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'Kurdungurlu got to drive Toyota':
Differential Colonizing Process among the Warlpiri

by
Gertrude Stotz, B.A.


Faculty of Arts
May 1993
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

CANDIDATE'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled 'KURDUNNURLU GO TO DRIVE...TURIA': Differential Colonizing Process among the Warlpiri' and submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy... is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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'KURDUNGURLU GOT TO DRIVE TOYOTA': Differential Colonizing Process among the Warlpiri.

'Nguru' by Nakamarra (1988)
Many have assisted in my project.

I would like to thank the administrators of Deakin University for a generous post-graduate scholarship and the excellent off-campus library service this university provides. I thank the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies for giving me the use of a 'Toyota' in the first year.

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My warmest thanks go to the residents of Nguru for teaching me even though often I seemed not to 'listen'.

I dedicate this work to Napananka.
List of Warlpiri terms

ngatina  mother, mother’s sister
nguru    country
jaja     matrilineal grandparent
jilimi   single women’s camp
junga    true
kangku   patrilineal grandparent
kirdana  father
kumanjayi no name
kurdaija revenger
kurdu    child of woman
kurduru  women’s fighting stick
kuyu     meat, animal
midjidi  Miss, Missus, white woman
ngalabi  child of man
parraja  carrier, coolamon
warlka   lie, untruth
yapa     person (Aboriginal)
"KURDUNGURLU GOT TO DRIVE TOYOTA": Differential Colonizing Process Among The Warlpiri.

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'KURDUNGURLU GOT TO DRIVE TOYOTA': Differential Colonizing Process Among the Warlpiri.

This thesis is based on fieldwork I carried out between December 1987 and June 1989 while living with the residents of a small Warlpiri Outstation Community situated ca. 75 km north-west of Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Colonialism is a process whereby incommensurate gender regimes impact differently on women and men and this is reflected in the indigenous response which affects the socialization of Western things.

The notion of the indigenous KIRDA-KURDUNGURLU reciprocity is shown to be consistent with a gender system and to articulate all exchange relations as pro-creative social relationships. This contrasts with the Western capitalist system of production and social reproduction of gendered individuals in that it does not ascribe gender to biological differences between women and men but is derived from a land based social division between Sister-Brother.

Social relationships are put under great strain in an effort to socialize Western things for Warlpiri internal use.

I argue that the colonization of Aboriginal societies is an ongoing process. Despite the historical shift from a physical all-male frontier to the present day cross-cultural negotiations between Aborigines and Non-Aborigines, men still privilege men. The negotiation process for ownership of a Community Toyota is the most recent phenomenon where this can be observed. Male privilege is established by linking control over the access to the Community Toyota with traditional rights to land.

However, the Toyota as Western object has a Western gender identity as well. By pitting women against men it engages people in social conflict which is brought into existence through an organisation of Western concepts based on an alien gender regime.

But Western things, especially the Community Toyota, resist socialization because the Warlpiri do not produce these things. Warlpiri people know this and, to satisfy their need for Western things, they engage them in a process of social differentiation. By this process they can be seen actively to maintain the Western system in an effort to maintain themselves as Warlpiri and to secure the production of Western things.

This investigation of the cultural response to Western influences shows that indigenous gender relations are only maintained through a socially stressful process of socializing Western things.
'KURDUNGURLU GOT TO DRIVE TOYOTA': Differential Colonizing Process Among The Warlipiri.

In a normal course of events, rain comes because the flying foxes have told the rainbow snake that the earth is getting very hot, the trees are all getting dry, the flowers that are food for the flying fox are gone. They 'say' this by going to roost along the river. (Rosc, D.B., 'Exploring an Aboriginal land ethic', Meanjin, vol. 47, no. 3, p.382)

INTRODUCTION

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To explain how Warlpiri society is gendered I will show that all relations between persons are structured according to whether a person is Kirda or Kurdungurlu for the other and who is 'looking after' whom.

I chose this structure because it is the relationship which underwrites social reciprocity. The Kirda-Kurdungurlu relationship, or system, can be
taken to exemplify the indigenous gender-system because:

a) it is the only structural reference to female-male differentiation in Warlpiri society;

b) it is a structure based on ego and other-centric references to either a Mother or a Father; the individual inherits two sets of rights and obligations;

c) depending on whether the individual is a female or a male, the rights and obligations to Mother and Father differ only in their expression. I would not suggest, as does Bell (1983), that differences of expression, that is ritual practices, are identical with the sexual division of labour;

d) all interaction and exchange ultimately have to refer back to Mother and Father in a never ending system of exchange, of give and take, regardless of the sex of the actor. Hence all social interactions are relations between Kirda and Kurdungurlu. They are symbolic relations between Mother and Father;

c) relations of exchange are almost exclusively acted out in same sex spheres under the same principle;

f) every person is involved in exchange; ritual or social status is irrelevant for the capacity to exchange.

The pervasive quality of Warlpiri gendering is essential to our understanding of how Western influences meet resistance within Warlpiri society.

The terms kirda and kurdungurlu are used throughout the literature in many contexts to support many different arguments. My discussion is thus necessarily wide ranging. My aim is to show first how the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship articulates gender. Secondly, to show how gender articulates exchange relations. Thirdly, to show how gendered exchange relationships
indicate that Warlpiri society produces and reproduces itself in a pro-creative manner. And finally, I hope to show how the Warlpiri people articulate their relationships through Western things.

This thesis is divided into two major segments. The first four chapters are primarily theoretical and analytic, the last five chapters are primarily ethnographic and analytic. This was necessary because the explanatory basis of this thesis rests on the indigenous model of the *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship which has hitherto not been used as a structural framework for social relations in Warlpiri society.

In order to gain a critical perspective on gender, Chapter I explores the issue of ritual reciprocity through various ethnographies written on the Warlpiri. Chapter II proceeds to a discussion of analytical models which have aimed at a pro-creative system of exchange relations. Chapter III and IV explain the *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship as a system of pro-creative relations as I found it to be elaborated at Nguru itself.

Chapter V sketches a social history of the residents at Nguru. It includes also a discussion of my arrival at Nguru.

Chapter VI explains how the residents relate to the world around them. Throughout this chapter the Toyota will serve as a critical reference to the issues and events raised.

Chapter VII and VIII discuss the socialization of Western things and compares the Toyota to other Western things. I will show the Toyota has attached to it a Western gender identity which makes control over access a stressful social process. This will be to show the subversive nature of Western things. Finally I will discuss how social production and distribution processes are being alienated for the sake of securing the 'appearance' of Western things.
in the future also and how this strategy allows the Warlpiri to maintain themselves socially in a culturally appropriate manner.

In my conclusion I argue that the Warlpiri's strategy to resist colonialism so far has been to promote cross-cultural relations. These relations are maintained under the condition that the Warlpiri remain the Other of Western discourse. The Warlpiri are active agents of the differential colonizing process.
CHAPTER I

A DISCOURSE ON KIRDA-KURDUNGURLU

It is necessary to take a fresh approach to the Warlpiri kirda-kurdungurlu relationship so that we may appreciate more fully how Western things constitute a potential threat to Warlpiri exchange relations and thereby subvert traditional gender relations.


Maddock argues the case that anthropologists cannot agree on 'conceptions of ownership' (1981:86), they argue whether kirda or kurdungurlu has primacy over ownership rights in land. This argument is basically about whether kirda-kurdungurlu refers to descent or ritual relations, to land, or people, or both. In the first instance, the question is whether matrilineal descendants - kurdungurlu - are to be considered to have a legitimate claim to 'ownership' (as defined under the Act) together with agnates of the local patriline -kirda-. In the second instance, the question, it appears, is whether ritual relations or 'totemic' clan relations to land are owned exclusively by the local patrilineal descent group. This would make the kurdungurlu 'custodians' of the land and they could therefore be excluded from traditional ownership claims as outlined in the Act. Without being able to pursue this ongoing controversy, I chose to operate from Ken Hale's definition of the kirda-kurdungurlu concept in
Warlpiri society. Maddock rightly argues that:

According to Hale, the question of primacy, to which so much time and effort has been devoted, is meaningless from a Warlpiri point of view:

'The kirda-kurdungurlu pair is but one manifestation of a central principle in the Warlpiri conception of the organization of reality, according to which units, or wholes, are composed of complementary or opposed parts. In discussion of the spiritual responsibility for land, Warlpiri make it quite clear that kirda-kurdungurlu constitutes such a unit. There is no spiritual responsibility for the land except the one that the kirda and kurdungurlu bear jointly - jiniangka, 'as one', in Warlpiri parliance (1980:5)' (cf Maddock, K. 1981:96)

My aim is to show that the terms kirda and kurdungurlu do more than indicate classificatory reciprocal relationships between the two patrimoieties in the ritual context and all that this implies. I intend to show that there are many varied kinds of exchange which are not necessarily reciprocal across patrimoieties lines and which the uncritical use of the kirda-kurdungurlu reciprocity have either neglected or treated as a separate issue.

I will show that reciprocal exchange across the boundary between the patrimoieties in all ceremonial contexts is gendered.

I argue that not only the men but also the women who are said to stand in a reciprocal relationship are actually engaging in gendered exchange towards each other. What is more, most, if not all, ritual exchange involves two ritual occasions: reciprocal relations between patrimoieties are not simultaneous. Rather, the relationship is considered reciprocal when viewed from at least two different ritual occasions where the ritual identities of the members of the two patrimoieties will be reversed. I will elaborate this point further when I discuss
business relations in Chapter III.

Only in general terms does the *kirda-kurdungurlu* division in ritual contextualize people's relationship to Country from which they derive their identity as a group. It symbolizes also the dual responsibility to ritual knowledge and the Law of the Dreaming, the *Jukurrpa*. It further distinguishes two patrimonies on the basis that they contain each other's marriage lines.

Thus, *kirda-kurdungurlu* as ritual division brings together the fundamentals of Warlpiri society -descent, marriage, ownership of Country and Ritual-. The overall reciprocity which the *kirda-kurdungurlu* division symbolizes is the most formal expression of pro-creative exchange relations.

However, there exist relationships that can never be conceptualized as reciprocal exchange relationships. But what is significant is that non-ritual and ritual exchange is fundamentally guided by the same principle of 'looking after' and being 'looked after'. Non-reciprocal relations exist for example between same sex siblings who are not standing in a *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship to each other but often there exists a hierarchical relationship between them which is expressed by the terms of who is 'looking after' whom. And this 'looking after' relationship in no way differs from 'looking after' in the ceremonial context between *kirda-kurdungurlu* identities. I further argue that even mother-child relationships, although they are considered primary *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationships as well as father's sister-child and mother's brother-child relationships, fall under the 'looking after' form of relationships (see also Bell, D. 1983:265).

I found that every relationship, any form of interaction for whatever purpose and in whatever context, is guided by the same principle. To watch two persons interacting at Nguru is to discover who 'looks after' whom: every
one of these exchanges often runs parallel to a degree of reciprocity in terms of an existing or non-existing *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship. There exists an almost Foucauldien power-knowledge discourse, for the 'looking after' relationship does not differ from the reciprocal relationship in quality of interaction, the 'looked after' is the one who demands and receives, the one who does the 'looking after' has to perform and represent. The 'boss - worker' (*kirda-kurdungurlu*) relationship in ritual exchange is identical for it is all done in the spirit of bonding, linking, growing, maintaining for future returns, in a fashion the 'looked after' has a future obligation to keep a promise, namely to 'look after' in turn. This is the true meaning of reciprocity as a general principle of exchange. For example, when I asked Napananka how come that as mother she 'looks after' her children when they are small, making them in a sense her *kirda* when in actual fact (by descent and classificatory ritual relations) they are her *kurdungurlu*. She replied: 'True, mother got to look after kids first, then kids got to look after mother in business'. That is, once the so called kids are adults they not only return the gift to their mother in symbolic activity but later, when the mother gets old and frail, they actually 'look after' her physically as well. But at that stage the mother would have partially withdrawn from actual ritual activity. She might under circumstances no longer 'dance' or 'sing', engage in activities of 'bosses' or 'workers'. At that stage she will have truly become an elder who is addressed in ritual and revered like an icon, in a word, she is being 'looked after'. Dussart (1988:69) writes to this: 'Ego's actual daughters become her *kurdungurlu* in practice when she is actually quite old.' It is therefore impossible to distinguish between so called symbolic returns and actual material returns in the local setting. As much of this occurs in same sex spheres in every day life and in
ceremonies, it applies to women and to men equally. Thus the basic meaning of reciprocal exchange is to maintain and multiply and project into the future people and relationships. This is the meaning of the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship. But this relationship is not based on descent from a marital couple but on descent from a Z-B pair (in practice at least two). Exchange relations are thus fundamentally pro-creative relations.

Exchange relations, reciprocal or not, are gendered relations between descendants. In other words, all relations are exchange relations and as such they are gendered. We can consequently speak of a pro-creative model of society and in this sense the kirda-kurdungurlu reciprocity describes a gender system.

My critique intends to go beyond the narrow focus and androcentric views of earlier interpretations (i.e.: Meggitt, 1962; 1972) and the broader but still limited application of patrilineal and matrilineal rights to Country more recently in the context of Land Rights Claims in the Northern Territory of Australia (i.e.: Maddock, K. 1981; Gumbert, M-M. 1984; Morphy and Morphy, 1984; Neate, G. 1989).

What made the Warlpiri data appear to be a male dominated model in the past is the fact that Meggitt (and others before and after) took the views of Aboriginal men as constituting the whole ideological edifice of Warlpiri society. This was only possible by largely ignoring not only women’s views but also by assuming that ritual divisions into kirda and kurdungurlu were merely there to distinguish one group of men from another ritually while considering them political equals at the same time, for these men were said to be in a reciprocal exchange relationship of kirda-kurdungurlu. As I will show shortly, this biased reporting has been corrected in subsequent ethnographies.
to the extent to which matrimoieties were structurally integrated; also women's views and practices were the focus or women's activities were included and compared with men's. For ethnographies on the Warlpiri see Dussart, F. 1988 and Glowczewski, B. 1988; for other Central Australian ethnographies see especially Bell, D. 1980, 1983, 1987, who pioneered a critique of this male bias in her work on the Kaytij; Myers, F.R.. 1986 on the Pintupi; Hamilton, A. 1975, 1981, 1987 on the Pitjantjatjara and North East Arnhemland.

1.1. THE ETHNOGRAPHIES

As Meggitt was the first to provide us with a comprehensive study of Warlpiri society I will now turn to his work. I note first that his explanation of the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship has only recently received the critical attention it deserves.

Meggitt's (1962) now classic analysis of Warlpiri society is characterized by a structural-functionalist approach. He starts from the macro-level of territorial boundaries of the Warlpiri 'tribe' which is, according to him, subdivided into four named regionally autonomous 'Communities'. A 'Community' is a socially and culturally autonomous group whose members relate to each other as 'countrymen' who are internally incorporated as members in one of the several 'Cult-Lodges'. The recruitment into these 'cult-lodges' is by patrilineal descent, yet such 'lodges' are each constituted of eight classificatory subsections (called 'skins'). These in turn are grouped into four F-S couples (patri-pairs or patri-lines) which are further grouped into matrimoieties, each made up of two patrilines of which one member of each is
matrilineally related to one member of the other.

Meggitt sees the moietal division as a ritual reciprocal relationship which he terms at one point a 'classificatory mother-in-law' relationship. Hence the patri-moieties are ritually distinguishable as being in an affinal relationship with each other. In short, 'cult-lodges' are made up of patrilineal 'clans' incorporated as a 'Community' and residing on a more or less fixed territory for ritual, economic and social purposes.

Meggitt thus explains the existence of territorial boundaries through the function of a shared spiritual relationship between localized patrilinees who share the custodianship of territorially close clusters of patrilineal spirit centres or sacred sites.

On the basis of this analysis Meggitt argues against Radcliffe-Brown that none of the single patrilinees constitute an autonomous socio-economic and territorially fixed descent group called the "horde" (Meggitt, 1962:70, cf. Radcliffe Brown 1930:35). Meggitt writes, although Radcliffe-Brown's model describes loosely what he calls 'Community', the "horde" has no reality in Aboriginal society anywhere in Australia.

Within the community patrilineal descent was important mainly as a principle of recruitment to the cult-lodges, and the community included several of these patrilinees, which were not genealogically related to each other. At the same time, residential and food-gathering units whose size and composition varied with the seasons and with other factors, formed and reformed within the matrix of the wider community. In the light of these sorts of considerations, it would be misleading to apply the term "horde", in Radcliffe-Brown's sense, either to Walbiri [Warlpiri] community or any of its component groups. (Meggitt, 1962:71)

As Meggitt incorporates patrilineal Countries into religiously affiliated
'cult-lodges' he not only incorrectly assumes that patrilocal 'clans' are incorporated but thereby misses the significance of matrilineal descent in terms of ritual relationships between Countries. Ultimately the significance of kirda-kurdungurlu relations remain unclear as a principle of social structure.

On the micro-level Meggitt discusses at length relations between kin categories from a juridical perspective governed by age hierarchies which give no indication that exchange relations between individuals are gendered (Meggitt, 1962:115-164). He reserves his most detailed descriptions of reciprocal relationships for ritual relations between men at initiation ceremonies. His description of initiation ceremonies are not only described but also interpreted from a man's perspective. Bell (1983) has largely corrected this one-sided view by describing and interpreting similar and other rites from a woman's perspective. Consequently, too, Peterson (1969) has dismissed the idea that patriline are incorporated.

Where Meggitt (1962:203) posits kurdungurlu as 'those outside the ritual' or as 'those who give the arm-blood for ritual decorations' he actually describes reciprocal relations between men not in terms of kirda-kurdungurlu exchanges but as relations between male affines, that is between two women-exchanging patri-moieties rather than patri-lines. While not excluding women altogether from ceremonial life, as some women are seen as active participants in male rites, they are in no manner part of the secret-sacred aspect that gives meaning to the ritual reproduction of natural species or of humans and their relationships. Meggitt argues effectively that in women's only ceremonies no ritual division between kirda and kurdungurlu exists:

For instance, women on occasion perform ceremonies, closed to men, in which they group themselves according to endogamous moiety affiliation. These activities are not seen
as part of the dreamtime ritual life; rather, they express women's secular concern with sexual behavior and procreation. Interestingly enough, women's ignorance of men's ritual is such that they believe the latter to be organized also in terms of endogamous moiety membership. (Meggitt 1972:74)

Accordingly, women's ritual exchanges do not involve concerns with the religious order of social life.

Munn's notion of the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship will help us better to understand on what grounds Meggitt really excludes women from ritual.

Munn (1973:13-15) grants men's and women's ceremonies an equal organizational structure, but she does not use this structural symmetry to lift actual women's concerns with reproduction to the same symbolic level of ritual interaction as that which occurs between men. Rather, Munn explains the ritual kirda-kurdungurlu relationship as an exchange relationship that is symbolic of a reproductive relationship between a husband and wife. She writes:

The inverse relationship of workers [kurdungurlu] and dancers [kirda] to the ceremonial paraphernalia seems to project on the symbolic plane the relationship between wife and husband vis à vis their children (especially their sons) in a society where patrilineal descent defines the individual's ancestral identity with respect to ritual group affiliation. (Munn, N. 1973:187)

By contrast, for Meggitt the kurdungurlu, as representatives of matrilineal interests, have to remain outside the ritual, for initiation is about the incorporation of a boy into the 'patrilodge'. Simultaneously this ritual is also about the increase of species and humans in the form of the 'banba' ceremonies which are performed during initiation rites. The 'patrilodge' is thus
concerned with the 'noumenal', with the purely religious reproduction of spiritual identities, whereas matrilines (or matri-moieties) are concerned with the reproduction of the 'phenomenal' identities of humans and species. These are secular concerns. (Meggitt, 1962:65; 1972:71-73). For Meggitt, ritual is not parallel to the secular, but separate.

To see that Munn’s analysis actually perceives a parallel between the secular and the ritual forms of reproductive relations, we must investigate who actually is engaging in ritual exchange as she sees it. The dancer (kirda) represents his father, his own Dreaming. The dancer himself, although spiritually identical with his father, is actually a son in this context. The worker, (kurdungurlu), who produces the designs and gives them to kirda calls that same Dreaming mother. He is thus not relating as wife but as child of the kirda’s father’s sister. Who is he?

He is not the novice’s brother-in-Law, for the novice, from my experience, whenever he was brought into view or brought among the women, was never adorned with designs. So the question is also who is the dancer? For Munn adds to the above:

this gift brings about the identification of the dancer with his ancestors, and so in effect "gives birth" to the ancestors, or reembodies them as a child reembodies essential ancestral guruwari powers when it is born. But while a child contains guruwari inside his body, the dancer wears guruwari on or over his body. (Munn, N. 1973:187)

Speaking from the perspective of the novice, who is Ego in such rites, the kurdungurlu is most likely his mother’s brother. Who is mother’s brother ritual exchange partner, the dancer? It has to be a member of the same generation moiety. Mother’s brother is matrilaterally related though his own mother’s
brother to a patriline of the novice’s patrimoiet. Mother’s brother’s ritual exchange partner is thus wife’s mother’s brother (kirda), the dancer. These two men stand in a niece exchanging relationship with each other. I will touch on this issue shortly. (See Glowczewski, 1988). For the moment the focus is on Munn’s concern with the inverse logic of transforming secular reproduction into a symbolic reproduction and thereby achieving the ritual re-birth of the novice. But how can these two men do this? Their relationship is that of affines, the kirda representing his own father and the kurdungurlu representing actually kirda’s father’s sister. These men are in a symbolic B and Z relationship representing their respective F and M who too are a B-Z pair. As such they do indeed represent a F and a M, but not a H-W couple as Munn suggests.

For the kurdungurlu to give metaphorically birth to kirda who in turn produces a spiritual son means simply that kurdungurlu, as representative of his own sister, transforms his sister’s son into a brother’s son. This means that the novice is taken from his mother to become the son of a man here represented by his wife’s mother’s brother (WMB).

The dancer is thus the man who, as mother’s brother’s son of the kurdungurlu, symbolizes F and S simultaneously. This is achieved by combining patrilineal and matrilineal forms in the appearance of the dancer who can thus be seen as an androgynous figure who is given a gendered identity because of the actions of his kurdungurlu. Hence one could also argue that the ancestor, to which the dancer gives birth metaphorically, is similarly F and M.

Hence Munn’s insistence that the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship, as a division between patri-moieties, is symbolic of a reproductive relationship
between F and S which is based on the inversion of an actual M-S relationship.

It is incorrect for Munn to claim that the patri-moiety division in ritual is symbolic of a H-W reproductive relationship as it is indeed a relationship symbolic of a M-S relationship which, as we have just seen, is being transformed into a F-S relationship. All that occurs is the son of mother becomes son of father, and, by extension, the boy is given a Dreaming identity. The H-W relationship Munn has in mind is really a Z-B pair as I have indicated earlier. This is to say, the man to whom the boy is given is his mother’s brother, who will make him the son of his own mother’s brother; in a word, a man’s child. Munn, we can see now, in assigning two levels to procreation, has exposed the fact that maternal and paternal relations to one Country and Dreaming are not based on the matrimonial couple but on the power to reproduce as woman (Z) and as man (B) respectively.

Thus I do not agree with the dual approach that differentiates between ritual and secular levels of parentage nor of the division of society into profane and sacred domains of interaction.

My next focus is Bell’s (1983) work which is especially critical of Meggitt’s (1962) and Munn’s (1973) failure to appreciate women’s positive role in the ritual maintenance of the Jukurrpa, the Law of the Dreaming, and thereby denying women autonomous status and political power in society. In setting out to correct a longheld misconception of women in anthropology generally and Australian anthropology in particular, Bell produces ethnographic proof of women’s equal, albeit specific, involvement in the ritual maintenance of society. She writes:
Unless women are accorded the status of joint owners and managers of country and ritual along with their male kin our understanding of group structure will be skewed. (Bell, D. 1983:237)

While she correctly focuses on Meggitt’s skewed interpretation of the role of the kurdungurlu in ritual, she fails to demolish the idea of an incorporated patrilineal ‘cult-lodge’ as she actually uses this term to refer to people associated with one and the same Dreaming (Bell, D. 1983:143).

Significantly for my analysis of the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship, Bell tries unsuccessfully to refute simultaneously Munn’s and Meggitt’s view of women’s position in the ceremonial structure. Munn argues contra Meggitt that in women’s ceremonies endogamous generation moieties are not unambiguously constituted but depend on a kirda-kurdungurlu distinction based on a relationship between affines (Munn. 1973:13-15) and, as we shall see, this is confirmed by Dussart (1988). But Bell argues against Munn in that she wants to assert that, while affines stand indeed in ritual kirda-kurdungurlu relationship to each other, the more important ritual kirda-kurdungurlu relations are based on matrilineal descent relations between a M and her D. Bell thus believes Meggitt inadvertently took endogamous moieties to be constituted by M and D. Hence Bell insists that the kin-based mother-daughter pair ‘is the kinship correlate of the ritual roles of kirda-kurdungurlu’. (Bell, D. 1983:239-240). It is thus in this context that Bell equally argues that kirda-kurdungurlu as ritual division distinguishes reciprocating patrimoieties. As she considers Dreamings are land-based, so she considers rites where patrimoieties reciprocate (that is, where affinal relationships are celebrated) as strictly land based kirda-kurdungurlu relationships (also among women participants),
hence Bell also sees the importance of the novice’s father’s sister as main ritual kurdungurlu for the novice’s mother as kirda. But this is of course based on a misunderstanding that the ritual structure applies equally to the exchange of women by their respective mothers. (I will discuss this in Chapter IV)

But as Bell, correctly so, does not compromise her position and maintains that relations to land are the basis for the ritual kirda-kurdungurlu division, she also proposes an apparent paradox by including the kin based M-D relations as ritual correlate. The M-D kin relation is a matrilineal descent relations and as such is not a ritual kirda-kurdungurlu relationship. Only in relation to patrilineal descent is the M-D dyad included in the ritual structure, and this makes the M kurdungurlu and the D kirda in ritual. Munn (1986:226-229), in response to Bell’s critique, retrieves her earlier (1973) correct statement.

Bell clearly does not distinguish between ritual categories and linear descent relations. The fact is that ritual reciprocity puts M and D not only into opposing patrimoieties but different patriline. Hence the M-D kirda-kurdungurlu reciprocity exists as an affinal relationship from the point of view of the overall ritual structure. This is the position maintained by Munn and it is correct. The fact in need of clarification is that in the next ceremony the D will be in the position of M vis-à-vis her own D. Thus, while M and D indeed reverse their ritual kirda-kurdungurlu position in the reciprocal event, they do not change them in relation to each other but in relation to the shift of focus from one patriline, and hence patrimoiet, to another.

That is to say, Bell takes her cue from Meggitt in the sense that he did not deny that the 'workers' were matrilineal relations of the 'masters', but she put an end to the misconception that because they were matrilineally related to the 'masters' they had to be 'outside ritual'. Further, for the same reasons he
excluded 'kurdungurlu' from ritual, he failed to distinguish that a kin-based kirda-kurdungurlu relationship existed between ritual 'masters' belonging to the same 'cult-lodge' as he took them to be reciprocating as affines on equal footing in their own right, each representing the 'masters' of their respective patriline. He thus failed to grasp the importance of kin-based reciprocity operating on the ritual level.

Bell countered this structural oversight with structural equivalence to the point that the Jilimi appears at times to be similar to Meggitt's 'cult-lodge' with the difference that the Jilimi is part of the local residence structure while the 'cult-lodge' only appears incorporated politically. She writes:

The group living in the jilimi is a localized socio-ritual group held together by cross-cutting ties of land, family, personal history, and the common assertion of rights and responsibilities in a particular tract of land. Underlying this group is a balance between the interest one has in one's mother's country and the interest one has in one's father's country. However the group of women living together in a jilimi share the maintenance of certain dreamings and therefore have a common function. (Bell, D. 1983:237-8)

This is maybe even more evident when we consider Bell's insistence that:

In my portrait of Aboriginal women's social and ritual organization I have not sought the discrete land-using or land-owning group, but rather the ritual land-maintaining group which encompasses many overlapping ties and claims to country. (Bell, D. 1983:237) (my emphasis)

Indeed, Bell's women's 'ritual land-maintaining group' far surpasses the narrow patrilineal 'cult-lodge' which seems to apply to ritual relations among men as their initiation rites are restricted to members of the patrimoieties that
make up a 'cult-lodge'.

Although Bell's ethnography is not strictly dealing with the Warlpiri, but based on the similar social structure of the Kaytej, she compares her data with that of Moggitt. She explains (ibid:139-141) that a woman’s daughters do not necessarily marry into an identical patriline for there are many parallel patrilines incorporated into separate 'cult-lodges'. The daughters extend enormously through marriage the women’s social network. They will in turn affiliate many countries through marriage as well as on the basis of their kin relations to other women. But this opens the possibility for classificatory relationships between countries couched in kin terms. Thus a woman can become kurdungurlu where her actual mother is not kirda. This then proves that kinship is a 'correlate' to ritual kirda-kurdungurlu relations.

However, it is almost impossible to gain a clear notion of the meaning of kirda-kurdungurlu exchanges from Bell’s ethnography despite the fact that her description of women’s activities in relation to ritual maintenance of country and the care for health and harmony in society is extremely rich. We do not get a sense of what these relationships actually create. For example, in relation to initiation ceremonies, which Bell deems 'men’s ceremonies' (Bell, D. 1983:205) she writes:

Once the ritual correlates of kin roles are recognized, however, it is evident that these complement, extend and overlap with those of the men, to provide an avenue through which women assert their enduring role as nurturer of people and relationships within the context of affiliation to land. Thus 'sisters' and 'aunts' (that is, 'fathers' sisters') become joint kirda with the initiate as members of his patriline. 'Mothers' become the kirda for the boy's kurdungurlu country; the 'mothers'in-law', as members of the opposite patrimoicy, become kurdungurlu to the 'mothers'. (ibid:205) (my emphases)
She further explains:

I am shifting the perspective from which women are seen as members of the boy's kin group to one in which women are seen as ritual status-holders in their own right. In this approach, marriage arrangements become an integral part of the initiation for, like the act of circumcision, they are hedged in by ritual politics and serve to create new webs of relationships within the society. Thus, as well as documenting women's ritual role at initiation, I am also seeking to re-integrate marriage arrangements within that complex of rituals associated with initiation. These include men and women of various ritual statuses politicking to achieve both personal ends and favourable alliances between families and countries.' (ibid:205-6) (my emphasis)

This is not an image of a pro-creative society at all, but a society differentiated by sexual politics and competition for positions of widening influences given the structural constraints of 'families and countries'.

It appears to me in this account that while in Warlpiri society women and men are highly politicized they do not act collectively even though they may act for the collective good.

To compare briefly Meggitt's and Bell's contribution to the kirda-kurdungurlu debate, we can now see that although Meggitt recognised that the male kurdungurlu are representatives of matrilincal relations, he deemed them 'outside ritual' because of this. He thought not only that women had no part to play in the religious life of society but assumed the principle of maternal reproduction had no mythological equivalent in women's ceremonies.

Bell does not link the kirda-kurdungurlu debate to issues of symbolic reproduction, but to the existence of an alternative perspective in myths
whereby women are portrayed by implication as autonomous actors deciding on their own destiny in the interplay of the sexes. Female ancestral heroines are thereby not without reproductive powers to name species and create the potential for their reproduction as well as leave topographical signs of their activities behind, but these appear neutral in terms of women’s social reproductivity.

Bell’s concern with the *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship stems from a need to see women integrated into the ritual life of society as a whole given that they are elaborating and transmitting secret-sacred knowledge. Knowledge about the creation myths are intimately linked with the maintenance of Country and relationships through ceremonial activities on equal footing with men within identical mythico-social structures.

Meggitt seems to provide us with the idea that exchange among men aims at reciprocal rights to another man’s classificatory sister in marriage. Exchange in this context cannot be seen as gendered exchange for it does not imply the exchange of women’s and men’s reproductive roles or powers. Bell also does not show us that exchange among women may be gendered in this fashion. She does not explicitly deny women ritual expression of women’s reproductivity as a socio-cultural foundation, but she states that myths are ultimately land-based and as such patrilineally owned and inherited. Women, through their agnatic relationship to Country, become owners of ritual knowledge and are the transmitters of a specific relationship to Country in turn. This allows women to compete with men in the politics of ritual life. The relationship between *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* is thus not characterized by gendered exchange. Women among themselves affirm and reaffirm themselves as women in the scheme of a larger unity which they share with men, the
Jukurrpa.

Let us now turn to Dussart’s study of the Warlpiri at Yuendumu. Dussart (1988) traces the activities of individuals under present day circumstances. To this end she examines “Warlpiri Women’s Yawulyu Ceremonics” She writes:

Ritual life is a domain in which the roles and status of women may be investigated, because this is the main domain in which women express themselves as social actors and obtain recognition from the whole society. (Dussart, F. 1988:22)

Dussart hoped to depart from a ‘rule-bound analysis’ which characterized Hamilton’s and Bell’s ethnographies whereby they emphasized ‘the separateness of men’s and women’s domains’ (Dussart, F. 1988:249). Rather, she argues, while competition between the sexes is crucial it occurs ‘between individuals within and between kin groups’ (ibid:250)

Dussart argues that on account of colonialism new types of associations have developed, most significantly in relation to land rights linked with the promise of mining royalty payments:

Kin groups are being expanded through largely external pressure so that more people have some access to areas of land producing the new resource. (ibid:250)

The Warlpiri’s response to colonialism is to expand their social networks in a need driven manner and this ‘brings new associations between individuals, kin groups, countries and Dreamings ’ (ibid:250). Yet, the ideal of innovation, (she discusses a practical example (ibid:217)), or change is ‘denied by Warlpiri people’ for they ‘stress the continuity of their ’traditional’ patterns of ownership.’ (ibid:250)
Such an analysis thus requires an understanding of the *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship. Dussart brings into play in this context the various processes by which such statuses can be acquired.

The *kirda-kurdungurlu* distinction is seen as 'central to the organisation of religious activity and the pattern of land tenure' (Dussart, F. 1988:55). *Kirda* and *kurdungurlu* are 'semantically complex' terms and only in most general usage do they convey ritual reciprocal relations between the two patri-moieties.

Their real significance in the organization of religious life and land-tenure derives from their more specific uses and the rights associated with them. (Dussart, F. 1988:59)

Although ideally these relationships connote patrilineal and matrilineal interests, but 'may be acquired in other ways beside inheritance' (ibid) as she argues:

Generally, Ego inherits as *kirda* more than one country and Dreaming-segments as Ego’s F’s and FF’s countries are not necessarily the same. Ego inherits all the countries with which Ego’s F and FF have been identified even if they did not necessarily acquire their rights through inheritance.’ (Dussart, F. 1988:61)

The same applies for *kurdungurlu*, for although *kurdungurlu* is traced through matrilineal interests, these are far reaching so that

(I)n practice, Ego is *kurdungurlu* for more countries and Dreaming segments than those for which Ego he/she has inherited the rights to act as such. (Dussart, F. 1988:63)
Dussart thus distinguishes between socio-political, or better, socially acquired knowledge and inherited rights to Country. But, because of the Warlpiri’s claim to act within the conservative framework of their traditions, Dussart is not adding new implications to the kirda-kurdungurlu relationships as such. Hence, the response to change is change itself, namely: innovation. New Dreamings are continuously revealed and through them new relationships are established, and vice versa (Dussart, F. 1988:217). She writes, while in ritual kirda-kurdungurlu rights are ‘complementary’,

In practice, an individual and other members of her descent group may act as kirda and kurdungurlu in ritual activities that they did not inherit. To acquire knowledge and to act as kirda and as kurdungurlu for non-inherited countries and Dreaming-segments results from life experience and relates to where the person lives, with whom, and to whom he/she is married. A kirda may pass on the knowledge of his/her inherited Dreaming-segments to another woman who is in one of the two subsections of his/her own patricouple, and eventually this woman may/will pass it on to his/her relatives…’ (Dussart, F. 1988:66)

She sees her concerns with the individual to be akin to Myers’ in his study on the Pintupi, and quoting him:

'One can claim identification with any place with which one’s close relatives are identified' (cf Dussart, F. 1988:67, Myers, 1986:130)

So Myers’ notion of ‘one country’ among the Pintupi is applicable to the Warlpiri since the advent of sedentarism and land rights. Dussart explains this by stressing that the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship ‘is often based on alliance rather than descent’ as others have confirmed, she refers to "Peterson,

But having the individual in mind, Dussart also impresses upon the reader that to perform as *kurdungurlu* in ritual is only possible 'when she is knowledgeable' (ibid:69). This brings into focus the question of leadership. Prominence in ritual life reflects upon relationships in the general community. New issues, such as Western educational standards on which positions in the community give rise to claims and counterclaims to hold positions in the local council are contested between men and women on account of age hierarchy rather than sex hierarchy (ibid:256). In turn, keen participation in ceremonies and concomitant attainment of knowledge in this sphere often enhances the chances to get a job in these new institutions. She writes, individuals 'consolidate their status and authority in different social domains' (ibid:257).

In the long run Dussart predicts a development toward a 'matrifocal' society. Men have a greater alcohol problem and incarceration rates are high in the 20 to 35 age group. Men thus enter later into ritual life and acquire their status later than women. This problem has arisen from an imposed division of labour which gradually reflects Western practices. Stock work and mining work became exclusively men's work and women were to become house maids. But while men are no longer employed in these industries, women are being trained as nurses and teachers. There is greater continuity in women's lives and, it seems also greater structural possibilities to forge links between women through the institution of *kurdungurlu*. For women there is also a greater solidarity to engage in public performances of their ceremonies with the approval of men. She writes 'women may become crucial in maintaining cultural forms' (ibid:258).
Although Dussart raises an important issue in terms of the individual as social actor within a climate of changing social institutions, her analysis does not account for gender relations in a non-dualistic manner. It is significant that she breaks the deadlock of the separatist argument of her predecessors (Hamilton and Bell), but notions of procreativity do not enter her concerns either, simply because she assumes that women's reproductive powers are duly cared for in the symbolism of ritual representations. She does not consider whether they are subject to exchange.

By contrast, Glowczewski's (1987; 1988; 1989) account of Warlpiri society is different altogether. The issue is rather the content and dynamics of exchange in terms of the structural positioning of women and men and how they are connected by a process of cosmological and social ordering.

Glowczewski's thesis is a topological structural analysis of Warlpiri society based on a mathematical figure of the hypercube.

For her *kirda-kurdungurlu* is part and parcel of a process of differentiation and transcendence of feminine and masculine attributes. Maintenance of Country and Relations is coincidental for her. She argues her case point by point very effectively and brings into discourse a system based not on double filiation (Meggitt) but of double alliance. And this is evident within each separate sex sphere: men exchange uterine nieces and women exchange S/I. Structural transformations inherent in the Warlpiri system are, according to Glowczewski, expressive of a philosophical attitude, 'un constant sur l'ambiguité du désir' (Glowczewski, B. 1988:177) and the desire to transform and be transformed.

She provides a visual representation of the interrelationships between the major social divisions: patri-moieties, matri-moities, generation-moities, and
superimposes the division that is *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* (1988:205-208). She has produced a detailed list to which I refer below in abbreviated form. The Boss’s son at Nguru is Ego. Some of the kin terms differ at Nguru, because actually at Nguru the Warlpiri spoken is a ‘soft’ version of the one spoken at Lajamanu where Glowczewski made her study. The Warlpiri spoken at Nguru is called Wakirti Warlpiri and is glossed as Eastern Warlpiri (Nash, D. 1990). In Figure 1. I will also use the subsection names together with the kin terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ego’s generation</th>
<th>Others’ generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KUYU-RNA <em>(my flesh)</em></td>
<td>KUYU-KARI <em>(other flesh)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B, Z, FF, FFZ</td>
<td>F, FZ, a man’s S or D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jungarrayi is Ego</td>
<td><em>kirdana</em> - F - <em>Japaljarri</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>pimirdi</em> - FZ - <em>Napaljarri</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kuyu-wapirra</em> or ‘brother clan’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**kirda**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st and 2nd Cross Cousins</th>
<th>M, MB, S/L and D/L of man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MF, MFZ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jamirdina - MF - Jupurulla</em></td>
<td><em>Ngardina - M - Nakamarra</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>MFZ - Napurulla</em></td>
<td><em>Ngamirni - MB - Jakamarra</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kuyu-yarriki</em> or ‘mother clan’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**kurdungurlu**

| FM or FMB, H or W, Z/L                | F/L or F/LZ S or D of woman,          |
| of woman or B/L of man                | a man’s uterine niecc and             |
|                                       | nephew                                 |
| *kalya-kalya - W - Nangala*          | *kurdu - ZD - Nampijinpa*             |
| B/L Jangala                           | *ZS - Jampijinpa*                     |
| *kuyu-kirda* or ‘spouse clan’         |                                         |

**kurdungurlu**

| MM, MMB, Cousins                     | M/L or M/LB, woman’s S/L or          |
|                                      | D/L, M/L of man                      |
| *Jajana-MM-Napananka* (old) - MMB - Japana* | *ngunyari - ZDD - Napangardi*          |
|                                      | *kuriji - MiL - Napangardi*          |
| *kuyu-wurruru* or ‘MIL clan’         |                                         |

**kirda**

*Figure 1.* Generation moietics and ritual reciprocity. (My translation)
The vertical division distinguishes adjacent generations of agnates from the perspective of Ego. The top section and the bottom section are all members of Ego's patrimoity, they are thus the *kirda*, and the *kurdungurlu* in the two middle sections are members of the opposite patrimoity.

Horizontally the sections are all similarly differentiated by agnatic descent. Where Ego's generation is *kirda* we find all the sons and daughters, and in the other generation we find all the fathers. However, where Ego's generation is *kurdungurlu*, the situation is reversed and all fathers are in Ego's generation and their sons and daughters in Ego's father's generation. This shows that, although a daughter is *kurdungurlu* to her mother, she appears as *kirda* to her mother in the ritual structure.

Glowczewski shows, like Bell and Dussart, that women do not elaborate a separate totemic system of relationships. In other words, Dreamings are concretely invested in topographical forms which are patrilineally anchored. Yet going much further, she shows that feminine or masculine identities are wrested from androgynous forms according to the business at hand. Her analysis of the Mungamunga, a Dreaming celebrated by the Warmunngu, is a good example (Glowczewski, B. 1988:161-175). She argues that myths function as gender and identity matrixes for women and men equally.

Le masculin et le feminin ne sont pas donnés a priori, mais produits par la rencontre de principes éternels, tous caractérisés par un pouvoir de métamorphose. (Glowczewski, B. 1988:178)
By this topological approach it becomes possible to appreciate the hidden/secret/sacred meaning through the perception of the external form. This process will by itself turn what is outside inside, pull what is above underground or vice versa and thereby transcend both form and content.

My analysis will show that (within this scheme) kirda-kurdungurlu relationships, when seen as exchange relations, are capable of effecting structural transformations of identities, of feminine and masculine principles. Thus, one is kurdungurlu of one’s spouse and of one’s M Country and Dreamings. This is to say, if one speaks in terms of Countries and Dreamings, one is kurdungurlu to MF Country and to HF or WF’s Country. The kirda-kurdungurlu relationship between affines is a classificatory and reciprocal relationship, while the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship between M and her D or a MB and his ZS (uterine nephew) are descent based and are a relationship between kin. As discussed earlier, kin relations of this type are not reciprocal as such. Bell’s insistence on the importance of the M-D dyad thus overemphasizes the primacy of kinship in extending social networks, for the M-D kirda-kurdungurlu relationship is not transmitted through the whole matri-cycle. Glowczewski’s detailed study of what differentiates alliance from filiation is important in this context.

She explains alliance by pointing out the matrimoietal opposition of 2 F-S pairs exchanging with 2 pairs of women who stand opposed as Z/L because their respective M are the M/L of their H.
In effect Glowczewski shows that the men, although they marry each other's Z, who are women of the same subsection as themselves, are not of the same generation. This is borne out by the fact that one man's Z is the other man's D, and vice versa. This is the case with their respective S and F as well. This is because women bisect patri-couples in opposite cyclical directions. She concluded from this that the standard representation of marriage structure is incorrect because they are based on the assumption that men exchange their Z in marriage while in truth men exchange their uterine nieces in marriage. Furthermore, the novice and his ZH, while they do indeed marry each other's Z, are not 'exchanging' them.

The truth of the matter is that through requirements of the matrilineal cycles to move in opposite directions through the 4 patrilineal, alternating with each other between F-S pairs, the system requires to maintain itself not four patrilineal pairs but eight.
This was a long way to say that what Bell, and as we have seen, Dussart, showed as machinations of extreme complexity are in fact structured and transparent. Following every move of every person in society will not illuminate structures, thus will not illuminate structured pro-creation (reproduction) of the world. In short, Warlpiri gender concepts will not yield to this approach. The clue to understanding gender relations is thus not to compare the ritual standing of women and men, nor the politicking that makes a ceremony happen in the first place and the ensuing exploitation of new found bargaining points for future business. For relations of power seen thus are relations of sex, not gender.

The important point I want to make is that all persons have a kirda-kurdungurlu identity and because of this all persons are continuously involved in exchange whatever they do and with whomever they relate.

Having summarized the kirda-kurdungurlu literature, I now discuss the concept of gender in Warlpiri society. Only when the concept of gender is clarified will I be able more fully to discuss the kirda-kurdungurlu system as a pro-creative system of gendered exchange relations.
CHAPTER II

GENDER

Gender in Warlpiri society is about the objectification of Self as pro-creative partner in the exchange-process for the creative reproduction of society. Gender is a socio-economic force responsible for the reproduction not only of people, but equally of animals and plants. Even, it could be argued, animals or plants like people are involved in this process on equal footing. Hence, by way of reproducing social relations of exchange the universe is simultaneously maintained as a 'conscious universe' and, 'in a conscious universe there is no hiding place' (Rose, D. 1987:264).

In this context it is astonishing that analyses of the effect of Western things on internal gender relations are virtually non-existent. Where analyses of the effect of Western influences have been attempted in the Australian context they have been almost exclusively in terms of Western economics (i.e. Altman 1987; Fisk 1985). Conversely, the production and gendering of Western things outside Aboriginal society appears to be inconsequential to the manner in which Aborigines deal with them (i.e. Sansom 1982, 1988; Gerrard, 1989).

In contrast Strathern in her (1988) Melanesian study The Gender of the Gift theorizes gender in conjunction with gift exchange. However, she has not broached the socialization of Western things; rather, she engages Western feminist gender theory in a comparative and critical manner. The most significant point she makes in regard to Western feminist thought is her concern with the individual as gendered social subject in reference to Gatens'
work. I will take up the discussion at this point.

Gatens posits the individual as gendered social subject whose consciousness or identity is derived from an 'active process of signification' (1983:149) involving the individual's experience of its own sexed body:

Given, that in this society [Western society], there is a network of relations obtained between femininity and femaleness, that is, between the female body and femininity, then there must be a qualitative difference between the kind of femininity 'lived' by men. (Gatens, M. 1983:149)

Further, Gatens writes:

Masculinity and femininity as forms of sex-appropriate behaviors are manifestations of an historically based, culturally shared phantasy about male and female biologies, and as such sex and gender are not arbitrarily connected. (Gatens, M. 1983:152)

Strathern (1988:62) argues that Gatens' concerns with individual identity cannot clarify 'what is being constructed in these relations', these concerns appear to Strathern to be embedded in commodity economies and are therefore inapplicable to her discussion of 'the gift economies of Melanesia' (1983:133). I fully agree with Strathern, but the crucial point Gatens makes she overlooks, that is, Gatens actually sees the sexed body-gender nexus as not arbitrary, i.e.: a man can experience femininity (just as a woman can experience masculinity one assumes), but he has to experience it differently to a woman because male biology is differently perceived. Gatens wanted to prove that gender-identity is historically constituted in connection with the (gendered) subjective experience of the sexed body, hence the individual's subjectivity consists of a
historical (non-arbitrary) relationship between her or his sex and gender identity. In other words, what Gatens is suggesting is that fantasies of what constitutes female or male biology are informing a person's gender identity and therefore sex (the sexed body) and gender are both culturally constructed differently for men and women and these constructs undergo historical changes. I believe, as Gatens actually mentions, her analysis is akin to anthropological interests and her insight should open the way for comparison between Western and non-Western gender regimes. Warlpiri practices suggest indeed that there is a historical link between the sexed body and gender. However, it is different to the Western mode where gender cannot be shifted cross-sexually without effecting some changes in subjective experience as Gatens suggests. The Warlpiri, by contrast, shift bodies across gender and vice versa continuously without any changes to their individual identity. But as we shall see, in relation to Western things this non-dualistic relationship between body and gender identities is coming under pressure.

I argue there exist as many genders in Warlpiri society as there are exchange relations and there exist as many exchange relations as there are kin relations.

What I mean by gender, therefore, is the relative distance to others in terms of one's physical origin from a Wife-Husband pair (W, H) that is parents, and one's social advancement towards becoming W or H, that is a parent. In other words, one's body is a social body, it comes separately from Mother and Father (M, F) with a dually gendered identity, one is kurdungurlu from M and kirda from F. As such, one is in the position to represent M or F to others independent of one's sex, yet on the level of concrete interaction this occurs almost exclusively between same sex individuals, hence my argument that the
separate spheres (Bell, D. 1983; Hamilton, A. 1975) are internally gendered. The separate spheres only appear to reflect a division of labour, in fact the separate spheres indicate nothing but the difference between female and male sexed bodies. This division is symbolic of the basic exogamous unit which is Z and B and does not constitute a productive relationship between women and men as such. Weiner writes:

A model of reproduction based on a system which defines reproductive capabilities and limitations beyond the purely biological, must examine the nucleus of kinship relations through a woman and her brother, their respective spouses, and respective children. (Weiner, A. 1979:331)

The Z-B unit is the reproductive unit and not the matrimonial couple because the latter combine relations between two different Countries and are thus classificatory and affinal while the former divide one and the same Country into matrilineal and patrilineal interests. What is crucial here is that biology and gender are not based on each other as in Western essentialist thought but they are related through social descent.(1)

Mary Laughren (1982) comments on the ‘Walpiri Kinship Structures’ as a linguist. She does not necessarily subscribe to the idea that the individual is multiply gendered, but she most definitely shows us that M and F are the basic reference points. She writes:

The Warlpiri kinship system is a complex hierarchically organised structure which encompasses a conventionalised set of relations based on the maternal and paternal relations. These relations between individuals on the basis of actual genealogical relationship or on the basis of their membership of recognised related sets. In addition to the relations which hold between people and sets of people, the kinship system is extended to the relations between people and their actual and
ontological world, thus encoding their social and political organization; it provides a system of personal appellation and reference. (Laughren, M. in Heath, Merlan and Rumscy (eds.) 1982:72) (my emphasis)

Relations between individuals are of course also based on specific known events and values. These are biographical and unique features which must not be put to indiscreet use by others. Rather, what is individual is what makes one singularly unique as a person. One could say that, contrary to Western thought, the idea of the individual as a social persona is impossible. It seems that Laughren confirms this when she writes:

Warlpiri kin terms which primarily designate relations between sets (...) do not contain as part of their meaning characteristics or qualities which are only properties of individuals in the Warlpiri system. (Laughren, M. in Heath et al (eds.) 182:73)

To achieve the power to reproduce as a female or male is thus not a biological given but rather depends on a gendered social relationship. To be more precise, gender is not determined by the sex or body of the individual, but by the sex and body of mother or father. That means there exists an historical relationship between the sexed body and gender in Warlpiri thought, but the relationship is not a one-to-one relationship. It is the body of two individuals other than oneself, namely M and F separately, which determines one's gender relations in society. So, Warlpiri individuation does not depend on subjective experiences between sexed body and gender for the processes of individuation. On the contrary, the Warlpiri individual is the result of past exchanges in society and is maintained by the individual through social exchange activities. This is one's social duty and social right combined.
I believe the basis of all exchange in Warlpiri society is to transform what is female into male and vice versa. The individual's activity as social activity is fundamentally an economic activity for the gendered reproduction of things, as well as meaning and value. What Strathern writes about individuation in Melanesian society applies equally to Warlpiri society, namely,

to regard 'the person' as an objectification ('personification') of relationships. In so far as people turn one set of relationships into another, they act (as individual subjects) to turn themselves into persons (objects) in the regard of others. They objectify themselves, one might say. And this is indeed the point of making themselves active agents; this is their destiny. Life is not imagined to be without supports: one acts to create the supports. (Strathern, M. 1988:313-4)

Strathern refers of course not to objectification as a concrete transference of gender identities into objects, but to the transference of gendered identities between exchange partners through the objects they exchange. She writes: 'The action is the gendered activity' (ibid:ix). In Warlpiri society exchange remains under the direct control of the exchange partners while the objects themselves are handed on, as indeed in Melanesian societies too. It can therefore be said that objects as such are not necessarily gendered, but they become gendered in the process. This is a complex issue which I will discuss further down.

Gender aims at sexual reproduction but is not identical with it, for where sexual union is reached gender becomes superfluous. Gender is here not a behavioral attitude of femininity or masculinity as such, although behaviors such as wearing long hair for girls and a shiny buckle by boys is evident to attract the opposite sex.(2)

Gender as a process aims at reproduction. The matrimonial couple is the
end point and starting point of any reciprocal exchange. Gender relations thus promise to 'produce' the reproductive unit, but gender does not directly emanate from the reproductive unit. Gender relations are effectively a movement between what was -parents- and what will be -parents- from the perspective of what is -any kinship category other than spouse. And what is, is made up of actual known personalities who stand in a specific relationship to each other.

In the social environment of Warlpiri society only one other opposite sex individual will be active wife or husband to the other, while several individuals could be their potential partners. These could be actual 'promises' by which a marriage partner is selected by kin members and not oneself. Women and men have several such 'promises' (Glowczewski & Pradelles de Latour, 1967:36). What matters is that where the process of reciprocal relationship has successfully culminated into the realization of the 'promise' (i.e. where people have become active spouses -actually married- of each other), no reciprocal exchange obligations exist between these individuals. This does not mean they do not have expectations of each other as economic partners. Kaberry (1973(1939):133) has correctly observed that the sexual division of labour in marriage imposes no additional duties on wife or husband which they don't already have as woman or man, marriage only specifies women's and men's activities contractually as an economic relationship between wife and husband. I thus argue that sex and gender merge at the level of the matrimonial couple.

Gender relations are constituted through the reciprocal exchange system, they are the Kirda-Kurdungurlu structure which regulates social relations as economic relations and vice versa. This system can only change if the fundamental beliefs about the socio-economic dynamics of the pro-creative
process change. For Gatens to insist, therefore, on the historic embeddedness of the gendered subject is correct, but her theory cannot explain why different cultures imagine the body differently, or one could say, why different cultures produce subjective experiences differently. This is to say, as Strathern argues, individuation is only critical in capitalist systems or in a commodity economy. Warlpiri economy is not alienating social relations of production. On the contrary, through the reciprocal system of exchange it socializes everything for inclusion into the pro-creative model of production. Individuation is thus a purely social process.

My findings suggest that the ongoing colonization of Aboriginal societics in Australia is effecting an assault on the socio-economic dynamics of the pro-creative model of exchange which ultimately destabilizes gender relations.

2.1. PROCREATIVE MODELS

Again I must take advice from Melanesian anthropology. Annette Weiner has argued for a reproductive view of social exchange relations among the Kirriwana, Trobriand Islands.

A. Weiner (1979:328-48) is concerned 'that we have examined reproduction in its biological context only' (ibid:328) 'and therefore, reproduction never becomes a cultural/symbolic form in its own right' (ibid:330). Her analysis falls short of describing Kirriwana society as a pro-creative society, for it is my contention that pro-creation is but reproduction as a 'cultural/symbolic system in its own right'. Without overstressing the point,
a pro-creative model of society simultaneously describes a gender system.

Weiner notes that the incest taboo between a sister and brother has from Morgan to Lévi-Strauss been taken as the primary social division. This division is consequently understood as the foundation of exogamous descent. But as we have seen above, when such biologism is perpetrated by androcentric reporting we arrive at the notion of men exchanging women in marriage (brothers exchanging sisters) and hence making reciprocal exchange the exclusive affairs of men. Weiner (1979:332) argues in this context that the basic social division on account of the incest taboo between sister and brother is not just a division by biological sex but rather, she writes:

What is being separated...are different modes of reproduction
which must come together to recombine and exchange in complementarity to each other. (Weiner, A. 1979:332)

To understand how this separation effects a pro-creative model of Warlpiri society, we have to comprehend the implications this has on conservative perceptions of reproduction.

In Warlpiri society reproduction has to be understood as a social process of exchange relations which is not premised on the matrimonial couple although it has as its social aim the heterosexual couple so that spouses may reproduce as W and H.

Social descent is land-based and it is traced separately to a M and a F who are siblings. This is to say, one’s parents are of course a married couple which consists of one’s actual M and F under usual circumstances. These parents are however not the parents through whom their children can trace their matrilineal and patrilineal descent relations. These are traced to the grandparent generation in relation to each other’s marriage partner. In other
words, where the Zs and Bs and their respective spouses grand-parents are combined they are made up of two Z-B pairs. The notion of Z-B as productive unit thus informs pro-creative exchange relations that are gendered not by biological differences but by different reproductive powers which differentiate the sexes.

I am, however, not the first to propose a pro-creative model of Warlpiri society. Yeatman (1983) ventured a model which requires comment because it shows how a social model based on W and H parentage as the unit of production distorts gender relations and systematically misrepresents social relations in Warlpiri society.

Yeatman makes use of other ethnographies, taking Meggitt's (1962) and Munn's (1973) interpretation of their data on the Warlpiri as facts for her own argument. Such is her uncritical acceptance of these interpretations that her analysis stands and falls on the idea of the existence of a male corporate body in Warlpiri society and the concomitant total lack of women's involvement in ritual practices in relation to the mythological origin of society.

Starting from this androcentric basis, she consequently distorts the idea of 'parentage', which is fundamental to her argument. She does this so thoroughly that it defies any ongoing dialogue. The internal logic of her argument is fully circular and self-enforcing.

As a consequence Yeatman produces an apparently watertight argument which posits that 'gender' and 'kinship' are related and 'presuppose each other' in a social ontology that characterizes Warlpiri culture and other cultures which have a dual descent structure (ibid:3). In her words, Warlpiri society requires that parentage 'be differentiated into two principles of patri-parentage and matri-parentage' (ibid:4). And further, this dual principle,
which, of course, is not identical with matri-lineal and patri-lineal descent, functions on two distinctly different levels in society. One is purely symbolic and elaborates the noumenal, the other is material and elaborates the phenomenal. Needless to say that the former is the exclusive domain of men although women are symbolically represented through the principle of matri-parentage which in male rites is enacted by MB, the kurduungurlu. The latter is identified with women but in which men as individuals have their phenomenological raison d'être (ibid:10). Here it becomes obvious that Yeatman took Meggitt's patrinoietal division and superimposed Munn's notion of reproductive symbolism and so arrived at 'parentage'.

From this basis Yeatman then goes on to discuss gender classifications (ibid:10-25). These too are of dual nature. Kin-based gender connotes 'individual personality' and ritually acquired gender connotes 'social personality'. Only men have a truly 'social personality' as such on account of their ritual incorporation into male cults. This is possible because men participate in rites that do not just involve life crises such as birth and death, for these have the individual at heart. The inclusion of men who represent 'matri-parentage' in their role as 'workérs' (kurduungurlu) means men's individual gender classification is thereby acknowledged but simultaneously suspended and takes the idea of parentage onto a higher plane than that of mere individualistic kin relations.

Yeatman produces a static model of society that is devoid of human agency. In her own view her concepts have 'ideal-typical status' (ibid:4). She has consequently nothing to say on exchange, especially as her ideal of parentage and gender is divided into individual and social forms. True, she tries to make them interdependent categories by logically linking actual men
with corporate male identities, but by this device her theoretical stance falls apart.

Ultimately Yeatman posits a kin derived gender classification which has nothing to do with gender but has everything to do with heterosexual reproduction. This is to say, biological relations between parents and children are the basis for kin classification. While this may be so if actual M and actual F are among the persons one calls 'mother' or 'father', these terms do not connote biological descent but rather a social relationship. I endeavor to make clear in the course of this thesis that ontologically social identity is derived from the notion that biology and gender do not stand in a one-to-one relationship in Warlpiri society. I will also show that neither is there a linear/straight connection made between parentage and gender but rather, that parentage, to the extent it is a Warlpiri concept at all, is a multi-directional process which takes into consideration what was and what will be. But I must hasten to add, while so called parentage is indeed gendered, the proposition of two different levels of parentage is absurd. Why she assumes with Eliade that ancestral heroes not unlike Western (Christian) ideas of a supreme being are conceived as androgynes, like Adam is said to have been, is a mystery. Further, that the conceptual link between humans and ancestral heroes (and heroines I might add) should therefore be akin to a parent-progyn relationship under exclusive male control remains unclear.

Yeatman's procreative model is static because it cannot explain by which process meaning in social action and aims finds expression in lived reality. One may well ask by what criteria does a society operate to create the following gender relations which, admittedly, have only 'ideal-typical status':

Lacking in this corporate aspect of their personality, and
standing for the idea of individuality itself, women accept the subordination to the corporate social order only as this is expressed as their subordination to the individual men with whom they are placed in relationship. Indeed, if men collectively attempt to assert their authority over women, women are likely to sceptically bracket or even question this expression of masculine authority, even while they continue to accept their subordination as individuals to the authority of the individual men to whom they relate. (Yeatman 1983:18)

Yeatman’s explanation, being premised on previous androcentric analyses of Warlpiri society, can in the end but justify its own rhetoric.

The conclusion I draw from Yeatman’s discussion is that ritual performance is purely used as an organizational vehicle to confirm and reconfirm the ideological view of reproduction which differentiates parentage into sacred and profane levels of social practice. Rather, ritual articulates procreative relationships in its organizational structure of which reproductive activity is the most sacred and thus hidden ‘promise’. People come together to formalize differences and similarities: most notably and most basically this is expressed in the kirda-kurdungurlu reciprocal division. Kirda-kurdungurlu however articulates these differences and similarities from many perspectives of social identification. I will further my analysis of kirda-kurdungurlu in the following chapter.

(1) Social descent is reckoned through a cyclical closed system. There are four generations recognized in Warlpiri society and these are based on the two matri-cycles or matri-moieties, they are cyclical from 1 to 4 and move in opposite directions across the 4 patricouples who have only two alternating generations each, that is a F-S - S-F cycle. This means the Warlpiri system has a dual social descent structure that is not symmetrical.

A graphic organization of the generation moieties, which is however based on the patrilineal cycle of descent shows that generation moieties are
nevertheless the result of bisecting matrilines. F-S couples are divided into 'my flesh' and 'others flesh', that is into kuyu-rna and kuyu-kari respectively (Glowczewski, 1988:205-208). What is significant here is that 'my flesh', that is ego's', is always contrasted with 'others flesh' from the point of view of a D or a S of a F. But what is maybe more significant is the fact that the distinction between 'my flesh' and 'others flesh' is not based on the paternal sex but on the fact that F and S are members of different matri-lines.

(2) My questions as to what makes a woman or a man attractive to the other sex never ever yielded an answer. When I pointed out that such and such a guy was handsome because he was slim, well dressed or nice, no woman, young or old, would ever confirm or deny my statement. What they would tell me was whether such or such a man is 'looking', or they would affirm or deny that they returned the 'look'. A Japangardi said to me quietly, in the presence of other Nampijinpas: 'Nampin, I been look you, I reckon I love you.' To stop him all I had to do was to inform him that I never looked at him, just as the women taught me, but I was under no obligation to deny him as I am a 'straight' potential partner for him.
CHAPTER III

THE KIRDA-KURDUNGURLU SYSTEM

The kirda-kurdungurlu system encompasses relationships to Country and people. It articulates these through kinship and descent, through exchange and through ritual. Kirda-kurdungurlu reciprocity permeates all social activity as gendered activity and it is for this reason that Warlpiri society can be considered to be based on a pro-creative model of society.

In the previous chapters I opened up for interpretation various approaches to the Warlpiri kirda-kurdungurlu system. In this chapter I will propose my own analysis of the Warlpiri kirda-kurdungurlu system.

I will show that Warlpiri society articulates a pro-creative system of social relations and that, because of this, all exchange relations are gendered relationships. Only when this is achieved will it be possible to proceed to an analysis of exchange relations that involve Western objects such as the Community Toyota.

The kirda-kurdungurlu system rests on an interdependent net of matrilineal and patrilineal land-based descent relations. Every individual has the possibility to act either as kirda or kurdungurlu. Yet kirda or kurdungurlu identity is not only a land-based matrilineal or patrilineal descent relationship, it is also a relationship between persons relating either as affines or as kin. While both these relationships are based on the same principle of land-based descent, they distinguish between primary and secondary descent relations. Kin relations are primary between a parent and her or his child while affines can trace their respective matrilineal or patrilineal descent reciprocally to each
other.

However, from the perspective of relations to Country or Dreaming it does not matter whether one’s kurdungurlu or kirda status is derived through primary descent from one’s M or F or through secondary descent from MM/MMB or FF/FFZ, MF/MFZ or FM/FMB. This is to say that Ego’s M and F are each descendants of two Z-B units (Ego’s MFZ or FMB) of which only one is M or F to one of Ego’s spouse’s parents. And vice versa, Ego’s spouse’s M and F are each descendants of two Z-B units (Ego’s spouse’s FMB or MFZ), of which only one is F or M to one of Ego’s parents.

The main point is that the country in relation to which Ego is kurdungurlu, Ego’s M is kirda and where Ego’s spouse is kurdungurlu, Ego’s spouse’s M is also kurdungurlu. Ego’s MF and Ego’s spouse’s MM are thus classificatory B-Z. And vice versa, the country in relation to which Ego is kirda, Ego’s F is kurdungurlu and where Ego’s spouse is kirda Ego’s spouse’s F is kirda, thus Ego’s FM and Ego’s spouse’s FF are classificatory Z-B. I hope the following diagram makes this clear.

\textbf{Figure 1.} Descent relations from the perspective of one H-W couple: Japaljarri (MFZDS) and Nakamarra (MMBDD). (or FFZ55) (or FFZ5D)
The above figure shows that the productive unit of social descent which gives persons their group identity is the Z-B unit and not W-H couples. This is a very important distinction to make if exchange relations are to be understood as gendered relationships.

My effort is to examine exchange relations in a manner that makes overall sense of the affinal and kin based relationship structure in terms of kirda-kurdungurlu relations. For this it is necessary to distinguish between reciprocally and non-reciprocally gendered exchange relations, or in other words, to distinguish between those which are pro-creative and non pro-creative. Kin and affines cannot take their gender (their respective kirda or kurdungurlu identity) similarly from a cross referential positioning vis-à-vis the exchange partner.

However, my contention is not only that there exist pro-creative and non pro-creative exchange relationships, I am also saying exchanges between kin and between affines are both gendered exchange relations. In other words, all exchanges take place between kirda and/or kurdungurlu identities, it is only that their respective productive relationship is differently gendered and thus there is a difference in what they can produce or create together. One is that in exchanges between kin, gender is derived separately from a linear relationship as that between a M and D or S, or as that between a F and S or D. (1) This is why ritual reciprocity does not exist between members of adjacent generations of one and the same patriline nor between members of adjacent generations of one and the same matriline. But, although male members of one patriline can be bisected by their membership in different matrimoieties, they will never stand in ritual reciprocity to each other. Yet, although adjacent generation
females who are members of one matriline can be bisected by membership in different patrilineal districts of opposite patrimoieties, they can stand in a classificatory reciprocal kirda-kurdungurlu relationship in ritual.

A further major point of my analysis is that relations among same sex individuals are also gendered. This becomes obvious when we consider that almost all social interaction takes place between same sex individuals (with the exception of the married couple W - H). (2)

I have argued earlier that in Warlpiri thought a person’s biological sex and gender do not stand in a one-to-one relationship because each person is endowed with two genders. By virtue of descending from a mother and a father one is kurdungurlu and kirda separately. (3) The individual can thus act as kurdungurlu on the basis of matrilateral interests in a country or as kirda on the basis of patrilateral interests in a country. And although one can actually act towards a topographical entity or a ritual sequence one calls M or F, one usually interacts in this capacity with another person. Regardless of this dual possibility then, one generally does not interact directly with persons of the opposite sex. Social intercourse with other persons, which includes ritual and non-ritual activity, takes place only between same sex individuals. In the local residential setting and from the perspective of a woman this generally includes actual or classificatory M, Z (this includes parallel cousins), aunt (FZ), Z/L, M/L, MM, FM and cross cousins.

With each of them I have a different relationship not only and simply because social etiquette requires different standards of behaviour in each case, but because one’s kirda-kurdungurlu interaction differs with each of them. To some persons I will be primary, secondary or identical kurdungurlu or kirda (i.e. to kin), to others I will be reciprocally kirda and kurdungurlu (i.e. affines
or potential spouses). Some who are my kirda, as for example my mother, who has identical gender to me and I to her. Yet, this is not because she is as my mother a woman like me, but because she is as mother a woman and I am as daughter a woman. My relationship to my aunt is different in that I am as her brother’s daughter in an agnatic relationship with her. She is a female father to me and I could be seen as a female son of hers. We are thus exchanging as male gendered females because we are both women and because we are agnates of adjacent generation males. The inverse relationship exists between a mother’s brother and his uterine nephew, they relate to each other as male mother and male daughter because they are both men who stand in a matrilineal relationship to each other. I am magnifying some other same sex relationships later. The point that needs to be made here is simply this: between kin there exists a gendered exchange relationship that is non-reciprocal because it is based on a linear descent relationship between individuals of adjacent generations or it is non-reciprocal because it is equivalent as between siblings of identical parents.

Because of this sameness of gender and sex notwithstanding, age hierarchy is what is stressed in these relationships. The senior 'looks after' the junior and the junior "follows" and shows respect in turn. This is the case also between elder and younger same sex siblings. 'Looking after' as a concept extends far beyond the natural care for the young or the old and frail. It encompasses an expectation that the young will one day look after the old materially but they also take on ritual responsibilities for them in return.

Now this notion is not so straightforward between affines such as between Z/L, B/L or between spouses, between M/L and second cross cousins in general. Gender relations between affines are reciprocal because they are
reciprocally *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* in relation to their respective patrilateral and matrilateral inheritance. Affines or potential affines reciprocate because they are actually separated by their respective group identity as members of opposite patrimoieties and matrimoieties. In a word, reciprocity means that they can act in each others’ interest. People at Nguru say they are *kirda* or *kurdungurlu* for not to someone. Affines can act patrilaterally or matrilaterally towards each other, but they can also mix their genders in circumstances where, for example, one acts as M for her S and the other as her son’s M/L. They can simply act as each others’ grandchildren’s FM (*kangku*) or MM (*jaja*) etc. etc. The significant difference between kin relations and affinal relations is the fact that exchanges between affines involve a greater variety of objects of exchange. Between kin the possibilities of concerns are limited. Their relationship to Country and Dreaming is fixed or constant and their social position is largely only differentiated hierarchically by age or seniority.

By contrast, it seems exchanges between affines have unlimited potential. They can act in all directions up and down, sideways and across the classificatory genealogical net of social relations. In the case of Mothers-in-Law their potential for political manoeuvring and hierarchical clout based on seniority and business acumen is at its peak in this category of persons. They look up to ascendants and down to descendants simultaneously in their interaction with each other. Added to this is their capacity to cross reference their *kirda-kurdungurlu* rights and obligations with members of other kin groups.

Thus, by reciprocity I do not mean an equivalence between what is exchanged but the mutual reversibility of *kirda-kurdungurlu* positions between exchange partners. This is not possible between kin and hence I do not speak
of reciprocity as a pro-creative activity here.

So far I discussed *kirda-kurdungurlu* relations as land-based descent relations between kin and affines. The different scope between linear and reciprocal relationship is the difference between non-procreative and pro-creative exchange relations. Ritual *kirda-kurdungurlu* relations are, however, another matter in terms of how gendering takes place. Again we see a separation by the sexes and each separate group interacts internally either in a *kirda* or *kurdungurlu* capacity.

During ritual engagement the relationship which regulates a person’s *kirda* or *kurdungurlu* performance is not narrowly decided between closely related individuals, for kin relations are subsumed under the wider concerns of two intermarrying kin groups. At a closer inspection it becomes clear that in ritual the *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* are positioned according to the egocentric criteria of the one patriline to which the novice is relating as son.

Reciprocity in ritual shows more clearly than other forms of social intercourse that to exchange is to pro-create because it actually concerns itself with the social reproduction of relationships, people and species. I will focus on the novice and his ZH (B/L) exchange relationship later. Here I would like to point out that ritual reciprocity is not something that can be observed by a mere 18 months stay in the community. Ritual reciprocity spans generations and occurs in real time.

My intention is to clarify that the ritual *kirda-kurdungurlu* division is not simply a patrilineal division per se but a division between patrilineally and matrilaterally related groups of actual and classificatory kin with respect to the patrimoieties that calls the business and which offers a novice for initiation. This patrimoieties stands in ritual *kirda* relationship to the members of the opposite
patrimoity who are their ritual *kurdungurlu*. This is to say, all members of the opposite patrimoity are *kurdungurlu* because they are all matrilaterally related to members of the *kirda* patrimoity. For example the novice’s M is ritual *kurdungurlu*, which means, in other words, one generation of the *kirda* are matrilateral descendants of members of the *kurdungurlu‘*s patriline and the other generation *kirda* are matrilateral descendants of another patriline in the opposite patrimoity. But this is not why the novice’s M is *kurdungurlu* in ritual. She is *kurdungurlu* in ritual because she herself is the D of a man’s Z whose F is of the same patrimoity as her S but of another patriline as her S. We must imagine the S of Japaljarri, Jinggaayi is being initiated. When we transpose descent relationship *kirda-kurdungurlu* relations from Figure 1. above onto a ritual *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship model we see that the novice’s and his Z’s M is indeed ritual *kurdungurlu*.

![Diagram](image)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>: descent</th>
<th>O : woman</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>: spouses</td>
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</table>
| | : siblings  | black: *kurdungurlu*; white: *kirda*
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**Figure 2:** Ritual *kirda-kurdungurlu* relations, Jinggaayi is Ego and novice.

(Figure modelled on Glowczewski, 1988:202)
It can be said that the *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship that exists between the M-D dyad is not the ritual correlate of the ritual *kirda-kurdungurlu* reciprocity. This in turn applies to all M-D dyads of both patrimoieties. Even when the ritual relationship is reversed at another occasion in the case of a novice belonging to the other patrimoiety being initiated, then who was previously *kirda* will now be *kurdungurlu*. But this reversal does not occur because the previous ritual positions of M and D or S are reversible. Rather, it will be the previous Z who will now be the other novice’s M, hence she will be ritual *kurdungurlu* together with her B.

Ritual reciprocity does not occur between spouses either, for ritual exchange is to enter into a pro-creative relationship with same sex individuals of the opposite gender and not between people who will be joined in order to engage in heterosexual intercourse. Rather, ritual exchange is about the creation of a H and W relationship in the future.

Actual ritual exchange is enacted between four sets of in-Laws of which only the novice is a first time candidate. Exactly the same relationships exist among women participants. Overall man and women are divided into groups of brothers and their sisters. For example, where the novice is *kirda* as B/L his Z is *kirda* as Z/L to his B/L.Z who is *kurdungurlu*. Or, where the novice’s M is *kurdungurlu* her Z/L, as the novice’s future WM (his future M/L), is *kirda*, and so on for all ceremonial exchange partners.

Finally I argue that all exchanges are gendered because the *Kirda-Kurdungurlu* System constitutes the ethical basis of exchange behaviour. The ethics of exchange allows the notion that on whatever differentiations people rely when engaging with others, they justify their exchanges by treating the content and meaning of their relationship in a pro-creative manner. In this
sense all exchange is reciprocal and all exchange relations are gendered relations as well.

When the Warlpiri thus exchange things (meanings and values) they cannot themselves produce, they will aim to reproduce the social relationships that secure the access to such things. I will focus my discussions in the subsequent chapters on this possibility.

3.1. RELATIONS TO COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

Individuals always indicate with the terms *kirda* or *kurdungurlu* their relationship to a specific Country, an area of land the rights to which they either inherited from father (F) or from mother (M) if the relationship is a primary one. The Country or Dreaming one calls 'father' is where one is *kirda* and the Country or Dreaming one calls 'mother' is where one is *kurdungurlu*. However, the F and M to whom I relate in this land-based manner call their respective Countries 'father'. This is to say, while one is *kirda* for F and *kurdungurlu* for M, both are *kirda* in relationship to me. (4) I stress that these terms are descent and/or exchange relationship terms between kin in this context and not kin terms. The kin terms are *kirtana* for father and *gnatina* for mother, but at Nguru the English words Daddy and Mum are used in direct address. However, the term *kurdungurlu*, according to Nash, is derivative of the term *kurdu* meaning child of a woman. I must make the reader aware, though, before quoting from Nash that although he investigated the etymology of *kurdungurlu* he applied his findings to men's ritual perspectives of the *kirda-kurdungurlu* reciprocity. He writes:
While the kin term *kurduna or *kurduyana focuses on 'child (of women)', it should be noted that its classificatory sense extends beyond this, potentially to the entire subsection of Ego's sister's child (which is also that of a man's wife's father)...It is not clear what particular meaning *kurdu would have had at the time *kurdu-gnuru was formed, but all the evidence points to *kurdu being strongly connected with the mother-child link... (Nash, D. 1982:148)

What I suggest goes somewhat beyond this specific reference. In relation to Country, those who are kirda could be seen as children of brothers, and those who are kurdungurlu could be seen as children of sisters. This is also reflected by the different terms for child. A man refers to kurdu as Z child and a woman refers to kurdu meaning her own child and her Z child. And conversely, a woman refers to ngalabi as B child and a man refers to ngalabi meaning his own child and his B child.

The terms kirda and kurdungurlu make reference to two brother-sister pairs if they refer to one and the same Country and to two husband-wife couples (or the abovementioned siblings' own parents) if they refer to two different Countries, simply, because the kirda relationship is fundamentally to F and the kurdungurlu relationship is fundamentally to M. (See Figure 1. above)

Kin relations are not identical with ritual relationships, but exchange among persons is conducted in the same manner as ritual exchange relations among groups or between individuals during ceremonies. Exchange in a pro-creative system is all about creating a 'promise'. The term is wide-ranging. The 'promise must not only be taken in its most narrow definition meaning legitimate 'spouse' but it must also be understood as the creative potential to produce and reproduce anything with anybody at any time and any place in a manner that distinguishes these relations as those between kirda and
kurdungurlu reciprocally.

In initiation ritual it is in the main to create the 'promise' of a wife to one young man so that he will perhaps 'promise' a wife to another man in the future. This exchange takes place matrilaterally between the novice's MB and the novice's future WMB. From the women's point of view it is the M of the promised girls who 'promise' each other their S to serve them as S/L., they are thus patrilateral exchange partners. These relationships are all articulated in kirda-kurdungurlu terms and are seen to be relations where people simultaneously 'look after' Country, Dreaming, and persons, F or M, B or Z, M/L or S/L etc. To make myself clear, by gender relations I mean not exclusive relations between women and men, girls and boys, but between kirda and/or kurdungurlu identitics. In other words, exchange relations pertain to a structure within which people are all potential exchange partners, in this case kirda or kurdungurlu, depending whether they act in their patrilateral or matrilateral interests or for father's or mother's interests. However, there are as many types of exchange partnerships as there are kin categories and affines. One can therefore say that there are as many gendered relations as there are exchange partners.

3.2. RELATIONS BETWEEN SAME SEX SIBLINGS

I observed that, where individuals cannot refer to a kirda or kurdungurlu status vis-à-vis each other, as for example siblings, especially same-sex siblings, equivalence of social identity in a sense abolishes the distinction between sex and gender identity. Although differences such as those based on
age may put same sex siblings into a 'looking after' relationship, it is still a gendered relationship.

Exchange between same sex siblings is of a mutually equal nature and can be of total assimilation whereby the actions of one become the actions of the other. Such relations, I have observed, are non-pro-creative relations. Rather these relations are marked by mutual caring or 'looking after' as the people at Nguru say. Thus, when a brother interacts with his brother they act in partnership. Usually the younger brother is obliged to the older brother but the older brother will 'look after' the younger brother. For example, the younger of two Janpjinpa brothers from Lajamanu (ca. 500 km west of Tennant Creek) told me in front of his older brother, 'I walk right up behind my brother, that is our way'. But this relationship reaches beyond two individuals; when for example one brother is involved in a fight with another man, usually a distant relative of similar standing, the other brother will assist him, and even continue the fight should his brother have been knocked out or in danger of losing the fight. The non-brother too will get aided by his own brother, and thus we have the sprawling effect of fights. But this is still a very contained type of exchange (fight). For as long as brother aids brother there is no pro-creative relationship involved. Such fights are forms of exchanges that have limited scope. Whoever might come to their aid often also belongs to the same 'family', that is to say, such fights occur between kin so that these types of fights tend not to stir wider interests.

Another case is based on drinking behaviour whereby if one brother is feeling he has had enough, he can oblige his brother to drink for him, as if his brother's body was his own. This business is called 'private way' and seems to depend on whether these brothers were initiated at the same ceremony, which
means they would have identical spiritual obligations towards each other as well. In the traditional context this would have meant an obligation to share almost everything with a co-initiate. (5) Meggitt has this to say:

Brothers should support each other in disputes and usually do so, unless one of them has outraged public opinion or broken some important law. Even then, there is a tacit expectation that right or wrong, the brothers will act as one. (Meggitt, 1962:132)

As we shall see, conflict arises from the introduction of Western things which eat away at the notion of the social body. One’s group identity becomes an inflationary identity; in order to maintain a decorum of propriety and social prestige the stakes are continuously raised to secure survival in the group.

There is no pro-creative exchange between same sex siblings because there exist no social differences between them. They can but substitute their bodies. This is to say, where there exist social differences, as say between a woman and her FZ, they, in contrast to same sex siblings, cannot substitute their bodies because they are socially not identical persons. Yet they can establish their relationship as gendered identities in the same fashion as same sex siblings even though they are same sex individuals like them. The difference between same sex sibling exchange and same sex exchange partners who stand in a paternal aunt - paternal niece relationship is that these women, although they are agnates, belong to adjacent generations while siblings are members of the same generation.

I was able to observe women more closely than I could observe men. I noticed that like brothers, sisters observe a hierarchical relationship based on age: it will always be an older sister who comes to the aid of a younger sister.
Similarly positioned sisters, where the age differential is not big and who have
danced together at their brother's initiation, will however also fight it out
among themselves as do brothers. They too have, I was told, what is called a
'private way'. They indicate their identical status by throwing off their clothes
when fighting with each other. I was told by one Nakamarra that this also
prevents husband, mother's brother or father's sister from interfering in their
fight. The husband and mother's brother cannot intervene because they are
men and no man is supposed to 'look women' who are not his actual spouse,
and father's sister cannot intervene, because she represents father. Because she
is representing a male she cannot intervene, and as woman who stands in a
pro-creative relation to her niece she cannot join in the fight. She does not
have the same social identity as the sisters.

She will, however, walk away from the scene of the fight and start wailing
to alarm the rest of the community that there is a potentially dangerous
situation developing and that she is 'looking after' her nieces. Her presence at
the scene is not only justified because she is a woman but because she is as
father's sister a woman. But I was told by one of the same Nakamarra above,
who sought my confirmation on the issue of 'private way' among men, this
should not continue because 'it's wrong, in d'it, Nampijinpa?', because they
each have their 'own body'. Nakamarra tested my (Western) attitude here, and
I replied, of course, that I was brought up to think that each person has only the
one body and, that we get sick (say from too much alcohol) separately, as
individuals. What is clear, however, is that the equivalence of social identity
puts the individualistic notion of the body as social body into question.
3.3. RELATIONS BETWEEN SPOUSES

Between spouses the *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship actually becomes totally neutralized. This is to say, the W and H relationship is the result of a series of ceremonial and less formal exchanges. Their relationship is reciprocal in terms of their *kirda-kurdungurlu* identities because they are of equal social status. This reciprocity derives from the specific type of structural reciprocity that exists between spouses. Glowczewski (1988:217) has shown that this relationship is structurally reciprocal between patri-cycles and matri-cycles only when we spread the Warlpiri marriage structure over four matri-cycles and eight patricycles.(6) The couple is joined through a claim to common descent from two Z-B pairs on the grandparent generation level. Claims of having 'one granny' or 'her mum's dad and her granny come from one father' are common. What this implies is the Warlpiri perception that descent from kin is identical with relations to Country (Hale, K. 1980). I found that Country refers to many different concepts of place because people can call each other countrymen for many different reasons quite unrelated to parents or grandparents, to place of birth or Dreaming associations (Myers 1986). Couples at Nguru nevertheless stress their relationship to each other's Country in terms of Dreamings and descent simultaneously. This is never more obvious than when a couple is in a 'mistake' marriage. I will explore this later where I discuss 'Family Relations'.

Here I would simply point out that couples are in a symmetrical relationship because as members of the same generation moiety and as second cross cousins they enjoy equal social status and are each other's *kirda* and/or *kurdungurlu*. They are members of opposite patrmoieties and opposite
matrimoieties as well. See a graphic representation of this in Figure 3. below.

Because of this symmetry a W and H are not in a pro-creative exchange relationship. They are each other's 'promise'; they have each other, in contrast to same sex siblings, who are each other.

Wife and husband are always each other's kirda and kurdungurlu. Nobody can interfere because they got to go fifty-fifty said Naparulla when she and I watched a drunk husband beat and kick his drunk wife as she lay on the ground. I tried to hear from Naparulla that the scene we were watching was a typical example of male violence against women. She said 'no', for when she is sober she'll come back at him, her family will help her, he will not raise a hand. 'He can't (is not allowed to), he knows she got the right to pay him back so next time he remembers'. I do not know the final outcome of this event, but I was present when my 'sister' at Nguru beat up her husband the day after he had 'been cheeky' to her when drunk. In sum, wife-husband exchange can be precarious because ultimately there is nothing to exchange except to show mutual respect for each other and their respective kin; couples are the silent pivotal point of exchange relations.

Kaberry writes a man does not have 'a monopoly' on his wife's services, without being expected to reciprocate in turn. He simply acquires the right to be her husband' (Kaberry, 1939:133). I must elaborate this point further. A wife and husband have, because of their kirda-kurdungurlu reciprocity, their rights and obligations as any woman and man has in society, economically and socially, but here it is with respect to each other. A wife and a husband are united because their common but different origin coincides with their sexual difference. They are further united because their relationship is the product of pro-creative exchange relations between their respective kin, who have made
and then kept their 'promise'.

A wife and a husband are for each other like kangaroo and echidna are for each other, according to Nakamarra. She told me that kangaroo and echidna are husband and wife, they both get up at seven o'clock in the evening, they both look for food at night, they go to sleep at the same hour in the morning. The kangaroo eats plants/vegetables and the echidna eats ants/meal. They support each other in their unique and different ways in that they do not eat each other's food. By not eating what the other eats, they actually provide for each other. They do this within an identical frame of time and space, they do this together for each other.

This then is what is meant by a symmetrical relationship, they are different but similar. The same cannot be said of same sex siblings, for they are identical and do therefore identical things (See also Hamilton, 1971:17).

My argument so far has been that the basic value of Warlpiri sociality is a common pro-creative relationship to land and people. *Kirda-kurdungurlu* relationships were set out as relations among kin primarily. It is now possible to plot these relationships onto a conventional form of representation by placing people according to their classificatory subsection names -skin names- into their respective matri-moictal and patri-moictal sections. We may now also understand the affinal ties with the wider society and hence the relevance of this representation for the following discussion on business relations.
Figure 3. Patrimoieties and Matrimoieties. Underlined are all the subsection names which are also represented at Nguru.

The above diagram indicates that patricycles are bisected by anticlockwise moving opposite matricycles and that female matrilineal relations of adjacent generations (i.e. M-D), are bisected by different patricycles throughout each matricycle thus linking opposite patrimoieties.
3.4. BUSINESS RELATIONS

The standard division in ceremonial gatherings is that between opposite patrimoieties the members of which are *kirda* or *kurdungurlu* respectively. Meggitt explained it thus:

A man refers to the members of his own patrimoicy as *gira* [*kirda*] and to those of the opposite moiety as *gurunuulu* [*kurdungurlu*]. These are not terms of address. The terms *gira* means 'the fathers and sons', and the totems that a man calls 'father' also belong to his own patrimoicy. The usual pidgin Australian of *gira* is 'the bosses' - the custodians of the patrimoicy dreamings, the men who perform the ceremonies to increase these totemic species. The term *gurungurlu* may have two meanings: *gurunu-ulu*, 'those who give the arm-blood for ritual decoration', or *guru-nulu*, 'those who may not act in a particular ritual'. (Meggitt, 1962:203)

Meggitt takes the latter meaning to be the more significant one. Nash questions this interpretation and states that

the internal structure of the term *kurdungurlu* does not in itself provide any evidence for translating it as 'those outside the ritual' or 'those who may not act in a particular ritual'. (Nash, D. 1982:147).

Meggitt sees the *kirda-kurdungurlu* reciprocity to be a function of the patrimoieties. This is incorrect for they are not once *kirda* and once *kurdungurlu* simply because they are reciprocating as members of opposite patrimoieties. Rather, those people who act as *kirda* on a particular occasion do so because of their affinal relationship with the *kurdungurlu*, and those who are *kurdungurlu* do so because of their matrilateral relationship to the members of the *kirda* group. One way of expressing the ritual *kirda-kurdungurlu*
relationship as reciprocal is the fact that the kirda men will get their wives from their kurdungurlu. This means, a kirda man's sister will become wife to a man of the opposite patrimoicty. When this occurs, usually at her brother’s wife’s brother initiation, the ritual kirda-kurdungurlu relationship between the patrimoicties will be reversed.

The kirda-kurdungurlu division is considered reciprocal for several reasons. One is because two sets, each containing two patriline, stand symmetrically opposed. But the kirda-kurdungurlu is not premised on this division. Another apparent symmetry can be seen in the internal make up of each patrimoicty, namely that between the two patriline. There, one member of each patricouple is matrilaterally related to one of the other. The diagram above shows clearly that ritual reciprocity is based on the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship between four sets of intermarrying patriline. These are each bisected by the two matrimoicties which relate the patrimoicties. Hence, the fact that only one 'promise' is made at the time of a given ceremony means that, to make the relationship between the patrimoicties a reciprocal one, the members of these two patriline will have to reverse their kirda-kurdungurlu relationship in the next. I will discuss this in more detail shortly.

Meggitt also suggested that reciprocity is based on procreation 'beliefs', that is, 'popular theories of matri- and patri-spirits'. This is typical Meggitt’s effort to separate human reproduction from social reproduction. Matri-spirits are considered those spiritual identities one receives from M and they represent a woman’s or a man’s conception dreaming, while only males can acquire patri-spirits through ritual incorporation into the totemic lodge. He writes:

Possession of each spirit betokens membership in a category
of grouping of social persons, and the two kinds of grouping have more or less complementary secular and ritual functions in Warlpiri society. The beliefs may be regarded as symbolic expressions of a principle of complementary filiation. (Meggitt, 1962:207)

My point of departure from Meggitt is that he separates the reproductive power of women from that of men. It would have made more sense to separate the reproductive relationships between women and men and then claim that men highjacked the whole of reproduction and put it onto the politico ritual level as did Munn (1973). His analysis is thus doubly androcentric in that he argues not only for a male dominated but also patrilineally dominated ritual exchange relationship and so arrives at the secular and ritual separation between what he calls matri- and patri-spirits.

Peterson (1969) re-examined Meggitt’s findings on the ceremonial structure and comes to the conclusion that although Meggitt wrongly assumed patrimoieties are corporate bodics, nevertheless,

The important point is that all ceremonies in which the patrimoicy division is the basis for organization the owners are grouped in father-son subsection pairs, but the workers stand in the relationship to each other of WMB-ZDH, named *malitangu* by the Warlpiri. The primary relationship between the owners and the workers is that of WB/ZH and MB/ZS....(Peterson, 1969:32)

and he adds,

If a man requests his WB to hold the ceremony, as a result of which it is possible that his wife will conceive, it implies that reproductive power lies with woman’s brother. (Peterson, 1969:32)
Although Peterson refers here to 'banba' ceremonies (a business also known as increase ritual or Lodge Ceremonies), we must not lose sight of the inherent androcentrism also of Peterson's remarks. I contend that we must learn to think of kirda-kurdungurlu relations as gender relations even and especially when the exchange partners are same-sex individuals. Peterson's statement that 'reproductive power lies with the woman's brother' ought to read: reproductive power is exchanged between a representative of the wife (her B) and the wife's husband. Their relationship is thus a pro-creative one.

Their relationship is pro-creative because by implication Country and its fertility, just like that of human fertility, is secured by the creative activity of ritual reproduction. Initiation rites contain banba (increase ceremonies) by the simple fact that the relations which initiation rites reconfirm are marriage relations simultaneously. This is nowhere expressed more clearly than among the women participants. The novice's mother and his father's sister stand in a kirda-kurdungurlu relationship which celebrates the same creative possibility of reproduction. The novice is already born, but he must be created as man in order for his mother to obtain the 'promise' from a woman to produce a son that will become her daughter's husband. The novice's mother and the novice's mother-in-Law stand in a ritual kirda kurzungurlu reciprocity that unites them on the basis of their simultaneous membership in opposite matrimoieties and opposite patrimoieties. The ritual exchange occurs thus between two mothers-in-Law, the novice's mother (as kurdungurlu of this ceremony) and his 'promise's' mother (as kirda of this ceremony). As the promised wife is not yet born, the relationship between these women is surely pro-creative because the novice's mother will only be able to keep her own promise to make a man of her son if she is promised the same in return by her
son's mother-in-Law. (7)

The women are interested in the exchange of each other's son and the men are interested in each other's sister, but they do not negotiate their exchange, this is done by their respective mother's brother. The situation of men exchanging their sisters in marriage is thus no longer self evident. Although mothers-in-Law exchange their sons, they do not marry them; thus, although men marry each other's sister they do not exchange them. Men exchange their nieces as Glowczewski has shown. Nevertheless, ritual reciprocity thus differentiates reproductive powers of Z and B on the most fundamental level.

I have pointed out in the introduction to this chapter that the actual ritual exchange partners all stand in an affinal relationship among the female as well as male participants. The kirda all represent brothers and the kurdungurlu all represent sisters because they are the exogamous unit which constitutes their respective descendants as either patrilineally (hence kirda) or matrilineally (hence kurdungurlu) to the business at hand.

Negotiations between business partners create a situation whereby the children of one and the nieces of another may become sexual partners in the future, but this remains the silent, invisible and most sacred aspect of exchange. Indeed, to exchange is to 'promise', and it is this reference to procreation which gives meaning to all types of exchange. This is to say, when women or men engage in exchange (ritual being its most formal expression), sexual intercourse receives metaphorical significance. This is especially the case between same-sex partners. The exchange partners must have gendered identities, and for the Warlpiri these are kirda and kurdungurlu. A woman must be able to represent F and a man must be able to represent M so that they may have an exchange relationship that is pro-creative. One result is that the
Warlpiri thereby avoid confrontation between women and men on the level of biological sex differences.

An example will serve to show how this is actually done. Let us assume that the kurdungurlu man (ZH) is a Jungarrayi, the kirda man (ZB) is a Jangala. He represents his own Z Nangala who is married to Jungarrayi. If we then assume that at another occasion the opposite patrimoiety calls the business then Jangala will be kurdungurlu (ZH) and Jungarrayi kirda (ZB).

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
KIRDA & KURDUNGURLU \\
H & W \\
B Jangala & Nungarrayi Z \\
Z Nangala & Jungarrayi B \\
W & H
\end{array}
\]

**Figure 4.** Ritual reciprocity between Brothers-in-Law, Jangala and Jungarrayi.

This demonstrates that their reciprocal relationship cannot be exhausted by deducing all the implications of the relationship between these two men from one occasion. It should be noted that there are in each case also two different women involved who are engaged in ritual exchange at the same occasion. As Glowczewski (1988) has shown, both men exchange their uterine nieces but their exchange relationship is bisected by two different matri-cycles. For we can see when the situation is reversed, it is Jungarrayi who represents his Z Nungarrayi vis-à-vis her husband Jangala.

It must be remembered that this is not about brothers exchanging sisters in marriage but about two men promising each other that their respective sister
will each produce a daughter for the other to promise in marriage to yet another man. When a brother represents his sister he does so as pro-creative partner to her husband. His purpose is to contract the promise of a future exchange or ceremony as he is the future mother’s brother of the other man’s child. Reciprocity is thus an expectation that a promise made will, in time, be responded to with another promise.

The promise of exchange is not only to assure that ritual business will flourish in the future, but also to secure a ‘promise’ for one’s own offspring. It is thus not a simple matter of asking one’s wife’s brother to hold a ceremony so that one’s wife may conceive, as Peterson argued. As I was assured many times, the business is called by the *kirda*. That is, it is the wife’s brother who wants to contract a ‘promise’ from his sister’s husband. By extracting a ‘promise’ from his sister’s husband, the sister’s brother actually enters metaphorically into a sexual relationship with his sister’s husband, a relationship which he cannot enter with his sister because the incest taboo precludes any face to face dealings between a sister and her brother. A sister and a brother cannot exchange among themselves, not because they have different reproductive functions but because they have overlapping social identities through descent which links them similarly to two Countries and Dreamings patrilineally and matrilineally, they have no pro-creative exchange relationship. But more than this, unlike brothers these two men cannot regard their bodies to have equivalent social identities. They are, unlike brothers, engaged in exchange not in replacement. Their relationship only appears to be between brothers because they are both men. Thus, by one acting as *kurdungurlu* and the other as *kirda*, the *kirda*, which also makes reference to F, asks *kurdungurlu*, which is also a reference to M, to reproduce with his help.
By this they virtually become H and W. But much as B and Z are divided by the incest taboo, these two men are doubly divided: first by virtue of being of the same sex, and second by standing ritually in a B-Z relationship. In these symbolic exchanges the kirda is the W and the kurdungurlu the H because the kirda will be mother’s brother to his sister’s husband’s daughter. (8) That is a male mother in the same sense as he is a male wife to his sister’s husband. This is also so because he is representing his sister to his sister’s husband and because his sister is a woman, for only women produce children.(9)

What is so interesting here is that the actual sexual consummation of marriage appears unmarked by ritual. It is merely the logical consequence of exchange activities between people other than the couple itself.(10)

This then is why I argue that these two men are not merely opposed as members of different patrimoieties structurally speaking, but as members of different patrimoieties and different matrimoieties. Glówekzewski and Pradelde de Latour (1987:38) came to the same conclusion albeit from a different angle of investigation. They write that ‘the Warlpiri Kin-system does not rest on double filiation [Meggitt’s complementary filiation] but double alliance between patri- and matricycles.’(my translation)

From my own experience while participating in several ceremonial events in the same sex setting with women, the gendered relationships were totally in line with those of men.

I will give only one example of such a gendered exchange between mothers and sisters and father’s sisters of the youth to be made a man during his initiation. The initiands were two brothers whose mothers are actual sisters. The two boys were represented in the women’s business area by two burning poles. At one stage during the rites the boys are carried on the shoulders of the
boys' mothers' sisters away from the men. The poles are eventually held in front of the boys by the actual mothers, their sisters and the boys' sisters while the maternal and paternal grandmothers are gathering medical plants which are used during these rites. It is the novice's father's sisters who tear these poles from the grip of these women and throw them into a burning fire. One of the father's sisters then hands the boys back to an older classificatory brother of the boys who leads them back to the men.

The women's relationships were reciprocal on the *kirda-kurdungurlu* lines. Here the father's sisters represented the boys' patriline, that is they represented F, the actual mothers together with their sisters and daughters, of course, represented M. M here was represented by a matrilineal endogamous group of women simply because they belong to adjacent generations and different age groups so the 'looking after' aspect among them predominated. This is not the same as saying reciprocal *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationships are also based on the mother-daughter dyad as Bell (1983) has stressed. Each woman had a different ritual relationship to the Novice's father's sister.

We can now conclude that the pro-creative model of society which *kirda-kurdungurlu* exchange tries to maintain means that all relations, be they reciprocal or not, are based on intentions of reproduction and are therefore pro-creative. The business of initiation differs from the business of increase only in that the 'promise' is now contracted between specific individuals. Similarly in mortuary rites the 'promise' is again undone as the dead are re-integrated back into their spirit identity only to be actualized again some time in the future.

(1) What is overlooked in this is often that where, let's say, my F is kirda, my FF is kirdu. Thus, my F is as S kirda and I am, as his D kirda. That is why
this is a descent relationship and not a ritual relationship.

(2) There are other opposite sex individuals beside a spouse with whom a person interacts generally. These are one's grandparents or one's grandchildren. These persons consider each other like elder and/or younger siblings. Age differential supported by equal ritual position (not ritual status) is here the reason for casual cross sexual relationships.

(3) Sister and brother constitute the exogamous unit to which their descendants will trace their group's identity either through matrilineal or patrilineal links to the father and his sister of the above sister-brother unit.

(4) Nash, D. (1982:147) argued in his etymological study on the kurdungurlu that the term is derived from 'a term designating the primary uterine relationship, that between mother and her child. In this view, kurdungurlu is a semantic complement to the agnatic relationship designated by kirda.'

(5) Brothers, I was told by Jakamara most emphatically, do not share each other's wife as Meggitt tried to make us believe. Knowing that the people at Nguru are the descendants of some of Meggitt's informants (Napananka remembers him from Phillip Creek) and having lived in a very intimate situation with them I cannot imagine how anyone could ever witness 'wife lending'.

(6) Glowczewski (1988:212) produced this graphical representation of the marriage structure to allow for the generation differences:

![Marriage Structure Diagram]

Ego homme épouse: NMBSO = FMBSD + FFBSD = NBZSD
Ego femme épouse: NFZOS = FFFSS + FSSBS = MBZDS

(7) A typical example of alliance relationships between women in ritual is provided by Bell (1983:270-272) where kirda-kurdungurlu relations are only in part based on the ritual division between patrimoieties because the women
who negotiate (the marriage?) according to Bell, stand in my view both in kurdungurlu relationship to the ceremony. They are the novice’s wife’s mother’s mother (WMM) and the novice’s mother. I conclude from this that Bell equates ritual reciprocity with patrilineal descent relations to Country.

In order to generate a pro-creative model of exchange relations we must however realize that, although inheritance of Country is patrilineal through male lines, this is not to say that inheritance of Country is identical with patriarchal interests in a piece of land or Dreaming. Rather, inheritance is not so much of but to Country, as patrilineal or matrilineal relationship to it. It thus bears to repeat that the relationship to Country I inherit refers not to a Country my M and F hold in common, but to a Country my M holds in common with her B and separately it refers to a Country my F holds in common with his Z.

(8) Meggitt (1962:305) describes how the novice is seated on the lap of his ZH during a particular event in his initiation trials.

(9) I had this confirmed in no uncertain terms by every woman and man I asked about this. My question was: Is it true that women make all the children and when they grow up the boys are given to the men? The women’s response was totally overwhelming. Napananka whom I asked first about this said, ‘You got it, this is true, men got nothing, they only got self, we give them the boys for company’. Naparualla, who heard of my question from Napananka, came up to me and asked me to sit down with her 'long way' (away from the others). She said, ‘What you said about women and children is true, you see, when the boys go to the men in business time (initiation) they get spiritual Mother which they got to visit (look after), after they come back (as initiated men) they got to feel shame for own mother’. (these quotes are verbatim)

(10) I was, however, told that women do have a ceremony that marks their daughter’s first intercourse with her husband. I was told the girl’s mother dances the Munga, the dance of the dark or night, starting at sunset and ending at sunrise. She is aided in this by her HZ, the daughter’s paternal aunt.
CHAPTER IV

THE SEPARATE SPHERES

By extending the *kirda-kurdungurlu* structure into a gendered model of pro-creative exchange, a feminist critique of the colonizing process becomes possible.

The *kirda-kurdungurlu* system, as a gendered process of reciprocal exchange, intimately involves everyone all the time. Regardless whether the social actor is a woman or a man, whether women execute their work or their rites separately or together, in private or in public, the 'promise' is pursued and created at every moment.

In this context it is both interesting and puzzling that in Warlpiri and other Central Desert societies people live and act almost exclusively within their own-sex group. Hamilton (1975, 1981, 1987) and Bell (1980:355-357, 1983, 1987), in particular, have made much of this phenomenon, yet their views and analyses of it vary greatly. Where the one sees women’s autonomy circumscribed by men’s economic and symbolic exploitation of women, the other sees mainly political and ritual equality and separate autonomy for women and men. Both authors saw women qua women and men qua men and consequently their analyses demonstrate a dichotomous view of female-male relations. Nothing could be more tempting when the sexual division of labour and ritual life is almost absolute.

Hamilton argues that the separate spheres suggest 'homasociality' referring to her studies among the 'Bidjandjara' (Pitjantjatjara) and writes:

Robert Murphy, as long ago as 1959, suggested that the
presence of secret women's cults means that the two sexes may be seen as constituting true social groups. This suggestion and its implications has been completely ignored, although I think that the presence of women's cults must always indicate a position of power of women in terms at least of their own self-image, that is, for the nature of their subject-hood.' (Hamilton, 1981:77/78)

Like Bell was to do later, Hamilton argues that women elaborate the 'same mythological basis' as an 'over-arching common social principle'. (Hamilton, 1981:78). But Hamilton also argues that regardless of the high degree of women's autonomy in the situation of confrontation between women's and men's interests there 'lies always men's ultimate power, the threat of force.' (Hamilton 1981:84) This is because male and female homosociality differs in that men think themselves superior to women while women see themselves neither as inferior nor superior to men. This is also reflected in men's rites as compared with women's rites.

Each had its own set of symbols, practices and bodies of law; women's discourse was permitted certain subjects which men's was not, especially matters pertaining to women's physiology. Men's was also permitted certain subjects which women's was not, and the most exclusive of these seemed to centre on those very cult practices which most clearly mimic women's natural functions - circumcision, subincision and ritual blood-letting. (Hamilton, 1981:84)

I am not aware whether the Pitjantjatjara conceive of their reciprocal exchange relations with terms equivalent to the Warlpiri kirda-kurdungurlu, but patrilineal and matrilineal interest are nevertheless operational distinctions. I assume therefore that exchange practices are gendered similarly.

For this reason I would refrain from an interpretation of male ritual practices like circumcision or subincision in such antagonistic terms. I would
need to know who exactly performs such operations on whom, is it a kirda or a kurdungurlu? From what I have been told by Warlpiri women, it is the man a novice calls 'somebody' who performs the circumcision. With this man and his sister the novice has a strict avoidance relationship. His mother, too, avoids her son’s 'somebody' but with his sister, who is her sister-in-Law, she has no avoidance to maintain. What I suggest is that the novice is marked as a sign of his transition from boy into a man. This not only supports the novice’s mother in her counterclaim of a son-in-Law from the initiator’s sister, but the initiator assures himself in this fashion that the novice will keep his promise to make his sister’s daughter his initiator’s wife. The initiator as wife’s mother’s brother is kirda. He is chosen by the novice’s mother’s brother (kurdungurlu) with the consent of the boy’s father to perform the operation. I was told by different women that a man gets at least two wives, one through 'promise way', the other through 'somebody way'. I was unable to follow up on this information because the time factor involved would have meant that I wait till the novices I helped to 'make men' were actually married and had children of their own.

Hamilton’s text on 'hmosociality' has limited application for an analysis of gendered exchange. I can accept her argument that Western forms of 'hmosociality' are based on the public-private division between men and women where 'hmosocial relations may exist only for men; women’s lives may even be almost entirely a-social' (Hamilton, 1981:83). By contrast, and I agree with her: 'In regimes which lack this public-private dichotomy the nature of sociality may take on a rather different character, and homosociality may exist for members of both sexes' (ibid). This, however, begs the question.

In Warlpiri society sex and gender do not stand in one-to-one relationship
to each other, although the separate spheres do give room for appropriating, or better, commenting on, typical behaviours of the other sex. This has, from my observations, no bearing on relationships between the sexes nor among the sexes. For example, in preparation for the ceremony at Wuchulpul for the McLaren Creek Land Rights Hearings in October 1988 the women sang a song cycle the night before the hearings. It was a performance by women for women and was not repeated next day at the public ceremony. I was informed I was *kirda* for that song and should listen carefully while a 'sister' of mine whispered the translation of the stanzas one by one into my ear. At one stage in the women's song cycle men are depicted as hopeless victims of female attraction, they virtually come flying towards the women, they make contact with them chest to chest. The women then force the men to sit down 'quiet' and first watch them dance. The excitement of the women was extreme, some got up at this point and danced moving their hips and knees forcefully back and forth (See also Kaberry, 1939:265). This sequence is definitely about heterosexual erotic excitement. In the next stanza the 'promise' of sexuality is put into action and the women go with the men. This is a stanza of separation from other women and the mood changes. In this sense women comment on relationships among themselves although they are dealing with heterosexual concerns. Although this ceremony could be classed as separatist and autonomous from any concerns men might have, it is contradicted by the fact that it was enacted according to *kirda-kurdungurlu* reciprocities and, hence, this ceremony by no means represented women's unilateral concerns, rights and obligations towards the overall scheme of things, namely the *Jukurrpa*. The ceremony which was enacted next day and which was to establish the legitimate claimants for the area involved a much wider group of women, and
a totally different focus of relationships was brought to life at that occasion.

This is to reiterate, women’s sex does not necessarily coincide with their gender in relation with other women and the same applies to relationships among men. Hence, what might look like an example of women’s ‘homonocial’ behaviour, is based on relations that distinguish between patrilateral and matrilateral concerns.

Bell, in contrast to Hamilton, argued a separatist position for women in terms of ritual autonomy and as concerns their aims as well. She writes:

For women I found it was not the role of child bearer per se that was being celebrated. Rather, women were casting themselves as the nurturers of emotions, of country, and of people., As women ‘grow up’ children, so they ‘grow up’ country and relationships. (Bell, 1987:348)

This is what Bell argued women achieved by being equal but different participants in the political economy as proscribed by the Law of the Dreaming, the Jukurrpa. Bell identified kirda-kurdungurlu relations among women in ritual mainly to show women’s equal right and access to esoteric knowledge on the basis of patrilineal descent which gives women and men equal rights and obligations to the Land, that is Country, and hence to the rights and knowledge that this requires. Bell demanded:

We need a model of ritual organization which allows for the integration of male and female worlds at the level of Kirda and Kurdungurlu. (Bell, 1980:216)

What this demand ignores, is the fact that kirda and kurdungurlu are already an expression of such an integration of ‘worlds’. It is only because Bell
understood *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* simply as a divisional opposition between patrimoieties who reciprocate in ritual for the sake of forming marriage alliances. Hence, the women in Bell’s text do exactly the same. (1)

However, it appears that for Bell *kirda-kurdungurlu* relations between kin, which are descent relations, and classificatory affinal relations between kin in ritual yield identical *kirda-kurdungurlu* identities. This, however, is not what actually occurs. In ritual, where the relationship to Country is to patrilineal or matrilineal descendants of a patriline, a mother’s daughter becomes a secondary *kirda* to her MF Country. Consequently a woman’s D will in ritual be *kurdungurlu* where her MB is *kirda*. Conversely, a woman’s D is *kirda* to her F Country and thus a D becomes her M *kirda* in ritual. If this were not so, ritual reciprocity would have to be organized along matrimoietal lines and not, as it is, on a patrimoietal division. So it is maybe not surprising that Bell finds women equal to men and like men in that they take their cultural cues from an identical moral and social code which is enshrined in the *Jukurrpa*, the Law of the Dreaming. She writes:

> The body of knowledge and beliefs about the ancestral travels is shared jointly as a sacred trust by men and women, each of whom has distinct responsibilities for the ritual maintenance of this heritage…. How each sex then fleshes out this common core of beliefs and knowledge is dependent upon their perception of their role and their contribution to society. (Bell, 1987:242)

Bell thus did not consider the *kirda-kurdungurlu* system as a gender system or as having anything to do with pro-creation. Rather, she conceived of women’s and men’s spheres as gender spheres, hence she dichotomized women’s and men’s sphere.
I am asserting that it is not a matter of women's or men's 'perception of their role' that governs their contribution to society'. Rather it depends whether in everyday life or in the local residence situation one is related to another as *kirda* or *kurdungurlu* (See Dussart, F. 1988). This is to say, regardless whether the social actor is a woman or a man, whether persons stand or act as *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* for each other, in ceremonies or public performances, this internal *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship is symbolic of relations between the sexes. Hence women and men partake both in male and female worlds, even though they will act in sex-segregated arrangements.

The basis on which local residents at Nguru divide space and activity has an analogue in the pro-creative model of society which is not based on biological sex but on a sibling pair relationship. Z and B are the productive agents of the exogamous system and consequently of the classificatory kinship structure (see Myers, 1986:197-198; Weiner, 1979, 1989). In this sense the separation of the sexes represents a division of reproductive labour as that between Z and B. At the local level this division is also symbolic of the classificatory descent structure which ensues from the Z-B exogamy enshrined in it. The separate sphere arrangement is an expression of the universe as a gendered system. The sexual division thus only appears to the Western onlooker identical with gender relations. This is simply not warranted, for gender relations are enacted within same sex groups predominantly through the *kirda-kurdungurlu* exchange system. The *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship is indivisible from the social pro-creative model because its focus is not on the biological facts of reproduction but on the social processes that make such production possible for the reproduction of society in the first place.

Further, in the local setting women *kirda* and men *kirda* as well as women
kurdungurlu and men kurdungurlu of one and the same Dreaming and Country live their lives in separate spheres but in a kirda-kurdungurlu mix. Only couples are separated during the day and during business times, while single women and widows, like single men and widowers, live separately day and night. And even granted that from the widows’ and widowers’ ranks are recruited the ritual ‘leaders’ because of their accumulated experience and knowledge as well as their accumulated social network. Many more people engage in exchange with each of them in the course of time. However, their primary kirda and kurdungurlu status is only fixed in relation to two places, in other places they may be their own opposites. This means, while their sex as such remains of course the same, their gender, their kirda or kurdungurlu status, is not fixed.

The separate spheres cannot and do not mark women or men as social categories as such. There is no indication either that women privilege a nurturing relationship towards any one or anything, for men, too, refer to their activities as ‘looking after’ and ‘grow up’. The only difference on which the apparently dissimilar tasks of women and men are based is what these tasks do not make obvious, that is the sexual act. Any form of social engagement is, like ritual engagement, about the creation and the maintenance of oneself and the other as ‘promise’.

I believe that only when we can conceive that the Warlpiri gender system is embedded in the Kirda-Kurdungurlu System can we perceive that the differential colonizing process constitutes an attack on Warlpiri gender relations and, indeed, on the entire pro-creative system.

(1) See reference to Bell (1983:270-272) in footnote (7), Chapter III.
Chapter V

THE PLACE AND ITS PEOPLE

This study is based on field-work I carried out between December 1987 and June 1989 at Nguru (1) which is one of four Aboriginal Outstation Communities situated ca. 75 km north-west of Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Nguru is a Warlpiri community, it lies on the south-eastern part of the 'Warlimanpa, Warlpiri, Mudbuta and Warumungu Land Claim' (2). The land to the west of the homeland is occupied by Phillip Creek Pastoral Lease and Warrego, a mining township.

Figure 1. Map of areas and places discussed in this chapter.
5.1. THE LEGACY OF TWO FRONTIERS

The oldest couple at Nguru, a Nungarrayi and a Jangala, whom I learned to call mother and father, had left the area in the early twenties with their parents during a long drought. While they went to Tennant Creek some families headed north and others headed south. Those who had strong ties in the north to the Mudbura, to a site named Kitpawuru, ca. 100 km west of Powell Creek, (Nash, D. 1980:64) sought out European settlements and Cattle Stations during the 1924 drought which also forced many Warlpiri into the Tennant Creek Arca (Meggitt, 1962:38). Nungarrayi showed me the caves where they used to live at the time. These are situated in the hills ca. 10 km south-west of the then Police Ration Depot and just north-west of today’s Tennant Creek. Those who had strong ties in the south, to a site called Miyicampi in the lower Hanson River floodout (Nash D. 1980:64), avoided Tennant Creek at the time. They subsequently were forced to flee their traditional homelands in 1928 in the wake of what are known as the Coniston Massacre and Hanson River Killings.

Napananka, a member of the family with links to the southern region of their homelands, remembers that even then they did not hurry straight into the Tennant Creek region. Rather, she says: ‘We been sitting down frightened fellow longa bush for long long time.’ (see Bell, D. 1979) She also told me the first whitefella she ever saw was a soldier throwing canned meat and fresh oranges from a passing truck. Other related families fled north to Wave Hill Station (Read, P. & Engineer Jack, J. 1978; Read, P. and J. 1991);

Many of today’s residents at Nguru came together again at Phillip Creek Mission only after 1945. Till then those who had left for Cattle Stations had already experienced a type of institutionalization while those who had been
attached to Ration Depots and European Settlements had experienced a life with a different modality, more or less on the fringe of Western society.

Those who ventured north and east worked as stockmen and stockwomen. While they maintained some contact with their homelands they also travelled into neighbouring countries when driving cattle over the Barkly Tablelands to Queensland. They were technologically privileged by their close association with European industry. At first men and women rode horses and were working with cattle and building fences. (McGrath, A. 1982) But later, to the distinction between working and non-working Aborigines was added the sexual division of labour. This marked in part the increasing number of European women on Cattle Stations and in the Northern Territory in general. European women employed Aboriginal women in the home, they had to learn to cook, wash, iron, and raise children. Simultaneously European men continued their sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women and many bore the children of European men. (McGrath, A. 1987; Rose, D.B. 1991)

Those who went north also encountered the private authority of station masters and their staff; their lives became organized around work and a new rhythm of disciplinary measures of punishment and reward; the ability to perform under these conditions and the acquisition of new skills combined formed a basis for men receiving continued privileged access to knowledge and know-how of Western skills and things.

The southern experience was marked by sporadic visits to ration-depots for food, blankets or items of clothes. (Nash, D. 1984) The old and frail who received them in the first instance exchanged them with their younger and able dependents for other essentials from the bush. At these sites a concentration of women and their children enabled the transmission of knowledge, and they
kept traditions alive about the places they had to leave behind. They also developed specific songs which Nungarrayi and her daughter Nampijinpa sing from time to time, called the 'Tennant Creek Time Songs'. Ceremonies were carried out regularly as people also benefited from the presence of members of the wider group. (Jacobs, J.M. in Brock, P. 1989:92-93) But, at the same time as they maintained traditional knowledge, they also became clients to European hand-outs and regimentation. No impetus for performance of Western skills was provided under these conditions.

With the Tennant Creek gold rush in the mid thirties many women were sexually abused by mine workers. I was shown an area south-east of Tennant Creek were the miners took the women in the thirties and after the war: 'here they been all come for raping them'. I was also present at an all women's bush meeting in 1989 where the women intoned a wailing session for the women who had been abused in this manner and because they were sorry for 'what they done to women' and 'children bin take away'.

The early differences of experience with European society lingers on as a backdrop to people's current approach to external influences. I suggest that the 'northern influence' promotes a masculine bias while the 'southern influence' promotes a feminine bias.

This paradoxical legacy of different frontier experiences has now almost dissipated completely. I will be demonstrating the division today is being firmly imposed in the form of an invisible line drawn between women and men on the basis of their biological sex. This line privileges men as males, as the dominant Western society's imposition of patriarchal values and practices continues.
5.2. INSTITUTIONALIZATION

At Phillip Creek Mission their lives became similarly regimented over the next three decades.

Institutionalization meant depersonalized relations with Europeans on one hand and stronger pressures on cultural and social independence on the other. As Bell (1983) shows, internally people maintained traditional group identities belonging to different cultural traditions. At Phillip Creek the Warlpiri were forced to live with the Warumungu on their land (1945-1955) and at Warrabri the Warlpiri were forced to live with the Kayetj on their land (1955-). These groups separated themselves by arranging their camps and activities in separate areas and the "visitors" took somewhat more advantage of the European presence. As a consequence the Warlpiri became quite prominent in the politics of the cross-cultural sphere. This internal structuring process was of course disfunctional for any attempt to assimilate the Aborigines en-masse to a Western way of thinking and doing things.

The 1967 referendum gave the Federal Government the mandate to legislate for Aborigines nationally. This put Aborigines not only on the electoral rolls but gave them equal access to welfare and unemployment payments, fair wages, access to public facilities in towns, the freedom to spend money whichever way they deemed fit. All of this was new, as were the implications of new rights. And when the Whitlam Government came to power in 1972, decentralization of the powers to provide services to Aborigines clearly marked a new era in cross-cultural relations.

When the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 was implemented, the northern part of the group pressed for a return to the
homelands. These were the same individuals who had lost their jobs during the restructuring of the cattle industry and the dissolution of employment for minimal wages at the government settlement of what was then called Warrabri, now Ali Curung. Men’s skills as mechanics and drivers constituted the single most significant factor that encouraged them to attempt modern bush life, for there was no question of reverting to a life on foot. The skills women brought from the ‘northern experience’ became obsolete, there were no clothes to iron, no floors to scrub etc. It is in this sense that the ‘northern experience’ was transmitted through a masculine idiom rather than a feminine one. The southern part of the group provided very different skills during the early stages of the exodus back home. Traditional hunting skills and knowledge of the terrain was especially important for women, as was a certain acceptance of sedentarism. That is, their willingness to live in one place was greatly helped by motorised mobility which allowed them to return home after shopping or hunting trips etc. And this is how these two experiences combined and became part of the collective history of the group.

5.3. THE EXODUS BACK HOME

The exodus back to Warlpiri country took almost five years. At first it was limited to family groups in close kin relations. The impetus to leave Warrabri for good had several causes: procedures to lodge a land claim were under way with the help of the Central Land Council in the late 70s and during this time Nguru was located by some of its oldest members. It took old Nampijinpa, Jakamarra and old Jangala over two years to identify the place some 200 km
north-west of the settlement. This type of locating places continues today, even after land rights have been granted. It was, however, the death of a senior male member of the group which occasioned the decision to move back into the bush at that point in time.

The group picked up members as the exodus progressed. Two camp sites were each occupied in succession during two to three years. The first camp at Miyicampi was established during the Land Rights hearings in 1979-1980 and was occupied till 1983. The second site nearby - Bandaparije - was vacated within a year as the natural source of water became polluted. I was told they were unable to remove a horse which fell in between the rocks which covered the spring.

Detailed accounts for that period are minimal because of strong taboos against the mentioning of names or deeds of dead relatives and those who died during the exodus in particular. Much information is also denied about the events of this time because of the deaths of some of the people who were involved.

The group consisted of about fifteen adults. Yet, just as they had kept their group identity intact during the institutional period, so did their relations internally undergo a period of increased solidarity as the exodus took momentum. Small family groups acted in their own best interest. Within these small units, however, new situations of conflict were created because some nuclear family units could obtain a car as some men still had employment as truck drivers at Warrabri. Still today a close family member is driving the school bus at Ali Curung. The cars they bought were second hand sedans they bought in town, holding maximum six people.

The northern legacy emerged at the time with a vengeance. Not only were
these the men who could drive and the ones who felt the need for a car in the bush, they were also the men who were no strangers to alcohol and to rubbing shoulders with other Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal men. In contrast, some women who previously consumed alcohol and who were now serviced by the Rural Health Nurses from Tennant Creek Hospital were encouraged to stop drinking, and many did. It was now almost exclusively the men who had privileged access to alcohol because they had privileged access to the car. Men did not approach the Rural Nurses, who were all female, partly because it is not appropriate for men to seek assistance from women directly (pc Kristine Newland, former Rural Nurse, 1991) and partly this situation was an excuse not to confront their drinking problems. This new voluntarism to access the services Western institutions provided has indeed led to a monumental disregard of health care for men. Simultaneously the male bias in respect to control of infrastructure and machinery continued.

I was told outrageous acts of violence and threats of violence were made too often by some men after returning from drinking sprees that a great uncertainty for the group's future in the bush prevailed. Consequently several couples, especially those who came into drinking age in the late sixties to early seventies, settled down in town camps around Tennant Creek. Others returned to live in Warrabri where some had achieved high school levels of education. They found employment in the local school, bank and hospital. This did not mean the homeland movement was over for them; they returned in strength as soon as the first outstation in the area became viable when in 1983 a bore was drilled and a handpump installed (it was taken from *Miyicampi*). (pc Adrian Newland, the then Co-ordinator of Jurnkurakur, 1991)

This outstation was Warlu (not its actual name), it flourished till a major
earthquake hit in February of 1988 and people had to flee. The epicentre was only some 20 km from this outstation, water-pipes burst and the panic was great. The N.T. Newspapers reported at the time no human habitation existed in the area. (See also Tennant Creek Times, January 27, 1988; front page)

The group destined to return to Nguru had to wait till a bore was sunk there. In 1985 the people started to get impatient and moved to a site where Phillip Creek Station had sunk a bore to provide water for cattle in the vicinity of Nguru, which was in fact outside the boundaries of Phillip Creek Station. In any case, one thing people were sure to have was a steady supply of meat from the cattle they killed themselves. They had no guns at the time. With the help of dogs and axes they used to hunt them down in areas not far away from the bore.

5.4. ESTABLISHING NGURU

In late 1985 a bore was sunk and good water found at Nguru. After another year of camping in makeshift shelters in the area, the first six corrugated iron shelters were built and two toilets, a shower and a water-tower were erected. At that time the Federal Government (Aboriginal Benefits Trust) provided a Toyota Landcruiser (trayback) and a tractor. Suddenly, almost overnight, the people residing at Nguru became a ‘Community’. Capital improvements and the Toyota and Tractor were provided for ‘communal use’. These objects put a tremendous strain on the group. People say that especially since they got the ‘Toyota’ they have had only trouble. It is here that the story of the ‘Community’ begins in earnest.
A process of social change so complex and new has started with the permanent occupation of Nguru that no single analysis is possible. The social distance between the 'Community' and Western society increased as service provisions came now mostly through Aboriginal Institutions with offices in town. Outstation Resource Centre, Central Land Council, Aboriginal Health Congress service the community. For the first years children went to school at Warlu some 40 km from Nguru where a Non-Aboriginal teacher worked one day per week. Now they are enrolled in a mainstream public school with one of Napananka's daughters as assistant teacher, at Warrego, a mining township half the distance from their previous school. During the week Aboriginal women provided some Western type training in literacy and numeracy. While some sympathetic Social Security Officers had put as many people as they could on a permanent pension, it was now only the young who had to make sure they received social benefit monies.

Most importantly, however, it was the greater distance to the direct gaze of the Police which people felt the strongest. For the Police were always the ultimate power which reinforced early forms of Western regimes on Cattle Stations and Fringe Camps around town, and at Warrabri they were omnipresent, regulating Law and Order. It was thus freedom from Western institutionalization that people were able to explore in earnest.

Contact with neighbours resumed in earnest from the basis of religious and family affiliations. This process is still under way as new Outstations come into existence and old stories and Dreamings are opened up again. At the same time, people cultivated relations they had established since colonial intervention started. Knowledge of land and people beyond their traditional boundaries which they had gained previously through intermarriage,
incarceration and hospitalization in Darwin, Alice Spring and Adelaide, was maintained and became part of their identity.

5.5. YAPA WAY - WHITEFELLA WAY

I was aware of only the general pattern of dispossession and colonization at the time I started to live at Nguru in late 1987. I set out with the intention to study the different forms of relationships to land areas such as Pastoral Leases, Government Settlements, Towns and Aboriginal Land.

However, several incidents set me on a course I never anticipated, leaving no doubt in my mind that Western things had a life of their own in the hands of Aborigines. I thus had to make choices. This was in itself a slow process. The first incident that provoked me to contemplate this was as follows. A young woman scolded me when I tried to prevent a woman drinking water from a cup where a dog had just drunk a little, with the words: 'You have learned nothing at University, only about genealogy, that's all, you know nothing about Yapa-way' (that is 'our' way).

Another incident greatly narrowed my focus. I presented a new cup to my 'sister' Nampijinpa, a senior older woman, one evening. Next morning she shouted 'No cup!' It could not be found. So I said, 'You must have lost it or someone took it.' This was not the case, however. She insisted it was 'gone', destroyed, but the meaning she related was more that the cup was dead. I should go back to the shop and pick it up again. 'Yes, another one'. 'No, same one', 'it come up again in shop' she insisted. The youngest woman in the round turned to me and whispered: 'The old people think everything is magic!'
But it was much more mundane and simple in a sense than this. 'Whitefella' have made the cup to appear in the shop, one way or another which only they know, in the same manner they find money in the ground where they have set up mines.

Throughout my fieldwork I never discovered a cultural process that makes things disappear, not even death is final. But what occurred to me at the time was that whitefella and Yapa have different ways of making things appear and that the different production processes could only produce typically Yapa or whitefella things. The cup is a whitefella thing.

Presents from me had a habit of disappearing from some people and not from others. It cost me a great amount of emotional pain to see my presents treated with so little regard for I was at first confused to what this meant. I felt insecure about my behaviour fearing that I insulted with my useful but rather petty gifts. Yet, when often they turned up in someone else’s hands soon after, I understood that it was not the usefulness of the thing/gift as such that mattered but that there was a special relationship involved between the donor and the receiver. How things could disappear, however, was quite beyond my comprehension at the time.

I realized then that it was crucial to understand that to involve a Non-Aboriginal individual in the exchange pattern is to problematize the relationship between gift and personal identity.

The incidence with the cup in a sense makes two statements: I was similar to the cup where I engaged inappropriate personalities in exchange, and I was dissimilar to the cup when I engaged appropriate personalities in exchange. In other words, there exists an inverse relationship between inappropriate exchange behaviour—the cup’s disappearance and appropriate exchange
behaviour—the cup’s circulation. When I did not exchange according to the Warlpiri relationship structure, my gifts were ignored. When, however, I did exchange with appropriate partners, I was no longer identified with the cup.

I was prompted to reconsider Mauss’s dictum that there exists among Australian Aborigines a ‘confusion of personality and things’ (Mauss, M. 1954:8). According to Mauss, exchange relations are moral relations based on a tripartite obligation to ‘give, receive and repay’. This implies that moral relations can also be appreciated through the practical criteria of linear time sequences which these actions imply. This is to say, morality could be measured purely by economic criteria. And if there exists a ‘confusion of personality and things’ then people must somehow be connected through things. The disappearance of the cup, however, seemed to indicate that Western things—gifts can be disconnected from whitefella in a manner they cannot be disconnected from Yapa.

Mauss’s notion that things are infused with the personality of the donor and, thereby, a pattern of moral obligations becomes the basic idiom of a social economy, cannot differentiate one gift from another nor can it differentiate one social relationship from another. And there is definitely no room for cross-cultural exchanges in Mauss’s scheme.

Also Firth (1967), who successfully avoided Mauss’s gift-personality ‘confusion’ by stressing that the quantity of the gift plays a significant role in gift exchange, only poses the question of social differentiation in economic terms. Similarly, Sahlin’s (1965; 1972) model of reciprocal exchange relations is entirely based on behavioural criteria between categories of exchange partners. He distinguishes between ‘generalized’ exchange among close of kin, ‘balanced’ reciprocity between affines and ‘negative’ reciprocity between
members of different groups. Both Firth's and Sahlins' models cannot satisfy cross-cultural exchange relations. These models also fail to consider that while outsiders and externally produced things can be socialized they are differently socialized. The person is socialized to make exchange amenable to purely social criteria of reproducing exchange relations while things are socialized to secure their social reproduction and hence their appearance.

Even though Turner's (1989) illuminating insight that exchange requires the notion of 'asking', that which is owned by you belongs to me, can to an extent account for the exchange of Western things among the Warlpiri, it cannot account for a cross-cultural modality of exchange. Nampijinpa could indeed take the cup as if it was hers by right because it belonged initially to me, but what could I possibly ask for myself in such a scenario from her? This would surely imply that either I became an Aborigine or that the thing exchanged becomes socialized into an Aboriginal thing. To investigate this creative possibility is what lay ahead of me.

From there on it was not such a big step to disentangle my personal feelings and efforts from the larger picture of how things Western fare in the community generally. If we consider that only a limited number of things Western enter the community, that they enter via certain channels and processes, a clearer and more transparent picture emerges as to the impact things have intraculturally. For these things, channels and processes by which they make their appearance are definitely loaded with a meaning of their own. That is, they are loaded with external (Western) gender-ideological values which, although these things are treated internally in such a manner so that they become amenable to internal use, have to go through a socialization process. I call the overall situation 'differential colonizing process'. But let me
qualify this further:

Western things (this includes values and processes) are gendered in the first place because they come into the community via men, with the exception of health care, which initially was delivered via women. Their 'appearance' is generally negotiated in the cross-cultural domain where men, Aboriginal and Western, deal face to face with each other, i.e. heads of institutions, Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal, are almost exclusively men. Accordingly the physical make-up of the all-male frontier has not markedly changed in the Northern Territory.

Moreover, Warlpiri men do not speak 'for' women, especially if it has to do with things and issues that are considered 'women's business'. And this includes what the Warlpiri have accepted of Western notions of women's place in society generally.

I am not suggesting that the physical all-male frontier and the relationship between Aboriginal and Western men is an equitable situation between men. On the contrary, as McGrath (1982) and Rose (1991) show clearly, the relationship has a violent history. Aboriginal men were humiliated in more ways than one. Behind the present day interaction lies a history of control, institutionalization and sexual politics. (Rose, D.B. 1992).

The difference between the male and female cross-cultural sphere was and still is problematic because Western women could not and still cannot privilege women the way men can privilege men because they are themselves operating from a position of marginal power. Aboriginal women's social positions were thus as successfully ignored by Western women as Western men with a little unwitting help from Aboriginal men themselves. The reduction in conflict for men at the colonial-frontier today is due to the fact
that the general bias is today enshrined cross-culturally in Government Services. Welfare provisions are directed at the community or the nuclear family. Both notions are alien concepts in Warlpiri society and both are conceived, in Western society, to be controlled by men. As Western men still take Aboriginal men to be the Bosses (leaders) and still consider Aboriginal women to have little or no autonomy in this context, their idea of 'development' is automatically gendered as male. Hence there was never in dispute that it was the male 'boss' (traditional owner) to whom the 'Community Toyota' was to be allocated. The privileging of men by men has its historical continuum here.

Secondly, internal negotiations of the meaning and use of Western things, which too is biased on a gender ideology, albeit a very different one indeed, causes social conflict and strife, hence the term differential colonizing process as a gendered process. My project is to describe and analyze this process of Warlpiri gender-relations from this standpoint.

To explain how Warlpiri society is gendered I have shown that all relations between persons are structured according to whether a person is Kirda or Kurdungurlu for the other and who is 'looking after' whom.

I chose this structure because it is the relationship which underwrites social reciprocity. The kirda-kurdungurlu relationship, or the Kirda-Kurdungurlu System, can be taken to be the indigenous gender-system.

The pervasive quality of Warlpiri gendering is essential to understanding how Western influences meet resistance within Warlpiri society.

Living on an Outstation as the only Non-Aborigine I had many opportunities to observe the introduction of Western things, including my own car and my own behaviour. My reliance on active participation and observation as event
after event occurred was, however, a condition imposed on me by the Nguru residents themselves. There was simply no separate housing provided, tape recording and formal interview sessions were very limited as these practices were frowned upon: 'You cannot question us!'; 'You cannot live separate and come with paper in the morning!'; 'It's all in the book with C.L.C. anyway'.

5.6. MY INTRODUCTION TO NGURU

It all started with the bureaucratic levelling of my Austrian identity into an Anglo-Celtic framework of communication by way of a letter I had to write to the Tennant Creek Branch of the Central Land Council. That letter, which was to be read out to members of Outstation Communities in the Barkley Region (apparently in keeping with the recently invented practices of 'self-management') was about my request for permission to live with and learn from Aboriginal people. In other words, my own line of communication was adjusted to show a colonizing potential. Thus my intentions to research had to be reworded into my need for help 'with language'. The mention that I had independent means of transport, that is, a car (from a grant provided by the A.I.A.S.), had to be changed into a provision of service I would give once in the field. This simply meant I had to call a car a 'toyota'. So there it was, my first 'initiation' into Aboriginal society as it was called by people involved in my 'toyota-letter', for I had the greatest difficulties in accepting the changes I had to make to my letter at first. Only the threat to maybe never being able to make it into the field made me comply. I rewrote the letter to make it more 'understandable'.phae.
It was the 'language' - 'toyota' link that made me uneasy, for my intention was not only to learn the language as it presented itself to me, nor was it my intention to provide a transport service. In reality, I think the changes to the letter were meant to teach me how to handle things in particular ways when dealing with 'blackfellas'.

I was effectively socialized two times over at the end of my fieldwork, once by Anglo-Celts trying to teach me how to communicate with Aborigines and second, by Aborigines who tried to turn me into an Anglo-Celtic outsider by providing me at first with stereotypical information on "Culture".

I started to react quite badly at first to such treatment and it was not until I found a defence strategy that I could actually start my research. I found out how to say "I got a culture too".

My thesis is foreshadowed in the process of the socialization I had to go through. It occurred to me only later that with the guise of a need based demand (to help me with Language) in connection with a material incentive ('toyota') whitefella (in English) try to appropriate Aboriginal culture while Aborigines try to exchange culture. My thesis could well be about my socialization too, and I think my experience of conflict of identity vis-à-vis Aborigines inspired me to pay attention to the socialization of external influences and the conflict of identity these produce not only for the incoming things but for the Warlpiri themselves in relation to each other.

Once in the field it took me a long time to disentangle myself from this misrepresentation of myself. Only when I revisited Nguru in July 1990, returning from a trip to Austria, showing pictures of me standing outside my native home, Nakamarra pointed at the road-sign behind me and said, 'You got Language too, just like us, not like the English, they got no Language.'
Moreover, a present of a book on the fauna and flora of Austria finally sealed my 'true' identity as a person with a Country, as a person with a Culture.

It was Nakamarra, Japaljarri's wife, who was the only woman present at the meeting where my 'toyota-letter' was read out who also accepted me to Nguru. Driving in my 'toyota' (which by the way was a Toyota) behind the Jurnkurrakur (3) car (driven by a white male employee) I arrived just before midday. The same afternoon Japaljarri, who is one of the 'bosses' of Nguru, drove ahead of us in the Community Toyota taking everybody along to show us the sacred sites nearby belonging to the rain-dreaming. The men parted from the women to see what men are allowed to see and the women took me to a beautiful rock-hole, also a sacred site. I was impressed beyond belief to find fresh and shaded water in the middle of the desert.

Next day Nakamarra directed me to drive with her to Warlu, to pay a visit and to introduce myself to Jungarrayi who is the Boss there. (Note that the 'bosses' of Nguru and Warlu stand in classificatory father-son relationship). Little did I know then that that man was not pleased to see a whitefella in his Community or that he would become my classificatory mother's brother, a man who has great authority over his niece. I chose from then on to stress my classificatory kin relationship to that man to avoid conflict, that is, I only talked to him if he addressed me first. At the time I asked him if his wife Naparulla (the younger of his two wives) could teach me Warlpiri as she is known as a good teacher. I was already annoyed that I could not ask the woman directly and when I learned on the way there that he had two wives I was not prepared to give him an inch. Nor did he. When his wife argued against his decision not to teach 'whitefella' any longer for 'Yapa' (us, our people, 'we mob', Aborigines) got to 'come first' I argued along with them.
Quite an unforgivable mistake Nakamarra told me later, but I had to repeat over the camp-fire in the evening my exchanges with Jungarrayi over and over again to the perverse pleasure of everyone. I did not know at the time that to speak face to face with a man without having a subsection name, that is, being integrated into the social structure meant that I was the most foreign person one could imagine. What he said to me was simply this: 'You can't talk with me like this, I am a big man, I was born 1941, I am 47 years old' to which I replied: 'And I am a big woman, I am born in 1941 and am 47 years old like you.' (All this is factual for 1988). My interpersonal communication skills amounted to very little, I could but mirror his statement, for as irony had it, it was also factual, I had to smile at my own helplessness. What would happen next?

Nakamarra disowned me and waited for me in the car. I only made up with that man a year later when he pulled my car out of a bad bog with his Toyota with the words: 'A bird told me there was someone in danger out there Phillip Creek way.'

The next day Nakamarra's mother Napananka and old Nampijinpa made an extension to their bough-shed for me. They even put up two poles where there would be a door were it a European house, and the women pointed it out to me, 'we made door for you'. I was, however, not sure whether they just mocked me or Western ways. The same evening I was given a 'skin-name' to integrate me into the community and to make me related to everyone in ways I am still learning about. I was given the name Nampijinpa, so Napananka, who was going to be my guardian, companion, stern teacher and gentle friend, was my 'daughter' and I her 'mother', while Nampijinpa became my 'older sister'. Nampijinpa was also the woman who much later gave me a bush-name.
Only a few days later was I introduced by Nakamarra to a most senior man, 
to Engineer Jack Japaljarri (4), who then resided in the town-camp known as 
'Village'. He had to sign my permit application to stay on and visit Aboriginal 
Land, a requirement of the Central Land Council. 

As far as the Community was concerned that was it, but as far as the Central 
Land Council was concerned, I had to make a personal representation at Alice 
Springs. No one at Alice Springs knew about Nguru, but soon a senior 
Aboriginal representative visited Nguru and so my status as a researcher was 
clarified.

Only one more relationship had to be established, and that was the 
relationship to the people living in Tennant Creek. Some women there, who 
previously lived at what was then Warrabri and knew Diane Bell who did her 
research in the late Seventies there, imagined I would follow exactly in her 
tracks (having achieved almost identical characteristics through the first 
socializing process) in all respects. They even imagined I would 'work for' the 
same individuals. This was, of course, not the case. The only way I got out of 
this dilemma was by strongly identifying with Nguru, to state that I 'work for 
Nguru' and that when Diane Bell 'worked for them' there were no Outstations 
like Nguru in existence.

But what meant it all to the people of Nguru? As an introduction to Nguru 
the above sequence of events follows a pattern starting with the Country's 
spiritual centre, meeting neighbours and the spiritual leader of a vast region, 
being provided with shelter and family and a relationship to the wider 
community, and it all ending in my declaration of allegiance to Nguru. It 
appears as a blue print for socialization in Warlpiri society and an elegant 
gesture of diplomacy and reception of a stranger. But was I a stranger? I was
not, for the 'toyota-letter' was to haunt me on many occasions by what it tried to hide, namely, that I was just another 'whitefella'.

Men are the guardians of the frontier

Warlpiri men have not only as Aborigines become Other of Western discourse (Attwood, 1989; Stratton, 1989) but in the cross-cultural context Western women are masculinized. By trying to objectify a Western woman, an Aboriginal man will masculinize her in a manner similar by which a Western man might be feminizing an Aboriginal man (Personal communication John v. Sturmer 1989).

The question why it was Nakamarra who guided me through the introductory routines can be settled from her local perspective in which I was going to be integrated as a woman. A woman could travel with me alone but never a man, and as my classificatory kin allocation was not yet public and as I presumably could yet not be trusted with it, I was still highly unsocialized.

This maybe answers the question why she introduced me only to men. This would simply be inconceivable had I been an Aboriginal woman. My introduction to men would have been totally indirect, in the same way that Aboriginal men are introduced to Aboriginal women only indirectly. Something was masculinizing me in a way that made me more like a man. For example:

a) Each time a Non-Aboriginal man came into the camp the women called out to the men to approach him. If Aborigines arrived the men would join the local men and the women the women. Only later, depending on the
degree of relatedness, a woman or a man might join the visitors mixed sex group around the fire to talk business or whatever.

By contrast, there were situations where my whiteness transcended my sex-identity. Often, when the men were absent from the camp it was I who was asked to make first contact with any Non-Aboriginal man, i.e. Police, Government Officials, Station owners etc. There are thus occasions where race transcends sex differences. As for gender, the women operated on the knowledge that whitesella have no shame to face strangers of the opposite sex. But they also acknowledged that the frontier is controlled by men, if a woman had to step forward the choice came to me.

b) When I drove with Napananka and Nampijinpa to Yuendumu in June 1988 (they accompanied me to attend an introductory language course for Warlpiri) where both had never been before, but where both knew of some distant relatives, the word of their arrival and identity was passed on through women. For three days, till those relatives were found, Napananka and Nampijinpa did not set foot outside the hostel. Once two sisters of Napananka had identified themselves, I had to drop my two companions in the morning at these sisters’ camp and pick them up in the late afternoon. They could not be persuaded to walk back to the hostel by themselves, they had ‘no tracks’ yet in that township, these they got only later after one of the Yuendumu sisters had walked with them through town. Only much later did a man make a very polite visit, standing at a distance he greeted them and made them welcome. He was a Janpijinpa, a brother to Nampijinpa.

I was at a later visit firmly asked to drive Janpijinpa, whose younger sister I had become, to collect firewood for him, the work of men usually, or was it because I had a car that I was being masculinized again, this time via the car?
Asking about this I was told that 'in olden time' women collected the wood but 'men had the fire', that is, men cooked the main meals in the camp. So no, I was not being masculinized via the car on traditional grounds, but considering that all firewood is nowadays collected with cars or trucks and that these are exclusively owned by men, it has become a man's job to collect firewood.

When women travelled with me my Western gender-identity was never distorted as I was doing things with women, but I was given a Warlpiri gender identity as well. So it was when once I stopped suddenly to park near a group of men who were standing outside the C.L.C. Office at Tennant Creek. A man who was about to approach was told to quickly turn away because 'Nampijinpa here, no room' (my sister was not with us at the time). He was my son-in-Law, a Jupurulla whom I call mimi. Whether the women at the time in my car simply used me to avoid being humbugged for money is less relevant than that they made my socialized identity to come to their aid.

But I was introduced by Nakamarra to men with whom, were I Aboriginal, I would have an avoidance relationship, incest-taboo restrictions would have made it impossible to interact directly and face to face with Jangarrayi. That I ended up in a cross-cultural situation via an Aboriginal woman with an Aboriginal man was only due to my whiteness and newness. Nakamarra surely made representations to her classificatory aunts, the wives of Warlu's Boss, or at least that was what she would have intended. But as the husband was present and I am white, he stepped forward assuming first access to the white person and thereby simultaneously assuming the position of husband who in the mode of the cross-cultural sphere makes decisions for his wife in any case. His position as husband coincided with that of male and male coincides in the cross-cultural sphere with traditional owner - 'boss' - as well. One of the wives,
with whom I later had occasion to talk about this incident, told me that a wife cannot act against the wishes of her husband ever. Only, in this case there were no traditional wishes involved, at least not from my perspective. All the husband did was make decisions in the cross-cultural sphere which are the domain of men, black or white. I was treated as an extension of white male power and by the same process his wife was being oppressed.

What I wanted from a woman (to teach me Language) was denied to me by a man because men see themselves as the guardians of the frontier. This is to say in concrete terms, as standing before the women when dealing with whites and institutions, as knowledgeable when it comes to machinery, infrastructure and land management. However, specific female concerns involving the health industry or schooling for children where women increasingly deal with women, men do not interfere directly. For women the maleness of the cross-cultural frontier is more insidious and hidden. Cross-Cultural negotiations have generally become men’s business, often a very humiliating experience for a Warlpiri man who attends a meeting ’for toyota’ at one of the Government Offices in town and returns home with a ’promise’ that never eventuates. This time it was his turn to deny and refuse not even to make an empty ’promise’ as he might have under the circumstances. He decided to make our encounter an empowering experience for him.

Another such an empowering experience I helped to set up for Napananka one day with the difference that it was not at the expense of us two women, but at the expense of one white man with the co-ordination of Napananka and myself. Napananka had been given a sedan car before I met her, which she lent to a relative, a young woman in Tennant Creek who promised she would pay for the repairs after she had wrecked the car. While the repair bill was
accumulating every day as the mechanic was encouraged to continue working on it and yet the money from the relative was not forthcoming, Napananka decided to pay some of it and retrieve the car. I watched her many times approaching the mechanic after she paid part of the repair costs incurred so far. Standing at a distance with face turned away from the man’s face, she would say that she has enough, she doesn’t want him to continue repairs and not be able to retrieve the car. I told her to look him in the face, to speak loud, slow and clear next time. I insisted not to talk to the mechanic although Napananka’s wanted me to take over the negotiation, I stood at a distance watching. Napananka did exactly as I said, and she got the car out. Turning to me afterwards she said: ‘I been talking white man straight’. She told others of this experience and was very pleased with herself and her feeling of empowerment.

I would like to reflect also on my position as a female anthropologist. Like Dussart (1988) I reject Bell’s idealistic argument that women who have born children will be more readily given privileged knowledge than unmarried or young women. Rather, the situation is this. I could take advantage of ethnographies written by men in that they contain cross-cultural transactions that give my own a measure of invisibility. I can say I am masculinized in the field because male anthropologists took their masculinity as a ‘natural’ attribute of their anthropological identity. Thus, add a woman or even a Western thing like a car to the situation and distortions of identity emerge. A good example is Sansom’s (1988) A Grammar of Exchange. He develops an exchange theory from a ‘structural indeterminancy’ among Northern Territory Aborigines which is based on ‘performative kinship’ (ibid:170). That is to say kin relations are contingent on social practice. He writes:
Beyond kinship, all positions and relationships among countrymen are referred to the performances, spans of experience and general inputs that qualify pretensions to a social state. One then gains both recognition for performance past and worth accorded with reference to one's current pattern of provisioning, giving and taking. Developed notions of service exchange subserve the estimation of a person's current standing. There are reckonings in which people are accorded their due by interested others. The things to be reckoned are expressed in the idiom and through the grammar of service exchange. (Sansom, B. 1988: 172/3)

He distinguishes two cases of help in which he was directly involved, one he sees as 'help for help' and the other as 'helping out'. Interestingly, in each instance there was a car involved: once in the form of his ability to drive, and once in the form of him owning a 4WD. In the first case he and another man drove a woman to Darwin to retrieve monies owed to her by another woman. She then rewarded the 'driving men' (Sansom, B. 1988:165) with a payment in money. In the second case a man who, as he writes, '...served me as a commentator' one day, 'fell prostate infront of my departing truck' (ibid:167). This man had a bleeding head wound he sustained during a fight in the pub from which he had just returned. Sansom took him to the hospital and stayed beside that man while his wound had to be stitched up. He returned the man back to his camp that same night. The man saw Sansom 'as a rescuer' and on a later visit pointed to him in public saying: 'This fella really bin lovin me', although Sansom warns, 'This is not an essay on the anthropologist as hero.' (ibid). What it meant was rather:

He announced thereby that we two are linked in special and particular association that some of 'bailing' or of 'helpin' someone out. All this happened a decade ago but let me add that Paulie and I still subsist in a relationship grounded in the
memory of that time of my helping out. (Sansom, B. 1988:167/8)

I will only point out that the fact that he was a man and thus able to drive a car, instead of the woman who had a rather personal business to follow up, did not worry Sansom. That he accepted payment in this context is only natural if one does not want to offend. But that it was he who was receiving information as he took up the offer to drive her, escaped him. He hid his anthropological identity. He could possibly have passed the money on to a man who asked him for money as he knew he had just been paid by that woman yet Sansom actually refused to give that man any of it because that man 'owed' him already. Secondly, that he had a 4WD because he needed it for his research means it was not by accident that this man could fall in front of his car. It seems that his theory, which mainly involves the assimilation of cash, is from the anthropologist's perspective not as voluntaristic as it seems to be. The following statement cannot so easily apply to anthropologists:

They assimilate cash to a developed philosophy of social action which has voluntarism at its core, the reconciliation of human needs for its dynamic and the substitution of persons as its end. (Sansom, B. 1988:176)

The 'structural indeterminancy', on which he rests his case, does not apply to him. The anthropologist's voluntarism has not the 'substitution of persons as its end'. Had that man, whom he refused because he still 'owed' him, been important as informant, he would not have refused him. Even for an Aborigine it applies only as long as this sort of temporary classificatory relationship can be maintained with another, for he might ultimately have to rely on kin if his performance fails.
In other words, the anthropologist engages in cross-cultural exchange for he is ultimately not kin.(5)

I hoped to show that a male anthropologist, who takes interpersonal relationships with Aboriginal men as unproblematic and natural, creates a situation that makes female anthropologists partly invisible in the cross-cultural context. But what is more, it makes invisible the male anthropologist’s relationship to Aboriginal women, for he is not their natural male opposite either. Similarly, my introduction to Warlu has shown that I am not naturally a woman in the cross-cultural exchange even though, at first, this fact did not emerge so clearly from my interaction with women.

(1) Nguru is an adopted name, I use it in order to protect the identity of this small community.

(2) This claim was granted to the traditional owners in 1980 but due to litigations from the Northern Territory Government on the grounds that the area where Nguru is situated is within the water control district serving Warrego Mine and Tennant Creek. Finally, after ten years of litigation Nguru was granted land rights under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 in June 1990.

(3) Jurkurrakur is the name for the Aboriginal Outstation Resource Centre in Tennant Creek serving the Barkley Region.


(5) I would like to explain this further with the help of the description of an experience I had towards the end of my stay. During 1989 I travelled from Tennant Creek to Alice Springs on my own. Before I reached Wauchoppe Roadhouse I run over a goanna and killed it. I picked it up and presented it to a group of women camping not far from the Roadhouse. It is of course not a practice among Aborigines to walk up to strangers and start making gifts, although it would have been my privilege as whitefella to do just that. I only approached these women because I had met
them previously and expected that they would have remembered me from my association with the Nguru community. So I identified myself by way of greeting them as Nampijinpa from Nguru holding up the goanna. There were three responses: some women identified themselves as my sister, others as my mother and one as my aunt (FZ). I did not want to just hand it over to the first person coming towards me but was intent on giving it to an appropriate classificatory relation of mine. I handed the goanna to my aunt. 'Good,' she said, 'so you are not really a wild one'..

My aunt is my father’s sister and as such I am a junior kirda. I thus gave as junior kirda a gift to a senior kirda. I did not make a gift to a woman because she was a woman like me but because she was my closest patrilineal relation. That is, my aunt is a member of the same patrimoieties, but by the same token is also a member of the other matri-moieties. We were of the same sex but our gender was not reflected in our sex because she represented F to me which made us in relationship to Country identical kirda. And there was another factor involved in this exchange, the goanna, which made it truly a gendered exchange. We were both kurdungurlu for the goanna. This, I was told by Nungarrayi, is so because my aunt is FZ and also MBW. Her kurdungurlu link to the goanna is by an affinal association with my matriline, she is married to my MB, mine is of course directly through matrilineal descent from my M. In a pro-creative manner this exchange was celebrating and re-creating for the future an affinal exchange between matri-moieties. But it did this via a representative of F with his D, hence an otherwise tabooed incestuous relationship was transformed into a pro-creative relationship in the same sex sphere. Furthermore, I was obligated to my aunt because I will 'follow her'; she will hand over the Yuwalyu, the 'women's business' to me because we are kirda for the Country.

I have asked what the situation would have been had I wanted to give away a western object. 'Then', said Nungarrayi, 'everyone would have shouted give to me, give to me.' Western objects almost automatically obliterate traditional kin relations on the level of exchange. On that level western things automatically exclude me from participating in Warlpiri society.
CHAPTER VI

NGURU AND THE WORLD

The relationship of the people to the world is best conceptualized with the notion of space the Warlpiri use to identify their own relative position in society. To be close or distant to place and/or kin marks the individual’s involvement with others. This interrelatedness and interdependence of place, space and kin has undergone changes which led to a sociological intensification of all these aspects. This is to say, the stress on certain relationships has increased while it has decreased on others.

Simultaneously with colonization a new socio-spatial relationship was created on which Aborigines became increasingly dependent for survival.

If we measure the social distance by the Warlpiri notion of spacial distance, then Western society might well be operating in another world, on another planet. However, it is the Warlpiri themselves who traverse this space quickly and efficiently to take what they need and what they know they can get. Especially since ‘self-determination’ has been watered down to ‘self-management’ (Langton, 1982:11) and led to a change in ‘whitefella’ attitude to deal with Aborigines, less and less demands are made of white society. Nakamarra was once embarrassed by her husband harassing a government official for new tyres on the Community Toyota and told him that he cannot just ask ‘government’, ‘whitefella can’t do that, they have to pay for everything’. The flipside of this is that many services to Aborigines are being neglected because the people are discouraged to ask for them. Their place
within and their place without is continuously exposed to distorting influences mostly due to the shifting positions of the dominant culture to which Aborigines are forced to find a response in order to survive with as much integrity as possible. This is the nature of the ongoing colonizing process.

Between 1988 and 1989 Nguru had an adult population of 25 permanent and approximately another 25 non-permanent residents. Since most of the children were of school age and enrolled at a public school in a mining township some 15 km from Nguru, and the children of the impermanent population were enrolled at Tennant Creek Schools or at Ali Curung, it was mainly adults only who shifted residence from time to time. During the holidays, however, whole families arrived and departed. Between December and February initiation rites were held and other major ritual engagements, especially rain making, were followed up. The most senior man of this rain making group is my 'father' Jangala who resided with my 'mother' Nungarrayi at Nguru.

Although only some individuals have a primary kirda or kurdungurlu relationship to Nguru itself, the majority stand in primary or secondary kirda-kurdungurlu relationship to each other as their primary kirda-kurdungurlu relationship is to other places in the region. Not all these places have been privileged for settlement because capital improvements exist only on a few sites. Social relations are however based on a number of sites, depending mainly on where residents have their M or F Country. Site relations also depend on where people were born, where relatives died, where they were initiated, where they used to live, where they may or may not hunt, where and with whom ongoing relationships exist or are being negotiated, with whom they have grown up and, finally, on whether they have access to mobilized
transport to maintain and create new relations.

The permanent residents of Nguru are three actual brothers and a sister (the 'bosses', kirda) who are married to three actual sisters and their classificatory brother. Four more married couples constitute the senior and oldest members of the community. There was also a young couple, four widows, a single woman and three bachelors. (I lived with the widows and the single women in the Jilimi, often glossed as 'single women's camp'.) The non-permanent residents were all considered close kin to the permanent residents. All together these people made up four intermarrying groups (see graphs below) and most members speak at least three languages, amongst themselves they speak Wakiriti Warlpiri (see Nash 1990). In addition there are two types of Aboriginal English, one that is spoken more in the urban environment and the other in the bush or outstation environment. Except for the oldest members everyone can read and write. A minority is fully literate, most of them are women, some are employed as teachers and one as a healthworker. On the graph below is mapped out the radius of activities relating to 'Yapa business' (own business) and the cross-cultural contacts.
Figure 1. Map of activities showing Yapa business and cross cultural contacts.

Overall the group relates to *Pawurrinji*, a spiritual centre of the highest order, an inland flood plain some 5 km in diameter about 200 km south-west of Nguru. *Pawurrinji* is a national shrine of the Warlpiri. Nungarrayi once showed me from a drawing she made in the sand how numerous dreaming
tracks converge at Pawurrinji (See also Bell, D.R. 1979). Several types of birds and snakes as well as other dreamtime heroes originate there while some others terminated there; others again traverse the site in opposing directions or simply their paths cross there. Thus many people from near and far whose dreamings are located on or near the various tracks relate to that dreaming site.

N aparulla, who is a senior kirda there but lives south of Tennant Creek, explained that there are four groups of people who relate to Pawurrinji as their major centre of spiritual activity. She said that several people with different languages 'became one in Pawurrinji, they had ceremonies together.' The following graphs, it must be emphasized, are not my abstractions. They are copied from a painting Naparulla made and from which she was teaching me 'about generations' and 'family', 'my people'. I have discussed these graphs with many people, all of whom corroborate them. I will present three versions of the structure below. The first shows the organization of the language groups or peoples, the second shows various major sites belonging exclusively to the above language groups, and the third version shows from the perspective of Napananka the exogamous relationships within this structure.

1) Languages and Peoples:
2) Places:

Kalimpulpa, Pinpala, Power Sh.
Kundalmiri, Ngapakunpa,
Pankurno, Judumini

'Ngurru'
Kupala
Wallalawurr
Karudja
Werrege

Jurrkurrakur
Warlu
Kantarupa
Putunja
Marla'ark
Walarki
Wargul
Kanamurra

3) Descent:

Ngurru

Nampijinpa

M

M

MM Nungarrayi
Kantarupa

EGO
Napananka

Miyicampi

While the above goes some way in representing the complexity of Warlpiri
relations in terms of relative closeness or distance on several levels of Warlpiri identity, it cannot reflect the actual vibrancy and nuances of all the possible relationships. However, what is important in this context emerges clearly. There is enormous room for emphasis and perspective depending on purpose, personality, place and space. The flexibility of these people to new situations and circumstances is for ever assured as long as they arise from within the culture. External influences imposed through colonialism have, however, put specific stresses on this flexibility which tend to subvert and distort relationships within Warlpiri society.

Some men find only sporadic employment on nearby Phillip Creek Cattle Station, never lasting more than three weeks. Most adults receive unemployment benefits or old age pension. Hence cross-cultural contact is maintained in the area of service provisions, that is, institutional contact, and with business. In all instances Aborigines are the clients. However, relatives living in town or in large communities engage in art production. They produce only sporadically, as the need for money arises. Tennant Creek and the outstations in the Barkly Region exist on the fringe of the famous desert painting schools of Papunya and Yuendumu. At Nguru people paint their own doors (an idea from Yuendumu) and even hang up their own paintings. Some artifacts -coolimon (parraja, wooden vessels) and crowbars (forged by the women from steelrods)- are sometimes sold and exchanged. I have not seen anything produced by men at Nguru. (1) I never saw boomerangs and shields being produced but every man possessed several sets.

The biggest beneficiaries of Aboriginal spending are the liquor outlets, the petrol pumps and food suppliers. The most intensive institutional contacts were with the hospital staff and the police force.
Western society is distant in more ways than mere space and yet makes itself felt in all aspects of Warlpiri life. It is as if all efforts to be self-sufficient are inadequate, and as if there is a threshold reached beyond which life becomes impossible. For example the quest for food cannot be sustained when there is no money left for petrol, ammunition, spare parts like tyres and batteries. Hunting activities simply cease soon after the fortnightly cheques have been collected because most of that money is spent on food in the first place. From the perspective of Nguru, Western society is only contacted for emergencies, and this is not so much as a right but as of need. People say 'government got to help us'.

There are strenuous efforts made to avoid Western society even in the quest of money. Women and men visit each other on pension day to gamble. There exists a rule to 'play whole lot', that is no one takes out their winnings till everyone has spent (lost) all their money. There can be up to two thousand dollars accumulated in this way. 'One game' at the end makes some 'rich', and everybody, hopes, of course, to be the rich one because they will control distribution. Instead of having to ask they will be asked, and will have more control over who will get a share, for it will be shared out. In a sense the money has lost its Western identity through pooling it in this manner. Redistribution is part of the socialization process money has to go through.(1) Gambling is but one example of a general principle that people try desperately to get what they need from each other rather than being humiliated with a 'no' here and a 'no' there. For 'Yapa can't say no, they got to help each other, we get it and lose it straight away, we can't be hard for each other'.

There is only one thing that could stop the cycle of dependency on Western things, and that is the CAR - the 'toyota'. Sounds like a paradox? I
believe it is not. The 'toyota' is above all an extension of walking. To be mobile always meant plenty of food and social contact, regardless of the occasion. 'Life was hard in olden days, now we get it easy with toyota', I am told. But the paradox is the fact that toyota-mobility is a privilege enjoyed and controlled almost exclusively by men (Lawrence, R. 1991; Young, E. & Doohan, K. 1989; Wilmuth, P. 1990; Gerrard, G. 1989). When I tried to point this discrepancy out to women I created some alarm that led to a proud denial by many: 'You don't know, you just talk, we get lift anyway, someone always help us', or, 'You right, toyota for community, not self'. My appearance in the community with a 'toyota' soon created some friction among the women so that I had to declare allegiance to 'only one mob': my declaration allowed members of this group to challenge from a position of strength (having the use of my car) the use the Boss made of the community car. In order not to challenge the boss personally, I had to appease him and his wife many times by providing diesel, lending jumper leads and often making emergency dashes to town.

The distance to Western society is thus marked by the relative access to the car, and this clearly puts men for ever in closer contact with Western society. Without expanding my analysis into psychoanalytics, one could say whites, like the car, become 'objects' of desire.

As all exchange and intercourse is expressed in terms of space, that is, distance or closeness, avoidance, part-avoidance or togetherness, it must be appreciated how significant the 'toyota' is to understand what changes people are dealing with. That these changes are externally produced and male-biased is a historical fact.

Conversely, however, relative distance to Western society also means an
intensification of exchange and sociality. Men are privileged here also because they have free and easy access to a car. Almost every item that was introduced improved men's techniques: men 'had the fire', now everyone uses matches, men also used to cook, now there are pots and pans, men used to spear and boomerang, now they use the gun, they all used the stone axe, now they got the steel axe, men used to carry large game, now they throw it on the car etc. etc. Women's technology by contrast has not changed at all. The digging stick is still used and the crowbar that replaces it is forged by the women themselves (one cannot buy them in shops). Babies, although carried in prams in town, are still carried in the wooden Parraja. Yet clothes, nappies, washing powder, bedding, cups and dishes, even the flour women buy instead of grinding seeds, while they are a source of infection and illness, these changes affect mostly women in ways that changes to men's activities do not. The difference drawn is that between space and time. One could almost say where women gained time they lost space and where men gained time they also gained space.

The car has greatly increased the pace of life. For example people can be on the scene for ritual engagement sooner, the car two-way radio permits to 'call the business' in no time and without moving from the spot. When the car breaks down there is an almost empty silence. The car punctuates time and women's lives, it commands what is 'good times' and what is 'bad times'. I heard on returns from town after my occasional over-night trips to Tennant Creek that 'we been sitting down hungry two days, no car, they never come back, they stop for grog'.

The car is also making women 'complain' more than men. Women are made jealous more often then men. The car thus divides the sexes in a new way and increasingly men feel the burden of patriarchal responsibilities.
By the gendered entry of the car into a hunter-gatherer society based on mobility and space, mobility and space themselves have become gendered differently. I am concerned to analyze the 'toyota' and its subversive potential to distort indigenous gender relations.

6.1. MOBILITY

In Nguru people’s thinking, there are no physical barriers to where a car can go and there are no limits to what a car can endure. This of course is leading to an environmental disaster. New roads become old roads after they have turned into gullies after one rainy season. But such are the inscriptions in the landscape that even traditional routes to hunting grounds are being displaced and renewed periodically (Stotz, G. 1988).

Mobility as a social phenomenon intensifies some relations more than others. It has pulled more distant relatives into closer orbit but thereby has also increased the pace of living and exchange almost to breaking point. Negotiations take place between people living hundreds of kilometers away and this means the men who drive the car are more often able to 'follow up' business of all types away from the checks and balances other residents could bring into play. This is why men are reluctant to drive a mother-in-law or other women to the scenes of disputes because fights have become like 'business', exclusive to those men concerned. Mere spatial closeness with relatives of disputing men more likely leads to peaceful settlement. But it could also mean one might end up in the opposite camp and fight one’s co-residents. I have
once been virtually torn apart between the Boss and his wife because my relationship to each of them differed. He was chasing her with his brother's car while she was driving away in the Community Toyota. He had just broken the windscreen of the Toyota when I arrived on the scene on my own. He ordered me not to let her get into my car, saying, 'I tell you don't do it, I am the boss'. She pleaded with me to take her away before he had a chance to hurt her. I had to deny them both in order to get out of a potentially violent situation, telling them that I am not going to become anyone's partner because I can't fight properly and that to engage me in their affairs was simply unfair. I rushed away from the scene unsure of my decision, but Napananka assured me I did the right thing. Later the couple came to me to borrow money to buy a new windscreen. My loan was promptly repaid. In a sense I had managed to escape from the dispute at the price of an almost ritual exchange of an identical sum of money. I could extract myself as whitefella from the kinship relationship which would have possibly put me into a very complex dilemma indeed. As Nampijinpa I am the Boss's FZ, which, in relation to Nakamarra, would have allowed me to take away from him the authority to tell his W what to do. As older Nampijinpa I was also younger Nakamarra's jaja, her maternal grandmother (MM). We were in the same age moiety and our relationship could also be seen as that of siblings. We were equals except for the fact that I was the older one. I was thus in a double sense Nakamarra's kirda, in the sense that I have to 'look after' her and that my relationship to Nguru was identical with that of the Boss, who was also my junior. Japaljarri however would not expect to be instructed by his FZ directly nor would either he or his wife take heed to what I as a whitefella had to say. My apparent sterility on one level was thus turned into a productive partnership via money, the realm of a
whitefella.

Hunting activities of men and women are very differently affected by the car. Women's mode is still to walk and stalk the hush in search of animals and vegetable foods or fruits. Mixed hunting-parties result in women being dropped off at a place while the men drive off, for men nowadays shoot from the car or simply move quickly from a place where there are no tracks of animals evident. Men thus secure themselves the prestige of being good hunters, of 'looking after' people more efficiently through the greater use of space. Women have more occasion to train dogs for hunting, and often lend their dogs to the men, thereby they can claim some prestige through indirect participation. Men, however, are not reliant on hunting dogs. Mobility in relation to hunting activities is thus as multifaceted as any other activity in Warlpiri society.

6.2. SPACE AND TIME

Space and time are for ever shrinking. While sitting arrangements in the car are still strict reflections of social closeness or distance, the activities contained in separate spheres are thereby dissolving at the edges, that is at least for the duration of the trip. M/L and S/L avoidance is spatially shrinking by travelling in the same car; women are regularly sitting in the uncomfortable and dangerously unsecured trayback while men sit in the closed-in security of the driver's cabin. On the other hand easier access to sacred places and more frequent re-visiting of one's Country has made it impossible to remember all the stories about people and their doings in the region, too many things happen
too quickly and too frequently.

This amounts to a loss of control over space and time, as well as extreme boredom for those who are not so lucky as to 'own' a car. In general people in the bush get cars, people in town camps don't. Frustration and disorientation in relation to one's place and role in the scheme of things is directed inwards, arguments and fights ensue. The car most definitely creates divisions between relations who live in town and those who live on outstations as between haves and have-nots.

The car helps men to legitimate their activities while it helps women to expose men's activities. Women most accurately predict whether a man is going 'for grog' or not, 'by the way they give excuses for leaving' I was told. But no interventions can be effected at this stage where a man says to go 'for cigarettes, for diesel, for battery, for meeting' for every person has an immutable right to their 'words', to mean what they say.

I had a very interesting explanation by one Jakamarra about women's role when men absent themselves. He stated: 'Women are nothing in our way, when I go for business the wife has to sit with mother in Jilimi (women's camp) and wait for me'. I asked him if this was also so when he went drinking in town. He replied, 'But you are talking about grog, I am talking about business!' This means men's absence, like women's of course, implies one is engaged in things the other sex cannot participate in. When I insisted that 'grog' and 'business' are not the same thing he only reluctantly admitted that there was a difference. In any case, if he gets bogged down with grog in town, 'the women still got to find me', and so they do. But by then there is no talk of 'business' any more. At least by the women, who often come armed with a kurduru (fighting stick) and beat the men into submission to return home. The
women greatly resent being called into action by men’s behaviour in such a manner. They are furious and often so depressed about their men that they say of their husbands, 'my husband is rubbish man', 'I kill him when he comes home and then I kill myself', 'men are no good for women'.

At Nguru only one man has control over the Toyota, yet most other men, non drinkers, have privileged access to the car because they are men. But, because the women are not dependent on such men for transport, they become indirectly alienated from the traditional support they would otherwise get from these men. The car permeates all agenda.

**Hunting on foot**

The difference between those who 'sit one place' and those who 'run away' is not only a difference in life-style but increasingly the difference between women and men. Those who 'sit down one place' go hunting on foot, look after the place, wash blankets, sing and tell stories. When they return from hunting they always bring back 'for kids' berries, witchetties, frogs -anything tender and special. They 'look after' the country by burning some areas where grasses have made hunting on foot impossible. They share at least one meal in the bush, for they always 'find' something. Often women cried out to me jokingly at the sight of a bush turkey or a larger kangaroo they could not hunt down: 'Nampin, where gun?' They would collect medicine plants, make sightings of trees 'good for making parraja' to which they would return another time. Through women, to whom hunting on foot is the only way to hunt, biographical details are being continuously inscribed into the land.

To return from a hunting trip means also to be groomed, deliced, massaged
and have one’s skin inspected for bites and thorns. One takes also a little nap after returning while those who stayed behind tell of the events of the day in the camp. Sleep is sacred and gives room for silence and peace.

Nobody is alarmed when people do not return from such hunting trips the same day. They will indicate they have found ‘plenty’ with a large fire that can be seen from their homes. People on foot can also not distance themselves so far as not to communicate their whereabouts.

**Hunting with 'private car'**

However, for a couple who own their 'private car' as these mostly 'little cars' are called, such rests are disappearing and with it a hunk of time with a quality of life attached to it is no longer available. One young couple at Nguru owns such a car. One of their three children was a baby at the time. Such 'private' cars are not practical for maintaining same-sex expeditions of any kind because they simply can’t carry enough people and because they are more conspicuously linked to the identity of a specific individual or couple. Such cars represent the trend to limit activities to the nuclear family unit. It becomes the portable camp identical to the family unit which shares the night sleeping side by side. Their days are spent like their nights: where wife, baby and husband are inseparable while children over two years of age usually sleep and play with whom they please, usually in their mother’s mother or father’s mother’s camp. Instead of sharing the rhythm of life with the rest of the community such couples take off whenever they can get the car started, hoping for the best. Often they go hunting on their own but mostly they visit people in town or other communities. Many times their failure to return shortly after
nightfall causes alarm and distress. Search parties have to be organised with the remaining cars, mostly the Community Toyota, a visitor's car and my car. More often than not we found the family stranded in the bush without adequate water and food, without petrol or with flat tyres and no spares.

Two points need exploring here: a) survival skills are transferred to the car because of its capacity to traverse space rapidly; b) reliance on the car is excessive despite the limited knowledge of its technological limitations.

There is thus an excessive identification with autonomous mobility which the hunter and gatherer mode of mobility connects with total knowledge of the land. In this sense travelling by car has stressed traditional knowledge of the land beyond its limits by moving people beyond safe distances from water and other resources they might otherwise use for survival. There is no doubt that awareness of this is reflected in the fearful attitude of the co-residents, a fear that most probably never arose before the introduction of the car as 'private' property.

'Private cars' come into the community through some 'private' deals Non-Aborigines clinch before they leave their employ in the Northern Territory. The turn-over of government employees is every three to four years, or that is the time of their working contracts which many choose not to renew. Some efforts are under way to recruit from within the Northern Territory, but private companies still recruit interstate. These people sell their cars which will not survive the journey 'down south' or 'over to Queensland' by parking them with a for sale sign near the places where most Aborigines get their cheques. Pre-Christmas security cheques and pension cheques are for double amounts, so the cars find ready clients. These cars are often no longer insured nor registered for any reasonable time, often they are sold without papers
altogether. I have witnessed terrible heartaches from such deals. The bad experience has encouraged Aborigines to buy cars off each other. But there ensue problems with payment, prices are ridiculously high or low, often the cars have to be returned.

The problems around the car are never ending.

(1) There are also many benign versions of the card game, all are great fun. I was unable to count as fast as others and to learn fully the sign language involved to participate and learn the rules of the game. But one can invest in a player by lending 'cents' and then participate in the win. But I have not noticed that anyone might be used regularly in this manner, although individuals are known to be better players than others.
CHAPTER VII

FAMILY RELATIONS AT NGURU

In this chapter I hope to show how gender relations at Nguru bespeak a social history of colonial intervention and how as a consequence the struggle for balance in the face of the ongoing colonizing process is fought out at a high cost to all concerned. Although Community internal conflicts are reported in the literature from all over Australia, no analyses exist from research on Outstations which were established since the introduction of Land Rights in the Northern Territory in 1976. All the recent ethnographies relevant to the Central Desert Region have been written from data collected on large communities, Bell at Warrabri, Dussart at Yuendumu and Glowczewski at Lajamanu.

The term 'family' is immediately problematic here. I use it instead of the term 'kin group', of which Dussart (1988:25) is so very fond, for two reasons: first the axis of negotiations around the Toyota is in the main one between one M/L and her S/L who is also the Boss at Nguru. The Boss shares his affinal status with two brothers and one sister and together they have one and the same mother and father. The M/L’s children are made up of three daughters, one of whom is a classificatory daughter and one a classificatory son. The M/L and her children call themselves a family although during arguments they claim 'we got no kirdana' (no father) and which they sometimes use in the sense that their family is not a complete family.(1) The sons and daughters-in-
law among themselves, too, refer to themselves as belonging to one family, often their actual mother stays at Nguru as well. Secondly people often refer to all the residents as family or community or just as Nguru, thereby personifying the place. I thus do not use the term ‘kin group’ because I do not know where such a group might start and where it might end. There are close and distant relatives living throughout the Northern Territory. The now deceased fathers of both families had both more than one wife with whom they also had several children. There are even some part-aboriginal sisters living in Victoria since they were taken away from their mothers during the assimilation period. Contact with all these people is maintained even though rather sporadically. What is interesting, however, is that none of the other mothers (co-wives) ever visited Nguru while I was there, yet widows of brothers of the M/L’s deceased husband often visit, they come as Napananka’s ‘Z’.

There might very well be a host of historical material hidden in these relations, for the above co-wives appear to have been from distant places. One is said to be a Pitjantjatjara woman whose son also married a Pitjantjatjara woman. He and his wife visited Nguru several times. Napananka calls this son ‘my son’s brother’ and behaves towards him just like to any of her own sons.

7.1. RELATIONS TO COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

In the following I combine the genealogical with the social, that is, descent and affinity, in order to achieve a cultural historical understanding of the situation at Nguru.

The focus is on the main axis of exchange relations between the Boss
(bosses) and the rest of the community. For this the mother-in-law’s, that is Napananka’s, and her sons-in-Law’s identity especially need to be put into historical perspective.

Napananka has double status as reigning (2) primary female kurdungurlu and as mother-in-Law to the primary kirda, her sons-in-Law. While Napananka’s situation does not involve a family history of irregular marriages her sons-in-Law’s does, they have double 'skins', they are Jangala/Japaljarri. They made mistake in the past' I was told. This 'mistake' concerned the marriage of the Boss’s parent generation and the boss’s wives' grandparent generation.

![Figure 1. Primary descent relations to Nguru of the Boss and his Mother-in-Law.](image-url)
I will try to further explain this from the couples' point of view of which the male partners are the bosses at Nguru and the female partners are two actual daughters and one classificatory daughter of Napananka.(3)

From the point of view of the wives their actual mother's mother was the actual sister of their husband's actual father. This means, their respective husbands cannot be considered 'straight' marriage partners because they came from the 'wrong' generation. As we have learned from Glowczewski (1988), wife's mother's mother's father and husband's mother's mother's brother cannot be identical persons. But this is what happened at Nguru. By this reckoning they married mother's mother's brother's son. Secondly, both the women's mother's mother -a Nampijinpa- and the men's father -a Janpijinpa- are from the wives' point of view siblings of their matrilineal grandparent generation. The latter should under no circumstances constitute the only sibling pair from which common descent of husbands and wives is reckoned. In short, affinal ties of spouses should point to common descent from two sister-brother sibling pairs of opposite patrimonies if the marriages are to be properly exogamous and hence pro-creative. In this case they should have been Napangardi and Japangardi, Nampijinpa and Janpijinpa.

I did find that because the brother of their mother's mother did not marry into a group that was traditionally providing spouses to his group, the 'mistake' of this man's sons appeared to be a 'wrong' union, that is, incestuous. The bosses married their actual father's sister's daughter's daughter, and the women married their actual mother's mother's brother's son. The husband and wife are constituted on this reckoning of a type of uncle by virtue of being the wife's mother's actual cross cousin, and a type of niece by virtue of being the husband's actual cross cousin's daughter, an illegal
incestuous relationship. However, Nakamarra would tease me endlessly with the puzzle that she married her uncle but she is not really his niece. And in fact, the couples are not considered to be in any type of uncle-niece relationship.

The many people, men and women, whom I asked about this insisted that the data I have is correct. That is, the couples appear to be in an uncle and niece relationship but at the same token insist that they cannot be considered uncle and niece. This construction is only possible if we superimpose on the genealogical data subsection or skin-names and Language. We find now that the men's parents were not paired correctly by subsection nor were they of the same language group. Their mother is Warumungu and their father was Warlipiri.

On account of these differences it is possible for the Warlipiri, here, to project the idea of an ideal grandparent generation (two classificatory sister-brother descent pairs of opposite patrimoieties) into the relationship. Not only does the ideal reckoning reveal that one sibling pair was not a sibling pair at all and, furthermore, they did not even speak the same language. They thus were not even of the same region or did not come from the same orbit of space within which Countries are identified as belonging to one people. Or in other words, the boss's father and mother were totally unrelated. It also means only the men's father and the women's mother's mother were actual siblings and as such could not represent the social pro-creative model of descent between marriage partners on their own, for this could only point to incestuous relations. But because these couples can now be said to uphold the pro-creative descent model in principle, the marriages are considered 'mistaken' only.

But why are they still considered mistaken? Surely not on account of what
the classificatory skin names suggest, for this discrepancy has been cleared up by showing that these classificatory terms hide historical truths which belie their 'mistaken' status. I will endeavor to answer this question further down. Let me first continue to unravel step by step the relationships at Nguru. The following figure represents the position of the two exogamous sibling pairs:

Figure 2. Grandparent generation, exogamous sibling pairs.

The situation in this case is further complicated and legitimized in that the men live on their father's Country where they are the primary kirda and where one of them, because he is the second oldest brother (the oldest is living on a Warumungu outstation), is now the Boss, the reigning male kirda. The bosses and the mother-in-Law constitute cousin-brother-sister pairs as they are often referred as, a term that implies almost sibling status. The mother-in-Law legitimately lives by the same token as the Boss on her Mother's Country as
the primary and reigning female *kurdungurlu* since she is the only surviving daughter and has a formidable career as a 'business woman' as well. The following figure illustrates this reciprocal relationship:

![Diagram](image)

black: Warumungu; white: Warlpiri

**Figure 3.** Primary *kirda* and primary *kurdungurlu* at Nguru.

Considering now the situation from the men’s mother’s point of view or reckoning, the women her sons married are in correct classificatory subsection relation to her sons and this reckoning even shifts them to the same and thus correct generation level with their wives. Figure 3. below shows that for the purpose of allowing a gradual undoing of her own 'mistake' her sons use a double reckoning, one through their father Janpijinpa making them Jangala -in relationship to Country- and one through their mother Nangala making them Japaljarri -in relationship to their marriage partners-. Her sons’ double identity projects a double status also on Napananka. And it is through the name they take from their mother which establishes Napananka’s daughters as correct and straight marriage partners. This means, while her sons have the identity that allowed them to marry Napananka’s daughters -Nakamarra-, their relationship
to Nguru they have from their father only. This assures that her sons’ children inherit their relationship to Country (Nguru) in part from their father (as they also carry double skins -Janpijinpa/Jungarrayi-) and in full from their mother and father combined. This process of straightening out mistakes effectively obliterated all relations to the Warumungu Country of their father’s mother. But this is not to say that their relationship to their actual FM is not one of close kin.

In effect the ideal reckoning of the boss’s generation in terms of affinal ties has in the following generation inverted and makes relation to Country appear to be the result of straight reckoning as affinal ties are being legitimized. Already some of the boss’s children are married to their promises and their marriages are said to be straight. I assume that their children’s generation might not have ‘double skin’ names.

If we now superimpose the idealized grandparent generation sibling couple from figure 2. and 3. above and add the descent relationship created through the men’s mother point of view, then we can see how the classificatory grandparent sister-brother (Z-B) pair-ideal is even more plausibly real, corrected, and with it we also have reproduced a straight marriage but a slightly crooked relationship to Country or vice versa? For only one thing is certain here, the tracing of genealogical links, that is the use of biological relatedness to legitimize an incorrect marriage does not at all mean that the pro-creative model is in the process of being abandoned. On the contrary, such biological references must be obliterated in time so that relations can be straightened out and thus become properly pro-creative.

Variations of irregular marriages have occurred over the decades in most communities. I believe the efforts to ‘straighten out’ the generations have
continued everywhere. The specific situation at Nguru cannot be generalized, but the overall situation of high levels of disharmony and internal conflict that arise from such 'mistakes' regardless of their acceptance from an ideal point of view are almost identical in other communities in the region.

I also suspect that such 'mistake'-marriages may have been more tolerable when people were not living in their own country. As Bell (1983) reported, the Warlpiri lived on Kaytityj Country and the issue of living on someone else's land in a sense unified the Warlpiri as a group rather than divided them internally as seems to be the case now where the people have to face each other anew.

The heart of the conflict is where the social and spiritual (marriage and land) relations do not exactly match. This is because each position contains in part the other, the social is spiritual and the spiritual is social. If these are slightly out of kilter people's rights and duties in relationship to each other are distorted in terms of rights and obligations to Country and People, that is in terms of gender-relations. In a word, pro-creativity does not proceed smoothly, as we see in the case of Napananka vis-à-vis her sons-in-law.

---: ideal relationship

Figure 4. Diagram of 'mistake'-marriages at Nguru.
Ultimately the process of straightening out past 'mistakes' clearly shows that the legacy of social disruption incurred by past colonialisit practices of deliberately forcing people off their land is more significant than I could describe above. For if we look closely at the constellation at Nguru we see that one patri-couple has basically died out and its Country and all this implies is being taken over by another patri-couple of the opposite patri-moiety. This means first that the M/L is definitely aware that her subsection -Napananka- will not hold primary kurdungurlu rights vis-à-vis Nguru in the future. When the transition from the Japijinpa-Jangala patipair to the Japaljarri-Jungarrayi patipair is achieved the respective daughters (Nungarrayi and Napaljarri) of the wives (Nakamarra and Nangala) of these men will be primary kurdungurlu for Nguru.

I often heard it mentioned that Napanaka is 'the last one, when she passes away we got no one' and Napananka herself tried often in vain to make me understand that Nguru 'got no Yawulyu'. That is, her father's sister - Napangardi- never passed the ritual knowledge on to her niece -Napananka -. There are two reasons for this: her mother's brother had married Nangala (the Boss's mother) instead of Napangardi; social intercourse with kin was disrupted by a 'mistake'-marriage and most probably families were still separated by force at the time Napananka should have received instructions in the late forties. However, I witnessed several women's ceremonies with Napananka either as kirda, that is, acting for her father's Country and as kurdungurlu for several other places or rather 'Dreamings', that is, for totemic species and sites. On the other hand Napananka assured me that there are 'young ones' still growing up who will have the Yawulyu for Nguru.

I do not pretend to come to any conclusive analysis of this situation, but
there may exist a totally different scenario that could explain the absence of a Yawulyu at Nguru. Napananka’s mother died during the exodus, only a few years ago, and thus the Yawulyu for Nguru is still taboo in keeping with the tradition.

Whatever the facts might be in relation to the Yawulyu at Nguru, the bosses’ sons were initiated as Jungarrayi (in 1988 and 1992) but they appear as Japijinpa and their father as Jangala in the ‘Wartmanpa, Warlpiri, Mudbara and Warumungu Land Claim’ and are identified as members of the CI group. (Parliamentary Paper No. 165/1982) Not only did the ‘bosses’ not report their double ‘skin’ in relation to Land Rights on their father’s land but they also indicated by this that the transition to the other patri-couple is not yet completed. No arguments about which person owns which ‘Dreaming’ in relation to which part of the Country was ever an issue. On the contrary, at my arrival I was shown a women’s site called ‘Emu Egg Dreaming’ and a site marking Ngapa, ‘Water Dreaming’ while men’s sites were pointed out to me in the distance, places I ought not to visit. I deduce from this that, because of the discrepancy that exists at Nguru between affines in relation to Country, the strain of this transition period makes social intercourse between affines especially stressful.

This lets me speculate whether in pre-colonial times Country and Family were of the same value as they appear today. Hunting and gathering activities in a semi-nomadic fashion would have had the people, as it were, slide across Countries and thereby change their relationships in terms of kirda and kurdungurlu among themselves and of course in relation to Country over and over again. Myers’ (1986) Pintupi informants describe just such a semi-nomadic lifestyle, but he does not interpret their relationships to each new
place and group as shifting *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationships. I have been on such weeklong trips into the Tanami desert where this became obvious. In some areas Japangardi could hunt but not eat, in others his wife Nampijinpa could not eat a certain species while Napananka and others could. The pattern of this appeared to have infinite mutations of *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship possibilities.

Sedentarism largely fixes people not only in relation to Country but in terms of their *kirda-kurdungurlu* interactions, and as a consequence this must intensify tensions that arise from irregular marriages. All types of tensions that arise in the community are similarly affected by sedentarism. A settled life inhibits living out one’s identity fully, it reduces inversion and shifting of relationships to a minimum. Under such circumstances gender relations too become distorted, pro-creative exchange is pre-empted by having to substitute gender relations with relations based on sexual difference. I believe, Napanaka can only accept her 'full cousin' in the role of son-in-Law because he is a man, and herein lies the potential of Western influences for subversion of the Warlpiri gender regime.

### 7.2. THE SOCIAL COST OF IRREGULAR UNIONS

Patrilineal and matrilineal reckoning is not exclusively based on biological genealogy but on social relations to Country. An ideal genealogical order prevails as long as some differences can legitimize it. But this order is maintained at a price.

At Nguru it turns out that the *kirda-kurdungurlu* configuration is of no
consequence between husband and wife while similarly the M/L-S/L relationship is not marked by a strong incest taboo or avoidance relationship on this account. On the contrary, the M/L-S/L respective kirda-kurdungurlu relations are equally primary because this is a relationship between actual cross-cousins. While social relations between wife and husband in part superficially reflect relations to Country, the M/L-S/L social relation is not as significant as their kin relations which prescribes their respective primary relations in terms of Country. It is not surprising that most serious arguments erupt between M/L and S/L while wife and husband quarrels are treated as inconsequential to the pro-creative order. By contrast, the women’s brother, who also resides at Nguru and who is married straight to another Warlpiri woman, cannot quarrel without serious consequences to the people’s wellbeing. Once this couple had a fight after which they had to separate by order from the man’s mother Napananka. The couples I am primarily concerned with here have survived many similar and more severe fights. So it depends really on how the M/L plays her cards, whether she acts as cousin or as M/L.

The Boss inherited as son from his father the kirda relationship to the Country on which the outstation is situated. And although this relationship is treated as absolutely legitimate, the idealized social relationship with his wife is never fully legitimized. This is because his M/L, whose claim to the same Country is as kurdungurlu legitimate and above board through her actual mother, is not part of that idealization process. Napananka is thus M/L to her cross cousin.

Here it becomes apparent that colonization in the past has had the effect of alienating Country from Kin/social relations. In other words, colonization has
alienated men from women. This issue will be treated in more detail further down. Let me just mention that the above situation is externally produced; the maternal grandmother’s brother of the wife, her husband’s father, was removed from his homeland during the early thirties and later employed on a pastoral station on Warumungu Land (Alroy Station) where her husband’s mother was employed as kitchen hand. When they married they could not have known that one day Aboriginal life and society would be possible with some form of normalcy a generation or so later.

1) The married couple

The structural distortions described above have social repercussions on the behavioral level. Relations to Country and Kin find their moral expression in the behaviour of individuals. This behaviour is ultimately also gendered.

The best way to discuss the effects of alienation of Country from Kin and of women from men is from figure 4. above where the stress between the idealized affinal and the actual kin relations can be appreciated at a glance.

Relations that arise from belonging to Country are in the above cases not traditionally balanced between married partners, hence the kirda-kurdungurlu relationship has lost its power to maintain mutual interdependency. This is to say, because as kirda and uncle the husband’s relation to his wife (she is secondary kurdungurlu at Nguru, which, she says, is ‘nothing’ because it’s ‘only’ from mother’s mother) as niece takes precedence in questions of spiritual importance. Everybody agrees ‘uncle is most important’ in terms of ritual relations to one’s mother’s mother Country. This negates their husband-wife relationship because their status is not based on a proper mutual H-W
reciprocity. As Nakamarra also says: ‘When there is a ceremony we go different ways.’

If we now look at the social relationship between wife and husband I am told by Nungarrayi that wife and husband are (’got to be’) always ’kirda and kurdungurlu for each other’ or as Naparulla says, ’husband and wife got to go fifty-fifty always’. There is thus a transference of moral conduct. Relations between wife and husband are expected to remain unchanged even though the relationship structure that deals with Country no longer underwrites the code of conduct between them.

The relationships between wife and husband have thus become more volatile. I suggest that with the partial disintegration of the kirda-kurdungurlu reciprocity in marriage the nuclear family couple has made its appearance in Warlpiri society. Yet this is not because the couples live in a pattern of ‘serial monogamy’ (Bell 1983:78) but because wife and husband are not linked traditionally. This fact remains unregistered in the cross-cultural context where the nuclear family has been assumed all along. However, women’s resistance to become Other to men is not fleshed out here, for the cross-cultural arena is men’s domain. Non-Aboriginal women, too, have no stake in this. Some men at Nuru told me Western women have nothing to do, ‘they just make cup of tea all the time’. Rather, it is in the intracultural sphere where the volatility of the situation is being dealt with.

From the perspective of the women, their marital relationship is almost totally secularized. In most instances I had the impression that these couples were, as couples, a separate category altogether. Whatever the behaviour between spouses, their highs and their lows, their comings and goings, their financial deals and travels were treated with great suspicion by the rest of the
community. They were treated like people who are a law unto themselves. The saying was that 'they can eat the echidna with spikes and all'.

Other couples at Nguru were integrated very differently, as I have already mentioned. 'Straight' couples were more integrated, their every move together and separately meant something to everybody, their conduct was altogether congruous.

It was often rumored that the 'kurdungurulu will make the kirda dance in the bush' one day. They will 'shame him' by laying down the Law, making him 'straight' again. Such talk always surfaced when the Boss's wife sought refuge in the Jilimi for a night or two after he had returned home drunk and she feared he would 'do something stupid' (be violent, in other words). Napananka, her mother, reacted with disgust to her plight, for she knew her daughter would always 'worry for kalyia kalyia' (husband) more than 'for people' (herself and others). Napananka knew that her daughter was, as a woman, attracted to the man for 'mistake'- marriages always suggest that 'love-love' plays an important role, and she knew too that her daughter was corrupted by the Toyota the keys to which were in the hands of her husband.

There is another phenomenon among couples whose union is the result of a 'mistake'. They seem to make up the structural discrepancy with 'love-love'. This is indeed a volatile mix where anything can happen, where behavioral models appear to come straight out of cowboy movies. During one argument between the Boss and his wife I was present, and almost invisible as on many other occasions. He was terribly drunk and she was truly angry at him when he suddenly stumbled towards her, put his arm around her and said 'Darling, I love you' and she could but smile. Soon after she walked behind him to their camp. The women and men, who were at the time standing around in a circle,
brandishing fighting sticks as he embarked from the Toyota, were totally perplexed.

2) Lovers

It appears also that the above type of mistake marriage is no longer increasing. There is some consolidation of straightness again, especially on Outstations. But this is a contentious issue, for mistake marriages increase in the urban setting, especially in drinking circles. These unions are, at a closer look, not strictly marriages. They are, in other words, of no consequence to pro-creativity. These unions are increasingly short lived and partners are changed more frequently while 'promises' (straight partners) are called upon or even returned to eventually under pressure from concerned family members who live on the outstations or also in the case when a town-dweller decides to move 'out bush' to live on an outstation. (See also Dussart, F. 1988).

Rejection of traditional marriage (to marry once 'promise') finds expression among girls, an unmarried Nakamarra and a twice married Napaljarri told me. According to them, young girls say: 'If I have to marry promise I'll kill myself first.' While this probably is nothing more than exaggerated juveniles' talk, it begs the question of another type of marriage. I am compelled to assume that such an alternative is what is known as 'love-marriage', also called 'grog-marriage' or 'kangaroo-marriage'. Such terms when used are always accompanied with laughter, they connote a dimension of forbidden fruit, sexuality as love.

The above Nakamarra has not accepted any of her 'promises' and remains unmarried at twenty-five. To consciously enter a love-marriage would be
possible only if she flaunted all conventions by committing a 'mistake', which would make a mockery of the term itself. The historical possibility for making genuine mistakes is no longer available to her as it still was for her mother's mother's brother in the thirties. Today she would have to join a town-camp population, consume alcohol and take on a lover. For love-relationships are public relationships nowadays, this is why they are talked of as marriages. No 'promise' will fight for another 'promise' unless they are already married to each other. Only when such type partner takes a lover will all hell break lose and maybe result in separation. Divorce would not be considered, for they were 'promised' by due process of the Law and nobody can change the Law for that would be tantamount to changing the world, changing the basis of their being which is pro-creativity.

3) **Mother-in-law – Son-in-law**

I argue that colonialism has also brought about an internal shift in the location in which the incest taboo is most intensely upheld in the social structure. This has had an effect on the gender-relations of the local residence group. The S/L-M/L avoidance is diffused. Only a minimum of avoidance is upheld, like never standing face to face to each other, never looking each other in the eye, never handling each other things. By contrast, a Mother and her Son's circumciser whom they call in English 'somebody' cannot travel in the same car, cannot stand in the same space, i.e. camp, a house and its surroundings, a shop etc.

This shift of the incest taboo corresponds with an intensification of certain relations over others. Ultimately this shift is indicative of a move from one
type of gender relations to another. For example Glowczewski (1988) sees the demise of the Warlpiri social system only in the case of the M/L-S/L incest taboo collapsing. This seems not to hold, because the structural emphasis of this principle can be shifted to a comparable relationship of that between initiator (circumciser) and Mother of the initiated. 'Too much no room' says Napananka when her sons's circumciser appears on the scene. Their behaviour is exactly the way Glowczewski argues for M/L-S/L avoidance behaviour.

The M/L-S/L incest-taboo, it can be said, has a double in WF-HM. But traditionally anthropologists' emphasis was only with the mother of the daughter. We see now, in the absence of a 'straight' M/L-S/L relationship, a shift of the incest taboo from M/L-S/L to the mother of the son and the latter's circumciser is possible. A further complication arises in this case, but it is impossible for me to go into in great detail. Napananka's sons' circumciser is their F/L and not, as he should be, their spouses' MB. This is the result of another 'mistake' marriage between the F/L and his two wives.

4) The local patriline

Nguru is the domicile not only of the local patriline, the Janpijnpa-Jangala patriline, but also of other patrilines with whom the bosses stand in kin or affinal (reciprocal) relation. F.G.G. Rose (1987:137) argues that 'The property relations of local group land were not autonomous.' traditionally. They could not have been autonomous because a father-son pair alone does not maintain a patriline for:

it should be realized that alliances between local groups could
be and were just as much established by 'exchange' of males through, for instance, initiation, and moreover, it is not through the females but through the males (that is, the patrilineages) that the local group was continued and maintained. (Rose, F.G.G. 1987:149)

Alliances between patriline means that from the point of view of residence today all those who have affinal ties to the bosses are in a *kurdungurlu* relationship to them in matters concerning Nguru. While traditionally only such mother's brothers who were grooming boys for initiation or such men who took up their S/L duties towards a daughter of the local group would, depending on the number of wives and consequently also children, have lived for extended periods as *kurdungurlu* with the local group. (Rose, F.G.G. 1987:160-161).

At Nguru this is of course complicated through the irregular marriages some people of the local patriline and the affinal patriline have contracted in the past. The bosses' double skin virtually makes them *kirda* of two Countries or, in other words, Nguru is claimed by two patriline of opposing patrmoieties:

1. Janpjinpa-Jangala
2. Jungarrayi-Japaljarri

However, as we have seen above, one relationship is claimed as resulting through idealized affinal ties and the other through genealogical descent. Yet, what I found most interesting is that those who are related through the bosses' mother will claim their status and rights to Nguru as if the mother had married straight, and those who claim rights through the bosses's father will do as if
the father had married straight. (Recently there is even a rumor going around that the boss's mother is 'really Warlpiri'.) These claims are all made on grounds of classificatory descent, that is kin relations. This means further, the neighbouring Outstations of Warlu and of Karli (not their actual names) where the bosses are both Jungarrayi are classificatory F to the Nguru bosses whom the Jungarrayis call 'young fellows' but the one from Karli is called jaja (maternal grandfather) by Napananka and the one from Warlu is called 'somebody' by her. As such Nguru's bosses' kirda rights are hierarchically inferior to that of the bosses from Warlu and Karli because they are their juniors. This means of course also that Warlu and Karli have their own contests in relationship to Nguru. On the other hand, the Jangala identity of the Nguru bosses have their actual FF, also a Jangala, living at Nguru; hence, also on that account are the Nguru bosses junior bosses. Further, the most senior and leading business man of the regional centre called Pawurrinji and his brother, who is living at Nguru, both Japaljarri, are the Nguru bosses' FF. They are by this fact men to whom the Nguru bosses are like younger brothers.

What we see then at Nguru, as in Warlpiri communities in general, is that this patrilineal criss-cross reckoning puts added pressure on the local residents, because domicile is fixed on one Outstation for the local patriline. This is not due to tradition but due to colonial domination which makes only one of the local bosses Boss. It appears the situation at Nguru comes to haunt those anthropologists whose analyses have influenced land rights legislation in the Northern Territory in such a way that upheld Radcliffe-Brown's analysis of land relations to be primarily patrilocal and also patrilocal. (See Chapter I.)

The pressure on the one Boss to become community leader is especially
great when it comes to the use and control of the infrastructures which the Australian Government provides. Nguru’s Boss is unable to refuse for example the right of the whole extended family of Warlu’s and Karli’s Boss to set up camp at Nguru whenever they choose. They have done this on several occasions: Warlu after the earthquake in February 1988 near Tennant Creek and Karli after the death of one of their members. These men demand that a house is made available for themselves and their wife, a separate one for the second wife in the case of Warlu (who, however, prefers to stay in the Jilimi with Napananka), separate houses for their married sons etc. This is all in addition to the complexities of the core residential group, where the M/L is the reigning female kurdangurlu at Nguru and whose classificatory brother, too, lives at Nguru with his wife and children as main male kurdangurlu. Also a mother’s father and his wife and his wife’s sister as well as his adult daughter and children live at Nguru to whom the bosses are kurdangurlu. They all have to be provided with shelter, water, firewood, ablution facilities as a matter of course.

No stress is more debilitating, however, than the rights in the Community Toyota. Father’s father (Jangala) does not have control of the Toyota as he is too old to drive a car, but he has primary rights to it. He cannot enforce his right because he is not considered the Boss for it from the Government’s perspective. Also he possibly never learned to drive and he is too frail. He says himself, ‘I can’t fight, I can’t drink, I am old man’.

The Bosses of Warlu and Karli, who also hold the keys to their own Community Toyotas, have the added bonus when living at Nguru that their Toyota cannot be demanded for Nguru’s Community services while they have all the rights to make use of the Nguru Toyota. This seems to be partly due to
the visitors’ status as guests and also to their traditionally established primacy to the membership of the local patri-couple in comparison to the Nguru Boss. At such times the pressure on the Nguru Boss, the one to whom the Government gave the Toyota to the exclusion of his brothers and sister, increases to breaking point. When such claims are made, the car is either stranded because the parties cannot agree on who is going to go with whom where. This is to the frustration not only of the Boss but everyone involved, yet the Boss will be blamed in the end (‘people start talking’). In moments of indecision and fear of loss of control the Boss will simply take off, drive away with his wife and sons. More often he just drives away by himself, to town, where he will drown his despair in grog.

This makes things only worse, for then the cycle of conflict starts all over again. His wife will get angry, his M/L will try to show her displeasure, there will be fear of violence all round and there is the ever lingering fear of ritual retribution that the kurdungurlu will ‘shame’ him one day by making him ‘dance in the bush’.

While these types of tensions appear almost always to centre on the rights to the Toyota, it now becomes clear that it is actually the rights to the Toyota which were established by Western concerns which bring the totality of social relations under strain. The Warlpiri thus show that they have their own agenda when dealing with introduced items which have ultimately nothing to do with the Toyota as an object or as a means of transport, but rather with the rights in it.

The Boss is a man who says to be Yapa is difficult but to be white seems easy. He is not the only one who is lured into an individualistic world view on account of the Toyota. His senior neighbours have the same idea. The only
difference is that they can reinforce their claim on his Toyota on traditional
grounds. In a sense the transition from ownership of Nguru from one patri-
couple to another constitutes also a regional integration, for soon it will be
claimed that Nguru, Karli and Warlu are one Country, belonging to one and
the same patri-couple. I argue that the colonial situation is creating new
reasons for disputes.

1) The reasons for this have always puzzled me for both families’ fathers
have died years ago, the spouses’ do not consider being incomplete as a
family. The situation might be that Napananka’s sons do not reside on their
father’s Country, although the infrastructure, housing, water and road do exist
there. Moreover, some of her sons are in irregular marriages of a different kind
to her daughters.

2) I use ‘reigning’ in the sense of acting *kurdungurlu*, Napananka is the
‘main’ *kurdungurlu* as she is often called by others.

3) There is a female Boss too married at Nguru to one of Napananka’s ‘S’,
but as relations between M/L and D/L have a different dynamics from that
between M/L and S/L, this relationship will find little attention in my
discussion. Furthermore, the ‘S’ is from an adjacent language group, the
Mudburra, and I do not know the details of their relationship in terms of past
histories.
Chapter VIII

WESTERN THINGS AND EXCHANGE

The problem of external influences poses itself concretely in the form of Western objects, most prominently the Community Toyota. The toyota (generic term for 4WD) is the main object of socialization, and the rule 'kurdungurlu got to drive toyota' applies but is hardly ever implementable.

I found that a critical feature of exchange of Western things is the fact that Western things are gendered before they enter the social world of the Warlpiri. This explains the need for their socialization, or re-gendering as this process could also be called.

Further, I need to emphasize here, in the most general sense all exchanges are governed by an ethics of reciprocity even if the exchange partners are not related as is the case when Yapa exchange with Non-Yapa. On the ground of actual sociality at Nguru people are related to each other and thus kirda-kurdungurlu (reciprocity or the absence of it) identifications apply in relation to every exchange partner at Nguru. There is, however, ample evidence throughout the literature that Non-Aborigines are given classificatory skin names in the effort to integrate them into the exchange system. Also Non-Aboriginal workers who work in Aboriginal Communities, i.e. building houses etc., are considered kurdungurlu. Who is their kirda then, I asked, 'well, they got to have kirda somewhere', I was told. The same applies to things. But let us first see how other scholars have perceived the influence of Western things
on indigenous systems.

8.1. A CRITICAL OVERVIEW

The impact of Western things on indigenous peoples has been mostly treated incorrectly as the impact of Western technology upon indigenous technology (Ingold, 1990). The effect especially on the material culture of Australian Aborigines has been commented on over decades often in a contemptuous manner with little focus as to the intracultural responses in terms of gender relations. However, the fact that Western objects are socialized rather than simply appropriated by the Warlpiri shows us that they are active, albeit unequal partners in the colonizing process (Sharpe, L. 1952; Taylor, J. 1988).

My critique of Thomas (1991) and Altman (1987) is to investigate the possibility of a gendered view of the colonial process.

Thomas’s (1991) study is greatly influenced by Appadurai (1986), Wciner (1976) and Strathern, M. (1988). He tries to break new grounds in theorizing colonial processes via objects from a ‘transcultural’ perspective across Melanesian and Polynesian societies and the capitalist world. He investigates early forms of contact and comments on the present. He pays lip service to feminist concerns by stating in his introduction that the ‘discourse of colonialism’ is ‘profoundly gendered’ (Thomas, 1991:6) but fails to show us how. He understands his work as fracturing the unified subject, to smash the master discourse of anthropological discourse and theories. But he rather
betrays a post-modernist obsession with levelling the world into multiple subjects, and he insists that while they, the indigenous people/societies, are all more or less uniquely entangled with Western objects, they are not so dissimilarly entangled with them as westerners are with indigenous objects or for that matter their own. He says, for example, nothing about the exploitation of raw materials of the Papua New Guinean homelands by multinational mining companies.

Despite these omissions in Thomas’s text, part of his discussion on the gift and commodity, reciprocity and hierarchy, is interesting especially as it negates systemic differences contra Strathern between indigenous and Western economies. The argument is thus whether objects are alienable or not. Before objects reach the ceremonial exchange level they may very well have female or male identities (values) he argues, but:

The recognition of the valuables in these terms diminishes, if it does not entirely elide, the male and female contributions to each. Hence contrary to Strathern’s characterization, it is as if ‘the work belongs to one of a pair’ (Thomas, 1991:55)

He says effectively that female-male divisions are diffused by 'the image of collectivity' at the moment of public exchange. He writes about Fiji practices thus:

The separateness of male and female goods such as drums and mats is a precondition of the image of collectivity created at the moment of presentation. (Thomas, 1991:55)

In terms of hierarchical relationships questions of power arise:

Exchange theories, in their emphasis upon reciprocity, have
always marginalized, in a paradigmatically liberal fashion, questions of power;... (Thomas, 1991:56)

He cites the case of tapu appropriations as was customary in early Marquesan society, and comes to the conclusion:

The point here is not merely that certain articles may potentially be abstracted from associations with former owners, users, or producers, but that the logic of the system made it possible for things to be recognized through tapu rather than through a producer/product or donor/gift association. Hierarchical systems of this type draw our attention, in the first place, to the power mediated by cultural forms; it is power, rather than reciprocity among transactors, that seems fundamental for the understanding of objects and exchange. (Thomas, 1991:55-6)

It would seem that despite his emphatic rejection of 'dichotomizing analysis of general economic forms' (ibid:59) he cannot do without them. For indeed, Thomas is not comparing but showing how, when economic regimes are separately engaged to explain the colonial and post-colonial situation, in general the explanatory value of such analysis is limited. Basically he blames Strathern and Weiner for what they did not explain, that is, post-colonialism in the Pacific region.

My argument with Thomas' project is that I doubt that indigenous alienability of labour or objects has anything to do with Western forms of alienability. I doubt this because in a single society, in this case Warlpiri society, there can exist many types of reciprocating relationships and there can exist many different forms of hierarchical relationships. There is ceremonial engagement, there are kin relations, avoidance regimes and age hierarchies. There are many reasons other than the ritually structured ones to engage with
others. There are those who are more skilful and those who seek knowledge, and the list goes on. But fundamentally power is not necessary for exchange. To my understanding the more important difference is whether exchanges occur in the spirit of pro-creativity or in the 'spirit of capitalism', to use Weber's metaphor. Weiner argues similarly when she writes:

I introduce the view that control and power are exercised by both men and women, but they must be seen operating not merely within the "politics" of social relations. Power extends beyond the social to concepts concerning articulation with cosmic and transcendent phenomena. (Weiner, A. 1989(1976):12)

Thomas asserts that, like Mauss, Weiner's analysis is 'oriented toward a general type rather than historic actualities' (Thomas, 1991:23), and Strathern is, according to him, preoccupied with a 'local singularity' from which she generalizes a Melanesian situation (ibid:27). Yet, if we follow his advice by quantifying our field of study and by pursuing objects in terms of their 'succession of uses and recontextualization' in a 'transcultural' scenario (ibid:29), what we get is an increasingly totalizing effect of Western influences. In other words, we participate in the post-modernist discourse and become apologetic of a system that is colonizing others before we know what the people who are subjected to it think about it and how they try to deal with it.

To contrast Thomas' approach I would now like to turn to an empirical study conducted in an Outstation Community several hundred kilometers north of Nguru because it is based on one contemporary Australian Aboriginal society. Any generalizations arising from this study might be more amenable to gain an understanding of Western influences on Australian Aboriginal
societies.

J.C. Altman (1987) analyzed social and economic change among the Gunwinggu people of Arnhem Land. His thesis is based on empirical research of economic production from which he reflects on patterns of social change.

He argues that women’s and men’s economic performances have been influenced differently by the introduction of Western goods. The most significant aspect of this difference was that women’s produce, carbohydrates, have almost totally been replaced by market goods. These goods are relatively cheap so that everyone can easily procure them from shops. As a result this reduced women’s subsistence activity. By contrast, men’s meat production has been increased with the introduction of large feral game, such as the buffalo and cattle, and with the introduction of a more effective ‘production technology’, such as the gun, the car and outboard motors. Overall consumption levels of protein foods and carbohydrates have not changed significantly, if at all, since colonization.

However, the fact that introduced species and goods have no ‘bisdiss’ (business) attached to them and they cannot be reproduced from within Aboriginal cultural forms of production, has had a major social impact. Distribution is no longer under the control of male ‘elders’. As a consequence women’s social status as gatherers has also declined. According to Altman, women’s produce, which was previously distributed during ceremonies by these ‘elders’, was never the object of trade. Rather, it was given in payment of ceremonial services, such as the kurdungurlu provides. Hence women’s produce as well as meat distributed by men was exchanged for ‘social invisibles’, by which Altman means ritual obligations.

The case is different for men. On one hand, guns replaced spears, and on
the other, meat from feral animals can be hunted by any man because ritual taboos do not exist for introduced species. Inter group trading of spears and associated objects needed for hunting disappeared. Simultaneously and irrespective of social hierarchy, young men could also gain prestige as hunters through the use of the gun and through the production of large quantities of meat from large ferals. This undermined the authority of ‘elders’ not only in matters economic, but also in controlling the marriage market. Today men marry younger because socio-economic prestige can be gained sooner. But with the demise of the power of the ‘elders’ and the discontinuation of indigenous trade, exchange during ritual gatherings has become confined to the exchange of goods for ‘social invisibles’.

Altman suggests, although men and women in general are equally caught up in the consumption of market goods, and trade is nowadays dominated by the marketplace, men, to a far greater extent than women, were able to maintain their social contribution through the practice of subsistence economy. He thus distinguishes between women’s ‘adoption’ of, and men’s ‘adaptation’ to Western influences. It would also seem that Altman perceives women’s greater reliance on the cash economy than subsistence economy, for the procurement of carbohydrates has made women more dependent on the State. The Welfare State, which provides cash in the form of pension cheques and other social benefit payments, has contributed more significantly to changes in women’s socio-economic performance.

Since cash is available to all and the majority of bought food consists of carbohydrates and, because they are cheap compared to fresh meat, they have deflated the value of women’s produce and production activity. The change from gathering to shopping has shifted the economic prestige to the
Government which provides the cash. Altman writes:

Given that people usually procure carbohydrates and tobacco -goods that only 20 years ago were luxuries- it is not surprising that the government that provides cash for these goods is viewed as a source of infinite wealth. (Altman, J.C. 1987:181)

The fact that self sufficiency of food production has been replaced by market dependency to a large extend is irrefutable. According to Altman, the indigenous division of labour between women and men to provide carbohydrates and meat has remained, but meat production as vestige for men's social prestige as hunter, with the help of new 'production technology', has resulted in more equality among men.

However, Altman fails to explain how men's privileged access to new technology, while it aided the preservation of a hunter's life style, has resulted in men's economic prestige in a manner that the loss of a gathering life style for women could not. For even if men sometimes spend their money on staples, a rather rare occurrence, women spend all their money on staples while men spend all their money on capital investments like guns and cars. Money, however, is a truly scarce commodity for women and men alike: the testimony to this is the fact that the majority of Aborigines live in poverty. Yet, if the provision of staples by women is not affected by relative shortage of cash, then one must conclude that women's economic role today is greatly exceeding that of men.

I will give a brief summary of Altman's text, but I will make more specific use of it later in this chapter. His analysis typically ignores Aborigines' point of view and imposes a Western economic interpretation of socio-economic
change on Gunwinggu society. I believe it does not do any service to Aborigines to speak in devolutionary terms about social change. This attitude risks missing the enormous contribution people make to the present situation. This is not to say there does not exist a degree of conscious resistance to capitalism and the State. From my experience, however, there is no evidence that people at Nguru, even the literate, have any coherent concept of either. Generally speaking Non-Aborigines have not much more than a vague idea about it. The economist’s point of view is limited and, however, great an effort to do justice to socio-cultural criteria, it fails. This, I think, is why Altman is unable to explain why men should for example monopolize the car and what communal use of large infrastructure items might mean.

The Toyota and the concomitant issues it raises about political leadership and community shows us where change is heading. The Toyota proposes to revolutionize Warlpiri society especially because it subverts the pro-creative model of exchange and, more fundamentally, it undermines gender relations.
8.2. WESTERN THINGS AT NGURU

The colonization of Aboriginal societies is an ongoing process with a specific history which is only being written now. See McGrath, A. 1987; Reynolds, H. 1990; Rose, D.B. 1991 for the rich variety of approaches and subject matter of writing Aboriginal History in Australia today.

There is a consensus that, from a physical all-male frontier to the institutional frontier, men privileged men (see also Berndt, C.H. 1984-1985; Bell, D. 1984-1985). (1) This privilege is based on how dominant Anglo-Celtic Australians construct gender, and is further constructed through racial discrimination and socio-economic and political marginalisation of Aborigines in general. The evidence of this are disproportionately high imprisonment rates and deaths in custody (see Report by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody), poverty and high infant mortality rates. These are some of the glaring consequences that link a cruel history of genocide and dispossession to the discriminatory practices today. Hence, when I describe the male-to-male frontier as privileging men I am not implying a positive state of affairs. I am also not dealing with the frontier as such but with the repercussions it has on gender relations internally. What I want to point out in this context is that as a consequence of this privileging, not all post-colonial cross-cultural relations are the same as, for example, in comparison with Canada or New Zealand. That is to say, the difference between Western colonizers may not be great in this respect, but the people they dominate are very different from each other. Australia is thus a specific case and hence the
colonizing process too is specific.

My focus on what I term the differential colonizing process is not a historical analysis of cross-cultural relations but, rather I hope to show that changing gender relations are part of that historical process. This process is an ongoing one for the Warlpiri as my research at Nguru exemplifies.

As cross-cultural sociality is virtually non-existent for the people at Nguru, Western influences come more concretely via things. These things, however, come into the Community via a specific type of cross-cultural relations between men. I call the locus where negotiations for Western things are thrashed out the cross-cultural sphere, and I have further identified this sphere as an all-male sphere where the external gendering of things takes place.

In the following analysis I hope to illuminate the process by which externally gendered objects become internally gendered objects. This process is conflict ridden because the internal gendering of Western things resists complete articulation. Most significantly this lies in the nature of the things themselves. This is especially evident with the Community Toyota as it imposes a complete readjustment to mobility in a physical and a social sense. As well, the fact that the production of Western things occurs elsewhere in a manner totally outside Warlpiri economy and know how means they cannot be reproduced or replaced from within Warlpiri society. And simply because colonization is still in process, not only are new things continuously introduced, but the positioning of the Western male vis-à-vis the Aboriginal male is also continuously shifting. The general perception that we live in a post-colonial era is, from the Warlpiri point of view, meaningless.

I will not dwell on the objects themselves but on the ways in which the process of socializing them into Warlpiri life indicates some of the kinds of
pressures on gender relations.

**External and internal gendering as a social process**

By external gendering of objects I mean the way in which Western things have attached to them Western notions of producing, maintaining, controlling and exchanging things. These are typically premised on the dichotomous opposition between the sexes which constitutes Western gender relations and, more significantly, on how this gender ideology dictates who and with whom negotiations for Western things are conducted in the cross-cultural sphere. As in dealings for the Community Toyota and most infrastructure items, the assumption is that it is natural that they occur not only with men but between men. This Western male bias is only apparently shared by the Warlpiri male for, as we will see further down, he has very different criteria which guide his actions as man. The furthest from his mind is that this external privileging automatically disenfranchises women. But this is exactly what the outcome of cross-cultural sphere negotiations in fact threaten. For even when women are present at cross-cultural sphere meetings 'their silence is often wrongly taken as agreement', not by the Warlpiri male but by the Government representatives ('Our Future, Our Selves', 1990:62). Only when the Toyota is actually handed over does this become apparent. What ensues is a conflict ridden process of socializing the Toyota to transform it into an internally gendered object. This socialization of Western things is only in part achievable and thus incomplete as a socially instituted process that lies in the nature of the car as such and the way in which it enters Warlpiri society; there exists a conflict between two
types of social relations most noticeable around the Toyota. This conflict can be seen as a product of the effort to synthesize externally imposed and internally negotiated forms of rights and obligations in relation to the Community Toyota. The conflict arises from an understanding that Government allocations are to the Community, with one implicit assumption that men are (or, more modestly, represent and look after) the Community. Yet, the ultimate focus of conflict is on the figure of the Boss, the man who is largely responsible for cross-cultural negotiations and who also holds the key to the Toyota. That this process is by necessity a gendered process is due to the fact that in Warlpiri society gender is the basis of exchange. One could thus say that external gendering plays such a significant role because the Warlpiri conduct their negotiations from a different gender regime, and the conflict between the two gender regimes finds expression via Western things and has thus become a Warlpiri internal problem.

There are, of course, other Western things than the Toyota being socialized: money, private cars, clothes, food, tools, information, education etc. But because not all access to Western things is predicated on Land Rights or the establishment of an Outstation, they are not all acquired through cross-cultural negotiations between men. As a consequence their socialization is more indirect. That is to say the socialization process for things other than the Community Toyota goes through the same internal gendering but without the continuous challenging of one person’s (the Boss’s) ability to manage the Toyota by the whole Community as to ownership and user rights. Also, this type of gendering has no repercussions in the cross-cultural sphere.

Furthermore, the socializing of Western things at Nguru does not extend to all objects evenly. Those objects which are privileged for socialization are
things which most effectively represent a link to hunter-gatherer traditions. The car, the gun and the crowbar are highly significant. For example, Altman’s assessment that vehicles are not effectively integrated in the social economy of the hunter and gatherer’s in Arnhem Land (North Australia) is only partly true for the Warlpiri. He writes:

ownership of a vehicle, even privately (as distinct from communal outstation ownership) does not necessarily result in production leadership. Because motor vehicles are not traditional production implements there are, as yet, no rules that provide guidelines for their control. (Altman, J.C. 1987:124)

My contention is, however, that the ‘rules’ become transparent once gender relations become part of the analysis. The Community Toyota may not fit any form of production processes as Altman’s basically economic analysis suggests, but it is nevertheless the most important tool to the people at Nguru. No major hunting trip, no firewood collection and no ritual engagement, not to speak of the many other activities, were possible without the Toyota or other motorized transport.

The gun and the crowbar do not evince problems in terms of gender relations as their external gendering largely overlaps with internal practices, or, as in the case of the crowbar, there is no external gender attached to it and thus socialization is not an issue. Mobilized transport, however, is a totally different matter for it connects itself in every sense to the traditional practices of women and men equally and is fully coherent with present day needs, that is the need to move from one place to another for social, ritual and economic purposes. There is only one other Western thing that is in many ways equivalent to the car and that is the communication media, telephone and
television. For an analysis of these see Michaels (1986).

The people at Nguru seem to have come to a silent agreement that the car is a thing naturally under the control of a man from the local patriline. Also the idea that mechanical things are male mysteries is externally produced, that is, in the cross-cultural sphere. The unspoken assumptions of male control by both Yapa and Westerners set also the agenda for race relations and support the argument that sexism and racism have something in common.

The car as a male thing.

Some features of the car are directly seen as related to the traditional power of men over fire (personal communication Marcia Langton 1991). I suggest that in Warlipiri perception there is a tendency to put sex and culture into a one-to-one correspondence. This does, of course, not affect *kirda-kurdungurlu* relations. Napananka may have confirmed this in part when I asked her whether before contact women cooked breakfast for the whole family like they do now, and she replied: 'What for? Men had the fire, no, we just drink ngapa [water] from parrajja [wooden container], that's all'. I could not be sure. I suggest that this problem ought to have haunted Altman too, for he found men’s privileged use of introduced technology as such not a significant factor for changes in gender relations. The truth of the matter might be found if it could be established whether men’s identification with the car has not been established prior to the coming of motorized transport but has been enforced with the discovery that it is propelled by ignition and burning of fuel, the combustion process.
Thus, regardless of what might be the problem with the car, the battery, which is a taboo word in Warlpiri, and the carburettor as well as the starter motor are focussed upon when attempts at repairing a stalled vehicle are made. The battery is by far the most privileged source of attention when a malfunction occurs, and it is also one of the first parts of the car to be stolen. Recharging of batteries is assumed to be possible for ever, yet batteries are discarded often too soon because recharging facilities rarely exist in the bush. Abandoned cars in the bush are always stripped of the engine and wheels. Before this takes place, however, the carburettor is often taken out of its mounting as it is the true source of 'fire'. Of course this is not incompatible with the functional logic of the motor.

When I probed further into the question why the car seems to be a men's thing the reply from men was that: 'Women got no licence', 'Women can't fix toyota', 'Women can drive private car', 'Some women got licence', 'Boss got to look after toyota', 'They give it for community', 'Men got the car first'. Actually there are two men related to people at Nguru whose family names are based on this fact. They are called Mr. Driver No. 1 and Mr. Driver No. 2 because they were the first men to learn to drive the truck at Ali Curung, formerly Warrabri, during the late 50s. Women's responses almost fully corroborated what the men had to say with the exception that they said: 'Women got to get Toyota too', 'Government got to look after women too, we can learn', and 'Really, kurdungurlu got to drive.' In turn the men corroborated the latter statement by the women and this is where gender comes into the discussion.

Further, I have been told by Nungarrayi that 'toyota is really like kuyu (meat or animal species), totem, you know.' When she told me this she had a
big smile on her face, she was obviously making an analytical point, one that I picked up with interest. Thus Toyotas and other cars are said to die and in a sense return to the land of the ancestors. It will continue not only as a reminder of past deeds but it will become a site that is revisited over and over again when the need for car parts or even brake fluids, engine oil and transmission fluid arises. These visits are made by men and these sites are also best known to men. (See Glowczewski 1989:175-176)

The use of the car

The car is used in innumerable ways. The sitting arrangements are not at all dissimilar to the camp, for example. Men never sit face to face with women and women sit behind men, although spouses sit beside each other if one of them actually drives the car. The M/L never sits in line with the rearview mirror, as her S/L might catch her eyes and turn blind as a consequence of transgressing the avoidance barrier. This is to say that, while practical considerations force the women into the back seats because mostly only men can actually drive, kin relations have to be accommodated as well. In fact the socialization of the Toyota requires the accommodation of kinship relations often to the point where this becomes stressful.

As in the camp, children and dogs can sit wherever they choose. Empty bottles and wrappings litter the car, and it is rarely cleaned. This is because the car has an identity (personal communication John von Sturmer, 1990). This means, the Toyota has a consciousness of its own, it will 'talk' when it requires the services of 'others'. My sister Nampijinpa, for example, told me
after my car once stalled because I had overheated the engine that 'Your mum
got headache, you got to drive slowly.' I was assured that she meant the car.
Here again is confirmed that 'kurdungurlu got to drive' and that the car has a
social identity.

Also, the aesthetics involved in having country-music playing, a cold drink
of some sort in one hand and a bag of potato chips or chicken leg in the lap
while speeding along some dusty road has to be experienced to be appreciated.
But despite all this, the use and the socialization of the car are not identical
matters.

The Community Toyota: Boss and Community

When the outstation was finally established in 1985 after more than five
years of shifting from camp to camp, it was the first time ever that the present
residents of Nguru were provided with shelter, a tractor, a waterpump and a
Toyota Landcruiser for their own independent use. However, the provision of
this infrastructure was conditional on two things,
a) that people had land rights or had lodged a land claim, and
b) that people showed cause that they wanted to live permanently on their
homeland.

This was a catch 22 situation. People had to live without adequate services
for years before they were deemed eligible for them. I was unable to get
detailed information about installation dates as the now defunct Aboriginal
Outstation Resource Centre at Tennant Creek (called Jurnkurrrakur) kept
records very poorly. But from a C.L.C. employee I learned that when the
Community Toyota was handed over to the Boss that year, he absented himself and his wife with it for almost six weeks. This type of euphoric behaviour, I was told, was repeated on almost all Outstations at the start.

Who is the Boss for a Toyota and of an Outstation Community is of utmost significance. Firstly, it is always a man. Secondly it is also always a man who is put forward by the residents themselves. This does not contradict Warlpiri traditions as such, rather it is done in anticipation that negotiations will have to be conducted with white men and hence also anticipating only men will be given the Toyota to 'look after community'. Thirdly, the Toyota is given to the Boss in accordance with the outmoded idea that his status as one of the 'traditional owners' coincides with political leadership. Moreover, 'traditional owners' are seen as a group of people identical with the residence group which in turn is supposed to be identical in make up with the traditional local patrilinical descent group. (see Morphy and Morphy, 1984; Myers, 1986a)

A Boss is not a young man put forward by older men who perceive themselves less able to deal with 'whitefella' so that he takes up the position of a 'broker' as Howard (1977) saw it. There is no need for this type of intermittent negotiation sphere on Outstations. This is not to say, as I will explain further down, that some old men do not hold the view that the present day Bosses are not really 'bosses'. For what Aborigines themselves overlook is the fact that these Bosses are *kirda* for a very localized area of land. The old men who talk like that often are Outstation Bosses themselves, and what they are referring to is 'bosses' in 'business' which is without exception a regional affair. The Boss is, however, put into a quasi broker position by the various government bodies that deal with Outstation Communities as entities. Government agents, which includes officers of Aboriginal Institutions, relate
to the Boss on the grounds that he is a 'traditional owner' and so assume he is the political leader as well. The Boss carries a dual responsibility. On one hand he has to prove his status in the cross-cultural sphere and on the other hand, on account of the Toyota, he has added responsibilities to provide and respond to the needs of the Community.

Control of the infrastructure and especially the Community Toyota is vested in one man who is supposed to represent Community members in the cross-cultural sphere. The idea of Community is thus seen by Western authorities as an unproblematic byproduct of the process by which an Outstation can be established.

People at Nguru take the idea of Community quite seriously, and not only when it comes to the use of the Toyota. There is a great sense of 'we mob' in relation to the external world, Yapa and Non-Yapa ('whitefella'), of us as bush-mob versus town-mob, of us as those of Nguru and those of other outstations, of this side and the other side, that is us as kin and them as affines or different mob. But Community in the sense of a politically and economically constituted democratic entity seems a Western imposition (Hamilton, A. 1978; Coombs, H.C. et al, 1989; Altman, J.C. 1990.).

Women make an effort to diffuse the pressure on the Toyota to avoid arguments among themselves and with the Boss by using Aboriginal Institutions in town which purport to have responsibilities for the needs of women. Women quite naturally want to reclaim some of their control on mobility and space but they cannot do this with the Community Toyota because it is under male control. For example, in Tennant Creek the women have access to a 'women's toyota' which is controlled by the Aboriginal Health Congress (Ananyinyi). Many women compete for it including women
from Outstations even though they have to pay a $30.- rent per day and pay also for the petrol themselves. As the car is not always available when they need it, they say soon they'll stop 'laundering money for Congress, we just sign for Toyota, that's all, we never see it'. Town-centered Aboriginal controlled services are incorporated and government funded bodies. They enlist women to sign grant applications for all types of hardware and projects which are then managed by these bodies. The women who sign are usually hand picked influential local personalities. Some women have signed for several toyotas as well as other things, and it is these women who in the end complain of getting nothing in return. In effect they are distressed that their signature is not producing the promise, that their social identity is being eroded by others who do not participate properly in exchange.

The practice of the separate spheres, of women and men going their own way during the day, is strangely affected by the car too. Women and men lose control of knowing the whereabouts of their spouses. Often I had to bring women right up to their husband after a bush trip and was instructed to say to him that she was with me all the time for, 'he might be jealous'. But gender relations are not just about the affairs between women and men. In relation to the Toyota, gender is about rights and obligations between kin as well as affines. In a word, gender is about exchange relations.

The main thrust of this discussion is thus with conflict situations and dilemmas arising from the presence of the car in the Community.

Although Strathern M. (1988:344) ultimately argues that societies based on commodity exchange and those based on gift exchange are 'incommensurable' for gift exchange is 'an inimitable process', Warlpiri people's living reality requires them to deal with this paradox.
How the Warlpiri make those external things their own and how the process places gender relations under stress I hope to show in more detail by discussing the socialization of the Toyota, that is the Community car. Its effects on mobility and space I have treated separately. I will also discuss the socialization of privately owned vehicles. Finally the socialization of things other than the car will be seen as subverting not only gender relations but concomitant issues of health, knowledge and education.

The socialization of the Toyota

This is to trace indirectly the 'biography' of the car. I do not suggest to compile a history of transformations that sees the car as object change its identity from gift to commodity or vice versa (Appadurai 1986). Rather it is about how the car is humanized with use and thus becomes intimately involved in the colonizing process.

The car makes tracks, it leaves a history of its successes and failures inscribed in the landscape. It is individualized so that it becomes recognizable like persons from a distance. From its movement and direction are identified the purpose and intentions of the people in it, whose identity is advertised as that of the car. For example, people call out when they see or hear the car approaching, 'Nguru Toyota coming'. From the seating arrangement the kin relations of the travellers are made clear, and those factors regulate who can approach it or get a lift. If one catches a glimpse of the driver and possibly of who sits beside him (the driver almost always is a man), whether the latter is a woman or a man for example, it is possible to predict that a whole combination
of people will or will not be found riding on the back of the car.

The car is never an exchange article. TV and Video also fall into this non-exchangeable category; like the car they are only lent out or borrowed. Lending means that the object will not come back in the same condition when it was lent. In the case of TV or Video, for example, people say 'they can't look after it, kids will break it'. However, lending cannot be avoided because no one can deny a legitimate request especially when it comes from people one is supposed to look after. The high cost of replacement of TV or Video is not perceived as a prominent problem, for such gadgets are notoriously short lived in anyone's hands. There is, however, a trend to give especially a 'player' (radio with cassette player) as a gift to older people who often do not know how to use these things. Sometimes such gifts are either stored away or handed back straight away with the words 'you keep it'. This arrangement helps the user to ward off any requests to borrow it, because she can always refer the request to the owner. She says for example: 'it's not mine, you got to find jaja for that'.

On the other hand, the Toyota has never been freely given in the first place but has been acquired by hard negotiations at many meetings in the cross-cultural sphere. Should a borrower damage the car all hell breaks lose as accusations fly back and forth. Yet when the situation has cooled down men join in fixing the car, and through their joint labour a whole cycle of male rights and obligations in the Toyota starts again. Nakamarra tells me 'toyota really men's thing 'cause they fix it all the time'. This attitude, while it is taken over from Western culture, is totally entrenched. There is a direct link to the cross-cultural sphere from where androcentric gender constructs are so easily transmitted and facilitated because it occurs between men. This
'Western' attitude is almost splitting women's rights from men's rights in the car and with it the control of social activities that require transport.

Assignment of ownership to one Boss and accumulated ownership rights through use (user rights are reclaimed at the time of death, see further down) give the Toyota a composite identity. On one level the Toyota is under the care of one individual and on the other it attracts many relationships through association with people. The contradictory identity of the Toyota stems from this tenuous relationship between individual control and communal use. The Toyota is continuously under pressure to be exchanged but as a thing the Community uses it cannot be exchanged. This is because it has through socialization, from its close association with the Boss, acquired traditional characteristics (Samson, 1982:135). As such it ought to become part of the pro-creative exchange system and, if not itself exchanged, then at least used for the purpose of exchange activities. The Toyota, it seems, becomes like Country, of which the kurdungurlu not the kirda are supposed to be the direct beneficiaries, hence the dictum 'kurudungurlu got to drive'.

This is a complex statement, and it should not be taken to mean that to be direct beneficiary of the bounty on one's mother's country is in any way applicable to the car despite the similar ruling. For kurdungurlu to drive would imply that he or she becomes enslaved to the kirda. It is kirda who calls the business and kurdungurlu has to respond to it. This would mean, in practice, that kurdungurlu has no discretionary powers over the manner in which the car is to be used. The kurdungurlu is in the service of the business at hand; in relation to the car this is what the kirda has in mind. For a kurdungurlu to actually drive the car on his or her own would be tantamount to ignoring the rights of the kirda. It is thus not practical for kurdungurlu to drive, but this is
the irony inherent in the car and not the ruling. The people at Nguru have recognized this because they never enforce this rule.

The pressure to exchange is based on traditional objectives but is only threatened when the Boss is seen to fail in his duty to 'look after toyota' or 'community'. There is apparently no distinction made between traditional and 'Western' requirements of 'looking after'. For example, when the Boss fails to turn up at mortuary rites, which is an increasing phenomenon especially among the young and alcoholics (Dussart, F. 1988), his hold on the Toyota is challenged just in the same way as when he fails to pick up the children from school or when he strands the car because he has no money to buy fuel. 'Looking after' is a socially monitored activity, a person who fails in this duty will soon be marginalised and not listened to. That means that while kirda rights cannot be taken from anyone, the rights to 'look after toyota' can be taken over by other kirda without altering the relations in the cross-cultural sphere.

Ownership in Warlpiri society can only be claimed to values and things that are in a sense earned. For example, when I kill a goanna on my mother’s country I have earned it by hunting it down and killing it and because my mother is kirda ('boss') for all the bounty on her Country I, as kurdungurlu, have inherited/earned the right to it for kirda is through Country looking after kurdungurlu. If kirda requests to hunt on her/his own Country, it is kurdungurlu who gives permission and it is kurdungurlu again who will get the catch before handing part of it back to kirda (see also Turner, D.H. 1989:147). This practice is more or less restricted to totemic species but nevertheless it shows that while kirda 'looks after' by representing, kurdungurlu 'looks after' by 'working', by executing the Law.
Like the Toyota, things which have an external source and access to which is 'unearned' remain under constant pressure to be exchanged so that access to them could be earned; for example the pooling of social security moneys at the card game so that it can be exchanged. Such games are hard work and can last for days after which just reward comes to those who stand in close relationship to the winner.

The Toyota has a temporal identity founded in two facts of its life:

1) that it will become useless one day (discussed below);

2) the Western fixation on one personality in the figure of the Boss.

The Boss has as part of his strategy become agreeable to the idea of leadership invested in him from the cross-cultural sphere. He accepts his responsibility to front up to the 'whitefella' at meetings. Yet, he is also aware that the people expect from him only to lead them to a Toyota (2) but not to lead them. The Boss would often say to me 'people don't understand government; they only talk in the camp; they never talk at meeting; they are not behind me' and thereby indicating that he needs the Community more than they need him. His interest in the Toyota is of course identical with that of his fellow residents but he has the added advantage that he can claim a double legitimacy to this Western object as I have already explained above. The true dilemma the Boss faces is that he can lose the Toyota to another 'traditional owner' ('boss') and with it he would lose his status as Boss. His dilemma becomes the Community’s dilemma and one can say the Toyota is like a Trojan horse: it appears simply to be a vehicle of transport, but actually it is an
agent of colonization which allows Western notions of leadership to deeply
penetrate almost imperceptibly into Warrpiri society.

The car's double identity becomes problematic:

a) when it breaks down and needs major repairs or even replacing or
b) when a person who had used the car (has been travelling in it) and
was a member of the Community dies.

In the first case representations will be made to the relevant institutions
(mainly Outstation Resource Centre and Central Land Council) for financial or
practical help. The Boss will draw attention to his financial plight by
reminding the Community that they 'got to help'. But whenever the car was
stranded in this way Community members invariably could not see the sense in
'giving money' when they did not intend to use a car that was useless. Some
people would spread rumors about the past behaviour of the Boss. 'He can't
look after Toyota properly; he goes town every day; he never there for going to
shop; he always late to pick children up from school; he only looks after self;
he gives car to anyone in town when he is drunk; we always pay for diesel; he
can't talk strong at meeting; all other outstation get plenty of new Toyota;
government got to help too.'

The Boss himself and his wife when in her husband's presence impressed
on me, as their only ally who could spread the word about their side of the
story, that 'people never help with diesel; they don't understand about cars;
Government does not help Aborigines in the bush; people in town are much
better off and they forget about us.' In this situation the conflict virtually tears
the Boss apart. As the Boss will preferably strand the Toyota at times when he knows there is 'plenty of money', a conflict between privately owned cars and the Community Toyota arises as well. Some nuclear family units will take off in their own cars for 'shopping' and, indeed, for 'filling up petrol'. People will make themselves scarce with the advantage of the private car, but this strategy is not available to other couples and women in general. Conflict at Nguru is thus again and again focused on the S/L-M/L, the Boss and his wife's mother.

The Boss cannot hand the Toyota over to his close brothers and sister who also are 'bosses' (kirda) at Nguru because that would mean he is no longer the Boss for the car and this will put him in conflict with his status as reigning kirda, being the oldest of four siblings. In a word, the control of the car at the time of entry into the Community is given to a man who is considered Boss by everyone. He has traditional rights as kirda, and his co-residents hope that he will use the car to help his social career, matching his status of Community Leader with that of his ceremonial status. People want to be proud of each other. The Boss of Warlu, a Jungarrayi, to whom the Nguru Boss relates as junior son being a Japaljarri, is managing to a degree to mix ceremonial status with Toyota prestige. However, I was told by my old Jaja, a Jakamarra (my MMB), who actually was one of the initiators of the Nguru Boss, that the Warlu Boss 'reckons he really boss, he still only young'. And a C.L.C. employee tells me 'he is notorious for his domineering stance, puts himself forward as ceremonial leader on every occasion but the old men tell me they are keeping an eye on him.' At Nguru itself the Warlu Boss is often held up as good example such: 'He can't (does not) drink; he talks strong at meetings; he says no to miners; he stops one place, never goes town.' These are the requirements the Boss at Nguru seems to neglect. One of the reasons why he
does not take it upon himself to weigh his performance in the cross-cultural sphere against his business performance is the fact that he is junior to the Jungarrayi from Warlu with whose Community much of the ritual engagements take place. He does in a sense have no chance to out-perform his senior 'F'. But what becomes clear is here that performance not just in the cross-cultural sphere but of internalized Western attitudes, like 'sitting down one place' and 'looking after community', is reflected onto the traditional performance in the sense that knowledge can be withheld from persons who fail to achieve in the cross-cultural sphere. This will eventually mean that the Toyota has to change hands. This is a decision the kurdungurlu have to make.

The interesting situation arises at Nguru that the patricouple which is in the process of taking over Nguru (Japaljarri-Jungarrayi) are the same men who chose to be the Boss's senior at one time and his kurdungurlu at another. Once the Boss came home from town visually shaking, I feared he had been on a binge drinking tour and that he had not eaten for days. I offered him food. He refused and said: 'I got trouble Yapa way, you are lucky, you can go away, Yapa, they can't run away, they find you anytime.' Later I asked Napananka what he might have meant. She shrugged her shoulders and said laconically: 'That one, the kurdungurlu make him dance, sometime.' This amounts to a threat of shaming an initiated man to take a lesson in the Law, 'to show himself'. But such drastic action was avoided, instead 'people started talking', they started to question his right to be 'boss for that toyota'. This situation arises in various forms in other Outstation Communities, Nguru is by no means an isolated case.

The threat to sack the Boss, to take the keys from him, arises at each minor failing. Sometimes it is simply a matter of the car needing new tyres or a new
battery which threatens the Boss's hold on his position.

Should the Boss be replaced, his status as ex-Boss is extremely low. In the cross-cultural sphere, he will not be directly consulted and called to meetings by Government agents on all matters concerning the Community, be these capital improvements or social services, or exploration permits to mining companies. Even permission to do fieldwork for anthropological research will not be asked of him. He also loses a considerable amount of respect at home because with the loss of his leader status he becomes a person of no consequence; only a real Boss can be lobbied for matters concerning relations with the outside world. In the case of Nguru, he can be replaced with an identical brother, but this brings into disarray age hierarchy and thus disrupts the pro-creative relationship between older and younger brother. There are hierarchical questions of 'looking after' involved not only between the actors but their offspring as well.

This analysis of the 'gift' of a Toyota to an outstation Community in accordance with the androcentric notion which only recognizes men as 'owners' and Community leaders illustrates that the car is an externally gendered vehicle of invasion.

Government agents of the cross-cultural sphere have no choice but to relate to a Boss. Eventually, however, they will not listen to a Boss who is not in control of the Community Toyota when it suits them. Internal conflict is perceived by government agents as a social situation disruptive to the Community as a whole. A Community in conflict is considered a problem Community (with a few exceptions), and the standard explanation is that the Boss is not showing enough 'leadership'. Such Communities will have less lobbying power when it comes to allocation of resources.
At Nguru, white government personnel have simply made up their own mind with which of the 'hosses' they want to deal, and this has created terrible arguments among the three brothers at Nguru. They accuse each other of 'working' behind each other's back, and this is a very serious accusation indeed. Partly this new development is due to the fact that the cross-cultural sphere is widening, and partly it is due to an Aboriginalization that is occurring in the cross-cultural sphere.

The 1990 report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs informs us that a Community of less than 100 residents has to deal with 'around 18 Commonwealth and State Government bodies' (ibid:68). This includes persons who are heads of Aboriginal Corporations, Aboriginal Councilors and recently ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Commission) members who are frequently Western educated Aborigines brought from interstate. The word at Nguru is that 'first we been slave for missionary, then we been slave for government, now we are slave for Queensland mob'. Aboriginal government agents become colonizing agents in their own right. Although the idea of bringing in non-locals is not a new development, it is not uniform. Basically these new forces are created as more and more Non-Aboriginal government employees abandon their paternalistic attitudes and embrace the ideology of self-determination. It is my view however that self-determination divests government officers of responsibilities without transferring responsibilities to local Aborigines.

It is vital to understand how the Boss constructs his identity in the cross-cultural sphere. As a Warlpiri man he will find it natural to negotiate face to face with men. The person he negotiates with, usually also a man, operates on the same assumption. Rather than asserting a gender identity on biological
grounds, the Warlpiri male will try to establish a gendered exchange relationship with his counterpart. Far from perceiving himself as dependent client, the Warlpiri man sees himself as *kirda* vis-à-vis government agents who are by this strategy put into the position of *kurdungurlu*. Whitefella who negotiate with Aborigines are seen to 'help us mob' and they 'have kirda somewhere'. It is a *kurdungurlu* who has endless supply and apparently unlimited discretion. He thus wants to get the government agent into a relationship of give and take. This would mean building up from the ground an exchange relationship which goes beyond the historical reasoning which says 'government got to help for what they did to us'.

A *kurdungurlu* who has endless supply and who never demands anything in return maintains control of a one-sided exchange situation. At least this is how the situation appears on the surface. Government agents never say why Yapa should get a Toyota for nothing, the debt of the colonizers to Aborigines is never put into words. Specific individuals may be too polite to question the motives for receiving a Toyota. Not only is this part of the strategy to keep the Toyota business among men, it is also impossible to ask people to reciprocate who have for decades made little effort to understand them. There is a lot at stake here. If men were to break the androcentric basis of their privilege they would deny their individual aspirations as well as their inherited right to be seen to be a good Boss. The men deny thereby that they are actually 'working' for 'whitefella' as they are also waiting to be called upon to really 'work'. Already I have overheard women warning their troublesome men that 'whitefella can't get Toyota like we mob, they got to pay for everything'. That is to say that people wonder when Westerners will show their true/false colors. Till such time as this happens the Boss plays along, and competes with other
Bosses from different outstations for this privilege.

**The Toyota and mortuary rites**

The Toyota has a social identity similar to other objects of lasting value. When a woman dies her possessions of lasting value such as sacred objects, designs and songs have to be handed back to FZ and when a man dies they have to be handed back to MB. Note here the gendering process of inheritance is simply reversed at the time of death. What came from F to a woman through her FZ must go back to her patriline while what came from M to a man through his MB has to go back to his matriline. Yet, we also note that FZ and MB actually are W and H, they are the exogamous opposites of the dead persons parents. As far as I could ascertain the M receives a gift of hair from a dead son cut by his surviving siblings. This hair will be spun and will be used as a type of passport for the mother, I was told. That is, when a woman should encounter a group of 'businessmen', that is men involved in initiation rites, on her journeys that might take her outside her familiar locality she will be able to proceed upon showing the hairstring as proof of her identity. I have witnessed the cutting of hair from a dead man and the handing over of it to the M but I have not witnessed the showing of hairstring by a woman to men during any trips away from Nguru. The F, by contrast, receives the body of the dead. That is to say, the dead are supposed to be returned to F Country for burial. The objects and the body so returned create a taboo on the 'business' and the area of land associated with the dead for up to two years. While the 'business' will again be handed down ('opened up') to niece or nephew as the case may be,
the body will with time be reintegrated with (the spirit of) the Country.

Other things and objects with which the dead has been in contact physically such as clothes and all types of utensils are burned or smoked. The camp or house where the person lived is vacated for the duration of the mortuary rites and will be used by a different set of relatives from among the residents or previous visitors become residents. While I was at Nguru, the Jilimi where I lived was shifted four times. The personal names of the dead are also never pronounced again. People with identical names, or things with similar sounding names, are addressed with the replacement word kumanjavji, meaning 'no name'. During mortuary rites the close of kin use sign language. Later, people are often addressed with nick names or titles are invented for them. A case in point is Chris George of Ananyinyi Congress who was first spoken of as Congress Midjidi (Miss) and then as Chris George and now she is called Congress Boss. It is also possible to shift to another language. This occurs with so called bush names that derive their meaning from plants, natural phenomena and things. As the people of Nguru are mostly conversant in Mudbara, Warumungu and Warlpiri as well as English, they have a great choice. I have become aware of the fact that the older a person is the more 'no names' they have accumulated and this means that, for example, Napananka speaks a very personal language which everyone in close daily relationship with her knows. The task for me to learn Warlpiri was immensely complicated by this.

While Western things like houses are put back into circulation simply by shifting the residents around, very close relatives often move away from the Community altogether. At Nguru this was always only done symbolically in the form of a statement of intent; for example: 'she got to live by herself in the
cave among those hills over there, for a long time'.

The exception in all this is, however, the Toyota. Only when a local resident dies must the Toyota be exchanged, it has become taboo because of the associations it had with the dead person. It thus becomes unsafe to use. Yet what happens in the case when the people with whom such exchange has to take place do not reside on an outstation or do not control a Toyota I could not find out. Similarly, I have no data of what happens to the Toyota when a Boss dies or whether the kurdungurlu status of the dead woman had any significance. I am, however, inclined to say the Toyota is exchanged only when there is a chance of swapping it with one owned by appropriate kin. In other words, the Toyota would always be exchanged if everyone had a Toyota to exchange.

I will discuss two cases, one in relation to the Toyota and the other in relation to private cars.

Ownership makes the car into a topographical element of the Country in whose service it is. Through its use it accumulates an identity like the Country and is exposed to claims and counterclaims of rights and obligations toward it. Like the Country it is supposed to be represented by kirda and adjudicated by the kurdungurlu but as we have seen above this relationship is under stress because of characteristics it carries from its link to external relations negotiated at the cross-cultural level.

Use endows the car also with the social and spiritual relationships of its users. Like a person the car acquires relationships to Country, but simultaneously it acquires the relationships of people as does Country. Unlike a person, its body cannot be returned to its Country of spiritual origin after death (usually father's Country, the Country where one is kirda) and unlike
Country it cannot last for ever. This is the dilemma which arose when a distant sister of Napananka died at Nguru.

A series of negotiations focusing on the Toyota followed the death of that woman. The Toyota had to be returned to her kirda Country but was actually swapped with a car from the Community and Country of her father’s Country because of the impossible task to get a replacement Toyota from the government under such circumstances and, it must be stressed, because the other Community too was an established outstation. This was done almost as if in licu of the body, for that was buried at Tennant Creek cemetery. I was told by Nakamarra after a long series of interrupted conversations and indirect questioning that 'before' when people were buried in the ground or in trees according to tradition, 'we remember for always where our people are buried, my mother tells me and I tell my children, they then tell their children, we can never go back to that place', it becomes a sacred place. I assume that since the dead are 'snatched' from the Country by the Government for burial at the cemetery, the need for something to be returned to the Country remains acute. The Toyota can to an extent fulfill this need. Indirectly, it could be said, the dead, instead of doing good by rejoining the spirit of the Country through their body, are now serving through the body of the car in spirit. I have lived through two distinctly different manners in which this occurs. The one is in relation to the Toyota after the death of a woman mentioned above and the other involves cars that were left as wrecks in the bush by their previous owners, two brothers, who have since died.

First to the Toyota. It took several weeks before the Toyota was 'returned' to the deceased's kin. While the car was still at Nguru the handing over process had started. Claims and counterclaims of who exactly was going to be
Boss for 'that Nguru toyota' were made. At one stage the car was stolen while parked in Tennant Creek by a couple from Ali Curung who tried to stake their claims on it. The police were sent after them and the car was taken off them. Interestingly, however, the woman was a classificatory MM (Nungarrayi) of the dead person and her H a classificatory H (Jupurrula). That Jupurrula is the Mr. Driver No. 1 I have already mentioned. Because of the taboo surrounding the dead and their relationships to others, it was impossible for me to find out on what grounds this couple might have staked their claim to the Toyota. The only reason I could find why it was taken off them was that they were regular visitors at Nguru and often travelled together with the dead woman in it.

The problems around the Toyota even shortly after a person's death at the Community highlights how a-social Western things really are. A most important ritual obligation was distorted into a fearful waiting game for some and a stressful powergame for the Boss. For, as I try to explain all along, the Toyota is producing conflict where there should be none. After a death in the Community or family there is always a form of amnesty declared. Not in so many words, but I have experienced regularly that previous animosities and strained relations were suddenly over. Everyone became friendly and cordial after mortuary rites. The largest and most successful hunting trips were conducted at such times.

It was not surprising when the 'new' Toyota (the exchange vehicle) was not forthcoming, suspicions arose about 'people might get sick'. The Boss at Nguru went into a deep depression over it. It seemed as if he were giving up in anticipation of the hard negotiations ahead that would assure his ownership claims to be transferred to the 'new Toyota'. He went on a drinking spree at Tennant Creek and was hospitalized for a few days. Soon after he asked me to
drive him back to town. There he approached the Outstation Resource Centre to help him get the 'new Toyota'. He even physically attacked the floor manager who literally did not know what hit him. The floor manager knew about the torturous deals on such occasions but insisted that it was not his business to get involved for that was 'up to the Community'. He did not fail to understand what was going on, but the code of 'self-determination' prevented all reasonable communication with the Nguru Boss who, by this attitude, was simply reminded that he is an Aborigine, a dependent client, not just another man. The manager put the violence down to the man's alcoholism. He then showed off his black eye to his co-workers as a sign of frontier bravery, but he never reported the Boss to the authorities. This was a form of declaring his male sympathy, he behaved like a mate. When, later, the people at Nguru got wind of what happened they were so alarmed that they were very reluctant to travel again in that Toyota.

The following incident too is an indication of how invasive and disruptive the Toyota is to the psychological well being of the people. Measures had to be taken to prevent disaster from befalling the Community which were generally only taken after a very real threat of violence had taken place. More for fear that 'people might talk' than of retribution by the ghost of the dead or ancestral powers, one morning Napananka, who is the leading opposite power figure at Nguru, told of the visit of three kurdaija men. These kurdaija are also called 'killer mob' and often used to scare adolescents when they misbehave. They can only be seen by senior persons. They came, Napananka told me in the presence of other women, with the intention of killing someone at Nguru. I questioned the visit since I was sleeping beside her and the dogs did not bark. Soon I learned that these men avoid everything white, that is, they do not
appear during moonlight or go near anything white, and further, they 'sing' the 
dogs into silence and submission. To prove that they were there and also that I 
could witness how she deals with them Napananka took me after nightfall 
away towards the treeline, some 200 m from the camps. A dog who was 
always on my side followed me. He lay flat on the ground, not making a noise 
throughout the procedures that followed. Napananka stood at a distance and 
spoke into the four directions of the wind. First she identified herself by name, 
dreaming and country and then she declared that there is 'no trouble' here, 
nobody is 'hot'. From the commotion and voices coming from the camp of the 
Boss it was obvious a major threat to the Community as a whole was 
imminent. From her own camp came voices of 'keep going, not enough'. I was 
instructed what to listen for that would give proof of them being behind the 
trees. One of the signs, the breaking of sticks, I could clearly hear, but I could 
not be sure whether the coughing I heard came from the bushes or whether I 
heard an echo from someone coughing in the camps. Flocks of birds started 
screeching all around, but the dog was absolutely still till the end.

When we returned to our camp, the Jilimi, all of Nguru was still and quiet. 
Napananka however had a terrible headache and assured me that now the 
kurdaija would go away. I had to give a witness account of what I heard to 
everyone around. I was also advised that should I ever be visited by such men 
they would ask me where a specific person was camping. I should say I don't 
know, for if I tell on anyone these men will then return to kill me for telling 
them where to find the person they went to kill in the first place. In a word, 
nobody is immune from the Law, from retribution, if social mistakes are made.

Napananka's power to regulate distressing conflicts comes from two 
positions she holds at Nguru. One is as woman, that is, she is M/L to the three
male 'bosses' and to the one female 'boss' in the Community. She also has, independent to her M/L status, juridical power over the place, the dreaming and the ceremonies because she is the reigning female kurdungurlu there. She intervened on this occasion simultaneously for two reasons: one, to finish off the 'sorry business', the other, to make the Boss move on the Toyota swapping. Although strictly speaking the 'sorry business' had been 'finished' at that time, the Toyota's presence in the Community prolonged it beyond the rites. This shows once again how the Toyota interferes with social time. Because the Toyota was not yet exchanged the amnesty period was in this fashion also prolonged, that is to say, the 'sorry business' was not altogether over. Napananka could under these circumstances not directly start an argument with the Boss, but rather started from a higher plane to dispense power by seeing the Kurdaija. I asked many individuals separately why the Toyota could not simply be repainted. That would not do, 'family got to get it'. Why the dead woman's kin could use it was also easily explained, 'nobody been using it from over there, for them it's clean'.

That the 'new' Toyota could finally be swapped with the 'old' one shows how deeply socialized the Toyota is already and how profoundly it interferes in Warlpiri life.

Napananka’s actions above were quite legitimate from either of her identities. The stress on her person is, however, doubled in that she is kurdungurlu and M/L to the Boss. Such doubling up of pressure and identities would not have been problematic in the traditional setting, that is a setting that is not complicated by Western things such as the Toyota. Her rights as kurdungurlu do not contradict her rights and obligations as M/L. But in relation to the Toyota these two roles become subject to the requirements of
the Toyota’s male gender. As woman she can articulate her power directly only to another woman. As kurdungurlu she might comment on and interpret the Law to women who are kirda at Nguru, as M/L she can ‘shame’ her daughter’s husband who, ironically, holds the (real) key to the Toyota which she has no right to claim unless she could take it over. This she cannot do because she cannot drive a car nor could she legally claim ownership as Boss for she is not kirda at Nguru. Even if the ideal prevailed at Nguru, that is, if the socialization of Western things were a fully fledged social process so that the internal gender of the Toyota would be unambiguous with a kurdungurlu driving the car (work) and the kirda owning and being driven around in it (represent), Napananka would still not get the key to the car because she is a woman and the Boss to whom the Government gives a car is always a man. Unless a female ‘boss’ too gets a car the access to it for Napananka and her fellow kurdungurlu women and men is very difficult. Or better still, if kurdungurlu were properly recognized as the ones that hold the Law up (are the ‘Lawyers’ as Nungarrayi tells me) and not just included as ‘traditional owners’ as was indeed the case at Nguru and other Land Claims, the story might be a very different one as far as men’s relationships are concerned. It is, however, a fact that women have not benefitted in terms of control of infrastructure such as the Toyota from the inclusion of the kurdungurlu for which Bell (1985), Wafer and Wafer (1979) and others argued so vehemently in several Land claims.

The unresolved controversy that surrounds the question of primacy to ownership rights between kirda and kurdungurlu is in any case not addressing the ritual relationship. For, as I tried to explain earlier, it is, strictly speaking, not the children of a woman of the patricouple which stand in a ritual
*kurdungurlu* relationship to their mother’s father Country. Rather, descendants of a female agnate, while being *kurdungurlu* of their mother(s) as kin, are in fact as members of the opposite patrimoicy *kurdungurlu*. This means, when anthropologists ask for the inclusion of *kurdungurlu* as ‘traditional owners’, they actually ask that a different patricouple, with *kirda* rights in another local Country, be considered as ‘traditional owners’. But this is not always what anthropologists have in mind, for example, the *kurdungurlu* ought to be included as ‘traditional owners’ because for part-Aboriginal children the only venue to claim their Aboriginal inheritance to Country is through their Aboriginal mother. Hale writes:

But quite apart from this, an important general principle is at issue here. The solution of land claims must support, rather than contradict, the traditional structures that are essential to Aboriginal community survival and cultural integrity. Explicit exclusion of the *kurdungurlu* amounts to the denial of a traditional construct whose existence is essential to the cultural continuity of Warlpiri communities. In turn, this would amount to a contradiction of principles implicit in the act itself, which seeks to define landownership in traditional terms. (Hale, K. 1980:5)

This is then how men become conspirators in the colonizing process despite themselves. As is the case at Nguru, there lives also a Japananka with his family who is primary *kurdungurlu* there, but as every *kurdungurlu* is *kirda* somewhere else and because he is a man he is, although in possession of a privately owned car, waiting for his Community Toyota to come through. He and his family are actually waiting to have the infrastructure of their outstation put in place not far from Nguru. It is for this reason that this Japananka never
got involved in 'toyota trouble' at Nguru. The idea of Community as collectivity of people who share their resources equally is certainly a Western construct, at least as concerns the car.

Napananka’s actions as kurdungurlu were not disputed by anyone. On the contrary, the fear of imminent disaster befalling the Community through the continuous use of the 'wrong' Toyota was felt strongest by the Boss himself. Her right, however, to implicate her S/L was resisted in the strongest terms by her own daughters. Their accusations ranged from threats to disown their relationship with her, with the words 'mother you are my sister' to the voicing of complaints to others and me: 'this old woman makes trouble for everyone, she does not understand, she is mad, I can show you where she hit my husband on the head before, she broke his arm many times'. All this was true but not all injuries were caused by arguments involving the Toyota. I was told in confidence by Napananka herself that many fights between M/L and S/L involved grog related incidents and curbing violent outbursts against his children and his wife. The conflicts around the Community Toyota arise through an incomplete socializing process in which ownership is not derived from pro-creative activities but rather through male to male negotiations in the cross-cultural sphere. These negotiations endow ownership to legitimate characters, but do it wrongly. The socialization process can also be seen as a process by which Warlpiri people resist external plans to assimilate them to Western society (Australian society in particular). I will discuss this in more detail under 'The Subversive Nature of Things Western'.

I will now discuss the second manner in which cars are being socialized. This is the case of private ownership. The story is very distressing and I refrain from identifying the personalities even by their skin names.
The car inscribes the biography of individuals and consequently also family histories. The story is of two brothers who once had a head on collision which each other on a bush road one night and have since died. One died of a cardiac arrest and the other never recovered from the injuries he had sustained in that accident. The mother of these men finally wanted to revisit their father’s Country and also hers which lie in the path of where the wrecks of both cars were left, that is, the scene of the accident. While one of the brothers was still alive the other’s car had to be removed before the mother could pass the spot safely. 'She might get too sad, she might do something to herself' I was told before we set out. However, after the death of the second brother the removal of the other wreck was somewhat untidy, parts of shattered glass was still on the ground, the tracks of dragging it were still fresh in the sand. Although we did not at first get the all clear to proceed and the woman started walking past the site in a large circle, when the all clear came through I went to fetch her as she was half way around the site. I found her with tears streaming down her face and wailing terribly. She returned to my car and we set off. As we passed the freshly fixed-up site she took a razor blade out which she always has ready should the occasion arise and cut a deep wound on the top of her head as is customary at mortuary rituals for women. It took another woman sitting in the back of the car some time to intervene and I finally got hold of her arm while driving fast past the scene, almost causing an accident myself. There is no doubt, had it not been for the car, past signs of the dead would have been a matter of memory only, for the land would have absorbed all disturbances through rain and wind. The body would have never been buried on such a track either but at a hidden location in the land. In this case the body remains through the car exposed on the surface as a constant
reminder which is associated with loss and pain. The car has the ability to pull the spirit of the land invested in people to the surface, the car makes shallow what is supposed to be deep and significant, the car is thus a cruel agent of colonialism.

I consider the above accounts to be indicative of the socialization process although this process is incomplete. It is the extraneous origins of the object and the all male controlled negotiations which make it impossible for the car to be fully socialized. What I thus actually highlight through the socialization of the car is the manner in which it puts undue pressure on relationships that would otherwise be harmonious. It seems also that if governments did not connect traditional relations to land with ownership rights to the Community Toyota then only the second manner of socialization would occur. That manner is just as disruptive to everyday life, but somehow has the potential of allowing intracultural responses to occur in relation to it without the social conflict.


(2) This applies for equivalents to the Toyota. While I was at Nguru, meetings at the Central Land Council were about a new tractor, houses, a shower block and ablation block and for a second bore, for moving old toilets or emptying full ones, for a school bus and a solar unit providing electricity for TV, Video, a freezer and a fridge. Of these items the tractor never eventuated and the school bus as well as the solar unit were wrecked within a few months.
CHAPTER IX

THE SUBVERSIVE NATURE OF THINGS WESTERN

Western things are subversive because they do not respond to ritual action for their continuous re-appearance, nor is their multiplication dependent on the pro-creative reproduction of social relations.

Western things are a-social because they have a tendency to distort pro-creative exchange relations. In the intracultural sphere this is, however, not without active involvement by the people themselves. The extent to which the Warlpiri try to conduct their social affairs in the presence of Western things and how this puts pressure on the very relations which are so affected is fundamental to the process of socializing these things for internal use. We have seen how the process of getting a Community Toyota engages men in the cross-cultural sphere and, while they are thereby privileged, they also experience turmoil and conflict in dealing with the privilege of the Toyota back home in the Community. But there are many objects that come into the community in a more direct fashion through individual efforts, and it is this which I hope to elaborate here.

9.1. WHITEFELLA DO IT LIKE DOGS

Warlpiri secure production through purely social activities which are
formalized in ceremonial practices. The regeneration of things or species is thus not a matter of recognizing natural processes in the Western sense of the term. Rather, their natural or biological reproduction is intimately linked with the social reproduction of relationships. A seemingly crass but apt example was given to me when asking people how whitefella marriage differs from Yapa marriage. They say 'whitefella are like dogs', and, indeed, comments on people in irregular marriages contracted in a drinking camp are also characterized in this manner. All this means that, like dogs, Non-Aborigines are not seen to have a social system that regulates reproduction the way Yapa have it. (Note that dogs are not simply animals, they stand in kin relationship to their owners.) It also means that whitefella live law-less because they leave pro-creation to purely physiological, that is, mechanical causes. I am not implying that the Warlpiri are not aware of the physiological facts of reproduction, but it does mean that whitefella do appear to the Warlpiri not to have any socio-cultural imperatives when it comes to sexual unions. Ingold (1990:5) remarks:

If Westerners belittle Aborigines on account of the simplicity of their technology, Aborigines are equally entitled to belittle Westerners on account of their primitive notions of kinship.

I could not find any separate explanations for the production of Western things like the Toyota or clothes etc. Also the idea that all whitefella are rich was never accompanied by a possible causal explanation other than the socio-centric explanation just given, namely, that whitefella do things a-socially, they reproduce like dogs with anybody and look only after 'self'.

Contrary to the peasants of Bolivia and Colombia (Taussig 1980: 13-22) the Warlpiri do not accuse those among themselves who 'got plenty' (Western
things) for being in league with the devil but rather of having made representations of their needs in the proper place and in a proper manner, of being successful negotiators. Taussig writes:

Those few who did associate themselves with the plantations and become visibly better-off from their work were held to be members of a new witchcraft association. They allegedly killed their relatives and even their children by turning them into zombies who were made to work on a distant mountain, driving lorries and so forth, where their witch-masters were said to have a modern town. (Taussig 1980:20)

His seductive analysis of a peasant economy under threat of capitalism from the peasants’ perspective in whose mind ‘The magic of production and the production of magic are inseparable...’ (ibid:21) goes a long way to clarify my concerns with the Warlpiri’s handling of Western things. But Taussig dealt with descendants of a people who were deported as slaves from their original homelands in Africa, they have a very different colonial history. I would also go too far if I were to say, as Taussig does, that Warlpiri production is only concerned with use-value as opposed to capitalism which is concerned with exchange-value. Nor would I claim that the Warlpiri’s involvement with Western things has any resemblance with proto-Marxist concepts. Taussig states:

The magic of use-value production draws out, magnifies, and counteracts the magic of exchange-value practices, and in this richly elaborated dramatic discord are embedded some rough-hewn proto-Marxist concepts. (ibid:21)

The Warlpiri do see that those who are better off in terms of Western
things do better in the cross-cultural arena; however, they see those individuals who do less well as failing to promote themselves and by extension their group. (Dussart, F. 1988) There surely is a premium to perform well in the cross-cultural arena, but in no sense does this imply to be in league with any magic forces. Bell, D. (1983) makes the interesting observation on what is commonly but wrongly called 'love magic', for yilpinji means 'love' which is the content of many songs and dances in ceremonies which women conduct separate from men. Men have equivalent ceremonies. She writes:

Love is a very poor translation of yilpinji but it is one that has found acceptance in the anthropological literature and been fed back into the indigenous conceptualization. It is a translation which feeds the Northern Territory male's notion of what women ought rightly to be about. For white itinerant road gangers and station hands with whom some Aboriginal women have had sexual liaisons, 'love magic' has been a smutty joke. It was something for which one could pay and then reap the results. It marked women clearly as sex objects. Acting with the support of some Aboriginal converts, the missionaries at Phillip Creek banned 'love magic' and labelled the practitioners 'witches'. ...... For Aboriginal men these debasements of yilpinji as 'love magic' and classification of women as sex objects allowed them an avenue by which yilpinji could be defused. Thus if some whites encouraged yilpinji, Aboriginal men could, with this new-found male support, construe yilpinji as 'magic'. (Bell, D. 1983:162)

There is then a distinction to be drawn between what Taussig above calls the 'magic of production and the production of magic' as historic concepts. It would seem that the Bolivian peasants not only have internalised Western/christian views of what must have been their indigenous (African) practices just like some Kaytij at Warrabri, but they must have forgotten that their views are distortions of their indigenous past.
The Warlpiri at Nguru, who were institutionalised at Phillip Creek and Warrabri (Ali Curung) like the Kaytitj, do not equate production and ceremonial practices although they speak of 'doing magic' when they sing certain songs to attract the opposite sex or, to mention just some of the many other occasions, when they use formal spells to prevent disaster or to help a positive outcome. There is a rite, for example, to dispel a threatening thunderstorm during a hunting trip; there is a rite to ask the Country to make game appear to the hunter; there is a rite to introduce outsiders to the Country; there is a rite to deal with koradaija etc..

I have never come across the idea that someone might take advantage of some rites for unfair gain. Some rites are exclusively performed for counteracting a misdeed (or for curing an illness, this itself is caused socially) which could have been caused by a social mistake or by someone else performing a rite in the first place. But my focus is on the negative outcome of actions involving Western things, or where the object of exchange is a Western thing.

Yapa got to give

Communities who 'always get new Toyota' are differently perceived from individuals who 'got plenty' of money or food or whatever. The former are 'lucky' because they have a Boss who 'talks strong' at meetings, and the latter are simply seen as being mean or uncaring. The Boss has to be generous and let others use the Toyota, and the individual has to be generous and hand things over to other appropriate individuals on demand. Hence a person who is
seen to have 'plenty' is seen to hold on to things and is immediately suspect.

    Turner, D.H. (1989) notes:

    It is not "sharing" [Aboriginal children] learn at an early age
    but the principle of "receiving from someone who has
    something when you have nothing."

    He further concludes:

    My point is that this isn't communalism, sharing, or even co-
    operation. Those terms are more appropriately applied to
    people who regard their property as held in common which
    these people do not. Rather, these Aboriginal People regard
    property as circulating from those who have it to those who
    don't. (Turner, D.H. 1989:147)

    This means, in other words, regardless of how the things come into the
    community, the pro-creative spirit of the promise is to keep them in the
    exchange system. Giving even in this context has to be understood as creating
    a commitment in the other to 'promise' and simultaneously to consider the gift
    as the fulfillment of a 'promise'. However, as I am also dealing with the
    Toyota, which clearly is a 'property held in common', there is a suggestion
    that two moral standards are applied to things depending on how they came to
    be in the hands of individuals and whether things are intended for the group or
    the individual. For we have seen, even the Toyota comes into being through a
    type of *kirda-kurdungurlu* interaction, albeit a distorted one. And more
    importantly, the Toyota is not 'circulating from those who have it to those who
    don't', to use Turner's phrase, as other things do. Only the circulation of the
    'use' of the Toyota is what is being demanded.

    What we are dealing here with is thus a process which promises that in
future things will come into being as they have in the past even if the past is only a recently established tradition. This is to say, the Toyota and other Western things have to come from 'Government' or 'whitefella' whichever way one might look at it. Social relationships are instrumental to maintain the supply of these things.

Although every single person in the community is eager to participate in the pursuit of Western things, there is no indication that, because one has first to 'work' for wages or get a job, that is in Taussig's terms, one is in league with the devil or, as the Warlpiri would say, one thereby turns into a whitefella, in a word, becomes a-social. Those few individuals who are in full time employment in the region are not envied for 'working' like whitefella but are chastised for being mean, for not 'looking after people' if they are seen to be flash with money or food, or can 'waste money' on grog, or have a 'new car all the time'. They are said 'to look after self not family', they become 'dogs' as so often self-deprecating drunks will call themselves. They are not praised for working, but encouraged not to jeopardize the pro-creative relationship they have established outside the community, and they are criticized for 'letting it go' when not distributing the fruits of their social labour. This is an effort to integrate the relationship the worker or employee has with the employer (Western society) into the pro-creative system of exchange. Failing to do so is tantamount to 'letting go' an economic opportunity as well. Under such social pressure, what happens is that individuals either do not hold jobs for long or they move to town. It becomes all too stressful.

I was present when one of Napananka's S/L had to face this type of stress. He was earning up to 700.-- Dollars per week as a police aid, working overtime. His wife Nakamarra complained bitterly in public: 'I never see that
money'; 'we looked after you when you was sick, you but hate us'; 'You reckon you policeman for family too?'. Her husband resigned a few days later from the police force.

Hence my second point is that the Warlpiri do not perceive that their system contains anything at all that exists outside social relations. They thus fail to see how Western things as such come into being. My understanding is here, while work/labour produces things (in the main this is foods), these things have been placed there by ritual production, hence work is an extension of the social relations to Country, and its products are established in ritual. Or, one could say, ceremonial 'work' brings people and species into being and productive work brings social relations into being. This is why it is possible for the Warlpiri to act as if the supply of Western things, like Aboriginal things, is secured only through social relations. It must be stressed again, production is subsumed in these relations. Or as Ingold (1990:11) argues: '...in hunting gathering societies, the forces of production are deeply embedded in the matrix of social relations.' This attitude also helps people to resist the perception that one becomes a whitefella embroiled in a-social production processes when in employment.

Shortage or unavailability of traditional foods is tantamount to some social failure, somebody not having 'followed the law' properly, like some people 'getting lazy for ceremony'; 'old people been pass away, nobody can make ceremony for this'. Similarly, unavailability of Western things is exclusively seen as a failure to maintain and cultivate social relations. The Warlpiri are on this account not interested in how Westerners procure their wealth. Whether they do it 'like dogs' in an unstructured almost a-social manner or not is not their concern, for what matters is that they get wealthy that way. One does get
the sense that it is not that the Warlpiri don’t want to know about Western production processes, but that they chose to ignore them. It seems that one needs to think the unthinkable, to think immorally when thinking about Western production processes, for already their reproductive processes are seen to be without law.

People become unreliable social partners when they fail to ‘look after’ those they call ‘my mob’: not the community or the members of the residential group, but those relatives for whom one is senior *kirda*. A person calls herself *kirda* often in relation to those she calls ‘my mob’. A specific junior set of relations is meant by this, usually comprising own children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, spouses of one’s grandchildren and their offspring, but others which I could not identify as well. They all stand in a *kurdungurlu* relationship to Ego. On many occasions such a senior *kirda* has been identified to me as ‘him [she or he] look after us mob, whole lot people’. A *kirda* of that category is approached continuously to ‘give’, ranging from amounts of sugar, tea or tobacco to items of clothing and amounts of money. Never is the quantity of these type of things specified: it is important only that they are ‘given’ for a reason and on demand.

But what is significant here, and what must be kept in mind, is that excessive demand only occurs in relation to Western things. This is because it is assumed Western things (food bought at the shop) are always available unlike Yapa foods. It would be impertinent to make demands of foods one knows are produced Yapa way and to put demands on anyone unless they have just returned from a hunting trip and have indicated that they caught something. This is done by sign language. First, those returning from a hunting trip are asked long before the Toyota is stopped whether they caught anything
and they will reply in the affirmative if an amount large enough for sharing out in this manner was caught.

In relation to Western things, it is therefore the kirda who is seen to 'have plenty' all the time by those who have a claim on her, on the grounds that she has a responsibility to 'look after' them. This is possible because Western things exist in limitless abundance, like money, which buys them and comes in small quantities but regularly with the fortnightly cheque. By contrast, traditional produce is said to exist in abundance too but its re-appearance is conditional on the maintenance of ritual, social relations and work but not on relations with whitefella.

But this behaviour seems contradictory nonetheless, is it not that the kurdungurlu got to work'? Yes and no, for what actually takes place is that the kurdungurlu are working as they demand. They work at keeping up the prestige of the senior kirda. This is exactly what the Boss does when negotiating in the cross-cultural sphere. But there is a limit to this. The kirda will only give as she sees fit to those kurdungurlu who are in genuine need or who deserve her generosity or in return for ritual obligations. If none of these criteria are met she will face poverty and often she will have run out of foodstuffs anyway. When too much time lapses before the next pension cheque is due she expects to be provided in turn. The rhythm of these exchanges is alternating between kirda and kurdungurlu on a weekly basis, 'Pension week' alternates with 'Miloweek'. Usually it is the older and senior persons who receive their money in 'Pension week' and the younger kurdungurlu generation receives their unemployment benefits, single parent support payments etc. in 'Miloweek'. If then the kurdungurlu fail to 'return' the gift of food, she will threaten to 'leave this place, my own country'. This recourse to
traditional threats is an extremely strong response to the young kurdungurlu generation who are taking for granted the continuous availability of Western things. That seniors have to utter these threats frequently is a sign of their insecurity and the young perceive these demands for respect as excessive use of power over them. It is in this context that one often hears, 'do what you like, I am a boss myself'. They become unreliable social partners for each other. Yet, because the younger kurdungurlu are many and the senior kirda few, senior persons are rarely missing out on food.(1) The real problem lies thus not with the indigenous social security, but with the fact that most foods demanded are Western foods. This is to say, as Altman has argued correctly, bought food is considered vegetable food and as such it is women's responsibility to provide it. Following the separate sphere exchange pattern we can now see that it will mainly be women who manage to feed each other and their children more regularly. While men are not necessarily missing out on these foods, they are less well fed as they tend not to buy or exchange these foods. Men consume much more take-away foods that are fatty and salty, drink more sugar-rich soft drinks and more alcohol. When once I broached this theme with Nakamarra she replied simply: 'You whitefella worry too much for health, we never worry, we live anyway.' Men's health is relatively speaking at much greater risk than women's health while women's personal safety is under greater risk from men. It was my perception that instances are increasing where women are beaten up in the Tennant Creek town camps when men have failed to buy food after they spent all their money on alcohol, lost their money gambling, spent it on petrol etc.

My analysis differs somewhat from Hamilton's who argued that traditional food was always given on demand and also produced on demand while
Western foodstuff runs out when the money runs out. She writes:

The good mother was the woman who gave freely to her children whatever she had; who fed them whenever there was food and searched for food when that was gone. A fortnightly pay cheque meant that mothers almost automatically had to become bad mothers. (Hamilton, A. 1975:174)

While Hamilton probably refers to mothers and their small children she forgets to mention that each mother has in turn the right to demand food of her own mother, sisters and aunts. As soon as a child can walk and talk she is receiving food on demand from every adult, woman and man, she cares to approach and often she is sent to ask for things from her aunt(s).

In comparing this demand-style with negotiations in the cross-cultural sphere, we can see that Aborigines are never put face to face with their own responsibilities. There seems to exist no desire Aborigines could fulfill for Westerners except to become like them. Client dependency is thus the silent name of the game in the cross-cultural sphere. In the intracultural sphere dependency cannot become entrenched due to the fact that hierarchical positions are held in the context of business at hand. As each person is kirda or kurdungurlu at different ceremonial occasions their positions in the exchange structure are not fixed nor are they transferable to other business, such as everyday food exchanges among kin. While seniority in business coincides with age seniority as we have just seen above, the more senior members of the group will always also be kurdungurlu, that is, at some occasion they will be working for the junior kirda in ritual. Prestige does not only come from giving Western things, but ultimately from the exchange of sacred knowledge of the Law and ritual performance know-how in ceremonial business.
There is thus talk of poverty in terms of Western things only. At such times Napananka tells me 'whitefella all rich, they all come here with caravan'. When I explain that only some have a caravan and that they still owe the money it cost to the bank she simply shrugs her shoulder, so do the rest of the people with whom I discussed this. It seems unbelievable that one can have a caravan and be poor at the same time. Napananka pointed out to me on many occasions that I was rich, for 'every time you go bank they give you [money], not me'.

Western things are not only a means by which the Warlpiri recognize 'whitefella' as socially distant and culturally separate from Yapa, but Western things have a similar impact among Yapa themselves. For example, men, who are pressured to be successful at 'meeting', come home from such meetings with grandiose stories of what big promises they could secure from some Institution. To my knowledge there was no local Aborigine working as public servant in any decision making capacity while I was doing fieldwork. Only field officers were locals and they promised the heaven to everyone, 'I get you that money, I know, I just got to tell them to send it out'. In the case of the then president of Ali Curung (actually Napananka's same son-in-law, who later abandoned also his job as police aid), he was beaten up several times for not granting favors to prominent individuals and their kin before learning not to make unrealistic promises. Non-Aboriginal public officers are often ambiguous in their responses, they do and they don't promise and ultimately blame the government for never providing enough funds, yet non-local Aborigines employed in high offices say 'no' more often. But then goes their reputation: 'We become slave for halfcaste, Queensland mob' says Naparulla from Warlu.
Chapter IX

These were some general observations. To indicate in more detail the potential for conflict and cultural dilemma inherent in all dealings with Western things I will describe one instance at length that deals with women’s clothes.

Women’s clothes

My presence and behaviour represented externality in this event and I was also responsible for creating a type of cross-cultural context for the event that was to unfold. I interfered with two interlocked events, one around the Toyota and the other around the exchange process by almost exposing Napananka as ‘wealthy’, as someone ‘holding on’ to Western things. Napananka, who took a strong stance against me, was justified on this ground alone for she could not have guessed that I had no intention of exposing her. Part of this discussion will be to unravel with hindsight what Napananka’s perception of me might have been. I believe I too was treated to a piece of socialization that day. As a consequence I ended up shunned and in tears. The personal trauma was great, and the social trauma disruptive to the everyday run of things.

Doing the dirty work for the Boss

I was asked by Nakamarra, the Boss’s wife, to drive the children to school in my car because she could not teach that day and because the ‘Toyota is not ready’. The Boss’s children came with me, but the children of his ‘MF’ camp,
Japaljarri, were slow in getting ready. When I told them to hurry up and told their M, Japaljarri's D, to make them speed up, he asked me accusingly, 'You reckon you boss now?' His grandchildren then refused to go to school that morning. When I returned from taking the rest of the children to school some 40 minutes later, I learned that the Toyota had been 'booked' the previous evening by this Japaljarri, a senior old man, to be driven to hospital in Tennant Creek for an urgent check-up. I argued with Nakamarra that we could have spared ourselves the trauma with the children had the Boss driven them to school in the Toyota as usual as he would have returned in time to take Japaljarri to town. 'You don't understand Yapa way', she said, and 'You don't know, people might talk'. This was said in anger and I knew instantly I had made a major social blunder. I will explain this in two stages.

You know nothing about Yapa way

In part this was entirely my own doing and in part it was by implication. I had talked 'hard' with the children and had no authority to tell their M what to do. I also had addressed his D directly rather than Japaljarri. This was a mistake I committed before at Warlu, but it had slipped my mind that I was treated like a man in situations where a senior man was present. I was denied direct interaction with women because I am an outsider and white. Aboriginal women do not encounter such limitations.

By implication, I was oblivious to what was going on at a deeper level. Japaljarri has claim to seniority and respect on many grounds. He is a close B of Engineer Jack and like him an authority on early contact history (see Read,
P. & J. 1991). He knows 'olden times'; he is a leading regional figure during initiation rites and settles many disputes; he is in terms of generation moity the Boss’s older 'B'. This means he has authority over the Boss. The Boss, by sending me to take the children to school before he himself would take Japaljarri to hospital gave an ominous sign of his unwillingness to oblige to the wishes of his older 'B'. I was thus doing the dirty work for the Boss. As everybody was attuned to this undercurrent, the school routine was flaunted. His question: "You reckon you boss now?" in answer for the displeasure I caused was also a measure of his impatience with the Boss.

**People might talk**

The Boss could not take him, for if something were to happen to Japaljarri he would be held responsible. Japaljarri was very sick at the time, he had an untreated kidney complaint, swollen legs and could not walk. Until that day he had refused to stay overnight in hospital for urine tests and observation. I was later instrumental in the negotiations that made him change his mind, as I had made the hospital staff aware that he would only stay for the tests if his wife could stay with him. He is today on medicine and a well man. Nakamarra indicated that he might die in their care and the Boss did not want to risk this for two reasons:

1) 'People might talk', meaning that he might cause his death by not caring properly and by not fending off the *kurdalja* who might have been sent by someone to kill him. Had he been a close elder 'B' this problem would not have arisen, but distant relations cannot be fully trusted. (see also Stotz, G.)
1989) The signs that someone or something means to harm him were already too obvious, he was very ill, unable to stand up and walk.

2) If the old man died in the Toyota, the community would be without transport till another community was found that would swap theirs for the Nguru Toyota. But this was unlikely as old Japaljarri’s actual F Country has no Outstation on it. These considerations doubled the stresses for the Boss:

a) he would have been accused for not caring and

b) he would have been accused for not keeping the Toyota out of trouble. This was simply too great a dilemma for the Boss and so he drove off without taking anybody anywhere before I returned from the school run. The Boss thus neglected his kurdungurlu duties to his “FF” but it was I who was persona non-grata, nobody talked to me from then on for some days.

Because the two Japaljarri are not actually close B, relations to Country were privileged over kin relations. The Boss’s choice not to abide by Japaljarri’s wishes was justified on the basis of his own primary relationship to Nguru. Through this he also avoided creating the ideal situation which demands that kurdungurlu drives where and when kirda calls the business. This would have meant an almost totally successful socialization of the Toyota. By the same token it would have ceased to be truly a community vehicle and the connection between Boss and Toyota too would have been diminished. This is to say, if we disregard that the Toyota as such cannot be reproduced by the Warlpiri, socialization would be achievable. For socialization during the relative short life of vehicles would go a long way to stabilize social relations around Western things.

The Toyota stands apart from other Western things because two contradictory powers are played out around it on a regular basis. The one
comes through kin and the other through Country. Both are fundamentally intertwined, yet the Toyota privileges relations to Country. In other words, the Boss has an interest that the Toyota does not become fully socialized for it would lose its status as a Western thing and the Boss would lose his status as Boss too.

External privileging allowed the Boss to play out his primary relation to Country. This is the basis of his privilege in the Toyota, rather than the socially more appropriate conduct towards a widely respected personality. The fact that the Boss’s patrilineal relationship to old Japaljarri is actually based on his matrilineal relationship to his Warumungu mother increased the distance to his ‘FF’ also somewhat. Yet, had the Boss related to old Japaljarri through his Jangala identity, he would have been seen to ignore the wishes of a kirda. For the Jangala is kurdungurlu to Japaljarri. But this was out of the question, both men seemed to have been in tacit agreement that the Toyota belonged to the kirda of Nguru.

Ultimately, it is the communal nature of the Toyota that prevents it from being even temporarily socialized, for while everyone could once walk, the Toyota discriminates as to who can ‘walk’ today. In the case of sick Japaljarri, I have been told that in ‘olden times’ people would leave the sick behind, they would put some provisions of food at their side and visit them from time to time, often only to find them dead. Conversely, the old and sick would often walk away into the bush and if they failed to return to the camp it was assumed the ‘kurdaija take im’. Later people would find the bones but not an identifiable body somewhere in the bush. In fact it is said of Napananka’s M: ‘Old lady, him walk into bush, we lose im then.’

The irony of this incident was that I had to drive Japaljarri to the hospital
a week later. He had missed one more chance to untangle himself from
dependency on whitefella. Such thankless jobs I had to do on many occasions.
This begs the question of why it seemed not to matter had something happened
to him in my car or while in my care. Is it a measure of how much of an
outsider I was? I hope to answer this question further down.

Finding the clothes

Next day Napananka and I made one of our regular visits to the rubbish
dump of a mining township. I found a teachest and a plastic bag full of
women’s and children’s clothes. I had the impression these clothes were
dumped there on purpose for the Aborigines to find, for it was not the first
time we had found good clothes there.

Normally I hand over to Napananka every item of clothing I obtain in this
manner. This time, however, I kept the clothes from the plastic bag, a frilly
dress and a t-shirt. Napananka knew I never wear that type of dress and I knew
that they were too small for her, but she claimed them for herself. I pointed out
to her that I found them and that I intended to give them to a woman who was
presently visiting the outstation. She responded with a look that spelled
disagreement. But I chose to say no more. I definitely wanted to test my
understanding and the degree of individual autonomy in the process of
exchange from beginning to end. As it turned out I did not go beyond the very
basics, but I learned a lot.
Chapter IX

Hiding the clothes

One always plans to make it back to the camp just before sunset. This time we were a little early. Napananka asked me to leave the teacheest in the car till nightfall, and I proceeded to give the dress and t-shirt to my distant granddaughter from Yuendumu. After dark I took the teacheest inside. I knew that Napananka was in no mood to make other women curious or even jealous should they see the clothes.

The accusation

Next morning a group of us sat around the fire having breakfast. There was Napananka, her two 'sisters', one of their daughters, and two of her 'mothers', of whom I was one. Napananka suddenly declared, 'Me got to go dirty-fellow, no clothes.' She repeated this several times. I thought for a moment she simply forgot that she had a teacheest full of clean and very much appreciated items of clothing that fitted her perfectly. I eventually said, 'But Napananka, you got it', trying not to give away our secret, as if I was just guessing. She countered, 'What you say?...I got nothing, warlka (lie, untruth)' and made the sign meaning 'nothing'. The sign she also makes after someone demands food or money from her, a gesture that may mean several things: I don’t want to give anything to you, or, you have no right to ask me for it, or, it can also mean, you still owe me from last time, so don’t bother me now. I proceeded to repeat my claim emphatically, adding that I saw she had some clothes; I was still under the illusion that the existence of the teacheest had simply slipped her mind. She
replied, 'You talk too much'. This was an accusation implying some breach of conduct, like talking for someone instead of giving the other person a chance to represent themselves. Everybody was absolutely still, and I knew I was in some kind of trouble, but I could not put my finger on it.

Punishment and reconciliation

The situation escalated as I was truly stuck for an appropriate response. All I could do was shake my head saying, 'I don't know what you are talking about'. 'You know' Napananka repeated several times. I had the suspicion that this had something to do with Nakamarra's displeasure of me the previous day. So I followed my intuition and shouted, 'I know now, Nakamarra has been talking'. She then lifted her voice one octave and said, 'You always talk too much, talk, talk, talk!'. As I refused to add one more word, she suddenly grabbed a crow-bar and went for me. I jumped up and ran a few steps. She shouted, 'You call me liar-liar, I tell you, you can talk now, talk!' holding the crow-bar as if she was going to spear me with it any moment. I simply took fright and headed towards the tree-line. It was inconceivable to me physically to defend myself, especially as I had no real clue at the time of how yesterday's events could have brought all this about in the first place. From a distance I shouted that I refused her accusation of having called her a liar (I could only take her literally) and that if I were to say more she might even have more reason to say I talk too much. She followed me with the crow-bar in a scaring position and I kept running. She then shouted, 'I kill you now, you can call police after'. Just then I turned around and saw her making some
gesture to the other women. At the time I interpreted this as: 'let’s see how much she can take', or, 'let’s scare her a little more.' As I know now with hindsight, she was suggesting to Nakamarra, who was watching from a distance: 'You see, I am teaching her a lesson for what she did yesterday.' Then the women called, 'Napananka leave her!', and my 'sister' shouted, 'Enough now!'. 'No!', shouted Napananka half mockingly now, 'I got to kill her now.' I turned and shouted into the winds for sympathy and help, an exercise I have learned from witnessing fights between women, 'I am all alone here, nobody cares for me.' Meanwhile the other women also raised their voices to stop Napananka. Looking back to the camp I suddenly became very sad and truly confused, I started crying bitterly. The women called out to me to come back, 'Everything all right now, sit down!' But I just could not stop crying. The children walked up to me and stared at me, and a small boy said pointing at me, 'Nampin crying'. Napananka put her arms around me, stroked my hair and said over and over again, 'You are my mum, I was joking, I’ve got to teach you.' I was truly stunned by then and even alarmed when she added, 'You stay here?' 'Of course; just let me drive to town now, by myself, I’ll be all right,' I said quickly. When I returned in the evening most of the women had left with visitors from a nearby outstation for a bush trip and stayed away for two nights. Nakamarra, the Boss’s wife, invited me to sleep at her camp outside beside her, while her husband and sons slept inside. I was treated like a convalescent for two days and the incident was never mentioned again.
A hunting trip gone wrong?

Besides the fact that Napananka used my accumulated misbehavior to vent her own displeasure of me, I am tempted to treat the visit to the dump site like a hunting trip gone wrong. Just like going for goanna or bush-bananas, people know where to go. There is no haphazard looking for anything anywhere. The same goes for discarded clothes: when they appear, they appear on the dump. The social rule of hunting is that the one who has first spotted the game or fruit hands it on to the hunting partner who then politely gives an appropriate share back but disposes of the rest autonomously.

There was no problem here because I knew this and behaved accordingly on bush trips. But what of dump trips? It did not occur to me that found clothes were already socialized in part. It was I who assumed that Western things are neutral to the mode of indigenous production. My problem was compounded by this initial appropriation, but I believe in fact the problem arose also from another dimension of my Non-Aboriginal status.

What use 'whitefella'?

It was something Napananka could not put into so many words. There is firstly my integration into the kinship structure by the allocation of a skin name, I became a Nampijinpa and not a N aparulla as some women who reside in Tennant Creek intended it. As Nampijinpa I am Napananka's M, her Ds MM (maternal grandmother). I am also Z to her regular Jilimi co-resident. Simultaneously I am the Boss's FZ (aunt), that is, Napananka's son-in-Law's
father's sister and that means kirda at Nguru. Napananka is primary kurdungurlu, Nguru being her M Country.

On the other hand, I never had a hope to appreciate fully the many social relations available to me because I was never fully socialized by the group. There was a limit to playing it 'their way', not only because of my ignorance overall, but because this would have meant the loss of a 'whitefella'. I was asked in earnest by the older generation women on later visits: 'Why don’t you stay here, all other communities got a midjidi (Miss, white woman)’. Thus similar to the Toyota, my status as an outsider had to be maintained. Any ambiguity, beyond the nominal integration by name, had to be negated at some point, thereby making sure I remained an outsider. Like the Toyota, which any total socialization would have virtually turned into a private car, so would I have become out of reach and useless for the community. By setting limits to the integration of the Toyota and the 'whitefella', these outsiders remain a more or less valuable asset to all. Anybody could ask me for a lift, for food, and money. This does not mean everybody did ask me, many individuals never asked anything of me. There was a tacit agreement in the community that I was privileging Napananka and I had the definite impression that Napananka had appropriated me before anyone else had a chance. But it also does not mean I did not learn to ask appropriate individuals for tobacco or tea, women and men, or ask for help when my car was bogged. I gradually learned to tell people that I had 'nothing', meaning not enough to share, that I was poor, that 'nobody helps me with petrol’, that ‘I am not a Taxi Driver’ etc. The response to my occasional outbursts always astonished me: 'Junga!’ (so true, indeed!).

Gerrard comments from Arnhem Land, 'that the fact that Europeans do not have the intention of ever really belonging positions them outside a system of
exchange based on social investment.' (Gerrard 1989:108/9) I believe this to be utterly naive, not only because such intentions cannot be assessed objectively but because this type of reasoning perpetuates the onesided argument that it is entirely up to Non-Aborigines to integrate themselves socially into Aboriginal societies.

As a hunting partner I was not really a bona fide partner. As a Non-Aborigine I am not seen to get clothes from the rubbish dump, I am supposed to buy them. Furthermore, I am not supposed to make presents of clothes which I did not acquire by way of spending money, and I made a present of something that did not actually belong to me personally. In the last instance this was because I did not let my hunting partner dispose of the dress and t-shirt. In the first instance it was because Napananka’s assertion that she had nothing for herself meant she had nothing to give to anybody and was therefore poor. But, according to Turner’s interesting analysis, Napananka actually portrayed herself paradoxically as someone who should receive rather than give. He writes:

Certainly you were more likely to give to those without who were closer in relationship to yourself, but that wasn’t the basis of the giving. Nor did you expect a return - unless you were without and then it could come from anyone (barring a mother-in-law!). (Turner, D.H. 1989:146)

The basis of giving, Turner explains, is not to be found without, but that to be without permitted food or to be barred from hunting in certain land areas is actually to have/own. It is from those who are prohibited to eat and hunt that I can expect to take. In other words, what is declared taboo to some is available to others. What is yours you cannot consume, but what is mine you may
consume. Put shortly: 'You have nothing now. What we have is yours.' (Turner, D.H. 1989:147)

Napananka thus clearly distanced herself from me. As a 'whitefella' who could squander clothes arbitrarily to quasi strangers, I exposed myself as 'dog' but also as someone who actually had nothing to give, that is, as someone who had nothing to exchange. And indeed, my social relationship to the visitor from Yuendumu was not acknowledged in terms of classificatory kin relations, I was not supposed to play this game with someone who was clearly a stranger to me.

So far this does not shed light on the invitation to fight. What kind of unwarranted interference did my behaviour, these clothes, the dump, the mining town represent on the intracultural plane?

My behaviour not only put in jeopardy a whole economic process of exchange that had to follow from the ownership of the clothes. I interfered in this process by threatening her need to first deny she had clothes in order to check not the demand for clothes but whether they had some themselves. She did not want to draw demanding relatives into her orbit without creating the promise for herself. By this I also threatened her chance to confirm herself as a generous person who looks after people properly. It is also in this sense that I understand her fierce attitude towards me.

The focus was not only my poor performance socially, the clothes themselves constituted a potential threat to aspects of social exchange structure internally. For had we for example found a goanna or bush-bananas, the question of ownership would not have been problematic. Fresh foodstuff cannot be stored or horded, and rights of ownership are clear cut in these instances. No debilitating outside agency is involved in the
production/reproduction or distribution of the 'Yapa belong'-food as the indigenous product is called. That was the case even where I was the hunting partner, for then my adopted kin identity took precedence over my Non-Aboriginality. I was told step by step what to do, to whom to hand what and when and at times I got it right, but when I did not I was not humiliated. That I could neither efficiently hunt, kill and cook such foods produced laughter but not scorn.

In chastising me there was a great measure of resistance to the apparently neutral value of found clothes. Found clothes always challenge a woman to claim them as private property and simply distribute them arbitrarily to other women and so create a wide net of followers who are indebted to her for no other than economic reasons. This is exactly what Europeans do. This would have been a totally immoral line of action for Napananka to follow. On another occasion, when Napananka brought home a large bag of clothes that were already partly socialized because they were given to her by a woman from another community, she opened the bag on arrival shouting this is not from 'whitefella', and appropriate persons came up to claim a piece one by one.

The intracultural domain

There are several other possible background scenarios which I believe Napananka might have taken into account from the intracultural perspective:

Firstly, Napananka had no compelling reason or obligation to hand anything to her 'Z' because they were sisters and because they were also distant sisters. As 'Z' they have to adhere to avoidance behaviour which
prohibits gifts/things passing directly from one to the other especially as they were all adults. This simply means avoidance behaviour among sisters who together danced at their brothers’ initiation ceremony. Initiation rites turn sisters into potential mothers in that they participate in the rite alongside their mothers who are said to ‘make men’ out of boys on this occasion. They progress by this into more delineated social identities also in relation to each other. For I believe the career of the ‘business woman’ is opened up at this point. This means the women enter a very competitive field composed at this stage almost entirely of sisters. For this reason alone there will follow some social distance after such ‘initiation’. For example, the formal expression not to pass things directly between themselves and not to call each other by name is identical with the behaviour they have to adopt towards their brothers, and the brothers among themselves as well.

Women give more than one ‘promise’ by repeated participation in initiation rites for they are at some stage nominated mother-in-law and as such they promise their future daughter or daughters which they may or may not produce, while men, who participate in person and in stages and in different capacities as they advance in knowledge, accumulate more than one ‘promise’ that way. The point which is never made in the literature is that simultaneously with men accumulating promises, one and the same as yet unborn woman may get promised to several men in this fashion; for example, in the case where a woman only produces one D. When this occurs men will be given as promise the D of their M/L’s sister or sisters. They will still call each other promise for they are considered siblings as their M are siblings. Should then the mothers be married to siblings as well, there exists hardly any difference between the promise of one Z and another of their daughters. My sister Nampijinpa, an
elder at Nguru, maintained the view that women too get more than one promise when I broached this issue in the *Jilimi* in the presence of her actual mother and others.

Moreover, by the same token, and this is the case at Nguru, two or three yet to be born wives may be promised by one woman to two or three brothers. I conclude from this that avoidance behaviour between Zs as between Bs is observed for the same reasons, namely to avoid competition or jealousy. This means, in other words, that women are not passive 'promiscus'; they are not 'exchanged' by men but they stand in pro-creative exchange relations with men in general and with their brothers and sisters in particular. Leacock made the point in her critique of Lévi-Strauss that 'the institutionalization of exchange between women and men, not the exchange of women by men, was the revolutionary solution' (Leacock, E.B. 1981:229). As there exists an incest taboo between Z and B there exists an avoidance behaviour between same sex siblings which prevents them from directly exchanging things between themselves. This is why Napananka did not hang the clothes to her sisters.

Secondly, they were all already mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers too. As such they are responsible for all their children together, hence they must also have danced together as mothers at initiation ceremonies. They must have passed each other the fire sticks representing their sons being initiated at one time, and they must have done so on several occasions in the past. As Napananka was the oldest among them her individual status as 'business woman' would have been taken into account as well. There was no doubt that Napananka was the most prominent among them. As Naparulla told me: 'A real woman is a business woman' and the women express this by admiration: 'All the women admire her'. A certain respect for her high status
would have added to their desisting to ask Napananka for clothes outright even only to test whether she actually possessed some and Napananka for the same reasons did not think she ought to give them anything. Or conversely, to follow Taylor’s argument, the women knew she had found something at the dump because by her denial she admitted it. In due time they might ask her to give.

Thirdly, it is also impolite to make presents to one person in front of others. Her mother had to wait. In short, there was nobody there to whom Napananka could have given anything: that nobody asked her was a sure sign of this. I have elaborated earlier that nothing is given to anyone without them demanding it. But as we have learned from Turner, they would have had to be in a relationship to Napananka which would have given them a right in what she had and, furthermore, Napananka would have had herself to own it but be prohibited from ’consuming’ it. As this is impossible to establish with Western things the only candidate for receiving anything from Napananka was her M and I.

I also observed that people will not ask for things they don’t also like. Yet, a sure sign of who is a business woman of some stature will be a person who asks people wherever she goes for whatever they can give and accepts what she gets. This is not to be confused with humbugging, which is a form of begging and predominantly occurs in the urban environment. Such a woman will in turn be able to ’look after’ people properly. Indeed, Napananka’s camp was a storehouse of things for children, men and women, even for me; she often kept a packet of tobacco of the brand only I smoked.

That Napananka opted for the social safety of business relations, that is pro-creative exchange relations, means that the clothes thereby received a social identity, their actual reproduction was irrelevant. It appears to me that
the mode of production of Western things is the point from which socialization of Western things starts. Where they first appear determines the manner in which they enter the socialisation process. For this reason the Toyota and the ‘whitefella’ have to remain partial outsiders. Full socialization would bring the end to the Toyota and the ‘whitefella’ and no Western things could be reproduced by anyone.

The Warlpiri thus respect and understand that whitefella produce things ‘like dogs’ by necessity. They are aware how Western things potentially subvert their exchange relations and because they also know full well they cannot reproduce them themselves they are interested that the whitefella keep their identity.

9.2. PRODUCTION

Pro-creative exchange relations are maintained in the hunting and distribution of game, but it is also clear that when people shop, that is, exchange money for goods, an effort is made to establish pro-creative exchange relations with shopkeepers.

I hope to indicate that the Toyota and money have something in common, namely, both ‘come’ from the Government. However, the Toyota hides the existence of money while money has to be made to disappear and be transformed into things (goods) so that exchange relations can be established.

By contrasting the modes of obtaining the Toyota and other things I will show that in relation to Western things the production process is different from distribution, but nevertheless, distribution takes account of relations to
Country and Kin simultaneously. Hence, one can say that generally there are similarities between the modes of distribution of Yapa things and Western things but there are differences in the production process. By introducing the Toyota this discrepancy will clearly emerge. I also hope to provide some answers as to why Warlpiri society tolerates men's monopoly in the cross-cultural sphere.

**The hunter and the division of labour**

Hamilton (1987) argues that although the economic base has changed for Aborigines the sense of selfhood is maintained and this is crucial for an understanding of Aborigines' aristocratic stance towards the State and its institutions today. She writes:

The refusal of Aborigines to regard themselves as inferior to whites constitutes at the individual level what is at the social level a refusal to become subjects of the State (...). The notions of individual autonomy, of each person being 'boss of him/her self', logically then emerges in the contemporary situation as an insistence on the rights of each individual to whatever benefits may become available under new conditions of social reproduction. (Hamilton, A. 1987:138)

The notion of being 'boss of him/herself' as I encountered it in the field was: 'I am a boss myself' or 'I am a fellow myself' which does not mean 'of' oneself as Hamilton suggests. There is also an assumption by Hamilton in this excellent article, through the use of the past tense, that because some things have changed for the Aborigines the Aborigines' perception of themselves as individuals has not changed.
The importance of colonial rule did not alter Aboriginal perspectives regarding their own individual importance. Further, Aboriginal religious beliefs and the power attributed to humans to determine production and reproduction may have fostered a self-image not only as 'aristocrats', but even as cosmocrats. (Hamilton, A. 1987:138)

Traditional social hierarchies, argues Hamilton, have become superfluous with the loss of the Land as economic base yet the traditional autonomous self which was always part of Aboriginal identity is retained:

Much recent research suggests that, rather than solidary groups, each individual (or perhaps sibling set) formed the nodal link for an egocentric network of relationships, many of which were asymmetrical (cf. Von Sturmer, 1978; Myers, 1986; Hiatt, 1987). (Hamilton, A. 1987:138)

The authors she cites above have to my knowledge analysed a situation in the present as they found it and, furthermore, these authors reported on specific Aboriginal societities and not on Aborigines in general as Hamilton does here. She further inserts her own perception of how things 'were' when she broaches her pet-subject: male power. She writes:

'Older men controlled younger men, and men generally extracted what surplus could be provided within such an economy from women.' (Hamilton, A. 1987:138)(1)

Because Hamilton distinguishes between every individual's right to land and a hierarchical distribution of the product of the land she is able to conceptualize the individual's personal identity as separate from the individual's social identity. At Nguru, which is predominantly a Warlpiri
community, this distinction does not make sense even today. Access and
distribution rights, although distinguishable from the point of material
practices, are inseparable, and such hierarchical differences as exist are not
drawn between men and women in general. The differences are between kirda
and kurdungurlu rights and obligations. Further, people often refer to
Countries in kin terms. In fact a similar situation is reported by Nancy
Williams in her study of Yolngu land tenure (Williams, N. 1986:38).

The fact is that foraging rights and distribution are structured according to
the pro-creative model of exchange and Land as such does not exist. Land as
economic base is a Western construct. There is only Country, and Countries
too stand in precise kin relationship to each other within a region. The Warlpiri
relate to Countries in all the existing kin terms. While it is true that a kirda
may hunt on her/his father’s country, the food obtained there may not be
consumed by that kirda. This is to say, like relations among kin, rights and
obligations to ’look after’ are also transferred to Country. A kirda provides for
kurdungurlu through Country and a kurdungurlu provides for kirda through
work and this is reciprocated throughout society. This is why hunting on one’s
mother’s country is preferable as one can also eat the catch oneself. One is
kurdungurlu for one’s mother, that is, one has to work for one’s mother while
in turn mother looks after her children at first personally and then through
Country. Nampijinpa and I have been fed by Napananka on her father’s
Country many times, she being our ’daughter’, hence our kurdungurlu. She
refused to eat anything she obtained from there. It was explained that only if
kurdungurlu touches kirda’s lips with some of the food would Napananka be
able to eat it. I was not game to perform this ritual on my own and my sister
Nampijinpa was not inclined to return anything to Napananka because it was
her favorite food, bush potatoes. But then Nampijinpa could very well have indicated with her refusal to part with it in full knowledge that Napananka may refuse to accept it because Nampijinpa is not in a primary *kurdungurlu* relationship to Napananka's father's Country. This was also reflected in the fact that Nampijinpa is a classificatory 'mother' of Napananka as she is indeed older than Nampijinpa. I asked if she only refused to eat because this was one of her totemic species and she said no, from another Country she can eat them, only 'my own Country' she cannot eat anywhere.

**The hunter and distribution**

It is important to see that economic relations to Country are not a one-to-one affair between the individual and the Land. Much depends on who is present when the distribution of food takes place (Turner, D.H. 1989:142). Another example shows this even more clearly. Napananka and I caught a large kangaroo one day on her FM Country, belonging to Naparulla, where she is secondary *kurdungurlu*. She passed the tail to a Japangardi, her classificatory father, who himself relates to the Country as primary *kurdungurlu*, the Country being his M. Napananka's choice here was not to relate to Naparulla's Country as Z/L but rather as FM; it was made on the basis of Japangardi's presence. This is what generally is considered the egocentric dimension of socio-economic relations but, contrary to Hamilton's interpretation, it is not the basis of individual identity as such, for it is still kinship relations, classificatory or genealogical, which inform individual identity (see Hamilton, A. 1987:138 above).
There was thus no impediment for both to take from this Country belonging to a Jupurrula-Jakamarra patricouple. Yet, because it was Napananka who hunted down the game and killed it, she passed the part of the kangaroo normally reserved to men to her 'father' because he was present. Had her son or husband been there at the time it would have gone to them for Jupurrula is Napananka's husband and Jakamarra her son. As both men are kirda there Napananka would have been in the position to turn the kangaroo into a permitted food for them. Napananka herself, however, ate the hunter's share, that is the liver and the testicles. The rest of the meat went to her mothers, her daughters, and via them to her sons-in-law and her grandchildren.

She ate exactly what conventional analysis indicates that men eat under these circumstances. Napananka told me: 'we [women] always kill em big ones too'. All we needed was two dogs and a crowbar plus a fire around the bushes where Napananka knew kangaroos go for their rest during the day. In sum, one could conclude from this that hunters are not male because they are men but because they are hunters. This type of gendering is totally invisible in androcentric ethnographies (Head, L. and Fullagar, R. 1991:50).

What this example shows is that the division of labour in relation to the things produced is not as clear cut an affair between the sexes as is generally assumed. This also means that distribution is not affected by the sex of the producer but by her kin relations. This brings us back to the importance of gender rather than biological sex because it would seem the sex of the hunter or gatherer is irrelevant.

My Warlpiri data thus differ from Altman's (1987) findings among the Gunwinggu. He has based his whole analysis of East Arnhem Land outstation economies on the fact that a division of labour which strictly divides society
into women as gatherers and men as hunters is traditional and it continues. He writes:

Today, as in the past, gathering of bush carbohydrates remains the women's domain, but little is collected.(Altman, 1987:42)

And in regard to men's economic activities he writes:

Production of high protein foods is men’s domain; hunting prowess is linked to men's status in Gunwinggu society and has aided the resilience of the hunting economy, and most importantly, the contemporary food production system is more efficient in producing protein foods.(Altman, 1987:42)

Greater efficiency in hunting has three causes according to Altman. One is the introduction of new technology, such as the gun, and the other is the introduction of large ferals, such as the buffalo and cattle, the third is that implements are covered with social taboos which prohibits some to be used by women and others by men, but only men's implements have been improved significantly with, for example, the introduction of the gun. As to the introduction to new technology Altman has this to say:

Hunting. This is predominantly a male activity because women are debarred from using spears and guns. Women do hunt guannas, bandicoots, and field rats. (Altman, 1987:75)

This is also true for Warlpiri outstations, but nevertheless, women use the crowbar in ways Altman seems to ignore. A crowbar is used like a spear, it is often thrown at game, and since it is made of iron and has a very sharp blade-shaped point (forged by the women themselves) it can be seen as increasing
women's productivity of protein foods as well for it is more effective than the wooden digging stick. Altman would have a point, had he made the comparison, in suggesting that the gun represents a much greater improvement to the spear than the crowbar to the digging stick. While this still means that men predominantly hunt larger game, it does not mean that women do not hunt large native game. And conversely, while women predominantly hunt small game and gather vegetable foods, it does not mean that men do not hunt small game too and that they don't gather vegetable foods too. Anderson's review article of Altman's text has this critique to make in relation to Altman's observation of production practices:

Apart from epistemological complaints, there is always the question of the observer's lack of omnipresent powers. For instance, I think Altman in arguing the relative contributions of males and females to a subsistence diet, underestimates the amount of food that women eat while they are working. (Anderson, 1990:67)

He too does not comment on what amount of vegetable foods, like berries, nuts and fruit men eat while hunting.

Despite the fact that for Western things 'there is no bismi' (ceremony) (Altman 1979:182) or as the Warlpiri say: 'there is no Law' for these things, exchange relations can and are maintained in many instances with bush carbohydrates and bought flour, tea, sugar and tobacco as if they were identical.

I am not trying to compare Arnhem Land economy with Warlpiri economy; rather, I try to contrast them. Altman's study is based on empirical and quantitative data. He seems to suggest that everyone spends all their money on staples and that occasionally men spend it on alcohol and ammunition. From
my data at Nguru the situation is that men tend to buy take away food, tobacco, alcohol and ammunition in the main, along with occasional small quantities of sugar and tea. I never saw a man buy flour or oil. Women buy these in great quantities, in drums and tins. But women also regularly buy fresh meat and all the so called 'children's food' like soft drinks, bubble gum, chips, lollies etc. More significantly, women buy most of men's clothes as well. Admittedly this allows women to demand money from men. Maybe it would be likely that shopping as such has become more of a women's activity because they shop more frequently. Men spend most of their cash on the car, on petrol and repairs. There is no doubt at all that women are the main providers today. Thus, the distinction Altman makes between bush carbohydrates and those bought at the shop in terms of the diminishing status of women's economic contribution within the subsistence economy seems to have limited relevance for the Warlpiri as they do not distinguish between subsistence economy and market economy.

Why is the Toyota produced by men?

Altman also makes the interesting observation:

In local terms the most sophisticated items of technology are motor vehicles and boats. However, when these items are available they tend to be monopolised by men. (Altman, 1979:93)

Unfortunately he does not tell us why this should be so. Altman leaves this tendency to one side of his analysis, except to say that the car is as yet not a
production implement (Altman, 1979:124 quoted above). Yet he also states:

Despite the fact that motor vehicles (or boats) are the most highly valued marked goods in the contemporary context, they are also the very commodities that Gunwinggu have the greatest trouble in controlling. (Altman, 1979:185)

The same is true for the Toyota at Nguru: it privileges men and thus it becomes a male thing, and it causes so much social strife. But unlike the kangaroo, because Western males are behind the gendering of the Toyota, any woman who might want to claim it would be an anomaly. This is quite opposite to the Warlpiri notions of gender which are portable and have no stigma attached to them as we have just seen above, hunting or gathering activity is not strictly the domain of one sex or the other. The individual who either acts as male or female does so on social grounds and, as the case might be, is male or female at that instance regardless of biological sex. Warlpiri society tolerates men’s domination of the cross-cultural sphere because the sex of the ‘hunter’ is irrelevant. Yet to the Westerner gender and sex identity are conceived as one and hence the Toyota, because it is produced by men, appears to have a male gender identity for both, Warlpiri and Westerner alike.

Money

In contrast to the Toyota, which is publicly handed over to the Boss, other things do not enter Warlpiri society through deals between men. This does not mean that Warlpiri social criteria of rights and obligations are not applied in both cases. The act of going looking for things and shopping are not
differentiated: to buy something is to 'find' something, and I also heard the term 'I killed him' to connote 'I bought it'.

The difference with the Toyota is that negotiations for its acquisition hide money. In other words, money and the Toyota have in common that they 'come' from the Government. (3) The difference between the two is that the Toyota has already an identity as an object that is in part socialized as a male thing. For this reason men at the cross-cultural sphere are not just hunters whose sex is irrelevant, but also exchange partners whose gender matters. They don't negotiate for money to buy a Toyota, but rather negotiate for the Toyota itself. Money is neutral as a thing and evades socialization because of this. What the people thus do is socialize the exchange relations with the shop keeper.

The notorious demand by Aborigines at Tennant Creek for 'booking down', to buy on credit, is the effort par excellence to transform shopping into a socially reproductive activity. This is not contradicted by the fact that most people only buy on credit for there is hardly ever any cash left over after old debts are repaid. To book down is a strategy employed also for the practical reason not to be obliged to 'give money away all the time' to relatives, for money does not constitute a 'gift' as such for 'giving' in itself does not constitute a social act. There is also no telling whether the repayment exceeds the loan or vice versa (Sansom, B. 1988). Money is often used in a tokenistic manner to generally acknowledge others or as payment for services rendered, such as participation in mortuary rites.

Money needs to be first converted into things before it is of any use. This is not to say that the instances of naming money in order to legitimize it socially, such as: 'give me money for tobacco', 'give me money for kuyu
(meat) etc. are not increasing. But this can, of course, lead to a counter
taking. For example, I have witnessed many times a refusal to give money
with the words: 'Government been give me this for children'. So money is
given an identity as soon as there arises the opportunity. The idea of this mode
is thus not only to obliterate money but to obliterate the nature of money. With
the Toyota this is not necessary, for it is the Government itself which
converted 'Aboriginal money' into a thing (and thereby hides its own
patronizing attitude that Aborigines in the bush are not able to deal with
money sensibly). The Toyota thus hides money, and by doing so exposes the
colonial attitude towards Aborigines. Similarly, things bought at the shop erase
money so that a proper social relationship can be established.

Only shopkeepers who are willing to accept the booking down business
will be well patronized. Once my sister went to the Feedbin in Tennant Creek,
a store run cooperatively by local Aboriginal Organizations, where she knew
she had credit. It was the start of the cold weather, and Nampijinpa loaded up
her trolley with a blanket and foodstuff. At the counter she was told by an
Aboriginal woman from Queensland who is director of Ananyinyi Congress
Aboriginal Health Organization with shares in the store, that from now on
booking down will only be for a certain maximum amount, an amount
Nampijinpa had exceeded by the purchase price of the blanket. Nampijinpa
did not want to believe her ears when the woman said, 'We are not a charity
organization' to which Nampijinpa replied, angrily: 'We never worry for
money anyway'. I advised Nampijinpa to hand back the blanket and promised
her to find one much cheaper at the second hand shop. As we left she said to
me, 'That woman has shamed me'. She was very distressed. Shame is too
complex an issue to be treated in depth here. I venture, however, the
interpretation of Nampijinpa's shame as the loss of prestige as 'hunter', as producer, tantamount to having been found out that she transgressed on someone else's Country and that by this she failed her social duty to ask permission to 'hunt' there. I understand the attempt to contain the 'booking down' habit was not successful.

Because booking down effectively erases money, the whole act of shopping becomes an event where social relationships are maintained and renewed with money from the Government paid to Aborigines. The Warlpiri reason: 'Government help Yapa, they got to, they take our land, for what they have done'. This perceived act of compensation is transformed into things at the shop. The shop or the shop-keeper is only of secondary importance here for the production contract is seen to be between Government, which sends the cheque, and the shopper. Altman writes:

> Given that people usually procure carbohydrates and tobacco - goods that only twenty years ago were luxuries - it is not surprising that the Government that provides cash for these goods is viewed as a source of infinite wealth. (Altman, 1979:181)

On one level of interaction the people at Nguru see themselves as economic partners with the Government, the infinite wealth of their Country has been taken from them, and is compensated with money. It is only fair in terms of money, for the Government holds the secret knowledge that produces it. Aborigines thus do not see themselves to be nor do they behave like clients in shops; they behave like exchange partners.

On another level the importance put on 'booking down' is an effort to also engage the shop-keeper in the social mode of doing things 'Yapa-way'. One
could say that there exists a cross-cultural sphere where traditional Aboriginal concerns run the agenda. The distressing truth is, however, that shopkeepers and other such contacts never so much as guess what is going on. As Nampijinpa’s worry about respect and shame shows, exchange relations are measured by appropriate social involvement.

The relationship itself with the shopkeeper is treated in terms of its potential to be pro-creative. The shopkeeper’s insatiable demand for money is respected because this is the ‘whitefella way’, ‘they like money’. Yet, there is no doubt that people are ‘making whitefella rich’(4) especially when a shopkeeper tries to contain debts from ‘booking down’ and refuses to hand over any more things. The word then goes round that such and such a shop-keeper ‘him robbing people’ with the result that neither will debts be repaid nor future business assured. The production of Western things by exchanging money for goods is thus a social issue that affects Aborigines and Westerners alike.

(1) This changes however when old people are no longer actively involved in business. As I have mentioned already, inactive old people become icons of the Dreaming and are venerated as such but more or less neglected in terms of food exchanges. Even though they receive regular pension cheques, they often rely on the young to do their shopping for them, this way moncys are often misappropriated and there is little stockpiling of foodstuff by the very old. Also, unless they are close relatives, young people are reluctant to care for the old and frail in case should ‘something happen’ to them, that is, as in Japaljarri’s case, they cannot shoulder the responsibilities involved should they fall seriously ill or die in their care.

(2) I refer to this quote when I discuss Altman’s text on hunter-gatherer economies in Arnhem Land. For it is ironic that what Hamilton intended as a feminist critique of men’s exploitation of women’s economic power is taken as uncritical fact by Altman to support his own analysis.
(3) At Nguru, three persons, two women and one man, out of 25 adults had only periodic employment during 1988 and 1990. The majority received money in the form of cheques directly from the Government either as unemployment benefit, single parent payment or pension.

(4) In 1988 some people put a sign up at the north end of Tennant Creek saying 'Tennant Creek Closed, ABTA run out of funds'. ABTA stands for Aboriginal Benefit Trust Account. This was obviously put up by Non-Aborigines, but the message was selfdefeating.
CONCLUSION

My aim was to present a thesis on colonization as a gendered process from the perspective of the residents of a small Warlpiri Outstation Community.

The most significant part of this project was to develop the Warlpiri concept of *kirda-kurdungurlu* relations as a gender regime. I was then able to investigate how the Warlpiri take issue with Western influences that appear to threaten the fundamentals of Warlpiri society, which I characterized as a pro-creative system of productive relations.

Noting the lack of cross-cultural sociality between the residents of Nguru and non-Aboriginal Australians, the Community Toyota presented itself as a tangible object of research. More than any other changes that were imposed over the recent decades, the Toyota reflects a historical link to colonial practices of the past which today takes the form of privileging male participation on the cross-cultural frontier.

My study of how this male bias articulates responsibility and control over the Toyota within Warlpiri society shows that an effort is made by the Warlpiri people to resist the subversive potential of Western things which threaten to alienate productive relations between women and men in particular. The manner in which they do this is to subject Western things to a process of socialization. This re-gendering, as this process can also be called, takes place with the aim to restore balance to social exchange relations.

The intracultural effort to socialize Western things and to simultaneously cultivate cross-cultural relations, I found, shows an active involvement in the colonizing process. The cultural integrity which the Warlpiri people display in dealing with the realities of the present situation shows they position
themselves strategically to Western society in such a way that tries to minimize internal conflict and maximize access to Western things. I understand this as a differential colonizing process.

I endeavored to keep my 'analytical constructs located in the society that produced them' (Strathern 1988:8). It became obvious during my research that *kirda-kurdungurlu* reciprocity not only structures ritual but that it is itself a structured and a gendered relationship which is fundamental to all exchanges. My aim was to show how the external Western system which dichotomizes female-male relations pressures Warlpiri exchange to become male dominated.

I also indicated that the *kirda-kurdungurlu* system can be shown to construct individuals differently. Strathern's Melanesian example is apt:

> Melanesian persons are as divindually as they are individually conceived. They contain a generalized sociality within. Indeed, persons are frequently constructed as the plural and composite site of the relationships that produced them. (Strathern 1988:13)

Because the *kirda-kurdungurlu* system also elaborates descent, affiliation, kinship and local identities, it structures these aspects on a fundamental Warlpiri-specific model of the pro-creative process. Most significant is the fact that social intercourse and exchange is always referenced on female and male pro-creative powers conceived as Mother or Father. I could not find any evidence that in women's or men's gender-specific rites women only concern themselves with Mother and men only with Father. I concluded from this that the separate spheres as analyzed by Bell (1983) do not concern themselves exclusively with one gender-identity, as the same-sex sphere would suggest. On the contrary, neither women nor men as such are incorporated and none is
empowered to regulate how they could differentiate themselves from others as a group.

If any division existed between women and men on account of their sex, gender would appear to be the most guarded secret in Warlpiri society. Matrimony would be the only occasion where gender could be acknowledged. I argue the opposite, that matrimony is the only occasion were the sexes are acknowledged for their difference. For after all, gender is an identity structured in terms of a relation to, while sex is an identity structured in terms of a division from.

The converse interpretation of the separate spheres as a social division by gender only, when the division is clearly by sex, would make nonsense of exchange as a gendered process and of other Warlpiri social structures for then exchange would have to be practised between actual women and men and this would make nonsense of the sexual division. Merlan (1988) writes in relation to Bell’s and Hamilton’s stress on sexual segregation that: ’Aboriginal ideas and practices concerning sexual separation cannot be taken over directly as a model of social relations’ (Merlan, F. 1988:27)

My contention is that Warlpiri society is divided by sex but united by gender. There is thus neither a division by sex nor by gender; women and men are neither incorporated as separate groups nor are they pitted against each other on any issue. People and their relations to others are gendered, and the sexual division of the separate spheres corresponds more plausibly to the exogamous nature of Warlpiri society based on the primary incest taboo and hence the social differentiation between sister(s) and brother(s). Only in this sense is the division by sex a social division of productive relations.

I did not set out to contradict the notion that Aborigines as a category of
people can generally be seen 'as an historical phenomenon' in the sense that: 'They made themselves as well as being made' (Attwood, 1989:159, 150). Yet, Attwood exposes a stereotypical approach to gender relations. This is apparent from his presumption that Aboriginal societies are male dominated; it is this which makes his account androcentric if not ethnocentric too. This type of text is part of the discursive practice that makes women the Other of male discourse. As a consequence his analysis of the Aboriginal reaction to the imposition of a new regime of the division of labour by sex only adds to the stereotypical interpretations of Aboriginal experience and thereby distorts their historical contribution. He mentions that:

Aboriginal men were reluctant to be agriculturalists because they regarded it as women's work - in the traditional economy women dug with digging sticks and gathered native vegetables - and therefore as **degrading**. (Attwood, 1989:60/1) (my emphasis)

Another example deals with 'violent behaviour' against European males. This, he writes, was due to the fact that,

Aboriginal men...felt their sexual authority over their female kin was challenged by European men. (Attwood, 1989:132)(my emphasis)

I believe that to Carter's (1987) critique of imperialist historiography a critique of sexual imperialism needs to be added. For it was also my intention to further a feminist critique which in Trinh's words is necessary in that:

In today's context, to defend a gendered way of living is to
fight for difference, a difference that postpones to infinity and subverts the trend toward unisex behavioral patterns. The story of gender-as-difference is, therefore, not "the story of what has been lost" (Illich), but the story of that which does not readily lend itself to (demonstrative) narrations or descriptions and continues to mutate with/beyond nomenclature. (Trinh, 1989:116)

In the real situation of the differential colonizing process, whereby one subjectivity is pitted against another, domination comes from the person who belongs to a culture with a discourse of the other as Other. The result is tragedy, violence and destruction for many Aborigines. As anthropologist I avoided direct confrontation where I could by partly allowing myself to be integrated into Warlpiri society and by partly sacrificing some Western aspects of myself. But such hybrid existences are only temporary interventions in Warlpiri sociality. Since the time I did research in the Community I have been able to maintain personal relationships with some of the individuals without hybridizing myself. This means that we argue a lot.

I hope that my ethnography is not seen as an effort to establish empirical facts about the Aborigines as the Other of Western discourse. I tried to do the opposite, namely to give an indication of what might constitute Westerners as Other of the Warlpiri's objects of discourse.

I must also stress that Warlpiri identity is not a blueprint of their ethnic identity in Australian society. For I question whether one (Western) discourse can reflect multiple subject positions. Ironically, if any one discourse were able to do this, it would be the Warlpiri one. That is to say, the Warlpiri do not have to make up a unified concept of white non-Aborigines as their lack, or as their repressed Self. The Warlpiri, for example, cannot exploit their perception
of whites' marriage relations being contracted as between 'dogs' in their
treatment of whites in any significant way, for they have no political,
economic or cultural power to implement such attitudes, nor it seems, do they
want to as long as they remain economically disadvantaged. Rather, they say,
as they say of other non-Warlpiri Aborigines, they live by another Law and as
such they only deal with others in a limited manner. This is evident in the
cross-cultural dealings which completely intrigues non-Aboriginal personnel.
The latter can afford to be intrigued as individuals but not as agents of
institutions and ultimately of Government. I had endless discussions after
people left meetings and never were they mystified by what did not make sense
to them in such a way that they reflected on it as something uniquely lacking in
whitefella. They invariably asked me to teach them about whitefella way and
especially about Government. They wanted to 'know' so that they could be
more effective. Whereas by contrast Westerners always expressed the same
experience in terms of how impossible it is to make 'them' understand what it
is all about.

The Warlpiri are unable to impact on whites as their Other, but the
Warlpiri's changing Self is used by whites to adjust their idea of the Aborigine
as Other. (Stratton, J. 1989) This means, in whichever way the Warlpiri try to
socialize Western things, it leads inevitably to a re-adjustment by the colonial
powers of their notion of Aborigines as Others. That is to say, until the
Warlpiri become white, not like whites, they will remain the Other. By then
the Warlpiri will no longer exist, and there will be no measure by which
Aborigines could come into a position to act upon whites as Others.

The Warlpiri have embarked, against their will, on a destiny that could be
conceptualized as the road from Difference to Other; this is without doubt the
road of colonial oppression. Yet, only when the destruction of a culture and oppression of a people coincide are we alerted to the tragic similarities of the consequences. This is what I term the differential colonizing process which paves the way from Difference to Other.
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