference is made to nature men, Left Hand and Right Hand, who pursue The Old Woman; A Man and his Wife, who discover the misdeed; Kaniru, the granddaughters Mutjingga swallows; Mothers, who wait in the camp for The Children, and The People. The actors are part of the camp which is the setting for the initial action.

The myth's central actor, Mutjingga, is a trusted consanguine who is left to care for The Children at the camp

while The People search for honey. At the camp she teaches The Children how to bathe in the water and inspects them for lice, the presence of which indicates shame. For some unknown motive she consumes The Children, leaving the camp in disguise through the river. While in the river she confronts the mature men and is subsequently killed.

Stanner states Mutjingga as a symbol represents the fear of the unknown (1963:8). She guards men but at the same time she removes them from the known social realm and places them in the unknown. Her actions are malevolent, a threat to men which continues to the present. That she undertakes to swallow the boys is an 'unknowable' fact, explained as an intrinsic part of her character.

Mutjingga is kadu re, she is also revealed in the course of the rite to initiates to be Karwadi, The Mother-of-All. The name Karwadi is known only to men, it is also the secret name of the bullroarer. Women and those who have not been initiated are not supposed to know the secret name of Mutjingga on penalty of death. Karwadi is a creator who, in The Dreaming, made men kadu punj by imparting secret knowledge to them. Though not as powerful as Kun'manggur, the Rainbow Serpent or Kukpi, The Snake Woman, she is nevertheless formidable. The 'duality' of visible and invisible which Stanner suggests permeates all entities can be seen to be an intrinsic part of Mutjingga's character. It is revealed by secret and public names. That which is visible is an

old woman whose social responsibility is to care for children; what is invisible, revealed only through the actions of the rite, is the creator who makes men 'know' the mystical realm.

The central conflict of the myth occurs between Mutjingga and The People over the social responsibility for The Children. Mutjingga's responsibilities were to look after The Children until the return of The People. The rejection or rather the abuse of that obligation leads to all subsequent actions. Had The Children been "grown and ready to become Kadu Punj," swallowing them would then have been right (ibid.:43). The impropriety is dependent upon the age of The Children and the situation, which includes the absence of The People. It creates a serious danger for The People. For the ritual these conditions are significant factors. The timing of the rite is dependent upon the consensus of the initiated males. Excluded from participation are both the mothers and fathers of the initiates whose presence at the rite is restricted to roles in the audience.

The term 'mutjingga' appears in other contexts both in The Dreaming and the Here-and-Now. These extra-myth contexts shed light on the character of The Old Woman in the myth examined here.

The Old Woman is not the only Dream-Time being referred to as being 'mutjingga', the Crab, (bali) is also Mutjingga.(2) In the myth about her activities, Stanner reports that her crucial

features are her extreme age and her ability to rejuvenate herself. I find these attributes to be significant to the character of The Old Woman. Crabs were thought to change "their shells and renew(ed.) their youth and strength" (ibid.:105), and that men, following their example could do the same. With the intervention of Crow, men learned to die, which was 'better' than Crab's power. As with Mutjingga, it is Crab's association with death and the renewal of life, that is of significance for men. Crab has the ability to die and renew herself, while Mutjingga's death brings the renewal of life through an outside agent. The mysterious power of women to create life is through spirits that are reborn. For both Crab and Mutjingga, being female implies the power of transforming spirits. Both lose control of their power--conceived of as gifts to the people--to men.

The name 'mutjingga' figures as a term in the Murin'bata age-grade system. It is applied to "old women with flat pendulant breasts" (Falkenberg 1962:179). Those who are mutjingga are to some degree outsiders, not usually socially significant beyond the family group. They are described by Falkenberg as a burden to the camp, no longer being of economic or reproductive significance. Taboos between the sexes are no longer operative for them, allowing them to pass between the sexes with relative ease. Mutjingga in the myth is recognised as an old woman. She does have significance beyond the family in that she is the one who has the power to make men from the youths

in the camp. In this way she too crosses the barriers of sex which exist for other women.

Left Hand and Right Hand, mature men, are agents sent by The People to find Mutjingga and The Children. They are sent because of their prowess with hunting tools; Left Hand carrying a spear and Right Hand carrying a club. It is Left Hand who points out the path of Mutjingga's escape to the men in pursuit. He is the first one to attack her, spearing her in the legs. He announces that the attack is retribution for the fault she committed through her deeds. Right Hand jumps into the water and breaks Mutjingga's neck with his club. Together they remove The Children from her belly, mark and return them to the camp.

While on a joint venture, Left Hand and Right Hand accomplish their task by diverse means and routes: "Now all told Left Hand, because of his great skill, to take spear and Right Hand to take club; the two men ran, one to each side of the water" (Stanner 1963:41). Left Hand from a place on the land and Right Hand from the water, together they kill Mutjingga. This dependence upon diverse but complementary means is recurrent not only in the myth, but in the rite and through the relations of the moiety system. Right and Left, with opposite tools, come together in order to oppose a supernaturally powerful and chaotic being.

Maturity for men is recognised by their ritual status and position in the age-grade system. This gives them authority, placing them in a position to determine changes in the ritual and

social positions of uninitiated men. The mature men in the myth after destroying Mutjingga take over her ritual functions. Ritual power and authority is taken from women by men, and is maintained exclusively by them. In this case, the woman was a supernaturally powerful one who loses control of The Children to two socially significant men representing The People. Power becomes expressed through one sex, here through men engaged in a common cause.

The Children left in Mutjingga's care learn how to bathe. She swallows them after offering to remove their shame (the lice) and help them to sleep. After being removed from her belly, they are washed and dried in the smoke, then are painted with ochre, marked by a band of possum hair and finally returned to the camp. Mutjingga calls The Children in her care Kaniru, brother's daughter's daughter. In the subsection system these are the females who would be given to Mutjingga's patriclan in the marriage exchange. Mutjingga removes them from the camp and the marriage network. Without these females the camp cannot renew or increase social ties with other camps and faces extinction. The existing social order is disrupted.

In relation to the rite the reference is an important indication of the merging of the sexes. The marks given The Children in the myth are those only given to males. Females are made males by the acts of mature men. By calling The Children Kaniru, Mutjingga is establishing their association with women,

one which men terminate in the actions of the rite. In the rite the initiates are called 'wild dogs', a further indication of the obscuring of social identity. The mine-of-the-blowfly also expresses a transformation through destruction of social identity. They only receive an identity by the actions of mature men.

After the rite, the initiates find that the differences between the sexes assume a sacred quality never before apparent. The denial of sex within the context of the myth is in a sense part of the preparation for the new significance it will take on following it. The men become persons who know the Secret as a prerogative of their status and the women remain those who can not.

The Man and his Wife are seen briefly following The Old Woman's misdeed. Their thirst for water brought them back to the camp and the discovery of the act. The Wife is the first to make it known that the camp is deserted. She reports that Mutjingga has swallowed The Children, thus bringing her husband and the other people back to the camp. The Wife's knowledge of the act is indicative of that which women are assumed to know. Like Mutjingga she is one of the women who have been brought into the camp through the marriage network. Given the native exegesis of her social position, the Husband is Mutjingga's link within the local group.

The Man and his Wife have domestic authority over The Children. In going to hunt for honey they surrender that authority to a publicly recognised figure, Nutjingga. The misdeed serves to further the break between private, i.e. family, control and public, i.e. camp, authority.

The people establish the initial conditions of responsibility in the camp. Their first appearance consists of leaving The Children in the care of a trusted consanguine, in order that they fulfill their obligations as providers of food to the camp. The food that they leave the camp to find is honey. Honey is especially significant in this case as it is provided by the same being Nogamain, who gives people children. While looking for one gift from Nogamain, The People lose his other gift to a supernatural being.

The People reemerge after the warning has been sounded by The Husband and His Wife. They set off in pursuit at first in mass and then in two groups of five men tracking on either side of the water. Upon reaching the place Manawarar, they delegate Left and Right Hand to seek revenge, thereby correcting the misdeed. References to The People, after the discovery of the misdeed, indicate they are all male. It is 'five men' who run in pursuit and the tools used to kill The Old Woman are male symbols. Even the obligation of providing for the camp belongs to males.

Contrast this to The Mothers, a sub-group of The People who appear only in the camp. Upon the return of The Children, they

"hit their own heads so that the blood flowed" (ibid.:42). Their response is not one of rejoicing, but rather of mourning as in the rites of death. It is the men who seek revenge for the act outside of the camp, while the women wait and mourn inside the camp.

Stanner states that the mature men return The Children to those who have mysterious power over Life. The Mothers transform the child-spirits into real children. In this respect they resemble Mutjingga who continues the transformation of The Children.

The actors and their actions during the course of the myth led to my hypothesis that the myth expresses the nature of conflict between men and women over the control of children. Distinctions between the actors are made on the basis of sex and social obligations regarding the development of the camp.

Mutjingga's behaviour is the central theme of the myth. Her actions are a defiance of the authority of The People throwing the camp into a state of chaos, where the distinctions between social entities are merged together. The resolution of the conflict leads to further distinctions made in the sacred realm on the basis of sex. The behaviour of the other actors focuses on the chaos created from the normal social behaviour, and attempts to restore it.

Mutjingga's actions serve to link her with the supernatural through her transformation into an ambiguously defined water-

creature. Her violation of social responsibilities is not based on incorrect actions, but on actions performed in the wrong context. Without the sanctions of The People, the swallowing of The Children by Mutjingga destroys their lives rather than transforms their identities into social beings. She removes all their socially recognisable features by putting them in one place all together.

Left Hand and Right Hand represent the authority of men in the moiety system. They are sent to resolve the chaos created by Mutjingga. The people give them the authority to seek retribution and also to sort out the chaos Mutjingga has created. Through their actions the mutual dependency of the two moieties in the creation of life and the maintenance of the camp is sustained.

The people in their pursuit of Mutjingga create distinctions between themselves. The distinctions are made on the basis of sex, men pursue while women remain in the camp. In the path of pursuit one group of men is on each side of the river. It is not until the men recognise the authority of the moieties that they are successful. The decision to send Left Hand and Right Hand is a recognition of both the significance of the moiety and the primacy of the authority of men in the moiety.

In numbers, the group of men are equivalent to the number of children Mutjingga has consumed. (3) The Children are dependent upon these men to return them to the camp, just as the initiates in the rite are dependent upon their potential wife's brothers to incorporate them into the cult.

The Children are not differentiated from one another until their rescue by the men. Then they are marked in such a way as to change their identities. The markings give them access to new social relations. They also establish The Children as males.

The relationships between the actors change during the course of the myth. These changes take place as part of the conflict that marks the development of the myth. In the beginning of the myth Mutjingga stands to The People as a trusted consanguine. She is a foreigner in the camp, a member of the opposite society brought into the group through marriage. To The Children she stands as a responsible elder to their own position as irresponsible novices. By her act she destroys the obligations of her relationships with both The People and The Children. She also assumes a position of supernatural authority in her escape.

The People stand as members of the opposite society to Mutjingga at the beginning of the myth. When she destroys The Children, she disrupts the dependency that sustains the camp.

The Children begin as socially undifferentiated beings. They are socially subordinate to all the other actors. Through the course of the myth they become socially distinct and gain status within the group.

The Setting

Place, as well as incidents, marks the progression of the action in the myth. This author finds that the camp, the river and the place Manawarar are significant indicators of the relationships between the actors. Each place defines the relationships between the actors and the action. Place is a significant line of evidence of the existence of The Dreaming. Evidence exists in that the shape of the world, the trees, streams and rocks that fill the countryside, are often the places where events in the journeys of the heroes took place. "Even when not well understood, the presence of such evidence was taken to be a sign betokening old intent and present significance" (ibid.:152). The paths of Kun'manggur and Kukpi are fixed in a socio-geographic network which serves to impart memory of the significance of the events of The Dreaming.

The significance of geography in the makeup of mythic areas was pointed out by Malinowski's work in the Trobriand Islands. Grounding his thesis in the notion of myths as charters for social institutions Malinowski, according to Harwood (1976), found actions on the landscape a major means of subdividing myth into cognitively distinct segments. The landscape as a means of establishing territories and limits of social practices provides a primary framework for the action in myths such as "Le Geste D'Asdiwal" (Levi-Strauss 1966).

The Murin'bata material has been explored by Falkenberg and Stanner which shows that there is significant data incorporated into the choice of place in myth. Falkenberg addresses this evidence in his discussion of local clan territories through the notions of territory demarcation and social access to totem sites, while Stanner's own interest is in the analysis of the journeys by Kun'manggur and Kukpi. In the analysis of the ritual, movement from one ceremonial area to another expresses the variation in relations between men. Turning to the myth, the movement from the camp to the river and the act of pursuit and the location have the same functions. Stanner however does not develop his analysis of place in the myth in this respect.

The river is the only place of significance to the analysis offered by Stanner. It symbolises Life, while the other places have no significance to the analysis. The condition of the water changes from clear to cloudy, from straight to crooked symbolising the deceit and the tortuous conditions into which Life has been thrown.

Action begins in the camp, the temporary headquarters of the clan. The camp is the base from which the exploration for honey takes place. Those who leave the camp, The Man and His Wife and The People, are providers for those who remain, Mutjingga and The Children. The camp is dependent upon the success of its hunters and gatherers and the presence of water to sustain it. With the exception of The Wife and Mutjingga, no women appear beyond the

camp. Their presence in the camp marks the danger in which The Children are placed and their mourning the conditions under which The Children were returned.

The order of the camp is disturbed by Mutjingga's act after The Children have entered the water. This prepares them for her act, and for their subsequent transformation. Mutjingga's escape is made by way of the river which sustains the camp. In the water Mutjingga's supernatural existence becomes known. When The Children have been swallowed they too become part of that existence. When they are rescued by the mature men, the rescue is not complete until the stain of the act has been removed and they have been dried.

The People follow the river in pursuit. At intervals the men meet to check for evidence of Mutjingga in the water. Finally they reach the place Manawarar, where the water is cloudy. It is at this place that the decision to send only Left Hand and Right Hand to continue the pursuit is made. As with decisions made by initiated men regarding the features of the rite, this was made outside the camp away from women. The delegation of authority to the mature men serves to separate The People involved in the pursuit. From this point only the mature men continue the pursuit. They have special instruments and power by virtue of their maturity and the authority delegated them.

Beyond the site of Manawarar only Left Hand and Right Hand pursue Nutjingga until, at an unnamed place in the river, they find and kill her. At the place of her death, they assume her powers and mark the boys as she would have done if the swallowing had taken place at the appropriate time.

The mature men journey back to the camp with The Children. There they restore the order disturbed by Nutjingga's actions. The order of the camp alters upon the return of The Children. The Children are returned to the camp rather than to their mothers' fires. Masculine authority over The Children replaces the joint authority evident in the first scene.

The myth reveals the new relations in the camp after a journey that displays many other relations. In the camp there is at first joint authority of men and women over The Children. The river marks the removal of The Children from that social order and their unity with a mystical being. Following the river, The People recognise the authority of the moiety and the authority of those who have been initiated. These two criteria distinguish between the significant actors. In returning to the camp a new social order dominated by men is enforced.

The Agents of Transformation

The conditions under which the actors in the myth transform their status or relationships do, in themselves, define a

significant line of evidence in the myth. Munn (1970) demonstrates one manner in which this significance can be traced. In the context of the rite, the transformation of the initiates is marked by the presentation of the bullroarer, the symbol of Mutjingga. In the myth, The Children are marked after a long sequence of events which includes the transformation of Mutjingga herself.

By examining the agent of transformation and the transformation itself the relationships discerned above may be seen to have a further significance.

The Bullroarer

Mutjingga's death was seen as premature, her function to initiate the boys had to be filled by a surrogate. In a subsequent myth a surrogate was made by Kudapun, The Apostle Bird. The bullroarer, the symbol of Mutjingga is the focus of the cult of Karwadi. Bullroarer cults extend through much of Australia. Karwadi as described by Stanner fits the classic model produced by Berndt (1951). It is similar to the Gunabibi rites of the Roper River area and the Gadjari rites of the Walbiri of the Central Desert.(4) Each of these cults share a variety of similar features: significance as part of a series of initiation rites, emphasis on a central figure and that actor's relation to the bullroarer.

The cult amongst the Murin'bata "is but the last phase of a complex religious development" (ibid.:54). Though not always associated with Mutjingga, it has served as a symbol of initiation for mature men since replacing the spearthrower. The bullroarer is frequently described as a phallic symbol. In the rite it is inserted between the initiates' thighs to stand erect like a penis. At the same time it is also known as Mutjingga, The Old Woman. The spearthrower that it replaced was also a male symbol. The spearthrower was not associated with any women as the bullroarer is. Tjimburke, the earliest rite on which Stanner was able to record data did, in its decline, incorporate a black and white bullroarer. The rite of Manggawila, that replaced Tjimburki, made use of the bullroarers. Punj developed from these earlier bullroarer rites and altered the purpose and significance of some major features such as the spearthrower. The association of the bullroarer with a specific hero developed with the rise of the cult.

In Stanner's version of the myth, the spearthrower is one of the tools used to kill Mutjingga. It and the club figure prominently in all the Mutjingga myths as the tools of her death.

The presentation of the bullroarers in the rite is for the participants the most crucial stage. Mutjingga is then revealed as the Mother-of-All, Karwadi, and as the spirit from which the bullroarer was formed. The initiates are presented with an image covered with blood they suppose is hers, but which is actually

that of the potential wife's brothers. This occurs on the second day at the point in the ritual when the anointing with the blood takes place. "Men in hiding nearby begin to sound bull-roarers. The chorus of cries is maintained and, as the roar comes ever nearer, many of the elder men, with shouts of well-simulated fear, cry 'Karwadi! Karwadi! The Old Woman is calling'" (ibid.:8).

Falkenberg indicates that this is the last of a series of bullroarers shown to the initiates during the rites. The first being the nawuru, which is revealed immediately after circumcision. Sometime afterwards, madinboi also known as tip:el' tip:elman is revealed and finally during Punj, Karwadi appears.

Stanner's early informants associated Kun'manggur, The Rainbow Serpent, rather than Mutjingga with the bullroarer. Kun'manggur supposedly left it to men on his death journey. The sound it made when swung overhead was said to have been his voice, just as it is now Mutjingga's voice. The reasons for the change in association from Kun'manggur to Mutjingga are unclear, being attributed both to internal and external changes in aboriginal life. At one point Stanner suggests that in changing to a subsection system with matrilineal totems, altering the sex of the mythic hero was a concession to the conflicts between matrilineal and patrilineal ideologies (ibid.:56). This suggestion is not pursued but rather replaced with one placing primacy on extra-aboriginal influences as the cause for the change.

Kun'manggur's failure to maintain a continuity with The Dreaming under changes brought about through contact with Europeans was resolved with the use of "a complementary idea which was beautifully appropriate, logically and psychologically- the idea of the All-Mother" (Stanner 1958:107). There exists a substantial similiarity between the two figures. Kun'manggur is frequently described as having female characteristics, while Mutjingga is associated with the image of a masculine trait. Within the two myths the beings escape the camp by entering the water, taking with them the essential elements of life. Mutjingga's escape with the Children is interrupted by the mature men. Kun'manggur's escape with the fire is disturbed by Kadpur, The Butcher Bird. Kun'manggur's action early in the myth stops an incestuous marriage. Mutjingga's actions on the other hand stop all potential marriages.

The two myths are in many respects in opposition to each other. In one, the malevolent supernatural being seeks to destroy the society and in the other the beneficent one seeks to maintain its integrity. The two murders are committed for opposite motives, revenge and self-gain. Kun'manggur at his death turns to remove the necessary light from the world as his own retribution for his murder. Mutjingga at her death allows the society to continue by giving up the precious commodity.

True men acquired the use of the bullroarer from men in The Dreaming who had either created it or had been its guardian. Stanner records two myths about the transference of the bullroarer to the custody of mature men. In the first, Kudapun (Stanner 1963:42), after having made the bullroarer drop it into deep water where it is found by two women. These women are killed by 'true men' who afterwards preserve it and prohibit women from knowing of it. The second myth (ibid.:130-131) is part of the larger tale of Kukpi. Kukpi and her son were in possession of flat stones marked with the secret marks of the bullroarer. The son gave Padurtj two stone bullroarers, who later teaches the men to make them. Two women who discover the bullroarers are killed just as the women are in the previous myth. Falkenberg's Mutjingga myth features Kudapun as a man who makes the bullroarer and established the secret. "Never speak to women about it, and never let them see it" (Falkenberg 1962:165).

In Robinson's version of the Mutjingga myth, The Old Woman is the guardian of the bullroarer and "the round stone Larnja, which is the Mother of All Ritual" (Robinson 1966:125). The role of guardianship is similar to that of Kukpi, who knows the songs and ritual of Karwadi. Mutjingga's role as guardian is terminated by her death rather than by agreement between man and one of the guardians as between Kukpi's son and Padurtj. As in the Kudapun tale, when men take the ritual objects women are prohibited from viewing them on penalty of death.

Men assume control of the ritual as revenge for the misdeeds of the two women. Kukpi's misdeed was in being overheard singing sacred songs; Nutjingga's misdeed was a treacherous one that involves the destruction of The Children. Kudapun establishes in myth the division between men and women which the rite brings to the foreground. At Kudapun's request women and those who are uninitiated are prohibited from viewing the objects. The sign of the division is the bullroarer.

Denninnoi

Changes in form of characters in myths from human to animal are common in aboriginal symbolism. In the Murin'bata tradition, the Kun'manggur was once human, but is now remembered as being a serpent. The metamorphosis is contained in the Murin'bata concept of 'denninnoi', (which is often used as an exclamation at the end of the narratives). Denninnoi is conceived of "as 'changing the body' or 'turning' from man (kadu) to animal (ku). It appears to have certain connotations, at least further suggestions among them 'spreading out', 'flying away', and 'going into the water'...the central meaning of that work seems to be 'metamorphosis', one that is instant, a voluntary exercise of choice, and at the same time a necessity of overwhelming circumstance" (Stanner 1963:78-79). Those who have been transformed in this way form a special class of persons in The

Dreaming. They have both human and supernatural powers. Their impact on human events is celebrated in the remembrance of their transformations. Those are marked on the landscape and in the relations between members of clan and their territory.

Local clan myths are often composed of the travels of heroes and heroines who, like Kun'manggur, die after performing feats which determine actions for men. At their death, they experience a transformation, becoming totems (Falkenberg 1963: 88-99). One such transformation is that in the myth of Wal'gutgut, a Kultjil clan totem. Wal'gutgut, after her death, became a bird and the path of her journey became a creek. Returning to the myth of Kun'manggur, the site of the transformation is said to be marked by the Kimal River. At the time of Kun'manggur's transformation by the water, the moiety totems, Kartjin and Ti'wungu were transformed by their flying away. The transformations of other heroes take place in much the same manner. References to the site of the transformation provides continuity in space with the beings of The Dreaming.

Denninnoi does not imply all forms of transformations. Stanner notes, for instance, that the transformation of the boys in the rites of Punj is not described as being denninnoi. Only those beings who are unified with the animal kingdom appear to represent this special form. Denninnoi does not appear to happen in the Here-and-Now.

The denninot motif is expressed in varying degrees through the Mutjingga myths. Falkenberg's brief description of the myth does not indicate the presence of any transformation. Mutjingga as recorded by Stanner does not, in his determination, emphasize the motif in either the myth or the rite, though he recognises similarities. Mutjingga's escape through the river and the subsequent description of her form indicates that a change has taken place. In the myth she is described as having 'dragging fingernails', 'big eyes' and 'legs', indicating a human form. Visual representations of her show that she is only part human, the other half is sometimes figured as a snake.

In the text of Mutjingga in Robinson, the denninot motif is explicit. Mutjingga transforms herself at will into a goanna as part of a ruse to attract her victims. The transformation into an animal is not permanent, as both she and the grand-daughter who lives with her, change form at several points in the myth. Mutjingga is killed while she is a goanna, but the grand-daughter is returned to the camp in human form.

Mutjingga never dies as a human as is the case in the other transformation, but is always in an altered state.

Swallowing and Regurgitation

Mutjingga destroys the boys by consuming them, placing them in her womb, not where the excrement goes. This act places men

in peril and is later avenged by her death. The Children in the Stanner myth are returned by removing them alive from her belly. As a result of this act of being swallowed and rescued, the boys are made into men.

Hiatt (1975) points out the significance of this motif of swallowing and regurgitation and its related forms in numerous aboriginal initiation rites. He views it as a physiological metaphor for the transformations which take place in the rites. The initiations such as Gunabibi and Gadjari all have an associated myth which incorporates this motif. This connection has been interpreted in psycho-analytic terms by Rohaim (1945) and in ontological terms by Eliade (1958), and by Hiatt as a theme which incorporates elements from both of these analyses.

Eliade's interpretation of the motif is an attempt "to add a metaphysical dimension to the formal analysis of van Gennep's 'The Rites of Passage'" (Hiatt 1975:145). The importance of the rites rests on their mystical implications.

Thus he presents the ritual theme of death and rebirth not as a simple metaphor signifying the end of one's status and the beginning of another, but as a complex notion symbolising, first the simultaneous retrogression of individual and cosmos to a state of chaos and second, their simultaneous regeneration to a state of sanctity (ibid.:154).

Swallowing and regurgitation in the Mutjingga myth confirms this analysis. Mutjingga's act is recognised as a threat, the impetus for the taking of ritual power by men. Her act creates

chaos out of the existing order. The new ritual order into which the initiates emerge is controlled by men, who recognise the transformation into that order as a sacred act.

Roheim's psycho-analytic approach "argues that the main function of Australian myth and rite is to satisfy in fantasy the wish for reunion with the mother, while actually achieving a deflection of libido away from the mother onto the father" (ibid.:155). Swallowing represents that desired reunion while the removal by men is the rebirth into an order established by them. Mutjingga does give evidence to the notion of rebirth by males. Through the explicit prohibition of contact with mothers after the rite, the initiates are brought into a new social realm in which the company of women and other uninitiated people is replaced by the companionship of initiated men. The operation of the rebirth is performed by men who later enforce the prohibitions against contact with particular women for the period immediately following the rite.

Hiatt has suggested that the 'carnal' bond between mothers and their sons is a 'point of insecurity' for men which they seek to break socially through a 'spiritual imperative'. Berndt (1965) cites women informants who express this same sentiment. Women suggest that the men are seeking to replace this bond with one of equal importance and closeness between themselves through the figure of the All-Mother. In the case of Mutjingga, the men rationalise the separation by "imputing malevolence to women,

(and) by emphasising the protective aspects of men" (Hiatt 1975: 156)--women consume boys, men return them as adults.

Hiatt's interpretation of the phenomenon rests on the assertion that the symbolism is a physiological metaphor for the transformation of the initiates that does not remove their previous identity. The initiates are consumed as children and expelled through the legs of men to their mothers.

The model of natural parturition which is at the core of Hiatt's analysis is displayed in a variation in the Mutjingga myth. Hiatt stresses the motif as the confusion of the model of natural parturition with the act of the intestinal tract. The confusion is based on the observations of the changes in what is consumed and what is expelled. Stressed also are notions that it is voluntary. Mutjingga's actions are reportedly not voluntary but were, rather, uncontrollable. She was killed in order to return The Children to the camp. The 'desired' reunion prohibits the boys from becoming men. She is successful not in bringing new life but in terminating the progression of the old life.

Mutjingga swallows The Children, who enter her womb. By this fact her supernatural existence is emphasized. Those who are 'mutjingga' are unable to reproduce, a factor which is critical in the definition of the role of women in the camp. That she is not allowed to complete the act as a woman denies the authority of women over The Children. Mutjingga's act returns the boys to the realm of The Mother where men have no access. By

killing Nutjingga, men do more than determine the point of initiation, they also assume to determine the conclusion of pregnancy. Nutjingga's act not only destroys the lives of the boys, but also the ability of men to reproduce the camp. She leaves the camp, taking with her that creative power, which the men must maintain to sustain the camp.

In the myth in Robinson, the victims are dismembered by Nutjingga and cannot be returned to the camp to restore life. However, men bring back the grand-daughter and through her assume their necessary control over life.

Conclusion

The Nutjingga myths address the contradiction in the value of men and women for the creation and maintenance of society. Women appear as a self-sustaining sex. They can provide the material goods of life and they have reproductive capacity as presented in Stanner's version that is beyond their usual capabilities. This contradiction focuses on the creation of men from women and the giving to men through ritual powers they do not possess biologically.

In the Robinson version, The Old Woman and The Grand-daughter live by themselves in a camp. The theme of women as self-sustaining is altered. Women here need men as providers,

contrary to the situation in real society. The Old Woman is a cannibal who eats men. The young woman does not. Not all women here participate in the destruction of society. The myth of Mutjingga is an expression of the significance of women in the creation and maintenance of life. It is also about the conflict between men and women to retain control over that process; The Old Woman through treachery becomes a threat to the development of The Children, and The Men through the act of murder avenging that treachery, save life. While focusing upon the fertility and symbolism of women in the myth and rite, men secure the continuity of life and the traditions which are crucial to it.

Notes

1. See Falkenberg 1962:261-266.
2. See Stanner 1963:152-157.
3. See Hiatt 1975:143-162
4. It is not the numbers of children and the number of men that is significant but that both groups have the same outcome of the rite.

CHAPTER 5ON MEN AND WOMEN

Stanner looks for meaning in the myth of Nutjingga as it relates to a Murin'bata world-view. His analysis stresses the correlation between the ultimate reality of religious experience and the movements of society. The aim is to discern the mysteries that are the guiding principles of that view. Nutjingga reveals the "mystery" that good and evil exist at the centre of Life in order to maintain it.

The second interpretation offered here looks at Stanner's statement regarding the mystery of the rites of Punj as an expression of a male ideology. Stanner finds the mystery of Punj to be the continuity of Life as part of the necessary relationship between men and the creators of The Dreaming. The intent of this thesis is to show that this same mystery can be expressed as the continuity of Life through the ordered relations of men and women.

The social context of the expression of the mystery is the final phase of the male initiation complex. Initiates, as a result of their participation in the ritual, complete a change in social status from subordinate youth to authoritative adult. It is

important for the youths as it alters all their existing relationships. They are no longer subject to the same prohibitions that the uninitiated face in regards to certain religious and clan activities. Clan areas formerly restricted to them are now opened up. Their relationships with their kin alter as they are prohibited from remaining at their mother's fire.

The continuity of the social order is dependent on the successful admission of these youths into adult status. To ensure this the proper performance of the rites must be guaranteed. The responsibility for this rests with those who are already initiated. The kirman as the ritual leader guides the preparations. He secures the rite by safeguarding the members of the opposite clan. Initiates are brought into the cult by their potential wife's brother. These men stand as members of the opposite moiety. Their blood is used to cover the boys.

Women pose a threat to the action of the rite. Their exclusion from the secrets ensures that continuity is maintained. It does not however account for their presence at the conclusion of both the myth and the rite.

Hiatt suggests that the rebirth by males of the initiates in front of their mothers is an act of defiance in the face of those who have control of life. The "basic message from men seems to be...This boy is your offspring; we must take him now and destroy his attachment to you" (Hiatt 1975:156). Hiatt's analysis is here emphasizing a psychoanalytic approach through the

implication of envy existing between the sexes over the reproductive capabilities of society. Men viewing women as biologically more important than themselves elevate their worth through rituals.

Men "openly as well as covertly...used the rites to sustain the paramountcy of male interests. By ritualising the biological and social development of males they put a higher worth on their own sex, both as flesh and as spirit, than on females" (Stanner 1963:153).

As pointed out by Leavitt *et al.* (1975), the recognition of this elevated status of men is incomplete without a form of recognition from women. Women in their role as audience acknowledge the "sacred progress" made by men through the ritual. The final step in the action is the necessary display of those possessing a new social identity to the society.

Despite their necessary action, Stanner ascribes them to a negative position in relation to the actions of men. The position is untenable as it implies that "women are devalued, incongruously, precisely on the grounds that they 'are' actors, involved with doing" (Leavitt *et al.* 1975:113)

The exclusion of women protects the integrity of the rite. It also serves to make explicit the meaning that men make men from children.

Mutjingga and Society

The religious distinction between men and women reinforces the subordinated role of women in society. The role is expressed in the "organisation of the society into patrilineal, exogamous local clans and into hordes (that) results in a definite social division between women and men" (Falkenberg 1962:163). As a corporate group the clan divided between men who remain members throughout their lives and women, both those who move into the group as wives from foreign clans and those who leave to reside with husbands in foreign clans. As Strathern (1972) points out, it is not possible for women under these conditions to be the same kind of persons as men.

Sex is a criterion determining participation and obligations in the camp itself. Other criteria such as clan and subsection position also incorporate to a degree the sex of the individual. Age-grade position, which in Falkenberg's sense is a formal declaration of status vis-a-vis all these criteria, makes terminological distinctions based on sex at all but two levels. Ethnographic material regarding the relations of individuals to clans and clan totems indicates that although at birth a clan affiliation is designated that, in the case of males, this is not complete until after a ritual has been performed. Women, though described as members of a clan are not subject to any such ritual. They are also denied the rights accrued to men as a result.

Women are prohibited access to ritual areas of their clan territories to which men who have become 'kadu punj' are not. Post-marriage it is generally men who remain in the clan territory, assuming authority over clan activities. Women usually move to foreign territories where they are aliens and are unable to exercise authority beyond the family unit. There is, with respect to economic relations, no material basis for the religious devaluation of women. Both sexes participate in economic relations. Men hunt large game and women trap small game. Gathering is also communal though dominated by women.

The distribution of gain by both is the same; from a man to his wife, his brothers and their wives, to his mother and father and to all children, and from a woman to husband, his brothers and their wives, to her mother and father and to all children. Falkenberg alludes to the significance of women in the exploitation of territory. "If there are many women in a horde, the men are well off, but in a horde with few women the men must work from dawn till dusk" (ibid.:139). It must be noted that men gain rights to resources in certain clan territories by virtue of their relations to women. Both sexes also participate in the Kulu network. The only exception being when ritual goods are in the exchange. Kulu relations between hordes are from man to man, but within a horde the exchange progresses from man to woman.

Men have a secret ritual life through which they are all bound together forming a male subculture within the society. The

interests that men have in each other, their interdependencies are religious in expression between clans and moieties. A man is given his first bullroarer by a potential wife's brother and he re-emerges from the womb of Karwadi, from between the legs of men of the opposite moiety. Men individually and collectively are dependent upon the men from the opposite moiety to confer their sacred identity.

The sacred bonds between men have secular implications for the camp. Religious progression by men assures their social progression and the dominance of women in society. It is also made through relationships that are the source of potential wives for the camp.

The associations which exist between all males are marked by formal rituals, first to separate those who are initiated from those who have not been and second to separate all men from women. No equivalents exist for women. When attempts were made to develop rites for them they failed. Stanner reports that the older men who attempted innovations used the girls sexually. The Wilili, which was being practised during the 1920's, is symptomatic of the male image of women as "sex objects, rather than as companions and equal partners, even in marriage" (White 1975:123).

Women are viewed as a threat. They would take over if the religious sanctions used to protect men were not enforced. Relations between men and women show the dominance of male

authority. This authority is dependent upon the maintenance of religious sanctions.

Relations between women are discussed as a function of their economic positions vis-a-vis men and the camp at large.

Strathern, in her analysis of Mount Hagen women, suggests that "it would be meaningless to talk of a female subculture; women's concerns are not systematically directed towards other women, and this would seem to derive from the fact that as intermediaries it is primarily men they link" (Strathern 1972:313).

Women, after marriage, find most of their early relationships with other women are discontinued. In their new situation, the women they come in contact with are usually, like themselves, alien to the camp. The new relationships that develop are between women who are either the wives of one man or the wives of a group of brothers. These relationships, as previously indicated, are economically significant. They are not however accompanied by ritual activity such as those accompanying the relations between men.

Mutjingga teaches the initiates of the threat of women and their necessity in the order established by men. It is order that exists through a dependency on the values of both sexes. Men depend on women to provide them with links through marriage exchanges to other groups of men. Men also depend on a Supernatural woman to define their relations with the unknown.

In these statements about the nature of male-female relations are the roots of a fundamental sociological conflict. The dependence relationship in the sexual dualism of the myth is unresolved giving men a sacred position over women though still dependant upon them. The conflicts over resource control and social status, at the level of lineage organisation, is not as easily resolved. The dependence of the societies remains always a fluctuating asymmetrical dualism. The temporary resolution of this rests on the distinction between father's society and mother's society, the ritually sacred and the ritually excluded.

APPENDIX**A. Mutjingga Myths**

From J. Falkenberg, Kin and Totem, 1962:164-165

In the beginning an old woman by the name of Tjajep, Mutjingga was the guardian of the novices during the initiation ceremonies, but she did not watch them properly, and in the end she swallowed all of them. That is why the men killed her. One of the men named Ku'dapun said to the other men, "I will make something better than Tjajep." With his stone axe he chopped off a piece of wood and made the first churinga. And he said, "This is a beauty. I have made it out of Mutjingga's (Tjajep's) spirit (njapan). This is better than Tjapen. We will call it kal:e neki (our mother) or Mutjingga (old woman) or Tjajep. Never speak to women about it, and never let them see it."

From R. Robinson, Aboriginal Myths and Legends, 1968:125-130

Moitjinka, an old woman, kept hidden in her camp the sacred object called Ngowaroo. A little girl, who was her granddaughter, stayed with this old woman. Moitjinka said to the

little girl: "Make a fire, my grand-daughter. It might be that your brother or someone else will see the smoke and come up." The little girl made a fire in the grass and the smoke rose far into the sky.

Two young men were out hunting. They saw the smoke and they travelled up to it. The little girl looked out and saw the two men coming. She said to the old woman; "Grandmother, my two brothers have come up." "O," said the old woman, "tell those two men that there are plenty of goannas over there in the grass. Tell them to burn the grass so that they can catch them."

The little girl told the men what her grandmother had said and the two men went away and started to burn the grass. The two men killed plenty of goannas all about in that place as the goannas ran out of the grass from the fire.

The wind was bringing the smoke and the crackling and roaring sound of the fire down to the old woman and the girl. The old woman and the girl changed into two goannas. They ran into the grass and down into a hole going under the ground. The hole led to a space under the ground where there was a big stone. The two goannas sat down in this space and listened.

Now the dark smoke of the fire that the two men had started surged up into the sky, and made the sun dark, crackling and roaring, the fire ate up the grass. It ran past the place where the old woman and the girl had gone into the ground and it strode, billowing up its dark smoke, away over the plain.

The two men came up to the hole in the ground. "Hey, brother," one of them called, "a big goanna has gone in here. Come on, we have got to kill him." The track of a big goanna, its tail and claws, led down into the hole.

The two brothers tapped the ground all round with their womerahs to find which way the hole led down. "He is there now, my brother!" one man cried. "Stand close up with me. You and I must catch him." One brother pounded on the ground over the hole with his heel while the other brother stood by watching. Suddenly the first brother broke through the ground. He fell down into the big space under the ground. As he broke through and fell the old woman picked up the big stone. She crushed the brother's chest with the stone and killed him. Then, when the other brother ran up and looked down into the hole, the old woman pulled him down and killed him with the stone.

The little girl began to cry. She was sorry for those two brothers. The old woman turned to her. "No more you be sorry," the old woman said. "No more you cry, or bye and bye I will kill you with this stone too."

The old woman carried the two brothers up to the camp and the little girl carried up the goannas the men had killed. The old woman made a ground oven and cooked the two men in it. She said to the child: "You cannot eat this meat. You can eat those goannas." But the little girl went out of the camp and sat down and cried for those two men. While she was away the old woman

ate the two men. Then she took their bones down to the creek and hid them in the water.

All day the little girl cried for the two brothers. The old woman called her up. "You have cried all day. Have your eyes still got water?" "No, no more," said the child, "my eyes have got smoke from the fire in them." Then the old woman pretended to cry. She sat down and pretended to cut her head with the sharp end of a yan-stick.

After a while the old woman began to feel hungry again. She said to the child: "You, my grand-daughter, go over there and make a fire. It might be that someone will see it and come up." The little girl went over to the grass and set fire to it and the smoke rose high into the air.

Two other men were out hunting. They saw the smoke and travelled up to it. "O, grandmother," the child called, "two of my brothers have come up." The old woman was sitting down pretending to cry and cut her head with a stone. "O, tell them," she wailed, "to go over there and find some goannas for me. I cannot find any."

The child told the two men what her grandmother had said and the two men set off to burn the grass. When they did so the old woman and the girl changed into two goannas and went down into another hole. They sat down under the ground and listened.

The two men set fire to the grass. They walked about this way and that way killing the goannas. Soon they found the tracks

of a big goanna. The tracks led them to a hole into which the old woman and the girl had gone. "Come on, my brother, there is a big goanna here!" one called. "We must kill him. You catch him by the tail and I will kill him with my stone axe."

The brother broke through the ground with his heel. He fell into the hole and the old woman killed him with the big stone. When the other brother looked into the hole the old woman killed him too with the stone.

The little girl began to cry. "O my brother! O my brother! Why have you killed my two brothers?" The old woman shook the stone in the child's face. "No more cry! No more tell anyone, or I will kill you with this stone," she cried.

The old woman carried the two men up to her camp, and the little girl carried up the goannas. Again the old woman cooked the two men in the ground oven, and again the little girl went away and cried for the two brothers.

Many times the old woman made the little girl burn the grass and bring men up to the camp. The old woman would sit down pretending to cry. When the men came up to the camp the old woman would hold the child close in her arms. She would pretend to cry. She would say to the two men: "There are plenty of goannas over there but I cannot find them and my little girl cannot find them." "Which way are those goannas, grandmother?" the men would ask. "Over there," said the old woman. "There are plenty. No need to take your spears with you. Just take your womerahs."

The men would go and set fire to the grass. They would kill plenty goannas. Then they would find the tracks of the big goanna going into a hole. And when they broke through the ground to get the big goanna, the old woman would be waiting and kill them both with the stone.

Sometimes the old woman would cook one man and eat him and the other man she would hang up in a tree until the next day. Then she would cook and eat the second man and take all the bones down to the river and hide them.

Now the fathers of all these men who had been killed and eaten by the old woman began to wonder what had happened to their sons. They began to search and look about for tracks in all directions. Two fathers, one a left-handed man, started out together with a big bundle of spears each. Far out over the plains, a snake-like form of smoke rose into the air. "Ah," they said, "it might be that our sons have made that smoke."

The two fathers travelled up to the smoke. At the camp of the old woman the little girl looked out. "Ah," she said, "my father is coming up." "Who is coming?" asked the old woman. "Your brother or your father?" "My father, it is my father who is here," said the child.

The two men came up and asked the old woman if she had seen their sons out hunting. The old woman pretended to cry. "O, O," she wailed, "you have lost your sons. No! We have not seen them." The left-handed father went down to the creek for a drink.

He lay down at the edge of the creek to drink and as he did so he saw the bones in the water. He went back to the camp of the old woman.

"Old man," said the old woman, "there are plenty of goannas over there in the grass. You will get plenty. You can leave your spears here. You will not want them."

The two men went away to burn the grass. The left-handed man set fire to the grass quickly and the other climbed into a tree to watch the old woman. As the fire burned up he saw the old woman changed into a big goanna and the girl into a little goanna and go into a hole in the ground. The two men ran back to the camp and got their spears. Then they came up to the hole where the old woman and the girl had gone in.

The two fathers came up and pretended to find the hole. "O," one man cried, "a big goanna has gone in here. Come on, we will kill him." The left-handed man tapped on the ground with his womerah. "He is here!" he cried. He broke through the ground with his foot. He did not fall through, he was waiting. As the old woman in the hole struck out at him with the stone, he moved aside and the old woman missed. The old woman struck at the other man but he moved aside and the stone missed him.

Then the two men stood back from the hole. They speared the old woman to death with their bundles of spears.

The two fathers picked up the little girl and they took the stone that the old woman had used. This stone was the sacred

stone Larnja which no woman and no young man can see. Lone men who have grey hair can look at the sacred stone Larnja. We look after this stone. We kill anyone who looks at it and should not see it.

And these two fathers took the sacred object Ngowaroo which had belonged to the old woman. And the little girl the two fathers took back with them to their camp and grew her up in their tribe.

B. Kudapun Myth

From W.E.H. Stanner, On Aboriginal Religion,
Oceania Monograph Series #11, 1963:43.

Kudapun, the apostle bird, who was coeval with Mutjingga (in spite of her supposed humanness), shaped the first bullroarer after her death. He found that it gave out its roar when swung, but the string broke and it fell into deep water. Two young women at fishing brought it ashore in a net. They were mystified by it, and thought it a bad and dangerous thing. Men took them into the bush (to the first mambana or secret place?) and killed them by cutting their necks. Thus, true men became possessed of the bullroarer for the first time and preserved it.

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