INITIATION IN THE BARD TRIBE, NORTH-WEST AUSTRALIA.

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INTRODUCTION.

The Bardi tribe occupies the northern portion of Dampier Land Peninsula, commencing from Pender Bay on the west and Cunningham Point on the King Sound side. The rest of the Peninsula was formerly, for the most part, the territory of the Nyul-Nyul tribe; three small tribes, the Djabera-Djaber, the Ngormbal and the Djukan occupied the coast between Beagle Bay and Broome. The Bardi have been in contact with whites for forty years, though not very intensively until about twenty-five years ago. They usually live in five local groups, each of which is associated with a small centre of white settlement. These groups are at Pender Bay and Cygnet Bay, at each of which there is, or was in 1928, a white settler; at Lombardina, where there is a Roman Catholic mission; at Bulgin just north of Cape Levêque Lighthouse, the headquarters of a capable "half-caste" who employed the natives on luggers; and finally at Sunday Island, which is occupied by a Protestant mission—a branch of the United Aborigines' Mission. This island, one of the Buccaneer Archipelago, really belonged to the Irwundjun or Djaui-speaking tribe, but there were very few Djaui left, and they mixed freely with the northern group of the Bardi; the members of the latter spent a lot of their time at the mission or working on its luggers.

The Bardi retained their kinship system as an effective social mechanism, and also remained faithful to the dictates of the secret life, with its rites, symbols, and myths. I was taken to a secret ground at Bulgin, and with due caution and reverence was shown the bullroarers which were stored there. The myths about the culture-hero who is symbolised by the bullroarer, were narrated to me, and other matters connected with this symbol,
such as the rules governing its making and revealing, were explained. Finally, I was presented with a bullroarer.

**Initiation.**

I received accounts of the stages and details of initiation from several informants, all of which agreed, the one with the other. But, in addition, I had the good fortune to witness on Sunday Island one series of ceremonies which included the operations of tooth-knocking and circumcision. These ceremonies lasted from Monday night, February 20, to Friday morning, March 2, 1928. They must always be performed in *Erelp*, the wet season.

The Bardi and Djaui natives concerned were "civilised" and were in close touch with the Sunday Island Mission, being camped only a short distance from the mission buildings. But this did not prevent them from following their old customs, though only a few discarded their European clothes and painted themselves in the old fashion. These few had special parts to play in the ceremonies, and, moreover, stood in significant relationships to the novice. Those in control, too, raised no objection to inviting the missionary to be present at the circumcision, and even asked him to perform the operation, knowing that he would have a better instrument for the purpose than they possessed. He declined to be the surgeon, though he did witness the operation.

Initiation consists of a number of stages or degrees, each with its rites and distinctive status designation. A special term is also usually applied to the candidate while passing through the principal stages.

**Preliminary Ceremonies.—** I did not see, nor was I told of any rite by which the youth was formally taken from the general camp, but as he was attending the mission school this was hardly practicable. But I was definitely informed that in this tribe it was not the custom to send the candidate round with the messengers who summoned the various groups to the ceremonies. The messengers, who are sent out by the oldest headman, do not even carry a token, but simply announce to each group *angu* *inlandjen amba*, "ceremony to make man", that is, "an initiation is to be held".

The ceremonies on the first eight nights, which were of a preliminary nature, were held on the camp corroboree ground. They are called *Kundaldja*. The novice was painted each evening with charcoal and turtle-oil by his
alabel (tribal sister’s husband), who acted as his guardian, adviser, and supporter throughout the rites and operations. The proceedings were very monotonous. The orchestra sat in a ring in the middle of the dancing ground, singing songs taught by the culture-hero Mino and tapping their boomerangs in even measure at the rate at which the dancers ran round them. One musician blew into a drone pipe. This formerly consisted of a piece of hollow wood, but on this occasion a two-inch iron pipe was used. Each song lasted only about five minutes or a little more. As soon as it was begun, the women and girls came from their corner of the corroboree ground and ran round the singers. Most of them carried a bunch of twigs in each hand and ran with their elbows bent up so that the twigs were shoulder high. The novice’s mother was always prominent. Young boys, not yet old enough for initiation, generally formed a second ring and ran round the women, carrying toy shields and boomerangs. Then, on the average, about every third song, the men with the novice formed an outer ring and ran round twice, after which they went to their part of the ground. Sometimes they mingled with the small boys. They did not all bother to paint themselves during the preliminary corroborees; it was a matter of personal feeling, but some did so in the manner to be described later. They all carried their shields in their left hands but held across their chests so that one end of the shield was under the right arm; they held boomerangs in their right hands. The novice, who is called Neminem until his teeth have been knocked out, always carried two bushes about four feet long, one in each hand, in such a manner that with his two arms extended straight out in front the bushes swept the ground; as he ran his arms would fall to his side and then be quickly extended again.

Joking formed a marked feature of the intervals between the dances, especially on the part of the women, some of whom danced and jumped about. The novice’s mother and father’s sister were especially prominent in this. On two nights, two women dressed as men and carrying spears imitated the men, to the great amusement of the women. The men apparently took no notice of their antics, and the singing would sometimes begin in the midst of the joking and laughing. A most interesting means of diversion consisted of the persons who stood to each other in the relation of son-in-law and mother-in-law, sneaking
up and throwing water over one another, to the delight of all present. Normally, persons so related must avoid each other. Jokes of the kind mentioned may only be performed at this ceremonial time.

The only other noteworthy incident during these preliminary days was that on one occasion (Monday, 27th) a number of men, including the novice’s father, father’s brother, mother’s brother, and guardian, went to the circumcision ground and drew blood from their subincised penes. This blood must run down their thighs and on to their calves before it touches the ground.

Tooth Avulsion.—At about 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 28th, the men gathered on the corroboree ground one by one in quite an unconcerned manner, as though it was just by accident that they were passing that way and happened to stop there. Some of the women also gathered near by. The novice, having been painted black by his guardian, arrived next and was encouraged by his father. Three parallel lines were marked on the ground about two feet apart, while a rug, instead of the bushes of former days, was placed about the same distance in front of the third line. The novice knelt at the first line and at a given signal, consisting of a shout and the crack of a waddy on the ground, hopped on his hands and knees to the second line, and, at two similar signals, to the third line and then on to the rug. He knelt up there, holding his forearms bent up to his shoulders. His guardian clasped him round his bent arms and chest and supported him.

The operator, the novice’s tribal mother’s brother and a djungagor (medicine-man), who had been kneeling in front of the rug all this time, then came up to the novice. He first of all tied some cotton, instead of the native opossum twine, round the two central incisors, working it up into the gum as he did so. Then taking a piece of pointed pearl-shell, the bindji-bindj, or ornament worn in a man’s forehead-band or hanging from his upper-arm band, he pushed the cotton further up, at the same time separating the gums from the teeth. He next took a round stick about six inches long and three-quarters of an inch thick, and placed one end of it on the teeth and hit the other end four times with a piece of stone just large enough to be comfortably gripped. The knocks appeared to be quite hard.

During the various parts of the operation the men had been shouting, one droning in the pipe, and the women,
who were quite near, rattled stones in tins. This was done to heighten the effect and also to drown any cries the novice might make. He, however, never whimpered. After the fourth knock one tooth was loosened enough to come out, and at the first sign of the blood from this wound the boy's mother picked up a boomerang which had been placed on the ground near him for her use, and hit her head several times until blood came. She then dropped the boomerang and ran off the ground, crying loudly; the other women at once threw down all the stones which they had been rattling and rushed away with her, crying. This all seemed to happen in the space of half a minute.

The operator then completed his work; he had to dig out the second tooth with his shell. The two teeth came out without being broken. Unfortunately a third tooth was snapped off at the gums. The root of this was extracted the next day by the missionary.

The teeth, string, and blood were spat into a little hole that had been made between the novice and the operator. The mother now returned to the ground with a small firestick, which one of the men took and dropped on top of this hole. The boy warmed his thumb and pressed it on his gum. His guardian then assisted him to pick up a boomerang and hit the proffered head of his operator; the hits were very light.

Soon after this a man who stood to the novice in the relation of kalingord, father's father, painted him all over with red ochre and added white vertical stripes on his chest and abdomen, and black ones on his back. His appearance was very ghostly. His father, father's brother, and father's father then took him away some distance and had a meal. These three men then cut their subincised penes again. In the meantime the boy's mother and another woman had cleared the stones off the corroboree ground ready for the night's ceremony. Although this had a special name, ker-ker, it was just the same as those held on the previous nights, except that the men took more trouble over painting themselves, almost all discarding their European clothes. The novice still carried his bushes. He was now called Lainyar.

Ceremonies between Tooth-Avulsion and Circumcision.—On the afternoon after the tooth-avulsion, the novice's father, father's brother, guardian, and two mother's brothers, painted themselves with red and white paint on their chests and round their eyes, and put on their fore-
head-bands, arm-strings, and human hair waist-belts, from which pearl shells hung in front and behind. Further adornment was procured by making tassels of wood shavings; a stick, six inches in length, was very finely shaved, or rather split, for about three-quarters of its length, and the shavings fluffed out like a tassel. The novice now had a big human hair belt, and carried a fire-stick. The latter showed that he was being distinguished as a man and had his own fire. The five men and the novice then moved away slowly from the camp and separated as though they were going to different places. When well out of sight and in a part where circumcision is performed, the boy sat down at his own fire, while the men stood a little distance off with their backs to him and again cut their subincised penes. Neither on this nor on any of the previous occasions could the novice see this cutting. The men say that they must hurt themselves because they are hurting the boy. They state that there is no rule as to who must thus cut themselves, but certainly the father, father’s brother, and mother’s brother did it on several occasions, and the guardian and father’s father once each. One of the older men was very loath to tell me about this cutting, fearing that there would be great trouble for him if it became known that he had spoken about it. He did not go out himself on this occasion, and was not aware that I knew all about it. The five men and the novice returned to the camp for tea.

The ceremonies on this night were of a special nature, they are called mitjo. All the men were fully painted and adorned with their hair-belts and shells. The novice wore his hair-belt with pointed pieces of pearl-shell hanging from it. The women were present. The ceremonies can be divided into several parts:

(a) All the young men from the higher stages of Djaminanga to Bunin inclusive, five in this case, knelt down one behind the other. Each one extended his arms on to the shoulders of the one in front of him, and, when the singing commenced, the mother of each one caught hold of her son by one shoulder. A similar row was formed of fully initiated men. As soon as the singing commenced the novice was lifted up in such a position that his legs were round the neck of his guardian, who was kneeling in front of him, while his head was supported by the man behind him. He held his two bushes erect in the air. At this instant his mother ran in and took hold
of him by one shoulder, and it was then, too, that the women already referred to ran in and grasped their sons' shoulders. The action suggested that the mothers, who cried loudly, were endeavouring to prevent their sons being taken away by the men. The men in both rows swayed from side to side during the singing, which continued for about five minutes. The following are the words of the song: no meaning could be obtained for them, nor for the words of the other songs sung on this night: *Mildjomi djägära djo kudai*.

(b) A few minutes later the young men, together with the novice and his guardian, stood up one behind the other. The guardian stood behind the boy and held in one hand the bushy ends of the two bushes, the other ends of which were passed between the novice's sides and arms and were held in his hands. A number of women, mothers, sisters and cross-cousins, got as close as they could on one side of the particular young man who was related to them, and touched his arm. After the singers had sat down in the centre of the corroboree ground and commenced the following song: *Kundoro male bâpâi djôinai baiigain*, this procession moved slowly round and round the singers. The novice's guardian turned his head in the direction of the singers and held his shield over his face. Each of the young men held a shield across the back of his neck. The mother of the novice kept one hand on his shoulder, and with the other hand held some leaves on his head. The women wailed. This doleful procession continued for about fifteen minutes, after which the other women and the children ran round them, and, later, a few men did the same. The ceremony then ended.

(c) The next half hour was occupied in running round the singers as on the previous nights.

(d) The final ceremony on this night consisted of carrying the young men round and round the singers and moving them up and down. This is called *kundubel*. There were two groups in each procession, a group consisting of two fully initiated men with a young man, in one case the novice, between them, and with the mother of the young man or novice concerned alongside. They commenced by walking slowly and dolefully round, the mother wailing. Then at a given moment each pair of men hoisted their particular young man on to their shoulders, his thighs being round the neck of the man in front and his head being supported by the other. They carried him round in this
position, and, quickening their pace to a run, they moved him up and down as they ran. The two groups sometimes ran in opposite directions. The novice was carried by his guardian and a man who stood to him in the relation of mother's father. Each of these acts lasted about five minutes or so. The night's ceremonies were concluded at about 11.30. The song for this ceremony was babau alerima gulganyar.

The Night before Circumcision.—The ceremony commenced with the young men—as before, those belonging to the stages from Djaminangya to Gambel—the novice and, next to him, his guardian, all standing in a line facing west. They stretched out their arms from their sides and gripped each other's hands. Their mothers stood behind them. On their left a similar line of fully initiated men was formed and linked up with the young men. When the singing commenced the young men and novice pulled, as it were, against the older men, and succeeded, by arrangement, in pulling the latter around the singers. All then joined in a circle and proceeded round in a slow walk, the mothers hanging on to their sons and crying.

After a few minutes the fully initiated men broke away to their own corner, while the young men and the novice formed up behind one another as on the previous night, their mothers, sisters, and cross-cousins standing on the outside and hanging on to their shoulders. These then proceeded round and round with little cessation in a slow and doleful manner, for about fifteen minutes, after which the running-round type of ceremony, like that before tooth-avulsion, was carried on until almost midnight.

Circumcision, Bria, and making the Novice Palil.—This same running-round ceremony was commenced about an hour before sunrise. All the men and women gradually gathered on to the camp corroboree ground. A little before sunrise all the fully and partially initiated men and the novice went off in two files, one of which was led by the novice, up a hill not far from the camp. The women returned to the camp crying.

On arriving on top the men lined up along the edge of the hill, waiting for the first rays of the sun to appear above the hill on the opposite side of the valley. The novice was made to sit facing the east, on an upturned shield which was placed on a rock. A man in the relation of cross-cousin sat behind him and supported him. The novice put his arms back behind his head and around the neck of his
supporter who, in his turn, put one arm across the novice's chest and the other across his chin and mouth. The operator, who was the same person who had knocked out the teeth, was kneeling opposite the boy. As soon as the sun was considered to have arisen—it was a very cloudy morning—he commenced by pulling the foreskin as far forward as possible and then making a cut across the top of the penis almost back at the base, continued this slit right round the organ, just cutting the skin of the scrotum. He then worked the skin forward, cutting under it all the time, and in a few minutes had removed it in a single piece. All his actions were deliberately carried out. He used two flakes from a glass bottle, which were prepared just before the operation; stone knives were formerly used. The operator then hit his own head hard a few times, and the assistant who held the boy tapped himself lightly on the head. Only about eight of the men had stood near by during the operation; the others remained in silence along the brow of the hill. The reason they gave for this was that they were too sorry for the boy to come up close. The boy never whimpered, a fact which pleased his father very much.

As soon as the skin had been removed it was put on the ground between the boy's feet, and a small sandalwood smoke fire was placed on top of it. The smoke was believed to aid the healing. After a little while the boy, now a *Palil*, was led to an ordinary camp fire, a few yards from the scene of the operation, and left there.

The men then descended the hill, the operator leading, followed by the man who held the boy. As soon as the camp was sighted these two threw boomerangs, the sign that all was over; the women immediately set up a wailing which lasted for about ten or fifteen minutes.

*Seclusion of the Candidate.*—On the night following the circumcision the men go out to the new *Palil* and, sitting down, sing the tooth-song which was taught by Mino:

*Kumberi midjera tanikai taumeritaua*

Knocking out tooth, "sing", hit

and then the special circumcision song called *Larabik*, taught by Maral:

*Marala inara bulgarinya mida*

Maral sings *bulgarinya mida*.

These two words were used by Maral, but have no meaning for the present-day natives. The singing is repeated each
night during the seclusion of the novice, which lasts for two or three weeks until the next new moon, by which time his wound is properly healed. During this time his father provides him with food from which all fish is excluded. This tapu on fish commenced at the time of the tooth-knocking, and continues until he is made Djaminayga.

He is now taught a few secret names which the initiates use amongst themselves. I give the ordinary names in parentheses: Women, didjigalin (oray); married men, korada (amba); young fellows who are Patil, budjeda (wolalan); dogs, nindjagin (ital). This period of seclusion is brought to an end at the next new moon with two ceremonies, which, like circumcision, form part of the angui and were instituted by the culture-hero Mino:

1. A post ceremony: A straight tree is chosen and its bark and limbs are removed. The Patil sits at the foot of what is now a post, while the younger boys climb up, the men singing a special Larabik: Didji malaybermanya. The women see neither this nor the second ceremony.

2. A fire ceremony: One afternoon, near sundown, the Patil is made to sit close to a big fire away from the camp, while all the men stand round holding long sticks in the fire until these light, when they point them towards the west, at the same time singing a Larabik: Djui bangarna ubala. This is performed away from the camp.

After this all get ready to return with the novice to the general camp. The young men who are already Djaminayga, but not yet Mambanaya, wear special bark belts called munk, which were first made by the culture-hero Maral, the composer of the Larabik. The belt is from two to four inches in width and covered with human blood. Although the women see the belt after the blood is dry, they do not know how it is fastened round the boys. The belts are worn for two or three weeks and then buried in the ground or put in a tree, the spot becoming tapu to the uninitiated.

On the return to the camp corroboree ground the novice is painted red. The women receive him with crying, and then all partake of a meal prepared by them. The crying is on this occasion an expression of joy comparable to that shown by a mother on the return of her son after a long absence.

I did not see these two ceremonies nor the ritual reaggregation of the novice. Nor did I witness the later
stages of the initiation rites. I was invited to be present at the Djaminangga ceremony, but I could not arrange my Kimberley journeyings so as to make this possible. But the various accounts which I received agree and can be relied upon.

Djaminangga.—The most important initiation ceremony is held a few weeks after circumcision, in the south-east or cold season, known as Pargan; the time is fixed by "law". It does not follow, however, that the same youth is both circumcised and made Djaminangga the same year, though this does sometimes happen, especially these days when it is hard to get hold of the boys for circumcision as young as before the advent of whites and missions. The principal features of this ceremony are the use of human blood for anointing and drinking, and the making and showing of sacred bullroarers. It is not held at the place where circumcision is performed. The Djaminangga ground is called Kundjeriŋ and is tapu to all uninitiated persons. The bullroarers are kept on this site, just lying uncovered on the ground.

The ceremony is called Ulaloy. It was instituted by the culture-hero Djamar, who came out of the ground in the northern part of the Bard territory at Swan Point. The coals of his camp-fire and the hole out of which he came can be seen there, and there is a similar site on Jaari, or Jackson Island, near by. A Bard headman informed me that he was told by a Port Darwin black that Djamar really started from the latter's country.

When Djamar first came out of the ground in the north he knew nothing. After remaining at Swan Point for some years he travelled south. He made some kalakor, bullroarers, but did not put a hole in their ends. He carried them in a bundle. He camped for about a month on a creek just south of Cape Levêque. When fishing one morning he took hold of a black fish, the spine of which pierced his hand, causing the blood to flow. He went on to a level stony place and let the blood run on to it. Noticing a little later that the blood had dried there, he decided to taste it; finding it agreeable he ate it all. His appetite being whetted, he decided to follow the accidental example set by the fish. He tied a ligature on his upper arm, and, when the veins were swollen up, he pierced the biggest one with a pointed kangaroo bone and let the blood flow into a gurndu or wooden dish. When it
had dried he cut it into blocks and ate it all.\footnote{One informant said that Djamar also tasted the blood obtained by cutting his subincised penis, but found it "no good".} It was so good that he decided to make this blood-eating an initiation law, and so his performance is repeated at every Djaminagga time. He did it, and therefore it must now be done. Djamar then went into the bush and made some bullroarers, this time putting the holes\footnote{One informant said that Djamar made his arm blood spurt through the hole in the bullroarer.} in them and swinging them. The noise proving satisfactory, he made the law of making new Kalakor and swinging them every Djaminagga time. Djamar walked on to the sandhills just north of Lombardina, where he swung his bullroarers, but his further movements are not known.

After preliminary corroborees for a couple of nights, two or three of the older men who stand in the relation of mother and mother’s brother and mother’s father to the novice, tie their upper arms very tightly, thus causing the veins of the lower arm to swell up. They then pierce a vein, generally the main one, with a kangaroo bone point, and let the blood spurt over the novice’s head and chest. His eyes are closed, for he is not yet allowed to see this sacred blood which is called wolb.\footnote{If the bleeding continues too long, the hole is plugged with a stick, the name of which, banyan, is tapu to the uninitiated. I met one case in which the main vein is no longer visible. The native says that it burst; he had severe headache after it. A couple of the veins in the upper arm now look rather swollen. One black is said to have bled to death. Generally, the bleeding stops of its own accord. Human blood is sometimes given to weak men to strengthen them. Every man has several marks of punctures in his arms. The blood is not used as a gum with which to stick decorative material on to the body as in Central Australia, nor is it put on to the ground or on to any objects as a ground for decoration. I am told that old men might pierce the upper arm instead of the lower.} Women do not know this word. The ordinary word is gruār. He holds a bark dish, gurndu, close to his abdomen to catch the blood as it flows down. When the blood first spurts out the following song is sung: Wolba nymbalbala, wolba djulyabana (Wolba, sacred arm-blood, nymbalbala, splash all over, wolba djulyabana, blood drop down). This is followed by another song: Bininiy mamara bininiy wongurbaguna. The first two words of this signify the squirting of the blood from the pierced arm. The last word has no meaning for the present-day natives.

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After the blood-letting which takes place on the Kundjeriŋ ground, the novice comes out some distance from it and kneels down, holding the gurndu in his two arms next to his abdomen, within sight of the women who have been lying down covered up. An old woman⁴ now comes up behind the novice and puts a fire stick between each of his upper arms and his sides. She returns to the women, and he gets up and goes again to the Kundjeriŋ, still holding the gurndu and the fire sticks. The novice is then given some of the congealed blood to eat, the remainder being eaten by the old men present. The dish is buried in the ground, after which all go out of the sacred ground to partake of a meal which the women have prepared.

They then return to the Kundjeriŋ and the candidate casts a throwing stick at a tree, hitting it amidst the approbations of the men. His spirit is believed to be thrown at the tree along with the stick, and one or more medicine men then catch it again with movements of their hands, and restore it to the new man, who as a result will not get sick again. Only the old men get sick.

Having thus been made a man by eating, and being anointed with, blood, and having been given a strengthened spirit, the young man can be shown the bullroarer. He is now called Djaminanga, instead of Djurdu, the term applied to him during the ceremony.

The bullroarers symbolise Djamar, who is also known as Maratj, their first maker. Some must be freshly made for each occasion, but at no other time, or else sickness would follow. Further, only a fully initiated man, a Mambayana, may make them. An initiated man, previous to reaching that stage, is permitted to go on to the ground and see or whirl them, but not to make them. He does not know the song and the ritual attitude which must be observed when making them. The latter, like the showing, is a social and not an individual matter.

The bullroarer is from twelve to eighteen inches long and from two to four wide. It is either painted all over with red ochre, or else has about five red stripes, half an inch broad, across it. No carving of any sort may be made on it. Whenever the bullroarers have been used or handled, they must be left pointing north and south, with the ends, the "eyes" or holes for the string, all placed in the one

⁴ Only an old woman can approach this sacred blood which is in the gurndu.
direction. The latter appears to be generally, if not always, south, though one of the men says the eyes could all point north. The reason for the orientation of the bullroarers is that Djammar came from the north and travelled to the south. Thus the bullroarer itself and the position in which it is placed serve as a record and symbol of the culture-hero. This is true also of its making.

Making the Bullroarer.—This is done on Djamminanga day. After the blood ritual a number of fully initiated men, Mambanyaga, generally three, are selected by the general consent of the old men, to go out into the bush and make some bullroarers. The tree from which they are made is described as a black one, and is called both yalyora and kadga. No one may visit, under penalty of sickness and death, the tree, or the place where the bullroarers are made, except at Djamminanga time, and then only for the purpose of making them. From the moment that the tree is cut and all the time that the bullroarers are being shaped and completed, two special Ulalony or ceremonial songs, composed by Djammar, must be sung alternately without ceasing. The words of these, to which no meaning can be given, are: (1) Milya elyara wianwiaŋga wianialaŋara and (2) Kormaninya waibandjo. When finished, the bullroarers are laid on some bushes and carried on to the Kundjerin ground. The ceremony then proceeds as described.

The bullroarers are shown to the novice, who is first warned not to tell any woman or child anything of what he sees or learns. The various names of this symbol are told to him, namely kalakor, kudi kudi, ramadjer bilibil, bangoridjak, and nalda; the noise made by it is called bibu bibu, the real nature of which he now learns for the first time. The connection of the bullroarer with Djammar is explained to him, after which he is made to swing it until he is very tired.

The ceremony is now over and the "new man" has to remain in the bush for some weeks along with some other young fellows who are already Djamminanga, but are not yet Mambanyaga. The tapu on fish is lifted, and he is taught about Kalalong, a sky culture-hero.

Subincision.—This operation, called lardj, may be performed either before or after Djamminanga. It is not a separate ceremony, but is done at a circumcision meeting. It is more correct to say that the cut is only commenced on the first occasion, and is extended a little at each
circumcision meeting until by the time a man is *Mambaynya* the cut extends for the whole length of the organ. The important thing is to have the full extension of the cut complete by that time. The operation is in the first instance performed on a human table consisting of several men lying on the ground.

*Cicatrisation.*—The cicatrices, *bauer*, are made in camp, the women, however, not looking, by a man's mother's mother's brother, after he has reached the *Djaminangga* stage. They are made across the abdomen and chest and on the shoulders in the order mentioned. There are usually three or four in each place. It is exceptional for a Bardi or Sunday Islander to have any on the back; the latter is a Nyul-Nyul practice. The places to be cut are first marked with charcoal. The scars are frequently half an inch in width. The tapu on the women in this instance is no doubt associated with the sacredness of man's blood when ritually drawn.

*Gambel.*—Some time, weeks or months, after having been made *Djaminangga*, the young man is taken to the *Kundjeriŋ* ground, where his guardian ties ligatures of human hair string very tightly on his arms. When the veins are sufficiently swollen blood is taken from the novice and caught in a *gurndu* and then drunk by him and all those present. If the young man is in much pain, his guardian loosens the ligatures after a few hours. They must be left on for at least several days. The ligatures are called *gangul*, a word which is not secret. The young fellow is now called *Gambel*, and has the privilege of wearing arm ligatures at corroborees and also of giving blood at ceremonies.

*Rungor.*—Some time later his guardian puts the wing of a bird in the *Gambel's* head-band, after which the latter is called *Rungor*. This is done openly in camp.

*Bziyn.*—On a later occasion, again openly in camp, a pearl-shell public pendant is hung on the young man's hair-belt by his guardian, after which he is called *Bziyn*. This shell must bear the peculiar key pattern or *ram* called *ris*, of the Karadjeri tribe, south of Broome, or else the person is not a proper *Bziyn*. Shells can be obtained on the coast of the Bard territory, but they will not do without the Karadjeri pattern, which means that the required shells must be obtained from the south.

*Mambayya.*—Finally, at some time decided on by the senior men, that is when they think the young man is old
enough to marry, he is made *Mambaygan*, after which he is a complete man. The simple ceremony is carried out openly in camp. His guardian paints him with red ochre and fat, gives him a plain shell, *korn*, to wear, and puts a stick adorned on both ends with white feathers through his hair on the back of his head. He now looks, and is, a man.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RITES.**

There is very little variation between the Bard rites and those of other Kimberley tribes which I was able to study, namely, the Karadjeri in the La Grange district, Nyul-Nyul at Beagle Bay, Ungarinyin at Walcott Inlet, the Yeidji on the Forrest River, and the Wolyamidi and Lunga of East Kimberley. This identity of pattern and remarkable similarity of detail is quite natural, for two or more tribes, or groups of several tribes, often meet for initiation rites and assist one another in them; moreover the secret life of the aborigines, like that of the great secret societies of our own culture, is inter-tribal, or as we should say with reference to the latter, is inter-state and even inter-national. Thus, whether a man witnessed the initiation rites in South or Central or North-West Australia, he would have no difficulty in following the general pattern and in interpreting the significance of the various rites. He would, however, find some important differences in Eastern Australia, such as the absence of circumcision and an insistence on the belief in a sky-being, an all-father; but even though this might be referred to as an eastern "use" as distinct from the western and central "use", our aboriginal traveller would still recognise that he was taking part in a ritual passing to manhood as from death to life, and to union with the hero or heroes of the tribe.

To return to the Bard rites. There are three series: the first is denoted by the terms *Neminem-Lainyar-Palil*, the second, *Djurd-Djaminnya*, and the third *Gambel-Rungor-Buyin-Mambaygan*. The first series, which includes the operations of tooth-knocking and circumcision, clearly serves to separate the youth from his previous life, and indeed, it is the prelude to a period of seclusion from the

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6 My research work in the Kimberley division was carried out in 1927-28 for the Australian National Research Council. Mr. R. Piddington continued my work amongst the Karadjeri, and Miss P. Kaberry amongst the Forrest River and East Kimberley tribes. Some reports of their work have appeared in _Oceanica_.
general camp. This is the obvious meaning of the ceremonies between these two operations. The youths are carried in mournful procession, while the mothers wail and cling on to their sons, as though loath to let them go to their ritual death; the wailing after the operations points the same way. And so the novice passes into seclusion, during which, in former days before the mission and its school intervened, he lived dead to the "world", at least to the general camp. He is forbidden to eat certain foods, and is taught the secret words which belong to the life apart. At the end of the time, about a month, the novice is painted red, the symbol of life, and ceremonially received into ordinary life again. It would be interesting to know the meaning of the post and fire ceremonies which immediately precede this, and why the sticks in the latter are pointed towards the setting sun.

In the Ungarinyin, on the north of King Sound, the newly circumcised youth, before returning to the camp, jumps through the smoke arising from a number of smoke fires. The men do likewise. The probable significance is one of purification, that is, to make sure that nothing of the sacred world is brought into the profane. In the same tribe the tree or pole ceremony, which takes place a stage later than in the Bard tribe, is described as follows: The novice and any men who are not yet subincised, have to sit touching the base of a tall thin green tree which is called by a secret name, uryanyin, and must not be seen by the uninitiated. The young fellows have to remain there with their heads bowed from early morning until sundown; one informant told me that he thought his neck would have broken. During the day all the subincised men climb up the tree, and while there cut their subincised penes to make them bleed. The blood runs down the tree on to the youths. If any of the latter notices a man approaching the tree, he calls out kradă or kuradī, that is, flying fox, the term which is also applied to the novice. While the men are up the tree they whisper ye... ye... ye, and after they have come down they stand in a line and sing kuradī djabinbāi kuradī ambana djabinban. This song was imported from the south, and the meaning of the words is not known. Whatever be the significance of this tree, the rite as a whole serves to give life to the newly initiated and to aggregate them into full male membership of the tribe by a sacramental application of sacred blood. Such tree and fire ceremonies are widespread in Australia,
and a comparative study would no doubt give us much insight into their meaning. The difficulty, however, is to get reliable and full descriptions of them with the aborigines' own interpretations.

In the Bard tribe the significant blood rite is that which makes a candidate Djaminanga; this not only unites him to the full members by sharing their sacred blood, but also gives him strength to receive the supreme revelation which is about to be given. Through this, namely, the bullroarer, he realises his fellowship with the tribal culture-hero, and in it he sees the symbol of the sacred world, from which this world has derived its culture and on which it still depends for life. During the period of seclusion he is taught much of the tribal mythology.

The casting of the throwing stick is a most interesting ceremony, for it gives a ritual interpretation of the aboriginal belief that sickness is unnatural and is always caused by magic. Medicine men naturally play a part in the rite, but once again, why the tree?

I have grouped the remaining operations and rites together in one series, for, with the occasional exception of subincision, they all occur after Djaminanga, and serve to add what might be called the finishing touches to, and signs of, a man's initiation. The account shows that subincision is not a rite in itself, but finds its significance in the letting of blood from the organ of generation at circumcision ceremonies. The tying of arm ligatures at the Gambel stage is likewise a preparation for parts to be played in later blood rites, more particularly in the Djaminanga. It is interesting that cicatrices are not made on the back, for in many tribes, from the Great Australian Bight up to the Timor Sea, the pattern on the back is a sign that the person is fully initiated—a "pass-sign". The fastening-on of the pearl-shell pubic pendant is probably not the casual action that the account suggests; details were no doubt omitted. Amongst the Forrest River tribes, for example, the young man is asleep, while a number of men tie the human hair girdle and shell on him. He is then awakened and goes off to camp by himself. He makes gifts of food to the men who invested him with the shell, and stays in seclusion for a few days during which he uses a secret term for the shell, namely, yagaula instead of djagala. He then returns to ordinary life. This use of the pearl-shell as a kind of "lodge" apron is widespread
in the circumcision area of Australia, and is not found outside of that area.

There is no need here to emphasise the function of initiation. It is a series of rites which form a transition from boyhood to manhood and to full membership of the tribe, with its privileges and responsibilities. It provides a valuable method of controlling, guiding, impressing, and inspiring the young fellow during adolescence and the years that follow. And, finally, it is the door to the secret world of myth, symbol, and rite, in which is found the sanction and inspiration for daily life.

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