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Born, signed and named

Naming, country and social change among the Bentinck Islanders

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The rich literature on traditional naming practices in Australia has tended to take a static perspective, yet naming systems can respond in interesting ways to social change.

For the Bentinck Islanders (Kaiadilt; language spelled Kayardild) of the South Wellesley Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland, the system of naming is intimately connected to the system of country tenure. Traditionally all three types of name (birth-place, conception and lineage names) had implications for country ownership.

Since 1940 the Bentinck Islanders have gone through several radical changes in their location and social structure. They were evacuated from their own country by missionaries to Mornington Island, sought to establish new relations with the Mornington people, began to make short-term visits back to the South Wellesleys in the 1980s, and since have begun to reestablish permanent outstations on their own country. Systems of naming practices have undergone interesting changes over this period. This paper traces the interconnections between these changes in naming systems, cultures of connection to country, and the practicalities of securing and maintaining a land-based identity against the powerful outside forces which have impinged upon the lives of Bentinck Islanders since mission contact.

1. Introduction

The range of personal naming systems in indigenous Australian societies provides a varied and intricate set of solutions to a basic double problem which all human

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1. I am honoured to be able to dedicate this chapter to Bruce Rigsby, in recognition of the perspective, generosity and ethical grit he has brought to the fertile transition-lands between linguistics and anthropology. As Alan Rumsey (2013) has recently pointed out, Bruce's arrival in Australia did much to add anthropological depth to the practice of linguistics in Australia

societies must solve: to make individuals identifiable in some linguistic form, and in so doing to weave them into the social fabric which binds them to the people, places and history around them.

Personal names are not simply, like other proper names, 'rigid designators' which designate the same object in all possible worlds (Kripke 1980). They establish a wide spectrum of relationships:

a. to *people*, whether name-givers or name-bearers. For each of these types there are many parameters. For instance, is the other name-bearer a parent (e.g. patronymics or matronymics), a child (teknonyms), another person with whom a special relationship is established as in the *ŋirwat* namesakings described by Stanner (1937) for the Daly River, or a distinctively-named heroic individual from Lazarus to Ringo? Likewise, in the case of name-givers there may be many people with naming rights – as described by Hart (1930) for the Tiwi – or there may be special quasi-randomising procedures such as the Wik-Mungkan method described by Thompson (1946) under which women surrounding the mother take it in turns to call out names as they pull on the umbilical cord, with the choice falling on the name called as the placenta emerges (see also Smith, this volume, on this practice among the Kaanju).

b. to *social entities*, such as clans, in the case of names which belong to a certain clan stock (Harrison 1990), to initiatory cohorts, to religious or ethnic groupings (David vs Daud, Ivan vs John vs Johannes), or to more loosely-organised families.

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and to ensure, both through his publications and the many people he taught or mentored, that it never turned its back on its engagement with cultural questions. More personally, I had the good fortune to be involved in a Native Title claim – pertaining to the very region discussed here – during the case *Lardil Peoples vs State of Queensland* [2004] FCA 298, which focussed on the traditional rights of the four Tangkic tribes, the Lardil, Ganggalida (Yukulta), Yangkaal and Kaiadilt, and for which Bruce had been engaged as an anthropological consultant by the Crown. Much of the material that appears here was gathered in the preparation of my anthropologist's report for that case (Evans 1998), and in the gathering and translation of affidavits that were tendered in court. Not all anthropologists agreed with Bruce's decision, seeing it as siding with the forces of darkness against the possibility of getting Native Title recognised. But Bruce, as an old-fashioned believer in applying scientific principles of falsifiability to anthropology, thought otherwise, and believed that properly-grounded accounts should have nothing to fear in a court of law and that as a professional anthropologist he should do his bit to add objectivity to the court's consideration of the case presented. Without pretending that the legal process is always immune from point-scoring or rhetorical manipulation, the fact that this case established Australian legal history by recognising indigenous territorial rights over the sea as well as the land goes some way to vindicating Bruce's position.

c.   to *events*, typically those leading up to the act of naming, which may in turn take place around the time of birth or at some other point in time (e.g. rituals like baptism, initiation or marriage). The events may be profane, such as the 'mishap nicknames' found among Bininj Gun-wok speakers who use special compounds like *mad-djarrang* [ankle-horse] for someone who was kicked in the ankle by a horse, or spiritually imbued, as in the case of initiation or baptismal names. These events are linked to the bearer, but there are also cases – such as the Yoruba names described by Akinnaso (1980) – where names provide a sort of oral history of events in the name-giver's life, e.g. *Owólabí* (from *owó ni a bí* [money is we beget] 'we have given birth to a wealthy person') in a case where the cocoa plantation the parent had been nursing for ten years has started yielding revenue. In the case of shared events, such as a shared mishap, 'dyadic nicknames' (Stasch 2002) may link two people together via a shared experience.

d.   to *places*, such as birthplaces, conception sites or ancestral homelands – we shall see many examples below.

There have been many detailed studies of naming traditions in different indigenous Australian groups – see especially Hart (1930) on the Tiwi, Stanner (1937) on name-saking in the Daly River, Thomson (1946) on the Wik-Mungkan, McKnight 1999 [Ch. 4] on Lardil, Dousset (1997) on Ngaatjatjarra and Simpson (1998) for the Adelaide region. These sources establish just how different are the cultures of traditional naming that are found across the continent.[2]

The use of personal names is of course just one way of referring to persons, and another important strand of research in Australian linguistic anthropology concerns the many other methods which are typically used in place of naming per se – from 'no-name' words like Warlpiri *kumunjayi*, which are used following name taboo upon death (Nash & Simpson 1981), to the use of intricately constructed combinations of social identifiers like kin terms, subsection names, matrilineal phratry names,

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2.   This is evident at the micro-level from the fact that the naming practices of the Bentinck Islanders and their neighbours and linguistic cousins, the Lardil on Mornington Island, are quite distinct. Traditional Lardil naming traditions employ characterising compounds such as *thungalmirndijarr* 'never steps on anything', referring to a wave that goes under rather than over objects, or *jaakiriija* 'never gets his feet wet' for the white-breasted sea-eagle "who habitually grasps fish with his talons as he skims the surface of the water" (McKnight 1999: 57); as these illustrate, Lardil "names frequently dwell on the essential feature of what a natural phenomenon is not, rather than what it is" (ibid: 57). The names given above are typically compounds, and the same applies to the physical peculiarity or mishap nicknames which are as frequent in Lardil, such as *Ngankewangalkur* 'hit on the temple by a boomerang' and *Kungkamiyaru* 'speared in the groin' (ibid: 64–5). Neither of these two naming types are found in Kayardild.

information about place of birth, death or residence. These are regularly used, like a cryptic crossword clue unfolding over many conversational turns, as a preferred alternative to the informationally simple but socially charged use of employing a personal name. Garde (2013) provides a masterly monograph-length discussion of how this works in Bininj Gun-wok.

What the literature has lacked, as far as I know, is any treatment of the diachrony of indigenous naming traditions – how they have changed through time, as outside challenges to their traditional culture and rights to maintain their ownership of and other links to land have impinged on the conditions that underlay the original system. It is precisely such a study that I undertake here, for the Bentinck Islanders, known in the ethnographic literature as Kaiadilt since Tindale (1962a,b) and in the linguistic literature as speakers of Kayardild (Evans 1985, 1992, 1995, Round 2013). I will use the spelling Kaiadilt for the people and Kayardild for the language; both are renditions of a language name rendered [kajaɖilt] in phonetic symbols, which is a compound of *ka(ng)-* 'language' and *jaɖilt(a)* 'strong', thus: 'strong language'.

My goal is to trace the main phases and principles governing their use of names through three main documented phases: (a) the traditional situation, while they still occupied their territory of long standing in the South Wellesley Islands and adjoining seas, (b) the 'exile' period following their removal to the Mornington Island mission in the 1940s, during which time they had minimal contact with their homeland, and (c) the period since the 1980s during which they succeeded in reestablishing connections to their traditional country through outstations and regular visits from Mornington.

The material on which this paper is based comes from two primary sources:

a.   Tindale (1962b), who attempts a complete listing of all Kaiadilt individuals who could be remembered by the people he worked with in the Wellesley Islands in May 1960 and subsequently. In addition to an individual-identifying code of his own devising, wherever possible Tindale includes two personal names – a birth-place name which adds the suffix *-ngathi* (-ŋaṯi)[3] to the place of birth (see § 4.1 below), and a totemic name. I was able to check the vast majority of these in my fieldwork on Kayardild since 1982, although memory of some had been lost owing to the death of crucial rememberers in the intervening decades. Slight mis-transcriptions aside, it is a remarkably accurate record, and stands as one of the few comprehensive listings of the names of all individuals in an Australian indigenous group from a period just before disruptive European contact.

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3.   Tindale renders this as *-ŋati*, missing the phonemically distinctive interdental articulation; *-ngathi* is the spelling in practical orthography, which I will use here.

b. a complete listing of names, European and Kayardild, which I prepared with anthropologist Penelope Johnson, first as part of a recommendation to the Queensland Minister of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs for the South Wellesley Islands land transfer (Evans 1993), and then for the Wellesley Island sea claim (Evans 1998, Evans & Johnson 1998). This listing moved the rolling snapshot forward by a quarter of a century, adding names of people born since Tindale's listing, dropping out individuals in Tindale's listing who were no longer remembered by Kaiadilt people alive in 1998 (which usually meant that their lines had died out, since important remaining apical ancestors were retained). This also afforded an opportunity to improve the transcriptions of the Tindale listing, and to pick up new naming principles which had emerged since Tindale's investigations, as reported below. The information was gathered in Kayardild or English as appropriate – when gathering the information in English we would ask 'what is/was their language name?', when gathering it in Kayardild the question would be posed as *niya ngaaka nid? ngaaka wurand? jinangathi?* 'What's his name? His totem(ic name)? His birthplace name?'[4]

The structure of this paper is as follows. In §2 I give some more background on the Kaiadilt people and their language, as well as a summary of their history, pre- and post-contact. In §3 I summarise some relevant aspects of their social structure as well as key vocabulary pertaining to ownership, particularly of land. In §4 I review the main naming systems and how they have changed through time, before concluding the paper in §5.

2. Historical background

The traditional territory of the Kaiadilt is the South Wellesley Islands in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria: Bentinck Island, Sweers Island, Fowler Island, Albinia Island, and a few smaller outlying islands (see map in Figure 1, from Ulm et al. 2010). Allen Island, lying roughly halfway between the South Wellesleys and Point Parker on the nearby mainland, was regarded as shared territory with Yangkaal and Ganggalida (Yukulta) speakers.

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4. The question can be framed as either *niya jinaa barjij?* 'where was (s)he born?' or *niya jinangathi?* The second formulation can be interpreted either as a request for a birthplace, or a birthplace name, so it can be difficult to decide whether the answer is supplying a birthplace name or a fact about place of birth. Here we were guided by such considerations as whether the answer used *barjij* 'to be born' (also 'to fall' – see Evans 1992) and whether the speaker persisted in using the *-ngathi* form as a stable identifier.
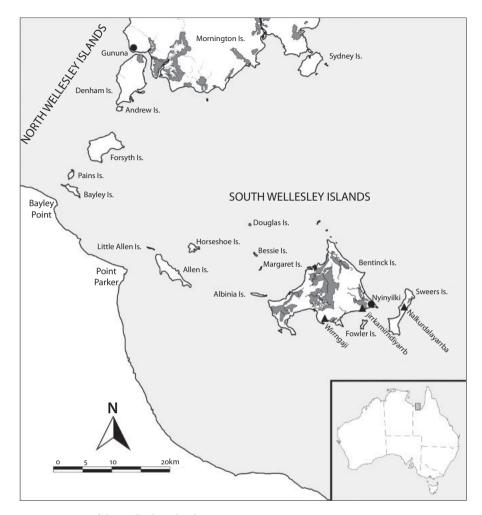
Figure 1. Map of the Wellesley Islands

2.1   Classical situation

The Kaiadilt people were in large part isolated from their neighbours on the mainland, on Mornington Island and the intermediate islands linking it to the mainland. Despite many cultural similarities, there were also important differences in cultural organisation. Subsections, which had reached the Ganggalida and Lardil by the time of substantial European contact, were not adopted by the Kaiadilt. There were no moieties, and – Tindale's (1962a,b, 1977) depictions notwithstanding – no clans as such (§3.2). Rather, as shown below, individuals were directly affiliated to country, most commonly through birth (recorded in their -*ngathi* or birthplace names), but sometimes through other means such as bestowal.

The Kayardild language belongs to the Tangkic family (Evans 1995, 2003). Within the Tangkic family its closest relative is Yangkaal, spoken on Forsyth Island and Point Parker, then Ganggalida (Yukulta) on the mainland to the southwest. Lardil, spoken on Mornington Island, is the most distant relative within the family, about as different from Kayardild as English is from German. (See also Memmott et al., this volume, on this family.)

The Kaiadilt were, as Tindale put it, 'people of the strand' – living mostly from the bounty of the sea, but not venturing very far out, owing to the fragility of their seacraft, which were traditionally confined to *walbu*, rafts made of white mangrove or driftwood logs lashed together with hibiscus-bark rope (cf Memmott 2010: 43). However, people claimed and named sites substantial distances out to sea, and it is clear from songs sung to me by the late Pluto Bentinck[5] that hunting for turtle and dugong sometimes took people out of sight of the shore, following the envelopes of tide and currents.

Their small territory – just 180 square kilometres – supported a population which reached 123 in 1942 (Tindale 1962b); this population density was "one of the highest known for a living stone tool-using people dependent on foraging for their subsistence" (Tindale 1977: 249). It is understandable that with such a high population density there should be strong notions of land and sea ownership, as we will see below – a set of connections which the system of naming is intimately involved in maintaining.

2.2   Contact

The Kaiadilt people were arguably the last coastal Aboriginal group to experience sustained contact with Europeans (Tindale 1977). Intense contact did not begin until mission boats removed the Kaiadilt to Mornington Island and Aurukun Missions in the 1940s. Before this, there had been a number of low-intensity encounters, but none required Kaiadilt people to cede territory or culture on more than a temporary and partial basis. The first recorded contacts were in 1802 when Matthew Flinders was anchored off Sweers Island while repairing the Investigator. During a visit to Horseshoe Island, Flinders and his companions made a simple exchange of caps, a hatchet and an adze for two spears and a woomera, and recorded the first

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5.   In one of these, which Pluto learned from his father, a hunter sings to his wife how he is missing her as she sits out of sight back on shore; in a second, which he learned from his mother, a woman sings to her husband how she is missing him as he hunts out of sight at sea. Unfortunately, constraints of assembling material for the lawcase meant that these invaluable pieces of musical evidence were not recorded, and Pluto died just before the court case opened.

fragment of Kayardild language, written by Flinders as *jahree!* and most probably the verbal exhortative suffix *-juruy.*

Following Flinders' visit, a number of other Europeans visited the South Wellesleys for shorter or longer periods. A township, Carnarvon, was temporarily established on Sweers Island in the 1860s, with around 35 residents, and from about 1916 an individual named McKenzie established himself on Bentinck Island, running sheep and goats and shooting and raping a number of Kaiadilt people (Evans & Kelly 1985). Later he built a lime kiln on Sweers Island, selling lime around the southern Gulf. When he eventually left in 1922, the Kaiadilt returned to Sweers Island, now a rich hunting ground with its sheep and goats; Tindale (1962b) records that one boy received the conception name *thungalngumuru* 'black goat'. With McKenzie, as with the Carnarvon period, Flinders' visit, and various other short-term visits by Europeans not detailed here, the Kaiadilt people could deal with the incursions by retreating to other parts of their territory, with occasional physical confrontations.

It was with the coming of the missionaries that the Kaiadilt were to see themselves dispossessed of their territory and the continuation of their traditional customs. Since the establishment of a Presbyterian Mission on Mornington Island in 1914, but particularly in the 1920s, the Mission had begun attempts at systematic and friendly contact with the Bentinck Islanders. From the late1920s these developments came to a standstill, due to a combination of staff turnover and cuts in the mission budget (Belcher MS). Through the 1930s the Kaiadilt once again returned to living a traditional life essentially untouched by outside influences.

This changed dramatically in the 1940s, when a series of events led to the total removal of the Kaiadilt population from the South Wellesleys.

First to leave were a group from Allen Island, led by two men: Minakuringathi Kulkiji, subsequently given the European name Shark Koolkitcha, and Walkirriringathi Thuwathu, later known as Rainbow.[6] Following a feud, these men took their wives and children (totalling fifteen companions) on two rafts to Allen Island, where two Kaiadilt women, Judy Walpo and Ann Moodoonuthi, were subsequently born. On Allen Island in mid 1941 they attacked and fatally wounded a passenger from a mission boat which had been sheltering on the Island (Belcher MS: 109, Roughsey 1971: 104–8). Following this incident the group were removed to the sister mission in Aurukun, Western Cape York; most later moved to the Mornington mission in the 1950s.

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6.   *Kulkiji* in fact means 'shark' in Kayardild (more specifically 'tiger shark' – Evans 1992), so Shark ended up with a first name which was an English translation of his totemic name, and a surname which is an anglicisation (Koolkitcha) of the same name; *Thuwathu* likewise means 'rainbow'.

Between 1942 and 1945 the southern Gulf experienced severe drought, vegetable foods ran scarce, fishing was poor, and famine and fighting reduced the remaining Kaiadilt population in the South Wellesleys to 87 (Tindale 1962b: 300). In 1945 Gully Peter, a Yangkaal man used by the mission to establish contacts in the 1920s, brought gifts of dugong and water, and persuaded a small party to visit Mornington Island for a month. Food and water problems continued on Bentinck Island, followed by a cyclone which caused major damage, including salting up the wells. By 1948 the last Kaiadilt people had been moved to Mornington Island.

Though it is clear from Douglas Belcher's history of the mission (Belcher MS: 120) that the removal of Kaiadilt people had been intended only as a temporary step, pending the establishment of a missionary outstation on Bentinck, various practical and financial problems prevented this goal from being achieved. As a result, the Kaiadilt people remained on Mornington Island. Though some made a temporary return to the South Wellesleys with ethnographic expeditions by Tindale in 1960 and 1963, for many others it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that they were able to return to their own country.

From the mid 1980s, there was a move to establish outstations in the South Wellesleys. This reached a peak in the late 1990s, when around 30–40 Kaiadilt people were residing on Bentinck – mostly old women and their young grandchildren, with shorter-term visits by young men working on CDEP programs. Subsequently a combination of factors, from the death or infirmity of many of the old women to the atrophying of financial support for the outstation movement, depleted the population living on Bentinck. Despite this, traditional links to country have been reestablished as having crucial value. This is reinforced by two moves giving recognition of Kaiadilt traditional tenure, first the 1993 transfer of land tenure at State level under the so-called DOGIT legislation (Deed of Grants in Trust; Evans 1993), this then extended to a degree of recognition of traditional rights to the intertidal zone and sea, out to a distance of 5 nautical miles (Behrendt n.d.), as a result of the Wellesley Islands Sea Claim.

We can divide the preceding brief history into three phases: a precontact phase, up to the 1940s, during which Kaiadilt people practiced their traditional culture essentially without interference from the outside world, an exile period from the 1940s to the late 1980s when they lived off country, mostly on Mornington Island and at Aurukun, with no effective contact with their country or prospect of renewing or enforcing traditional rights and connections, and a renewal of links to country – in a less intense and demographically saturated form – following the establishment of outstations in the late 1980s and recognition first of land and then of intertidal and sea rights. As we shall see, each of these three phases is reflected in a different set of naming practices.

3. System of land/sea tenure

3.1 The language of ownership

Since all Kayardild personal names pertain, directly or indirectly, to relations to country, it is useful to summarise the crucial Kayardild concepts of ownership.

A central word is *dulk* 'earth, dirt; land; place, site; country, estate', as in *ngijinda dulk* 'my place; my country'. Though some of its senses pertain specifically to dirt or ground (e.g. *dulkuruwath* [dirt-having-become] 'get dirty, get dust in one's eyes'), once it is used in senses pertaining to tenure of country it can apply just as readily to tracts of sea or sites there. One could say (1) of an impostor on either land or sea:

(1) *Maraka   bilwanda dulk!*
    COUNTEREXPEC their   country
    '(They're acting) as if it's their country!'

There are also some specialised terms for sea country, particularly for dugong hunting grounds. The suffix *-mirdamirda*, 'sea country in compass direction X, espec. dugong hunting ground', can be added to compass directions, e.g. *balumirdamird* 'sea country to the west' (*balungk* 'westwards').

Human relationships to country, in the form of various rights and interests, are denoted by various phrases based on the root *dulk*:

(2) *dulk-uru   dangkaa*
    country-PROPRIETIVE person
    'custodian, land/sea owner'

(3) *dulk-uru   jardi*
    country-PROPRIETIVE group
    'estate group, country-owning group'

(4) *dul-marra   dangkaa*
    country-UTIL person
    'senior custodian, boss of country'

As the above examples show, ownership is most normally shown by the 'proprietive' suffix *-kuru* (and its variants), which denotes a wide range of actual or potential 'having' relationships (see Evans 1995: 146–7). The Kayardild case system contrasts the more stable and abstract proprietive case *-kuru* with an 'associative' case *-nurru* used for situations of immediate (but not necessarily abiding) possession. Building on the noun root *wirrin-* 'shell; money', *wirrinkuru* would refer to someone who has money (though possibly not about their person at the time – it may be in a bank) whereas *wirrinurru* would refer to the situation of holding money in one's hand, whether or not this is a stable situation (I could be holding someone else's money, for example, and not own it).

The 'utilitive' case suffix in Kayardild in (4) generally means 'to be used for, transformed into', as in a tree-root that is *wangal-marra* [boomerang-UTIL] 'useable for a boomerang, having a (potential) boomerang inside it'. The meaning of the phrase *dulmarra dangkaa* cannot readily be derived from the more general use of -*marra*. The corresponding Lardil word *dulmarr*, however, is defined as 'totemic and associated territorial authority and responsibility which ego derives from his/her patriline', which makes more sense of the suffixal meaning – i.e. '(auhority/responsibility) for territory, to use territory'. Kayardild speakers do not give this particular semantic emphasis, instead treating it as a near-synonym of *dulkuru dangkaa*, though with the added notion of being a senior spokesperson.

In addition to the case system, it is also possible to use the verb *karrngij* 'hold, have; look after'. This is particularly common when people are talking about looking after country, or taking care to maintain their ownership over it:

(5) *Ngada kurirrwa-tharrb, nyingka karrngija   danda dulk!*
      I   die-when   you   look.after(IMP) this   country
      'When I die, you look after this country!'

The two most fundamental links that people can have to country are through spiritual conception and birth. The verb *ngaarrngij* ('sign for' in Mornington English) means 'to be presaged – have one's spiritual conception and later birth presaged by the appearance of a special sign [that will link you to the place where this occurred, and the thing which served as the sign]'. For example, one might say:

(6) *niya   ngaarrngija bijarrb*
      (s)he be.presaged dugong
      'my spiritual conception was presaged by the appearance of a dugong [typically to my father]' (Mornington English: *he sign for dugong*)

The relevant conception[7] event typically involves something unusual – a dugong giving itself up to a hunter, or an odd event like a goanna floating on a turtle's back – which is believed to be the spirit of the future child coming to the father through the creature which gives itself up. This is followed soon after by the quickening of the mother's womb, and when the child is born it will be scrutinised for some physical

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7. From here on I will stop adding the adjective 'spiritual' before conception. Like other Aboriginal groups, the Kaiadilt see the physical act of intercourse as a necessary but not sufficient condition for conception. It is the 'spiritual' conception, as outlined above, which introduces the needed spirit into the mother's womb, and which links the future child to land. (Belabouring the obvious, I have never heard anyone attempt to link someone to a place because of an act of physical intercourse that occurred there, although such events are invoked when it comes to pinning down physical paternity for other reasons).

sign indicating its origins through the creature that brought its spirit, e.g. a screwy ear for someone whose conception was presaged by a dugong. The place where this *ngaar-rngij* event occurs will be referred to as a 'conception site', and is crucial for one type of naming, as discussed below.

3.2 Principles of tenure over country

The ethnographic interpretation of Kaiadilt tenure over country has taken some time to clarify. In fact, the three best-documented Tangkic groups – Lardil, Ganggalida (Yukulta) and Kaiadilt – have rather different systems of tenure. For the Ganggalida, clans were a crucial social unit, reproduced by patrifiliation, and each clan was aligned with patricouples within the subsection system (Trigger 1998; see also Trigger, this volume).[8] For the Lardil, there was a patrifiliating clan structure (McKnight 1999: 115), but this was not aligned with patricouples. Since our initial ethnographic descriptions of Kaiadilt were by Norman Tindale, who worked through Yangkaal man Gully Peter[9] as a linguistic and cultural interpreter, they were likely to have been heavily influenced by an assumption Gully Peter would have made that clans were a fundamental unit of social organisation. However, I will argue in this section that the clan-based model does not work for the Kaiadilt.

3.2.1 *Tindale and an alternative model*

The first published description of Kaiadilt land tenure systems is Tindale (1962a), repeated in its essentials in Tindale (1977). Tindale describes a set of eight patrifilia-tive groups, which he terms *dolnoro*, each headed by a senior man or *dolnoro dangka* (in his transcription). The map in Tindale (1962b) exhaustively divides the territory of the South Wellesleys into eight *dolnoro*, with a small parcel of land in the south-west being "disputed territory". In attempting to characterise the nature of *dolnoro* more precisely, Tindale vacillates between calling them "territorially defined hordes" (Tindale 1962b: 299), "patrilineal horde-like units" (Tindale 1962b: 316) and "clan-like groups" (Tindale 1977: 257). According to his model, membership of these groups is inherited

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8.   Since subsections would have spread to the Tangkic region from the west or southwest (McConvell 1985), it is logically clear that they would have reached the Ganggalida first before passing out to the island groups, and thus the ideologies of clan membership and subsection membership would have had longer to align themselves.

9.   We don't have an independent account of Yangkaal social structure – Yangkaal has tended to get lumped in with Lardil for purposes of ethnographic description (e.g. Memmott 1998). It seems likely that Gully Peter, whose wife Cora had a Ganggalida mother, was conversant with both Lardil and Ganggalida systems, and since both had patrifiliating clan structures this would have reinforced a view that other indigenous societies also had this.

through the father only, though in his genealogies he notes a number of exceptions to this principle. In this respect the *dolnoro* closely resemble the patrilineal clans found among the Lardil.

The Tindale model has been repeated in a number of other sources on the Kaiadilt, such as Belcher (MS) and Roughsey (1971), as well as the ethnographic introduction to the present author's grammar of Kayardild in both its original thesis form (Evans 1985) and as a revised, published book (Evans 1995). However, the more detailed work on Kaiadilt systems of title which I undertook as preparation for the land and sea claims, uncovered a more flexible system of ownership and inheritance, in which individuals are directly affiliated to estates, without the mediating step of *dolnoro* membership.[10]

The relevant affiliatory principles include birthplace, conception site, father's, mother's or grandparent's affiliation, or bequest, as will be set out in §3.2.3. Modulating these individualistic principles are some systematic desiderata which can be invoked to smooth out individual affiliations: (a) every country (*dulk*) should have a *dulkuru dangkaa*, (b) every person (*dangkaa*) should have a country (*dulk*), (c) places (*dulk*) should not have too many *dulkuru dangkaa*, (d) people should not be reponsible for too many places. As Netta Loogatha expressed it: "every place needs to have someone to look after it".

People holding the same affiliations, as a result of the above principles, may then constitute groups of co-owners, known as *dulkuru-dulkuru* or *dulkuru jardi*. However, these groups have no imputed unity of descent in the way that a clan has.

Kaiadilt normally stress that country is not owned by unique individuals, since several people could claim the same land, and every adult has some country they can claim. For example, Roger Kelly keeps using the term *bilwand* 'their' in the following discussion of ownership of a particular country:

> NE: so that owner … now how many owners would there be for one country?
> RK: well, if you got a big area like Oaktree point, Minakuri, say Oaktree point has, from, I would say to Makarrki to Birrmuy, that all big area, big family

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10.   This raises the question whether the two models result from social change in the last three and a half decades (see Sutton 1998 for a survey of comparable transformations in Aboriginal groups through post-colonial Australia) or whether Tindale exaggerated the degree to which Kaiadilt social structure approximated the patrilineal clan system held to be the canonical land-ownership system in Australia until the 1960s (see Hiatt 1995: 32). There are several reasons to think Tindale overemphasized the patrilineal and clan-like nature of the groups he described, including distortions by heavy reliance on a Yangkaal-speaking man during his fieldwork, the absence of Kaiadilt names for individual groups, and the absence of strict exogamy and patrilineality.

> NE so, any one of those, so you could call any person from that mob, you could say they're *dulmarra dangkaa*?
> RK: yeah, *bilwanda dulk* [their country]
> NE or, is *dulkuru dangkaa*, is that the same?
> RK yeah, that's the same name
> NE like *dulmarra dangkaa*
> RK yeah, and *dulkuru dangkaa*, that's the same name, someone who own that country, *bilwanda dulk* [their country]. [July 1997][11]

In conversation people will normally identify their own country by naming a single significant site, e.g. *Nyinyaaki* in the case of Clayton Paul, or *Mirrimanki* in the case of Barney Rainbow, or *Wirrngaji* in the case of Dawn Naranatjil. This will be the place with which they have a special personal connection; by bequest in Clayton Paul's case, and by birth in the case of Barney Rainbow and Dawn Naranatjil.

In practice, people will then have rights over a wider area around the named focal site: Barney Rainbow's country thus extends around the whole western end of Bentinck Island, and Albinia Island, and in recognition of this he is sometimes referred to as *Walkirrirringathi*, after another main site, *Walkirrirri*, on the western end of the island. Similarly Clayton Paul's country extends northwards and southwards along the eastern side of the island from Nyinyaaki, and will sometimes be referred to as Whitecliffs; this, like most English names used by Kaiadilt, tends to have a broader spatial reference than the Kayardild terms. In this way affiliation with one site brings with it affiliation to a broader estate which contains it.

Boundaries between the estates clustering around such sites are formed by the creeks and estuaries that cut across the coastline, and are projected out to sea and inland from these points of intersection.

A common way of identifying the extent of estates in detail, particularly in the context of *marraaja wuuja dulki* 'showing the country', is through the recitation of place names along a journey within one's own estate, typically around some stretch of coast, but also along a commonly used track. Tindale (1962a:274) captures this method well, including the importance of community consensus as to boundaries arising through tacit assent as an estate owner recites the names of sites in his own country:

> The boundaries [of dolnoro – N.E.] are well established. In defining their separate territories to me, while sailing along the coast, in sight of them, each informant indicated in turn the place names of his own *dolnoro*; another person automatically began to speak up at the next boundary. An interested audience

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11.   These and other quoted dialogues, with individual-identifying initials, represent transcripts from interviews I undertook in gathering information for the Wellesley Islands Sea Claim. Fuller information can be found in Evans (1998), from which all such examples are excerpted.

> listened intently and assented to each identified place name. Only at the boundary between the countries of the two *dolnorodangka* named *Minakuringati kulkitji* and *Walkareingati toato* were rival claims made. This brought out the point that a strip of about half a mile of coast-line, known as "Disputed territory" on the map, had long been a bone of contention, a matter left unsettled when Minakuringati and his associates fled to Allen Island in 1940.

However, in most everyday situations people do not like to stress the boundaries. In giving boundaries on Mornington as an example, Melville Escott said:

> Well then.. he cut that creek down la, down here, Spring Yard, where river goin' out, he cut from there go back, right nother brother-in-law bla im he take over then, yeah, his brother, because his boundary, and that's.. next brother here, that's his boundary again, but there.. he doesn't matter, they all come in one again. They don't quarrel, they just share, share between if you want my land you come over there… [7/7/97]

3.2.2   *Principles of affiliation*

The evidence we have been considering thus points to the relevant estate group being more loosely organized than a clan. It allows some endogamous marriages, and is essentially an aggregation of individuals affiliated to the same country as a result of one or more of several factors: birth, conception, affiliation of the father, mother, or a grandparent, and bequest. I now look at these factors in more detail.

AFFILIATION BY BIRTH OR CONCEPTION

This was the dominant factor as long as people were still being born in the South Wellesleys. Since the evacuation to Mornington in the 1940s, the fact that everyone has been born in either Mornington Hospital or in Mt Isa has removed the distinguishing value of birthplace, as well as its connection to country.

A clear and typical case of birthplace determining one's country is that of Paula Paul:

> NE: can you say how you got that area?
> PP: because was born there, and, *ngada dulkuru dangkaa dathinmaanda dangkaa, ngada barjija dathinki dulki* [I'm the boss of that country, I'm a person from there, I was born at that place.] [July 1997]

This can lead to children having different country from that of either parent. Thus, Paula Paul takes her country from her birthplace at *Dangkankuru* rather than from her father, who was from *Thundii* in the north:[12]

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12. Tindale's list (1962b:323) includes Paula Paul in the same *dolnoro* as her father *Thundiyingathi* (Tondoingati); it is not clear on what basis he made this decision.

> NE: if I can get you to say who you are, what your name is, what country you come from, how you got that country..
> PP gotta start my father's area, so I speak to, from, *danmaanda dulk, ngaakana dangkana dulk, ngijinda kanthathu, ngijinda kanthathu Thundiyingathi, jirrkaand, jirrkara warraa jirrkaanda dulk, bana ngada rarumband, dulki barjij, warraa raya dulki, ngijinda nida.. Kuruwarriyingathi, bana ngijinda ngamathu balumband, kakuju, ngarriju* [from here, whatsisname's country, my father, my father Thundiyingathi, from the north, way up in the north, and I'm a southerner, I was born here, way to the south; (that's why) my name is *Kuruwarriyingathi*. And my mother is from the west, and my uncle, and maternal grandmother.] [July 1997]

Expecting mothers sometime travelled to a particular place so as to ensure birth-rights for their infants. As Netta Loogatha put it in her affidavit during the Wellesley Claim (Netta Loogatha Affidavit §3):[13] "Before I was born my grandmother, my mother's mother, carried my mother on her shoulder up the hillside to Birrmuyi, so I would be born there… My grandmother carried my mother from Dunkurrurri, I was my mother's first-born child. She thought that I was a boy. She wanted me to carry that country." Netta's mother's father was from Dunkurrurri, so this means she went from her mother's father's to her mother's mother's country. In another statement, Netta formulated things as follows: "When the time came for mothers to have their babies, they would go where they wanted the child to have country. The bosses of that country wouldn't refuse them. Noone would refuse them. The grandmothers would make the decisions about where a child would be born." (Netta Loogatha Affidavit, §40)

In connection with rights by birth, the Kayardild language possesses the special term *ngalkand*, technically a nominalisation of the verb *ngalkath* 'to be born at'. This form originally means 'country where one was born; birth-place to which one has rights'. However, since the removal of Kaiadilt people from Bentinck Island, which has necessitated an adjustment in how people establish claims to country, it has come to mean 'conception place', as explained by Roger Kelly:

> Roger: There's two ways. *Nathaa* [camp], that's *dulk, dulk* [place] where you bin *barjij* [born]. and alright that … *ngalkand*.
> NE: that, *ngijinda ngalkand* [my ngalkand] that's like, where that sign appeared is it?
> Roger: that's where your sign, and *ngijinda dulk* [my place] well *dathina barjija dathin dulk* [that place where (I) was born] that's where I was born, la that certain place. [July 1997]

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13.   This and other references to affidavits refer to sworn affidavits made by various claimants and tendered as written, signed documents during the Wellesley Island claim – see Behrendt (n.d.).

In either case, it is a place to which one has ownership rights by virtue of how one came into the world; the disagreements in meaning may reflect a shifting emphasis from birth to conception in conferring rights that is comparable to the changing means of assigning -*ngathi* names (see below).

AFFILIATION BY BEQUEST

It was, and remains, normal for senior *dulkuru dangkaa* to make a verbal bequest passing on their country as they grow old.

> Well on family side, who was in that group, who was in that family group, who was livin' in that same area, you know, that pass that to people further round, round the island, to the owner of the area now, when his father, his father die, pass to him, and when he die, he pass to his son, it's like.. you know, something like it just keep going on and on. [ME 7/7/97]

Typically they would say to the inheriting relative *Nyingka marmirrayij! Danda dulka ngumband!* 'You look after it! This country is yours!' or *Danda dulka karrngijuruy!* 'Look after this country!'. Such bequests are usually made publicly, in front of close family who would then relay it to other Kaiadilt.

As an example of such a bequest, David Loogatha was given the country around Nyinyilki by Pat Gabori, one of the *dulkuru dangkaa* for that country, while Clarence Paul and Christopher Loogatha were given Fowler Island (*Barthayi*) by the late Darwin Moodoonuthi.[14] At the same time Christopher Loogatha was given the site *Dangka-kurrijarri* by Maurice, an owner for that country; although Christopher Loogatha has a white father, Maurice was the Kaiadilt man to whom Christopher's mother Dolly had originally been promised [NL January 98]. A further example is the bequest by Phoebe of land around Makarrki to Kylie Thompson, because she (Phoebe) 'grew up' Kylie's father Bobby (Netta Loogatha Affidavit, §80).

Usually this happens when people are aware they are growing old and it is time to pass on their country to the next generation:

> DN: And my children they can look after this island, because *makalmakalwatha, birdikalayarrb* [I'm becoming a weak old woman], all my family every one.
> NL: She want to pass this on to her family, pass it to her children when she go
> DN: All my family, my childrens, boys and girls.

AFFILIATION BY INHERITANCE FROM FATHER OR MOTHER

The vast majority of the cases in Tindale's genealogy conform to a principle of patrilineal transmission. But there are also examples in it of matrilineal transmission, with

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14. In another version, recounted by Roger Kelly, they were given it by Maurice, who was born on Fowler Island (Tindale lists him as *Barthayingathi*).

single women passing on their land to their children, such as "Sarah No. 2" (Xf10), *Bakayinjingathi wurrubarr*, whose child belonged to the same land-holding group as she did (Dolnoro X in Tindale's terminology), in the absence of an acknowledged father. Finally, Kaiadilt people have told me that it is possible to claim *dulkuru dangkaa* status on the basis of any one of one's grandparents; Irene Yarak, for instance, inherited her *dulkuru dangkaa* status for the area around McKenzie River from her mother's father (*jambathu*), Jack Yarak.

However, one cannot determine from Tindale's data whether cases of inheritance from a parent (usually the father) were because

a.   this was by simple right of patrilineal inheritance
b.   owing to patrilocal marriage, children were most likely to be born in their father's country and therefore get this country through birth
c.   in inheritance by bequest, men were more likely to pass on their country to their own children.

In all likelihood these three factors usually correlated to the point where they were not enunciated as separate principles. Some evidence that patrilineal inheritance could occur in the absence of being born in one's father's *dolnoro* comes from cases in Tindale's genealogies where a child is born outside the father's *dolnoro* region but is assigned to the father's *dolnoro* anyway: examples are Uf7 (*Kalnyirringathi balibali karwarrk*), who was born in the region belonging to *dolnoro* V but was assigned to her father's *dolnoro* U, and Tony (*Tharurrkingathi murrkurdi*, U19), who was born in the country of *dolnoro* V but assigned to his father's *dolnoro*. A further example of patirilineal transmission involves Pluto Bentinck: he was born on the south side of the Bentinck Island, but grew up in the north and was given country there by his father – though in this case Pluto retained birth rights in the south as well.

In another case I have recorded, the fact of straightforward patrilineal inheritance is clear. This concerns the passing on of country from Jack Yarak to Valmae Yarak. Because the children were isolated in dormitories during the mission period, there was no opportunity for him to make a verbal bequest, but his country is recognized as having passed on to his daughter Valmae and on to her children.

WEIGHING OF MULTIPLE FACTORS

Having several bases on which membership of estate groups could be claimed, as outlined above, gives greater flexibility to the system, and allows the ongoing readjustment of estate groups to the disappearance of some lineages, the proliferation of others, and to situations such as the inferred depopulation of the Kurumbali area following the McKenzie massacres (see Section 2.2 above). This flexibility can be used by older people in making final decisions about bequests, and by younger people in

arriving at a fairer distribution of estates to people, for example by renouncing one's right to inherit land from one's father if one could claim land on another basis (e.g. from having been born there, and from having a claim through one's *babiju* 'father's mother') and others were more in need of one's father's land. On the other hand, the lack of any single categorical factor means that in some cases there are disputes about how given cases should be handled.

In the case of Roger Kelly, for example, his father's country was the area around *Bilinab*, just south-west from Oaktree Point, but he claims McKenzie River (*Kurumbali*) on the basis that

a. he was born near there
b. his father was the half-brother (same mother) of Jack Yarak, who was the boss of that country

This same land, at *Kurumbali*, is claimed by Irene Yarak through her *jambathu* (mother's father) Jack Yarak, father of her mother Rita Yarak. A third owner of this general area, Dawn Naranatjil, is acknowledged as an owner of the story place *Tharurrki* on the basis that she was born in the region (actually at *Wirrngaji* nearby), even though both her parents were from the Oaktree point area. That these three claims are made, and recognized as valid by the Kaiadilt community, at least in part reflects the fact that Jack Yarak had no descendants through the male line. The more that obscure facts are taken into account, however, the less easy it is to secure complete community assent, so that there are people who dispute Roger's claim to the McKenzie area, but none disputing Dawn's claim, based on a right of birth.

IMPLICATIONS TODAY

Kaiadilt law regarding country affiliation thus makes use of a number of factors. A careful scrutiny of Tindale's data, collected in 1960 and much of it concerning the period before people were removed from Bentinck, suggests that one could potentially claim land through either parent (with father being the default case); through an adoptive parent; on the basis of birthplace, or in some cases on the basis of other factors.

Data I collected in the late 1990s suggests a continuation of this basic system,[15] but with some adaptations that basically involve the replacement of birth by spiritual conception and the extension of the bequest system; it seems, in fact, that bequests have been particularly important in deciding the affiliations of children born on Mornington during the decades when there was minimal contact with Bentinck, and that spiritual conception has been assuming greater importance since the move back to

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15. Unfortunately I am not in a position to adduce additional more recent data relevant to updating this picture a decade and a half later.

Bentinck, becoming an analogue to the original birth-place system. At the same time, the possibility of affiliation through parents and grandparents remains.

4. Naming, country and affiliation

With this background on how people affiliate to country, we now turn to the system of naming, which is a key means of indexing these links. In the Kayardild language, names are one of the most important clues to group and family membership, and to relations to particular places. The giving of names is a powerful means of establishing and maintaining relations between older and younger people, as well as an effective mnemonic for encoding social and territorial relationships. Although some modifications to the traditional naming system (§4.1) have been made in the modern situation (§4.2), there is clear continuity in the system of naming practice.

4.1   Names in the traditional setting

In the pre-contact situation, Kaiadilt people received three types of name. They could have only one name of type (a), but one or more of types (b) and (c).[16]

a. BIRTHPLACE or -*NGATHI* NAMES are formed by adding the suffix -*ngathi* to the name of the place where the person is born. Thus Roger Kelly, born at *Dulkalaji*, has the birthplace name *Dulkalajingathi*, and Dawn Narranatjil, born at *Wirrngaji*, has the birthplace name *Wirrngajingathi*. Because, as outlined above, being born in a place conferred rights to be a *dulmarra dangkaa* or country-owner, these names are an instant index of affiliation to country. Both Kaiadilt (e.g. Netta Loogatha) and Lardil speakers (e.g. Kenneth Jacobs) have sometimes stated to me that -*ngathi* means 'boss of country', and Kenneth Jacobs suggested it is equivalent to the Lardil term *dulmada*. The only time a person's -*ngathi* names exhibits variation is when a more general site name (or *jungarra nid* 'big name') is substituted for a more specific one (or *kunyaa nid* 'little name'), e.g. *Makarrkingathi* for *Nardangathi*, or *Walkirrirringathi* for *Mirrimankingathi* in the case of Barney Rainbow.

b. CONCEPTION NAMES (sometimes called 'sign names' in Mornington English) are given on the basis of some significant event, typically early in the woman's pregnancy, which presages (*ngaarrngij* in Kayardild – see discussion in §3.1 above)

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16.   This description is based on what older Kaiadilt people have told me since 1982. The description in Tindale (1962b) is consistent with this, except that he did not distinguish conception and lineage names – see below.

the entry of the spirit child into the womb.[17] Whereas -*ngathi* names directly link individuals to country, conception names link individuals to the natural world (e.g. fish, dugong, goannas), and indirectly to country by being a cryptic mnemonic of where the conception occurred. The link to a particular natural species is commemorated by the name, and shown physically through a mark or distinctive feature on the body. For example, Amy Loogatha's birth was presaged by a turtle being speared in the eye, and every winter Amy is said to suffer from tears in the corner of her eye.

Brian Gabori was presaged by an osprey or 'big foot',[18] and Janie Gabori by a rock cod (*dibirdibi*) which displayed the unusual behaviour of coming up to eat a dugong's blood:

> PG: *danda Janie.*
> NE: *ngaaka niwanda nid, ngaaka wurand?*
> PG: *dibirdibi, Rock Cod, danda bada ngambirri diyaja wirdija kanduya bijarrbay. "Ee, danda kunawuna dangkaa ngaaka kunawuna danda dangkaa kunawun!" Dangkaa kamburija, dathina kangk, "dathinanangand, dandananganda mirrarutha wuranki, mirrarutha diyaj kanduya bijarrbay", yeah, kandu-diyand, dibirdibi diyaja kanduya diyaj, wanjiija warraja murratha diyaj.* [7/7/97]
> [PG: This one, Janie.
> NE: What's her name, her conception name?
> PG: Dibirdibi, Rock Cod, it was eating a dugong's blood at this house in the west. "Hey, that's a child, what child is this?" people said, like that, "that's what's happening, it's making a child", yeah, a blood–eater, a rock cod eating blood, it came right up (to shore).]

The location of these conception events is usually passed on as a vital part of the story:

> My father gave me the name Burdija Burdija. It means 'Little Black Bird'. It was a sign that I was going to be born. He was out hunting at sea and the bird flew out and sat on the bow of his canoe. That was at Thalkurrki on Denham Island. My parents were camping there.   (Olive Loogatha, Affidavit, §1).

Individuals could acquire multiple conception names if there were several such salient conception events. Caroline Paul, for example, has the three conception names *Wanikarr* (pelican), *Thardawukarra* (pumpkin-head fish) and *Bulthuku* (quail, believed to

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17. To ask about someone's conception name one says either *ngaaka ngumbanda wurand* 'What is your food/creature?' or *ngaaka nyingka ngaarrngij* 'What presaged your conception?'.

18. In this case he did not merely receive a corresponding conception name, *bukaji* 'osprey', but also a nickname, *Jajungarr* 'big-foot' based on the big feet said to be a manifestation of the osprey that brought about his spiritual conception.

be sister of the rainbow serpent); the first two are based on conception events on For-syth Island and Dugong River (Mornington) respectively.

c.   LINEAGE NAMES are passed on from older relatives – typically a father's father or father's father's sister – to indicate shared membership in a descent group, without reference to any significant conception event.

> Like you know old people give them language name, like.. my father gave them, them boys, their name now. [Melville Escott 7/7/97]

As with conception names, to find out someone's lineage name, one asks *ngaaka ngum-banda wurand?* 'What is your food/creature?'. Although it is possible to specify that conception rather than lineage totems are meant by framing the question as *ngaaka nyingka ngaarrngij?* 'what presaged your conception', in practice the distinction is not always made, and attempts to collect individual names result in a mixture of (b) and (c) unless one is able to get the story of how someone acquired a conception name. The process is made more difficult by the fact that conception and lineage names have the same linguistic properties (i.e. simple common nouns) and largely draw on the same stock of entities for their denotata. As a result the names contained in Tindale (1962b) are a mixture of both types, and it is not clear, for all names in the Kaiadilt genealogy accompanying this report, which type is involved.

As a result certain names crop up frequently in particular lineages. Pat Gabori, himself bearing the lineage name Dibirdibi 'rock cod', shared this with his father and his father's father. Likewise Rodney Naranatjil (Affidavit, §1):

> My Kaiadilt name is Dibirdibi, which means Rock Cod. I got my name from father, Alec Naranatjil, and my father's father. They were both Dibirdibi too. My sign name is Bijarrb, which means Dugong.

The name *Bijarrba* 'dugong' in the lineage descended from Percy Loogatha (him-self a *Bijarrba*), recurs in six of his ten children (Gerald, Rex, Margaret, Neil, Judith and Maryanne) as well as some of his grandchildren, e.g. Gerald's daughter Alberta Roughsey. However there are many others outside this lineage also called *Bijarrba* (e.g. Paula Paul, Dawn Naranatjil, Duncan Kelly) as well as people inside the lineage who are not called *Bijarrba* (Olive Loogatha, †Geoffrey Loogatha and Joy Loogatha, for example), so the correlation of such names with lineages is only approximate.

Likewise, the name *Jardarrk* 'crow' was passed on from Willie (father of Roland and Darwin Moodoonuthi) to Roland's son Douglas, and further to Roland's son John Graham's children Rowena and Reynard. At the same time the lineage name *Ngarrawurn* was passed on from Darwin and Roland to Roland's sons John Graham, Douglas and Murphy. Thus within this lineage four names – *Ngarrawurn* 'blue fish', *Jardarrk* 'crow', *Buranthand* 'bone fish' and *Thardawukarr* 'pumpkin-head fish' – recur across the generations.

This process of passing on names need not be carried out by the actual bearers of the name, but can be performed by other elders recognized as having rights to make such decisions. For example, Pat Gabori was recognized as having the right to pass on names from Willy (his *kakuju* 'maternal uncle') to Rowena on John Graham's behalf, a considerable period after Willy's death.

Although one often hears statements like *kangkuru jinkaj* ['(s)he is following the paternal grandfather'] as rationales for why children have particular names, the assigning of such names is a matter of preference rather than an absolute requirement, and it is not the case that all members of a particular lineage receive these. At the same time, some individuals could receive more than one, since more than one person could assign names to them. Thus Wendy Loogatha received the name *Limilimi* from her stepfather, the name *Rurrbururrbu* from Valmae Yarak, and the name *Bukaji* from May Moodoonuthi.

Conception and lineage names are sometimes conflated, e.g. Reg Kellie was called *Damankuru* 'senior male dugong' as a result of his *babiju* Pat spearing one (i.e. a conception totem), but at the same time, his father Roger says:

> that's our totem, just like me, you see, like all my family, my father too, he *Bijarrb*. My daughter there was that *Bulthuku*. Totem name, through my father he bin give me that one [RK 5/7/97]

Unlike birthplace names, which are clearly determined by circumstances, the conception and lineage name systems leave a lot of space for individual discretion to be exercised by the relevant elders, and as such are more easily adapted to symbolizing new relationships to people or land. For example, one of the conception names received by Clarence Paul (b. 1961) was *Ngumuwa yarbuda* 'black animal; wild pig', based on the fact that his father shot a pig while hunting on the mainland.

Similarly, Melville Escott, though Ganggalida by descent, was given the lineage name *Mithindaku*, a name pertaining to the Dugong River, by Milmaja, an old Lardil man, because

> Old people used to been here before, you know, they bin grow me up when I was only a little baby in a *jumurr* [coolamon cradle] as I grew gradually grew they said "oh this land belong to you now, well you *dulmada* belong to here, your sign, *bijarrb*, you know" [ME June 1997]

It is not unusual for a younger individual, or even that person's parent, not to know their own conception or lineage name, but for them to say "must be X would know", or "you should ask X", where X is some older person in a position to give their name (in both senses of 'give' – i.e. to bestow, or to make public). This reflects the general pattern of how cultural knowledge is distributed through the community, and its concentration with the most important elders. It also reflects the way in which those elders sometimes hold off making a public announcement while a range of factors are

considered, such as who else bears particular names, who has died recently without a namesake continuing their name, what country needs a nominated custodian, and so forth. The fact that in the Tindale genealogies (Tindale 1962b) many who died in childhood only have a *-ngathi* name (e.g. his Sf19, S22, S25, and S42), and no conception or lineage name, suggests this is a situation of long standing.

4.2   Names in the contemporary setting

> All Kaiadilt people are given land, even if they are born on Mornington Island. The family looks after them, particularly the older people, to make sure they all have a home. They are given language names by their grandparents and totems or sign names.   (Netta Loogatha Affidavit, #81).

The pre-contact system of naming is basically continued today, but with five important modifications: the introduction of European names, the growth of a system of nicknames, the introduction of a new practice of naming people directly after bestowed countries, the modification of the *-ngathi* system to reflect spiritual conception instead of birth, and the introduction of naming traditions from other marriage partners coming from other Aboriginal groups.

The introduction of European names is a consequence of partial integration into wider Australian society. Every living Kaiadilt person now bears a European surname and one or more European first names; some Kaiadilt who made contacts with the early missionaries but died before the 1970s had only a first name (e.g. Dinny, Venus, Maurice, King Alfred). In general European names are the only ones appearing on official records. In many cases it is the officials at the hospital who now decree the child's surname by writing down the mother's surname as the child's surname, but within the community the father's surname may also be used, creating some confusion over surnames.

In fact, some 'European' surnames are actually modifications of traditional Kayardild names. Some may originate from birthplace names, as in the case of Moodoonuthi, a corruption of *Murdumurdungathi* 'born at *Murdumurdu*', Durretnuthi, a corruption of *Tharurrkingathi* 'born at Tharurrki', Binjari, a corruption of *Binjarrinjingathi* 'born at *Binjarrinji*', and Goongarra, a corruption of *Kungarrangathi* 'born at *Kungarra*'. Note that the first two of these retain an anglicized version of the *-ngathi* suffix (i.e. *-nuthi*), while this is dropped off in the last two. Others originate as conception or lineage names: the surname Dundaman is a corruption of *Thandamand* 'water spout'. Sometimes traditional names are translated, as in the case of Rainbow (from the Kayardild lineage name *Thuwathu*). Other surnames, such as Kelly or Shorty, are based on first or nicknames given to Kaiadilt people when they first came to the mission.

The second modern modification to the naming system has been the introduction of nicknames, usually of English origin, which are perhaps the commonest way of referring to people in everyday speech: examples that will give the flavour are Bayou, Elvis, Moselle, May-May, Cherokee, Froggie, Pole Cat, and Ramjet. Many of these result from word-resemblances of one kind or another (e.g. Roland > Pole Cat), standard name substitutions (two Benjamins – Benjamin Gabori and Benjamin Rainbow – both become Bayou), adaptation of the names of cartoon characters (Roger > Roger Ramjet > Ramjet), or reconstitution of the names of such characters from a person's initials (Darwin Moodoonuthi > D.M. > Danger Mouse).

The third and fourth modifications are more subtle, but are directly relevant to questions of how people affiliate to country. The *-ngathi* birth-place system lost its distinctive value once children were no longer being born on Bentinck Island, so that the generation born from the 50s to the 80s lack place-affiliating names. From the mid 1980s, however, when the first moves back to Bentinck occurred two new methods of giving people country-based names began to be introduced: directly naming people after countries, and giving them *-ngathi* names after the countries in which they were spiritually conceived. It seems that the use of *-ngathi* names for conception countries is more recent; this is presumably because it could only be used once fathers were again regularly hunting and fishing in the South Wellesleys.

Starting with children born in the 1960s, many younger Kaiadilt have been given names of places on Bentinck Island with which they have a special relationship, typically of ownership. Examples are Clarence Paul (*Nalkardarrawuru*), b. 1961, †Netty Paul (*Balarruru*). b. 1968, Sandra Paul (*Bayanab*), b. 1970, all named after sites in their father's country, Jay Clayton Paul (*Nyinyaaki*), b. 1972, named after a site in his grandfather's country, and Tiana Loogatha (*Dangka-kurrijarri*), b. 1994, named after a site belonging to her father Christopher (b. 1969); the site was bestowed to Christopher by Maurice Loogatha, to whom Christopher's mother Dolly had been promised. Neil Loogatha was given the name Barnbarnd by Pat Gabori, commemorating his *kangku* (father's father), a man of the same name, who built the fishtrap at Nyinyilki, deemed to be Neil Loogatha's country on Bentinck Island.

The impact of spiritual conception sites on naming has likewise followed the recent return to the South Wellesleys, though the impact of this on the naming system seems to have come later than the use of bestowed site names. During the 1950s and 1960s, when the Kaiadilt were living on Mornington with little possibility of getting across to Bentinck, conception names were given on the basis of events occurring on Mornington Island or the mainland. For example the conception of Pat Gabori's son Wilfred was presaged at Murndanyarri on Mornington Island when he speared a mullet (*duburrk*); this fact is acknowledged by the relevant Lardil people (as confirmed by

Andrew Marmies and Kenneth Jacobs on 22/6/98) who state that it gives him camping and visiting rights there but does not make him a *dulmada* (the Lardil term for a landowner by patrilineal inheritance).

> PG: *Wilfred, alright, duburrk, kurdurrkurdurr, kiyarrngka nid. Duburrka yakuriy, ngada raaj, kunawunay, bardakayiwath.*
> NE: *bana jinaa niwanda dulk, Wilfred?*
> PG: *dathina dulk,*
> NE: *bana bardiwardi marrija kangki?*
> PG: *Yeah, bardiwardi dangkaa mungurru Mornington, diyaja bild, ngijlayiinngarrbayi, mungurru bardiwardi, niwanda countryman, bilwanda countryman.* [PG 7/7/97]

> [PG: Wilfred, alright, he's got two names, mullet and *kurdurrkurdurr* (another type of fish). The mullet is a fish, that I speared, (carrying) the child, and it went into (the mother's) stomach.
> NE: And where's his country, Wilfred's?
> PG: That place (where I'd speared the mullet).
> NE: And do the Lardil people know about that?
> PG: Yeah, the Mornington people know, they ate what I had speared, the Lardil know, (they're) his countryman, (he's) their countryman.]

Since the establishment of the outstation on Bentinck Island, however, children have been getting *-ngathi* names again, but now based on conception rather than birth place. Thus Christopher Loogatha's young son Traefon is *Kurumbalingathi*, based on a sign (the appearance of a red dog) that occurred while Christopher was hunting at Kurumbali; the child is said to have a 'blood spot' on his body as a sign of this conception:

> NL: That little kid there la Christopher, he belong sign for dog, red dog down there, he claimin this area, Christopher's baby, because he's sign for there..
> NE: Which baby's that one eh?
> NL: *Kurmbalingathi, niya kunyaa kurmbalingathi* [*Kurmbalingathi*, he's a little *Kurmbalingathi*] [June 1997]

A final modification of tradition results from the increasing intermarriage between Kaiadilt and other Aboriginal groups, which has brought further Aboriginal naming systems into play. In the cases of marriages to outsiders, the practice is to name children according to the Kaiadilt system, except in the case of non-Kaiadilt fathers who are (a) married to Kaiadilt mothers under European law (i.e. a church wedding), and (b) are traditionally-oriented Aboriginal men from the region who would be expected to give names according to their own customs. One example of this involves Alma Moon, the daughter of Molly Rainbow to an Aurukun man, Robert Kongnampa. Alma married Cyril Moon, a senior Lardil man, and their four children all received Lardil names:

Birnkurn (Beatrice), *Lebudmul* (Guy), *Jeridngarnaja* (Brendan) and *Kethuku* (Mario). Lineage names, in the contemporary setting, can be passed on from a number of individuals; it is not clear how far this is merely a continuation of earlier practice, and how far it represents an adaptation to modern conditions where fatherless households are a commoner phenomenon. According to Melville Escott, names mostly follow the father's line, but

> through the mother if she not married; if she not married he can go through the mother, like through from grandfather side, but if he married, he can go from the father, from his father right down, grandfather right down. [July 1997]

The changes and continuities in the naming system are indicative of the degree to which Kaiadilt tradition has been maintained, with modification, as their life situation has changed. Entirely new elements have been brought in, from three areas: 'official' European practice (Christian names plus surnames), European vernacular culture (nicknames), and the practice of other Aboriginal groups (as with Cyril Moon), as well as Aboriginal refashionings of Lardil naming traditions (e.g. nicknames based on physical features). At the same time the main principles of the Kaiadilt system have been continued, but with some modifications necessitated by changed circumstances: affiliation to the natural world has continued through the use of conception and lineage names, while affiliation to country has been continued in a somewhat different form, replacing birth-based *-ngathi* names with bestowed country names and with conception-based *-ngathi* names.

5.   Conclusion: social change, naming change, and the maintenance of links to country

As summarised in §2, in the space of a lifetime (74 years at the time of writing) the Kaiadilt have undergone dramatic changes in their world and how this shapes their relationship to land. In 1940 they were still living in the South Wellesley Islands in a way that gave them full control over their traditional territory, and maintaining their traditional system of tenure. The traditional naming system was central to recording and transmitting the information needed to keep track of people's links to country and one another, across the generations. *-ngathi* names tracked people's birthplaces, which entailed primary rights to country, and were also the most important way of identifying individuals in genealogical discussions. Conception names recorded events surrounding a child's spiritual conception, establishing a double connection with both the creature or other event bearing its spirit, and the place where the event occurred. Lineage names did not link directly to country, but helped keep track of descent lines, though this system was not especially accurate since not all lineage members received

the same names, and the same word could be found on one individual as a lineage name and on another as a conception name.

During the exile years, from the 1940s up until the late 1980s and early 1990s, Kaiadilt people had little opportunity to maintain experiential links with their country, though incessant reminiscing by older generations kept knowledge of it alive in detail. During this period, as part of coming to terms with their status as immigrants on Lardil country, conception names took on special importance as a legitimate way of signalling secondary rights on Mornington, Denham and Forsyth Islands. At the same time, -ngathi names ceased to be distinctive, since in effect all children were being born in the Mornington Mission hospital, so they largely stopped being used. Lineage names, which were not place-dependent, continued to be transmitted in the traditional way.

The move to Mornington also saw the introduction of a second system of naming, impinging from the European and post-contact Indigenous worlds. First, individuals received single names, more or less from English or anglicised, then a rather unsystematic process gradually introduced surnames. The majority of Kaiadilt surnames come from the Kayardild language, either directly (through anglicisation of Kayardild words, e.g. Gabori) or indirectly (through translation, e.g. Rainbow) – the few exceptions involve the conversion of what were original sole Christian names (Paul, Kelly) into surnames.[19] Nicknames, almost entirely in some form of English, also appear to have entered the Kaiadilt system during this period – I have not recorded a single Kayardild nickname that goes back beyond the contact period, nor do the comprehensive lists in Tindale contain any.

A third phase in the use of Kayardild names began to emerge as access to motorboats to travel across to Bentinck, and partial resettlement there through the outstation movement, allowed a reconnection with country. Transmission of lineage names continued as before. Some conception names began again to be based on spiritual conception events occurring on Bentinck Island, and the word *ngalkand* underwent a shift from 'place where one was born' to 'place where one's spiritual conception occurred'.[20] And since children were still not being born there, the system of -ngathi names was not reintroduced. However, a new method of using Kayardild names to link to country began to be employed: children were named directly after a place (e.g. *Balarruru*, rather than *Balarrurungathi*), a naming

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19. Perhaps reflecting the lack of contact with the pastoral industry, there were to my knowledge no cases of names taken from European families with which the relevant indigenous people had an association of employment, residence or intimate relationship.

20. It is also possible that this semantic shift occurred during the prior, 'exile' phase – we don't have early enough recordings to decide between these two chronologies.

technique that employs Kayardild words in an innovative way. These names were bestowed by elders, to children who on grounds of their descent would be expected to take up rights to the country designated by their name. In other words, this naming practice picks up on one traditional but less common method of transmitting rights to country – bequest – and formalises it by giving the child the name of the bestowed site.

A key word in Kayardild is the verb *yulkaaja* – 'to go straight through without stopping, follow an unerring path; always do, do without fail, do with lasting effect' – and its even more commonly-used nominal derivative *yulkaand* 'eternal, permanent, perfect, properly observed (law)'. Like all indigenous groups faced with the challenge of maintaining the essential core of their culture against the incurson of European laws and customs, Kaiadilt people have had to adapt many parts of their traditions in order that the most central ones be *yulkaand*. The changes in naming systems outlined in this paper should make it clear that at every phase the Kayardild element of the personal naming system intimately and centrally connects both name-bearers and name-givers to country, but also that changes that have occurred within it have served to maintain the core of these connections in the face of changing circumstances.

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