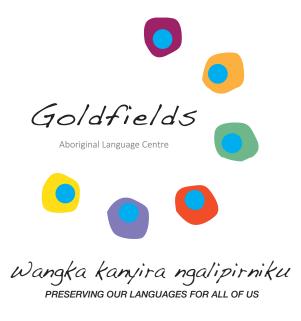
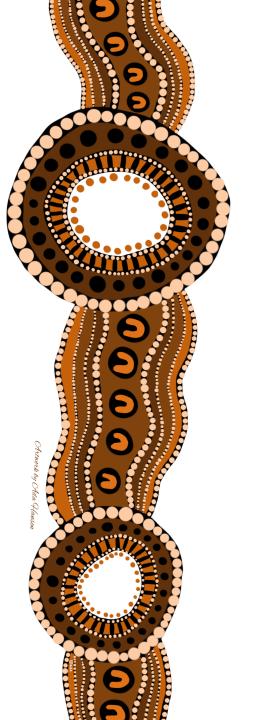


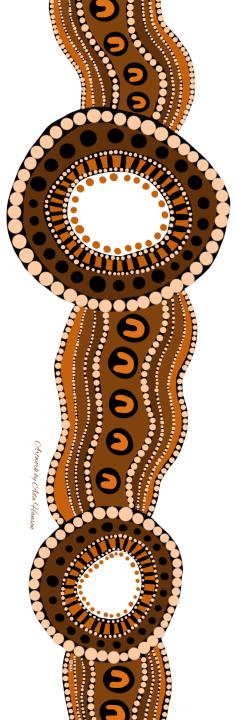
# Honouring the Tjukurrpa: Decolonising Appropriated Stories

Gizem Güven Milonas
Linguist
Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre



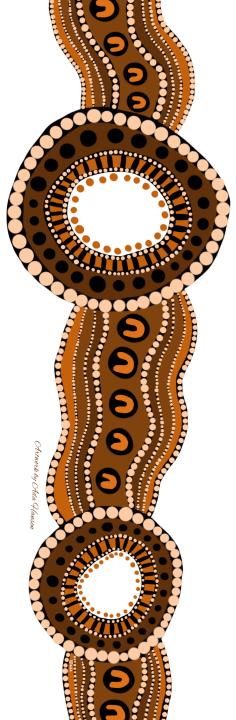


# Tjukurrpa



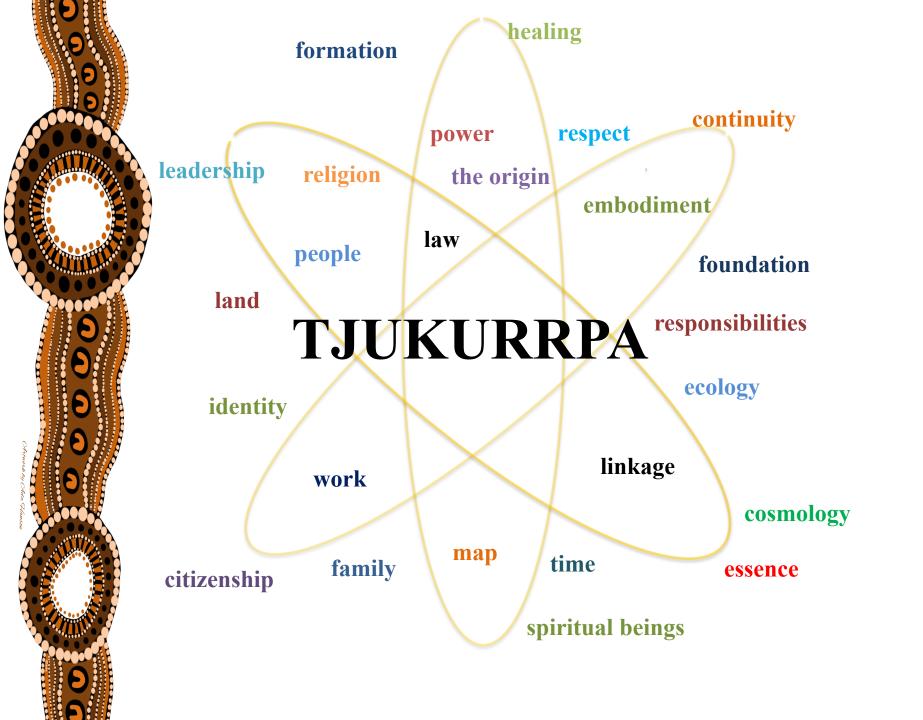
# What is a story?

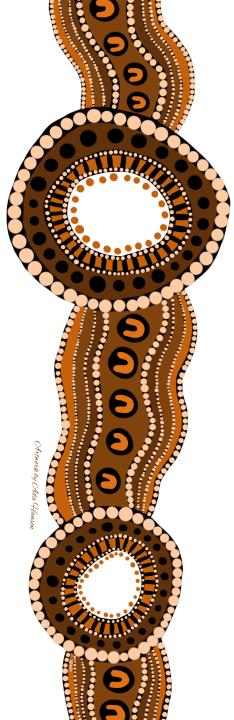
In Cambridge, Collins and Oxford Learner's Dictionary story is description, either true or imagined, of a connected series of events invented in order to entertain people.



## Aboriginal stories: tjuma

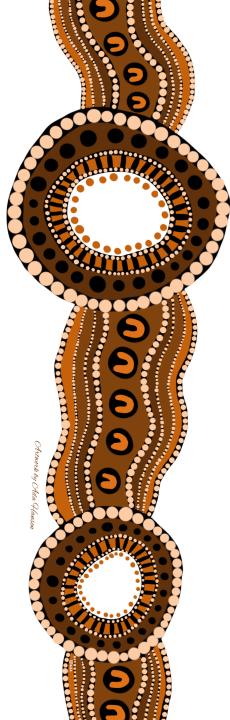
Memories, daily events, jokes, and messages that is the genre of recount.





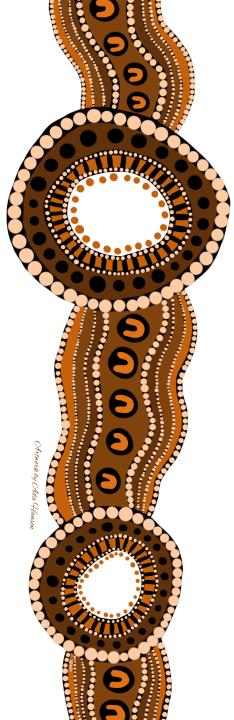


Warlpiri People of Northern Territory



### Weaponization by

- re-shaping identity
- re-telling in another language and removing from land
- devaluing kinship systems by the lack of acknowledgement of the Traditional Owner
- disconnecting from the *Tjukurrpa* and alienating people to the law, ceremonies and responsibilities
- marketing by prioritising the public fame of the non-Aboriginal writer



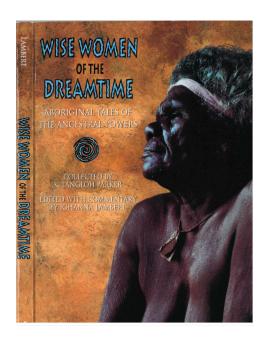
### Beginning of the chain appropriation

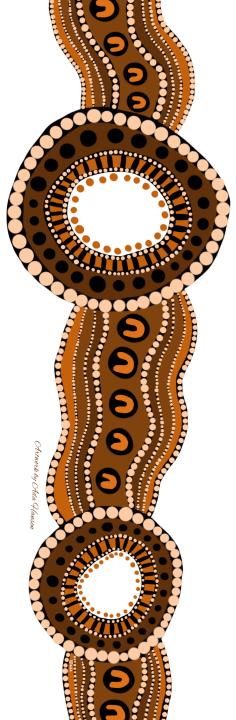
Katherine Langloh Parker

Australian Legendary Tales: folklore of the Noongahburrahs as told to the Piccaninnies, 1896 Johanna Lambert

Wise Women of the Dreamtime, Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers, 1993







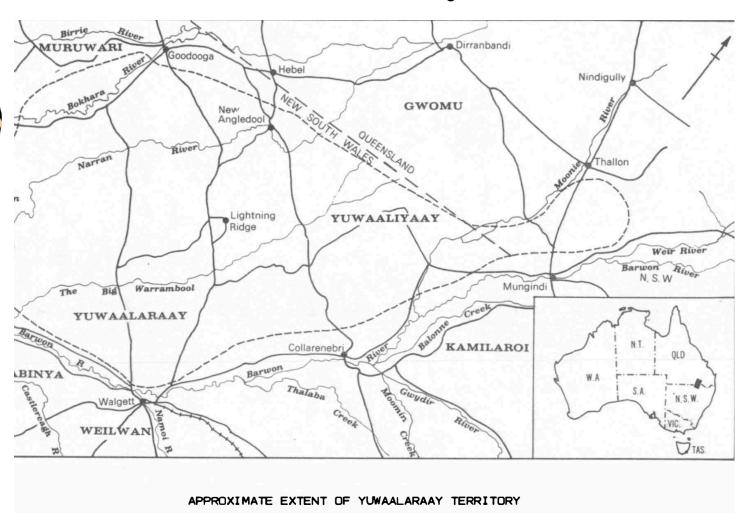
### **Katherine Langloh Parker**

Australian Legendary Tales: folklore of the Noongahburrahs as told to the Piccaninnies, 1896

- Born in South Australia, 1856 and lived in Bangate Station, New South Wales amongst Yuwaalaraay people.
- Believed that Yuwaalaraay was a 'fast dying out race'.
- Recorded Yuwaalaraay people's stories and published them as Christmas gift books.



# Yuwaalaraay



A Grammar of Yuwaalaraay, Corinne J. Williams, 1980



The foundation of *The Folklore Society* in 1878, London, and high demand for Indigenous cultural stories:

"...traditional music, song, dance and drama, narrative, arts and crafts, customs and belief. We are also interested in popular religion, traditional and regional food, folk medicine, children's folklore, traditional sayings, proverbs, rhymes and jingles."

The Folklore Society website, 2023

The International Folklore Congress in 1891, London, and belief that the Indigenous cultures to be exotic, for the entertainment of non-Indigenous society, and dying out as quoted by Daisy Bates smooth the dying pillow.



'...while there is yet time, to gather all the information possible of a race fast dying out, and the origin of which is so obscure...

The time is coming when it will be impossible to make even such a collection as this, for the old blacks are quickly dying out, and the young ones will probably think it beneath the dignity of their so-called civilisation even to remember such old-women's stories.'

Australian Legendary Tales, 1896:Preface

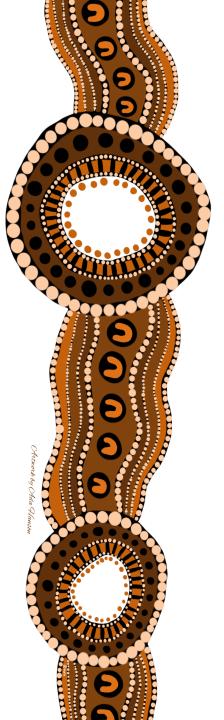


Andrew Lang, a member of The Folklore Society, writer, and publisher wrote in the Introduction of Parker's book that Aboriginal people had no history and Australia was of little value, in comparison to Ancient Greek or Egyptian culture. His perception was with the start of colonisation the Aboriginal culture was valueless and dead.



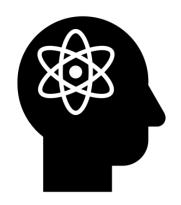
In 1896, the critic A.G. Stephens of *The Bulletin* wrote that the *Tjukurrpa* stories written by Parker had 'ethnologically little significance' and that 'the Noongahburrahs are evidently as happy in thoughtlessness as all their kindred ... The undoubted value of the collection is chiefly that of a literary curiosity – the prattlings of our Australia's children, which even in their worthlessness must have a charm for a parent.'

The Bulletin, January 9, 1896 quoted in My Bush Book, Marcie Muir, 1982



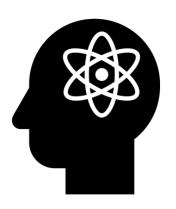
I can safely say that every idea in the legends in my books is the idea of a real Black — I am very careful to get them as truly as I can. First I get an old, old black to tell it in his own language (he probably has little English). I get a younger one to tell it back to him in his language; he corrects what is wrong, then I get the other one to tell it to me in English. I write it down, read it, and tell it back again to the old fellow with the help of the medium, for though I have a fair grasp of the language, I would not, in a thing like this, trust to my knowledge entirely.

Quoted in My Bush Book, Marcie Muir, 1982









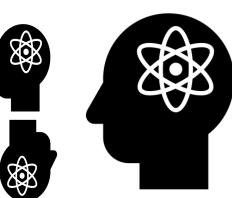












### "The Ideal Gift-Books of the Season."

# FAIRY TALES OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

"An Australian Jungle-Book."

### AUSTRALIAN LEGENDARY TALES

Folk-lore of the Noongahburrahs as told to the Piccaninnies.

Collected by MRS. KATE PARKER. with Introduction by ANDREW LANG, M.A. Illustrated by a Native Artist.

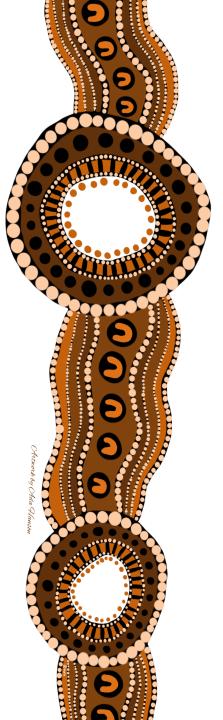
Two vols., square demy 8vo

Sumptuously printed at the Ballantyne Press on special paper, in attractive Cloth Cover. Each 3s. 6d.

\* \* The first volume was published in 1897, and was cordially welcomed by the English and Colonial Press. The second volume is just ready (Christmas 1898).

Specimen of the Native Illustrator's Work:





'The Blacks to whom I told that I was credited with their pretty ideas, very scornfully said, "How you know? You nebber know sposin' me nebber tell you. That peller womba (mad or deaf) altogether." And then comes a spitting of contempt; and certainly it is hard that having taken their country, not so bloodlessly either as people would have us believe, we should not arrogate to ourselves their own poetical thoughts. But you will be cursing Blackfellows, thinking I am a crank...'

Quoted in My Bush Book, Marcie Muir, 1982



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K(atie) Langloh Parker (1856-1940)

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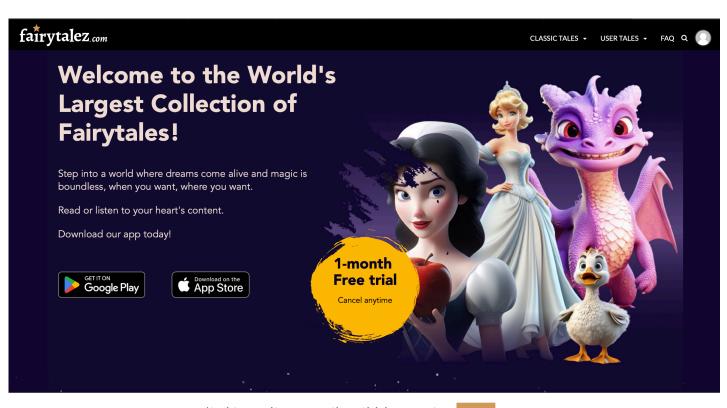
Australian Legendary Tales—Folk-lore of the Noongahburrahs as told to the piccaninnies The Euahlayi Tribe—A Study of Aboriginal Life in Australia

These books were published circa 1900 and this historical context must be kept in mind when reading them. There are some misconceptions, racist comments and inaccurate descriptions of aboriginal spiritual practices. Nevertheless, they provide valuable information about aboriginal folklore and cultural and spiritual beliefs.

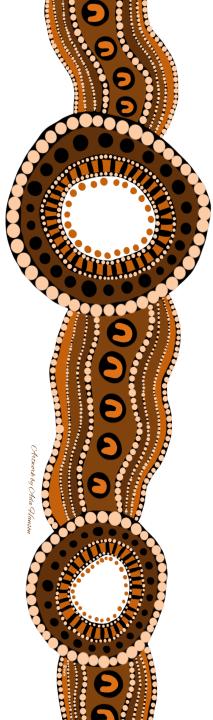
Parker lived in the Australian outback in the late nineteenth century. As she said in the introduction to 'The Euahlayi Tribe', "The following pages are intended as a contribution to the study of the manners, customs, beliefs, and legends of the Aborigines of Australia. The area of my observation is mainly limited to the region occupied by the Euahlayi tribe of north-western New South Wales, who for twenty years were my neighbours on the Narran River. I have been acquainted since childhood with the natives, first in southern South Australia; next on my father's station on the Darling River, where I was saved by a native girl, when my sisters were drowned while bathing. I was intimate with the dispositions of the blacks, and was on friendly terms with them, before I began a regular attempt to inquire into their folk-lore and customary laws, at my husband's station on the Narran, due north of the Barwon River, the great affluent of the Murray River."



### ...and on fairytales.com

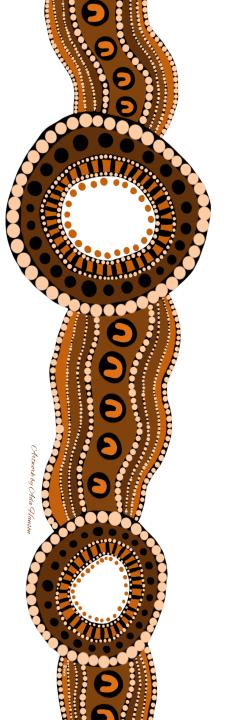


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"...little did they realise that the coming of Mitchellan was the beginning of their end, or that fifty years afterwards, from the remnant of their once numerous tribe, would be collected the legends they told in those days to their piccaninnies round their camp fires, and those legends used to make a Christmas booklet for the children of their white supplanters."

Australian Legendary Tales, 1896, Preface.



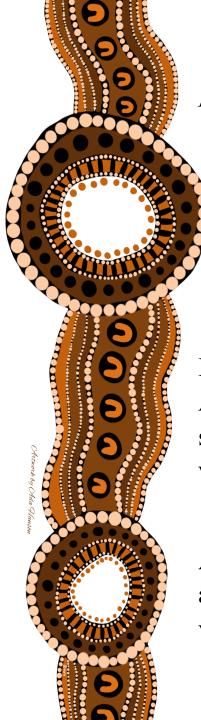
a hundred years later...



Johanna Lambert's *Wise Women of the Dreamtime*, *Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers* was published by Inner Traditions International, USA, in 1993.

#### Who is Johanna Lambert?

An Australian-born actress and writer, Johanna Lambert has been deeply involved in Aboriginal issues for many years. She studied with the renowned Aboriginal film and stage director Brian Syron and is also the editor of the audio edition of Wise Women of the Dreamtime.



Wise Women of the Dreamtime, Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers:

Tales of the Ancestral Powers

Tales of the Animal Powers

Tales of the Magical Powers

Tales of Healing

Personal commentary on 'spiritual and emotional freedom of the Aborigines [sic]', male-female initiation, Dreamtime, social structures and law, kinship system, family and child care, and womanhood.

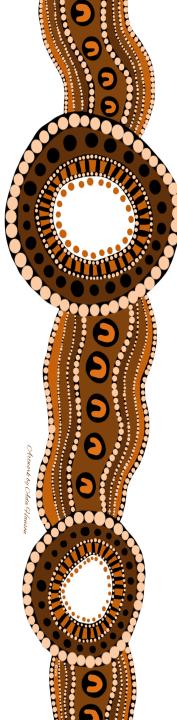
Aboriginal Ancestors and Ancestral beings are equated to the gods and goddesses of Ancient Greek mythology and its concepts of virginity, true love, jealousy, revenge, punishment, and so on.



Lambert's book was published by the publisher Ehud Sperling, the founder of *Inner Traditions Bear and Company* and a member and author of *Sanatan Society*.

**Sanatan Society** is an *international networking association* teaching Indian Vedic and Tantric traditions.

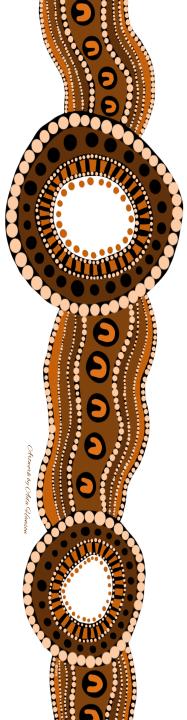
*Inner Traditions* publishes books in spiritual, cultural, mythical, esoteric, occult, and philosophical subjects.



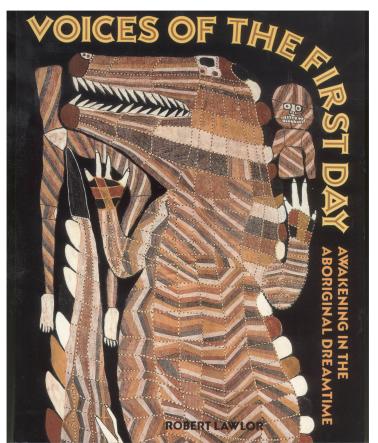
The anecdote published in *Inner Traditions* official website in 2022.

How Ehud Sperling, Johanna Lambert and Lambert's husband and Inner Traditions writer Robert Lawlor cooperated in 'saving' Aboriginal people's pride:

... they got in touch with the National Museum of Victoria ( now known as Museums Victoria), which holds the world's largest collection of Aboriginal art. The museum said they couldn't help them, but Ehud charmed the curator and she agreed to meet with them on New Year's Day to see the collection, which was not on public display. Robert and Ehud arrived at the museum on New Year's Day and were taken into an enormous former ballroom where every square inch was filled with art and artifacts, including Aboriginal canoes, burial logs, and implements.



The collection also included the entire Baldwin Spencer photographic archive, filled with sacred and secret images from the depths of Aboriginal culture. Ehud and Robert carefully selected 200 of the most unique and important photos. Together Robert, Johanna, and Ehud's dedication made Voice of the First Day: Awakening in the Aboriginal Dreamtime completed in 1991, one of the most important books on Indigenous culture Inner Traditions has published.'





Lawlor acknowledges the help he received in Australia in the 1991:

I am very grateful to many institutes and individuals for providing the photographs for this book. They include the Museum of Victoria Council in Melbourne, Australia, and its helpful staff, especially Mary Lakic, who gave endless time and assistance while we sorted through nearly 3,000 photographs of the Baldwin Spencer Collection...



To the publisher, Ehud Sperling, I am appreciative for the confidence he placed in my ability to express the value of these most archaic legends.



Only firsthand information comes from a visit to Bathurst Island in Northern Australia with her husband.

Her relationship with the informants was more of an encounter with Aboriginal women – rather than a friendship.

The women who claimed to have influenced and shaped Lambert's *imagination of feminine in Aboriginal culture* are not introduced within their identities other than their names.

Lambert emphasizes her connections with Aboriginal people rather than acknowledging people as the owners of the information.

The information she gathered and synthesized came from the books largely published in the USA, and largely from her husband Lawlor's book.

She claims her personal interpretations to be the facts about Aboriginal language, customs, history, and the future.



No Aboriginal language has possessive pronouns. For example: 'my uncle' or 'my brother' would be expressed 'uncle me' or 'brother me'.

Voices of the First Day

Aboriginal people rejected agriculture, architecture, writing, and clothing.

Voices of the First Day

The Dreamtime stories arose from listening to the innate intelligence within all things. In many Aboriginal languages the word 'listen' and the word 'understand' are the same.

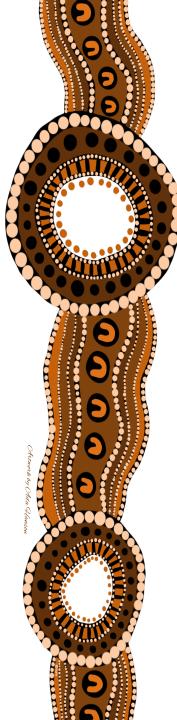
Fred Myer, Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self, 1986



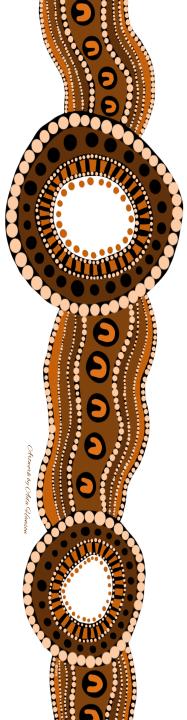
Lambert states that her preparation for exploring these legends has not been an academic anthropology but rather her long friendship and association with the Aboriginal film and theatre director and drama teacher Brian Syron.

...Mr. Syron brought to the examination of Western dramatic literature a deeply symbolic vision, which he seems to draw from the archaic depths of his native culture. He worked with an intuitive sense that symbols resound through the transparency of time and that a symbolic essence or relationship found in a Dreamtime story can be equally discovered in a play by Shakespeare or Chekhov...

Wise Women of the Dreamtime, Introduction, 1993:4



From Roman to Indian to Mexican to Aboriginal mythology, all the gods and Ancestors have been depicted as jealously craving the ecstatic depths of passion and rapture that romantic love inspires.



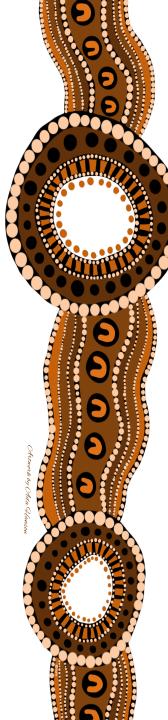
# Marcia Langton Welcome to Country, Language Rules, 2019

My advice: Don't try out European theories on Aboriginal people.



Aboriginal people write primarily to inform their children and other family members; not for fame as a writer.

Terri Janke, True Tracks, 2021



It is paramount that

**policy and protocols** are followed to ensure that the rights of the written work remain with the custodians

natural speech recordings must be done whenever possible

'correct' examples must be searched for and taken as guides.



When a non-Indigenous writer includes Indigenous content, the True Tracks principles should be considered, especially:

- **Respect:** Is the writer following the protocols, and can they demonstrate that they have followed them? Have they understood the issues?
- Consent and Consultation: Have Indigenous people been consulted?
- Interpretation: Should the non-Indigenous writer be the person to tell the story, or refer to that knowledge in that way? Are they telling a whole story, or including a character? What is the point of view being represented? How is the knowledge represented?
- Maintaining Indigenous Cultures: How will this publication impact on the culture of Indigenous people?



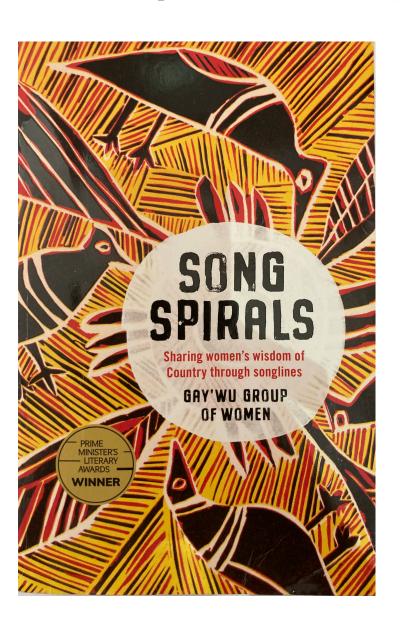
### **Natural speech recordings**

As Corrine J. Williams states in A Grammar of Yuwaalaraay:

The spelling of the Yuwaaliyaay [a close-dialect] words in these lists is very difficult to understand, and not consistent in the representation of similar sounds. Mrs Parker also published one story in Yuwaaliyaay. This story 'Dinewan Boollarnah Goomlegubbon' is included in her book Australian Legendary Tales published in 1896. Unfortunately, I have not been able to decipher her orthography, so the text is of little value.



## Correct examples to follow: It is us, speaking for ourselves



Songspirals, Sharing Women's Wisdom of Country Through Songlines by Gay'Wu Group of Women, Allen and Unwin, 2019

by The Sisters Laklak Burarrwaŋa, Ritjilili Ganambar, Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr-Stubbs and Banbapuy Ganambarr are elders of the Yolŋu people of North-East Arnhem Land is an example for this.

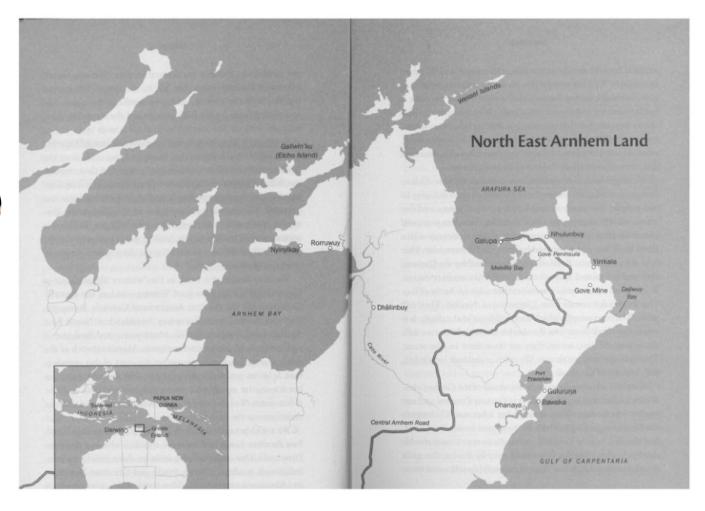


# Why is this book important?

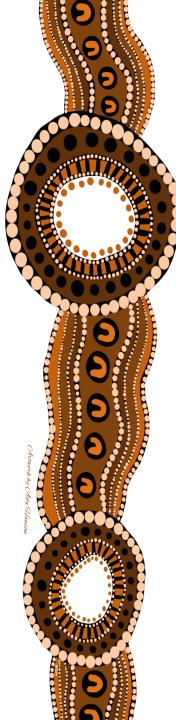
This book is important and powerful because it comes out of Yolyu hearts, Yolyu mouths. It is us, speaking for ourselves.

Songspirals, Respecting Country, 2019: X





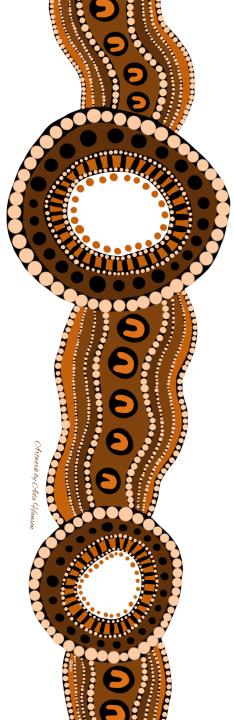
We sisters, Laklak Burarrwaŋa, Ritjilili Ganambar, Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr-Stubbs and Banbapuy Ganambarr, together with our daughter Djawundil Maymuru, speak from our place, our Country, Rorruwuy, <u>Dätiwuy</u> land and Bawaka, Gumatj land, Yolyu Country, in North East Arnhem Land in Australia.



The Sisters and three *ngapaki*, *non-Indigenous*, supporters are the founders of the *Bawaka Collective*, *Gay'wu Group of Women*, *the 'dilly bag women's group'* and they have been collaborating to strengthen Yolngu culture since 2006.

Since 2007 the Bawaka Collective has focused on the transformative potential of Indigenous-led tourism to strengthen communities, progress self-determination and contribute towards inter-cultural understandings through the communication of Yolngu knowledge for non-Indigenous audiences. Their collaboration is based on the development of trust, respect and mutual benefits.

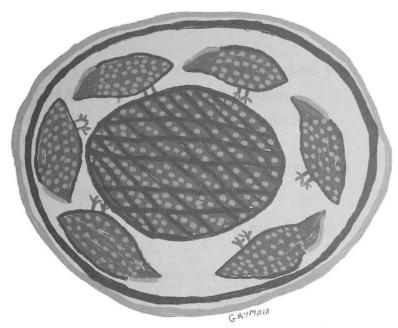
Bawaka Collective website







# Djalkiri

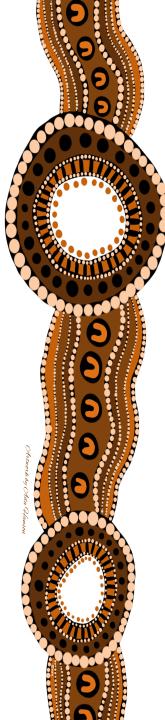


Gaymala Yunupiŋu,, Djirikitj (1998).

(The Buku-Larrngay Mulka Art Centre archives)

Mum's artwork of the quail, Djirikitj, is the image used at the start of the introduction. It shows renewal and sacred fire. The six baby quails on her screenprint are us four sisters, our brother, Djali, and our oldest sister, Wulara, who passed away as a little girl. To our mum, we are the new generation.

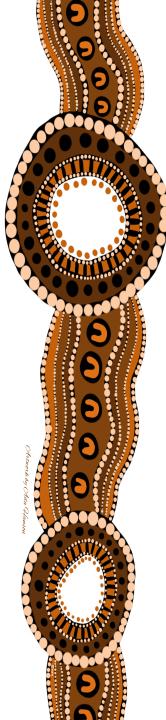
Songspirals, Djalkiri, 2019:XVII



The methodology used in *Songspirals* includes transcribing and translation of the natural speech recordings.

We have discussed these translations together and with the custodians of each song. We have worked carefully on the writing of the yolyu matha words, and the way they are translated, written and punctuated in English, to make sure they give a strong sense of what the songspirals mean to us. The translations are not 'the songspirals', as if the whole songspiral could be captured in words and fixed in a book. No. the words are those that were shared in a particular context, a particular time and place, by a particular person who has the authority to do so.

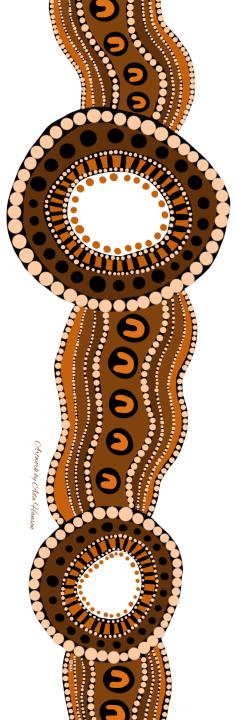
Songspirals, Djalkiri 2019:XXXVII



In the Part 1: Wuymirri, The Siters explain how they transcribed:

The Wuymirri we share now is Gumatj language and comes from a recording of our mum doing milkarri of it a long time ago. Our mum's younger sister Djerrkyu helped us transcribe and translate it, and we all sat around the recording together, listening to it so carefully, playing it over and over again on our smartphones, learning and teaching so much.

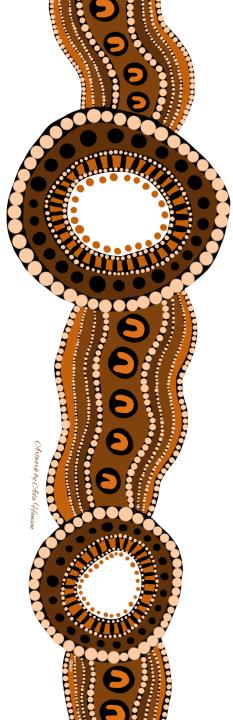
Songspirals, Part 1: Wuymirri: 2019:4



# **CONCLUSION**

Decolonisation of the *Tjukurrpa* returns the language, stories, and songs to Traditional Owners. One field that freed from appropriation will create a chain-affect on other fields of, as listed in *True Tracks* by Terri Janke, *arts, architecture* and industrial design, music, film and television, writing, dance, bush food and medicine, science, Indigenous research, education, technology, galleries, libraries, archives and museums, tourism, business, and fashion.

In the essence of the *Tjukurrpa* all these fields are connected.



#### **Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre Abor. Corp.**

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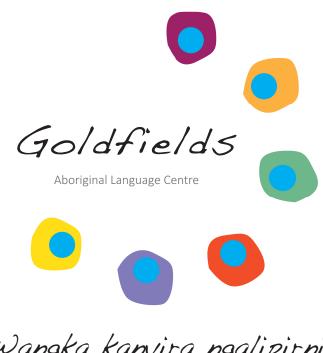
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PRESERVING OUR LANGUAGES FOR ALL OF US