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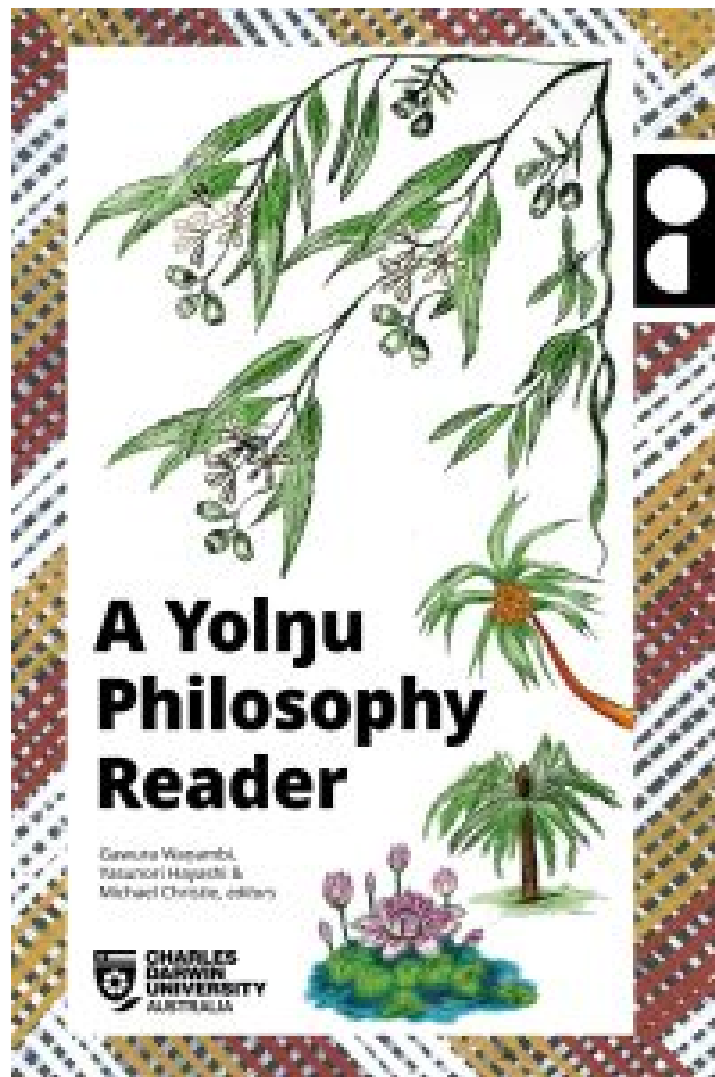
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A Yolngu Philosophy Reader

Ganana Wiyambal,
Tatianori Hapaychi &
Michael Christie, editors

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AUSTRALIA

A Yolŋu Philosophy Reader

A Yolŋu Philosophy Reader

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Contents

In Memory of Dr W. (Birrinymal) Gaykamaṅu	ix
About the Authors	x
Preface - Yolṅu Philosophy by Gawura Waṅambi	xii
Foreword: Yolṅu People-Places, Languages and Philosophy <i>by Yasunori Hayashi and Michael Christie</i>	xiii
Accessibility Information	xiv
Acknowledgements	xv
Yolṅu Baḷandi-waṅaṅumirr <i>Yolṅu with ancestral connections</i>	xvi
Gapu Milṅurr <i>Milṅurr Water</i>	xxiv
Yolṅuw Yothuw Marṅgithinyaraw ga Marṅgikunhamirr Dhukarr <i>The Yolṅu Child's Pathway</i>	xxvii
Bundurrpuy <i>What does bundurr mean?</i>	xxxii
Dhuwalatjan Dhukarrkurr Yuṭay Yolṅuy Märram Djambatj <i>Yolṅu Qualifications</i>	xxxiv
Galṅayṅu <i>Ancestral Skin</i>	xxxvi
Yolṅu Metaphors for Learning	xxxix
Methodology for Yolṅu Research	xlii
Garmak Gularriwuy <i>About Gularri Water</i>	xlvi
Dhäruk ga Wäṅa <i>Words of language and land</i>	liv
References	lvii
Versioning History	59

In Memory of Dr W. (Birrinymal) Gaykamaŋu

This book is dedicated to the memory of Dr W. Gaykamaŋu, a Yolŋu elder, educator and philosopher who was born on the island of Milingimbi in east Arnhem land, in the Northern Territory of Australia in the early 1950s. Her father was Tom Djäwa, leader of the Gaykamaŋu branch of the Gupapuyŋu people. Her mother was Eva Marañiny of the Gunḍapuy Djambarrpuyŋu people.

Dr W. Gaykamaŋu spent her adult life working to share her knowledge and her love of Yolŋu life, land and culture with others around the world. She trained as a teacher in the 1970s, taught in remote Yolŋu schools, and was appointed as an educational consultant with the Northern Territory Department of Education in Darwin in 1990.

In 1994, when the Yolŋu Studies program was established in the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies at Charles Darwin University (then Northern Territory University), she was appointed as its first lecturer by a group of Yolŋu elders from the communities and homeland centres of Milingimbi, Ramingining, Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak and Yirrkala.

Working with the Yolŋu advisers and Michael Christie, she negotiated with the university, the conditions under which the study of Yolŋu languages and culture could be undertaken in an academic context. These rules continue today.

Over almost thirty years of involvement with Charles Darwin University, she taught, supported and advised many hundreds of students, both Indigenous and nonIndigenous, undergraduate and postgraduate, domestic and international.

She would start every class with an hour-long discussion with her students about various aspects of Yolŋu languages and culture, or history or current affairs always taking care to observe traditional protocols governing who can talk about which topics, what can and cannot be said, and what language should be used. She maintained constant contact with the elders in Arnhem Land.

In 2005, her team won the Prime Minister's award for the Australian University Teacher of the Year.

In 2010, she was awarded The Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council National Elder of the Year.

In 2014, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Charles Darwin University.

She taught and led research projects for fourteen years before retiring in 2009 after which she remained active as an adviser, guest lecturer and writer. She always spoke gently and thoughtfully with good humour. She passed away at Milingimbi in late November 2023 and was peacefully buried on the island in June 2024.

She was intending to be the chief editor of this book which is dedicated to her memory as a wise, gentle, thoughtful, always positive, loved, respected and very knowledgeable teacher and elder.

About the Authors

Joanne Garngulkpuy (dec. 2023) was a Yirritja woman of the Wangurri clan. The land of Wangurri clan, Dhäliny is connected with Muthamul through *gularri* the freshwater streaming under the ground. She is the descendant of her *nändi* (mother) of Rorruwuy Naymil Dätiwuy and Nurruyurtjurr Djambarrpuyŋu, and of her *märi* (maternal grandmother) of Maṭamaṭa Bukulatjpi. She has her *waku* (great-grandmother) Garrawurra Liya-gäwumirr of Gärriyak and *yapa* (great-great-grandmother) Wubulkarra of Łaŋarra. As the eldest daughter of Buthimaŋ Demala of Dhälinybuy Wangurri, she re-presents the Ancestral Being as *dingu* (cycad nuts) that stands with Wangurri people. She was a qualified teacher trained at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE). She occupied an Executive Teacher position in the Shepherdson College bilingual school for many years before co-founding the Yalu' Marrgithinyaraw research centre at Galiwin'ku. She has undertaken and mentored numerous Health Research projects.

Raymattja Marika (dec. 2008) was a Rirratjingu woman from the Dhuwa country of Yalaŋbara. She was the oldest child of Roy Daḍayŋa Marika. She was begotten by the *waka'* (maternal code) governing the Gumatj people of Biranybirany and Gälpu people traditionally owning and caring for the land of Njappinya. She speaks the words of Dhaŋu'mi language and re-presents and is re-presented by the sacred rocks at Yalaŋbara where the Djaŋ'kawu sisters arrived on the shores of Arnhem Land carrying ceremonial items and a pair of digging sticks. She successfully completed a Certificate of Literary Attainment at BIITE. Subsequently, she studied through Melbourne University for a Graduate Diploma in Adult Education and Training and then an Advanced Diploma in Teaching at BIITE. She was responsible for writing the original version of the Yolŋu language and culture notes which are still being taught in the Charles Darwin University Yolŋu Studies program, which won the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Tertiary Teaching in 2005. In 2007 she received an honorary doctorate from CDU.

James Wapiriny Gurruwiwi (dec. 2016) was a son of Mayawuku, a Gälpu man of Njappinya homeland. He and his father were begotten through the maternal grandmother line of Djambarrpuyŋu Garraṭaŋur and Nurruyurtjurr. He had his mother from Dholtji, the ancestral land of Warramiri and his maternal great-great-grandmothers from Łuŋgutja, the ancestral land of Birrkili Gupapuyŋu. When growing up, he sat down and closely learned from his grandmother's place and the people of Djambarrpuyŋu. He had extensive knowledge of *dhäwu* (ancestral narratives) and *rom* (ancestral law) and also stood strong as a *djuŋgaya* (cultural guardian and labour) for Wangurri and Warramiri clan groups.

Joy Bulkanhawuy is a Djambarrpuyŋu woman of Nurruyurtjurr. Her educational backgrounds was built in Galiwin'ku through learning and practising Yolŋu education, *gamunungu* (the design of land) and *manikay* (songline). Her father passed his knowledge to her brothers and now she is co-holding and looking after her father's knowledge for Djambarrpuyŋu people in ceremony and everyday life. She does not sing as men do, but she performs her authorised knowledge through ceremonial keening – *milkarri*. Now she is authorised to share her knowledges and professional skills as a Djambarrpuyŋu elder with others such as those who work in (non)government organisations, health professionals working at hospital and also students being passionate about learning our Yolŋu culture and languages. As a professional Yolŋu health educator, she always works in both ways; Yolŋu and Western biomedical health practices in collaboration with researchers at Charles Darwin University and Menzies School of Health Research, and Yolŋu research professionals at Yalu' Marrgithinyaraw in Galiwin'ku.

Elaine Ławurrpa Maypilama is a Yirritja person of Warramiri clan and speaks many languages of Yolŋu Matha. She is an experienced Yolŋu researcher who was one of the founding members of the research organisation Yalu' Marrgithinyaraw. She has worked extensively with Charles Darwin University and Menzies School of Health for over twenty years, and has skillfully guided many non-Indigenous researchers to work with Yolŋu in ways that are ethical, mutually beneficial, and enable non-Indigenous and Yolŋu to understand each other's knowledge practices and commitments. She is passionate about improving education pathways for Yolŋu and wants to see Yolŋu people achieving at the highest levels of education in both worlds.

Timothy Buthimaŋ Demala is a Yirritja elder of Wangurri clan. His country is at Dhäliny. His *märi* (maternal

grandmother) is Gupapuyŋu Birrkili of Luŋgutja and his *yapa* (maternal great-great grandmother) is Gupapuyŋu of Djiliwirri. He has his *waku* (maternal great grandmother) at Djarraya and his *ŋäŋdi* (mother) over at Nurruyurtjurr. His *waŋarr* (ancestral being) is Giant Trevalley, *Nuykal* in his Dhaŋu language and also is re-presented as and by cycad, *Dingu* standing in Dhäliny. Demala is well known and respected for his large banana and vegetable garden at Galiwin'ku which he nurtured and shared for many years, and his strong commitment to both Ancestral Yolŋu and Christian spiritual beliefs and practices.

Ian Mongunu Gumbula is the son of Djapani Gumbula and a Yolŋu Elder who grew up in Galiwin'ku. He is a qualified teacher and has worked extensively in education at Batchelor College, Ngukurr and Galiwin'ku from 1975-1986. He worked with ALPA Stores in Arnhem Land and Consultancy Stores as a Trainee Operations Manager and Relief Manager during 1987-1988 before moving back to Ngukurr to work with the Community Government Council as a CDEP Coordinator from 1989-1996. Moving home to Galiwin'ku in 1997, he took on a role of Youth Worker before securing the Managers position with CDEP from 1998-2007, before Ngukurr again called on his experience to work for FaHCSIA as the Indigenous Engagement Officer 2009-2014. His extensive knowledge of Indigenous people, culture and law is complemented by his ability to speak 16 dialects throughout Arnhem Land. His cultural responsibilities and knowledge make him influential when representing either the private sector or Government Departments as a consultant.

About the Editors

Gawura Waŋambi is the senior elder of Marraju clan nation, whose ancestral place is Raymaŋgirr. His *bundurr* (sacred knee names) are Gatjinydji, Dalthaŋu, Muwuŋu, Binygurrŋu and Dhaliyali. He grew up in the bush and learned by watching how Yolŋu knowledge traditions were performed and how songlines talked and taught him through which country they travelled, where they began and where they completed. He followed the Elders who established *mägaya* (peace) in accordance with Yolŋu law. With the deep knowledge of *Närra* (sacred shelter containing sacred ceremonial objects), he has been appointed as a Dhuwa ceremonial leader and authorised to chant sacred names of his clan estate and other Dhuwa clan groups and to paint the sacred clan designs with his *gakal* (skillsets of knowledge, performance, leadership) for his Marraju Yolŋu, his *ŋäŋdi* (mother), *märi* (maternal grandmother), *waku* (maternal great-grandmother) and *yapa* (maternal great-great-grandmother). Gawura is the first editor of this volume.

Yasunori Hayashi is a Djapan man, originally from Japan. Allured by the sounds of Yolŋu languages and music, in the early 2000s he received an invitation from Birrinymal Gaykamaŋu who later supervised both of his undergraduate and postgraduate studies, to first visit Milingimbi Island to meet her family. Then he became a novice inquirer enthusiastically learning the ways in which Yolŋu people know and speak their world. He is the coordinator of Yolŋu Studies at CDU.

Michael Christie began learning Yolŋu languages when he was at Milingimbi in the 1970s, where Birrinymal Gaykamaŋu to whom this volume is dedicated, was also a young teacher. He worked as teacher linguist at Milingimbi and Yirrkala and worked with Birrinymal to set up the Yolŋu Studies program at CDU (then NTU) in 1994.

Preface - Yolŋu Philosophy by Gawura Waŋambi

Yolŋu dhäruk	Literal translation
Yolŋu philosophy-dja gäna'kana yan Dhuwaw ga Yirritjaw; ŋayi ga dhärra Yirritjawuŋ waŋarrwuŋ ga Dhuwaw waŋarrwuŋ.	Yolŋu philosophy separate just for Dhuwa and for Yirritja standing from Yirritja Ancestral Beings and from Dhuwa Ancestral Beings.
Ga ŋunha bala nhanŋuwuy ga marrtji dhärra li, ya' biyan, ŋarrakuwuyŋa yän Marraju ga wiripu yolŋu ŋunha ga bäki nhanŋuwuy yän.	And that there their own is going standing ongoing my own only Marraju and other Yolŋu over there are their own.
Ŋunhi Djarramba ¹ ga dhärra ŋarrakuwuy yän.	That Djarramba ¹ is standing for my own only.
Ga napurru Marraju li ga wiripun mala galkikum balayidhi nhakun ŋarraku gutharra ² , wayirri ³ Marraju.	We, Marraju habitually are other clan groups close such as my grandchild, back of Marraju.
Yaka wapthurr balayidhi wiripulil wo yuŋa ŋama'ŋamayurr.	Do not jump away towards others or new create.
Balanya nhakun Milŋurr', Dhuwawundja ŋayi Djan'kawuy dharpuŋal beŋur walu marrtji dhawatthun ga bala walu marrtji gärru, yän barrtjunminan, bukmakku ŋunhi Dhuwaw yolŋuw napurr dhu bäki.	For example Milŋurr' for Dhuwa, it Djan'kawu pierce where sun goes rises and to sun sets down, just pierce the Dhuwa people, we shall use.
Ŋurunjy bili dhoŋay' maŋda barrtjunmin marrtjin yurr Dhuwa yän.	By Those same digging sticks piercing went, but for
Yirritjawundja maŋda Barama ga Laytjun ga nhä malanyŋa wiripu mala, Yirritjaw marrtji yindi malany dhärra.	For Yirritja, two Barama and Laytjun and whatever of for Yirritja big things standing.
Dhuwali ŋayi 'philosophy-ny yäku, walal yan bi waŋgany, yurru Yolŋu philosophy-ny dhärra ga gapuŋur, dharpuŋur, man'tjarrŋur gapuŋur raypinyŋur ga gapuŋur moŋukŋur, ŋanapur ŋuli dhäkay-ŋäma wataŋur.	That is 'philosophy' name, they might (think) one by philosophy standing in water, in trees, in leafy branches fresh and water salt, we always feeling in the air.
Dhuwal ŋarra, ŋarrakuny philosophy.	This me, my philosophy.
Nhe dhu philosophy-ny ŋarraku nhäma rumbalŋur ŋarrakal ga nhä ŋarra ga ŋayatham.	You will philosophy my see in body my and what I a
Marrgithirr ŋuli Yolŋuny Yolŋuw philosophy-wundja nhänharay, nänharay, ŋän'ŋunharay, nhumanaray, lukanharay, waŋanharay, wukiriyunaray ga lakaranharay.	Learn always Yolŋu for Yolŋu philosophy by seeing, by asking, by smelling, by eating, by talking, by writing, by telling.
Ŋarraku philosophy ga dhärra bawala'mirriŋur.	My philosophy is standing everywhere.

1. Djarramba¹ is a special name for Marraju people's sacred space, site, shelter.

2. The Marraju gutharra clans are the clan of Marraju women's daughter's children. They are also Dhuwa so share totems and ceremonial practices and names with their Marraju grandmother's people.

3. From the metaphor of grandparents carrying their gutharras on their backs.

Foreword: Yolŋu People-Places, Languages and Philosophy

by Yasunori Hayashi and Michael Christie

Introduction to Yolŋu People, Places, and their languages

Yolŋu people and their places have thrived for many thousands of years in the eastern region of what we now know as Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia. Yolŋu speak many languages, each left in its own places as the ancestors came across the land, singing, crying, dancing and leaving behind networks of people-places, species, clouds, breezes, waterholes and rivers, ceremonies, images and ancestral songs. Each group – often referred to as a *bäpurru* – sings and dances its own totemic species, many of which it shares with other related groups. Every place belongs to a particular *bäpurru* with a particular language created by an Ancestral Being.

Everything and everyone in the Yolŋu world, including every *bäpurru* belongs to a moiety – either Dhuwa or Yirritja. Dhuwa must marry Yirritja, and Yirritja must marry Dhuwa, so every Dhuwa person has a Yirritja mother, and vice versa. Dhuwa people sing and dance their own Dhuwa species, ancestors, places, totems, ceremonies etc, and Yirritja have their own. Yirritja authors in this book include Garŋgulkpuy and her father Buthimaŋ from the Wangurri *bäpurru*, and the book is dedicated to Birrinymal Gaykamaŋu from the Yirritja Gupapuyŋu people. Dhuwa authors include Raymattja Marika from the Rirratjŋu *bäpurru*, Wapiriny Gurruwiwi from the Gälpu *bäpurru*, and Gawura Waŋambi from the Marraŋu people. The relationship of care and responsibility between a person's group and their mother's group is known as *yothu-yindi*. A Yolŋu mother could be an individual person, a whole clan group, an area of land, a ceremonial object, or a tree or animal, which is sung, cried, danced, painted or owned by one's mother's group.

Introduction to Yolŋu Philosophy

The word philosophy is derived from the ancient Greek words *philos*: 'love' and *sophia* 'wisdom'. The love of wisdom, and the wisdom which Yolŋu love is that of their ancestors and all that their ancestors left behind for them: the places, the languages and their words and concepts, the songs, stories and ceremonies and daily practices, as well as that which is kept secret-sacred.

The work of Yolŋu philosophy generally entails discerning how ancestral stories of actions provide a model or an imperative for correct, appropriate or beneficial ways of behaving in the contemporary world. Every Yolŋu, in fact everything in the Yolŋu world has its own unique style of behaviour, called *gaka!*, which must be attended to carefully. Moral formation in the Yolŋu world is the work of producing a good *gaka!*

Yolŋu use many ancestral traces to enliven and preserve their love of wisdom – footprints and bones, spring waters, lagoons and ashes, nests and strings, ceremonial sites and performances – all these things can be used to make agreement as to who and where we are, where we have come from, and how we should go on together.

So the work of Yolŋu philosophy is generally integrated into everyday life in everyday conversations, where resources left by the ancestors are brought up to assess the best interpretation of a situation or an event, or the best course of action.

Only occasionally do Yolŋu knowledge authorities sit down and write to make their philosophies clear – and usually this is to help non-Yolŋu learners or researchers understand the fundamentals of Yolŋu life which are so different from the fundamentals which underlie Balanda (whitefella) thinking and ways of living. Understanding these fundamentals is critical to Yolŋu and Balanda working together productively and diplomatically in order not to undermine either Yolŋu or Balanda's thinking or philosophy.

The papers in this volume have been collected over many years from Yolŋu who have shared their philosophies as they led teaching or research activities in the Yolŋu Studies Department at Charles Darwin University since the mid-1990s.

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Acknowledgements

The editors acknowledge the Larrakia people on whose land in Garramilla Darwin, Yolŋu studies and research came to life and continues its life in the academy.

We particularly acknowledge the warmth and support of the many Larrakia people who have guided our work on their country.

We acknowledge the many different groups of Yolŋu people whose networks of people-places which participated in making the texts in this book, are found mostly in east Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia.

Since the Yolŋu Studies program started in 1994, we have benefitted from the constant guidance of senior Yolŋu authorities from many Yolŋu places – too many to name.

We also acknowledge the work of John Creatorex and Yiŋiya Guyula who coordinated and taught Yolŋu Studies during the years when many of these texts were written.

We also thank Michaela Spencer, **Rebecca Adams, Alice Leutchford and Tara Burton for their assistance in bringing this volume together.**

Finally we acknowledge the support and contributions of Brenda Muthamulawuy who is the niece – gäthu – of Birrinymal Gaykamaŋu to whom this book is dedicated. Mutha's Gupapuyŋu bāpurru comes from Birrkili at Luŋgutja, and Birrinymal belongs to the Gaykamaŋu Gupapuyŋu at Djiliwirri. She provided the cover image and permission given to use in this volume. She illustrated some *Yirritja* and *Dhuwa* beings¹ making the Yolŋu world.

“Dingu (cycad palms and nuts) is Yirritja and belongs to Wangurri clan group as their totem. Following the ancestral process, we, Yolŋu people make bread with *dingu*, share and eat it during the ceremonies. Seeing and smelling the flowers of *gaḍayka* (stringybark) and *wakwak* (waterlily), and weaving baskets made of *gunga* (pandanus) for collecting berries and yams, we care for our country and are cared for by our country. *Rärrk* (crosshatched layering of lines) presents the identity and ownership of particular Yolŋu clan groups. We use four or three colours (black, white, yellow and red) for the design of Yolŋu people and places called *miny'tji*.”

We also thank her for all her work in Yolŋu Studies over the years, and for agreeing to be the Yolŋu reviewer for this volume.

We also thank John Creatorex for reviewing drafts of this reader.

This book was produced through a grant from the Council of Australasian University Librarians.

1. Everyone and everything in the Yolŋu world belongs to either Yirritja or Dhuwa moiety. The word 'moiety' derives from the old French word *moitié* meaning 'half'.

Yolŋu Baḷandi-waṭaṅumirr

Yolŋu with ancestral connections

In 2002, the Yolŋu researchers worked with the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management at Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University) and the Yalu' Marŋgithinyaraw Nurturing Centre at Galiwin'ku to make clear and bed down the Yolŋu philosophy which would underpin the Yalu' Centre's work within the community. For nurturing work to be conducted properly, the interconnectedness of all Yolŋu must be understood and engaged.

In this paper, Garŋgulkpuy (dec in 2023) uses the example of her own Wangurri *bäpurru* to describe the interconnections among different *bäpurru* groups. Using the metaphor of strong, thick ropes (*baḷandi*) she points out the ties through songs, through the balance of saltwater and freshwater, of meaty foods and carbohydrates, of mother and child.

Sitting on a beach, a Wangurri Yolŋu 'deliberately uses' the Wangurri songs to tell her where she is, what she is doing, what food she will be collecting, what tools she will be using, and what the menfolk will be doing when hunting turtle. 'Our song tells us that what we perceive is a function of our ancestral connections'. Other *bäpurru* use their own songs for their own ways of seeing themselves in the world.

Even the water in our Wangurri brains has a special sacred name which ensures that Wangurri people's minds are protected and respected. Other groups have other names for their sacred minds.

Yolŋu Baḷandi-waṭaṅumirr

by Joanne Garŋgulkpuy

Yalu' Marŋgithinyaraw, Galiwin'ku

Language: Dhuwal

2002

Translations and notes by Michael Christie and Garŋgulkpuy, Faculty of Indigenous Research and Education, Northern Territory University

This paper contributes to research into Indigenous Governance being conducted by the Yalu' Marŋgithinyaraw Research Group at Galiwin'ku, and the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management at the Faculty of Indigenous Research and Education, Northern Territory University. It deals with the links between Yolŋu identity – through ancestral songs and connections – and the harvesting of resources.

The first column contains the original essay by Garŋgulkpuy written as part of her study in 2002. The second and third columns provide literal and free translations by Michael Christie and Garŋgulkpuy.

Outline:

- 1 Introduction. Yolŋu are distributed in distinct groups knowing their lives through ancestral songs etc.
- 2 Yolŋu from both the freshwater country and the saltwater country have the full balance of carbohydrate and meat food through their individual skills and resources, and through sharing.
- 3 Our Wangurri song teaches Wangurri people how we should live our daily lives, as well as how we should see our world.
- 4 It is our affiliation to particular groups and their affiliations to the natural and cultural world – places, species, and practices – which drives our knowledge and our and our behaviour.
- 5 Within each group we have a particular way of talking about our collective knowledge as a clan, and we

can see how that helps knowledgeable Yolŋu keep the peace by directing people to consider themselves in terms of their ancestral affiliations.

6 Within the mother-child clan relationship (yothu-yindi) our clan-based mind-sets show us how to behave responsibly as children/caretakers and as mothers (like using peaceful Yirritja seawater for sorting out problems for our shark-like Dhuwa mother's clan)

7 All Yolŋu groups have names to link their minds into ancestral practice, in every aspect of everyday life from hunting to politicking, within and between Even when Yolŋu have passed away, our bodies are still sacred objects belonging to our own groups.

Yolŋu dhäruk	Literal translation	English translation
1		
Yolŋu buku-liw ¹ maram dhuwal wäŋaŋur gan mala-bunhamin ¹ . Romŋur, ga bukmak limurr ŋuthar marrtjin, ga marŋgithin marrtjin romgu limurrŋgalaŋaw.	Yolŋu face-round this land were clangroup- creating ¹ inside the law, and all we grew up, and went learning law which belongs to us.	Yolŋu from all around this country have been giving life to new generations within the law, and we all grew up, and learnt our law.
Njanapurrnydja dhuwal Yolŋu Australiapuynyndja maŋa-barrkuwatjkunhawuy ² dhuwandja Northern Territory-ŋurnydja.	We are Yolŋu of Australia in various distinct groups here in the Northern Territory.	We are Aboriginal people of Australia distributed in distinct groups here in the Northern Territory.
Napurrnydja Yolŋuny ŋuthar ga marŋgithin marrtjin napurr dhäwuw malaŋuw märranharaw bungulŋur, manikayŋur, buku-lupŋur, milkariŋur ³ ga dharwa bulu.	We Yolŋu grew and became knowing we went getting stories from ceremony, song, cleansing ceremony, keening, and much else.	We Yolŋu people grew up and we learnt the various stories, we got them from the ceremonies, and the ancestral songs, from the mortuary rites, from the keening, and from many other sources.
Dhiyaŋ ŋunhi dhäwuy malaŋuy ga mel-lakaram djäma mala, napurr dhu djäma rä-l-gäma ⁴ diltjilil ga bala ranjilil.	These those different stories, reveal activities, we will implement and carry our <i>räl</i> to the bush and to the beach.	These very stories reveal the work of our day to day life, and we practise them as we carry our knowledge, confidence and skills into the bush and on to the beach.
2		
Manymak! Yolŋu moŋukpuy, napurr ŋuli lakaranhamirr djambatj ⁵ bili napurr dhu märram ŋatha ŋunha damurrŋŋur, matha-yal' ga ŋunha diltjijurnydja murnyaŋ ⁶ nha.	Good. People of the saltwater, we always speak of ourselves as <i>djabatj</i> . because we will get food from the salt, tongue relaxers, and there in the bush, starchy, filling food.	Okay, we saltwater Yolŋu, call ourselves good hunters because we can get meats from the sea, and fruit and vegetable from the bush.
Wiripuny Yolŋunha bala gapu-raypinyŋur ga nhina. Lukany walal ŋuli marrtji ŋaririny, bitjan bili nhakun napurr marrtji ŋuli luka. Bili walal ŋuli lakaram walalaŋuwuy matha-yal' ga murnyaŋ' manikaykurr ga bungulkurr bitjan bili nhakun napurr moŋukpuyyu.	Other Yolŋu there away by freshwater are sitting. They always eat fish, in the same way as we always eat. Because they always speak their own tongue relaxers and fillers, through song and ceremony just as we of the salt water.	Other Yolŋu belong to freshwater country, They eat fish just like we saltwater people do. Because they always sing of their own meat and vegetable foods in their own songs and ceremonies, just as we saltwater people do.
Yolŋunyndja rom ga bitjan waŋa gam': ŋunhi dhu Yolŋu djambatj marrtji duwatthun, märram yan ŋayi dhu matha-yal' diltjijurnydja, balanya nhakun gurrumattji, weŋi, djanda ga minhala ga dharwa bulu.	Yolŋu law is saying this: when a djambatj Yolŋu will go up, he will easily obtain tongue-coolers in the bush, like for example goose, wallaby, goanna, tortoise and much else.	Yolŋu custom says: If a good hunter goes into the bush, he can get meat like goose, wallaby, goanna, tortoise and many other things.
Ga gapu raypinybuyyu Yolŋuy dhu märram yän, nhä malaŋunha gapuy moŋukthu ga ŋayatham, ŋunhiyiny ŋuli rä-l-gurrupanmirra.	And the fresh water Yolŋu will always get, whatever things that salt water is holding, that it is which always give <i>räl</i> reciprocally.	And the freshwater Yolŋu will still get some of those things which the salt water holds, because the work and the resources are shared around.
3		

1. from mala-buma (lit: group-make/create) to procreate. Reflexive form mala-bunhamirr – procreating together within distinct groups.
2. (lit: groups constituted separately) – distinct, or differentiated
3. any Yolŋu ceremonial, manikay – ancestral song, buku-lup – lit: head-wash – cleansing ceremony, milkarri – lit: tears – women’s ceremonial crying for the deceased.
4. represents the hunting skills, environmental knowledge, confidence, and connections which are productive in the Yolŋu economy.. räl-gäma (räl-carry) to go out hunting taking with you the knowledge, skills and confidence to be successful., räl-dumurru -(big räl) person who goes hunting and comes back with lots of fish, shellfish, etc., rälmirw – someone with no luck hunting., räl-gurrupanmirr – sharing the bounty from hunting expeditions, räl-manapanminya – collaboration, sharing work together
5. djambatj – skillfull hunter, smart, knowledgeable, insightful thinker.
6. matha-yal’ – tongue-cooler/relaxer and murnyanj – sweet and starchy foods are opposites. Matha-yal’ is meat which needs to be balanced off with murnyanj’ which is carbohydrate.

Yolŋu dhäruk	Literal translation	English translation
Manymak. Yirritjay Yolŋuy dhu manikay dar'taryun, lakaram ŋayi dhu 'Yolŋuny Wurarrnha ŋayi dhu ga nhäma ranji Djältji, Watjpalala, Gäwunu, ga Mänurr' ŋayi dhu ŋorra ŋunhiyiny dharrwa dhu matha-yal' lakaram ga märram napurr dhu.	Good. Yirritja Yolŋu will sing a song, he will tell: 'Yolŋu Wurarr he will be seeing the beach <i>Djältji</i> , <i>Watjpalala</i> , <i>Gäwunu</i> , ga <i>Mänurr</i> it will be lying', that one will be telling many tongue-coolers, and we will get it.	Okay, and when a Yirritja person sings, they might sing for example, "That Wurarr group is going to see the long open beach <i>Djältji</i> , <i>Watjpalala</i> , <i>Gäwunu</i> , and <i>Mänurr</i> lying there", that implies that there is a lot of good meaty food there, and we will gather it successfully.
Ŋunha ŋayi dhu warryundja marrtji warrawuku ⁹ räi-marrtji ŋayi dhu dju kumuw.	There he will pull along a <i>warrawuku</i> paperbark raft <i>räi</i> go he will for cockles.	Maybe s/he is dragging along a <i>warrawuku</i> , the ancestral Wangurri paperbark raft, piled up with cockle shells.
Ŋunha bäydhi ŋayi dhu ruran'thun gathulny'tja dharpaw gođu maypalmirriv ⁹	There alternatively he will search through the mangroves for a tree with mangrove worms.	Or maybe hunting through the mangroves for a tree which we would call <i>godu-maypalmirr</i> (because we refer to it in a specially respectful way).
Nuruŋiyi manikayyu ŋuli dhunupamirriyam Yolŋuny djambatj ga räi-mirriyam ŋunhi ŋayi dhu larrum matha-yal'wu yuwalkkum yän, miyalknhany yolŋuny ŋuli walal lakaram räi-dumurrnha ŋunhi ŋayi dhu dharrwakumany maypalnydja.	That song will make straight the <i>djambatj</i> Yolŋu, and give him <i>räi</i> , if he should look for tongue-coolers truly only, of a woman they would say big-räi if she will make many the shellfish.	That Wangurri (Yirritja) song makes clear what the Yolŋu hunter is to do, and prepares him for his search for the best and most efficient source of meat. And women are also called <i>räi-dumurr</i> if they have for example collected a lot of shellfish.
Balanya nhakun ŋändiy ¹⁰ walal ŋuli manikay miyaman ga lakaram walalaŋguwuy djambatj miyapunuw, yurr ŋurruŋuny walal ŋuli ŋäthilmirriyam, rawu, ga luŋarrinyha, ga jaku walalaŋ yäkumirr mala Wuwarku, Bultjimarra, Daymirri.	Like those mothers, they always sing a song and tell of their own <i>djambatj</i> turtle hunter, but first they will prepare the rope, and the harpoon and their canoes with names <i>Wuwarku</i> , <i>Bultjimarra</i> , <i>Daymirri</i> .	In the same way, my mothers' people always sing the song, and tell the stories of their own good hunters, for turtle. They have properly prepared the rope and the harpoon and their canoes which have their own particular clan-affiliated names, like <i>Wuwarku</i> , <i>Bultjimarra</i> , <i>Daymirri</i> .
Miyaman walal dhu manikaynydja, dhunupayam ¹¹] marrtji walal dhu rom wiripuwal Yolŋuwal, nhaltjan dhu miyapunuw marrtji.	They will sing a song, make straight they will, the custom/law for other Yolŋu, how they will go for turtle.	They sing their own ancestral song, and it shows them the way ahead, all their different styles, how they should go out for the turtle hunt.
4		
Romdja manikaynydja walalaŋ, ŋändipuluw ¹² ga wakupuluw ga gurruknnydja djämany mala bukakkun Yolŋuw.	The law their song, of the mother's mob, and children's mob, and the connections work for all Yolŋu.	The law which is in their own song, is also for their mothers' people and their (sisters') children's people, and so it makes connections through kinship to all the other various groups of Yolŋu.
Ga nhinany napurr ga dhuwal malany, Yirritja ga Dhuwa, ga dhiyaŋ napurr ga mala-bunhamirrydja.	And sitting here are we Yolŋu, Yirritja and Dhuwa, and by means of this we are having new generations of our children.	So we live as groups, Yirritja and Dhuwa, and through this, we continue to give life to new generations.

7. Wurarr – a group of people going hunting – from Wangurri ancestral song. Djältji, Watjpalala, Gäwunu, Mänurr – the beach when the tide is a long way out –

from Wangurri ancestral song. I use these words as an example of how, when a Yolŋu person sees even something ordinary in the environment, we properly describe it using words from our own ancestral song (in this case Wangurri tribe). We deliberately see and identify the world from our own particular clan perspective. Our song tells us that what we perceive is a function of our ancestral connections.

8. warrawuku – word for paperbark raft from Wangurri ancestral song – the hunters may be collecting cockles on to a paperbark raft. People see it and describe it using their own particular clan vocabulary from clan song.
9. goḏu-maypalmirr – ‘the deep inside containing shellfish’ – describing a dead tree in the mangroves full of mangrove worms. This is both an expression from the song and something which occurs in real life. We don’t speak straight out and say ‘a tree with mangrove worms’ – ‘dharpa laṭjin’mirr’ – we say ‘goḏu-maypalmirr’ because even though we find these trees in real life as we are hunting, they are also an important totem (to do with the funeral and body of deceased Wurarr people), so we speak of it respectfully, even when we find it out hunting.
10. ṅāṅḏi – mother – referring here to the mother clan for Wangurri, who are Djambarrupuyŋu clan, shark people and turtle hunters, who have their own ancestral songs which demonstrate their way of life.
11. dhunupayam – to make straight, to set on the correct path. When they sing, the song teaches all Yolŋu how to read and act upon the world – the technology, the hunting grounds and reefs, the roles people play in the hunt, cutting and distributing, etc – not just for the owners of the song, but for their relations too. Some Dhuwa people might not sing the turtle hunt, but they may have a māri, or a gutharra clan who do, and who share their song and its knowledge.
12. Yirritja, Dhuwa: Everything in the world, people, places, languages, ceremonies, totems, species, mala-barkuwatjkuṅhawuy, (see note 2 above) – is either Dhuwa or Yirritja. Dhuwa things have a Yirritja mother clan (ṅāṅḏipulu) and Yirritja things have a Dhuwa ṅāṅḏipulu. Yirritja people have Dhuwa wakupulu (sister’s children’ clan group) and Dhuwa have Yirritja wakupulu. Yirritja is connected with Yirritja through the mother’s mother’s people (māri) and the (sisters’ daughter’s daughter’s people (gutharra). Dhuwa people have Dhuwa māri and gutharra

Yolŋu dhäruk	Literal translation	English translation
Njunha wänjay-ŋarakay ga ŋayatham mulmu, guŋda, warrakan, dharpa, munatha, gapu, mala- barrkuwatjkuhawuy, diltjilil, ŋinydjiyalil, baralalil, raŋilil ga ŋunha djinawan gapuŋura, mala barrkuwatjkuhawuy Yirritjalil ga Dhuwalil, bili napurr ŋuli balyunmirr ¹³ ŋunhiwili malaŋulil.	The land-bone holds grass, rocks, meat, trees, earth, water, separated into groups, into the bush, on to the salt pans, to the sand hills, to the beaches, and there inside the water, separated into distinct groups to both Yirritja and Dhuwa, because we create our totemic identities to these different things.	The land holds plants, rocks, animals, trees, sand, water all over the place, in the bush, on the plains, the hills, the beaches and underneath the sea, each belonging to particular Yirritja and Dhuwa peoples, and our Yolŋu identity is committed to those various things as totems.
Yurr ŋunhiyin ŋunhi rä-l-gurrupanamirrnnydja djäma ŋayi dhuwali yolŋuy nhaltjan napurr dhu nhina maranhu-gäma, ga gurrupanmirr.	So exactly there is the work of sharing skill/resources s/he that yolŋu, how we will sit, bring rä-l, and give to each other.	And therein lies the work of sharing for each person, how we will continue to collect food, and share it.
Dhuwal napurr ŋuli dhawatthundja Gäna, ga ŋuthandja napurr marrtji ŋuli Yolŋuwal malaŋuwal.	Here we come out alone, and yet we grow inside various Yolŋu groups.	We are born alone, but we grow up in specific Yolŋu ancestral groupings.
Birrkayunaraw ¹⁴ djämawunydydja napurrŋu ga barrkuwatj malaw ga malaw.	To justify our work, is separate for groups and for groups.	Our understanding of our actions is individual to our particular groups.
5		
Balanya nhakun Wangurri Yolŋu dhuwal napurr dhu lakaranhamirr 'Gayilinydjil', mulkurr ¹⁵ .	Like for example Wangurri Yolŋu here we call ourselves <i>Gayilinydjil</i> , heads.	For example, we Wangurri clan Yolŋu, we call our minds, our ' <i>Gayilinydjil</i> '.
Njunhi napurr dhu marilil gulŋiyirr ga walal dhu napurrŋu mulkurr wutthun; walal dhu wiripuy mala lakaranhamirr bitjan gam': 'Njunha Gayilinydjil walal ŋanya nhäŋalnydja'.	When we will enter into trouble, and they will hit our heads, they will the others say to themselves like this: 'There they saw her <i>Gayilinydjil</i> '.	If we got into a fight, and someone hits us on the head, then people will say of us: 'They have seen her <i>Gayilinydjil</i> '.
Dhuwandja dhäruk ŋunha ŋayi dhu Yolŋuy galkikum märryu- ðapmaram. ¹⁶	This speech that he will Yolŋu bring close, by faith-clench.	By speaking that way a Yolŋu can work towards a peaceful solution which keeps everyone united, tied together by goodfaith, trust and confidence.
Yaka ŋayi dhu waŋa bitjandja gam! 'Njunha mulkurr bakthurr' Njunhi yäku marraŋan' ŋayi dhu Yolŋun galŋa-marimiriyyirr.	He will not say this: 'That head broke'. That name provocative. S/he will that Yolŋu skin-become-ready-for- fight.	They are not going to say: 'She got bashed in the head'. That would be asking for trouble. People could get really angry.
Ga bukmakku Yolŋuw dhuwal romdja, bäpurruw, bäpurruw.	And for all Yolŋu this law, for tribe for tribe.	This principle applies to all Yolŋu groups.
Djämwunydydja romgu napurr dhu märra'marranhamirr napurrŋuwuy nurrku birrkayunawuy bala wänjalil ŋarakalil, nhaliy ŋunhiyi bili napurrŋu ¹⁷ dhu roŋiyirr buŋdurr ¹⁸ nydja balayi bili wänjalil.	For work of the law we will gather our heads for testing towards the land bone, how that very thing of ours will return as sacred name to that very place.	To make our law work, we have to bring our heads back to thinking about our ancestral land, using those sacred ancestral names which take us back each to our own place.
Balanya napurrŋu dhuwal djämany dhiyaŋ Gomuluy ¹⁹ ga lakaram, Yolŋuw Yirritjawnydja.	For example for us this work the Heron is speaking, for Yirritja Yolŋu.	For example the Heron demonstrates that same principle for us Yolŋu of the Yirritja moiety.

13. balyunmirr – to be committed to, or identify with as a spiritual/totemic relationship. I as Wangurri am balyunmirr to giŋgu – the cycad nuts and sacred bread – because it is part of my ancestral song and keening. When I die they will sing the cycad ceremonies for me.

14. birrkayunara – testing, proving, assessing, accusing, deciding, understanding, justifying.

15. mulkurr – head, knowledge, mind, understanding, perspectives, vision. Every clan group has a special word to describe their own mind-set. For example, Djambarrpuyŋu (and other shark people) call their minds waŋga – from the shark. Warramiri minds are nirru. Gälpu minds are bamundurr etc. My Wangurri mind is called Gayilinydjil. One way people show respect for the particular mindsets of different people, is to speak respectfully of their heads, even in times of great trouble. To speak like this will keep people focussed on their ancestral connectedness and responsibilities, it will turn their minds back to their land, their language and sacred business, and their kinship network that make it possible.

16. märryu-ðapmaram (lit: faith, trust, confidence, goodwill/instrument-/clench) keeping the situation under control by using the power of ancestral connections (märr), problem solving by appealing to people's strength through identity and kinship.

17. yothu napurrŋu lit: our child, refers to the clan group which calls them 'mother'. That is, all the children of Wangurri women (they will all be Dhuwa since their

mother is Yirritja and belong to a different clan) are considered to be the 'yothu' of Wangurri. The relationship between the yothu clan group and the mother clan group is called yothu-yindi.

18. buṅḍurr sacred ancestral names which link Yolŋu groups to their ancestral lands and creation stories.

19. Gomuḷu Yirritja Heron ancestor – referring here to a talk given to the Yalu' Marngithinyaraw Yolŋu research group at Galiwin'ku by Barripaṅ about the ancestral crested heron who gave identity and connections to many Yirritja groups, and who instituted the philosophy of yalu.

Gapu Milŋurr

Milŋurr Water

In the previous paper, Garŋgulkpuy spoke of the sacred water in the heads of the Yirritja Wangurri people. Gapu Milŋurr is the story told by Raymattja Marika who belonged to the Dhuwa Rirratjingu people from the eastern coast of Arnhem Land. It was on a Rirratjingu beach looking straight out to the east, that the Djaŋ'kawu creating sisters first arrived, spearing holes in the sand which provided fresh water, and later travelling west creating similar springs and leaving behind other Dhuwa groups who sing the Djaŋ'kawu. That Rirratjingu Milŋurr water in the spring is the same as the water in a Rirratjingu baby's head. It provides the baby's 'cognitive development'. As they grow up, the Milŋurr water in their heads helps Rirratjingu people become skillful – *gakalmi*, in their own particular way.

Gapu Milŋurr

by Raymattja Marika

Recorded in Rirratjingu language, 2005, translated by Michael Christie

Yolŋu dhäruk	English translation
Gapum dhaŋu, milŋurrma dhaŋu gapu, Dhuwa gapu ŋayiŋa. Dhuwaŋa ŋayiŋa bukmakku yolŋuwu Dhuwawu warrawu.	This water, This water is Milŋurr water, Dhuwa water in place. In a Dhuwa place for all the Dhuwa people.
Ga bitjan nyäku gapu guŋnharra nyäkum gapu, ga ŋunha Yalanbara ga Guluruŋa.	I have my own water like this, there at <i>Yalanbara</i> and <i>Guluruŋa</i> .
Raypiny gapu bokmanda dhupalinguŋ yapa'manydjiwuŋ banha dhupal ŋarruŋan, dhawal-yarpuwan dhupal ŋarruŋan bayiŋuya ganinyidiyu.	Fresh water created by those two sister when they came piercing the ground as they went using their sacred digging sticks.
Djäma ŋarruŋan dhupal banhaya gapu ŋayili gunyan ŋarruŋan.	These two went off putting the water holes in place.
Ga djalkiri dhupal nhinathuŋan ŋarruŋan malawul, mittjiwul, bäpurru'wul.	As they went leaving the foundations, for all the different people, groups and
Guŋan ŋarruŋan dhupal, yäku nhinathuŋan warrakannha, yolŋuny, bäpurruny, mittjiŋy, ga nhän malanyŋu guŋan ŋarruŋan rarr'yuwun djalkiri malanyŋu rom ga biyapul dhäruk bayiŋuya yapa'manydjiwu wulaythu.	They gave the names which remain for the animals, people, groups and clans, and whatever else, purging them out for the laws of the different groups and their different different languages, from those two sisters.
Ga banhaya dhupal ŋarruŋan dhupal bayiŋuya ganinyidiyu.	And off they went, using their digging sticks called <i>ganinyidi</i> .
Djäma ŋarruŋan dhupal bokman ŋarruŋan gapu banhaya milŋurr.	As they went they created the Milŋurr water.
Nhän yaka ga rakaram banha Milŋurr. Milŋurru rakaram yaka.	It explains that milŋurr. The Milŋurr shows that.
Ŋayi banha ŋayi dhaŋu, land, ŋalmalinygu ŋaraka ŋayi ŋaraka.	That place, that land, is our 'bone place'.
Djalkirimi, foundationmi, rommi, law'mi.	Containing the foundations, the culture and the law.
Gunyan ŋarruŋan dhanal rom ŋalmalingu.	They gave us our culture.
Yolŋu banha ŋalmaliny yaka ŋayathan bayiŋuya romdhu malaŋuyu yolŋuy warray.	We Yolŋu still hold on to that, by means of the law, groups and people.
Banha ŋalma ŋarru ŋayathan ga gunyan yalalanuwu djamarrkuli'wu.	We will hold it and pass it on later for our children.
Rulwanŋhun ga marŋgikum ŋarru ŋalma banhaya rom malanyŋu yumurrku'nha ŋalmalinguway.	Put in place and teach the laws to our young people.
Ŋunha djunama ŋunha bärrku banha ŋalma yaka marŋgi nhalpiyan dhanal ŋarru yalŋuwa.	There far ahead we do not know how things will turn out in the future.
Märr dhanal ŋarru marŋgi dhanalingu ŋayiwi ga romgu, ga dhärukku ga djalkiriwu, ga romgu, malanyŋu, ga miny'tjiwu, miny'tjiwu, yow.	So that they will know their country, culture, language, foundations, laws for the different groups, and paintings, yes paintings.
Yow'. Dhaŋuny nhän rakaram yaka djinaŋu gapuyum banha.	Yes. It's this (she points to the top of her head) that tells us, this water up here.
Ŋalma bayiŋ dhäkay-ŋäma yothuwura banham nhän yothu, nyumukuniny yäna yothu, yothu ŋalma ŋarru dhäkay-ŋäma banha yalŋgi, banhaya. Yow	When we feel this place on the child's head, it is still a small child, on the child we feel this soft spot, you see. OK.
Ga banha ŋalma ŋarru ŋathan, mulkurr ŋalmalingu dhaŋu dhiŋ'kiŋbuy ŋathan ŋarru develop mulkurr ŋalmalingu dhaŋu dhiŋ'kiŋbuy ŋathan ŋarru develop ŋalmalingu dhaŋu cognitive development rakarama.	It is this grows in us, in our heads, our thinking grows and develops in our head, this explains what we would call our 'cognitive development'.
Ŋarru rakaram yaka bayiŋuyam gapuyum milŋurruy. Nhalpiyan ŋalma ŋarru develop ŋalmalinguway mulkurr djämawu. ga nhinanarawu.	But it's the miŋurr gapu which reveals that, how we will develop our own heads for work and for living.
Bilanya, like moŋuk ga raypiny' wäŋa ga rakaram yaka balance nhalpiyan ŋalma ŋarru balancing maliku, ŋuwakurru rom ga djämaŋa, wakalŋa, ŋayiŋa.	So it's like the salt water and fresh water explaining balance, how we should go about working out the difference between bad and good ways at work, at play, at home.
Yow. Rakaram nhän yaka waripum bayiŋuya, ŋalmalinygu feeling nhalpiyan ŋalma ŋarru dhäkay--ŋäma, ŋalmalinguway feeling.	Yes. It also explains our feelings, how we will sense and understand our feelings.
Djinaku gyaŋinyarawu, ga ŋayaŋuwu, ŋurrku yow.	And for our thinking, and feeling, our minds, yes.

Yolŋu dhäruk	English translation
Ga biyapul nhän ŋarru rakaram knowledge djinaŋyua gapuyu, yow.	And also it will give us knowledge, this water.
Banha nhän ŋarru dhaŋaŋdji djinalaŋa muḷkurrŋa gapu	Our head will become full with water-knowledge.
Banha mayali' bitjan dhaŋaŋdjin ŋalmalinygura ŋarru dhiŋ'kiŋbuy, wo ideas.	This means is that it becomes filled with thoughts and ideas.
Dhaŋaŋdji ŋarru gyaŋiŋyara dhiŋ'kiŋbuy banha nhän ŋarru.	It will become full of thoughts.
Dhawathhun nhän ŋarru, bawutjtji, raŋitji gapu yarrupthuna nhän ŋarru gapu, banha mayali biyan nhän ŋarru, nhäpa, go muḷkurr ŋalmaliŋgu ŋarru dhawar'yun ŋarru 'e? muḷkurrŋur ŋalmaliŋguru.	Then the tide will go out, the water will go down, and so will the water in the well, this means that the ideas will drain away out of our heads.
Dhawar'yun or bäyŋuyi banham mayali' bitjan bäyŋu ŋalmalinygu dhiŋ'kiŋbuy or idea dhaŋaŋdjin ŋarru ya' bitjan'.	Finish, or end, which means that we will not have any further ideas, you see.
Bitjan nhän yaka nhamam cycle-murru ŋarruŋan.	It goes through cycles like that.
Yow dhaŋaŋdji nhän ŋarru gapu, banhalaya maŋutjiŋa. Ga dhawar'yun nhän ŋarru.	Yes. It will become full of water, there in the spring. And then it will dry up.
In ga out, raypinydji ga moŋuk. Yow. Ga dhaŋaŋdji nhän ŋarru fullyi, ga biyapul dhawar'yun nhän ŋarru.	In and out, becoming fresh and salty. It will become full, and then it will empty out.
Bitjanana nhän ŋarru nhawi gapum bay' maŋutjim nhän banha gapu ŋaŋgi'yuman, bala nhäma nhän banha gapu maŋutji.	That' what happens to the well water, which we dig, and then see the water down there.
Yow, nhäma ŋalma bayiŋ nhän ŋarru down, tidegu malthun ga biyapul ŋarru gulŋiyi nhän ŋarru gapu bawutj ŋarru dhaŋaŋdji.	Yes, we see it going down, following the tide, and when the tide comes in then at full tide, the water fills up.
Bitjan ŋalmaliŋgu ga rumbalma thinkingbuyma, ideas malanyŋu nhäpa development ŋalmalinygu bitjana yaka.	This is also true for our thinking, our ideas, our development.
Nuthan yaka, growing yaka, banha ŋalma ŋarru bäkim dhaŋu gapu, proper wayma, develop ŋarru.	Growing up, we will hold on to this water, in the proper way, we will grow up like this our development will.
Djambatjtji ŋalma dhaŋum muḷkurr.	Our heads will become skilful.
Yow. Ga waripu ŋarru, ŋalma gyaŋi bilanya like, ŋalma ŋarru bitjan ŋalma ŋarru maŋgiyi yuṭawu romgu malanyŋu dälwu romgu malanyŋu banhan dhaŋu ŋarru bäki, dhaŋu muḷkurr. Ga banhaya gapu.	Okay. And also, we think that when we are learning new things, new ways, hard things, it is our milŋurr water in our heads which will help us
Ga balanya.	That's it.

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Yolŋuw Yothuw Marŋgithinyaraw ga Marŋgikunhamirr Dhukarr

The Yolŋu Child's Pathway

Yolŋu elders can often identify very special young people who will grow up to be leaders in ceremony, in clan groups, in the community or in politics as Gawura beautifully articulated in his introduction to Yolŋu Philosophy. But the school system does not understand Yolŋu points of view of what it means for a young person to be seen as 'gifted' or 'talented'.

In 2008, the Yolŋu Aboriginal Consultants Initiative invited eight Yolŋu consultants to a week-long workshop to make recommendations to government about the education of 'Gifted and Talented Yolŋu Children'.

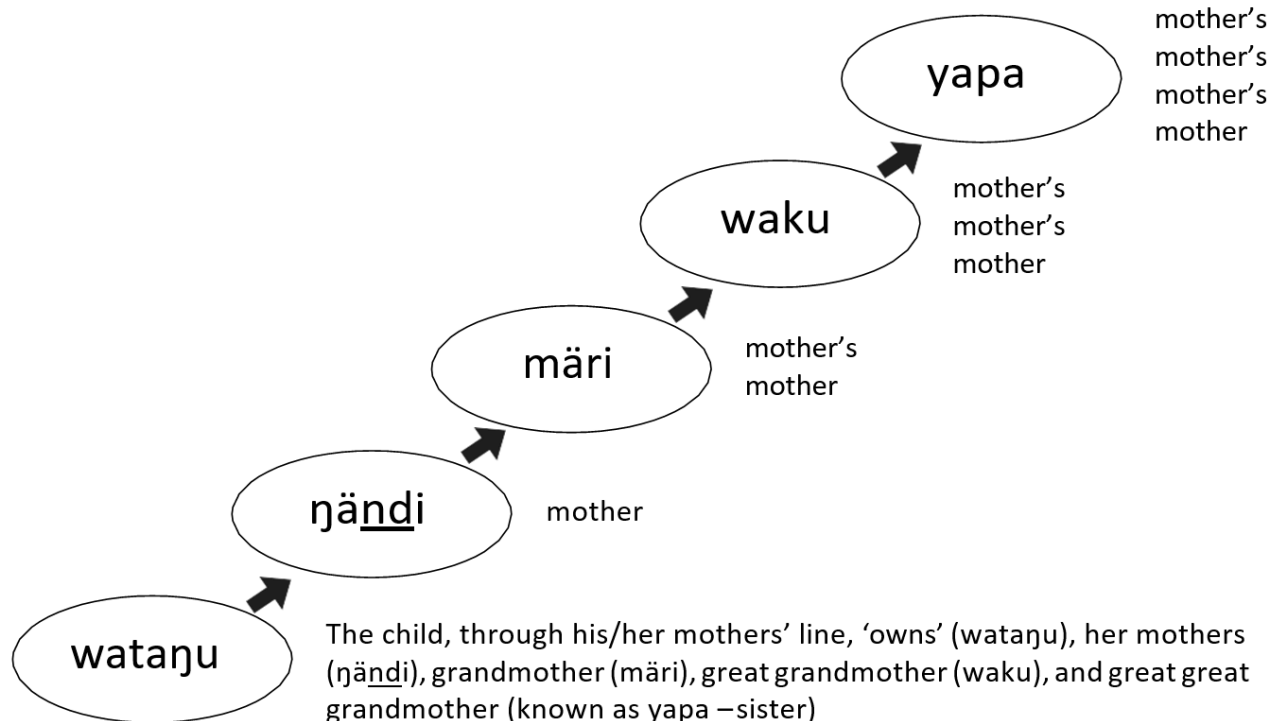
Garrŋgulkpuy was keen to explain that when a Yolŋu child is born, she already has all the networks of kin names and places required to grow up with a habitual way of behaving – a *gaka!* – which proves her talent. She uses a diagram of the matriline to point out the clan networks and intergenerational connections which makes this possible.

Yolŋuw Yothuw Marŋgithinyaraw ga Marŋgikunhamirr Dhukarr

by Joanne Garrŋgulkpuy

Translated by Garrŋgulkpuy and Michael Christie

23 September 2008



Yolŋu dhäruk	Direct translation	English translation
Nunhi yolŋu yothuy ŋuli wäŋa nhäma ¹ , ga wiripuy yolŋuy gurruṯumirriy ŋuli yäku- nhirrpandja ŋanyany.	When yolŋu child will place- see, and other yolŋu with kin links will name-place him.	As soon as a child is born (sees the land) his kin folk name him.
Bala ŋuli yorrnha yolŋu luŋ'thun ga gurruṯan nhanŋu märr-ŋamathinyawuydja yothuwnydja.	Then always later people gather and give him love for that child.	And other people will crowd around and give that child love.
Nuruŋiny romdhu ŋuli ŋändi'mirriŋunhan ŋayaŋu ² rur'maraman djägawnha yothuwnydja.	By that law will that mother's <i>ŋayaŋu</i> be activated to care for that child.	In that way the mother's soul becomes mobilised to look after the child.
Ga ŋurruŋuny ŋayi dhu marŋgithirr ŋändi'mirriŋuw.	And first she will learn for mother.	The first thing he learns about is mother.
Yurr ŋunhi ŋuli Dhuway ³ ŋändi'mirriŋuy gäma yothuny, ga yothuny ŋunhi, ga Yirritja. Ga ŋuli ga Yirritjay ŋändi'mirriŋuy gäma, yothu ŋuli maŋ'thun Dhuwa.	But when will Dhuwa mother carry baby, and baby that, and Yirritja. And when Yirritja mother carries, the baby will appear Dhuwa.	But Dhuwa mothers carry Yirritja babies and Yirritja mothers carry Dhuwa babies.
Dhunupan ŋayi ŋuli ŋunhi yothu mälmirriyirr bäpurru'mirriyirr, ga bundurrmirriyirra gurruṯanaraw wiripuw yolŋuw.	Straight she always baby with mälk, with clan, and with sacred bone names for kin-calling different Yolŋu.	Straight away that baby has a subsection, a clan name, and sacred bone name to correctly identify and link to other Yolŋu.
Bili ŋändi'mirriŋu dhuwal dharray-manymakmirrydja bili ŋayi ŋunhi dhang'i'- waṯaŋuny yakurr'wuny yothuwnydja.	Because mother here care- good-full, because she that hug-owner for sleep for baby.	So the mother is the good carer, because she owns the cradling care for the child's sleep.
Galki nhakun ŋayi dhu ga yothu nhina ŋändi'mirriŋuwal.	Close like she will the child sit with mother.	Because the child is always close to his mother.
Bala nuruŋiny romdhu yothuydja ŋuli ŋäma ŋändi'mirriŋuny nhanŋuwuy ŋayi, ŋunhi ŋayi ŋuli lakaranhamirr nhanukal yothukurr dhärukurr 'Ŋamala'.	Then through that law the children will hear mother her own, that she will call herself to her through baby language: Ŋamala	So in this way the child hears his own mother, when she uses baby language and calls herself 'Mummy' (Ŋamala).
Nuruŋiny dhärukthun ŋayi ŋuli ga ŋändi'mirriŋuy lakaranhamirr ŋanyapinya ŋayi gurruṯu yothuwala.	By that by language she always is mother tell-herself her-own-self she kin for child.	Through that language, the mother refers to herself using a kin term to her child.
Yorrnha ŋuli dhäruk gurruṯana ga marŋgikuman dälnydja, balanya nhakun yäkuwnydja wiripuwurrunguny gurruṯumirriwnydja, ga waka'wu ga gitkitku bala marrkapthuna ⁴ ŋuli yothuny dhika mirithirra.	Later always language give and teach hard, like names other-other kin-full and for games for laughs then express love always child her very much.	After that she starts to give and teach harder words, like the names of other kin folk, and through games and laughter the child becomes confident in his mother's love.
Ŋändi'mirriŋuyndja ŋuli märr-ŋamathinyawuy gurruṯana bala lakaraman ŋayi marrtji ŋuli ŋuliwitjandhi märr-ŋamathinyawuykurra romgurr ga marrkapthunawurra.	Mother always love gives then tells she goes always whichever way love law and appreciation.	The mother always gives love, then tells her child everything through the ways of love and appreciation.
Dhuwalyiny mirithirr nhakun ŋayi märr- dapthunamirr rom, märr ga ŋayi dhu yothu marrkapthun nhanukiyingalaŋaw ŋändi'mirriŋuw.	This very much like she commitment law, so she will child love-praise-appreciate her mother.	This is a very faith- clenching law, so that a child can most appreciate his own mother.
Nunhi ŋayi dhu märramany marrtji romdja, bala ŋayiny marrtji dhu ŋayipin yan yothuynha mala-djarr'yundja.	When she will get the law, then she will go herself that child differentiate.	As he learns that law, he learns to make discriminations for himself.
Yol ŋayi, wanhaŋur ŋayi, nhä nhanŋu bäpurruny', ga yol nhanŋu yalu'.	Who she, where from she, what her clan, and who her nest.	Who he is, where he is from, what clan group, what mother's line.

1. wäŋa- nhäma – literally 'sees the place, the newborn baby's first activity.

2. n̄ayan̄u – the seat of the emotions

3. all Yol̄ju (and their land, songs, languages, etc) are either Dhuwa or Yirritja moiety. Marriages are across moieties and children have the opposite moiety of their mother.

4. Marrkap, beloved person, someone who keeps families safe and protected and supports them in difficult circumstances. He is like a 'shade' for that Yol̄ju.

Yolŋu dhäruk	Direct translation	English translation
Bala ŋayi marrtji dhu larruman yol mala yapa'mirr nhanŋu, yol mala ŋändimirr mala bäpurru, yol wakumirr ga yol märimirr, ga wanhaŋur ŋayi mala-ŋurrrkanhawuy.	Then she go will search who are m's m's m's m's group, who her mothers' (pl) clan, who m's m's m's, and who m's m's, and where from she many-thrown.	So he'll want to know who are his great grand mothers' people, his mothers', his mother's grandmothers' and mothers, and from where he is descended (See diagram).
Yolŋu yothu ŋuli ŋuthana bala marŋgithirra dhunukuŋur ⁵ ŋändi'mirriŋuwal yurr märrmay' dhukarryuny: nhänharay ga ŋänharay bala marrtji ŋuli dhäruktja rulaŋdhuna ŋurru'liilha ⁶	Yolŋu child will grow then learn in care by mother but by two paths: by looking and by listening and then will go words put into head.	The Yolŋu child grows and learns in the mother's care through two means, looking and listening, then the words form in her head.
Ga ŋunhiyi nurrku' djämaw dhuwal mirithirr ganydjarrmirr bili birrka'yunawuy nurrku dhuwal warrpam yäkumirr Yolŋuw yothuw ga bäpurruw, balanya nhakun napurruŋ nurrku birrka'yunaraw, dhuwal Gayalinydjil	And that very head-mind for work this very powerful because trying head this all with name of the yolŋu child, and clan like our head for thinking this <i>Gayalinydjil</i> .	And the mind is very powerful for working, since the thinking power of any Yolŋu child actually has a specific clan-related name For example our (Wangurri clan) mind is called <i>Gayalinydjil</i> .
Beŋur dhuŋgarranŋur goŋ- wangany ga djimbiyalil yothu ŋuli marŋgithirra yol nhanŋu ŋändi'mirriŋuw galkiwuy gurruŋu'mirr walal, ga yän bili ga balan bitjana ŋayi ŋuli marŋgithirra bukmakkun romgun, ŋunhi ga rom ŋorra buŋgulŋur, manikayŋur ga bulu dharrwa dhika.	From years hand-one and to seven the child always learns who her mother's close relations are, until there she learns all the law, the law which is in ceremony, in song, and all other sorts.	Between five and seven years old, the child learns who his mother's close relations are, until he knows everyone – relations, and their traditional roles, in ceremonies and songs and all other things ⁷
Ŋunhiyiny waluy ŋayi ŋuli djämamirriyaman nhanŋu marŋgithinyawuynyndja, bala ŋuli gäman ga milkuman nhanŋuwuy gaka'tja ⁸ wiripuruwal yolŋuwal.	That time makes her learning work, and takes and shows her talent/style to other Yolŋu.	That period puts his knowledge to work, and he carries it, and reveals his own ancestral style to other people.
Ŋunhiyiny nhanŋu gaka'lha ga mundhurrnha djämawnha dirramuwnynda djäma ŋayi dhu märram djäma djuŋgayawnha, dalkarawnha, bilmawnha, ga romgun mala.	That his style and gift for working – for a boy he will work as manager, or ceremonial leader, and clapstick laws.	This provides a man's talent and gift, for the work he will do as custodian, authority on sacred names, ceremonial leader, and other important roles.
Ŋayiny dhu miyalktja yolŋu buthuru gänhamirra ⁹ makarrwu yuŋgurrwu manikaywun, märr ga ŋayi dhu nyä'yundja dhunupa yän bundurrnynda lakaram.	And the woman Yolŋu will take her ears to the theme of ancestral songs, so she will cry straight, just telling the body names.	And the woman will listen carefully so that when it comes time to cry, she will get the song lines right, she will sing/cry the right sacred names.
Bili ŋayipin ŋunhi miyalktja yothu marŋgin yol bäyŋuthin.	Because she along that woman baby knows who became nothing.	Because she has known that person who has died ever since she was a baby.
Beŋuryiny ŋayi dhu yolŋuy yothuy märr-dharaŋanna yol nhanŋu yapapulu, ŋändipulu, wakupulu, märipulu ga dharaŋanna ŋayi marrtji dhu djäman nhanŋuwuy dhiyak mala	From that she will yolŋu child believe who her yapa, ŋändi, waku, märi and understand she will go work for her for them.	After the child grows up, he builds up trust with other groups, (sisters, mothers, great grandmothers, grandmothers), and understands what his role is in relation to all those different groups.
Balanya nhakun yapapuluwalnynda ŋayi dhu ga mukthuna yän nhina, yäkuny ŋayi ŋunhi moda wo mirriiri.	Like example, sister family will quiet only sit, name that there <i>moda</i> or <i>mirriiri</i> .	For example at a funeral, those people from clans who could be called 'sister' to the deceased, must sit quietly and do nothing, this is what we call <i>moda</i> or <i>mirriiri</i> .
Ga ŋändi'mirriŋuwal ga märi'mirriŋuwal ŋayi dhu rur'yun ga waŋa ga napuŋga dhärra, balanya nhakun djawarrkmirr wo rom ŋayi dhu nhirpan dhunupayam.	And for the mothers and for the mother's mothers she will get up and talk and stand in the middle, for example exhorting or law she will lay down straight.	But for the mother's and grandmother's clan, he will get up and stand in the middle and talk and exhort people, and make sure things are being done correctly according to law.
Ga wakupuluwalnynda ŋayi dhu nhina ga ŋäman, bili nhanukalanu märipuluw ŋunhiyi romdja.	And with the waku people, she will sit and listen, because it is their mother's mother's law.	And sit with the <i>waku</i> clan people (see the diagram), because their <i>märi</i> (ie the mother's mother clan of the deceased) are in control.

Yolŋu dhäruk	Direct translation	English translation
Yurru ŋunhi ŋayi dhu yothu 'waŋaŋu' bayinguthirrinydja, märi yän nhanŋu bungawany.	But if she will child waŋaŋu die, mother's mothers only her boss.	If a child dies, it will be the mother's mothers' people in control of the ceremony.
Yolŋuy yothuy ga ŋayatham gaka' ga mundhurr mala, ga nhaliy ŋayi dhu ŋunhi djuŋkmaramany ŋunhi ŋayi dhu ga dhuli'na- bitjuna, ralpayirr ga djambatjthirr, nhaku mala romgu walal dhu nhirpan nhanŋu.	Yolŋu children hold roles and gifts, and who they will pass them when they will listen, become helpful and effective, for what laws will be put for her.	That Yolŋu child has that talent of gaka', he is gifted, this will make him go ahead if he listens properly, and be helpful and a good provider for ceremonies that will be set up for his participation.
Romdhu manymakthu ga mägayay dhu guwatjmanmirr ga dharanjanmirrnydja.	By good law, and by peace will come together and recognise.	By following this properly and peaceably, people will come together and respect each other.

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<https://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/yaci/resources.html>

5. dhunuku – (noun) care, protection

6. Author's note: nurrku – refers to the mind or that part of the head which thinks and knows (as opposed to liya – which is the physical head). Different Yolŋu groups have different names for their nurrku. The nurrku interacts with the nature – thinking, problem solving, negotiation, ways we behave.

7. Author's note: He knows and joins in but still doesn't properly understand

8. gaka' – ancestral style, talent, true role. A person shows gaka' through his/her performances in a variety of tasks – dances, language, law making, and decision making.

9. Buthuru-gänhamirri – to bring one's ears, to bring oneself through listening carefully

Bundurrpuy

What does bundurr mean?

As part of her research, Garngulkpuy invited Wapiriny Gurruwiwi to explain in more details the concept of bundurr – a key feature of a child’s identity right from conception. Wapiriny was an elder from the Gälpu bäpurru. She tape-recorded a conversation with him at Galiwin’ku and brought it to Darwin for transcription, translation and interpretation. The whole of the human body is a map of the land and of connections of kin. Everyone knows who everyone is right from the beginning. everything is connected. Everyone has a part to play in the network. There are no one blank slates.

Different to conventional views that newly born babies are purely empty – tabula rasa – and ready to absorb whatever is externally surrounding them, Yolŋu babies are born with bundurr for their bones and sacred gapu (water) in their brains, ready for their growth into their ancestral languages, songlines, and sacred designs, as invested by the ancestral beings of their particular sacred places. The manifestation of bodily invested knowledge is the internal journey of discovering who they are and how they are becoming, by virtue of being particular kin to a particular land.

Bundurrpuy

by Wapiriny Gurruwiwi

Transcribed by Garngulkpuy

Translated by Garngulkpuy and Michael Christie

23 September 2008

Yolŋu dhäruk	English translation
Yo! Yothu ŋunhi ŋayi li dhawal-guyaŋirnydja dhunupan yan ŋunhi ŋayi bundurrimrnydja yothuny. Yo! Yothu ŋunhi ŋayi li dhawal-guyaŋirnydja ŋunhi ŋayi bundurrimrnydja Yothuny.	Okay. When a child is born she already has sacred names for her bones. Yes, when the child is born it already has bundurr.
Bundurrimrriŋa ŋayi li, likanmirriŋa, ŋayi dhuwal ŋaraka ŋayi, mulkurr ŋayi, diltji ŋayi, mel ŋayi, marwat ŋayi, ŋunhi ŋayi bundurrimra warrpam'ŋha.	She is born with a sacred 'knee' name, and a sacred 'elbow' name, all related to her bones, her head, her back, her eyes, her hair, all of her has bundurr ¹
Ŋunhi ŋalapaŋi nhawi malŋ'thuna ŋayi ŋunhi li yutjuwalany ŋunhi dhawal-guyaŋirnydja gal'kalmirriŋa ga ŋalapaŋiŋ.	Any adult we see, when she was small and newborn, and when she was crawling around, (she always had that same bundurr), and now she is old.
Ga yalala ŋayi dhu bäyŋuthirr ŋunhi ŋayi still goŋmirr ² yän ŋe!	And later when she dies, she still has all those connections
Goŋmirr yän ŋayi ŋunhiyiny ŋunhi dhu dhiŋgamany ŋurruŋi ŋayi goŋmirrnydja bundurruŋ, bundurruŋ likanŋa ŋayi.	When she dies, she will be all connected, and it is the bundurr which makes those relationships, through the bundurr she has connections.
Yol ŋayi dhiyal gan nhinan, wanŋaŋur ŋayi, wanha nhanŋu wäŋa, yol nhanŋu yapa ³ , yol nhanŋu märi ga yol nhanŋu ŋänŋi'mirriŋu...	Who she was when she was alive with us, where she was from, where her country was, who her great great grandmother's people were, her grandmother's, her mother's ...
Ŋuruŋiŋyiny ŋayi ŋuli goŋmirrnydja, beŋur ŋayi yutjuwala goŋmirr bundurrimra ŋayi already, ŋunhi ŋayi li malŋ'thuna ŋunhi ŋayi goŋmirra bundurrimra ŋayi ga bäyŋuthirr ŋayi dhu, rakunydhirr ŋayi dhu ŋunhi ŋalapaŋi, yurr rakunydhirra.	That is how she is connected, since she was a small baby already with bundurr, as soon as she was born, she already had connections with bundurr, when she dies, when she's old and dead.
Ŋayi dhu yothu ga goŋmirr yan ŋayi even ŋayi yothu bäyŋuthirr wanhal ŋayi dhu aŋeŋur bäyŋuthirr napuŋga aw wulmandhirra ŋayi dhu still ŋayi goŋmirr yan bili ŋunhi born goŋmirr ga bäyŋuthirr ŋayi still goŋmirr yan.	Ever since a baby, she has connections, it doesn't matter how old she is when she dies, middle aged or old, she is still connected, born connected, dies connected.
That's why ŋunhi li buŋgulnydja ŋamaŋamayun, munathany, warraw ⁴ ny'tja dhika nhä marrtji nhirra'nhirra bili ŋunhi ŋayi yolŋu ŋunhi goŋmirr ŋayi yolŋu bukmak Dhuwa Yirritja bäyŋu.	That's why when funerals are made, the sacred sand sculptures, the sacred shade, and whatever else (sacred) are put in place, that is done because every person's body has got connections whether it's a Dhuwa or a Yirritja person who dies.
Bukmak warrpam ŋunhi ŋali dhu bäyŋuthirr manikayyu ŋalitjalany dhu dholkumany ga balanya.	So everything, when we die, will be buried by ancestral song, you see.
Rumbalnydja napurr dhuwal mirithirr dhuyu ga yaka nhe dhu warku'yundja napurrŋ bundurruŋdja bili ŋayi ga rom waŋa bukmak ŋaraka dhuwal dhuyu.	Our bodies are very sacred, so you must not disrespect our sacred names because the law says that all bones are sacred.
Ga ŋunhi napurr ŋuli burruŋ gamununguny aw miny'tjiny rulawaŋdun ŋunhiyiny goŋ-waŋaŋuw ga djuŋgayaw yan djäma.	So when we dance painted up with ochre or we paint ancestral designs on the body or the coffin, it is only those people responsible ⁵ for performing and managing the funeral who allowed to do the painting.
Ga yuwalktja bukmak dhu luŋ'thundja mala manapanmirrnydja ŋurikiyiny bundurruw dhawar'maranharaw.	And truly, everyone will gather and join together to do the right thing for finishing that sacred bone connection properly.

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1. Beginning to tease out the meaning of bundurr, Wapiriny is linking the knees and elbows (the most potent source of Yolŋu connectedness metaphor) with all the other parts of the body (each with its own spiritual significance).
2. Goŋmirr (- hand, -mirr, having) literally 'with hands', means having relations around who will give support.
3. Yapa means both sister and mother' mother's mother's mother. (See the diagram on Garrŋulkpuy's paper The Yolŋu Child's Pathway in this volume)
4. Warraw' shade, sometimes used to denote a designated space where secret/sacred business is done.
5. Different clan groups have particular roles in a funeral (as described in Garrŋulkpuy's paper The Yolŋu Child's Pathway in this volume) because the body of the deceased is a sacred object through its ancestral connections.

Dhuwalatjan Dhukarrkurr Yuṭay Yolṅuy Märram Djambatj

Yolṅu Qualifications

When thinking about the difference between Yolṅu and Balanda (non-Indigenous) education, Gawura made clear how it is that Yolṅu young people become qualified within their knowledge community. It is the end of a process in which practices of care and respect, understanding the environment and what it provides, right speaking and skillful behaviour are nurtured by parents and elders. The elders assess the young person in terms of ceremonial performance (re-presented by sacred shelters) and ancestral knowledge (ancient cooking sites) and award particular people particular qualifications from within the traditions of their own clan group.

To a significant degree, this piece of writing advocates the newly proposed research scheme, 'dual academy' at Charles Darwin University (CDU) – how a contemporary institution such as tertiary education providers should take seriously both Indigenous and university-based knowledge practices. That is the knowledge production which is recognised and credited by academic authorities within the university as well as by local/ancestral knowledge authorities working in their own knowledge traditions.

In 2024, Gawura commenced his PhD candidature at CDU with his research work that he entitled – *Marraṅu Djarrambaḷ*. He is intending to foreground the ways in which Yolṅu knowledge claim is ancestrally invested once and for all and ineluctably placed and immobile, yet shareable and recognisable by the right people in the right place.

Dhuwalatjan Dhukarrkurr Yuṭay Yolṅuy Märram Djambatj – Yolṅu Qualifications

by Gawura Waṅambi

2024

Yolŋu dhäruk	English translation
Nhinanha ŋuli marrtjinya Yolŋu walal bala ŋuli yothu dirramu wo miyalk malthunan bala ŋuli djägayunminyawuynydjia rom ŋurr-yirr'yuna.	<i>Yolŋu people live together; one day a male or female child is born, then the tradition of caring starts.</i>
Djäga marrtjinya yan warray märr ŋuli ŋunhi yothu djäkamirriyinyan bala ŋuli marrtjinya romgun marŋgithinya.	<i>The child is cared for until she/he reaches the right age and height, she/he then starts to learn Yolŋu education.</i>
Dhärukun waŋanharaw, dhuŋgarrawnha malaŋuw marrtjinya marŋgithinya, nhäku ŋathaw märranhaw, nhaltjanaraw bathanaraw ŋurunjyidhi ŋayaŋay'wu wo wäyingu, buŋgulwun giritjinyarawnha.	<i>It includes the ways in which how to speak our world with languages and names and how to know well the country and which food to collect and cook, and also how to dance our world in the ceremony.</i>
Dirramuny yothu ŋuli dhapiwurrnha romgurr marrtjinya ga marŋgithinya.	<i>Yolŋu boys go through the circumcision ceremony and learn more through that process.</i>
Benjruyidhi ŋalapalmirriy worru'wurrunuy wo ŋändiy ga bäpay ŋuli djambatjinha nhänha wo ŋänha dhärukliil wo djämalil ŋunhiyidhi yothuny bala ŋuli nherranan wo yäkumirriyanhan nhakun ŋunhiyidhin yolŋuny bilin gađamannha ga mułkurr dhukarmirrnhä.	<i>After a while, senior leaders or the father and mother of the child start to watch the performance they do in all sorts of things. They observe what the child is adept at, and carefully see and hear whether the child is skilful and clever in speaking languages and performing according to Yolŋu ways.</i>
Ŋarambiya'lil ŋuli nhänha djambatj, waŋanhalil dhärukliil, buŋgullil gakallil, manikaylil ga milkarrilil makarrilil.	<i>When and where boys are good at singing songlines and girls are good at crying songlines, they are recognised and expected to be the next leaders.</i>
Goŋ-dhułanmirrnhä li wo goŋ-buyumirrnhä li, dhäruk dhu ga nininyŋun waŋa nhanjuwuynha yan yakan wiripuw bala ŋuli dharaŋanan romdhuny ga wurrunyudja yolŋuy bala ŋuli gurrupanan ga yäkumirriyanhan.	<i>Being skillfully knowledgeable in speaking Yolŋu world with their own clan language, not someone else's, they are allowed to start learning how to paint patterns and designs and make sacred baskets.</i>
Dhiyakkurr dhukargurr ŋuli dharaŋanawuydjia märram. Bäyŋu gi ŋula wiripuny dhukarr dhäri.	<i>This is when they receive recognition from the most senior Yolŋu people in the Yolŋu world. There is no other way or shortcut.</i>
Romdhu warraw'yu ŋurrŋgitjithu ga dilakthu yolŋuy yan gurrupandja dhu yurr balaydhi yan dhu nhämany wo djarr'yundja djambatjlil malaŋulil.	<i>In our Yolŋu world, Yolŋu seniors are the ones who carefully watch, hear, evaluate and then decide whether young Yolŋu receive recognition qualifying them as djambatj – a skillfully knowledgeable person according to the Yolŋu ways.</i>

Galḥayḥu

Ancestral Skin

The concept of *gakal* often comes up when Yolḥu philosophers are explaining how a child's identity grows from their ancestral heritage into a confident authoritative performance in the world. *Gakal* is a particular individual style of behaviour which develops in a well cared for Yolḥu child in place¹. Another less common concept, *galḥayḥu* became the subject of discussion among Charles Darwin University senior Yolḥu staff in 2022. Whereas *gakal* comes from the inside of a child's identity, *galḥayḥu* comes from the environment in which she or he grows. *Gakal* and *galḥayḥu* work together to produce and maintain the Yolḥu person-place. The word *galḥayḥu* comes from the root *galḥa* which means skin, and the suffix *-ayḥu*, which means something like 'eternal'². This text was pieced together by the editors in 2024 from transcribed conversations involving Birrinymal [Dr W. Gaykamaḥu], Joy Bulkanhawuy and Gawura Waḥambi.

Galḥayḥu (ancestral skin)

by Birrinymal [Dr W. Gaykamaḥu], Joy Bulkanhawuy and Gawura Waḥambi

1. For more information on *gakal* see Yolḥuw Yothuw Marrgithinyaraw ga Marrgikunhamirr Dhukarr – The Yolḥu Child's Pathway, in this volume.

2. Other examples: dhārranḥayḥu, standing forever, gulyunayḥu, in place forever, bokmanayḥu, created forever

When we are on country, our lands and totems 'stick' to us as galḥayḡu.	Waymamba: Narra nhunany dhu ḡaḡ'thun yāku ḡarra li ga mārr dhumbal'yun galḡayḡuw yākuw.	<i>I will ask you about a word I'm somewhat confused about: galḡayḡu.</i>
	Wanhal dhu mārram? Yolthu dhu gurrupan? Nhaliy?	<i>Where do we get it from? Who gives it? How?</i>
	Nhakun dhuwaltjan ḡayi dhu dhuwali gurrupan wāḡay nhuna waḡa, ḡunhi limurrūḡ yirralka wāḡa, bala ḡayi dhu ḡunhi ḡulatjandhi nhe dhu ga marrtji wāḡakurr nhokal wāḡakurr bala ḡayi nḡuḡu dhu ḡunhi mak manim'thuna nhokalna rumballilina.	<i>Through this way, it will be the land which gives it to you, wherever is our homeland, so that when you go through your ancestral land, walking through the land, your land, then it will maybe attach to your body.</i>
	Ga nheny yaka marḡḡi mak ḡunhi ḡayi dhu nḡuḡu manim'thun mak yalalanḡumirriyna nhe dhu dhākay-ḡāma.	<i>Maybe you're not aware of it when it attaches itself to you, but maybe later you will feel it.</i>
Galḡayḡu strengthens our minds and skills.	Gawura: Nhakun ḡayi yolḡu wiripuny ḡayi dhu galḡayḡu ḡunhi nḡanḡu ḡunhi djambatj yindikum. Djambatjkum nḡanḡu djambatj dhu ḡamatham, nḡanḡu djāma djambatjnha nḡanḡu ḡayi dhu ḡakalmirriyam ḡanya dhu wo ḡakal nḡanḡu dhu ḡamatham, nhakun ḡula nhā djambatj nḡanḡu dhu ḡamatham.	<i>Like, he the Yolḡu, sometimes the galḡayḡu will improve his hunting skills. Make him skillful, increase his skill, his efforts will give him ḡakal, or make his ḡakal better, like whatever he does well, will be improved.</i>
	Ga dhāwu ḡakaram "Dhuwali miyapunu ḡalki burakirra dhu nhokunḡ! Way! Nḡaḡu marrtji!", ga yuwalktja yan ḡayi li ḡunhi miyapunu burakirra.	<i>And tell them, "There is a turtle about to be wounded by you! Hey! Look carefully!", and it's true, that turtle will be caught.</i>
	ḡula nhā wāyingu li menguna marrtjinya, ḡayi dhu ḡunhiyi nḡanḡu galḡayḡu buna ḡayi dhu ḡunhi bitjandhi nḡanḡu biḡgirri'yun wo ḡurru-walyun ḡayi dhu ḡarraluman ḡula nḡaltjan duwitjtuwitj ḡayi dhu rumbal ḡula nhā waḡa, ḡikan dhika nhā duwitjtuwitjthun ḡunhiy ga ḡakaram nḡanḡu.	<i>Any sort of animal that they miss seeing, the hunter's galḡayḡu will emerge, and it also will make him burp or rub his nose like this, he will burp, somehow it will twitch, twitch, the body whatever, the arm, the elbow whatever will twitch, twitch, that is letting him know.</i>
Galḡayḡu connects us with our networks of totems.	Ga ḡunhiyi galḡayḡuy dhākay-ḡāma ga, ḡurunḡiyi galḡayḡuy djambatj gurrupan, nhāku ḡula ḡayi dhu malḡ'maram bondi yan dḡarpuman bondin yān ḡula nhā. Balanya bala wiripuny.	<i>The galḡayḡu feels that, galḡayḡu gives them skill for whatever they may find quickly and spear it quickly whatever it is. It's also like that.</i>
	Wiripuny nhakun dhuwanydja ḡarra gan malḡ'maraḡal experience ḡāḡḡipulu ḡarraku Wangurri ga Guyamirriil ḡunhi walalaḡgal ḡunhiyi nḡawi ḡarirri yan galḡayḡu walalaḡ walalany dhu ḡakaram ḡarirri wo ḡany'tjurr, gomulu, yow.	<i>Also I have found in my experience with my mothers' clan groups, the Wangurri and Guyamirriil, for them it's a fish, that is, their galḡayḡu is their totemic fish which will let them know, a fish, and also a heron³.</i>
	Walal dhu ḡarralum (brrrr!) nhakun ḡarralum bitjan ḡarralum dhuwal dhu, yow ḡunhi ray'kalyun dhu ḡarralum dhu ḡunhiyi ḡayi dhu ḡamathirr yuwalk yān djambatj ḡula nḡanḡu ḡayi dhu mārram, miyapunu mārram ḡula nhā, wo ḡayi dhu wiripuny dhāwu ga ḡurunḡiy ḡakaram.	<i>They will burp (brrrr!) like that, like belch they will, they will burp, that will improve truly that skill, whatever of his he will get, get turtle, whatever different message it will indicate.</i>
	Waripu ḡayi dhu ga ḡurinḡiyi ḡakaram, ḡarra dhu ga ray'kalyun nhakun ḡuka ḡarra dhu ga rerri buwayakkum nhā dhu yolḡuny ḡayatham.	<i>Or also, it will indicate this, as I burp the galḡayḡu, swallow, and I will make my sickness disappear whatever the person has.</i>
	Wo ḡayi galḡayḡu balanya bili dhārra, balanya bili dhārra nḡanukal bili ḡunha ḡayi ga warrakandhu ḡakaram.	<i>Or galḡayḡu is something standing, something standing/being with her/him because the totemic animal indicates.</i>
	Totem-ḡur ga ḡakaram ga mam'thun, ḡunhiy bili nhā nḡumalaḡ totem. Nḡarrakal dhu mam'thun ḡunhi bili nhā ḡarraku totem.	<i>From the totemic beings it is told, and sticks whatever your totem happens to be. On to me will stick whatever is my totem.</i>

3. Gomulu or gany'tjurr the heron is also mentioned in Yolḡu Baḡandi-waḡanḡumirr in this volume

Galḥayḡu protects us.	<p>Bulkanhawuy: Yow yuwalk gurrḡḡ, Yuwalk ḡayi napurrḡḡ happen ga beḡur bili yolḡu mala ḡanapurḡ bitjan bili, ga bitjan bili gan yān galḡayḡumirriy ḡurukumirriy nhinan ḡunhi galḡayḡu nhā walalaḡ ḡunha bilmaḡur ga ḡorra yindi whether ḡayi warrakan ḡula nhā, ḡarirri ḡula nhā, dawurr guku ḡula nhā, ḡayi li mam'thun ga dhāwu ḡānhamirra ḡayi ḡunhi, dhāwumirra ḡayi ḡunhi ḡurukiyi yolḡuw ga djāgamirra ḡayi ḡurukiyi yolḡuw.</p>	<p><i>Yes, that's true, cousin, truly it does happen to us, and after that we Yolḡu always live by means of that galḡayḡu, whatever lies within our sacred clapsticks⁴, whether to do with animals or fish, whatever, wild honeybee, honey, it will stick and tell its own story, it has a message for its Yolḡu, and cares for that Yolḡu.</i></p>
	<p>Djāga ḡayi ḡurukiyi yolḡuw ḡunhiydhi galḡayḡu dawurr guku, ḡula nhā dhāwu ḡayi li gurrupan yātj wo ḡamakuli⁴, wo ḡayi li djambatjḡa gurrupan yolḡuny ga gakaḡna nḡanḡu yindikum ḡamatham gakaḡmirriyam ḡanya.</p>	<p><i>That galḡayḡu is caring for that Yolḡu – honeybee, sugarcane, whatever it tells, good or bad or giving hunting skill to the Yolḡu, enhancing their gakaḡ, giving him or her good gakaḡ.</i></p>
	<p>Nḡathajurḡa mak djitama, dingḡu ḡayi li mam'thun napurrḡḡ. If it's not processed manyḡakḡḡ, yātjkurr can be poison, tastes and more than that... your body can get sick. Then you notice you processed and ate that ḡatha in a wrong way and start having symptoms... mak ḡayi dhu infection-na mārram.</p>	<p><i>After eating food like cheeky yam, or cycad nut it adheres to us. If it's not processed properly, it can be poisonous, taste bad and can be more than that... your body can get sick. Then you notice when you process and eat food in a wrong way and start having symptoms... maybe they can get an infection.</i></p>
	<p>Mārrma' napurru ḡunhi nhāman ḡunhi napurr maḡḡ'maram ḡunhi galḡayḡu yolḡuwal rumbalḡurnydja bala napurr dhu ḡuyaḡa 'Way! Nhā dhuwana maḡakarḡḡi wo nhā dhuwal ḡuḡḡayunamirḡ?' ya' bitjan ḡarra ḡuli nhāma.</p>	<p><i>There are two things we see when we find that galḡayḡu with a Yolḡu body, so we think 'Hey, what is this? Dangerous or helpful?' yes that's how I see it.</i></p>
	<p>Waḡanydja ḡunhi galḡayḡu litjalḡuwuy yān, nḡumalaḡ nḡumalaḡuwuy yān, ḡarraku ḡarrakuwuy yān. Nhā nḡumalaḡ ga maḡakarḡḡ ga ḡorra, ḡurḡḡy ga gurrupan rerri, nhā nḡumalaḡ manyḡak totem nḡumalaḡy ḡayi dhu djambatjkum, marrḡḡitjkum ḡayi dhu nḡumalaḡy. Narraḡuny dārrpa ga bulanybirr. Waḡanydja maḡakarḡḡ, waḡanydja ḡuḡḡayunamirḡ ga manyḡak. ḡayi dhu dhukarr gurrupan wanhaltjan ḡarra dhu marḡḡi. Dārrpaynydja ḡarrany dhu bumany yān, ririkkuma yān.</p>	<p><i>One thing, our galḡayḡu is ours alone, and yours is yours alone. Any totem you might have which is dangerous, it might make you sick. Your good totem will make you skillful, it will make you a healer. I have the king brown snake and the dolphin. One is dangerous, one is helpful and good. It will show a pathway through which I will go. The king brown snake will just hit me, just sicken me.</i></p>
But we must be careful.	<p>Gawura: Narra dhu waḡany ḡakaram nḡakun dhuwal ḡarraku waku'mirriḡu wāḡa-wulanbuy ḡunhiy balanyamirriy dharrwa Warramiri mala yolḡu mala nhina ga. Walal marḡḡi-gurrupan whether ḡayi dhu bitjan, ḡayi ḡunha bala wāḡa-wulanbuy yindi wo ḡayi waḡa-gulku yow. Yow ḡunha bala mirinyuḡu wo ḡarrpiya wiripuny ḡayi, ḡayi li ḡunhi ḡula nḡaltjan "ḡatj" dhuwali rirrakay ḡayi walal ḡunhi walal galḡa-waḡaḡu, rumbal-waḡaḡu walal dharaḡan 'Dhika nhā rraḡu ga ḡakaram?' Dhāwu ga rraḡu ḡakaram wo ḡula nhā rerri ga marḡḡi wo ḡula nhā ga marḡḡi yātjkurr wo ḡula nhā latju ga marḡḡi wo djambatj rraḡu ga gurrupan.</p>	<p><i>I will tell you one story about my maternal great-grandmother – whale, by which many Warramiri people are living. They let know whether they are like the whale, huge, or with many arms. Yes, there the whale or the octopus, which ever, it will 'ḡatj!' – that sound will, those who own that skin, own that body, they will recognise 'What's this here that's telling me?' Telling me a story whatever sickness is approaching, whatever a bad is coming, whatever a good is coming or that it gives me hunting skills.</i></p>
	<p>Waymamba: Napurrḡḡu Gupapuyḡu ḡinykiny, manbiri muka. Nḡakun ḡayi ga bathan ya' balanya, nḡanḡu maḡakarḡḡi ga ḡorra manbiriw. If you know how to handle it, you'll be safe.</p>	<p><i>For us Gupapuyḡu tribe it's the catfish. Like it is cooking, see what I mean, the danger of the catfish lies⁵. If you know how to handle it, you'll be safe.</i></p>
	<p>Bulkanhawuy: Carrying it and nhāma napurr dhu ga whether it manyḡak or yātjkurr.</p>	<p><i>They are carrying galḡayḡu and we will see whether it is good or bad.</i></p>

4. Bilma are ceremonial clapsticks, used in singing and in calling out sacred names. The word is used as a metonym for totemic names.

5. The catfish has poisonous spines which can sting you if it's not handled carefully when catching or cooking.

Yolŋu Metaphors for Learning

Raymattja Marika was the first Yolŋu to teach Yolŋu language and culture program at Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University). She was born and grew up on her own Rirratjŋu land in the community of Yirrkala. As Yolŋu educators began to develop more control over the curriculum in their schools during the 1980s, community elders both Dhuwa and Yirritja worked with the Yolŋu teachers at Yirrkala school to develop Yolŋu curriculum. Raymattja worked with Michael Christie to make clear in English the meaning and significance of five of the key concepts – *galtha*, *dhiŋ'thun*, *lundu-nhāma*, *dhudakthun* and *gatjpu'yun* – that had been given to the Yolŋu Action Group by the elders.

Metaphors for Yolŋu are more than metaphors. Rather, they are distinct knowledge practices happening here-and-now. The five key concepts positioning this paper as one of world philosophies are experientially praxial for Yolŋu to love our homelands and Ancestral creating beings to become confident to be true Yolŋu in the contemporary Australia.

Yolŋu Metaphors for Learning

by Raymattja Marika-Munungiritj and Michael J. Christie

All languages use metaphors to describe and understand what happens when we learn. In English, a common metaphor is LEARNING IS UNCOVERING SOMETHING THAT IS HIDDEN. This metaphor is at work when we say things like “We *found out* about rocks and metals,” and “They *discovered* how to make metal out of rocks.” It is a metaphor that leads us to believe that knowledge is not something constructed through negotiation but is something we find if we look hard enough and if we are lucky enough. The metaphors that Yolŋu use for learning are quite different. Our school (Yirrkala Community School, Northeast Arnhem Land, Australia) has been exploring the use of Aboriginal ways of making knowledge in the classroom. The school council is using community elders as consultants in developing a Yolŋu curriculum, which teaches the children Yolŋu knowledge and Yolŋu ways of knowing.

We have examined examples of Yolŋu metaphors for learning that were given to us by Yirrkala community elders during discussions about curriculum. These were metaphors chosen by our elders to show how schooling for Yolŋu children must be consistent with traditional Yolŋu ways of education.

Five words that we often hear when Elders talk about education are *galtha*, *dhiŋ'thun*, *lundu-nhāma*, *dhudakthun*, and *gatjpu'yun*.

Galtha is a connecting spot. Sometimes a place can be seen as a *galtha*. Recently we have been learning about a place near Dhalinybuy, the traditional homeland of some of our students, which is known as a *galtha*. This was a place where people used to gather at certain times of year, for sacred ceremonies and for the collection of cycad nuts and the preparation of sacred cycad bread. The people would sit in the *galtha* area, not on seats or blankets, but on the ground, different families and groups of people, gathering together from different areas, there for a special collective purpose, negotiating together and getting ready for special activities together – maybe hunting, maybe ceremonies. This is a *galtha* – the spot where people make solid contact with the earth, when they have been brought together from different places, and now they are having a discussion together to agree on a plan of action.

Anywhere there is a ceremony, there will be a *galtha*. Every ceremony must be different, because its art lies in creating that ceremony to specially reflect the participants and the place and the time. This takes a lot of planning and discussion on the part of the most knowledgeable people – discussion about which song lines to choose, which people should be involved, what roles they will play, and how to make this particular ceremony special and unique – to reflect this particular moment and place. When the discussion is finished, and people are happy about the plans that have been negotiated, a small but special ceremonial

act is performed – *galtha-nurrkama* ‘throwing the *galtha*’. Sometimes it is marked as a spear thrusting into the ground out of which the ceremony will grow (just like the Central Australian man on *Imparja* television who throws the spear that turns into a tree when it pierces the ground). When the *galtha* is thrown down, everyone knows the connection has been made, a decision has been agreed to, on how once again to bring the past into the present. We have decided on a plan, a way of going about creating something special and beautiful for ourselves.

Galtha is everywhere; wherever Yolngu “Aboriginal” and Balanda “non-Aboriginal” people are acting properly, there is the possibility of *galtha*. *Galtha* is the name the community elders gave us for our Aboriginal curriculum in the school – a constant reminder that our knowledge comes from the context of our learning, and that we must negotiate an agreement about our perspectives if we are to produce significant knowledge.

How can a Yolngu student in school learn to produce *galtha*? Daymbalipu Mununggurr, a Djapu clan elder and teacher from many years ago, has told us about using metaphors from hunting, history, and ceremony.

First, *dhiṅ'thun*. This word is often used to mean identifying the tracks of animals and following the tracks to find the animal. As we learn, we learn to recognize what we see in the environment, and how it can help us. We need the skill of *dhiṅ'thun* in order to understand the clouds and the tides, the animal tracks and the flowers, the clan totems and the sacred designs, and the songs that have come from the creation. *Dhiṅ'thun*, in this sense, speaks of research. We use it to describe the way we find out about our history, and about the way we follow up decisions that have been agreed upon.

Next, *ḷundu-nhiima*. *Nhāma* means ‘to see’. *ḷundu* has many possible translations in English. Often it is used to mean a journey, usually referring to the journey made through the land by the creating ancestors, or the pathway taken by these ancestors. It also refers to the footsteps and the gait, or manner of walking, of these people. *ḷundu* is also the word for friend, or companion, someone who thinks and feels so close to you, they are almost like your reflection.

The part of a Yolngu education described as *ḷundu-nhāma* means identifying the pattern and the style of the past. This refers particularly to our forebears, our ancestors, but also to the elders of the present day. First we must recognize what has gone before and know exactly how it fits in with the whole web of meaning which makes Yolngu life – *dhiṅ'thun*. Then we must identify the pattern or style of how it was performed in the past (*ḷundu-nhāma*). Literally, we must “see the journey” taken by our ancestors, and this involves identifying the land, and the people they have interacted with through the years, their motivations, their loyalties, their ideas, and everything else which has made them great. We say *ḷundu-nhāma* because, even if we can't actually see the creators and the ancestors, we can still see their *ḷundu* – exactly where they have been, what they have left behind, their signs and reflections, their images, and their way of life. We can see all those things because we can read them in the land, and they have been passed down to us through their songs.

Something special happens if we are able to *dhiṅ'thun* and *ḷundu-nhāma* accurately. What happens is that we begin to reproduce *dhuḍakthun*, the lives of our ancestors, in the same way that allowed them to preserve our knowledge and our culture for thousands of years and bring it right up to the modern world. This is more than just copying what the ancestors have done. *Dhuḍakthun* has the effect of bringing our spiritual past to life again through our modern behavior. It also has an effect on ourselves – putting us “in tune with” our spiritual past, shaping us like our ancestors. This is something quite natural for us, but very difficult for many Balanda to understand. Yolngu education is not about young Aboriginal people following their ancestors like robots. And Yolngu education is not about young people learning to do just what they feel like. Yolngu education is learning to love and understand our homeland and the ancestors who have provided it for us, so as to create a life for ourselves reworking the truths we have learned from the land and from the elders, into a celebration of who we are and where we are in the modern world.

A man who is a good dancer, who knows his connections and his land and understands his *rom* (law and culture), can produce his own *galtha*. This is what we are aiming for in Yolngu education. A man who is *galtha-gānaṅumirri* (literally ‘possessing a different and distinctive *galtha*’), can present his own *galtha* in the context of a ceremony and is much admired. He can act intelligently as an individual because he knows and respects the background to what he is doing. He is a unique individual. He isn't just copying his

ancestors. He isn't just keeping Yolngu culture unchanged like a museum piece. He has learned to create something that is especially his own, but quite consistent with the past. When he is *galtha-gänañumirri* he is loved and admired. He is a modern Yolngu keeping his Yolngu culture strong.

What about the future? A young Yolngu man or woman who has benefitted from a good education, in both worlds, will be like a turtle hunter, waking up in the morning, looking out to sea, paddling out to a special place on the reef, preparing to catch a turtle. He is *gatjpu'yun*. He is hopeful and expectant. He is happy because he is in familiar territory. He knows the currents and the winds, and there may be danger out there on the hunting ground, but he is still confident because he has the strength and knowledge of his culture behind him. *Gatjpu'yun* means that we are excited and hopeful and confident for the future. We know what we are looking for. It is not a discovery we are looking for, but the knowledge and skills to be true Yolngu in the modern world.

This paper was originally published as Marika-Mununggiritj, R. and Michael Christie, (1995). Yolngu metaphors for learning. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 113(1), 59-62 and is reproduced with permission.

Methodology for Yolŋu Research

Garŋgulkpuy and Lawurrpa had been working with a group called the Community Harmony Project looking for ways to support 'long grassers' – Aboriginal people from remote communities who sleep in the long grass on the beaches of Darwin. Their report called *'Yolŋu Longgrassers on Larrakia Land'* begins with the assumption that Darwin is the Aboriginal land of the Gulumerrdjin (Larrakia) people, and it is through the appreciation of this fact that longgrassers and service providers can work together to make life easier and safer from longgrassers and the community.

This research project opened the whole question of research methodology – the methods which Garŋgulkpuy and Lawurrpa had used were quite different from conventional research methods. They sat down with Darwin Indigenous researchers, Lorna Murakami-Gold and Terry Dunbar to make clear how Indigenous research methods differ strikingly from academic methods. Credible research with integrity begins with being the right people in the right place, remembering the right stories of where we came from, agreeing upon what we should do and how we should go about it, and what we should do with the 'results'. This is how a successful group hunting expedition unfolds and how research should be conducted. More recently Garŋgulkpuy used this same research method to lead an Evaluation of a Health program at Galiwin'ku.

The word, 'mel-ŋakaranhamirra' means 'to acknowledge, identify' and also a person who has the right kin network with groups/families who are against each other in trouble. [Birrinyamal] Waymamba Gaykamarŋu translates the word in English as a legal defender. They are a group of kin who support you and stand up for you when you are in trouble. They will jump in to help settle the trouble or argument so that you will live peacefully.

Methodology for Yolŋu Research

by Garŋgulkpuy ga L̄awurrpa

for the First Language Community Harmony Project

Working with Lorna Murakami-Gold and Terry Dunbar

assisted by Michael Christie

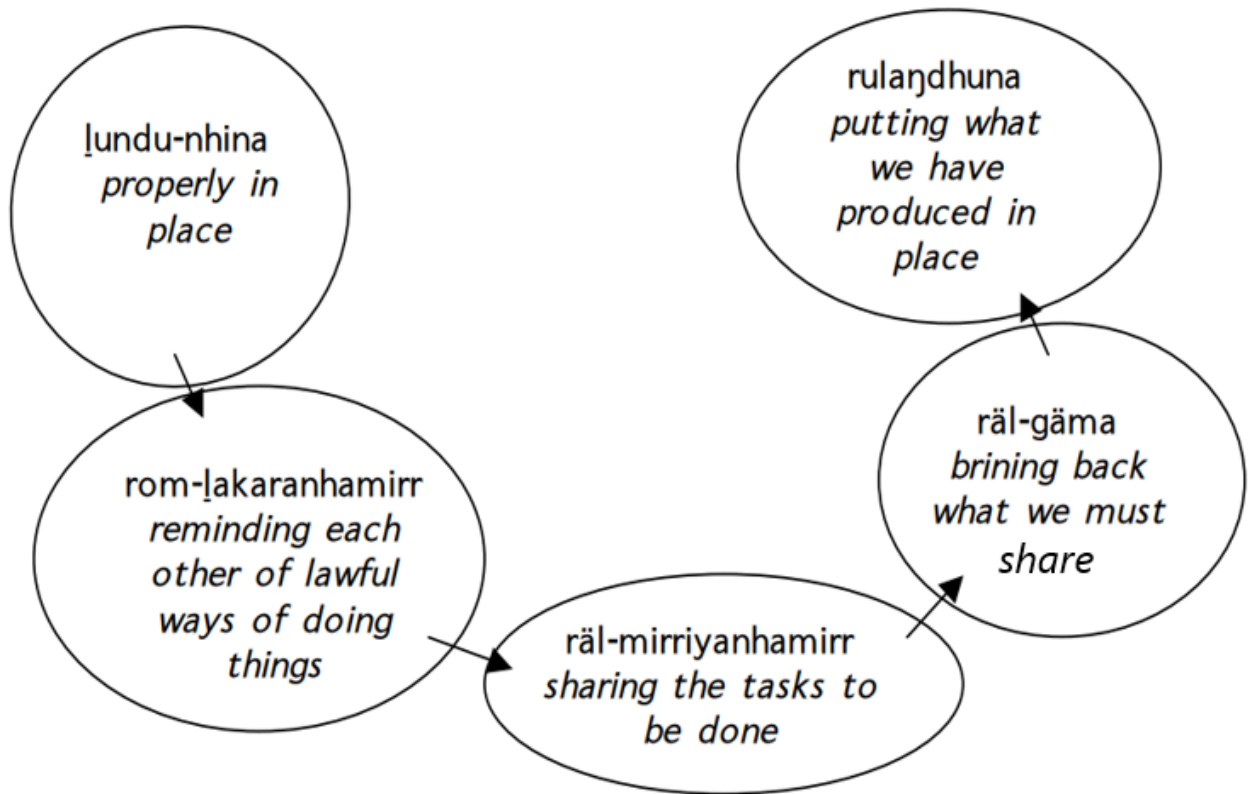
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Introduction:

One of the ways in which the Yalu' Marŋgithinyaraw research methodology can be shared with Aboriginal people from other communities, languages and traditions, is for storytelling about methodology.

Garŋgulkpuy and L̄awurrpa talked with Lorna and Terry about research methodology and how they might document it before they visited Maningrida and Tiwi.

In a session with Michael they prepared the story below. Michael worked on the translation and notes. Then Garŋgulkpuy and L̄awurrpa took the first draft home and brought it back with corrections the following day, and with diagram below.



Dhuwalatjan Dhukarrkurr Yuṭay Yolṅuy Märram Djambatj

Yolŋu dhäruk	English translation	Comments
Warraw'ŋurnydja, Yirritja dhu nhina Wangurri, Warramiri, nhina dhu yäkuŋura warraw'ŋur dhäruŋur ga balthanur	Yirritja people, of Wangurri and Warramiri clan groups will be sitting under a shade, which is called <i>dhäruŋ</i> or <i>baltha</i> .	<i>malŋ'maram gämurru</i> (finding the point) – different groups can mix together but they all have their identities, even their shades have particular names which link them to their clan groups.
Waŋanhamirr dhu ga Yolŋu miyalkkurruwurr ga ñirramuwurr rrambaŋi, nhälil walal dhu marrtji.	They will talk, the women and the men together, discussing which direction they will go.	<i>dhäruk bakmaram</i> – there are many different things to do and ways of going about them. The work we do needs to be negotiated
Dhäruk-bakmaranhamirr dhu ga, nhäkurru walal dhu mala-gulkmaranhamirr marrtji.	They will listen to each other's ideas, and decide how they will split up and go various ways.	Problems need to be discussed properly, and work needs to be divided up properly.
Ŋunha walal dhu wäŋa nhäma raŋi, ga ŋunha walal dhu wäŋa nhäma ñiltji.	Some will be looking down to the sea, others across to the bush.	People have a process that can link in.
Raŋi nhäma maypalwu, ga bala ñuwatthun marrtji nhäma ŋathaw ñiltjipuygu.	Looking at the beach thinking of shellfish, or going up to the bush looking for bush food.	<i>räl gäma</i> – they are collection information through the process
Ga ŋayi dhu ñirramuwurrnydja biŋjan bili marrtji djambatj gäma, raŋilil gapulil, ŋarkula nhäma, ga ñiltjilil.	And those men will always take their skills down to the beach, looking at the water, and into the bush.	Different people have their different skills which need to be coordinated together.
Miyalktja dhu marrtji märrmaw' matha-yal'wu ga gonyil'wu raŋilil ga ñiltjilil ga gonyil'wu.	The women go to the beach to find both meat and carbohydrate and to the bush for carbohydrate.	Women collect and gather information, nurture it, find out, they use feedback.
Ga ñirramu dhu marrtji matha-yal'wu yän, ga yänan muka gukuw guŋga'yun miyalkkurruwurrny.	And the men will go for meat, and maybe help the women in honey gathering.	Men give information and help women with sorting, strengthening with whatever outcomes they are trying to achieve.
Ga beŋuruyiny walal dhu roŋyirra räl gäman ga nhina walal dhu ga ŋunhiliyi warraw'ŋur, gurrupanmirr walal dhu gumurr-djulmaranhamirr, bala mala-gulkmaranhamirr ŋathany, nhä mala walal märraŋal.	Then after that they will return and bring back what they have gathered, and they will sit together in that same shade, and they will share, giving across to each other, and dividing up the food, whatever they have gathered.	<i>guŋga'yunmirr</i> – when the work is done, it needs to be shared again properly in the proper ancestral shades, according to family lines.
Bala walal dhu mala-gulkmaranhamirr barrkuwatjthirra, roŋyirra marrtji wäŋalila, bala gurrupan ŋunhala bala gurruŋumirriwnha wiripuwurrnha.	Then they will split up, and go in different directions, returning home, and back there, give food to all their other kin.	<i>räl-gurrupanmirr</i> – it also needs to spread out into the network of kin in different places.
Bala walal dhu ŋunhi marrtji dhäkay-ŋupan. Wanhaŋuwuy dhuwal? Ŋunhaŋuwuy bala. Go limurru marrtjin! Nhä, goðarr' limurru dhu marrtji? Ŋula nhuma ga ñälthir.	And they will taste it carefully. Where did this come from? From over that way. Come on, let's go! Should we all go there hunting tomorrow? If you would like to.	<i>rom-lakaranhamirr</i> – all the others in different places will examine what has been done, and may ask to.
Yo—w Marrkapmirr, Yukuyuku! Waku! Yapa! Walal dhu gurpanmirr ŋunhili, räl-manyaknha lakarama, wo djambatj-dumurr ŋunhi ŋayi dhu märr-ŋamathirra ŋurunjiny dhärukthu malaŋuy.	Yes! Beloved little brother, daughter, sister. They will call each other by their right kin terms there, congratulating each other for their hunting skills, telling them they are good shots, they show affection with those words.	<i>guŋga'yunmirr</i> – this work allows people to be proud and supporting of their kinfolk. It makes family groups stronger.
Mayali' ŋayi ŋunha, napurru yolŋu ŋunhi ŋanapurru yirritja wo dhuwa, ŋurruŋuny napurru dhu nhäma, nhaliy ŋanapurruŋy ŋuli marimiriyam, wo ŋayaŋu-wutthun.	This all means that we Yolŋu whether we are Yirritja or Dhuwa, we need to have a look at whatever it is that's giving trouble, or making us upset.	<i>dhäruk-bakmaranhamirr</i> – the hunting story tells us how to go about problem solving research.
Bala ŋanapurru dhu waŋanhamirra, wanhaŋur ga gämurruy' marrtji ŋunhi mari, yolthi ŋunhi ga gämurru' bokman?	Then we will talk together, discussing the source of that trouble, who has created this issue?	Discussing the problem together is the important step.

Yolŋu dhäruk	English translation	Comments
Beŋuruyi napurru dhu gurruŋumirri luŋ' maranhamirra lakaranhamirra dhuwal dhuwal dhuwal dhuwal gämurruny'.	So we have to collect all our kin together, and talk to each other about this thing.	Build partnership, good relationship, working in a collaborative manner will meet our outcomes.
'Nheny manymak dhiyak gämurruw?'- nhakun ŋayaŋu-wutthunamirriw gämurruw.	How are you feeling about this thing? – the thing which is worrying them.	Responding to the point/ problem/ issue
Wo wiripu yolŋu ŋayi dhu bitjan waŋa 'Wanha nheny, yätjin yolŋu? Wo manymak nhe?' Bala ŋayi dhu yuram nhanŋu, wo yaka'yun.	Or another person might say: "How are you going? Feeling bad? or are you okay?" and he will say yes to him or no.	In this process, people may support, encourage, consent
Nhina walal dhu waŋanhamirr. Nhäliil limurru dhu marrtji? Mari djäma? Wo marrtji gurruŋ'thu romdhu? Nhä manymaktja dhukarr?	They will sit and talk together. What are we going to do about this? Sort it out with a fight, or treat the situation gently? What's the best path to follow?	Sit and discuss together, come to agreement
Bitjan walal dhu warraw'ŋur waŋanhamirr.	That's what they will be talking about under their shade.	These discussions need to be organised through family groupings.
Gurŋga'yunmirra walal dhu. ŋunhi ŋayi dhu marimirriyirr yolŋu, walalnydja dhu wiripuwurrnydja ŋoy-ya' maraman ŋanya yolŋuny, mari gulmaraman.	They will help each other out. If a person gets upset, the others will calm him down, stop the trouble.	Know and be aware of other people, have respect and trust.
Märr ga dhu marrtji ŋurikal marimirriwal yolŋuwal ŋayaŋuy-manymakthun.	So that he will be able to face up to that trouble maker with feeling good inside.	People need to be encouraged to face up to each other feeling okay about each other.
Bala ŋayi dhu maŋdany dhurrwara-manapana bala ŋayi waŋan bitjana ŋunhi yolŋuny, "Way, nhä nhe manymak yän dhiyakun yolŋuw wo baðak nhe ga ŋayatham nhanŋu yän?"	So he might bring them together, and he'll say, "Hey, do you feel okay now about this person, or are you still holding something against him?"	This draws in the expectation of the outcome and concludes the process.
ŋayi dhu mak yolŋu bitjan waŋa. "Ŋe, baðak ŋarra ga ŋayatham yän nhanŋu".	Then maybe that person will say: "yes I'm still holding something against him".	
Yalala ŋayi dhu yolŋuny buku-roŋjiyirriyi nhanŋu. Yaka yän ŋayi ŋuli gunharra'yun ga bäy ŋayi dhu ŋamathirr yolŋu.	So that person will still keep going back to him. He won't leave him alone until he feels better.	Don't give up on. Keep working until it is sorted out.
Yalalaŋumirriynydja ŋayi dhu ŋunhi yolŋu, mel-lakaranhamirra nhanŋu gurruŋumirrinynha.	And later on that person will acknowledge his network of kinship.	Then they will be able to take their place as peacemakers in the community.
Mel-lakaranhamirra ŋayi dhu ga, wiripuny ŋayi li napuŋgan' dhärra, bukmakku yolŋuw gurŋga'yunaraw.	He will identify all his relations, and maybe he will then be standing in the middle, helping all the others.	Action and process will then work to achieve outcomes.

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Garmak Gularriwuy

About Gularri Water

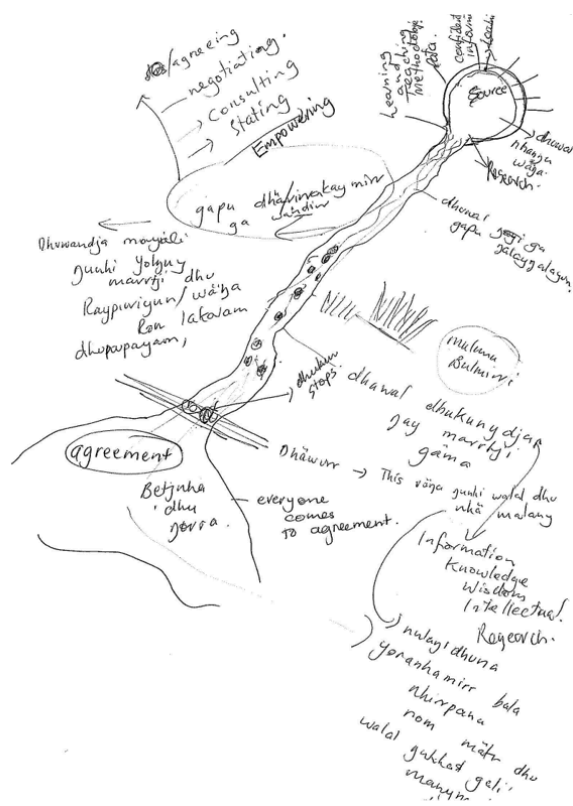
Timothy Buthiman, an elder of the Wangurri people, reminded his daughter Garrngulkpuy about the *Gularri* floodwater which flows down from their ancestral land at Dhälinybuy calling out the sacred names as it goes. That river is his 'library'. It starts when the grass starts to cry, and the green frogs hear it, and feel relaxed because the rain is coming. The pathway for the water is already in place, and as it fills with water, it collects up sticks and leaves and bits of paperbark which finally get filtered out before the river reaches the sea. The story of that water in that place reveals the special role which Wangurri people have in conflict resolution and leadership. Garrngulkpuy added a detailed diagram of the river and its work.

Garmak Gularriwuy (About Gularri Water)

by Timothy Buthiman Demala

talking to his daughter Garrngulkpuy and his sister Lisa Walpulay, at the Dingu garden, Galiwin'ku
February 2008

Just as the Teaching from Country program was starting up, Garrngulkpuy came to work at Charles Darwin University for a few days and brought with her an audio recording from a discussion with her father. She transcribed the story, and she and Michael worked on the translation and interpretation. It is a story about Wangurri tribe and their water, and what their story of the water tells them about their life and work. While we were working on the translation, Garrngulkpuy also drew a diagram.



At the top right is the Wangurri water source at Dhälinybuy, and it flows out to the sea (joining up with other Yirritja waters which are not marked). On the side of the river the grass (mulmu bulmirri)

is growing. The source contains the 'learning and teaching methodology, confidence, research' – 'dhuwal nhanju wärrja' – that is its home. When the water wells up inside Wangurri country, it starts to flow 'dhuwal gapu nhalnyalayyun' and it talks – 'gapu dhä-rirrakaymirri' – water with sound in its mouth – 'agreeing, negotiating, consulting, stating and empowering.

Dhuwandja mayali' ṅunhi yolṅuy dhu marrtji raypirri'yun wāṅa rom ḷarakam dhunupayam' – This means that when Yolṅu advise and admonish each other the land tells the law straight. 'Dhuwal dhukundja ṅayi marrtji gāma' – these are the leaves and sticks, palm fronds and bits of paperbark the Wangurri water is carrying down the river. These are bits of 'information, knowledge, wisdom, intellectual research'. Near the mouth of the river is a 'dhāwurr' – this 'wāṅa ṅunhi walal dhu nha malany rulaṅdhuna bala nhirrana rom mār dhu walal ṅunhal gali' manymakthirr' – the bar where everything, anything comes together for agreement, and lays down the law 'rom' – so that everything on the other side will be good. The water on the other 'agreement' side is no longer rippling, it is calm Yirritja water called betj 'betjnha dhu ṅorra' – everyone comes to agreement.

Wangurri transcription	English translation
<p>Garrgulkpuy: Ma! Nhaltjarr gan nãthil walal nhinan, ga nhã nũnhi ñayi yuwalk Garrayyu gurrupar limurruñ yolũuw nhawi, nhaku limurruñ ñayi nũnhi romdja¹ gurrupar! Ga nhaltjan limurr dhu nũnhiyi use-nydja dhiyanũny bala, nũnhiyiny, bili marrtji dhuwal gumurr-dãlthirra wãñany.</p>	<p>Garrgulkpuy: Okay! How did they use to live, and what did God truly give us Yolũu, why he gave us our law? And how we will use it today, because things are getting very hard now in this place.</p>
<p>Buthimañ: Yo! Garraywu dhanu nãñ'thuwan, Garraynha, bala buku-meñgan Garraywul God-nha Moriny ga nhunu ñarru God moriny galki ñanapiligul, djinañ bala lĩngu nhũngu, nhũngu rom nhunupi, nhunupi dhuwan bokman wangala ñarru nhawun dharrpalnha. Dhanu wangalam ñarru dharrpalnha dhanu, rom mala nhũnguram dhaluthaña gayña ñoya ga nhũngura, nhunu ñarru nhunupin bala milkumam ñala banha ñuwakurru ñanapilĩngu nyenanhawu.</p>	<p>Buthimañ: Okay. We'll pray to God for guidance. 'Here we ask you and thank you, Lord, God, father, that you will remain close to us, at this time, because you alone are the creator of this earth, and it is sacred land.' This land is sacred, these laws are in your hands, reveal yourself to show the right way for us to live.</p>
<p>Garrgulkpuy: Ga ñala banha rom, ga law ñanapilĩngunãpũ ñarru nyena ñuwakurru, mãgaya bayĩñ ñanapu ñarra nhãma nhunany dharangã, bitjan bili malthun ga munguyun nhũngu mã ñarru nhunum mattji bala rakaram ya ñuwakurru dhanũny ga rom nhãlpiyan gan nãtjilĩñ dhanũny garruwan dhãwu ga ñoya ga nhãlpiyana ñarru yutaram banhaya lĩngu bala nhan ñarru yutayin bala ñanapiliny, gunga'yunna yutanham yolũny djinañum bala. Bilinya dhanu Garray ñaya nhũngul rakaranam nhũnguru, nhũnguru-murru yãkurumuru Djesuwurumuru. Yo yo.</p>	<p>And where is a system and a law for right living, where we can attain your peace, always following you, so you can tell for us the right story, and the right way that the ancestral stories told the story of what was lying there, and how we can continue to renew it, for us so we can help the new generation of Yolũu of today. This is what we ask you father in the name of Jesus. Amen.</p>
<p>Buthimañ: Yo! Nhãwuy bili ñaya ñarru rakaramam ñurruñum, gatjuwilak nhuma rakarañ ñãtjil nyãkul. Gamurruñum nhãwuy.</p>	<p>Buthimañ: (to his daughter) What am I going to tell you? You tell me first, what points?</p>
<p>Garrgulkpuy: Balanya nhakun. Balanya nhã ñayi ga representing ñalitjalañ, ñunhal ñali dhu play role today, balanya nhakun example ñarra dhu lakaram gapu, ñunhi barpuru ñali ga lakaranhamirr, ñunhi ñalitjalañ role ñali dhu always napũnga ga dhãrra, ga dhukun ñali dhu gal'kalmaram, djãma litjalañ ñunhi. Gungayun ñali dhu ga yolũny ñunhi ñayi dhu ga hurt, gunga'yun ñali dhu ga yolũny ñunhi ñayi dhu ga problem-mirriyirr ñunhi ñalitjalañ rom, bili ñurũnyyi ñayi ga lakaram.</p>	<p>Garrgulkpuy: Like, tell me what does it mean for us, in the role we play today, the example I'm asking about is water, what we were talking about yesterday, that our role is always to stand in the middle, and get rid of the rubbish, is that our role? You and I will help Yolũu people when they get hurt, we will help them when they develop problems, that's our law, because that's what (the water) tells us to do.</p>
<p>Buthimañ: Ya' bilinya, dhuwanma nhãn nhãpa, dhanũyã nhãn ga ñapañuruñ dhuwanayã dhanũny nhan ñapañuruñ garmakpuy. Dhanũny ga galanydjany dhanũny, ga ñunham ñarra golam galanydjany galgaluman nhan ñarra garmakthu bili banhaya garmak nhan gayña, ñarru bitjana lĩngu gãtthuna.</p>	<p>Buthimañ: Oh I see what you mean, yes it is, that's the story on the surface, of the water (in both senses of the word). That's the story of the flotsam is being carried slowly by the Wangurri water, because that water will keep on flowing for ever.</p>
<p>Banhaya garmak, banha ñangawulnha yolũyuy gayñan djãma, ga yolũuwũ yaw'yunda, ga yolũuwũ mayãñ guwathanharanaw bore nhan bayãñu. Ñangawul banham nininyũyã yana, gulundayũyũ, ñunham Dhãlĩnyãm garmak, nhan ñarru gayña gãtthuna bitjan lĩngu ga bitjan lĩngu. Lĩngu garmak banhaya rakaram ñalma ñarru garmak nhan ñarru ñarra rãli dhã-wirkarmi garrun.</p>	<p>That water, was never made by Yolũu or dug by Yolũu, the Yolũu didn't make the river, it's not from a bore. No it's everlasting, it has always been there, the water from Dhãlĩnyã², it will always be flowing for ever. Because that water tells us it comes to us unstoppable and speaks confidently.</p>
<p>Garrun ñarra nhapa ñarra ñalayñalayyun garmak, ñunha nhan ñarra gãtthun nhan ñarru gayña ñãma ñalma ñarru, nhan ñarru gayña dhã-rengitjimi nhan ñarru gayña gãtthun garmak ga golamã nhan ñarru gayña dhuwanyã, dhuwanyã nhãpa malanynha galanydja dhukun. Yo! Ñunham nhan yana ñapañuruñ dhãwu, ñunha nhan ga rurrwuyun, ñunha ga rurrwuyun, yutaram nhan gayña djinaña bãrrku marimi ñutu, be baya banha ñali ñalim ñangawulnha marĩgi. Banhayã nhan gayña darrtjalckuman ga waripum nhan ga darrtjalckum ga waripum nhan gayña batjiwarr guwatharam mayãñnha, mayãñnha nhanbayã yana garmak. Ga yakan ñalma marĩgi bulum djinañuyã.</p>	<p>It is speaking and at the same time it is flowing, as it runs we can hear it, calling out the names of what it is carrying (belonging to different Yirritja clan groups), it will flow that water and carry the leaf litter, sticks and fragments of paperbark along. Yes, there's the story about the surface, how it washes clean, and when it washes it makes new the inside, very very deep, so deep we don't even understand it ourselves. When it cleans, then other things are cleaned too, also, it also prepares a path for the itself, the water does that itself. And we don't know more about that.</p>
<p>Ga gatjuwilak nhunum dhã-wirrkayũwan nhãnany djinalaya nhãnany. Nhuma dhã-wirrkayũwanmiya.</p>	<p>Go on, ask me more questions. Ask me.</p>

1. Rom in the context of this story could be translated as protocols, laws, advice, proper ways of doing things, good customary practice.

2. Dhāliny is the source of Wangurri water which flows into Arnhem Bay along what in English is called the Cato River.

Wangurri transcription	English translation
<p>Garrngulkpuy: Yow n̄unhi nhe gan lakaraŋal nhakun gapupuy, ga n̄unhiyi rom mala n̄unhi ŋayi <i>start</i> wanhal. Ga, ga <i>reason</i>-mirr nhakun ŋayi gan marrtjin yarrupthurrnydja ga dhiyaŋyuni bala, nhaltjana napurrndja dhu dhialnydja Wangurriny Yolŋu ga rom nhakun ŋayi ga ŋayatham ŋurunjiyi gapuy limurruŋ.</p>	<p>Garrngulkpuy: Yes, when you were telling the story of water, and the laws, where did they start? And what is the reason that the water is going down to the sea, and now, what are we going to do here, we Wangurri tribe Yolŋu and the law that the water holds for us.</p>
<p>Buthimaŋ: Yo banha nhan ga romma ŋayathan ŋarrun nhan ŋarru gätthunma garmakma banha ŋaya gandarraŋa djaka- warruwan. Banham ŋaya djakawarruwan gandarraŋa ŋarrun. Nhan ŋarru garmakma gätthun ŋunham nhan gayŋa ŋunham nhan, ŋunham nhan gayŋa ŋawatthun garmak, ŋayathanam nhan gayŋa dalkarrayu.</p>	<p>Buthimaŋ: Okay, the full story is that the water was flowing later. We started talking about the middle of the story, about when the water is flowing. But the origins when it first bubbled up, it was held by the sacred names of the law.</p>
<p>Ne! N̄unham nhan gayŋan ŋayathan dalkarrayu garmakma ŋunha nhan ga nhäpa <i>inside</i> yana ŋudulŋudul dhäya nhanbay yana garmak be baya nhanbay ga banha. N̄arru bukmaŋa Yolŋu banha nhuma bayin manikay ŋäma banham ŋanapu bayin miyaman ŋalma mulmu rakaram gudaŋbaŋ aw dhika nhä banha ŋanapu bayin rakaram bulmirri ga banhayam nha gayŋa ŋurru-yirr'yuna. Yutan nhän ŋunha nhän ŋarru, ŋarru nhäpan rakaraman ŋätjin nhan gayŋa, ŋätjin nhan gayŋa gudaŋbaŋnha nhan banhayam bulmirrin nhan ŋarru gätthunma garmakma, ŋunham nhan out.</p>	<p>Okay, so the sacred names held the water, inside, murmuring to itself, the water, just by itself. And all of us Yolŋu know that ancestral song which we sing, we sing about the grass, the new shoots, all the different things we sing about, it's the grass that starts it off. The song tells of all the new things emerging, the grass starts weeping, when the rains come, the water will come flowing and will take it away.</p>
<p>Garrngulkpuy: ŋayiny dhu dhäkay-ŋäma wokaraynydja nhawiyuny wokaraynydja?</p>	<p>Garrngulkpuy: Yes, and will the green tree frog also feel it?</p>
<p>Buthimaŋ: Yow! Nhanam ŋarru ŋäman dhäkay-ŋäman bala mattji garruna wayinma wokaram, ŋunha mattji djarrngulkmurru garruna ŋunhuŋyuan nhanany ŋarru galŋa ŋulwitjukamam, galŋa ŋuwatjuman. Bala nhan ŋarru nhapam djarwaryunma ŋanydja buŋgatthuna³ nhan ŋarru. Buŋgatthumana yana ya ŋunha, ga nhangu banhayam djäma, ŋunha dhupal ga dhuli'na-witjunmi.</p>	<p>Buthimaŋ: Yes! He will hear the grass crying, and feel the moisture and start croaking that little animal in the little creeks, in that way he will cool his skin and feel better. He won't be feeling tired any more, he'll be feeling cool and relaxed and expectant. He just relaxes, you see, and that is his job. The grass and the frog both listen to each other.</p>
<p>Mulmu ga ŋunha garmak <i>inside</i> ga ga garmindjarrk ŋunha ŋalmalingu wangala. Yow, bala nhan ŋarru manikayma banham ŋarram ŋarrun nhan ŋarru ŋarra banha manikay bayikuya. Yo, Baltha nhan ŋarru nhinathunganmi. Yo! Ga murrakaynha ŋarru, yindiyin nhan ŋarru ŋoy-gurrŋandjin, bala nhän ŋarru nyarryuna, ga nyarryunma nhan ŋarru—u dhawar'ma murryunma nhan ŋarru, murryunma milŋ'thunma nhan ŋarru, dhawar'yuman nhan ŋarru, bala nhan ŋarru ŋalayŋalayyuna garmakma. Nalayŋalayyuna nhan ŋarru riyala gätthuna ŋunha bayma ŋe! ŋe! ya ŋunha.</p>	<p>Water and grass rising up inside our country. Yes, then it will become the song, it turns into the song about it. Yes, the rain cloud sets itself in place, it gets bigger, its base becomes black, and then it will start to rain. It will rain, and then it will stop and then the thunder starts. When the thunder starts, then the lightening, then it will finish, and the water will start flowing. It will rise up and start flowing from the source over there, eh? That's it.</p>
<p>Golurr nhan yäku ŋirrima, Golurr. Nhawi bilanya ya! ŋirrima nhäpa ŋirrima bilanya nhäpa wangala nhan ŋarru ga dhäya, lorr yäku nhan lorr, ŋaykana nhan lorr banhayam, yo! bayikuya wangala garmakku yana banhaya dharanŋan nhän ŋarru yalala. Ga dharanŋana nhan ŋarru bayinŋaya garmakthu, bala nhan ŋarru gätthuna. Bayikuya wangala garmakku yana after nhan ŋarru dhawar'yunna, bala nhan ŋarru ŋurru-yirr'yun gätthunna ŋalayŋalayyunna dhuwanayam. Dhuwan nhangu ga rom ŋoya rom nhangu.</p>	<p>We call that place <i>Golurr</i>. So you see, the place, the land, will be standing, the water building up is called lorr, that's the name for that water, the name for the water in that place, it will recognise the path it has to take later. The water will recognise its place and start moving. The place that belongs to that water, when later it fills up, then it will start flowing. That's the law lying there that belongs to that water.</p>
<p>Garrngulkpuy: Ga nhaltjan nhakun ŋayi ga teachingnydja napurruny Wangurrinhany limurrunhany ŋurunjiyiny?</p>	<p>Garrngulkpuy: So what is it that it teaches us Wangurri people, that water story?</p>
<p>Buthimaŋ: Yo banhayam ga bitjana gayŋa rakaramam banhayam ŋalmalingu yanamu, dhaŋu nhumalingu ŋaya ŋarru rakaram, dhaŋum, dhaŋum, dhaŋum nhä ŋaya bayin ŋaya gayŋan marŋgiyin, ga ŋunha nyäku librim, librim nyäku buk, libri yäku bilanya bitjan nhumalingu nhä ŋalmalingu buk, ŋalma bayin warrathun ga libriŋa nhuma bayin ŋawatthunga dhaŋu nyäku libri ŋunhan bitjan nhumam bayin warrathuna, dharanŋan ŋalma bayin nhäma, ya witjan, ŋunha nhawun <i>shop</i>-ŋa. Yo! Ga ŋunham nhan libri dhaŋu gam! nhan ŋarru garrun.</p>	<p>Buthimaŋ: Yes, it speaks to us like this, this is for us people, it's ours I'll tell all sorts of things that I have learnt, that's my library. The library where you get and look at books inside, and find all sorts of things, so these are our books, which we will get, and you can get the story like the library. This is my library. You can give them, and get them and understand them, just like out of a shop. Yes. There's a library there, it can talk.</p>
<p>Garrngulkpuy: <i>Discipline</i>-nydja ŋayi ga ŋorra ŋunhiliyi ŋe! ? Balanya nhakun <i>discipline</i> ŋayi ga ŋorra raypirri.</p>	<p>Garrngulkpuy: Is there a discipline lying in there? Is there some discipline like <i>raypirri</i>⁴ in there?</p>

3. Burrgatthun means relaxed, but also confident, aware, and ready for action.

4. Raypirri is difficult to translate into English. I means discipline in the sense of a well-guided, well-founded appropriate way to behave.

Wangurri transcription	English translation
Buthimaṅ: Yow, raypirri.	Buthimaṅ: Yes, <i>raypirri</i> .
Garrṅgulkpuy: Ṇayi ga ṅorra napurr dhu right time napurr dhu gurku'yun.	Garrṅgulkpuy: It's there, ready for when we (Wangurri Yolṅu) get up and start talking.
Buthimaṅ: Ya! right time nhuma ṅarru gurku'yun ṅarru gurku'yunma, bili nhan ṅarru banha gurku'yunma nhuma ṅarru right time bayikuya bayikuya yana liṅgu, bayiku yana liṅgu. Bayiku yana liṅgu nhawu nhunu gayṅa gatjpu'yun, ya ṅunha nhawu nhunu ṅayaṅu gurku'yuwana.	Buthimaṅ: Yes, you need to speak up at the right time whatever point you need to make, stand up and make those points. Yes, so you are looking into the future, and you are preparing to get up and going.
Yo! dingū banhay ga garmak garrun bitjan. Bitjan gam! 'Ṇayam dhaṅu, ṅayam dhaṅu garmak ṅaya ṅarru dhā-rengitjmi, ga ṅarra ga birka'birkayun ṅaya ṅarru ṅarra.	Yes, the cycad ⁵ and the water are both telling us. Like this; 'I am the water, I speak the scared connections, I will roar out the names.'
Garrṅgulkpuy: Dālkurr?	Garrṅgulkpuy: Through strength?
Buthimaṅ: Wanyumurru mu! Ga gandarrṅa ṅaya ṅarru birkarr'yun 'Ga yay!' bili garmak ya! banhaya ṅyāku garmak. Bilanya bitjan djolurr balaya ṅaya ṅarru gunhan, dhuwarrpum ṅaya ṅarru. Bala bayiṅ ṅaya ṅalthumanna, banha bili romma banhayan, ṅalthuna nhan ṅarru.	Buthimaṅ: Yes, through strength. And in the middle (of a ceremony) I will start chanting the sacred names (and everyone echoes) 'Ga yay!' because of my water. That's why I use white clay to paint the balaya on my forehead when we have ceremonies, it's showing the pathway of the water. When I put the white ochre on my forehead that's the law, I'll put it on (representing the water).
Garrṅgulkpuy: Ga betjṅa yān dhu ga nhinany?	Garrṅgulkpuy: And make the calm quiet Yirritja water?
Buthimaṅ: Banhayan liṅgu, Djolurr banha ya! Ṇunhayan nyākum nhan nhawi.	Buthimaṅ: That's it, that forehead painting, that's mine.
Garrṅgulkpuy: Ga nhakun dhiyaṅuny bala organizationṅura ṅaliny dhu nhāma nhakun organization-dja.	Garrṅgulkpuy: And what nowadays in organizations can we see, for organizations?
Buthimaṅ: Ṇayi ṅunhiyi nhakun ṅayiny gurrupara limurruṅ ṅali dhu dharray ga raypirri ṅalitjalaṅ Wangurriw yan yolṅuw gurrupar Garray-yu mārr ga ṅayi dhu fit in with nhanukal dhāwu-lil Garraywal.	Buthimaṅ: So what the water has given us, we will look after carefully and use it to sort out problems, it was given by God only to the Wangurri yolṅu, and it fits in with His truth.
Yow! Ṇalmam djinakuya nhawi nhakun nhawun ṅalma nhawi gaṅga ṅalma marṅgi, gaṅga ṅalma marṅgi. Ga ṅalapalmi gaṅga marṅgi gaṅga nhan marṅgi ga djinaṅum bala ṅali ṅarru nhāma fit in-ma nhān ṅarru ṅalaṅa, ṅe ṅalaṅa ṅarru do'yunmim, bitjan gam!	Yes! We here, really only partially understand all that. Even the oldest people only partly understand, but we can see how it fits in whenever we meet together (to reach agreement).
Burrpar nhan burrpar ya wilanya nhakun ṅayi dhu burrgatthunman nhunany gurku'yuman nhunany nhunu ṅarru ṅarra ga mala manapan bayikul yolṅuwul warrawul. Yolṅu banha ṅanapu ṅarru luṅ'thunanmi ga mala manapanmi join <i>together</i> -n	There are two things lying there (that the water does): to make you confident and relaxed, and to put you into action, to go and join with others, other ideas. (The water helps) Yolṅu when we come together, and join together.
Garrṅgulkpuy: Ṇunhi nhe gan lakaraṅalnydja ṅunhili <i>leadership</i> -ṅur, leadership ṅayi ga ṅayatham yolṅuy ṅayiny dhu nhakun napurrnydja wiripuwurrunguny waṅgayṅu- wulkuny ga nhāpa balanya ṅayi ṅunhi mayali' nhakun dhiyaṅ bala todays organization ṅunhi limurr ga <i>facing</i> .	Garrṅgulkpuy: Was what you were talking about a sort of leadership, (from the water) help by Yolṅu so that we people, working with others, (Yes) so it refers to today's organizations.
Buthimaṅ: Yo! Ga bitjana nhan ṅarru ga wekamam ṅe!	Yes that's what the Wangurri water has to give.
Garrṅgulkpuy: Ga waṅganydja ṅayi ga Balanday rom milkum dhiyaṅ bala ṅalimurr dhu ga malthun yanbi dhanaliṅguway romgu, ṅarru dhanaliway gayṅan ṅalmaliny baduwaduyuwana.	Garrṅgulkpuy: And the nonAboriginal people are showing us how to do things their way, and follow their system, but that is what has been distracting us.
Nhakun ṅalitjalaṅ gāmurru mala djāmaw walaldja ga coming in nhakun yolṅu'yulṅuny mala ṅayiny ga ṅuruṅuyiny clearly ga lakaram dhāwu, ṅuruṅuyiny gapuṅnydja. Ga ṅunhi ṅalimurr dhu ṅurukiyi malthun ga open-lil dhāruk ṅanya rulaṅmaram as Wangurri tribe-thu. Ga nhawin limurr dhika nhaman ṅanyany ṅunhiyi bala putting into <i>practise</i> -nha.	So that is the point about the work that keeps coming in for Yolṅu, the water is making the story very clear. And if we follow it, and put the story out in the open, as the Wangurri tribe. And we will see it, and put it into practice.

5. *Dingū* the cycad nut is another Yirritja totem which has a story to tell about water and truth and process.

Wangurri transcription	English translation
<p>God-kun djäma nünhi nanyi rulaŋdhurra gapu muka ga dhäwu mala nanyi rulaŋdhurr litjalaŋ. Nali dhu put nünhiyi into practice dhiyaŋuny bala <i>today's organisation</i>-lila balany nhakun dingu dhuwal foundation- mirr nanyi dhuwal. Foundationmirr nanyi dhuwal, founder nanyi dhuwal, nhaku? Maranhu gurrupanaraw. Ga rä! Gäma nanyi dhu maranhuw <i>represent</i> nanyi ga dingu ŋe!</p>	<p>It was God's work putting the waters in place, and He put the stories in place for us. We will put it into practice now in today's organizations, it's like this cycad process, it has a foundation. It is its foundation, the founder what for? For giving sustenance. Getting up and doing something for your survival is what the cycad story represents.</p>
<p>Buthimaŋ: Yo! Dhuwanya bili mu naya gayŋan rakaran bilanya nhawun leader riwal'yun njarra ga mala 'yarrk'. Bala nhan njaru leaderyu bitjana gam! 'Banhalaya linggu line-ŋa.' Nya! Nya nhuŋgum nhunum djinakuya dharray nhunu njaru ga dharray djinaku nhakun njunha dhanal.</p>	<p>Buthimaŋ: Yes! Yes, that's what I was telling you, that's a leader, who will sweep things away, clear. Then the leader will say: 'That's the right line!' So there is your story. You will care for it, you will care for this, like they did (your ancestors)</p>

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Dhāruk ga Wāṅa

Words of language and land

As part of his contribution to a major research project called Investing in Aboriginal languages, Ian Gumbula and his wife, Mercy Djungmali and daughter, AJ collected stories in and about various languages at Njukurr. As part of the research process, Ian made clear over many hours of discussion around his own philosophy of language, in particular its relation to land, power and identity.

Given the land is not an object to be known or talked 'about', Ian is listened, watched and spoken by the land. Ian uses the word 'spiritual' in a diplomatic manner for non-Indigenous audience to be able to partially grasp the Yolṅu commitment that the land has its mindful network and structure and ancestral authority. With and through the authority of the land, Ian further discusses the ways in which Yolṅu and non-Indigenous work together in making the right decisions for Aboriginal communities.

Dhāruk ga Wāṅa (Words of language and land)

by Ian Mongunu Gumbula

CDU Northern Institute, June 2023

It is the land that gives the language

When we talk we don't talk *about* the land. We talk the land. We don't own the land, the land owns us.

It is the land that holds the power. The land is the foundation. The land is first, fully awake, fully aware that it is alive. The land can speak to us but sometimes it is standing still there. It can listen to us, watch us, and speak to us through the languages specific to each place and its people, whether they be Dhuwa or Yirritja.

Land gives us the language that makes it possible for us to have ceremonies, to remember ancestors' songs, and to know where the plants and animals belong and how we should find and use them.

Every ceremony, every ancestral song comes from the land. The land is actually giving us the mind to speak, according to its will. Songs and ceremonies are given by the land so that the people can perform, sing, praise back to that land.

Ceremonies dancing and ancestral songs keep the land alive and show us what to do for healing and survival.

Everything in its place

Everything is spiritual, so everything must have its right place in the network. Don't just mix it up, just put a plant there, it has to be put into a structure that has a purpose for something – medicine food, healing, making things. Everything is spiritual and has a placement among all the items.

The land has everything. It has kinship. But it can't give it. Someone has to take it. Djalkiri (foot, footprint, ancestral foundation) gives authorities and responsibilities for how it should be demonstrated or carried out in the law.

You can't just say what you want

Language isn't words for you to say what you want. Everything comes from the land. The structure of how language can be spoken comes from the land. That is why you have each area that has its own language and each has its suffixes to go with (for example) Dhanju language, both Yirrtja mob language and Dhuwa mob. That's so it can have a meaning.

If you don't use language according to the authority of the land, you will end up separating people and being separate from the authority of the land. When people speak properly with language, their authority comes from the land.

So just talking a language doesn't give you authority for yourself. When language is used properly, it brings people to safety and ownership.

When we are talking about investments in language we need to show that we're paying respect to the

land. When people use their language, it is a power not within his or her power. It is the land's power. It belongs to the land. We need our language to listen to country,

The power is not in the person, he uses the power of the land which gives him the right way of acting for his own place, to show what is in the land, and he is a really good dancer now. Land is giving me my unique ancestral style of behaviour (gakal) so I can use it and demonstrate to reflect what is already in the land.

Language reveals the law of the land

There is nothing I can say or do if there is no law.

But the law is not like a policy for land and people. The law does not give you ownership, the law gives the land ownership. That law in the land gives language its particular forms and practices: dancing, ceremonials, talking, kinship.

The ancestral songs have got governance inside them. The special ancient words that old people use in their governance of groups and ceremonies come from the authority of the land.

Sacred ceremonial leaders are needed to make clear all the authorities and responsibilities which come from the networks of places and songs and dances and ceremonial objects and paintings...

The songs demonstrate exactly how people-places fit together whether Dhuwa or Yirritja law or ceremony. Each has its own authority.

The land tells you all these things in a correct, clean and beautifully crafted (dhapirrk) way. It's up to you to make that fullness so the land will be happy.

We need, together, to have the skills and knowledge that please the land.

If you do the negotiations properly through the land, then when you go back the land is changed, and the people are changed. And your philosophy has changed.

Language in an Aboriginal Community

When Balanda (nonaboriginal) government and nongovernment representatives come Aboriginal people are really tested as to how they can do the right things in accordance with the land.

They have a program, but where is the right place for it? Where is the right authority? The Balanda say: 'I know the constitution'. But the constitution is in the land.

That governance of the land will tell us where to put the services. That's how we can honour and respect the land.

Think about the land before the program was there – it had its language, its song, its dances and ceremonies.

So it's not good when those government people come in expecting an individual person, rather than the land, to have authority. People can ask if that person who is working with government are speaking with the authority of the land. If he is, people will listen and respect him because the land is being acknowledged in the right way. It's really bad to expect authority to be in a person.

Especially Balanda are saying go to him, that person can decide, but no. Not him that has the power. Other people look at him to see if he is using the right authority from his land – on somebody else's land. Can he show that? Can he demonstrate that? If he demonstrates that he is speaking country, and we agree, he is using the right authority.

Local Decision Making

Aboriginal politics – that is agreement about whether the land is being used in the right way. Aboriginal decision making – not people making decision, but decision through whether land is being acknowledged in the right way by those right people, by the right group, by the clan and family.

In local decision making, I am not saying "I know that thing". The land already knows that thing, and I am just passing it on, checking to see that the style of that performance is indicating to be situated within the land (not within me, or you, or the organisation)

So in Local Decision Making for example, people can't just decide what they want for themselves, the decision needs to be made through the land that the services and programs are sitting on.

When Balanda don't understand or respect that principle of land's authority, then programs go wrong and community people get the blame. This will make people fight amongst themselves.

The first thing Balanda do is push Yolŋu away from land. People and places are pulled apart. If people don't want to come on board, that leaves the community with nothing.

That is why Balanda are frightened. Balanda are frightened not because of the person, but the law that

the services and programs are sitting on. This is the bottom line – it is not you sitting on the services, it is you sitting on the land and working on the land. And services themselves are often not acknowledging that I am there and doing wrong things, but blaming community for wrong things. You get a program, but where is the right place for it? Ceremony: we can see its right place in the land, it has got connections.

Investing in Languages

Programs and services coming in, where are the connections for them? They can say culture, it is new culture in that space. But hang on, go back, go back... when that thing was not there, what was there? Language, ancestral song, ceremony, proper speaking.

And where were they, where is the place for them in the land? The land holds that. The land itself is the governance. When you do the ceremony, song, proper speaking, the good governance is reflected back to the land. When it is done, it is reflected perfectly, clean and beautiful. Not interrupted by anything.

Like when get drunk people that come in, people get upset but really it upsets that land. Disgrace the land. Not saying we don't like you, but you are showing things that should not be shown. Your behaviour, attitude. Discipline, behaviour everything, the land has got that. When you do that right, the land gives you a long life. If you mess this thing up, something happens, but don't blame the land. Blame yourself.

So there's a problem with Kriol. It's the language of people without place. Of course the Balanda think that's very appropriate for policies, processes and rules. But no, lets invest in local languages. Not Kriol.

Kriol has no part in ceremony. Kriol keeps making people with no places. If you use Kriol it gives balanda more power to make decisions, say that is really good and Kriol can be on the policies and processes and rules. That everything has to be in Kriol.

Purpose of Investing in Aboriginal languages is not to invest in Kriol. We are investing in local languages, Aboriginal languages.

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Version	Date	Change	Details
1.0	10 February 2025	Published	