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PREFACE

These Work Papers are being produced in two series by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australian Aborigines Branch, Inc. in order to make results of SIL research in Australia more widely available. Series A includes technical papers on linguistic or anthropological analysis and description, or on literacy research. Series B contains material suitable for a broader audience, including the lay audience for which it is often designed, such as language learning lessons and dictionaries.

Both series include both reports on current research and on past research projects. Some papers by other than SIL members are included, although most are by SIL field workers. The majority of material concerns linguistic matters, although related fields such as anthropology and education are also included.

Because of the preliminary nature of most of the material to appear in the Work Papers, these volumes are being circulated on a limited basis. It is hoped that their contents will prove of interest to those concerned with linguistics in Australia, and that comment on their contents will be forthcoming from the readers. Papers should not be reproduced without the authors' consent, nor cited without due reference to their preliminary status.

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S.K. Ray
Series Editor
INTRODUCTION TO SERIES B VOLUME 8

SIL is primarily an applied-linguistics organisation, with goals in translation and literacy. As such, it cannot ignore the cultural context of language, particularly since SIL fieldworkers carry out their research and goals in an ongoing language-culture situation. For these reasons it is appropriate that SIL-AAB personnel share some ideas and insights in a 'language-culture' work papers volume. We are also pleased to include two papers by non-SIL contributors, Judith Stokes and John Harris, both of whom have had much experience in the Aboriginal language-culture context.

In the first paper Jean Kirton shares insights she has gained during the dual process of learning Yanyuwa language and culture at Borroloola. Though not claiming that she is expressing an emic (insider's) viewpoint, Jean has been careful to check out her observations and tentative conclusions with a Yanyuwa speaker, Nero Timothy. In exploring the interrelationships between language and culture, there are always the dangers of stating the obvious and/or making unwarranted statements of causation. Jean has aimed to underscore the importance of relating language study to the local culture, demonstrating that linguistic data can be better understood when its cultural context is known.

Long before the use of such interdisciplinary labels as 'cognitive anthropology', 'sociolinguistics' and 'anthropological linguistics', both linguists and anthropologists were interested in kinship terminology as an interface of language and culture. Helen Geytenbeek's paper on Nyangumarta kinship has grown out of her need as a field linguist to speak and act correctly in the Nyangumarta community. Helen shares the view of Nyangumarta kinship which she has had to learn—that of a female member of the group.

Cross-cultural education in mathematics has often been a frustrating experience for both teachers and students. Part of the problem has been the lack of knowledge of, or appreciation for, non-Western approaches to mathematics. Judith Stokes' paper is an extensive description of Anindilyakwa mathematical language and its cultural context which refutes popular generalisations about the limited counting ability of Aboriginal people. Judith is to be commended for the amount of data she has collected and for her efforts to gain due recognition for Anindilyakwa mathematical language and concepts.

John Harris believes that Judith's paper is 'the first substantial discussion of the mathematical concepts of an Aboriginal group which has ever been published', and he finds fault with linguists and anthro-
poloists who have had access to such data for other Aboriginal groups but for various reasons have not made it known. Their neglect has allowed prejudiced views of Aboriginal mathematics as 'primitive' to continue unchecked, often with the accompanying view that 'primitive mathematics' is primary evidence of cultural inferiority. John's paper outlines how biased statements about Aboriginal mathematical abilities have developed and continued to the present day, and he cites data from several Aboriginal languages to correct such biases.

However, a deeper understanding of Aboriginal mathematics does not mean that differences between Western and Aboriginal approaches to mathematics are henceforth discounted. As Barbara Sayers' paper recognises, there are still frustrations and problems for many Aboriginal children learning mathematics in school. Barbara believes that the 'problems' are primarily cultural rather than linguistic: a hunting and gathering people have no need for highly developed and precise mathematical calculations and therefore should not be expected to have developed them. The perceptual and cognitive skills will be in different areas more appropriate to a hunting and gathering way of life. Barbara offers several suggestions to those teaching mathematics to Aboriginal children, suggestions which take into account the concepts and teaching styles of Aboriginal culture. Though their approaches are quite different, both John and Barbara are concerned that Western educators know more about Aboriginal culture and that they accept Aboriginal mathematical concepts and language on their own merit rather than judging them from a Western ethnocentric viewpoint.

As this introduction has indicated, the first five work papers in this volume illustrate the interdependence of language and culture. The reader will have to judge how much the final paper illustrates that same interdependence. It is a partial report of a research project undertaken to find out to what extent the development of colour terminology is culturally determined. The data gathered from five Aboriginal languages by SIL fieldworkers are inconclusive as to the relationship between culture and colour vocabulary, but they certainly illustrate the complexity of language-culture research.

Susanne K. Hargrave
Volume Editor
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NYANGUMARTA KINSHIP
A WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT

Helen Geytenbeek

0. INTRODUCTION

The Nyangumarta language is spoken by about 700 Aborigines along the northwest coast of Australia, between Port Hedland and Broome and inland around Marble Bar. Of this number about 500 claim it as their own language.

The majority of the Nyangumarta claim to speak the southern or inland dialect while the others speak the coastal dialect (called Ngulibardu and Wanyarli respectively in O'Grady and Mooney 1973:1). The terms 'inland' and 'coastal' refer to their original territories and do not necessarily reflect the current situation. Many of the coastal people now live at La Grange, but the inland Nyangumarta mostly live at Strelley Station and outcamps, Yandeyarra Station, and Port Hedland.

There are some differences in kinship terminology and section organisation between the two dialects. As far as I can ascertain the northern Nyangumarta use the same section organisation as the Garadjari who are the traditional owners of the country around La Grange. The southern or inland Nyangumarta follow the same basic system as some of the desert groups with whom they have close ties. Most of my knowledge of the kinship system has been gleaned from speakers of the inland dialect.

It is customary to describe kinship systems from the viewpoint of a male ego. However, this description of Nyangumarta kinship and section organisation is written from a woman's point of view. A man has different names for a few of his relatives. Brief reference is made to differing kinship terms used by male speakers.
This paper was originally written in 1978 and was updated in 1982. The material on which it is based was gathered at Marble Bar and Port Hedland between 1972 and 1978 during an effective field time of 44 months. It may be misleading to talk of the material being 'gathered'. Much of it was learned informally as I struggled to understand my relationship to others as an 'adopted' member of the Nyangumarta family.

It would be impossible to name everyone who has had a hand in my education in matters of Nyangumarta kinship. But the person who has spent the most time answering questions and trying to make the system clear is Mrs. Lily Darby. My special thanks to her.

1. SECTION ORGANISATION

The Nyangumarta are divided into four social groups or sections, and each person in the society belongs to one of them. A person’s place in the society is determined by where his or her parents fit into the system. The diagram below shows the marriageable sections and the directions in which descent is traced when correct marriages are made. Marriageable sections are connected by an = sign. Arrows show lines of descent from the mother.

```
PANAKA ➔ KARIMARRA ➔
PURUNGU ➔ MILANGKA ➔
```

Thus a Karimarra man marries a Panaka woman and their children are Purungu. A Purungu man marries a Milangka woman and their children are Karimarra. A Panaka man marries a Karimarra woman and their children are Milangka. A Milangka man marries a Purungu woman and their children are Panaka.

Among the coastal or northern Nyangumarta the pattern is a little different. A person who is reckoned as Karimarra among the southern Nyangumarta is reckoned as Purungu in the north. A person who is Purungu among the southern Nyangumarta is known as Karimarra in the north. The diagram below shows correct marriages and lines of descent for the northern Nyangumarta.

```
PANAKA ➔ PURUNGU ➔
KARIMARRA ➔ MILANGKA ➔
```

Thus in the north a Purungu man marries a Panaka woman and their children are Karimarra. A Karimarra man marries a Milangka woman and their children are Purungu. A Panaka man marries a Purungu woman and their children are Milangka. A Milangka man marries a
Karimarra woman and their children are Panaka.

When a 'wrong' marriage is contracted there can be confusion as to where the children belong in the system. Elkin (1979:128-9), in discussing the section system of the north-west of Western Australia, states that 'in the minds of the natives its principle of descent is always based on the mother-child relationship...In any case of alternate or irregular marriage, the father is "thrown away"; that is, he is not considered...the child goes into the section to which it would belong, if the mother had married according to the normal rule.' Tonkinson (1978:49) has also found that this is the case among the Mardu (Marta Wangka). But according to my data, descent may be reckoned from the mother or the father. While it may be true that most people use the mother's section in reckoning the child's section, some use the father's. A certain ambivalence of outlook seems evident in remarks like the following concerning a man whose parents were married wrongly: 'He should be half a nyupa ('spouse') and half a pujamu ('son').'

In fact the man referred to has chosen to follow his father's section which makes him a nyupa to the speaker. It may be that the Nyangumarta view descent, in terms of the section system, as neither patrilineal nor matrilineal, but from both parents joined in a correct relationship.

2. KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

Chart 1 gives the names of a woman's relatives and illustrates the lines of descent. Chart 2 shows how her relatives are distributed among the four sections. Taking A as the section to which Ego belongs, B will be her husband's section and C the section of her children. Comparing Charts 1 and 2, it is apparent that many of Ego's kin are related to her in more than one way. For example, if correct marriages have been made, Ego's MM is also her classificatory FFZ and Ego's husband is also classified as her MBS and FZS (see section 3).

A man calls his son-in-law pujamu (the same term he uses for 'son'). His terms for his grandchildren are different from a woman's terms. She calls her daughter's children kamiji and her son's children kagariji. But he calls his daughter's children jami and those of his son karluki.

Nyangumarta kinship terms refer not only to the immediate family, but also to classificatory relatives. The term that is used for 'mother' is used also for mother's sisters and for all females of the mother's generation level who belong to the same section as the mother. The term for 'father' is likewise extended to include all the males of one's father's generation level who belong to the
same section as father. The terms used for one's siblings are also applied to the children of anyone whom Ego calls 'mother' or 'father'. This extension of kin terms applies throughout the system. The only exceptions are for special terms applied to a limited number of people when men and women from marriageable sections are considered too close to marry.

From Chart 1 it can be seen that there are names for relatives on only four generation levels. The terms for relatives two generations above and two generations below Ego are the same. Children of one's grandchildren are called by the same terms as parents, uncles and aunts. In other words they are in the same sections as children of one's grandparents. Parents of grandparents are in the same sections as parents of grandchildren and are called by the same terms as children, nieces and nephews. In this way it is possible to have classificatory parents, uncles and aunts who are much younger than oneself. Conversely it is common to have classificatory children, nieces and nephews who are much older than oneself.

There are three terms listed by O'Grady and Mooney (1973:8) as Nyangumarta kin terms of unclear meaning. They are murrkangunya, malyurta and nyirtingunya. (The term kartapal which is listed as an alternate for malyurta I have been told is a Nyamal term.) The use of these terms is certainly not confined to Nyangumarta. Tonkinson (1978:46) cites their use among the Mardudjara (Martu Wangka). They are not kinship terms in the normal sense: they do not show a person's relationship to another, but rather his or her place in the family. Murrkangunya is a term for the first-born, nyirtingunya (usually shortened to nyirti) is a term for the youngest member of a family, and malyurta is used for all the offspring in the middle. These terms can be used for address or reference. They are frequently used instead of the appropriate kin term to address another.
Chart 1: NYANGUMARTA KINSHIP

FFZ  kamiji
FF   kerluji
FM   keparli
FMB  jamuji
MFZ  keparli
MF   jamuji
MM   kamiji
MMB  kerluji

FZH kokaji
FZ jinartu

FB japartu
F japartu
M pipi
MZ pipi
MB kakaji
MBW jinartu

FZS jaluwal
FZD yapuyu
BM yapuyu
OB memaji/merrka
YB
H nyupa
EGO
OZ
YZ
ZH nyupa
MBS
MBD

BS walka-welka
BD ngarraya
SW ngarraya
S pujamu
D kurntal
DH marrku
ZS pujamu
ZD kurntal

SS keparli
SD keparli
CS kamiji
DD kamiji
CHART 2

Distribution of Ego's Kin (Chart 1) in the Section System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ego</td>
<td>nyupa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mamaji</td>
<td>OB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanguji</td>
<td>OZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marrka.</td>
<td>YB, YZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamiji</td>
<td>MM, FFZ, DD, DS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karluji</td>
<td>FF, MMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H, ZH, MBS, FZS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MBD, FZD, BW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FM, MFZ, SS, SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MF, FMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unmarriageable MBS, FZR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pipi</td>
<td>M, MZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaka(ji)</td>
<td>MB, FZH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kurntal</td>
<td>D, ZD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pujamu</td>
<td>S, ZS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>japatu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F, FB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FZ, MBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BD, SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BS, CH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BS, HZ (too close for D to marry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBREVIATIONS:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B brother</td>
<td>S son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z sister</td>
<td>D daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F father</td>
<td>H husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M mother</td>
<td>W wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O older</td>
<td>Y younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMBINATIONS:</td>
<td>(example)</td>
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<td>MBD = mother's brother's daughter</td>
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</table>
2.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Most of the terms used in Charts 1 and 2 are terms of both address and of reference. As a woman is not supposed to directly address her son-in-law, her term for him—marruku—is only a term of reference.

Some of the other terms listed are inappropriate as terms of reference in certain situations, particularly when referring to one's own or another's spouse. The term nyupa 'spouse' is used in conversation between Ego and her mother-in-law or father-in-law to refer to Ego's spouse (their son). But when a woman's parents talk to her about her spouse they refer to him as ginini. O'Grady and Mooney (1973:8) call these terms 'shared' reference terms, because they take into account the relationship of the hearer (the addressee) as well as the relationship of the speaker to the person referred to.

There are other examples of shared reference terms in Nyangumarta. People of the same generation level (except for women who are sisters-in-law or men who are brothers-in-law) refer to their own spouse or the spouse of the other person as pinaji. Women who are in sister-in-law relationship or men who are brothers-in-law refer to their own or the other's spouse as nyukunu. The term of reference for spouse between people who are two generations apart is yakan.

The term yarruwa is used by a woman when speaking to her unmarried jaliwal about his wife. As jaliwal is a reciprocal term, I expect that yarruwa is also used by a man when speaking to his jaliwal about her husband, but I do not recall hearing a man using it that way. Note that my understanding of yarruwa differs from that of O'Grady and Mooney. (O'Grady and Mooney 1973:9 list yarruwa as used by a man when addressing his B in reference to BW, when B and BW are of alternate generations.) This has proved an elusive term to investigate and I am far from satisfied that I know all there is to be known about it. Perhaps part of the reason for seemingly conflicting evidence concerning its meaning is that it is used with a different meaning in at least one neighbouring language. In Martu Wanga yarruwa is used as the equivalent of Nyangumarta pinaji. It is not unusual for terms to be borrowed from other languages.

The term punarri 'father' is used between a woman and her brother's children to refer to their father (her brother).

O'Grady and Mooney list one other shared term of reference—nyarrumpaji—which is supposed to be rare and not La Grange.
Nyangumarda'. I have been told that the word is Nyamal and the corresponding Nyangumarta term is partanguji. I am not familiar with either term. If I understand the explanation correctly, partanguji is used between Ego and someone in her marriageable section to refer to a brother or sister of the addressee.

This list of terms of reference is probably not exhaustive. In the future more could come to light.

2.2 RECIPROCAL TERMS

People of the same sex who are two generations removed from each other use identical reciprocal terms for each other. A woman and her MM (or her DD) address each other as kamiji. A woman and her FM (or SD) address each other as kaparli. A man and his MF (or DS) address each other as jamuji. A man and his FF (or SS) address each other as karluji.

However, people of the opposite sex do not always use identical reciprocal terms for each other. When children are young they do use identical reciprocal terms with their grandparents. Thus a woman calls all her daughter's children kamiji and all her son's children kaparli regardless of their sex, and they reciprocate with the same terms. Likewise a man has only two terms for his young grandchildren: jamuji for his daughter's children and karluji for his son's children.

When the children reach adolescence, however, it is usual for terms for them to be adjusted to show sex distinctions. A woman will continue to call DD kamiji, but will call DS karluji, while both will call her kamiji. She will still call her SD kaparli but her SS jamuji, and both will call her kaparli. In the same way a man will call his adolescent or adult DD kaparli while she calls him jamuji. He will call his SD kamaji while she calls him karluji.

This may be the reason why O'Grady and Mooney (1973:4) show (for northern Nyangumarta) Ego using all four terms for grandchildren. But among the southern Nyangumarta each person has only two terms for small grandchildren.

The mother-in-law to son-in-law relationship uses identical reciprocal terminology. A woman refers to a man who is an actual or potential spouse for her daughter as marruku, and he refers to her as marruku. If he is too close to marry her daughter they refer to each other as walka-walka.

Between a woman and her spouse or potential spouse the reciprocal term nyupa is used. But if a man and woman are in marriageable sections but are considered unmarriageable, they address each other as jaluwal.
2.3 DUAL AND PLURAL TERMINOLOGY

Nyangumarta has an extensive system of dual and plural terminology. There are at least three different kinds of dual terms:

1. Duals and plurals may be formed by adding the ordinary dual and plural suffixes, -jirri and -rrangu, to singular kin terms, e.g.:
   - pipijirri 'two mothers'
   - pipirrangu 'more than two mothers'

2. There are terms of reference for married couples which are derived from singular forms, e.g.:
   - yakankarra 'a married couple, one of whom is yakan to Ego'
   - pinarra 'Ego's pinaji and spouse'
   - yarruwarra 'Ego's yarruwa and spouse'

3. There are paired terms for two related individuals, e.g.:
   - rampanu 'a man and his nephew'
   - galyjalirra 'two siblings'

The first two categories above are terms which are seen from Ego's viewpoint, i.e. the terms are based on Ego's relationship to one or more of the individuals referred to. Examples I have of forms from the third category show that these terms are not necessarily used from Ego's viewpoint, as the examples given indicate. Category 3 is a very large one and a thorough study of the subject is beyond the scope of this paper. The reader is referred to a long section on dual and plural terminology in O'Grady and Mooney 1975: 9-21.

3. MARRIAGE

There are two possible correct choices for a marriage partner for a woman. One is the son of her classificatory mother's brother and father's sister. She may not marry the son of her mother's actual brother or the son of her father's actual sister. But she may marry the son of a 'close' mother's brother. The precise meaning of walyja 'close' is not understood. The other choice is a man who is a classificatory jamuji — MF or FMB. A man who is jamuji is still in the same section as one who is MBS or FZS.

Sackett (1976:44-54) says that prior to contact the Aborigines of the Western Desert had a prescribed marriage with MBD/FZD who was genealogically and geographically distant, but now among the Wiluna
group the practice of getting a partner who is geographically distant is less common. There is some evidence to suggest that among the Nyangumarta the ideal marriage is still with a partner from another community, but I have not had the opportunity to observe how rigorously the practice is carried out.

3.1 WRONG MARRIAGES

Wrong marriages are tolerated, though not approved. No statistics are available, but the proportion of wrong marriages is considerably higher than Tonkinson observed among the Jigalong community (1974:51).

There is one way that a wrong union (not marriage) can be sanctioned. If a woman's husband gives permission for his wife to have a boyfriend she may have one who is not 'straight' for her, even while she continues living with her husband.

3.2 ARRANGEMENT OF MARRIAGES

The practice of promising a girl to a man while she is still an infant is widespread even today. The promised girl is called his pilyurr. What proportion of men actually marry their pilyurr I do not know.

Marriages are arranged by the girl's parents in consultation with others. An eligible man may be approached by the girl's parents. But if he does not want the girl he can say so and the parents must look elsewhere for a husband for their daughter.

In the past it has been the practice for a girl to be promised to an older man who might have one or more wives at the time he married the girl. An older wife was supposed to help the young wife not to feel nervous and to teach her wifely duties. Young girls are still sometimes given to older men. A few years ago an old man who already had two aged and feeble wives had a third young wife promised to him. When her school days were over she moved in with the old folk to care for them.

Another teen-aged girl was given to a middle-aged man of standing in the group. He had been married previously and his children were grown up. The girl was unhappy about the situation and ran away more than once. The older man decided he would renounce his right to the girl and he now has a middle-aged wife. The girl then married a young man who was not straight for her.

3.3 POLYGAMY

Polygamy is not uncommon. A man may have two wives, and in one case...
case I have heard of three. These are recognised among the Aboriginal community as valid unions.

There is no polyandry as such. But, as has already been stated, a man may give permission for his wife to have a boyfriend. On the other hand a woman may have a yarunyu 'secret lover'. These secret alliances cause disapproval. People who engage in such alliances are regarded as trouble makers.

4. KINSHIP BEHAVIOUR

A person's interaction with others may be marked by varying degrees of restraint or familiarity. The relationship where the greatest restraint is observed is between a woman and her son-in-law, the marruku relationship. They are expected to avoid being in close proximity with each other. A man avoids not only his actual mother-in-law but any woman who is classified as such. The reason for this avoidance is that a woman who is marruku has the potential of producing a wife for him.

In the past if a woman and her son-in-law saw each other they would pass at a distance and not address each other. These days not everyone takes the matter seriously. Occasionally a woman and her actual son-in-law will live in the same family group. But this is not the usual practice and most men are still cautious about going near a marruku. However a woman will not bother to avoid a marruku if he is only a small child, and indeed will often play with him.

If a man from the section into which a woman's daughter should marry is too close for marriage there is no need for such strict avoidance. Instead of calling each other marruku they use the term walka-walka.

A man and his wife are expected to behave in a restrained fashion towards one another in public, without any joking. The same applies to any two persons who are in correct relationship for marriage.

In some cases where a man and woman would normally be expected to be in right relationship for marriage, for some reason imperfectly understood they choose to regard themselves as more like brother and sister and not free to marry. I think the reason for this choice may be that it gives greater freedom. In this relationship the two may freely talk and joke together. Their term for each other is jaluwal.

A woman is supposed to be stern with her daughter. On the other hand, grandparents and grandchildren can be relaxed in each other's company.
5. CONCLUSION

It seems probable that in the years since European settlement of the Pilbara there has been relaxation with regard to avoidance relationships and correct marriages. However, it is hard to make objective judgments on how much attitudes have changed, especially toward marriage, since we do not know the frequency of wrong marriages before settlement. It is evident that not everyone views wrong marriages lightly these days.

Not all the Nyangumarta live in the same sort of environment. Some live in a mission station situation at La Grange. At the other end of the scale, a large proportion live in a much more traditional society at Strelley. Then there are other groups whose relationships with Europeans are more relaxed than those of the Strelley Community. A few Nyangumarta people have even ventured to live in Housing Commission dwellings in Port Hedland or South Hedland. But I have not been able to discern that these different environments have made a great deal of difference in attitudes toward kinship ties. Even those who have moved out into the wider community keep in close contact with other Aboriginal groups and regard kinship ties as important.

Kinship ties go far beyond the bounds of those who regard themselves as Nyangumarta. There is a great deal of inter-marriage between language groups. People seem to adjust with very little mental effort to the differences in section organisation of the Yindjibarndi to the west and the Garadjari to the north-east.

It seems to me that social organisation as described in this paper still has a very pervasive influence in the life of the Nyangumarta people.
REFERENCES


