



# UNESCO Observatory Multi-Disciplinary Journal in the Arts

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## ABOUT THE E-JOURNAL

*The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal is based within the Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne, Australia. The journal promotes multi-disciplinary research in the Arts and Education and arose out of a recognised need for knowledge sharing in the field. The publication of diverse arts and cultural experiences within a multi-disciplinary context informs the development of future initiatives in this expanding field. There are many instances where the arts work successfully in collaboration with formerly non-traditional partners such as the sciences and health care, and this peer-reviewed journal aims to publish examples of excellence.*

*Valuable contributions from international researchers are providing evidence of the impact of the arts on individuals, groups and organisations across all sectors of society. The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal is a clearing house of research which can be used to support advocacy processes; to improve practice; influence policy making, and benefit the integration of the arts in formal and non-formal educational systems across communities, regions and countries.*

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# Volume 4, Issue 2

## Indigenous Education In Australia: Place, Pedagogy and Epistemic Assumptions

### Guest Editors

*Marnie O'Bryan*

*Prof. Mark Rose*

### THEME

This special edition of the UNESCO Observatory E-Journal focuses on education for and about the First Peoples of Australia and bears witness to the many faces of Indigenous education in Australia. It testifies to a complex landscape; places on a map, places in minds and places in spirit that taken together present a snapshot of the tone and dimension of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in early 2015.

Indigenous education policy is framed by a bi-partisan commitment to 'closing the gap'. In some instances, Indigenous leaders are framing the debate over how this is best achieved. At the same time, non-Indigenous educators are increasingly becoming aware that equality and mutual respect can only be established once the Australian community opens its mind to the ancient wisdom and the true stories of this place. Many of the articles in this publication identify the 'gap' as an epistemological divide and argue that, like any bridge, education measures aimed at 'closing the gap' need to be constructed simultaneously from both sides. To that end, a number of papers focus on initiatives being developed and explored by mainstream schools to give authentic voice to the perspectives of First Australians for the benefit of non-Indigenous students.

### COVER ART

*Yirrkala Collage*

Various Artists,

Yirrkala Art Centre

*Courtesy of the artists  
and Yirrkala Art Centre*

The papers in Volume One, '**Indigenous Education in Australia: Policy, Participation and Praxis**', are all concerned with how Western educational structures and institutions work for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Volume Two of the Journal is entitled '**Indigenous Education In Australia: Place, Pedagogy and Epistemic Assumptions**'. Each of the articles in this volume pertains to the education experiences of people living in remote Australia.

The articles in this publication take the reader through a rich multidisciplinary tapestry that points to the breadth and complexity of the Indigenous education landscape in Australia today. The papers are honest and true to the heterogeneous communities that are the First Peoples of Australia. Similarly, the poetry and artworks that appear here bear witness to the breadth, depth and diversity of artistic talent and tradition in this country. Taken together, they challenge the reader to move beyond a simplistic quest for 'the silver bullet' to redress disparity in education outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. They encourage reflection, innovation, reciprocity, respect and empowerment through education.

We recommend each and every article.

Prof. Mark Rose & Marnie O'Bryan

Guest Editors

# *Pulyaranyi*: New educational contexts for transferring Warlpiri knowledge<sup>1</sup>

**Aaron Japangardi Corn**  
**Wantarri Jampijinpa Patrick**  
*The Australian National University*

## ABSTRACT

This article explores the innovative teaching strategies of the Warlpiri educator and academic, Steven Wantarri Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu Patrick, through his efforts to extend the transference of classical Warlpiri knowledge from old to young in remote desert Australia, and from Warlpiri to others further afield. It follows two initiatives through which this work has been undertaken: the Milpirri Festival at Lajamanu, produced by Tracks Dance Company, and the intensive undergraduate course, Indigenous Music and Media, which we teach together at the Australian National University. We explore how Wantarri's pedagogical leadership in these initiatives is grounded in esoteric ideas that stem from the inner core of Warlpiri epistemology, and how his novel theorisation of *Ngurra-kurlu* ('about home', 'with home', and 'home within') provides a way into these ideas that is approachable to beginners. Drawing on our case studies, we demonstrate how Wantarri has sought through his educational work to circumvent the overarching Anglocentrism of educational institutions in Australia to provide new learning pathways for all.

## KEYWORDS

*Indigenous education, Australian Indigenous studies, Warlpiri, Lajamanu, Ethnomusicology, Indigenous knowledges, Milpirri*

I

We extend our sincerest thanks to our families and colleagues, and to the Australian Research Council (ARC) for supporting our research. We have been privileged to work with David McMicken and Tim Newth (co-Artistic Directors), Susan Congreve (General Manager), and everyone else at Tracks Dance Company on the Milpirri Festival at Lajamanu; and to have had the support of Stephen Wild (ARC co-Chief Investigator), Lee-Anne Proberts (ARC Research Assistant), Yukihiro Doi and Samuel Curkpatrick (Tutors), and our other colleagues at the Australian National University (ANU) in our teaching of Indigenous Music and Media in the School of Music. Finally, to everyone who has participated in the Milpirri Festival at Lajamanu or Indigenous Music and Media at ANU, thank-you for a truly inspiring journey.

Frontpiece

A sand painting of the Milpirri 'Thundercloud' dreaming created on campus at ANU in April 2014 by Wantarri Jampijinpa Patrick with students enrolled in Indigenous Music and Media.



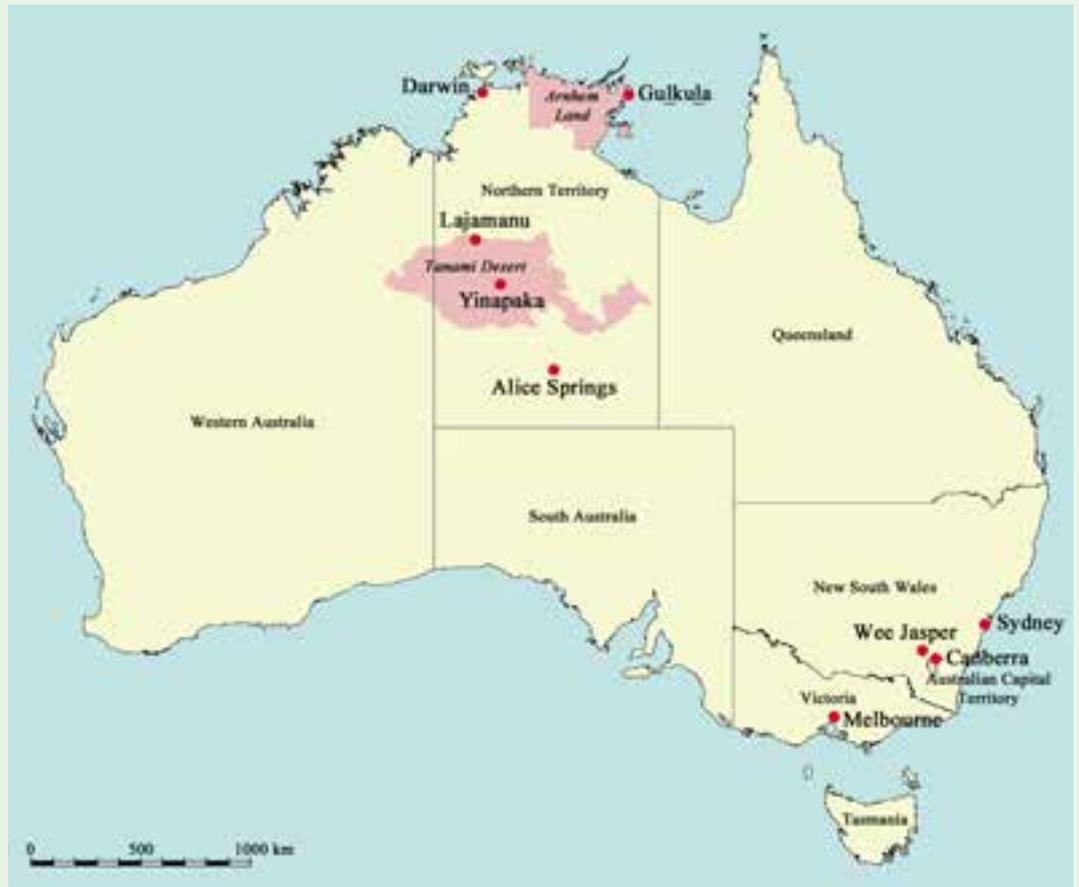
*Nyampurula kuja karlipa nyinami, Wawirri-kirlangurla ngurrara-rla, maannginyanyirlipa Wanya-parnta-wiyi, yugunganpa pinarri-mani paarr-pardinjaku, Warlawurru-piya, kankarlarra pura, nguruwana* 'To live in the homeland of the Kangaroo, first understand the Emu, who will teach us to soar high like the Wedged-tailed eagle'. — Warlpiri proverb

It is a crisp, clear night in Australia's capital, Canberra, as we stand atop Mount Stromlo beside the shell of an old, burnt-out observatory. City lights shine in the mid-distance and, here with us, we have about a dozen students, a few colleagues, and assorted friends and family. But we are not here to see the city lights or any other earthly phenomenon, and we have specifically chosen this night for its new moon so we might observe the celestial panorama above. Only a few sparse clouds drift overhead, so we have been fortunate. We ask the students what constellations they recognise, assisted by Japangardi's iPad, before moving to more formal proceedings. Jampijinpa asks an eternal question. It is simple enough, yet stems from the inner

core of Warlpiri epistemology that traditionally informs the logic of life in the remote Tanami Desert within Australia's Northern Territory (NT) (see Figure I). It is a question that follows a classically cryptic pattern of codifying and transmitting knowledge among Australian Indigenous societies, for its answer can be found in natural forms that are hidden in plain view, yet require contextual information attained through esoteric teachings to be deciphered.

The question hangs on the brisk night air as it passes Jampijinpa's lips, and the dimly-lit faces of our students grow puzzled under the pitch black of the new moon: 'Who has ever seen an emu fly?'

Figure I  
Map of the Tanami Desert and other cited locations within Australia.



## II

Wantarri's appointment at ANU is funded by a Discovery Indigenous Award attached to the three-year ARC Discovery Indigenous project, Early collections of Warlpiri cultural heritage and resulting community access needs in remote desert Australia (2012–14), on which Aaron Corn and Stephen Wild are co-Chief Investigators.

## III

There exists a sizable body of ethnography on Warlpiri culture and heritage which, in brief, spans studies by Pink (1936), Meggitt (1962), Elkin (1957), Peterson (1969, 2000, 2011; Peterson et al. 1978), Munn (1973), Nash (1982), Bell (1983), Laughren (1984; Laughren et al. 1996), Wild (1984, 1987, 1994), Glowczewski (1989, 1991), Hale (1995), Coombs (1995), Sutton (1995), Simpson (1997), Dussart (2000), Biddle (2000, 2007), Poirier (2005), Musharbash (2008), Gabrys and Vaarzon-Morel (2009), and Swartz (Comp. 2012).

## CONVERGING CURRENTS

This article explores the innovative teaching strategies of its co-author — the Warlpiri educator and academic, Steven Wantarri Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu Patrick — through his efforts to extend the transference of classical Warlpiri knowledge from old to young in remote desert Australia, and from Warlpiri to others further afield. It follows two initiatives through which this work has been undertaken. The first is the Milpirri Festival at Lajamanu, produced by Tracks Dance Company from Darwin, on which Wantarri has worked as Creative Director since 2004. The Milpirri Festival emerged during Wantarri's tenure at the Lajamanu School, where he worked as an Assistant Teacher from 2004 to 2011, and it was principally designed to ignite improved educational aspirations in Warlpiri youths.

The second initiative we follow arose through our collaborative work in Canberra at the Australian National University (ANU) following Wantarri's appointment to the School of Music early in 2012 as a fellow funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) on our collaborative Warlpiri cultural heritage project.<sup>11</sup> Here at ANU, we mainly teach young adults who are not Warlpiri, and seldom Indigenous Australians, through our intensive undergraduate course, Indigenous Music and Media.

Wantarri's pedagogical leadership in these initiatives is grounded in esoteric ideas that stem from the inner core of Warlpiri epistemology, yet through his innovative teaching, are communicated in ways that are approachable to beginners. His theorisation of *Ngurra-kurlu* (Patrick, Dir. 2008; Patrick, Holmes & Box 2008), provides a way into these ideas. Translatable into English as 'about home', 'with home' and the carriage of 'home within', it exposit five interconnected fields of classical Warlpiri knowledge: *Walya* 'Land', *Kuruwarra* 'Law', *Manyuwana* 'Ceremony', *Jaru* 'Language' and *Warlalja* 'Kin'.

While much ethnography has been conducted among the Warlpiri since their initial contacts with Anglophone Australians in the 1930s,<sup>111</sup> Wantarri's own work generates new possibilities for the application of classical Warlpiri knowledge to the contemporary challenges of Indigenous cultural survival in Australia. Today, speakers of the Warlpiri language number few more than 3000 due to the growth over the past four decades of the hybridised Light Warlpiri out of Warlpiri, English and Kriol (O'Shannessy 2005, 2008). While Wantarri, now in his forties, is fluent in the classical Warlpiri through which esoteric ideas are conveyed, today this is usually understood only by the elderly.

Adverse policies towards the teaching of Australian languages in NT schools, including Warlpiri (Disbray 2014), further complicated Wantarri's educational work at Lajamanu. In 2008, in an act that contravened Article 30 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990), the NT Department of Education summarily mandated English to be the compulsory language of instruction for all students for the first four hours of each school day (NT 2009). The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs launched a federal inquiry in response (Australia 2012b), and the policy was repealed two months before its findings were released. Curiously, this has transpired within the same timeframe that the Australian Assessment, Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA 2012) has been moving Australian schools towards a unified

IV  
Insightful analyses of these developments are offered by Michaels (1986), Ginsburg (1993), Glowczewski (2005), Hinkson (2005), Stojanovski (2010), and Kral and Schwab (2012).

V  
Yunupinju recently passed away in June 2013 (Corn 2013a). Under Yolŋu law, there is a strict moratorium against speaking the forenames of deceased individuals for some years (Keen 1994: 139), and to assist in this process, we mention his forename only once in this article.

VI  
Our spellings in this article of Yolŋu–Matha words and names follows accepted the orthographic conventions now used by most Yolŋu communities (Zorc 1996).

national curriculum in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are embedded as a Cross-curriculum priority to be taught in all subjects. Elsewhere in Australia, there has therefore been new interest among metropolitan schools in engaging Indigenous educators to teach on Indigenous perspectives, even if only during NAIDOC Week, such as when Wantarri ran a five-day intensive for students at Scotch College in Melbourne in 2012.

Drawing on our case studies, this article will demonstrate how Wantarri has sought through his educational work to circumvent the overarching Anglocentrism of educational institutions in Australian to provide new learning pathways for all. His concerns and motivations in this endeavour echo those of the Indigenous education expert, Martin Nakata (2007).

*It is ... important to understand what happens when Indigenous knowledge is documented in ways that disembodies it from the people who are its agents, ... [and] to consider what disintegrations and transformations occur when it is redistributed across Western categories of classification ... that suit the hierarchies, linearity, abstraction and objectification of Western knowledge – all of which are the antithesis of Indigenous knowledge traditions and technologies. (Nakata 2007: 9)*

Both the Milpirri Festival and our course at ANU are built on an Indigenous pedagogy of *knowing through doing* that encourages new understandings to fluidly emerge and reemerge in students as a function of their own embodied engagements with Warlpiri knowledge throughout the learning process. Rather than teaching *about* Warlpiri knowledge from a detached and distanced perspective, Wantarri's pedagogical approaches encourage students not only to learn about Warlpiri knowledge, but also to learn about themselves and the world *through* Warlpiri knowledge. These include the application of Warlpiri kinship structures to all educational settings, the active participation of students in performing ceremonial repertoire, encouraging students to actively hunt for knowledge on their own, and the admittance of students to greater levels of knowledge and responsibility in reward for educational aptitude and attainment.

These approaches exist within a rich continuum of innovative praxis through which Warlpiri have appropriated new media technologies to address their own cultural survival needs and concerns since the introduction to the Tanami of local television in the 1980s.<sup>IV</sup> Yet having attended the Garma Festival at Guḷkuḷa in North-East Arnhem Land, Wantarri also builds on the pedagogical ideas of the late, great Yolŋu teacher and musician, Mandawuy Yunupinju,<sup>V</sup> who first theorised *Ganma* 'Converging currents' as an Indigenous model for bicultural education and exchange in Australia (Yunupinju 1994; Corn & Gumbula 2006: 188; Corn 2011: 30).<sup>VI</sup>

This *Ganma* ethos carried over into Wantarri's creative direction of the Milpirri Festival as a bridge between classical Warlpiri values and the contemporary world (Patrick, Holmes & Box 2008: 25; Corn with Patrick 2008; Patrick 2008: 54). It was also a central methodology of co-author Aaron Corn's formative collaborations with Yolŋu commentators to document Yunupinju's life and achievements, and to embed bicultural approaches into the teaching of Yolŋu studies at both the University of Melbourne and University of Sydney (Corn 2009, 2010, 2011). Our mutual recognition of *Ganma* as a framework for generating new perspectives and understandings from across our respective backgrounds and intellectual traditions has therefore greatly

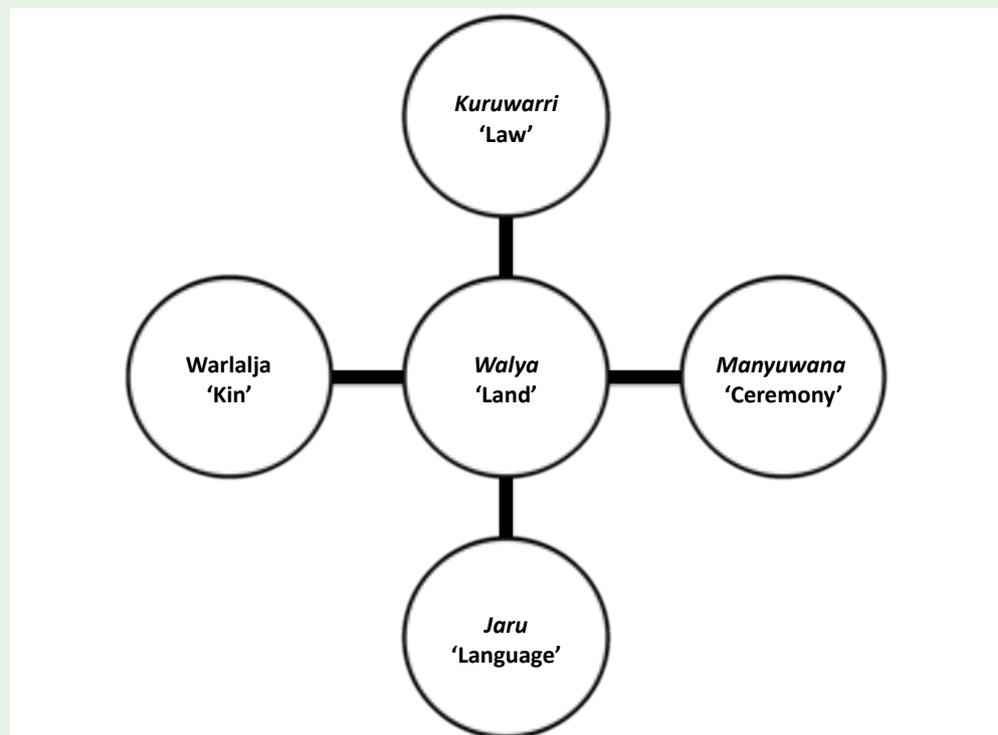
informed our present work together at ANU as ARC co-investigators, as co-lecturers of Indigenous Music and Media, and as co-authors of this article.

Though his teaching, Wantarri also works to challenge racialised notions about the value of Warlpiri knowledge. He maintains that Warlpiri knowledge is not to be construed as holding value only for the Warlpiri, nor it is to be taught merely to satisfy the ethnographic curiosity of others. Warlpiri knowledge is to be taught because it can hold intrinsic value for all as a framework of understanding and living in Australia that has enabled humans to survive and thrive in our country for scores of millennia. In Australian tertiary education, such approaches remain rare and fleeting as they directly confront the Anglocentric colonising constructs on which Australian universities have been founded since the University of Sydney was first established in 1850 (Corn & Gumbula 2006: 170–2; Connell 2007; Ford 2010; Corn 2011: 34; Australia 2012a: 94–104; Dabashi 2013).

## NGURRA-KURLU

*Walya* 'Land', *Kuruwarri* 'Law', *Manyuwana* 'Ceremony', *Jaru* 'Language' and *Warlalja* 'Kin' are the five interconnected fields of Warlpiri knowledge that Wantarri theorises as comprising *Ngurra-kurlu*: a Warlpiri way of understanding one's place in the world and within the environment of one's home. Described as 'a way of working with Warlpiri people' (Patrick, Holmes & Box 2008: i), *Ngurra-kurlu* is an interculturally approachable model that outlines the classical foundations of the Warlpiri way of life. Wantarri depicts it as a cross consisting of five points connected by two intersecting perpendicular lines (see Figure II). *Walya* 'Land' is the central point and, at the respective ends of the four spokes radiating outward from this, *Kuruwarri* 'Law', *Manyuwana* 'Ceremony', *Jaru* 'Language' and *Warlalja* 'Kin' are arranged clockwise from the top.

Figure II  
Wantarri's  
Ngurra-kurlu schema.



As the central point, *Walya* ‘Land’ is the eternal constant that binds humans to their ancestors through a shared environment, and into which the original ancestors inscribed their *jukurrpa* ‘dreamings’ as laws of human living within the natural order. The top point, *Kuruwarru* ‘Law’, is the means through which Warlpiri observe their *jukurrpa* as a corpus of principles for maintaining balance within society and with nature. The right-hand point, *Manyuwana* ‘Ceremony’, is the constitutive mechanism for observing Warlpiri law through the ritual execution of esoteric repertoires of song, dance and design that express Walpiri polity, record human connections to ancestors and land, maintain social order in balance with nature, and prepare the young for adult responsibilities. The bottom point, *Jaru* ‘Language’, is the esoteric tongue of the land: spoken by the original ancestors, and recorded in ceremonial songs offering detailed accounts of their *jukurrpa*. Finally, the left-hand point, *Warlajja* ‘Kin’, is the complex system of kinship among individuals in Warlpiri society through which ancestral lineages are reckoned, rights to discrete estates of land and their incumbent *jukurrpa* are managed, marriages are traditionally arranged, ceremonial roles are apportioned, and one’s obligations to others are governed.

Together as *Ngurra-kurlu*, these five fields of knowledge enable *yapa* ‘people’ to read the land as an ever-growing living entity, and to remain receptive to the sentient ancestral entities that reside eternally within it. They teach attentiveness to our human abilities to sense and deduce the patterns in nature that tell us how it functions and how to live in balance with it. “*Wangkayarla nguruku, kapungku nguruju pina wangkami-jarla* ‘Speak to the land, and the land will speak back’” is a Warlpiri proverb that Patrick regularly shares to emphasis this point. It is a key theme of Milpirri Festival, and also of the mixed-media installation he created with colleagues and students from ANU, *Wirntaru* [Great Story]: *Hear the Elements Talk*. If we learn to remain receptive to the elements and what they can tell us about country’s living ecologies, all five components of *Ngurra-kurlu* can be kept strong and in balance.

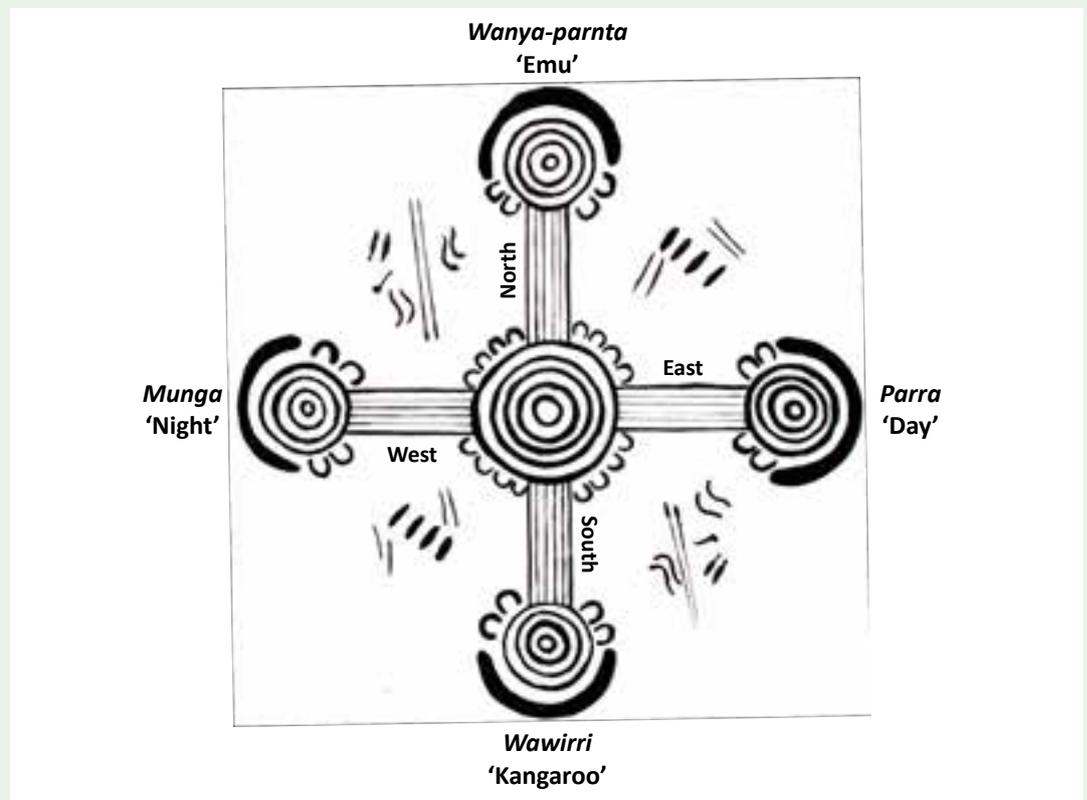
*All these things govern yapa lives. This is Ngurra-kurlu. Everyone in their own way in Australia, in this land, has this, everybody. These five things, yapa have all of these. Lines joining circles, all of these are connected to each other. If the skin name is not strong, if we don’t use it according to our marriage system law — marrying to the wrong skin group — these others will not be strong as well. Even our language, if it is not strong, the other four principles will not function well too. This one too, the law — if we become lawless, both the country and yapa will become sick — and this one as well, ceremony. If we don’t respect our ceremonies and the rituals that belong to skin groups, we will become sick and the country will become sick as well. If we disrespect the land, we will forget what the land is trying to say. We will disappear as Warlpiri people. (Patrick, Dir. 2008)*

Wantarri’s emphasis on the importance of *skin* names — the sixteen subsections or ancestral *kuyu* ‘meat’ groups into which all Warlpiri are born — is a response to the erosion of traditional Warlpiri marriage arrangements over the past four decades. Like the contemporaneous attrition of classical Warlpiri as a spoken language, this too has had an adverse effect on the maintenance of law, as a clear knowledge of one’s position within the Warlpiri kinship system is necessary to perform the ceremonial roles and responsibilities incumbent with one’s homeland and *jukurrpa*. For this to be clear, one’s parentage should ideally conform to traditional marriage protocols. While the kinship system is flexible enough to accommodate anomalous marriages

and the adoption of individuals born outside the Warlpiri domain, its functional logic is built upon marriages between individuals with compatible *skin* names to keep multiple interrelational symmetries in balance.

Depicted by Wantarri in a classical *Pulyaranyi* ‘Windblown path’ configuration, the Warlpiri kinship system closely resembles Wantarri’s *Ngurra-kurlu* schema (see Figure III). It too is a cross consisting of five points connected by two intersecting perpendicular lines. Warlpiri society consists of four patrilineal ceremonial groups, comprising owners of multiple constituent estates dotted throughout the Tanami, which are represented in their respective camps by the four concentric circles on each outer point of the cross. Clockwise from the top, they are *Wanya-parnta* ‘Emu’, *Parra* ‘Day’, *Wawirri* ‘Kangaroo’ and *Munga* ‘Night’. Etymologically, Warlpiri is a contraction of *warlpa-wiri* after the ‘big winds’ that sweep the Tanami. The thick, large semicircles that shelter their camps are therefore windbreaks.

Figure III  
Wantarri’s *Pulyaranyi*  
depiction of the  
Warlpiri kinship system



Seated within each camp are four small semicircles that denote the four constituent *skin* names of each ceremonial group. Each group comprises two distinct female and two corresponding male *skin* names, as indicated by the women’s coolamons and digging sticks, and men’s spears, spear-throwers, boomerangs and clapsticks that alternately lie between each camp. Masculine *skin* names always begin with ‘J’ and feminine ones with ‘N’. Clockwise from the top, the six parallel lines that connect each camp to the centre are winds from the *Yatitjarra* ‘North’, *Kakarrara* ‘East’, *Kurlirra* ‘South’ and *Karlarra* ‘West’ that blow all four patrilineal groups together for ceremony. Finally, this central fifth point of five concentric circles is a shared ceremonial ground around which is seated a small semicircle for each of sixteen *skin* names.

Responsibilities for two annual, public ceremonies in which both females and males traditionally perform can also be traced through this kinship schema. *Jardiwarnpa* 'Deep sleep' is a fire purification ceremony performed for everyone by the Emu and Kangaroo groups of the North–South axis. It provides a mechanism for restoring balance and social order by laying to rest all disagreements, enmities and hostilities of the year past (Lander, Dir. 1983). It is necessary for this process to be completed before the Day and Night groups of the East–West axis can perform the *Kurdiji* 'Shield' ceremony for all. This is the mechanism through which women hand to men their boys for initiation into adulthood (Curran 2011). As each boy is handed over, he faces four shields on which four different *jupurrka* are depicted, which represent his lineages from the estates of his *warringi* 'father's father', *jinnardi* 'father's mother', *jaja* 'mother's mother' and *jamirdi* 'mother's father'.

These North–South and East–West axes of ceremonial responsibility effectively form two reflected patrimoieties comprising the Emu and Kangaroo groups, and the Day and Night groups, which Patrick respectively identifies as *Walyangka-pitipiti* (Earth) and *Pirli-mangkuru* (Sky) (see Figure IV). At the ends of each patrimoietal axis, internal symmetries are revealed by the etymologies of each ceremonial group's four constituent *skin* names. Along the Earth axis, the respective *skin* names of the Emu and Kangaroo groups express reflected ideas about blood and water, while those of the Day and Night groups along the Sky axis respectively express reflected ideas about birth and death. Even finer symmetries among four constituent *skin* names of each ceremonial group can also be found to express reflected properties of stillness and movement, height and depth, light and sound, and trunk and limb.

Figure IV  
Reflected symmetries  
within the Warlpiri  
kinship system.

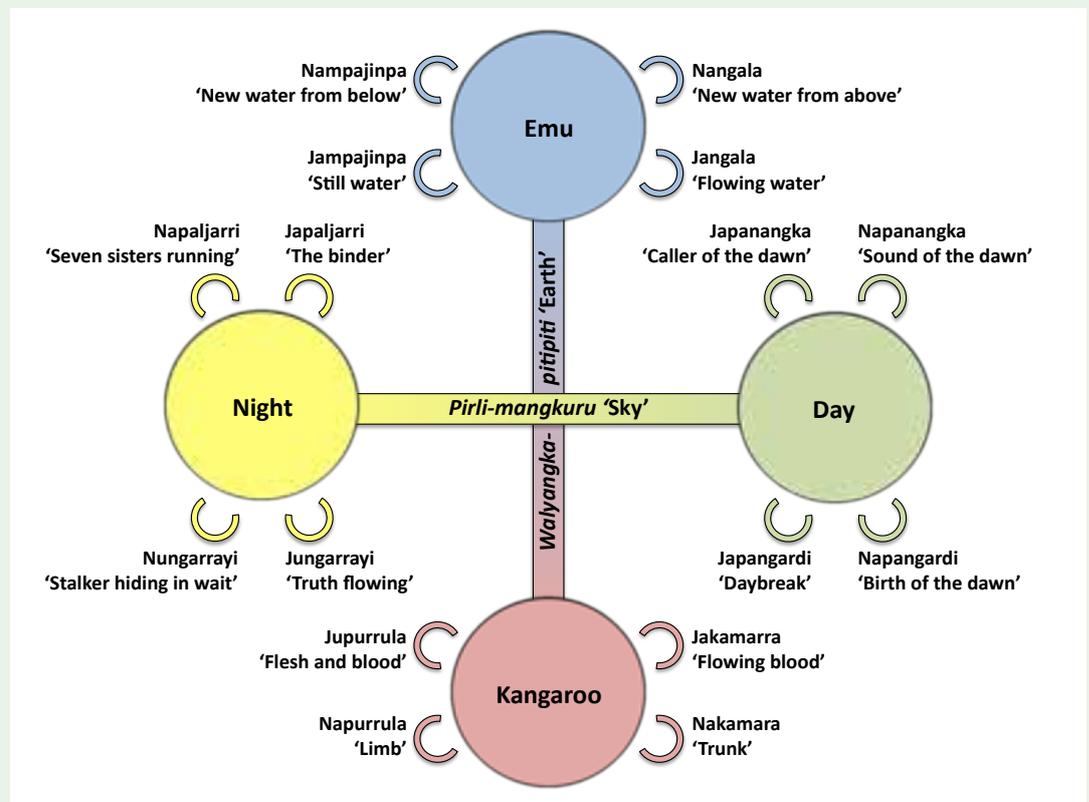


Figure V  
The Warlpiri Flying  
Emu constellation.

## THE ETERNAL QUESTION

Himself a Jampijinpa 'Still water', Wantarri's patrilineage is within the Emu group and, as such, pedagogical approach is guided by the *jukurrpa* relationship between emu and water to be found in the night sky. The term *Pirli-mangkuru* specifically refers to the Milky Way and can be translated literally as 'Sea of stones'. But on the night of a new moon in the Tanami, far away from city lights, dark nebulae can also be seen amidst this expansive sea of stars (Figure V). Adjoining the most iconic of southern hemisphere constellations, the Southern Cross, is the Coalsack Dark Nebula, which can be seen to form the head of an emu. Following the silhouette of an emu in profile, the Coalsack in turn joins a long, thin neck of dark nebulae that stretches past the Pointers, and into a greater dark nebulae body that is bisected by Scorpio. The legs of this celestial emu also are comprised of dark nebulae and both stretch backwards beneath his tail to the sidereal constellation Scutum.



VII  
Similar astronomical  
associations within  
parallel Australian  
Indigenous  
epistemologies  
are discussed by  
Fuller, Norris and  
Trudgett (2013).

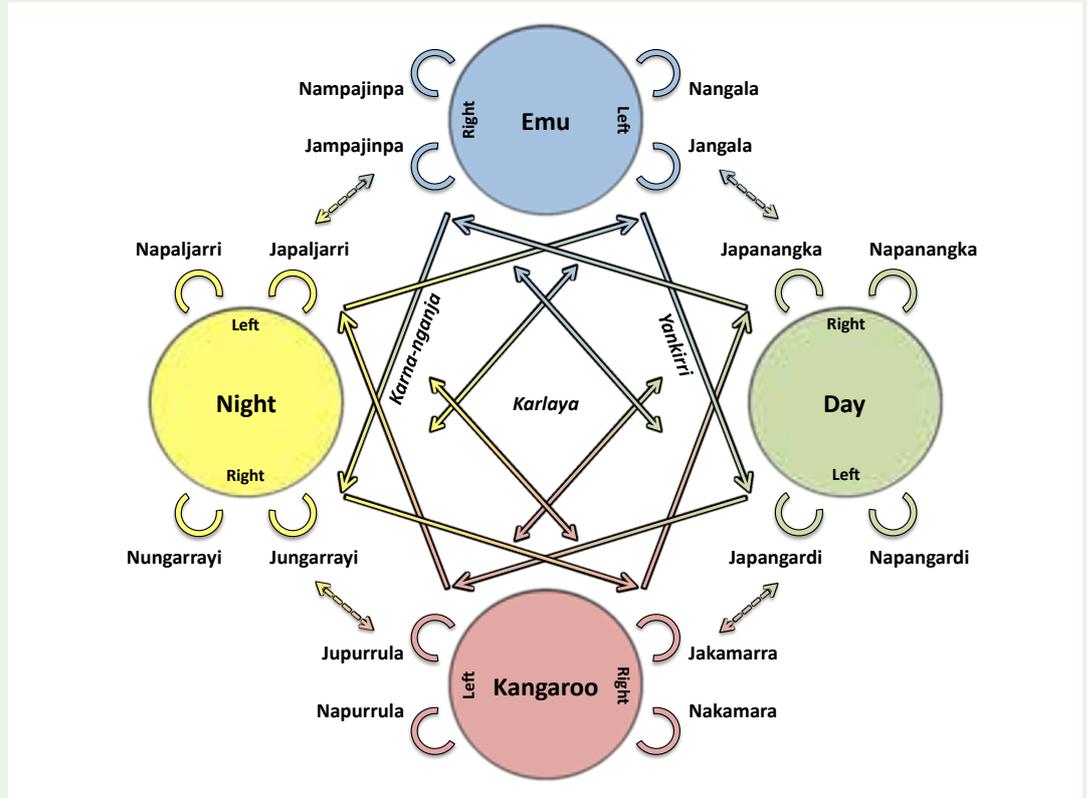
VIII  
In colloquial usage,  
*Wanya-parnta*,  
*Karlaya*, *Karna-nganja*  
and *Yankirri* can each  
be used as common  
words for 'Emu'.

This constellation of dark nebulae is known to Warlpiri as the Flying Emu, and like the single white feather worn as a headdress in Warlpiri ceremonies, the South Cross is his Crown.<sup>VII</sup> As he faces down upon Earth from his vantage in the night sky, the Pointers in his neck, to the right of his Crown, form a woman's Digging Stick, and to its left, lie two Goanna Holes in the form of pale Magellanic Clouds. These latter two constellations represent the two exogamous matrimoieties of the Warlpiri kinship system through which *karlaya*, or marriage protocols, drive the perpetual rotation of skin names from mother to child through two mirrored intergenerational cycles (see Figure VI). The Digging Stick Pointers denote the Right matrimoiety, called *Karna-nganja* 'I am going to eat and drink', while the Goanna Hole Magellanic Clouds denote the Left matrimoiety, called *Yankirri* 'People coming and going'.<sup>VIII</sup> The former refers to the feasting upon knowledge that ceremonies afford, while the latter places the

burden of choice upon the individual as whether to partake in the arduous process of attaining knowledge through ceremonies.

Figure VI  
Matrimoieties and marriage in the Warlpiri kinship system.<sup>IX</sup>

IX  
Each unidirectional arrow in this figure traces a child-to-mother relationship. Each solid bidirectional arrow indicates ideal marriageability between opposite-sex skin names, and each broken bidirectional arrow a secondary alternative.



X  
These nine birds of prey, ordered by ascending rank in three stages of three levels each, are *Karr-karnpa* 'Brown goshawk', *Winy-winy* 'Spotted harrier', *Waruku-parluku-parluku* 'Nankeen kestrel', *Purrkura* 'Whistling kite', *Kalantirri* 'Black-breasted buzzard', *Yalakapara* 'Peregrine falcon', *Kirrkalanji* 'Brown falcon', *Purla-purla* 'Black kite', and *Warlawurru* 'Wedge-tailed eagle'.

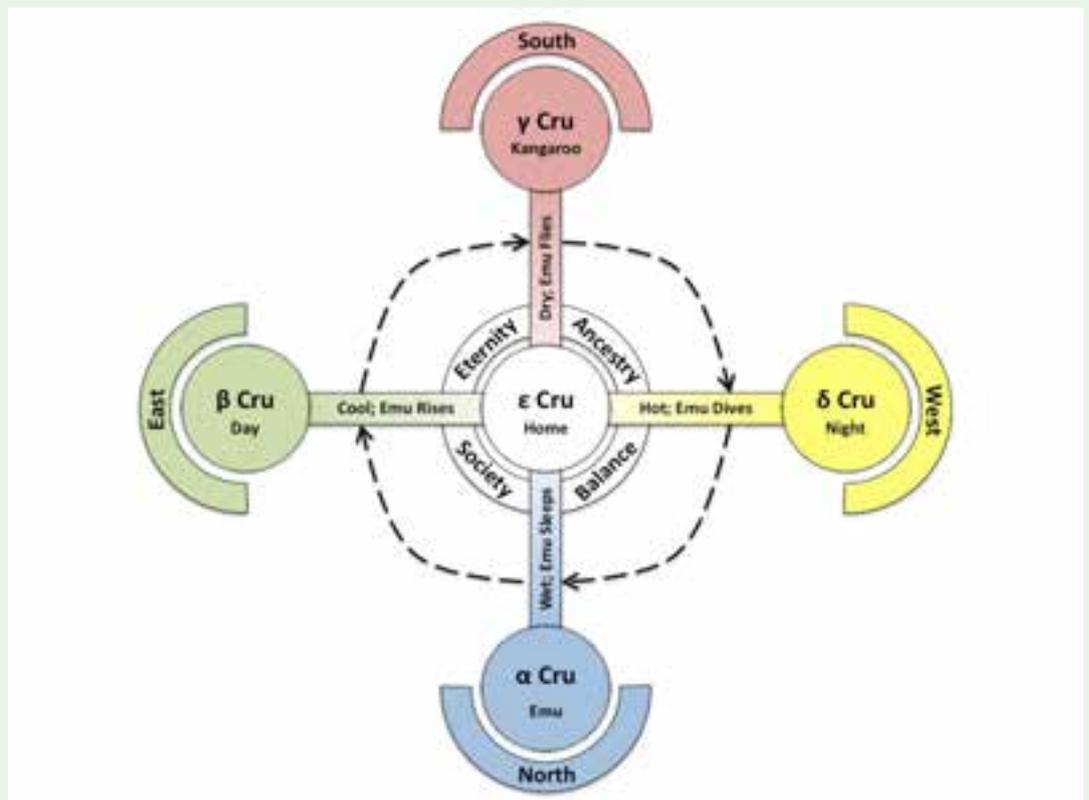
At Yinapaka (Lake Surprise), where all the *jukurpa* birds gathered to learn how to fly, the *Warlawurru* 'Wedge-tailed eagle' was venerated as the highest flyer and greatest hunter of them all. The other birds asked him to teach them, but he revealed that his own teacher had been the Emu, whose help they had already aggressively refused. Before a boy first enters into formal ceremonies, he is deemed to be a *Yakalpa* 'Emu chick', and is given the choice of pursuing subsequent levels of initiation into greater esoteric knowledge and social responsibility. The first nine of these levels is named for a progressively bolder bird of prey from the modest *Karr-karnpa* 'Brown goshawk', who flies through undergrowth to flush out small prey, through to the great, soaring Wedge-tailed Eagle, who prefers to hunt from two kilometres above the Earth's surface.<sup>X</sup> But from his vantage amongst the stars, the Flying Emu is the ultimate teacher, who can educate us to live in the homeland of Kangaroo and soar high like the Wedged-tailed eagle. He is a paragon of knowledge to which all should aspire.

As each year passes, the Flying Emu constellation wheels through the sky and its position marks the four Warlpiri seasons. In the song series performed by the Emu group for *Jardiwarnpa* ceremonies, the four seasons are described as stations of the Flying Emu. It opens with songs that establish the Emu in his immutable, eternal state before moving to each of the four seasons in turn. The Wet season is of the Emu group, and this is when the Emu rests, submerged beneath the water. The Cool season is of the Day group, and this is when the Emu wakes and launches himself out of his watery bed. The Dry season is of the Kangaroo group, and finds the Emu in

full flight, astonished to see both of his legs stretched backwards behind him in the sky. Finally, the Hot season is of the Night group, and finds the Emu losing altitude and diving back into the water to sleep again. In this final Hot season, the Digging Stick Pointers touch the horizon, and the Southern Cross hides behind the curvature of the Earth to mark the commencement of annual ceremonies. In this position, the Southern Cross becomes the *Yarla* 'Great Yam' of Warlpiri knowledge on which all who gather for ceremonies feast.

Here becomes apparent the underlying natural form that binds Wantarri's *Ngurra-kurlu* schema and the Warlpiri kinship system alike to the stations of the Flying Emu within an integrated body of Warlpiri knowledge. The Crown of the Flying Emu, the Great Yam of Warlpiri knowledge: the Southern Cross comprises five main stars in the approximate shape of a five-point cross. It is the same five-point cross upon which Wantarri has theorised *Ngurra-kurlu*. The four seasonal stations of the Flying Emu, the cardinal directions and their big winds, and the four Warlpiri ceremonial groups are attributed to the four outer stars of the Southern Cross, starting clockwise from the bottom at Alpha Crux ( $\alpha$  Cru), the constellation's brightest star (see Figure VII).

Figure VII  
Polysemic Warlpiri readings of the Southern Cross constellation.



The fifth inner star, however, is always attributed to the immutable, fixed eternity of *jukurupa* around which revolves the natural cycles of the physical world, the sentient ancestors that eternally reside within the living Warlpiri homelands, and the Warlpiri social order in which everyone is bound together by balanced ceremonial relationships. In the night sky, this fifth star is visibly off centre. Yet we have seen how in Warlpiri schemas it will typically be depicted in an idealised balanced position at the centre of the cross. Wantarri tells students that this reminds us to follow the

tenets of *Ngurra-kurlu*. Otherwise, we lose the ability to follow ancestral precedent in understanding our home, we risk disturbing the natural balance and rendering our environment unlivable, and we become homeless in our own land.

## COLD AIR FALLING

Despite the centrality of ceremonies and the knowledge they impart to *Ngurra-kurlu* as a Warlpiri way of life, the *Jardiwarnpa* and *Kurdiyi* ceremonies have been performed with less and less frequency at Lajamanu over the past four decades. Younger people, who speak Light Warlpiri, generally lack the language skills necessary to access the esoteric ideas that these ceremonies convey. A simultaneous increase in the deviation of marriage arrangements from the prescriptions for social balance and ceremonial roles of the Warlpiri kinship system has further compounded this plight. By the twenty-first century, an entire generation of young adult Warlpiri had been raised at Lajamanu with no clear understanding of classical kinship and limited exposure to traditional ceremonies. These radical social changes had severely threatened the continuation of *Ngurra-kurlu* as a way of life for future generations, and they had also begun to endanger young lives.

*There was a suicide at Lajamanu, maybe two years earlier before the ... [first] Milpirri event. For that loss for that young fella ['fellow'], it was like having the guts taken out of the Warlpiri nation. How do we find a way to teach ourselves again, and to remind ourselves that each one of us is precious? (Patrick in People Pictures, Dir. 2012)*

Inaugurated in 2005, the Milpirri Festival at Lajamanu is an ambitious strategy for facing this crucial challenge that attempts to restore the balance of *Ngurra-kurlu* to Warlpiri society. It is produced in collaboration with Tracks Dance Company from Darwin, and continues to be developed through extensive consultations with elder ceremonial leaders at Lajamanu, who include Wantarri's own father, Jerry Jangala Patrick. Having undertaken numerous theatrical collaborations with the Lajamanu community since 1988, Tracks had worked with Wantarri before on the staged production of *Ngapa: Two cultures, one country* (Tracks 1996), which premiered at the 1996 Darwin Festival. This show traced the great, serpentine pathway of the *Ngapa* 'Rain' *jukurrpa* that connects Alice Springs to Darwin over a distance of some 2000 kilometres (Tracks 2014), and generated a new framework for bicultural exchanges between Warlpiri and Anglophone Australians upon which the Milpirri Festival would later build.

The Milpirri Festival envisions a new future for Warlpiri society: a future in which the classical tenets and values of *Ngurra-kurlu* can coexist alongside the enduring Anglocentrism of Australia's broader social institutions. This approach parallels the annual, five-day Garma Festival, which was founded upon *Ganma* 'Converging currents': a bicultural educational model pioneered by Yunupinu (1994) to aid the continuing survival Yolŋu culture in North-East Arnhem Land (Corn 2005: 22–3; Corn with Patrick 2008). *Ganma* is an estuarine meeting of freshwater and saltwater currents that creates pungent, yellow foam on the water's surface. It is traditional framework for forging non-competitive, cooperative accords between groups of equal standing in Yolŋu society, and in the 1980s, was developed by Yunupinu into a model for bicultural balance between Yolŋu and Anglophone intellectual traditions in the rearing and schooling of Yolŋu children (Corn & Gumbula 2006: 187–9; Corn 2011: 29–31).

But in the desert there is no meeting of saltwater and freshwater currents. Wantarri has therefore drawn upon his own *jukurrpa* to evoke an equivalent ethos of biculturalism in the hope of building deeper cooperation between Warlpiri and Anglophone Australians to prevent any recurrence of the fatal tragedy that motivated the first Milpirri Festival. *Milpirri* is a lofty ‘Thundercloud’ that forms along the path of the great Rain *jukurrpa* through the meeting of hot air rising from the Earth’s surface and cold air falling from the sky (Patrick 2008: 33; Patrick, Holmes & Box 2008: 25).

*Yes, Milpirri – bringing the hot air rising and the cold air falling to form this cloud. We have to think of Milpirri: how to put everything together, both kardiya [‘Anglophones’] and yapa having input, and try and tackle these problems to the best of our ability. Understanding each other, that’s what Milpirri is: good or bad; negative or positive. (Patrick in People Pictures, Dir. 2012)*

## HOT AIR RISING

To date, there have been four Milpirri Festivals in 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2012, interspersed by a smaller Milpirri Showing in 2011 (Tracks 2014). They have typically consisted of a single evening’s performance of staged music and dance by a cast of more than 200 in the public park at Lajamanu, which is preceded by some eight weeks of preparation and regular rehearsals with children at the Lajamanu School and with other performers led by local elders. Following the traditional timing of annual ceremonies, the festival is designed to take place when the Pointers touch the horizon, which is usually in early October.

Through Wantarri’s creative direction, each new festival has cumulatively focused on different ceremonial teachings to introduce a new generation of Warlpiri youths to the classical tenets and values of *Ngurra-kurlu*. The 2005 and 2007 festivals respectively focused on the *Jardiwarnpa* and *Kurdiji* ceremonies. The 2009 festival focused on the Jurntu *purlapa* ‘public ceremony’, which teaches responsibility, respect, justice and discipline to be key principles of Warlpiri law. The 2011 Milpirri Showing focused on Yinapaka, where the *jukurrpa* birds of the four Warlpiri social groups gathered to learn how to fly, and the 2012 festival built upon this further with its theme of *Pulyaranyi* ‘Windblown path’, the four corresponding winds that blow everyone together for ceremony.

Since its inception, the Milpirri Festival has employed an innovative array of pedagogical methods for reengaging Warlpiri youths and the Lajamanu community with the tenets and values of *Ngurra-kurlu*, while simultaneously extending them into accessible contemporary media for creative expression, and into an unprecedented intercultural performance context. Rather than framing the old and the new as disparate domains of expression, it seamlessly incorporates ceremonial repertoire into a single, unified program alongside contemporary items. This allows children the freedom to perform their own new, hip hop dances based on the traditional songs and dances led by elders during the show.

Throughout the rehearsal process, children learn through an Indigenous pedagogy of knowing through doing. They work in the four Warlpiri ceremonial groups.

XI  
Tracks co-Artistic  
Director, Tim Newth,  
has collaborated  
with the Lajamanu  
community in the  
process of creating  
these banners since  
1989 (Tracks 2014).

XII  
Red Sand Culture  
has delivered hip  
hop music and  
dance workshops in  
Warlpiri communities  
in partnership  
with the Warlpiri  
Youth Development  
Aboriginal Corporation  
Mt Theo Program  
since 2007. Its present  
hip hop mentors  
are Marlon 'Elf  
Tranzporter' Porter,  
Marc 'MonkeyMarc'  
Peckham, and Caiti  
Baker and James  
Mangohig of Sietta.

Their skin names are clarified if required, and they are given brightly coloured gel wristbands that help them remember. Worn on the left or right wrist, depending on whether the child bears a *skin* name of Left or Right matrimoiety, these bands come in four colours from the *jukurrpa* of each group. The Emu group is blue, denoting water; the Day group is green, denoting vegetation; the Kangaroo is red, denoting blood; and the Night group is yellow, denoting stars.

The traditional song and dance repertoires incorporated into the festival have become the primary means at Lajamanu through which children are now introduced to their hereditary ceremonies. The 2012 festival, for example, was structured around an overarching sequence of iconic ceremonial items by each of the four groups: *Yankirri* 'Emu' by the Emu group, which symbolises parental teachings; *Warlu* 'Fire' by the Day group, which symbolises new growth; *Marlu* 'Kangaroo' by the Kangaroo group, which symbolises unchanging law; and *Witi* 'Two trees' by the Night group, which symbolises the consequences of one's choices. Following *Yankirri*, women elders led a medley of Yinapaka bird items from *yawulyu* 'women's ceremony', comprising *Jipilyaku* 'Duck', *Pinparlajarrpa* 'Wood swallow', *Kurlukuku* 'Diamond dove' and *Ngatijirri* 'Budgerigar', to depict these same four groups coming together for ceremony. The Day and Night groups ushered in the show's conclusion with a joint performance of *Wulpararri* 'Milky Way' to evoke the greater esoteric teachings embedded among the stars. This culminated in the release of large sky lanterns into the night to evoke the Milky Way, and the lighting of leafy, ceremonial *Witi* poles to mark the commencement of one's journey towards greater understanding.

Interspersed amongst this ceremonial repertoire, children dance within their own four groups. Their respective coloured t-shirts in blue, green, red and yellow reflected the stage's backdrop of twenty-seven towering banners that, like the shields displayed in *Kurdiji* ceremonies, depicted the *jukurrpa* of numerous Warlpiri homelands (Tracks 2014).<sup>XI</sup> They became animals living in the desert landscape. They encircled the four women elders who danced each of the Yinapaka birds. Their hip hop dances embodied the four winds blowing everyone together for ceremony, and preempting the *Wulpararri* finale, each came together in chorus to form *Pulyaranyi*, the composite winds of change (Holmes 2013: 13). Heard through a sophisticated, mobile sound-and-lighting rig supplied by Top End Sounds, some youths had also worked through the affiliated Red Sand Culture initiative to compose for the show an original hip hop soundtrack incorporating narration and lyrics provided by Wantarri (InCite Youth Arts 2014).<sup>XII</sup>

The Milpirri Festival has established a renewed social foundation for imparting the classical tenets and values of *Ngurra-kurlu* from old to young. Building on repertoire from public ceremonies that are now rarely performed in their complete original formats, it has rapidly gained regional traction as a new Warlpiri tradition for a post-classical age abounding with unavoidable intercultural influences and entanglements that demand innovative strategies for cultural survival (Holmes 2013: 8–9; Tracks 2014).

While all who feel comfortable dancing in the show are generally welcome to do so, irrespective of skin colour or cultural heritage, the message sent to local children throughout the rehearsal process is clear: no school, no Milpirri. In the eight weeks of rehearsals that has typically precede each festival, school attendance has

consequentially been known to leap from some forty to sixty per cent. Fitness among local children also shows appreciable improvements as a result of their regular dance training (Holmes 2013: 14–21). In addition to benefiting from improved fitness and school attendance, the festival has also inspired local children to embrace their Warlpiri heritage. They now wear their coloured festival wristbands all year round, and have developed them into an elaborate system for signaling not only their own *skin* names, but also their grandparental lineages from their father's mother, mother's mother, and mother's father.

Thirsting for more, youths began requesting regular instruction in Warlpiri knowledge in between festivals, which prompted Wantarri to devise for them an inventive new curriculum called *Yirtaki-mani* 'Tracking'. Following the classical Warlpiri emphasis on training youths to be self-sufficient learners who are attentive to their environment and can therefore hunt for themselves, *Yirtaki-mani* was constructed as a grand treasure hunt in which children progressed through a graded series of ever more demanding clues based on traditional knowledge to make them more attuned to country's living ecology, or as Patrick explains it with respect to *Ngurra-kurla*, to help them become their home and carry it within. Driven by written clues that demanded literacy in Warlpiri to decipher, it was also designed to build better reading skills in children, which Wantarri explained to them to be merely another form of tracking. Trialled voluntarily by children outside school hours, *Yirtaki-mani* proved highly popular. Families would spend entire evenings trying to decipher Wantarri's clues, and teenagers who had left school to raise families were being lured back to learning by the thrill of the hunt.

Wantarri had hoped that this new curriculum would be adopted by the Lajamanu School as a means of prolonging the educational experience of Milpirri in between festivals. Given the NT Department of Education's unsupportive stance on compulsory instruction in English at this time (NT 2009), this was not to be. But for Wantarri, the opportunity to teach in another new intercultural context lay ahead at ANU through our collaboration on the intensive undergraduate course, Indigenous Music and Media.

## HEAR THE ELEMENTS TALK

Based on the same pedagogical approach and body of *jukurrpa* that inform Wantarri's continuing creative direction of the Milpirri Festival, Indigenous Music and Media earned similar traction among participating students at ANU. Delivered over five continuous days of classes in Canberra, this course offered students an experience that emulated some of the rich intensity and intercultural stimuli of the Garma and Milpirri festivals. Students quickly came to thirst for Wantarri's Warlpiri dance workshops at a long day's end, and the coloured wristbands that he gave them to ensure each student would have a *skin* name were still being worn by most long after the course had ended.

Four students from our first cohort in July–August 2012 were so enthused by the course that they took it upon themselves to make the 5000 kilometre journey from Canberra to Lajamanu to attend the 2012 Milpirri Festival, while others from this and

### XIII

These include scholarly writings and media sources by Wild (1984, 1987), Yunupingu (1994), Langton (2003), Corn (2008, 2010; Corn & Gumbula 2007), Patrick (2008, Dir. 2008; Patrick, Holmes & Box 2008; Patrick & Peckham, Comp. 2011), the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia (2011), and Kral and Schwab (2012).

### XIV

Our generous guest lecturers from across ANU have included linguist Jane Simpson, geographer Richard Baker, archaeologist Cressida Fforde, visual anthropologist Howard Morphy, linguistic anthropologist Inge Kral, economist Matthew Gray, and socio-cultural anthropologist Nicolas Peterson. Brenda Gifford, now a curator at the National Film and Sound Archive, has spoken on her time in inner Sydney as a musician in the influential Indigenous reggae band, Mixed Relations (1993), and Aaron's doctoral student, Samuel Curkpatrick, has presented his research on *Crossing Roper*

subsequent cohorts in April and September 2013 found ways to extend their learning with us via a combination of voluntary side-projects and elective courses supporting independent studies. These have included a formally-assessed internship to assist Aaron convene the 2012 Symposium on Indigenous Music and Dance in Canberra; a series of formally-assessed Sound Archiving Internships at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS); collaborating with Wantarri and our ARC Research Assistant, Lee-Anne Proberts, to create a mixed-media installation called *Wirntaru* [*'Great story'*]: *Hear the elements talk* (Patrick et al. 2013); and supporting Wantarri to deliver workshops at the 2013 Dragon Dreaming Festival outside Canberra in Wee Jasper.

Indigenous Music and Media is a second-year undergraduate course that is open to all eligible students as an elective with no prerequisites. It contributes towards Majors and Minors in Australian Indigenous Studies and Music, and to date has attracted forty undergraduates undertaking Majors in Anthropology, Australian Indigenous Studies, Development Studies, History, Languages, Linguistics, Music, Pacific Studies, Philosophy and Political Science. A range of postgraduate students pursuing related topics in Australian Indigenous Studies, Creative Writing, Music, Linguistics and Law have also participated in the course. A Master of Music student, a Master of Studies student and a Master of Philosophy candidate have undertaken it to fulfill coursework requirements, and it has been audited voluntarily by eight Doctor of Philosophy candidates. Of these students, only one undergraduate and one doctoral candidate identified as being of Australian Indigenous descent.

The aim of Indigenous Music and Media is to introduce students to Australian Indigenous epistemologies in which the ceremonial execution of songs, dances and designs is centrally located within a universalising logic for human experience that orders social structures, personal relationships, corporate memory, spiritual beliefs, legal principles, land tenure and environmental management. Like the Milpirri Festival, it pivots on an Indigenous pedagogy of knowing through doing as a fundamental means of learning to hunt for oneself. It presents songs, dances and designs as media that are capable of codifying law and supporting fact, and in so doing it actively deconstructs conventional scholarly assumptions about the kinds of media that can bear knowledge to build new capacities in students for critical analysis and understanding across cultures (Corn & Gumbula 2006: 189; Corn 2011: 39, 2013b: 156).

Wantarri's application of *skin* names and coloured wristbands to all students in class also actively destabilises common racialised assumptions about the ethno-specificity of Indigenous knowledges and demonstrates their broader human value. The only skin colours we recognise in Indigenous Music and Media are therefore blue, green, red and yellow.

Classes each day typically comprise an assortment of formal lectures, excursions off campus, and participatory dance workshops supported by compulsory readings and media sources.<sup>XIII</sup> Wantarri and Aaron's lectures respectively focus on Warlpiri and Yolŋu epistemologies and creative engagements across cultures, while a variety of guest lecturers have also presented more broadly on Indigenous languages maintenance, environmental management, museum repatriation campaigns, visual arts, digital media training, protest music, public policy, native title legislation and cross-cultural arts initiatives.<sup>XIV</sup>

Bar, a longitudinal cross-cultural arts collaboration between Indigenous musicians from Ngukurr and the Australian Art Orchestra (AAO 2010).

XV  
Wantarri has been supported in the delivery of these workshops by our doctoral student Yukihori Doi, who has been researching the Milpirri Festival since 2009.

Our excursions take students on journeys of discovery, mostly on foot, through the leafy parkways of Canberra to the Indigenous galleries of the National Museum of Australia, to the AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive and Native Title Research Unit, to Australian Parliament House and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, to the sculptural memorials of Reconciliation Place, and to lookout from the secluded grounds of the ANU Mount Stromlo Observatory. Travelling from site to site, their movements echo classical Indigenous readings of the land through which different places are inscribed with their own distinct histories and meanings, which can be woven together by the knowledgeable to greater and deeper understandings.

Working from his *Ngurra-kurlu* schema, Wantarri attributes each of the five days of class in Indigenous Music and Media to a star of the Southern Cross (see Figure VIII), which suggests a Warlpiri logic behind our overarching curriculum. This is also embedded in our student induction process and Wantarri's dance workshops, which ensure that students are involved in experiencing the performance of new ceremonial repertoires each day.<sup>XV</sup>

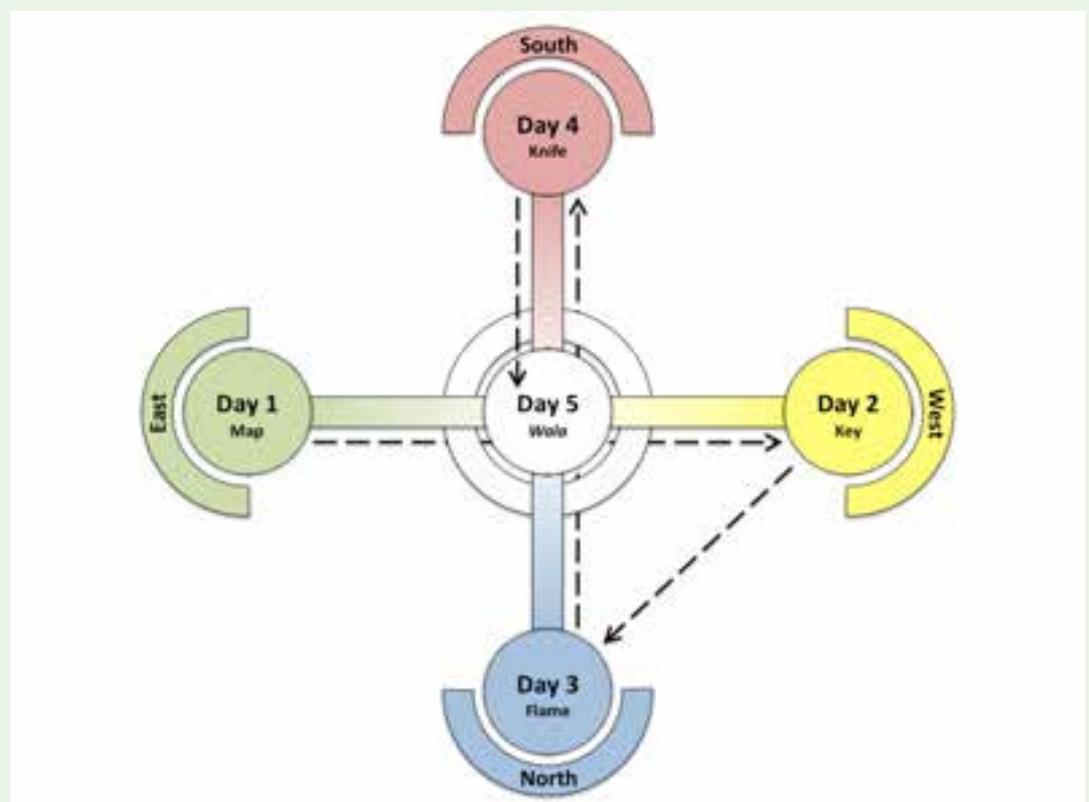


Figure VIII  
Days of class in  
Indigenous Music  
and Media.

Days One and Two are built along the East–West *Kurdiji* axis. On the morning of Day One, called the *Kuyu ngurru* ‘Map’, students arrive at the School of Music and are led outside to be purified in a traditional smoking ceremony. As they bathe in the fumes of smoldering green eucalyptus leaves, they take on the scent of the land before returning inside to be introduced to various traditions of Indigenous music and dance across Australia, and to *Ganma* and *Ngurra-kurlu* as cognate Indigenous models for engagements with others across cultures. Virtually all students will have, at the most, a limited foreknowledge of these phenomena, and some may feel a little daunted by the new terrain covered. On Day Two, the *Yukurruku* ‘Key’, we take students further into the unknown and challenge them to start perceiving the world,

and their relationships to knowledge and each other, in a fundamentally different way. Wantarri ensures that each student is accorded a Warlpiri *skin* name and a matching gel wristband, and typically introduces dance workshops that bring each day to a close. Sung by Wantarri, these start with two dances of the Day group: *Kanakurlangu* 'Digging Stick Pointers' in which women hand over their boys for the *Kurdiji* ceremony; and Wantarri 'Sun', which is alternatively billed in the Milpirri Festival as *Warlu* 'Fire'.

Days Three and Four are built along the North–South *Jardiwarnpa* axis. On Day Three, the *Jarra* 'Flame', students often experience a revelation that accelerates their understanding of Indigenous epistemologies through attentiveness to the environment. They learn to dance the seasonal stations of the Flying Emu from the *Jardiwarnpa* repertoire of the Emu group before we drive in convoy some nineteen kilometers to Mount Stromlo to witness the Flying Emu himself: hidden in plain view amongst the stars every night of their lives, yet revealed to them only now through the study of Warlpiri epistemology. For this particular feat to succeed, we ideally plan for Indigenous Music and Media to coincide with a new moon and hope for clear weather. By Day Four, the *Junma* 'Knife', when students learn to dance the *Yankirri* 'Emu' repertoire of the Emu group, the new routine we have established has typically been normalised. Coloured wristbands have been compared and *skin* names shared among students to calculate their relational values in Warlpiri kinship, and the heightened biochemistry of repeated physical activity has induced within them a thirst for more dance. They earn esteem by demonstrating that they can hunt for themselves in identifying semantic linkages among the myriad concepts and materials presented to them in class, and in articulating how the attainment of embodied knowing through environmental attentiveness and ceremonial performance contributes to the overall fabric of Indigenous epistemologies.

It is with this awareness that students can be taken to Parliament House to discuss the Warlpiri forecourt mosaic, designed by Michael Jakamara Nelson (1985), as a *Jardiwarnpa* ceremony that expresses the ceremonial constitution of a classically Indigenous body of polity. We take students inside this house to where that great assertion of Indigenous rights, the *Barunga Statement* (Yunupingu et al. 1988), hangs on public display, and because they have danced cognate repertoires in class, they can identify the painting on its right-hand panel as *Kanakurlangu*, the Digging Stick Pointers that traditionally call such bodies of polity together for annual ceremonies when they touch the horizon.

Finally, Day Five is called *Wala* for which students must deduce their own personal meanings. As it draws to a close, *Wantarri* presents each with a token of encouragement in recognition of their learning achievements and the responsibility he has placed upon them to carry what they have learnt for the rest of their lives. The student who has shown the greatest aptitude and initiative throughout the course is presented with a large, mounted reproduction of Wantarri's iconic *Milpirri* painting (Patrick 2009), while others typically receive photocopies of different Milpirri Festival backdrop banners in the respective colours of their wristbands. Much like in traditional ceremonies, the alignment of kinship roles, shared revelation and communal performance throughout the week has rapidly forged among them a new constitutive identity and they are saddened that their final dance workshop with *Wantarri* is now upon them. As in the Milpirri Festival, our concluding ceremonial

item is *Warntarritarri* 'Celestial road', the joint dance of the Day and Night groups also known as *Wulpararru* 'Milky Way', which again evokes the greater esoteric teachings embedded among the stars.

## WINDS OF CHANGE

*Out of the land, our sounds become our words, our words become our stories, our stories become our songs, our songs become our ceremonies, our ceremonies become our teachings, our teachings become our beliefs, our beliefs become our law, and through that, we are strong and know who we are, wherever and whatever we are doing. — Wantarri Patrick*

While we have avoided discussing the two assessment tasks of Indigenous Music and Media for the benefit of future students, this is the statement that we ask students to contemplate when approaching them. It speaks to the way that Australian Indigenous epistemologies challenge us to think about knowledge in ways that cannot be encountered through the reading and writing of text on a screen or a page, but rather as something that can also be attained through mindfully embodied praxis as a legitimate and valuable means of learning.

Travelling the land from site to site to read inscriptions on the earth or in the sky; bringing ancestral memory into the now through the seamless ceremonial integration of sacred songs, dances and designs; observing balanced *skin* relationships that locate human endeavours within the cyclical continuum of the natural order — these embodied learning experiences stimulate rich understandings that cannot be attained *through* detached and distanced scrutiny, or simulated *through* alternative means of instruction. They evoke in students the thrill of the hunt. But not only do they compel students to ponder the myriad semantic linkages among the concepts and materials presented throughout the course, they also enable students to question their own received assumptions about where knowledge resides, how it can be evidenced and attained, and how they themselves engage in the acts of learning and knowing. This mechanism for learning about oneself and the world through Warlpiri knowledge is indeed a prime example of how Australian Indigenous epistemologies can be shown to hold intrinsic value for all.

While the two educational initiatives that we have explored in this article have served quite dissimilar student cohorts, their innovative realisations of pedagogical approaches that Wantarri derived from *Ngurra-kurlu* have nonetheless yielded similar results. Both the Milpirri Festival at Lajamanu, and Indigenous Music and Media at ANU have produced students who engage with the process of their own education, who thirst to attain more knowledge, and who actively hunt for new opportunities that can extend their learning experiences.

At Lajamanu, this has resulted in markedly improved fitness and school attendance among children during Milpirri Festival rehearsals, and an infectious desire among youths, some of whom had already left school, to continue learning Warlpiri knowledge in between festivals despite the new literacy requirements that Wantarri imposed upon this process. At ANU, it typically takes only five days for students to become profoundly intrigued by an Indigenous epistemology that, on Day One, seems entirely alien to them, and to remain engaged with Indigenous knowledges

through elective courses and voluntary side-projects long after Indigenous Music and Media has run its course. In seeking to generate new possibilities for Warlpiri cultural survival by simultaneously extending the transference of classical Warlpiri knowledge from old to young in remote desert Australia, and from Warlpiri to others further afield, Wantarri's innovative teaching strategies have therefore proven to be highly efficacious in both contexts.

In Australia, opportunities for students to learn through Indigenous epistemologies within the formal curricula of schools and universities remain rare and fleeting (Yunupinju 1994: 116; Ford 2010; Corn 2011: 34, 2013b: 149–50; Australia 2012a: 94–104, 2012b). Even remote Indigenous communities must constantly fight public education policies to maintain within their local schools any instruction in their own languages or inclusion of their own intellectual traditions beyond the diversionary, and already, a change of federal government in Australia threatens the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as a Cross-curriculum priority from our fledgling national curriculum (Hurst 2014). This centre–periphery dynamic between the enduring Anglocentrism of Australian educational institutions and the traditional holders of Australia's rich Indigenous knowledges perpetuates an Anglocentric colonising construct, which is itself echoed in an entrenched postcolonial paradigm of knowledge production and dissemination that continues to normalise the values and perspectives of the affluent Transatlantic metropole over equally legitimate alternatives in the Global South (Corn & Gumbula 2006: 170–2; Connell 2007; Dabashi 2013).

It is a matter of choice whether we, in Australia, continue down this path of complacency, or instead build closer collaborations with Indigenous thinkers, who like Wantarri and Yunupinju before him, seek to share their traditional knowledges in ways that are approachable for all. Do we merely accept that our educational institutions echo received epistemologies of knowledge and pedagogies of teaching from the Transatlantic metropole as an inevitable consequence of our nation's colonial history of 226 years, or do we simultaneously aspire to embrace the rich possibilities for understanding ourselves and the world that have been shaped by the Australian continent over scores of millennia, and in doing so, support Indigenous communities seeking to maintain their traditional knowledges amidst the contemporary challenges of cultural survival?

Every night, the Flying Emu wheels overhead, hidden in plain view amid the stars of the Milky Way, to remind us of such choices: the Southern Cross his Crown, teaching us to maintain balance in all things; the Digging Stick Pointers on his Right, teaching us that knowledge is nourishment; and the Goanna Hole Magellanic Clouds on his Left, teaching us that we must each choose to actively pursue learning no matter how arduous. On completing Indigenous Music and Media, our students often comment that such principles should be centrally embedded throughout all Australian schools. Such revelations are neither naïve nor fanciful. They reflect the legitimate views of young Australians who have come to realise the undervalued significance of Indigenous knowledges both to them personally and within the global scheme of human heritage, and the crucial importance of supporting Indigenous communities in pursuing their continuing maintenance.

What would be the consequences of a unified Australian curriculum that facilitated such insights? All that is needed to achieve this goal is well within our grasp. There are now many informed and committed educators and supporters within Indigenous communities and broader education networks nationwide actively working to realise this opportunity. Through their dedicated efforts, there are growing opportunities for students across Australia to engage with Indigenous thinkers and knowledges within a variety of intensive contexts spanning cultural residencies on school campuses to immersive experiences on Indigenous homelands such as those offered by Lirrwi Tourism (2012) and the Garma Festival's Youth Forum (Yothu Yindi Foundation 2014). There is also an inclusive national curriculum framework that, if kept true to its foundational *Melbourne declaration* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs Melbourne 2008: 4), values student engagements with Indigenous cultures past, present and future as a key educational strategy towards 'building a democratic, equitable and just society ... that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse'.

Irrespective of overarching policy debates, however, we have nonetheless shown through our case studies in this article what dedicated individuals can achieve by building intercultural communication and trust, and pooling our networks and resources, over years of collaborative engagements to assert and affirm the value and legitimacy of Indigenous knowledges in contemporary educational contexts. We also encourage others seeking to nurture such engagements to contribute to diversifying the rich array of collaborative possibilities that have now become possible. Wheeling eternally overhead, the Flying Emu waits to teach us.

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