INTOXICATION

'facts about the black snake, songs about the cure'

AN EXPLORATION IN INTER CULTURAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH THE SUGARMAN PROJECT

ITS ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT, RATIONALE AND IMPLICATIONS WITH PERFORMANCE SCRIPT, PERFORMANCE VIDEO, REVIEWS, EVALUATION AND POTENTIAL AS A THERAPEUTIC PARADIGM CONSIDERED.

by

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Offered in submission for a Doctorate of Philosophy in the School of Social Ecology
University of Western Sydney

March 1998
DEDICATION

To all those people who have helped bring this dionysian project to life especially to Jude and my immediate family who have had to bear with the shadows and to the Spencer and Cook family, whose life and death experience has shaped the vision.

# INTOXICATION

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### INTOXICATION

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| Page 9 | Maps I. Central Australia. from HALT Catalogue II. Arrente/ Alice Springs. Brooks/lAD. |


| Page 14/15 | ‘Intjartjama’ painting with descriptive diagram by Barry Cook. |


| Page 24 | Cosmic egg and snake graphic. Orphic creation symbol. see Sugarman text Story One. Used in this document as section break icon, source unknown. |


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| 8    | 'How the Sugarman Story Got Started' Cartoon by Blair McFarland drawn for a Bush Newsletter.            |
ABSTRACT

This thesis is a narrative of the development of a community project in Central Australia. It is concerned with research into ancient Mediterranean and Greek traditions of alcohol use and abuse, with a specific purpose in mind. The project was initiated as a proactive response to a request from an Aboriginal man for a 'story about alcohol', which would fill a missing link in traditional Aboriginal conceptualisation of alcohol's origins, use and control.

The 'story' if appropriate would have a role in indigenous treatment, at least as a metaphor for psychological facts of intoxication, put in a symbolic form, consistent with oral teaching methods of indigenous custom.

The Sugarman Project, as it has become known, is structured around the development of an original performance script, a working version of which is included in the thesis. Two major performances were given; one in August 1996, of the first part, and the second part in August 1997, along with an exhibition of paintings, artifacts and photographs spanning the various phases of the seven year period of the Sugarman development. The thesis author has been responsible for supervising the project, researching and writing the script, co producing the performances, documenting the project and writing the thesis as a reflective phenomenological study. The entire project is an original work.

A video documentary by an independent filmmaker is included in the supporting material.

The thesis itself describes the origin, context, development, rationale and implications of the experimental endeavour, especially with a view to considering the potential of the mythologem of Dionysos as a therapeutic paradigm in intercultural substance abuse work. Particular attention is given to the relationship between Aboriginal and European therapeutic practitioners and the use of myth, metaphor, symbolic function and specific Aboriginal 'dreaming stories' (Tjukurrpa) as a source and backup to therapeutic practice.

This project foregrounds issues in the relationship between culture, tradition, treatment, indigenous epistemology and depth psychology.

The process of putting the concept into action generated specific ideas and certain themes, many of which were unforeseen. These themes, their discussion and amplification unfold through the course of the thesis. Principle themes include:

- the role of mythopoetic symbol formation in the development of thinking.
- reflections on the presence of theriomorphic serpentine imagery in the work.
- the role of stories as mental containers of therapeutic theory.
- reflections on the 'milieu' needed for implementing intercultural therapeutic procedures.
- examples of positive indigenous responses to alcohol work.
- preliminary notions on cross cultural transference communications.
- reflections on primal states associated with alcohol intoxication.

The conclusion is that the experience of developing a classic Western myth in concert with Aboriginal colleagues confirms the value of the initial, seminal suggestion that Tjukurrpa, as a consortium of myth, the arts and pragmatic instruction, has an authentic place in the repertoire of alcohol treatment and education. An imaginative future is possible if the Sugarman Project were to be developed further.
INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PROJECT

The Sugarman Project began as an interest in the potential for cross cultural exchange in formulating therapeutic practice in a Central Australian context. The specific therapeutic problem involved alcohol treatment and intervention to modify the destructive impact of intoxication on Aboriginal families. The primary concern soon constellated as that of creating a setting within which practitioners of Aboriginal and European derived therapeutic traditions might find, receive and recognise that which was useful in each other’s healing repertoire.

The establishment of a milieu was seen as a prerequisite to developing effective indigenous treatment methodologies. It rapidly emerged that milieu means both a physical and a mental precinct.

From the first serious exchange on this subject the writer’s investigations took direction from an Aboriginal collaborator. Rather than requesting the writer to attempt to solve an Aboriginal problem (by for example, helping to set up a treatment precinct), the Aboriginal redirected the European to first examine his own cultural history. That is to say; to become mindful of and articulate about the history and origins of the European mind.

It was assumed by the Aboriginal practitioner that within ancient European lore, useful accounts and explanations might be found of the creation of alcohol, the states of intoxication, and the consequences for a society. Knowledge of stories of the origins of alcohol preparation and intoxication was seen as a missing link in the development of a contemporary therapeutic paradigm. This formulation was stated as:

-If we know where it comes from we might know how to treat it-

The thesis is an account of the steps taken in revitalising a relevant European mythologen, that of Dionysos, and the transformation of it into forms approaching congruence with local Aboriginal teaching and performance practice.

The project must be considered as a very preliminary venture in the creation of a milieu - for - thought as a preliminary to the creation of a milieu - for - interaction.

A story matrix becomes the container for engagement.
The limitations of the project and hence the thesis must be stated clearly since expectations have arisen that the Sugarman Project has ambitions beyond that originally intended.

The agreed intentions, as a response to a seminal suggestion from the Aboriginal domain, were:

1. To identify a useful and evocative European based myth which deals with the origin story of intoxicating alcohol.
2. To present the story in a form recognisable by Aboriginal people as being consistent with traditional creation stories.
3. To learn from the experience.
4. To establish a *milieu* within which pragmatic Aboriginal oriented alcohol treatment methods could be considered and developed.
5. To employ the 'myths of origin' of alcohol in a way that would help establish a conceptual framework for handling alcohol intoxication.
6. In short, to have a story to tell.

The Dionysos myth was offered for what it might contribute to evolving a suitable therapeutic paradigm.

It was not the writer's intention to prove that the Dionysos mythologem would serve as a model for Aboriginal alcohol treatment.

There was no intention to 'inject' the Dionysos story into Aboriginal culture, in any way.

The transmission of technology and intellectual property from one culture to another is a matter which raises significant issues of process and ethics. This thesis is not about the transfer of therapeutic technology from European to Aboriginal culture.

The thesis is a narrative of the process of finding and revealing the vitality of the Dionysos myth and placing it within a Central Australian context. There is a clear intent that the myth may have a therapeutic impact or at least a potential for such, but this intent is held lightly.

The description of the evolution of the Sugarman Project is one strand of three.

The second is an exercise in intercultural phenomenology.

I try to convey the subjective experience of working in the interactive field between two very different cultures. To do this I rely upon psychotherapeutic discipline, specifically the phenomenology of transference/countertransference. I am interested in cross cultural transference.

The third strand is almost anti-thesis, anarchic, a deliberate intent to undo the work of developing a single idea or a logical progression toward a proof of a 'thesis'.

This strand, an exercise in 'negative capability' is a product of the subject matter and the local environment. Intoxication, Dionysian reality and Aboriginal life is antithetical to organised logic and rational containment.

This quality is reflected in the structure of the document and the structure of the project.

The thesis document itself can best be read as an amplification on the conversation fragment recorded in Chapter Three and reproduced here for the reader's convenience.
This is a women's story, for which the artist obtained permission to paint from its senior owner.

The Warlpiri word pama refers to forms of concentrated sugars which can be gathered from some flowers and insects. It is a category of foods which is differentiated from meat, and vegetables or fruits. The story of its creation and gathering is enacted in ceremonies which are shown in the painting. The symbology is also a choreographic notation for dancing.

This kind of food is deemed to have a special spiritual power and meaning; perhaps reflecting the experience of a rapid boost of energy when it is consumed.

When alcoholic beverages were introduced to Warlpiri people, this word was applied to the new substance, before its destructive power was known: a semantic shift. Andrew intends to reaffirm the healthy values and practices of traditional pama in contrast with the harmful power of alcohol.
SONGS FOR PETROL AND ALCOHOL

*This painting is about ‘sugar ant’ - different to honey ant. It is like a fly.
We have the song for Parma and for strengthening Parma.
We haven’t got the song to send the Whiteman’s Parma away.
We can’t get rid of this one. We can only strengthen the good Parma.
The songs for petrol and alcohol must come from the Whiteman.
or we must dream new ones.

The children can’t save the world.
You (The white people) have lost your dreaming.
Maybe you don’t know the songs for alcohol and petrol.
You have to learn (reconnect to) your songs -
your Whitefeller Tjukurrpa.
To turn to us, to me (ie. Andrew and to Aboriginal people)
for the (alcohol and petrol dreaming) songs is not right.
To expect me to dream petrol/alcohol songs is too much."

Later Andrew asked straight out.
Do Karda have Tjukurrpa for parma?"
I exchanged glances with Petchkovsky.
We nodded to each other.
I said “Yes”.

He said, “Well, maybe you’d better go and get it. That’s your responsibility.”
I nodded “Alright Japljarri”.

The project, which responds to Japljarri’s formulations and enquiry, can also be seen as a venture in community action research. It has been through different phases from 1990 to 1997. There is a clear line of development of actions (as ideas in action) even if the implications and therapeutic conceptualisations are still somewhat obscure and even prenatal.

It has to be accepted that the document records and foregrounds many issues which require much more detailed and specialised investigation.
The phases of the Sugarman Project, primarily, are these:

1. the conception events

2. the research into the myth.

3. the acquisition of experience in the Aboriginal domain.

4. the transformation of key elements of the Dionysian myth into a (contemporary) poetic script which encodes pertinent psychological states.

5. the rehearsal and presentation, at a bush location, of the first part of the epic, as theatrical performance. (August 1996) - this with a view to assessing its impact on, mainly, Aboriginal sensibility.

6. the rehearsal and presentation in a town gallery location, of the second part of the epic (August 1997) - this with a view to assessing its impact on, mainly, ‘white’ mainstream sensibility.

7. evaluation, consolidation and use of the story elements in various therapeutic settings and situations to explore and test its efficacy as metaphor and psychological law.

8. preparation for a bush community tour with a view to developing parallel or two way Aboriginal and European performance, teaching and therapeutic opportunities (1998).

9. documentation (including video); continuous.

10. gradual and tentative formulations on implications for intercultural therapeutic procedure and communication.
LOCATION MAPS:

CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN REGION (From HALT EXHIBITION CATALOGUE 1993)

ALICE SPRINGS REGION: SHOWING ARRERNTJE SITES. (From Brooks, 1991 I.A.D.)
COUNTRY VOICES
ESTABLISHING THE CONTEXT 1990-1997

'...to work together to solve all these problems...'  
Andrew Spencer Japaljarri.

'Women and kids crying out- Stop the grog!'  
The Intjartnama painting by Elva Cook.

'The problem with our mob and alcohol'  
Bobby Randall.

Strehlow/Dionysos

'Standing in the arena'  
Karen Hedley - Sugarman maenad

A letter from Araluen Arts Centre

David Whitney

The chronological sequence of the project, covering approximately seven years, is marked by the following stories. Andrew Spencer's interview extract with Liz Thompson in Aboriginal Voices, published 1990, marks a beginning, since this was made at much the same time as my first meetings with Andrew Spencer when he worked for HALT.

Elva's painting story is from an interview in Story About Intjartnama (1993) an account of the theory and practice of the rehabilitation community. Like Andrew's interview, it gives a context on Central Australia, the issue of alcohol and presents a picture of an Aboriginal led initiative from an Aboriginal point of view. These are not statistical representations of the problem. Neither Andrew nor Elva need the statistics. Their personal experiences suffice.

The Randall extract is transcribed from a video interview by David Roberts made in the process of the Sugarman Project, August 1996. It outlines some basic principles of Aboriginal culture and introduces succinctly the problem and the paradox of determining responsibility for alcohol related offensiveness. The rest of this interview occurs in Chapter 13.

The extract from Strehlow's significant textual collection of cultural songs, ceremony and practices from the Western Arrernte region; Songs of Central Australia (1971) shows how the idea of a connection between ancient Greek mythology and the Arrernte traditions was already present in Strehlow's mind and is a sample of the research phase.
Karen Hethey's voice previews the 1996 Sugarman performance experience at Intjarnama, also in the Western Arrernte region, and Whitney's letter is a succinct impression of the public reaction to the 1997 Araluen Gallery events in Alice Springs town.

These six extracts, voices from the local country, help establish a setting and perhaps a summary of the work.

'A family breakdown' a poster produced by HALT (Healthy Aboriginal Life Team).

**Family breakdown**

*Walaja rdilykijarrimi*  
*WARLPIRI*

*Painting by Andrew Japaljarri Spencer*

The painting explains the process of breakdown of the Aboriginal family system under pressures from Western society. Most adults, leaving their children and other relatives behind when they travel to towns and cities, often stop caring for them and teaching the Aboriginal Law when they drink or gamble. Children and youth lose their culture (the Dreaming, and some part pots) or other things. They sometimes leave their families and become communities. If they have sex with people outside their proper group, they may catch AIDS or other STDs. Aboriginal Law and life will then pass away.
Jukurrpa Wankaru Juku
Keeping the Dreaming Alive

THE EXHIBITION

Jukurrpa Wankaru Juku - Keeping the Dreaming Alive is an exhibition of 23 paintings owned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) which is travelling to more than twenty venues throughout Australia until mid-1996. The Australian Exhibitions Touring Agency (AETA) is managing the tour of this exhibition of contemporary Aboriginal painting from the Central Desert region of Australia. The Western Australian tour is coordinated by Art on the Move.

From 1984 to 1991 a group of health workers and Aboriginal artists worked in and around Alice Springs in a health promotion program. They were called the Healthy Aboriginal Life Team (HALT) and included Hinton J. Lowu, artist Andrew Spencer Tjapaltjarri and Christine Franks. One of the contributions made by the Aboriginal artists was to produce paintings that focus on a range of health and lifestyle issues prevalent in many Aboriginal communities throughout Australia such as AIDS, diabetes, petrol sniffing, family breakdown and general substance abuse. The use of painting to communicate the array of different health and lifestyle messages was a unique and effective way to spread the health message. The HALT project was seen as a positive way for communities to regain control over their own culture and destiny.

LANDSCAPE AND JUKURRPA

The Central Desert region of the Northern Territory is characterised by its red soil, low scrub with chert bush and eucalyptus, complemented by the violet hue of the Musgrave Ranges stretching for almost 500 kilometres. Prior to the annual rainfall the land is dry and thirsty and seemingly empty; but as springs into life every year after the torrential rains which cause the desert landscape to become carpeted with an array of flowers and colours.

While there is no direct translation for the term Jukurrpa from Warlpiri language into English, to speak of Jukurrpa is to speak of the Dreaming, a complex notion for non-Aboriginal people. The Dreaming is seen as a time in which the land with its rivers, mountain ranges, waterholes and sandhills were formed. Jukurrpa can be expressed through dancing, singing, body decoration, sand painting, carving and other artistic practices.

AN AETA TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

Appendices: #1.
THE PAINTINGS AND SYMBOLS

The art and languages of the Aboriginal people change dramatically from region to region. At first glance the symbols used in these paintings appear abstract and intuitive, however they actually follow a code, a unique graphic vocabulary. Some of the stories told are only understood by the tribal elders or by the initiated. The development of the acrylic painting tradition in the Central Desert region started in 1971 and has expanded its practice and repertoire, finding subject matter not just in Jakurrpa but more contemporary events such as the arrival of a new piece of technology in the local area or in topics such as those explored in this exhibition. Below is a collection of selected symbols which will assist your reading and comprehension of the works in this exhibition.

Tracks, Paths

Meeting Place

Children

Adults

THE TECHNIQUE

The practice of working with acrylic paints is a relatively young art form in the Western Desert region. Painting Jakurrpa with acrylics gave a permanency to the transient sand paintings and body decorations which were previously lost or destroyed after the ceremonies. Working outside in a dusty environment meant that a quick drying acrylic paint was far preferable to the slow drying nature of oil paint which would have inevitably been dotted with dust and insects. The synthetic acrylic paint also provided the Aborigines with a larger selection of colours than the more traditional desert ochres.

The technique of acrylic painting is regulated by tribal law and is ordered and ritualistic in its execution. For example, at the Yuendumu community the entire ground of the canvas or board is initially painted in a monochrome layer of black or burnt red colour, representing either the body or the soil. This relates to traditional ceremonial celebrations of body decoration and sand painting. It is over this dark background that the forms and subsequent arrangement of coloured dots are carefully arranged. The method of applying dots of paint was originally used by the men who eventually gave them over to the women to use. The colours in these pictures do not have any specific traditional association but are more about personal preference and individual taste.

The approach to painting is ordered and requires people to know their respective roles within the community. The artists may choose to start painting from the centre and work out, painting in the different forms and shapes as they go. Depending on the size of the picture, the artist might even sit on the canvas to work. The dots are often applied with a brush or cotton buds, but some artists prefer to use sticks or twigs. Frequently Jakurrpa will be told and owned by one elder, who, in collaboration with others works on the painting and oversees its production. The painting is often carried out amongst ceremonial dancing and singing as in the context of the sand paintings. In some instances Jakurrpa is often so complex and involved that the pictures only tell small parts of the story, while in many cases tribal law prevents mention of it at all. The powerful imagery presented in this exhibition is a potent way to spread the 'word' and educate white and black communities throughout Australia.

This exhibition is organised and toured by the Australian Exhibitions Touring Agency (AETA) on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). AETA is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

The Western Australian tour of this exhibition is proudly sponsored by Healthway and coordinated by Art on the Move.

Prepared by Dan Williams, Project Officer - Education, AETA
Design: Sarah Bartok, AETA
Printed by VicPrint

Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation
ART ON THE MOVE - The National Exhibitions Touring Structure for Western Australia
Andrew Spencer

Interview extract

“When I started working in my own community there was no grog. That’s 1960 I’m talking about. The Europeans used to run the town like superintendents. There used to be no grog in town, people used to work and on Friday afternoon they’d go out hunting and come back Sunday afternoon. In 1966 we had small roads first, now we’ve got big ones. Then people started travelling, in the 1970s, from Alice Springs to Yuendumu; this was when people started bringing grog into the community and started drinking. The place has been getting worse and worse and worse. From 1970 to 1990 it’s been a big problem.

The problem with Aboriginal people only started when the grog came into the community. People started to think the grog is better, it makes you happy, it can’t make you sad when your family pass away, it will take your pain away. That’s why a lot of people who have lost their family, they want to drink, drink, drink and sort the problem out that way. In my opinion that’s wrong. We should sit down and try and talk to the family about what problems they’ve got. Otherwise the grog will kill them. In our community when people pass away there’s a lot of family to take over, so we want to get rid of this grog in town. We’ve got to look to the future. We are talking about Aboriginal history, about the future....

In Aboriginal communities we’ve always waited for the Europeans to do things. Now we have to do these things for ourselves and look to the future.

... up here we use these paintings specially for the very young and for the old people, those who can’t read. These posters and paintings are not just for my people but for the white people too. They might find something from us that they can turn around and use themselves.

Some people think the white people have different problems; no, they’re not different problems, they’re the same problems but white people act in different ways. We want to see all people working together - that’s the way I want to go. There’s only one way to go - to work together to solve all these problems.”
“Let’s start with the drinking mob. Here in the painting, these are the drinkers who sit around in Alice Springs and other places spending all their time and money just drinking. They forget about their families, their culture, their future and they tell all kinds of stories just so they can keep drinking. The drinkers go round to their families asking for money and food and they make promises but mostly they just keep drinking. They mess up the town camps, they fight, they humbug. They break up other people’s places. Poor things. They go around to the government mob too, and ask for help.

The government mob sit there watching. Some of them get sick of it. They don’t know what to do. They say “Oh what are we going to do?” We wanted to start Intjartnama as a drying out place. We wanted to go round to the drinkers and start facing up to people. We wanted to look after the kids to bring them here to the outstation. We used to drive round the streets at night. Some of the government helped us. That was the right thing to do. We know how to work these things.

Around the corners of the painting you can see women and kids crying out “Stop the Grog”. We had a march in the streets of Alice Springs. We cried out “Stop the Grog!” We went around to Dawns Deli (a takeaway outlet) and we said “Stop the Grog”. They took away the (liquor) licence. The drinkers and the grog runners have an easy time. They are really clever. They’ll find another way maybe. We know how these things work. We don’t sit around crying about it. We get up and do something about it. We keep going.... last year, this year, next year, we just keep going looking after people because that’s the right thing to do.
Thats Aboriginal Way.”
PMARA

ELVA'S PAINTING

About people coming to Injartnamsa
Who they are
The Intjartnarnna Parny. Elza Cook.
1994.
iii

Robert Randall

On care for Tjukurrpa, Ngurra, Walytja, Karakurlpa - the classic principles of Aboriginal culture
Edited transcript from sugarman video interview with David Roberts. August 1996.

What I find as being the problem with our mob and alcohol is not having the responsibility of caring. In the traditional way for Aboriginal people it (responsibility and caring) was a necessary ingredient for health and feeling good about everything.

There were four parts you had to feel good about and you were responsible for that. It was your relationship between "me and that other thing".

1. TJUKURRPA

Of the four, firstly there was Tjukurrpa. The belief of the creation period and the laws that were set down from the beginning.

These laws and rules were handed down, through ceremonies, it was passed down from one generation to another.

So I had to take care for that, it was my responsibility. You separate me from that and already you've made me weak.

Tjukurrpa, in our words is the belief of creation, like our law, our religion. You look... at the past, it is part of the present and will still be there in the future. Its what non Aboriginal people refer to as 'The Dreamtime' but it's real. This is Tjukurrpa, this is not a rock, only a rock, it is my link to Tjukurrpa and all the stories are in this... you realise.... its the Tjukurrpa.

2. NGURRA

The second thing is Ngurra. You had to care for Ngurra. Ngurra is the place... or 'my country'.

My country (my Ngurra) can be my house, it could be my tribal area. Wherever you are at any moment of that time, that's my country.

I have to care for my country and in caring for country you have to know it's stories and what totemic ancestral beings are associated with that. Its important. And anything that happened that was for you to know (you) pass on to your kids.

That's where it brings in the sacred sites or sites of significance.

It's that one there, that country caring. You had to know that.

That had to be passed down through elders who are responsible to pass that down to you. It can be grandparents, it can be uncles and aunties and when you are a little child it's the parents. Both sides will tell you stories about country.
3. WALYTJA

The third thing is Walytja. Family.
You’ve got to care for family. When you look at the Aboriginal family it’s many mothers and fathers...heaps of them, because there’s four lines of relationship which teaches how to care for family. The whole tribe is family, it’s related, it’s that big. And if you break any part of that you are weaker. You’ll start reaching out for something that may help to make you strong again.
The strength is in the Kanyini - the care. You take away that care and you start alienating yourself. You become alienated from others.

4. KURANPA

The fourth one. The other very strong one is what we call Kuranpa.
It’s the spirit. Your spirit. I’ve got to be responsible for that strength in that spirit.
The ‘holiness’ has got to be mine. The Kuranpa is like... like a soul, it’s me, second me, right there beside me.
It’s here right beside me always. We cannot move without each other.
But if that (Kuranpa) is weak and it’s hanging back it affects me physically. Just listening to a lie is enough for that.
Saying ‘no’ to children when they wish to have something can affect that as a child.

You’ll notice when Aboriginal parents raise children they will give them anything... at the mission they say we spoil our kids rotten...we don’t. You’re strengthening the relationship between that child, the physical and that child, the soul. You are making that strong partnership so that they will want to be together all the time.

A physical (being) without the soul or spirit (Kuranpa) will die.
Sometimes it can die quickly, sometimes it can die slowly because the spirit will want to leave it. They are meant to be together, they’ve got to be kept together. Anytime they’re separated that physical will start losing something, it’ll start getting sick.

And so the most responsible part of true Aboriginal people is that...That one we’re being responsible for.
Relationship to my beliefs (Tjukurrpa) to my soul or spirit (Kuranpa) to my land (Ngurra) and to my people as family (Walytja).
And that Kanyini (care). If that link is strong you don’t need any outside things at all. You don’t need alcohol. You don’t need drugs. You don’t need anything because that is enough.

A Story.

My father used to pester me to take him home to country and I said, "Well a bit later Dad, hang on... a little bit later. I’ve got work to do".
He said "Oh, but you’ve got to take me, you said you’d take me".
And I said, "But I’ve got to take a week off to do that, we’ve got a long way to travel".
Now, OK, I said. "I'll take you out this weekend".

So I picked him up Friday and we drove out, heading towards Arnhem Land from Darwin. He was still low, miserable, but as we got near to East Alligator River you could see the spirit started to come back. It started to get strong, he was established, strengthening that link by visiting. He is coming!

And then we enter the reservation, heading towards the Arnhem Land coast where his country is, and honestly... Boom! He was getting younger, you couldn't believe it. He was almost jumping out to do all the errands instead of telling us to do it all the time.

He wanted to do it.

And then when we went into the country... man!... here was this young man who'd... regained.. 20 years in the drive from Darwin to his country.

He was a different man. The tone of his voice became strong.

He stopped us near the site and he was speaking to the ancestral spirit before he took us boys in to show us the sites. He was going to pass knowledge down to us.

This man, from that sick old man where you'd just say "Oh that poor old guy, he's going to die soon"... Man, he's not going to die for a hundred years. He was associating back where he wanted to be with his country and his spirit was with him.

That's the care I'm talking about. You really don't need anything else. You don't need alcohol, but alcohol can seem to be what you need when you haven't got that caring strength.

It's got to be strong. It's got to be kept strong. If it's weakened, you're gone and you're vulnerable to all sorts of things that are happening that will weaken you.

This is where the alcohol has got us.

It came in when we were starting to be broken down in family caring. We thought. "Ah. Something will fix us, this medicine... this grog... its good".

Grog became the means by which we were able to care for each other but it was false. He (Sugarman/alcohol) was tricking us.

He was tricking everybody. At the start it was good but then we quickly started fighting, we quickly started arguing and some of our people even started breaking very strong traditional laws under the influence of alcohol.

It was a false power. It just made you feel good for a few seconds.

You become this power and you think that you are doing it, but you are doing it the wrong way.

That is not good for family at all. Once that comes into the family they'll break up.

I say. "Our problem is not an Aboriginal problem, it's problem of a system that has fractured us and alienated us from the areas where we should be responsible for. What we need to do is get that strength back through caring the right way for each other."
Strehlow/Dionysos

In Ted Strehlow's monumental book, *Songs of Central Australia* (1971) there is an aperture through which he introduces Dionysos into the Central Australian landscape.

In his survey of the subject matter and themes of Arrernte songs and ceremonies he draws comparisons and makes references to the mythology and classical literature of Europe. He successfully demonstrates that the Arrernte poetic traditions have a quality and psychological sophistication which places them on a par with the great poetic and mythological traditions of Europe. He is arguing against the then, Eurocentrist accusations of primitivism which had relegated Australian Aborigines to the bottom of the evolutionary and spiritual heap.

In the chapter in question, from around pages 400 to 414, Strehlow is giving an account of young men's initiation rites (which it would be circumspect to refrain from quoting here). Strehlow's observations had implications for the development of the Sugarman Project in so far as they point up ceremonial procedures and themes which are remarkably akin to some significant elements of ancient Dionysian ceremony and "frenzy"¹ such as;

i. the process of initiation.
ii. the role of physical pain and forms of dismemberment.
iii. the partition of animals from the hunt.
iv. forms of 'angry fury' and contained frenzy which pervade specific ceremonial events.
v. the attitude of the young men to the old including an ambivalent mix of; reverence, terror and awe for old men/fathers and the 'supernatural beings' who back them up, including the apparent oppression of the youths by the old men; and a satirical defiance and even derision of the old men, through ancestral beings which is provided for in the ceremony (as a release).

Strehlow makes a comparative reference to Greek mythology and specifically quotes Euripides and Aristophanes, showing how Dionysos is treated, on the one hand as a figure of "divine glory and terror" by Euripides and on the other hand as a "figure of comedy" and "riotous laughter" by the comic writer Aristophanes. Strehlow points out that in pagan Europe as in pagan Australia, "men could both revere their supernatural personages, and laugh at their escapades, without any feeling that their actions were incongruous or.... incompatible". (ibid p410)

Strehlow supports his argument with a passage from Euripides. Teiresias is speaking to Pentheus warning him to be extremely careful in his dealings with his cousin Dionysos, this violently unpredictable, supernatural creature, "this most tender and most bitter of gods".

The translation by A.S. Way² may seem a little florid, but Strehlow used it, thus I quote it, and thus we introduce Dionysos, set by Strehlow in the midst of a vivid, stark (probably secret) traditional Arrernte initiation song series which, coincidentally, is redolent with Dionysian imagery.

"Two chiefest powers,
Prince, among men there are: divine Demeter-
Earth is she, name her by which name thou wilt;- 
She upon dry food nurtureth mortal men:

Then followeth Semele's Son; (Dionysos) to match her gift
The cluster's flowing draught he found, and gave
To mortals, which gives rest from grief to men
Woe worn, soon as the vine's stream filleth them.

And sleep, the oblivion of our daily ills,
He gives- there is none other balm for toils.
He is the God's libation, though a God,
So that through him do men obtain good things.

A prophet is this God: the Bacchic frenzy
And ecstasy are full-fraught with prophecy:
For, in his fullness when he floods our frame,
He makes his maddened votaries tell the future.

Somewhat of Ares' dues he shares withal:
Hosts harness- clad, in ranks arrayed, sometimes
Are thrilled with panic ere a spear be touched;
This too is a frenzy Dionysus sends

Yet shalt thou see him even on Delphi's crags
With pine -brands leaping o'er the cloven crest,
Tossing on high and waving Bacchus bough-
Yea, great through Hellas..........................

I, then, and Cadmus, whom thou laugh'st to scorn,
Will wreath our grey heads with ivy, and will dance-
A greybeard pair, yet cannot we but dance.
Not at thy persuasion will I war with Gods."

² lines 274-325
Strehlow then mentions Pentheus’ end, torn to pieces by his own mother Agave and her companions, at Dionysos instigation. Deluded and grandiose, betrayed by his own arrogance and naivety, Pentheus thrusts himself, in women’s clothes, into the enclave of the women’s ceremony and the frenzy is unleashed upon him.

It can be no accident that the observant and erudite Strehlow set this scene right in the midst of his description of activities within the enclave of the men’s ceremonies.

He then quotes a Sir Richard Jebb in a commentary on the *The Bacchae*.

“This wonderful tragedy has all through it a flashing divine light, a Dionysiac glory of joy and terror, which is sometimes more oriental than Greek. It was composed or finished in Macedonia—in that northern region where the Thracian bacchants were said to have rent Orpheus in pieces; and it has the true fire of their worship. On that summer evening in the Asiatic camp when the gory head of the Roman Crassus was brought to the Parthian general’s tent, it was brought to the sound of the verses in which Agave of Euripides vaunts her ghastly trophy.”

The mention of Dionysos in the context of Strehlow’s work and the hint, even if unintentional, of possible thematic conjunctions, between ‘songs of ancient Greece’ and ‘songs of Central Australia’ was an early stimulus to the attempt to write a Central Australian version of Dionysos, beginning with ‘Sugarman Returns’, a version of *The Bacchae*.

Had I chosen another direction this thesis could have been an analysis of Strehlow’s profound works for the light they shed on the current existential situation of Central Australian people and the viability of the concept of introducing a European poetic myth as a contribution to dealing with a cultural crisis. Such an analysis can be amplified from Strehlow’s observations and records, including, for example his observations on disillusionment in his Final Summary Chapter (around page 703).

I chose the proactive path, making a ‘song cycle’ which speaks to that existential situation. Perhaps someone else can try the analysis.
Karen Hethey

extract from an account of the Sugarman performance by a participant (see Ch.14)

"Standing in the arena, covered in white clay, the taste of red dust still in my mouth and the echoes of a gut wrenching scream still reverberating in my throat, I can still feel the charged silence of those who bore witness to this event. Along with twenty other women, I have just torn apart, literally limb from limb, a four metre puppet in a re-enactment of the rip up of King Pentheus... from The Bacchae. I can still feel the strength of the blinding rage I needed to tear the head from his body and the depth of grief and shame of a mother who has just realised that in her intoxicated state she has torn apart her own son. This is a scene from the Sugarman story and for the first time since I was four years old I found a place to release my rage in a constructive way - to create a new way to tell an ancient story."

photo. Scene from the Bacchae/Sugarman Returns, Hethey as maenad.
Araluen/Christopher Brockebank/ Craig San Roque

The Sugarman Project

14 November 1997

Dear Christopher and Craig,

I write to follow on from our earlier discussions concerning the Sugarman Story project stage 2 and its impact on Araluen and our audiences.

The Sugarman Project is ambitious, intense and powerful in its scale and appeal. The project and its many components were well received at Araluen and provided some creative and visionary uses of our space and relationships to our/your audiences. The exhibition was strengthened by the salon sessions and the integration of performance. The attendances alone indicate the support for the project and stimulated discussion and debate created by the work.

The sense of community and commitment by participants and attendees to the exhibition and all its elements are important components in reviewing the impact and success of the project. This display component of Sugarman and the maturation of the imagery developed through relationship to the HALT project, the Sugarman Stage 1 and the workshop program was very strong. The performance component, a major element of community involvement was equally strong and consistently well attended. In all a great success.

Araluen's galleries are often by the nature of our exhibitions very 2 dimensional and contemplative rather than interpretive and totally engulfing and Sugarman Story was certainly a change to this. The complete environment created by the Sugarman team was all encompassing and very detailed. There was a sense of a new environment that impacted upon a variety of the senses. This environment was equally suited to an installation, a more formal gallery approach or performance.

It was good to both work with and challenge Araluen's practices and expectations. The attendances of 1636 in total and 605 for the performances speak highly of the acceptance and attractiveness of the project, and I look forward to the next stage, the Sugarman on tour program.

Congratulations and I look forward to Araluen being able to assist on any future development of Sugarman.

Best wishes,

DAVID WHITNEY
Director

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Owned and operated by the Northern Territory Government through the Office of the Arts and Cultural Affairs

Northern Territory Government Art and Cultural Affairs
Background and context for the evolution of the Sugarman Project.
An appreciation of myth as a starting point for intercultural communication.

PRELUDE
CHAPTER 1  BEING RAW AND GETTING COOKED
CHAPTER 2  MEETING THE HEALTHY ABORIGINAL LIFE TEAM
CHAPTER 3  RAISING A QUESTION ABOUT ALCOHOL
CHAPTER 4  PASSING THROUGH THE GAP
PRELUDE

On the continuum of myth:

"Like a musical work, myth operates on the basis of a twofold continuum; one part of it is external and is composed, in the one instance of historical, or supposedly historical, events forming a theoretically infinite series from which each society extracts a limited number of relevant incidents with which to create its myths. . . . .

The second aspect of the continuum is internal and is situated in the psychophysiological time of the listener, the elements of which are very complex; they involve the periodicity of cerebral waves and organic rhythms, the strength of the memory and the power of the attention.

Mythology makes demands. . . . on the neuromental aspects because of the length of the narration, the recurrence of certain themes and the other forms of back references and parallels which can only be correctly grasped if the listeners mind surveys the whole range of the story as it is unfolded. All this applies, too, in the case of music."


James Hillman on the art of the mythopoetic and ‘personifying’:

"Personifying not only aids discrimination; it also offers another avenue of loving, of imagining things in a personal form so that we can find access to them with our hearts.

"The image of the heart- l’immagine del cuor- was an important idea in the work of Michelangelo who was strongly influenced by the Platonist tradition. Imagining with the heart refers to a mode of perception that penetrates through... physical appearances to a personified interior image ... by imagining through and beyond what the eye sees, the imagination envisages primordial images. And these present themselves in personified forms.

Another Mediterranean, the Spaniard, Miguel de Unamuno returned to the relationship of heart and personified images and explained the necessary interdependence between love and personifying....

Our feeling of the world, upon which is based our understanding of it, is necessarily anthropomorphic and mythopoetic.

Loving is a way of knowing, and for loving to know, it must personify. Personifying is thus a way of knowing, especially knowing what is invisible, hidden in the heart.

In this perspective personifying is not a lesser, primitive mode of apprehending but a finer one. It presents in psychological theory the attempt to integrate heart into method and to return abstract thoughts and dead matter to their human shapes."

On grids and walking tracks.

"Wafting over the low gneiss outcrops east of town, I can hear the dull throb of Aboriginal singing in the chill morning air. My step quickens. The thrall of families, only recently encountered, singing their stories in Arrente, original language in these hills. Had they been singing through the night? Diverting from my walk, I approach the camp. A dozen dogs squall; thoughts of an unobtrusive meeting. Five men are sharing a flagon of moselle while women and kids sleep near the fire at their feet. And the breakfast compere sends a cheerio to the families who requested that last song from the Tanami band. The transistor percolates onwards through a dithering welter of Arrente Country and Western, Warlpiri Rock, Lorijja Blues and whatever it is we, both whites and blacks, think we mean by 'traditional music'.

The place, Alice Springs, crucible of thousands of anecdotes, target of as many projected fantasies, a place to encounter the touristically geared frontier, invented on and after the hoof. Distinct from the slumbering ranges surrounding it, the town has the nervous temporality of a film set. Its Arrente walking tracks have been erased by the grid structures of enlightenment town planning. Old men sit on the ground at the corners of the grid, their resistance to the zeal of White improvisation is palpable."

from Documentary on Gravity by Rod Moss, Central Australian painter 1995.
intoxication one

conception story

CHAPTER 1

BEING RAW AND GETTING COOKED

1. CANNIBALISM

The customary law of procedure in a research project, as I understand it, is that, first, one outlines the thematic direction of one’s enquiry and the foundation question. This question may be a variation of simple but stimulating queries - “Who Am I?” “Who are you?” or “What is that?” “What does that do?” By way of a review of literature, one establishes a context and foundation for the specific and perhaps unique contribution to the question in hand which the researcher wishes to make. After assembling the corpus of the relevant literature, one points to the specific part of that ‘body’ which the writer wishes to lay out for consumption by one’s fellows. One then begins to cook that particular bit. A variation is to cut the body (of literature) into bits and reassemble it in new combinations. Or declare that, after all, such a body is not worth eating. This traditional procedural rite in academic customary law can be understood, wryly, as a sublimated form of cannibalism.

2. CEREMONY

Mentally eating bodies of literature has acquired massive value within Westernised intellectual culture. It is the sanctioned form of absorbing knowledge. There is another approach which is closer to participative ceremony, as practised, traditionally, by indigenous Australians and by some streams of the Western traditions. This relies upon the procedures of ‘whole body’ ceremonials, as distinct from the mainly ‘head and belly’ oriented hunting and gathering activities which underpin many critical academic methodologies.

Collaborative Action Research could be described as a variation on a form of the participative ceremonial approach and it is, I submit, a politic way to engage in intercultural researches in the Central Australia of the post Mabo turmoil, where a new ethics is being painfully negotiated on matters of interracial, intellectual and cultural ‘property’ exchange. Western cannibalism is no longer the go.

I am using ‘ceremony’ in this context - as referring to a process of collective preparation for, then participation in a ‘performance’ - which is intended to contribute to an increase in fertility of experience or an enhanced state of awareness about a matter upon which one’s spiritual survival may depend.
In ceremony it is essential that one participates, and is seen to participate. A change in the state of one's being is expected, probably inevitable, and some display of that changed state is obligatory. A ceremony may take place at set time and a set place but a ceremonial sensibility can also pervade ordinary life activities. In this sense, we can think of a 'ceremonial state of mind', perhaps as an alternative to a 'cannibalistic state of mind'.

The cannibalistic state of mind expresses itself by producing (regurgitating) questions and demanding (swallowing) answers intended to fill the belly or head of the swallower. It is this form of invasive voraciousness which has alienated many Aboriginal people from engaging in cooperation with Western research projects. The rite of academic cannibalism is about getting knowledge by mentally eating bodies of thought.

The ceremonial approach is primally about taking part in a collective 'dance' and acquiring knowledge by participatory osmosis and revelation. Both may be necessary and complementary and in both cases, the cannibalism and the ceremony, one should be stronger or more alive in experience at the end of the event, having incorporated psychic vitality or participated in the manifestation of 'ancestral' spirit.

The reader will note that I have a disquieting ambivalence about, what I consider, acts of academic ancestral necrophilia, believing that discovery during participation in ceremony has a risk and animation which is somehow more appealing. Perhaps it is merely a matter of taste.

3. THE METAPHOR AND ITS MESSAGE

In The Raw and The Cooked - An Introduction To The Science Of Mythology, Levi Strauss organises his book around the metaphor of musical form. He presents his thoughts as though he were presenting musical cycles, sonatas, cantata. His subject is indigenous South American songs, stories, and what is told and what is hidden in the poetic structures of myth.

I have asked myself, what is the metaphor of primal process which best organises what I have been doing? You will see that I will display a song cycle and a series of mythologems of several cultural origins but I am not taking apart a myth in order to show its organs and bones, as Levi Strauss and the Structuralists have done. Nor am I revealing 'primitive' myths to back up psychological theories or interpret them psychologically, as Freud, Jung and the psychoanalytic anthropologists have attempted. Metaphorically, I have 'eaten and drunk the body of Dionysos', and I have in turn, been consumed by 'him'. In fact, hunting, dismemberment, swallowing and regurgitation of or by a mythic complex is what was accomplished.

In order to fulfil the purpose of the project I had to bring to birth not a 'report' or a document of textual analysis but an intercultural ceremonial as the demonstration of the efficacy of the Dionysos story for its intended purpose.
The presentation of the text of the Sugarman song cycle is a way of synthesising the research, because packed into it, is evidence of how well I and my collaborators have grasped the realities of the psychology of intoxication, the realities of the social cultural setting and the realities of ceremonial performance as a mode of touching and telling tales of the experiences of humanity.

Our project community has involved, directly and indirectly, some three to four hundred people of many races and cultural histories, whose work together finally brought into being, on a specific arid zone sand hill in the Western Macdonnell Ranges, a meeting with the avatar of intoxication, Dionysos, appearing in a new shape but with the old story still intact. That meeting had to be enacted publically and ceremonially, since it had a symbolic function in contributing toward the development of psychological thinking about alcohol addiction. Effective thinking depends in part upon effective use of the symbolic function (as used and developed through the Jungian explorations of mental process).

And so this project may be read as an exercise in symbolic process and procedures which extends from the Jungian tradition, exemplified in Rosemary Gordon’s book Dying and Creating (1978). Here she describes the imagery and the symbolic language used by analysts, patients, artists and exponents of specific African cultural myths as they grapple with the facts of dying and the origins of death; and because these matters and experiences are so intimate and so hard to formulate, the best possible expression of the almost unfathomable realities of human life and death tends to be in the shape of symbolic acts and images. Our theme is intoxication and like Rosemary’s, the theme is also dying and creating, entwined with the search for some way of giving meaning to apparently mindless, ruthless acts of cultural suicide. The meaning, if it is to be found, comes first through gathering and showing images, composing them into a sequences and then perhaps, if the milieu is right, the sense will arrive.

4. ARTAUD ON SYMBOLIC PROCESS IN THEATRE

"Woman, this man is walking into the net.
He will visit the Bacchae; and there death shall punish him."
And he shall know Dionysus, son of Zeus, in his full nature
God, Most terrible, although most gentle, to mankind." Euripides. The Bacchae

In his hallucinatory sermons, in his poetic manifesto The Theatre and Its Double (1938/1958) Antonin Artaud speaks of the ‘theatre’ as alchemy and as a plague whose function it is to “drain abscesses collectively” (p28-30)

The metaphor is astoundingly potent especially when related, not so much to conventional theatre, but to theatre which becomes participatory ceremony in the Dionysian sense and in the way in which Central Australian Aboriginal ceremony (inma/pulapa) is used.

(see Marshall and Gordon’s notes on Inma, Chapter Nine, below)
A few brief quotes will have to suffice to give the sense of those of Artaud's ideas which have deeply influenced my negotiations with the alchemical potential of theatre as a way of collecting and holding symbolic actions and images of intoxication, dying and creating.

1. "Like the plague, the theatre is a formidable call to the forces that impel the mind, by example, to the source of its conflicts."

2. "The terrorising apparition of Evil which in the Mysteries of Eleusis was produced in its pure, truly revealed form corresponds to the dark hour of certain ancient tragedies which all theatre must recover."

3. "In the theatre, as in the plague there is a kind of strange sun, a light of abnormal intensity by which it seems that the difficult and even the impossible suddenly become our normal element."

4. "... and that is why all great Myths are dark, so that one cannot imagine, save in an atmosphere of carnage, torture and bloodshed, all the magnificent Fables which recount to the multitudes the first sexual division and the first carnage of essences that appeared in creation..."

5. "The theatre, like the plague, is in the image of this carnage and this essential separation."

6. "The theatre, like the plague......releases conflicts, disengages powers, liberates possibilities, and if these possibilities and these powers are dark, it is the fault, not of the plague, nor of the theatre, but of life."

Artaud goes on to write about the social and moral body as though it were infected, from time to time by a massive abscess or plague in much the same way as biological plagues periodically recur and infect and decimate the population. He suggests, poetically, that the theatre provides us with a way of lancing and draining the periodically recurring pustules in the social body. By making this suggestion and making it so vividly he turned my attention to the use of a certain kind of ceremonial theatre, based upon or derived from the "dark hours of certain ancient tragedies" which can have a therapeutic use and a therapeutic effect upon a body of people who have a common concern and a common trouble.

I count The Bacchae by Euripides and Oedipus Rex by Sophocles as two of our darkest, ancient tragedies. Both of these ceremonial theatre pieces addressed the matter of a peculiar kind of plague in the social and moral body of the state (Ancient Thebes).

2. Artaud p.28-30
It is a very small step from ancient Thebes to ancient and modern Central Australia. For here too, the body politic and the body personal is infected by a peculiar plague. which the dramatic tragedies of Oedipus and The Bacchae reflect with startling clarity. Oedipus, a tale of dispossession, the search for the truth of identity, unwitting incest and the fateful consequences of past 'crimes' forming a repetitive family tragedy. The Bacchae, a tale of spiritual retribution, irrational, divine payback, family dismemberment and manic intoxication.

Returning to Artaud—

"The theatre, like the plague is a crisis which is resolved by death or cure. And the plague is a superior disease because it is a total crisis after which nothing remains except death or an extreme purification. Similarly the theatre is a disease because it is the supreme equilibrium which cannot be achieved without destruction, it invites the mind to share a delirium which exalts its energies; and we can see, to conclude, that from the human point of view, the action of theatre, like that of a plague, is beneficial, for, impelling men to see themselves as they are, it causes the mask to fall, reveals the lie, the slackness, baseness and hypocrisy of our world....and in revealing to collectivities of men their dark power, their hidden force, it invites them to take, in the face of destiny, a superior and heroic attitude they would never have assumed without it....And the question we must now ask is whether, in this slippery world which is committing suicide without noticing it, there can be found a nucleus of men capable of imposing this superior notion of the theatre, men who will restore to all of us the natural and magic equivalent of the dogmas in which we no longer believe." 3

The sentiments expressed in this apocalyptic piece by Artaud, his other writings on the alchemy of theatre have given initial direction to the Dionysos metamorphosis project, because he articulates a strange kind of paradox with which I have become familiar here. Maybe, I wondered, the plague of alcohol intoxication is destroying Aboriginal life, but maybe also it is a means to bring about a new equilibrium. Maybe the only 'medicine' is to give up attempts to cure the 'plague' but at the same time continue to mirror the dark tragic hour, through(these)images which reflect the paradox. Morality tales about drunkenness might work as a health promotion exercise but maybe only theatre shaped in the Dionysian tradition will be accurate enough to appeal to the anarchically intoxicated pre rational state of mind which seems to possess the bodies of the drinkers.

In looking for appropriately dramatic images which would have an alchemic effect of the kind Artaud advocates, we began naively and rawly but we ended cooking something up, exhilarating to experience, which in Artaud's sense, liberated possibilities, revealed and released conflicts, disengaged powers and demonstrated potentials which stretched each participant to the limits of their ego centric and ethno centric cultural boundaries.

3 Artaud 'The Theatre and the Plague' in The Theatre and It's Double. page 30
A second extract from Karen Hethey's record of the Sugarman performance gives indication of this stretching of herself as a participant. 4

"... somehow I found myself having a creative responsibility for shaping the final scene, (Sugarman Returns, a version of The Bacchae). The best way I can describe it is like I was being driven, it was strange, almost an obsession. Building the puppet of King Pentheus, knowing that I was going to tear it apart was a powerful experience. I remember collecting bullock bones to make his rib cage, making his heart and filling him with red strips of fabric, symbolic of blood. Together with some of the women we brought him to life. He became more than an inanimate object, but a being whom I had literally created. To some extent I was his mother and this intensified the drama I could bring to the scene. At another level it deeply touched my psyche and understanding as to what it might be like for a mother to destroy her child.........

After rehearsing (the Bacchae/Pentheus rip up) scene my liver was surprisingly, incredibly sore. Later that night (Marlene Nampitjinpa had said) that the scene had reminded her of an old Pintubi story that her mother had told her when she was young. It was a story about the liver, kidneys and heart crying..." 5

4 As part of the Sugarman Papers. Hethey's article 'Spinning Yarns'; unpublished.
5 For an echo see Kerényi on the Bacchic 'child' dismemberment ceremonies by maenadic women in Dionysos chapter - Myths of Arrival p 179-189.
5. FAMILY BUSINESS

The seminal action which kicked the Sugarman Project into life was a meeting with a man whose epistemological lineage is direct Warlpiri /Pintupi. The man was Andrew Spencer Japalarri but really there is no such thing as a 'sole man' in this culture so when I acknowledge Andrew I really include all the members of his extended family, whose personal experiences have helped form the character of the project. Learning from their experience has shaped the public performance text of the script and shaped the hidden (bush) text, which can be elaborated in personal engagements.

The personal relationships which sustained the development work include Barry and Elva Cook, a family group of Western Arrernte location with an equally wide ranging network of connection and responsibility which intersects with my own and the Spencer clan.

photo  Andrew Spencer Japalarri with Marlene Ross 1990
In Central Australia, as everywhere else in this continent, there is no pristine stream of culture, there is an eddying interaction of peoples and histories, of traditions, griefs and new beginnings. There are also the psychic ‘plagues’, which for better or for worse, as cross cultural infections, change people’s definitions of themselves, their destiny and their fate. The people mentioned above are acutely aware of how their lives, traditions and fate are being altered by the substance and the substances of the Western European cultural repertoire.

It is those people, and the members of their and my extended families, who have determined the course of this project, the search for those stories which would serve our purposes. It is they who have responded with stories of their own to add to the pot of a ‘cultural medicine’. It should be clearly stated and understood that this project is a ‘family business’ it is not an institutional project, it is not a ‘research program’ and it is sustained by a sense of mutual family obligation. I say to underline that the evolution and management of the Sugarman as a therapeutic project in alcohol intervention depends entirely upon the evolution and management of a network of relationships, a social ecosystem. The project, so called, does not exist separately from the walytja matrix.

6 I first heard this phrase ‘cultural medicine’ from Bobby Randall (20-7-97). It is the most aptly descriptive phrase that I have come across to describe the way in which songs, dance, stories, art and human interactions can combine to form therapeutic procedures which address cultural distress in the human social ecosystem.
6. THE FIRST SESSION TELLS ALL

The moment which I am acknowledging as the conception point of this project may have been partly a coincidental event, but there had been preparation for and establishment of a mental context for the exchange. There was originally another line of enquiry, out of which the Sugarman Project grew, which I tend to refer to as an Intercultural Therapeutics Project. In the interests of sharpness of focus I have reluctantly set aside much of the ethno-psychological dimensions of the experiences in Central Australia. My main intention is primarily to address the pressing problem about alcohol set by my Aboriginal work partners and family. However in order to do justice to that I have had to give some attention to the metaphysics of cross cultural work, which includes making preliminary observations on cultural transference communications and cross cultural symbolic process.

In these first four chapters I signal the possibility of applying experience from the way psychoanalytic exchanges operate in order to heighten awareness of what may be psychically passing between people, across the cultural borders, in a symbolic language.

Symbol exchange and intercultural symbol formation is, I believe, an aspect of intercultural transaction in Australia which requires and deserves a great deal of attention. The painter Rod Moss is one of those whose work is helping to create a juxtaposition of Aboriginal and European images, apparently social realism, but in fact his paintings are acts of national symbol formation, articulating the almost inexpressible experience of dying and living on the cutting edge of the late 20th century cultural transition. Located around the town grid of Alice Springs, his paintings may require decoding for the viewer unfamiliar with the life of the families he paints as they enact apocalyptic dramas in corrugated iron shelters, on the back streets of town, in the river bed of the Todd and in ceremonies in secluded arid valleys. However once that image unpacking process begins and the stories are told, the harsh and poignant realities they describe leap into conscious awareness and find voice and somehow settle one's spirit because a subconscious pressure has found a place in awareness. This works for both the white and the black viewer. The paintings name existential situations which have until then been unnamed or repressed.

The Sugarman script, read in this light, may be seen as a response to the same genre of experiences, in fact an elucidation, such as may happen in a psychotherapy dialogue where the analysand is trying to make sense of some semi conscious state and then analyst and analysand, as an ensemble, begin to piece together words, images, anecdotes, analogies, metaphors, stories as a linking system between the conscious and the unconscious, the body and the psyche, the known and the unknown, the nameless and the named. The Sugarman imagery, scene by scene, can be understood as a long and involved psychotherapeutic elucidation. The performance events can be read as an enactment and amplification of that elucidation.
In psychotherapy it is a common experience that the first session tells all. Here, in potentia, is displayed, often unconsciously, the unwrapped and revealed primal state, dream, myth/thought, preconception and behavioural display which will set the course of the therapeutic drama. Everything is contained in the first meeting, in microcosm and everything unravels from that first conception/conjunction between the self and the other who listens.

In September 1996 (after the first major Sugarman performance) I reviewed the notes of the series of conversations which occurred in April 1990 in Alice Springs and which had, I believed, triggered the project. I was surprised at what I found there. My memory had simplified those events, of course, and I was reminded of the complexity and richness of the actual meetings. With the benefit of six years’ experience I could see how much I had missed at the time, but also how much my training as an analyst helped me absorb, attend to and interpret certain elements of the interaction between myself and Spencer Japaljarri, which, with hindsight, I can see contained, in potentia, an entire course of cultural collaboration.

7. A BLUEPRINT FOR RELATIONSHIP

It might help to see the painting known as Reconciliation by Andrew Spencer Japaljarri. In those first conversations Andrew was organising me into taking a position exemplified by the third scenario: The European and Aboriginal ‘map’ set down on the ground in equivalence. I went willing but innocently to the slaughter. In that third panel/scenario he creates a blueprint design for the construction of preferred working relationships between the exponents of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal traditions. It is a piece of sociocultural architecture. I have attempted to follow this pattern throughout the Sugarman Project.

The painting sets, by implication, a form within which exponents of Western therapeutic tradition can reflectively engage in a critique of the positions taken by themselves when faced with problems and practices arising from encounters with patients and practitioners of an ‘other’ culture. Which of the three scenarios are in operation at any moment?

The painting and an interpretive text is reproduced below from the catalogue of the HALT travelling exhibition7 Jukurrpa Wanka Wanka Juku or Keeping the Dreaming Alive (1993)

7. Note: I have expanded the interpretive possibilities of the Reconciliation painting in an, as yet unpublished paper ‘On Being In Two Minds’ - especially in terms of the ethics and procedures of bi cultural or ‘Two Way’ work.
The white horseshoe forms face one another across two open books. They are non-Aboriginal people, each with a file or paper before him/her. The circle surrounding them shows that this is an exclusive, 'closed', system of information. The dualistic, oppositional structuring of the information, and adversarial style of the communication, are characteristic of this way of producing and controlling the flow of information. Decisions are reached without reference to anyone outside the institution.

Below this representation, non-Aboriginal people again form a system for producing and exchanging information, and for making decisions. They gather around a table (the white rectangular form); again each has his/her own file or papers. Participants in this institution leave its domain to 'consult' with Aboriginal communities; they bring and present information in their own literary formats, entering the group and moving towards central positions. The usual circular formations for Aboriginal consultation, negotiation and decision making are distorted by the intrusions.

The third figure proposes an alternative which could resolve the problems of cultural difference and disempowerment which are exposed in the others. Members of different cultural groups meet in a circle, exchanging knowledge in their own distinctive language formats (symbolised by the book and the Aboriginal painting). Relative status of the roles, and of the different forms of knowledge, are equivalent in this organisational structure. The tracks which can be discerned between this group and the Aboriginal communities, are those of their representatives, who mediate the exchange of information and negotiated decisions.
CHAPTER 2

MEETING THE HEALTHY ABORIGINAL LIFE TEAM.
ALICE SPRINGS. APRIL 1990

1. THE ARCHETYPE IN ALICE

In April 1990, Dr Leon Petchkovsky and I were invited to Alice Springs to give a series of workshops as an introduction to psychological themes central to C.G Jung’s work. Both of us practice as analysts in the Jungian tradition and are members of the International Association of Analytical Psychologists, the recognised international professional association of Jungian Analysts. Leon is a psychiatrist whose connection with Central Australia began in the late 60’s when he worked for the Flying Doctor Service. He developed a taste for the country and an abiding interest in the problem of how Western medicine and psychological experience could best serve Aboriginal people and, more significantly, how Western medicine and psychology could best learn from and support indigenous practices.

He has consistently included psychiatric consultancy for Aboriginal health services in his practice and has contributed to the field of European/Aboriginal collaborations through professional papers and the facilitation of three significant conferences in Aboriginal Studies through Nepean College, now University of Western Sydney, (1986-1989). Petchkovsky’s area of special interest is in the phenomenology of the Self and the intricacies of self perception and sensitive states of mind. Since 1986 we have cooperated clinically and in relationship to an evolving Intercultural Therapeutics Project.

For the Alice Springs workshop we chose the somewhat whimsical title, ‘The Archetype in Alice’. Through a series of experiential sessions we wished to introduce four themes.

1. The notion and history of archetypes.

2. Living in and living through archetypal experiences.


4. Holding an archetype.
In the seminar we outlined some of the classic archetypal processes and figures identified by Jung: The Mother, Rebirth, Descent to the Underworld, and archetypal family dynamics revolving around the Kore described in C G Jung, C. W. Vol 9, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. We opened up the way in which archetypal situations, as understood by Jung, might be found in one’s ordinary life, in dreams and in extraordinary encounters.

We took Jung’s autobiography, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, as an illustrative example of archetypal process in action. In particular, we noted Jung’s account of his personal breakdown, recovery and individuation set against the background of the social cultural conditions, anxieties and turmoil of the time of his formative experiences, especially the first twenty years of the Twentieth Century. We extrapolated from that to speculation upon the social and cultural conditions which might be influencing the lives and preoccupations of the contemporary inhabitants of European Australia.

As the sessions developed, two issues arose which caught our attention as having wider significance than the uniquely personal matters of individual participants.

One was the way in which Central Australia, as a place, tended to draw projections as being a locus for a uniquely Australian ‘spirit’ where the deeper self or spiritual identity of many Australians was somehow, mysteriously, symbolically, enfolded, encoded or evoked.

The second issue turned around the recognition of Central Australia, as a place where the perennial traditions of Aboriginal life are palpably active and which brings with it many questions of the relationship between indigenous and European based ways of perception and existence.

A discussion of the questions of interracial living involved, from a psychoanalytic point of view, recognition of matters of projection, idealisation, defence, denial, cross cultural erotics, contempt, envy, fear, in fact, a whole range of psychological processes began to present themselves as being a part of the dynamics of intercultural relationship.

David Tacey has taken up some of these themes in his writings especially The Edge of the Sacred published in 1995. His work also provides a review of much of the relevant literary and psychological writings on this still underdeveloped region of cultural unconsciousness. His ability to articulate and synthesise matters which are still relatively inchoate in the national psyche, has provided a kind of raft or diving platform from which others make further jumps into the muddy waters of the Australian collective unconscious.

The ‘Archetype in Alice’ workshop did not develop the psycho cultural themes in any detail, since the participants were, in general, more concerned with issues felt to be of an intimately personal nature. I was becoming intrigued, however, with the possibility that the social/cultural racial meta issues might be unconsciously influencing European Australian individuals in ways that might not be immediately visible to them and that so called intimate or private matters might in fact be intimations of a collective (archetypal?) issue, in much the same way as Jung identified the emergence of an impending global holocaust from the
dreamt preoccupations of individual patients and his own, as discussed in his biography, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, particularly Chapter 6, 'Confrontation with the Unconscious'.

The charged personal event emerged during the workshop, came from a woman who, to her surprise, began to recall submerged emotions surrounding the loss of her young brother by drowning, which led to expressions of thoughts about death, loss, the possibility of revival, and recovery of vitality. The desire for recovery of the lost and loved family member was accompanied by an anticipatory fear of that revival or at least uncertainty about the benefits of recovering a full emotionally vital life.

I do not wish to make an issue of the preoccupations of the members of that group since they belong to the participants of that session, but I record it because the impression of those emotionally charged themes was present in the reflections of both myself and Petchkovsky when we met in the HALT office next day with Hinton Lowe, Christine Franks and later with Margaret Borger, all of whom elaborated upon matters of the destructive impact of alcohol upon Aboriginal culture and European and indigenous attitudes toward alcohol use, abuse and treatment.1 As a consequence emotionally charged themes of loss, shock, uncertainty about revival and uncertainty about how to assimilate that impact, which had arisen in the thoughts of the group of Europeans the night before, were now being replayed in the conversation about the Aboriginal situations.

The personal events may have been different but the prevailing emotional preoccupations seemed to be the same, much as in the ‘build up’ in Darwin or the approach of a storm in the Centre where the climatic pressure begins to affect collective mood. One can account for this coincidence of preoccupations in several ways. I do not want to analyse or account for it in any detail but simply by recording the coincidence it can return us to Artaud’s insight about ‘the plague’ and the psychic infections that can pass through barriers of distance and race. Neither white nor black are immune to each other’s psychic distress. Denial of each other’s existence does not appear to be an adequate defence.

2. THINKING IN PICTURES: THE HEALTHY ABORIGINAL LIFE TEAM

I did not meet Andrew Japaljarri for our scheduled introduction until later in that same day. I remember vividly the impression made by the array of paintings on the walls of the HALT office, all of which addressed or portrayed contemporary problems of Aboriginal survival in terms of traditional and adapted iconography. The impression was that ‘someone was doing some thinking’ and the thinking was visible in pictures.

The second significant impression of the office atmosphere was of Hinton Lowe on the phone, persistently negotiating with government departments in the attempt to secure the next three months’ funding for the HALT project. I had the impression that there was an absence of long term vision somewhere at the other end of the telephone. An inability to plan for the preservation of continuity of projects seemed to be the de facto policy of expedience for the government bureaucratic process.

1 A representative record of the HALT work is available in various HALT papers by Franks and Lowe et al (see bibliography), the HALT Poster Series, A published collection of paintings and stories generated through the HALT work in Anangu Way. The Menzies Review of HALT (1991) and the HALT Exhibition Catalogue (1993)
I came away perplexed as to how a small group of experienced people could seriously address a problem of massive cultural disintegration when those agents of change had no sense of the protection and preservation of their initiative and no predictable assurance of continuity of intervention or service.

3. HEALTH AS INTEGRATION OF EXPERIENCE

In a conversation after leaving the HALT office I noted a comment by Margaret Borger. Margaret mused, somewhat wryly, that given the degree of fragmentation and multiplicity of issues in the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal life situations in Central Australia the most health provoking activity which the Health Department could undertake for the population was to provide situations and opportunities where integration of experience could occur, rather than simply attempt the ‘delivery’ of service.

She was addressing a theoretical meta-issue, which I understood to imply that the Health Department could and should ‘deliver health service’ but the greater need was for people to have opportunities for holding, handling and making sense of the inconsistent, incongruent and challenging experiences of both the indigenous inhabitants and the predominantly European migratory groups who were settling or finding transitory employment in the region.

I understood from her succinct comment that mental health of Aborigines, white residents and transient service professionals, was affected by contradictory pressures from the existential realities of the region; and balanced health would restore itself once people could be helped to make some sustainable way to live and work in the Territory together.

The prevailing societal atmosphere in the Alice/Centralian area at that time (late 1980s) was a combination of many factors, of course, but it included patterns of awkward negotiations between members of the racial groups, for instance;

- co existence based on a denial of each other’s reality.

- co existence but not integration of experiences.

- adoption of and mimicking of each other’s ways of living.

- competition for attention, services and funds.

- with the sense of anxiety that “no one was listening to the real problems”.

- exploitation and contemptuous manipulation of resources by both white and black.

- drunkenness as a real but also fabricated way of demeaning the Aboriginal image.
4. BEING IN TWO MINDS

I came to discover that Andrew Spencer's vision was similar to Margaret Borger's. He too was urging that the way to handle the fragmented and fragmenting mental world of Central Australia was to provide integrating opportunities for Aboriginal people (Yappa) and 'white fellers' (Kardia) to meet, reflect and think together about common problems and then base actions upon that thinking rather than upon (mindless) action and reaction. The way he and other members of his relationship network (Walbiri) did this was to first conceptualise the problem into strong, comprehensive and comprehensible images through paintings/pictograms such as the Reconciliation painting and the HALT posters.

It seems to me that this process is based on the notion that people won't know what to do about a problem until it can be accurately depicted in the form of an image which can be recognised and acknowledged as a reflection of reality by both black and white. In that sense his paintings are reflective mirrors of social and psychological situations as precursors to action, and as such are akin to Rod Moss and the 'White Gate' families' joint self reflective work.

It is my impression that few people understood this aspect of HALT's work. The review conducted by Menzies School of Health Research (1991), (in my view) did not draw sufficient explicit attention to this essential element in facilitating cultural change and so missed the opportunity to confirm and consolidate the value of the transformations in collective thinking process in which HALT was participating or even initiating through the use of the paintings as 'mirrors' of contemporary social reality. Very few Territory writers at the time were capable of revealing this clarity of mirroring Aboriginal mental reality. Probably because an appreciation of the role of visual experience in making conceptual maps of self, country and relationship was still very undeveloped among Western observers and scholars.

(With perhaps, the notable exceptions of Nancy Munn through her Walbiri Iconography. The Yuendumu Doors Project (1987) and Eric Michael's more personal, For a Cultural Future. (1989), his account of the setting up of Warlpiri Media, which, incidentally drew upon Andrew Spencer Japaljarri's conceptual skill, through his first public painting, which depicts a network of video broadcast outlets across Warlpiri country.)

The Menzies report reviewed and criticised actions and outcomes and reviewed theory, ambition and aspirations of the HALT project but did not adequately grasp a fundamentally creative aspect of HALT's work.

Japaljarri and colleagues were laying down a process of mapping Yappa thought patterns which would ultimately make it possible for those of a European frame of mind and those of an Aboriginal frame of mind to map each other and thus engage in joint and collaborative thinking about mutually troubling problems. The 'Reconciliation' painting is an excellent instance of conceptual socio dramatic mapping, so too is Alec Minutjukur's 'History Story' published in Anangu Way, p 6/7. (see following page)
Long ago our ancestors were there. Fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers and children lived together like this (top left roundel).

Young men stayed here (top middle roundel) and uninitiated young fellas going through their rites of passage stayed here (top right roundel). They were really happy living in this way and were able to do the things they had to do. They hunted meat and gathered food, men danced in traditional stamping step, and the people handed down stories to the children. This is how they were. This is what our culture was like. Our ancestors had a strong culture.

They didn't see what was to happen. That culture then was as stable as a mountain range. They could not have seen beyond it.

Outsiders came and made cities. They brought other things such as petrol, wine, drugs, glue. Outsiders know so many things, yet they know so little. They didn't understand: what will happen to my sons and daughters and family? While sons and daughters, mothers and fathers drink, chug...en sniff petrol or glue, smoke marijuana, or take drugs. And big brothers keep on drinking. Then, the spirit dies. And that culture that I spoke of before, that culture line is broken.

I'm not just talking about Aboriginal people's experience. I'm talking about outsiders' experiences, too. Long ago, outsiders must have had a strong culture. At that time, mothers and fathers must have taken care of their children and shown them the right way.

We are all at the point where we're looking at our histories - traditional Aboriginal history, urban Aboriginal history and outsiders' history. And we can look at those histories together and talk about how we can make it better for our children.

Perhaps outsiders will come and listen to us and see how we are beating the problem. In this way, culture will become strong again. Thank you.

*Text by Alee Minajukur and Ely White*
The demise of HALT meant, in fact, the demise of a significant location for thought which had been established in the region of overlap between the two cultural mental worlds. Not only was this issue one of the first observations recorded in my notes, it is also the principle sub theme of my subsequent research attitude and activities in substance abuse work. That sub theme is the contemplation of the questions;

1. How can we learn to think bi culturally about these problems or, put another way, how can we learn to think successfully ‘in two minds’?

2. How can we sustain that thinking process once it gets going?

In New Zealand, in many public situations, both the Maori and the English languages are presented on an equal basis. To some extent this is a symbolic representation of the ambition of New Zealanders to be able to think in two minds. Surely Australians must also learn to think in two minds at the same time (or indeed in several minds) because Australia’s mental world is divided significantly into two dominant halves, that of the indigenous mind set and that of the settler, predominantly Western but increasingly Eastern, mind set. Each of these dominant halves of the Australian mind have their own sub sets, of course, but the racial black/white schism is where the sharpest contrast and sharpest challenge is found and is likely to continue to be found over issues of land use, culture, economics and Australian spiritual identity. All of these matters are represented in language via action of symbol formation. Reading the symbolic representations of country, culture, money and spiritual identity is something of a problem.

In the late 1980s, like many other Australians I became concerned with the question of how authentic, unsentimental, collaborative thinking might occur between minds which have been trained in distinctly different cultural domains. ‘Thinking in pictures’ emerged as the medium for this collaboration to get started. I consider this to be a psychological issue. Being ‘in two minds’ means being able to picture each other’s minds in order to begin communicating between two minds. The so called Western Desert art is not really art at all, it is much more accurate to call it iconic thinking, thoughts moving in pictures. Japaljarri Spencer is a master of this kind of conceptualisation.

5. MEETING JAPALJARRI.

The first note I have from the first meeting with Japaljarri Spencer, in person, is a rough diagram of part of a Japaljarri Jugarrai Tjukurpa, describing one part of the saga of the travels of a snake.

At that stage I had no idea of the significance or the complexity of the snake story nor about my right, limits and responsibilities in knowing, recording or telling it. But the effect was of an introduction to Japaljarri’s family history, responsibility and mythology via the introduction to the activity of a snake. Hearing that bit of the Tjukurpa acted as an orientation to what he valued, what he thought about and how he placed himself in the cultural matrix of Central Australian country.

I am treating this introductory fragment of Tjukurpa like a fragment of a dream told in a psychotherapeutic interaction, where the dreamer in telling the dream is also communicating to the listener a matter which the dreamer wants the listener to hear. It is a common experience that an analyst’s patient may begin to give a
matter to communicate wrapped in a metaphor or image. The image comes before the thought and acts as a stimulant to attentive reception by the listener. A serious and perhaps emotionally charged matter is rarely first told in a coherent, articulate sequence but rather, the matter is alluded to through the medium of the dream action, an apparently incidental anecdote or some form of imagery. Such contents communicated in the first session of an interaction introduce, in potential, the contents of the course of the (therapeutic) relationship.

In psychotherapeutic language this kind of communication can be referred to as an exchange of transference metaphor. Such an exchange expresses the desire of the one to communicate a matter to the other. The matter to be communicated, the story to be told, at this stage of the interaction may not have reached the point of clear thought sequences but the training of a psychoanalyst directs one to be sensitive to these liminal communications. In this instance, Andrew began by telling a fragment of his dream(ing). I heard a fragment. He hardly introduced himself as a person or an individual. Instead he introduced himself by way of the story he told. I noted it as I would note a fragment of an exchange from a session, not knowing what it might imply but recognising it as part of the beginning of a communication, and not simply a display of an artifact or an interesting piece of folklore.

photograph: A painting of the Warra Tjururrpa. (circa 1990) showing the brother and sister serpents, held by Christine Nungurrai Spencer and Andrew.

2. To avoid any misunderstanding I want to emphasise that I am not recording “anthropological” material, nor carrying out psycho- anthropological investigations here. I am, however, recording a communication metaphor which will say as much about my own state of being as it says about Japaljarri. Although I am relying upon a psychotherapeutic technique of receptive attention to latent meanings in the communication symbology, I am in no way implying that I was approaching Andrew as though either he or I were in a therapist/patient relationship, however if we understand this meeting as a case of intercultural conciliation then both of us are engaged in a potentially healing communication...ie doctors to each other.
6. STORY ABOUT SNAKES.

The following sequence is as written down at the time. It is illustrated by a sketch from my notebook and a photograph of Japaljarri’s painting of a section of the story. The language includes Pintupi/Luritja and Warlpiri since these were the words Andrew used at the time.

1. Fight (between the male and female snakes)
   She doesn’t want him.
   She says (to him) “I am your sister”.
   (She) bites.
   (He) loses an eye. The right eye.
   (He) takes off toward Jigalong. (west)

2. Wallabies (?) attack him.
   They hit him.
   He loses.
   Falls to bits.

3. Kurunpa (his vital spirit) keeps going.
   Towards the sea (Western Australian coast)
   (He) makes it to... (where?)

4. (He) stays there.
   Spirit stays there.
   In a cave near a waterhole.
   That is a powerful place for (trainee) ngankaris (healers)

5. The snake and/or the trainee ngankari goes into the waterhole.
   When he comes out the first person he touches (to heal) is his wife.
   If he fixes her she can say (declare to others)
   “He fixed me” (ie.she vouches for his healing capacity)
   Then he can touch others,
   Fix them.

6. The Kungka Liru (Wana Karnie or female snake) stays there at original water hole. She did not travel or follow the same track as the male.
Illustration: Part of the Warna Tjukurrpa(1991) snake travels, by Andrew Japaljarri Spencer. (See also Diagram P. 123 Chapter 7)

7. BROTHERS IN LORE?

(A reflective commentary on the experience of hearing the snake story, with reference to cultural transference communication dynamics)

I felt something being communicated from this story which was more than the simple surface information even though I realise now that it is only a fragment of the full saga of the travelling story and adventures of that apparently unfortunate snake. The emphasis I wish to make here is on the feeling impact and a preconceptual image communication, familiar to psychoanalysts who work with interactive transference exchange and psychic transformations of a 'truth' within the conversation. For example, Bion describes this process in his Grid mapping of psychoanalytic communications and the transformations of psychic material which can occur along a continuum of understanding as the people engaged in an attempt to communicate, struggle to attend to each other and to the (unconscious) message which is trying to communicate itself through their meeting.  

3 for example see W. Bion. *Elements of Psychoanalysis*, 1984; and other works in that series emanating from him and Donald Meltzer; see bibliography, where they try to define almost algebraically the steps in the procedures of making unconscious communications conscious in a psychoanalytic relationship. I am only too aware of how much prior understanding of the psychoanalytic literature may be needed by the reader to grasp the detail of this process but it is impossible to give a full exposition of Bion's work here without devoting pages to it.
It would be fruitful to explore Bion’s work in detail because it presents a most useful tool, derived from psychoanalytic experience and method, for helping people who work in the domain of intercultural communication, to decode each other’s communications and mental transformations.

Anangu Yappa reciprocal exchange, known as Ngapartji Ngapartji (in Pitjantjarra), can include psychic and mental exchange as well as exchange of physical objects and activities, so it is not surprising that even this fragment of a serious story should put me into a frame of mind that was both receptive and alert to mutual and reciprocal emotional communication.

The story, I felt, and the imagery conveyed primal matters, or rather I felt that I was being addressed by primal matters; (in Bion’s terms beta-elements which were ‘looking’ for someone to do work on them and thus convert them from incoherent sensation to meaningful comprehension.)

-Matters of invasion and displacement.

-Matters of loss and disintegration.

-Matters of uncertainty about the possibility of recovery of one’s self.

-Matters of placing responsibility for inexplicable injury.

And;

-Questions about the cure of nameless or senseless trauma.

-Questions about capacity for accepting and transcending loss.

-Questions about capacity for transmission of healing.

After hearing this story I found that these matters and questions were in my mind. From whence did they come?


He is writing about problems of translation from one language to another but he is also writing about how we receive and recognise psychic pain when it presents itself to us to be found.

I quote from page 148.

“In one of Freud’s first definitions of repression (in his letter to Fliess dated 6 December 1896) he said it was a failure of translation. What then should one say of translation itself, which is always defective, if not always in danger of bringing in a surplus of repression? Or worse; a double repression, that of the author’s maternal language and that of the translators.”
The point I am trying to reach for is not about the difficulties linguists find in translating concepts from one linguistic frame to another; that is a vital enough matter, but the issue that is coming to my attention is far more obscure. It is about repression, the preemptive repression which I detect is operating in my own psyche as I receive the communications from Japaljarri. I become aware of how inhibited I have become, or been made by my cultural history, in being able to make accurate psychic translations of psychic pain when I am confronted with it in the being and communications of Aboriginal people. I realise, painfully, that I do not know how to read them and that this failure in ‘reading’ must have been going on to a massive degree throughout my childhood and amongst my family and perhaps within every significant cluster of Australian perception since 1788. I detect a culturally determined repression, a defence system in operation which distorts my perception in a way I would never be distorted if I were similarly attending to the psychic world of a fellow European. Pontalis’ cryptic phrase, as the title to his paper is; ‘Finding, Receiving and Recognising the Absent’. By reversing it I can give myself another way of making the point conscious. Consider something like; ‘Losing, Rejecting and Ignoring the Present’.

I am sure, now, that what was occurring in the conversation/story from Japaljarri was a communication about present psychic pain and the form it was being communicated in was a myth-thought, not quite a dream, not quite a myth, not quite a complaint, not quite a symptom, not even a personal problem as such, and perhaps not even deliberately conscious, but present nevertheless. It was an instance, in Artaud’s sense of a psychic plague element being transmitted across a skin boundary in the form of a theatrical event (a Tjukurrpa fragment) and its intent was to seek a way in which the unspecified but definite distress could be ‘found, received and recognised’ and not ‘lost, rejected and ignored’.

The message was passed obliquely by virtue of the fact that we both entered, for that phase of time, into a state of ‘participation mystique’ in the sense that Jung uses it in his descriptions of transference symbiosis in his treatise on ‘Alchemy and the Psychology of the Transference’ in Collected Works 16.

In these paragraphs Jung refers to the process of ‘unconscious identification’ which can occur between people who fall into intimate psychic relationship. He writes in para 376;

“Similarly the psychological parallel to the nigredo is the result of the foregoing preliminary talk which, at a certain moment, sometimes long delayed, ‘touches’ the unconscious and establishes the unconscious identity & 27 ( his note #) of doctor and patient. This moment may be perceived and registered consciously, but generally it happens outside consciousness and the bond thus established is recognised only later and indirectly by its results.” Jung’s note # reads (“unconscious identity” is the same as Levy Bruhl’s participation mystique. cf: “How Natives Think.”)

para 462 includes the sentence;

“... a union in unconscious identity, which could be compared with the primitive, initial state of chaos, the massa confusa, or rather with the state of participation mystique where heterogeneous factors merge in an unconscious relationship...”
para 504 includes this:

"The collective unconscious is a natural and universal datum and its manifestation always causes an unconscious identity, a state of participation mystique..."

I think that what began to happen in this and the subsequent conversational exchanges with Andrew, was in fact a moment of participation mystique, an unexpected and relatively unconscious identification, or rather an identification at the level of the collective unconscious which, perhaps, I consciously felt but did not significantly register at the time. As Jung says, "the bond was recognised only later and indirectly by its results."

This moment of 'participation' established the conception event, or was the conception event which established the dynamic that fuelled the immense investment of personal energy and commitment which became the Sugarman Project. Petchkovsky has also written about these meetings and the impact of the Warna Tjukurrpa telling upon us both, at the time. I think a similar moment of unconscious identification occurred between myself and Barry Cook, at Intjurtunna, in April 1991 during my first visit to the outstation when I outlined the Dionysos story to him.

When Andrew and I began to converse, I dimly perceived that something was being said in Japaljarri's story about breakdown. Whose breakdown / What breakdown? Why would I start, intuitively, to decode his story in terms of a communication about breakdown?

I am reminded of a Winnicott case discussion on 'Fear of Breakdown', where he describes a patient's fear of what the patient imagines as an anticipated breakdown, that is, some catastrophe about to happen.

In fact the breakdown had already occurred and the patient's fear, Winnicott offers, is probably a fear of recognising the already existing fact, coupled with the analyst's fear of finding, recognising and receiving the facts of his own active or potential breakdown. (in Winnicott 1963/1989)

Winnicott addresses this further in his analysis of Jung's childhood psychotic breakdown where he describes the entire body of Jung's work as Jung's process of self cure following a childhood psychosis. 5

I am not particularly implying that either Japaljarri or myself are or were going through a personal breakdown at the time, in the conventional sense of psychological breakdown, but rather, something was 'in the air' about such matters which seemed to me to about finding, recognising and naming the facts and consequences of what might be identified as a collective breakdown. The disintegration of family relationships, cultural values and the personal existential realities of individuals, both white and black. A cultural anxiety, an anticipated annihilation, a cold sweat at being swallowed by the changing Australian social ecosystem?

5 Described in Winnicott's review of Jung's biography Memories, Dreams, Reflections (1964/1989)
Some people experience this change as an anticipated or already extant catastrophe. A catastrophe, in which we all, consciously or unconsciously, participate.

Japaljarri’s painting, ‘Family Breakdown’ succinctly describes this state. Later, when I got to know him better (and myself in relationship with him) I got to see and experience that existing and anticipated breakdown and how the consequences of cultural disintegration in both his and my worlds was to unravel.⁶

This phenomenon can be viewed as political and economic tactics over possession of land but it is also a manifestation of profoundly dysfunctional thinking on the part of those who would ignore or repeal those rights already established. Aboriginal people themselves are not immune to this exploitative manipulation of reality or agreed reality in law.

In summary; A statement on family and cultural breakdown/disintegration was communicated in the displacement and dismemberment imagery of the Yarrapalong Warna Tjukurrpa. This same primal state of dismemberment is central to the imagery of the Dionysos story. The Dionysian story, an epic of dismemberment and delusion, eventually emerged as the story of response to Japaljarri’s query about the existence of a European story form that holds and explains the derangement (of the body collective) which accompanied the arrival of the alcohol phenomenon in Aboriginal country.

The Dionysos story matches the Yarrapalong Black Snake story like a Jack of Diamonds matches a Jack of Spades. Two cards from different suits, almost like brothers in lore.

8. A PLACE FOR THINKING.

The next note from my journal, made immediately after the conversations with Andrew, was about the recognition that; for there to be authentically satisfying intercultural relationship and exchange there were some prerequisites.

One such prerequisite was the establishment of reliable opportunities for people to think together, not only to think together about a ‘problem’ but also to develop ways in which thinking itself could occur.

I saw this process in action in the HALT office. People of various backgrounds, cultures, language groups, gender, interests, professions, abilities passed in and out of the office. It was like sitting at a village well where gossip and news from the village and from the road was being exchanged, noted and processed. Andrew and Christine Franks both noted this socially alive exchange as an intention of the HALT work; a away of extending the ‘healthy life’ message and indirectly influencing families.

⁶ The current (1997-98) vacillations about the Wik native title debate and the contamination of Aboriginal legal right to the use of their land is an instance of this breakdown of the integrity and morality of the predominant Australian majority culture. This is also another instance of ‘attacks on linking’ where psychotic and delusional processes, sanctioned by popular legal and economic expediency, deny the reality of the law and the already established rights of Australian Aboriginal citizens to occupy and use their own country. This phenomenon can be viewed as political and economic tactics over possession of land but it is also a manifestation of profoundly dysfunctional thinking on the part of those who would ignore or repeal those rights already established. Aboriginal people themselves are not immune to this exploitative manipulation of reality or agreed reality in law.
While all this 'village well' business was going on, the incorrigible linguistic philosopher Hinton Lowe was still on the phone trying to secure the next three months' funding, the gracious Christine Nungarrayi was on the computer, translating a concept into Warlpiri iconography much like a painting in computer graphics, the redoubtable Christine Franks was in conversation with a group of women, Andrew and a visiting psychiatrist and psychologist, (Petchkovsky and San Roque) were discussing the complexities of how a traditional healer (ngankari) diagnosed mental health problems, in particular how alcoholic states made it difficult to diagnose accurately and the various problems a ngankari encounters dealing with alcohol related illness.

Andrew expressed his appreciation in having the opportunity to talk through these matters with sympathetic and skilled white practitioners. An occurrence which seemed to be all too rare. I jotted down the phrase 'paralysis of thinking'. It seemed to me then, that one of the factors in operation in the intercultural exchange was indeed a paralysis of thinking brought about by what Bion calls 'attacks on linking'.

Six years later and after more than five years of intensive work in these regions I see this same paralysis of thinking still in operation. I have witnessed the dismantling of several intercultural ‘thinking places’ through a process of misadventure, incompetence, lassitude and missed opportunities probably brought on, as much as anything, by failures of imagination.7

It is no wonder, with this repetitive dissolution of opportunities for thinking and linking, that black/white relationships fall into pathological states, where confusion, oscillating projection and crudely unconscious defence mechanisms come into play. There is a repertoire of disturbing states of being which seem to appear consistently at the psychological interface of Aboriginal and ‘white’ Australian interaction and reaction. This repertoire includes antisocial depression, dependent apathy, collusive manipulation, racial paranoia, messianic benevolence, masochistic self-reproach, depersonalised exploitation and emotional exhaustion. These states, and others, familiar to people who live and work in this region, might well be tracked back to confusions in the zone of cultural transference, errors in reading the relationship between black and white and the lack of opportunity for consistent, clear interactive thinking about our mutual condition.

7 cf. the astute analysis of recurrent failures of coordination in government managed substance abuse programs, Jane Robbins (1993) and the transcripts of the 1996/97 Coronial Enquiry into a petrol sniffers death near Alice Springs convened by magistrate Warren Donald.
9. NGANKARI DIAGNOSTICS

The next journal note is from an elaborate and complex conversation, primarily between Japaljarri and Petchkovsky, about the process of diagnosis and the way in which a typical Western Desert ngankari handles initial consultations. The details of this is are illuminating, but are not open for me to discuss here, outside the domain of specialised practitioners, however, one point which is appropriate for its relevance to substance abuse work is as follows:

Andrew commented that if the ngankari feels that the patient’s problem is too strong or might hurt the healer, if he becomes engaged with it, then the ngankari may withdraw, ‘go away and sit down’ at a special place to build up his own spirit or wait until the force of the patient’s condition weakens when it may then be more amenable to a therapeutic touch.

This conversation eventually led again into problems associated with alcohol related conditions, which are perceived as being too dangerous for ngankaris to deal with or are outside the traditional healer’s authority. Following these conversations some questions began to form;

- In what way might a traditional healer ‘build up the spirit’ so that it could be a match for the spirit of alcohol?

- How might a traditional healer build up spirit in order to handle the effects of intoxication?

- By what process might an Aboriginal practitioner withdraw, consider and size up the reality of the strength of the spirit of alcohol and so determine the time and the method of dealing with it?

- How might a traditional healer get the authority to deal therapeutically with the sickness brought on by alcohol abuse and the misuse of volatile substances?

The role and definition of traditional healer or ngankari begins to broaden. I begin to understand a wider application of the term than I expected. Perhaps HALT is becoming a social action ngankari organisation. This implies a development in the tradition from the individual practitioner to the group practice. A ngankari may be anyone recognised within Aboriginal circles as possessing ngankar, (which seems to be the commonly used term to denote an individual’s healing capacity). There are specialist practitioners and there seem to be many people who are recognised as having some capacity to fix people up, or cause harm.

I begin to wonder just what a ngankari is, in reality, in the environment of the 1990’s. How is such a person identified and trained and who decides who is qualified to do what? It is obvious that the Western system of achievement of qualification, skill, recognition and registration exists in a completely different dimension to the Aboriginal sense of ‘qualification’ but is a developmental synthesis of the two modes of training and practice consolidation possible, in order to meet the ‘new’ illnesses? Perhaps people such as Japaljarri and his immediate circle, who are not necessarily identified as traditional healers, are, in fact, broadening the definition of that role and HALT itself is beginning to develop a contemporary form of ngankari work by
dint of the effort of trying to work from a base of implicit traditional method while meeting the contemporary problems of substance related illness of spirit.

If this is so then their effort goes almost bizarrely unrecognised as a creative innovation.

While listening to Andrew describe the way ngankaris work I began to wonder if it were possible to formulate a clear picture of the implicit and explicit elements of Aboriginal therapeutic theory and method and if so, by sympathetically describing and analysing the basic elements, we might find a crossover into European based mental health practice and substance abuse treatment. The aim is to find a common therapeutic language.

It might be possible to get an acceptably agreed view on how ngankaris, as the custodians of Aboriginal healing methods, viewed;

- the structure and nature of the psyche

- the definitions of illness

- the causes of illness

- the methods of therapeutic intervention

- and definitions of what constitutes cure.

Understanding the elements and the frame of mind with which a traditionally based healer approaches their task might provide guidelines for alcohol intervention and psychological treatments based upon the elements in the matrix of Aboriginal traditional psycho-cosmology.

What surprised me then, as it still does, is that very little consistent, on the ground, case related discussion and clarification seems to have occurred in this very fundamental area of reconciliation. It is almost as though a whole dimension of Aboriginal health work has been deliberately ignored or obscured from recognition.

Why is this?
10. SUMMARY OF POINTS FROM THE DISCUSSIONS

In summary, the discussions drew attention to the following matters which seem to beg further investigation by an appropriately qualified bi-cultural research group.

1. Enquiry into distinctions between the Aboriginal and Western medical/therapeutic procedures of handling physical/psychological problems.

2. An indication of some problems specific to alcohol related conditions which were of concern to healers of a Central Desert perspective.

3. Differences and discrepancies in the perception of, diagnosis of, and treatment of 'a problem'.

4. Specific behaviours of the 'doctors' (as a generic term for health professionals) in the Western health system where there was a perceived absence of continuity of attention, continuity of experience and continuity of relationship.

5. The need for greater awareness by European professionals of Aboriginal cultural dynamics especially as it relates to healing process and to definition of who and what constitutes a person as having ngankari abilities or being qualified to practice.

6. The possibility that traditional ngankari method is not fading or redundant and may in fact be undergoing (spontaneous) adaptations to meet the contemporary problems. However this significant transition is not fully appreciated or recognised in the literature or even by practising health managers. Also Aboriginal people themselves may not have formulated this transition in terms that can be recognised by bodies such as the National Drug Strategy and their research agencies.

7. A hint that symbolic patterns contained in Tjukurrpa could be decoded and understood as conveying elements of an Aboriginal therapeutic paradigm which even Western practitioners, medical anthropologists, medical philosophers and psycho cultural theorists could understand, if the right mind frame of perception were cultivated.

This understanding could/should be formulated in terms which would make sense to those health administrators who are concerned with authentic application of the recommendations found in the Deaths in Custody reports and in Aboriginal Health policies, where attention to the integration of indigenous methodologies into health and law services is advocated.

8. Despite the avowal of such policies, there would appear to be regular breaks in the implementation cycle of Aboriginal oriented services. These breaks may well be explained in terms of regular failures of imagination and thought. The blame for these failures is often attributed to or projected upon government bodies. This blame may be accurately placed but a deeper analysis might reveal that a breakdown of imagination has occurred in the collective psyche of the Australian nation. We are still struggling to find metaphors and
images which accurately reflect our condition, which can also guide conciliation and a cultural healing process.

Paradoxically, the very metaphors we need, collectively, may well be part of the indigenous *Tjukurrpa*, but public recognition of this resource seems to be in a state of repression or denial.

**11. THE URGE, THE WHIM AND THE REASON - PERSONAL COMMENT.**

When I am asked “How did the Sugarman start?” or “What motivated this project?” I usually give a simple response which turns around the idea of a need for a story that explains the origins of alcohol and the nature of drunkenness. And I tell how the first idea arose from a conversation and a query from an Aboriginal colleague. All this is true enough, but there is another set to that initiating urge, which I hope is now beginning to become apparent. It is another question - an urge or a whim to become conscious of myself as an Australian. The quest might be the old ‘search for identity’ syndrome, but this time I am placing the question “Who Am I?” into the nexus of a search for identity which attempts to recognise the pre-‘Australian’ context. I mean before Captain Cook. There are many contemporary Australians who pass their spiritual search for authentic Self identity through the net of Buddhism, or Sufism, or Christianity or other traditions which were conceived in continents beyond Australia and beyond the influence of the *Tjukurrpa*. But what is the role of the Australian *Tjukurrpa* in shaping the ‘soul’ of Australia’s present and future inhabitants? It is possible that the *Tjukurrpa* can function independently and influence the soul of the inhabitants whether they will it or not. But maybe there has to be a reasonable amount of conscious facilitation of the Australian ‘soul making’ project. I see this as a task which invites the conscious attention of therapists trained in the Jungian tradition which is why both Petchkovsky and I have spent so much time at it.
CHAPTER 3

RAISING A QUESTION ABOUT ALCOHOL

1. ON MYTHOLOGISING
How stories start and stories change.

We are approaching the conversation which was the active stimulus to the Sugarman Project. But a slow approach is necessary in order to collect a few thoughts on irrational processes and magical thinking. I would never have been able to take on this project or even catch Japaljarri’s logic in the beginning if I had not already developed a capacity for magical thinking, mythopoetic awareness and irrational symbolising thanks to a psychoanalytic training and an already developed poetic/theatrical faculty.

The conception conversation with Japaljarri Spencer, as reported elsewhere has often been simplified to present the Sugarman story to various audiences. (see Blair Mefarland comic in appendix) Barry Cook, for instance, has clearly exercised his story teller’s licence in his inspired piece in the introduction to the script: ‘How The Sugarman Came to Central Australia’. Barry’s account moves the event into the realm of poetic legend. This is an appropriate thing to do with creation stories and the reader is reminded of Levi Strauss’ observation of ‘the continuum of myth’ as including transformations of historical (everyday events) into the mythological dimension.

Barry’s retelling is probably also a transformation in the sense Bion uses; see Elements of Psychoanalysis etc. (1963) A transformation occurs when spontaneous psychic work (alpha function) is done. Where an emotionally charged concrete fact or event (beta element) is converted into a dream thought or a myth-thought, on the way to it becoming a preconception, a concept, a thought. The transformation continues thence to become recognisable as a continuous series of thoughts, which become the basis for a theory or conceptual system. This then allows conscious thinking and action to occur. Barry’s story begins a mythologising process and in this sense his is an early step in the transformation sequence. When we get to Andrew’s conversation I do not want it to be seen as a merely rational exchange which can be submitted to a merely rational critique. It too is part of a transformation sequence.
Transformations of the truth, from one modality to another along a continuum are significant processes in the development of ideas. It may be particularly relevant in cross cultural exchanges, since the translations of 'a fact' from one cultural world into a 'fact' in the other cultural world is often fraught with conceptual confusions, mistranslations and often bizarre and funny consequences.

This is not only about linguistic slips in translation. It is also about how different cultural groups think, what they think with, and how the mental and emotional elements of thought are put together. The place and the role of myth and magical thinking deserves serious attention, not only by cultural anthropologists, whose domain it tends to be, but also by cross cultural health promotion specialists. I argue that it is essential to grasp something about how these procedures work in mental life if we are to get a sense of what helps us think. Some cultures put more emphasis on mythopoetic formulations of the truth than on rational or scientific structures. It is not really a matter of one form being superior to another or more enlightened but it is a matter of recognising how different cultural groups prefer to formulate their ideas and how they prefer to communicate and teach them. Understanding how transformations of reality occur in the mental world (as in Bion's work) may possibly help Europeans in getting a passable sense of how Tjukurrpa works, in the Aboriginal world, as a state of mind and as a basis for formulating teachings, moral laws and the restoration of an individual to sanity.

One of the most comprehensively helpful elucidations on Tjukurrpa by a Western scholar comes with Tony Swain, in his book A Place for Strangers (1993). I came across his work in 1995, through Petchkovsky, when we were discussing the way in which Aboriginal people seem to organise their psychic reality in terms of topography and geography, horizontally, as it were, rather than vertically (i.e. sky/earth/underworld) or in terms of dimensions of interiority and externality, which is a more prevalent modality in current European psychic organisation.

The factor of how the psyche organises its geography becomes significant when one tries to understand and translate mythological journey imagery from one culture to another. For example, if a divine being is located 'in heaven', which is 'up' and also 'within', then one gets to meet such a being by going 'up' and 'in' (somehow); which is often translated as a metaphorical journey which may not need actual footwork. If a supernatural being, or creation power is located as a mountain range or a water course, then one gets to meet such a being by going to the actual geographic site or travelling along it. The metaphorical journey is actual and requires footwork (or Toyota work).

For the Dionysos project I had to explore these questions, they turned up in the process of translating and transforming the Graeco/ Middle Eastern mythological imagery into the psychic organisational patterns, and spatial and temporal relationships and kinship patterns familiar to local indigenous people. However, I have not undertaken a systematic comparison of Aboriginal and European mental framing, perceptual systems or mythological imagery and certainly not to the degree of scholarship which Tony Swain manages or to the degree to which the translators of the Bible (in Hermannsburg and Santa Theresa) have had to master.1

1. see newspaper article Alice News Sept 10 1997 p3 interview with Pastor Paul Albrecht on linguistic and conceptual problems in translating between Arrernte and Biblical texts.
Bible freed from a foreign mould

A new Arrarnta translation of the Bible, including for the first time not only the New Testament but extensive portions of the Old Testament, is soon to be launched by the Finke River Mission Board.

It comes at the end of a long line of translation effort by the Lutheran Church in Central Australia.

Their first publication appeared in 1891, just 14 years after the first missionaries arrived in Hermannsburg (Ntharia). The book was a collection of stories from the Old and New Testaments, psalms, hymns, occasional prayers and Luther's Small Catechism.

Difficulty in translating concepts like “holy” and “Lord” was met with the use of Latin equivalents.

This first translation was expanded on by the Rev Carl Streihlow who also translated the entire New Testament.

Parts of this were published in the mid to late 1920s.

“It is clear that these men were still struggling to learn the grammar of the language,” says Pastor Paul Albrecht, who has headed the current translation project. “While the translations as such left a great deal to be desired, one can but admire their effort and tenacity.”

Renowned linguist TGH Streihlow, son of Carl and who grew up speaking Arrarnta, provided the next translation of the New Testament, which was published in 1966.

It was marked by the use of diacritical symbols such as dots and dashes under letters to indicate their correct pronunciation.

He incorporated many words and synonyms that were known only to the old people, in the hope that his translation would help preserve the richness of the Arrarnta language.

However, many of these words are now not known and haven’t been for some time.

As well, Ted Streihlow, working at a time when translations of the Scriptures had to be word equivalent, forced the Arrarnta language into a Greek-English mould.

**GREEK SOURCE**

He invented Arrarnta equivalents for Greek concepts and reproduced long Greek-style sentences, with many relative clauses.

These last two features of his work ultimately created the need for a new translation.

Today, translation theory and practice has changed dramatically. A translator now looks for a functional equivalent that is meaning-based.

Pastor Albrecht gives the example of translating “a land flowing with milk and honey.”

The word equivalent method might well convey something the Hebrew text never intended to say: “In Arrarnta,” he says, “the words for milk and breast are identical. So you can work out for yourself the pictures a land flowing with milk and honey would conjure up in the minds of Arrarnta readers and hearers!”

Another difficulty was encountered with Isaiah’s vision in the temple: “Holy, holy, holy! / The Lord Almighty is holy! His glory fills the earth.”

Pastor Albrecht acknowledges the contribution of others to the translation project, among them the Arrarnta pastors, the late Nahassen Ungkwanaka, Eli Rubunjla and Davey Ingkamala.

The Western Arrarnta Bible is published by The Bible Society in Australia.

PASTOR PAUL ALBRECHT

VOL 4, ISSUE No 32 - September 10, 1997. ALICE SPRINGS NEWS

APARTNICES #2
The process of writing the script and participating in the preparation of the Sugarman performance has, in itself, been an instruction in cross cultural thinking and mental geography. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* prepared me to think about the mythopoetic transformations which people make between psychic reality and geographical reality or between objects in the world (trees, flowers, animals, geographical sites) and mental states, feelings, etc. (Ovid 43 BC to AD 17)

I knew, from experience, how perplexingly difficult it is for many people (of agricultural/industrial/administrative origins) to comprehend how the Tjukurrpa state of mind and being actually works. It can be argued that living in the agricultural/industrial/administrative complex forces people to organise the geography of the mental world in a particular way and quite differently to how a nomadic, hunter/gatherer society must structure the collective psyche.

Tony Swain lays out the complexities and paradoxes of understanding the *Tjukurrpa* in his invaluable book (ibid) and Peter Latz\(^{2}\) gives a succinct ethnobotanical perspective on *Tjukurrpa* in his introduction to *Bushfires and Bushtucker* (1995).

In acknowledging that there are several versions of how the Sugarman idea/event started the point is not the obvious one that different people have different perspectives or different memories, but that right from the start some kind of fluid mythologising was in operation.

In Barry Cook’s version, ‘How the Sugarman Came to Central Australia’, the basic events upon which he elaborates are true, but he prefers to minimise the Japaljarri contribution for reasons of his own that are too family sensitive to mention. The first painted scroll was completed at Intjarnama in 1991, with the help of the Cook family and residents and this places the conception on Western Arrernte land rather than Warlpiri country. On Intjarnama land, a notable influence on the imaginative construction of the story is the sacred hill of the ‘dismembered warrior spirits’ which overlooks the outstation, and another nearby location which is regarded as the place where the spirits of the dead enter the other world. (Urama) The conception influence then, looked at in this way, is not a man but a place and the spirits associated with it.

\(^{2}\) Latz has been a severe and helpful critic of this project. Helpful because of his appreciation of the value of both the Aboriginal and European traditions. The most unhelpful criticism has come from people who are either not familiar with ancient sources or disparage the value of ‘the classics’ or idealise Aboriginal traditions. It has been constantly refreshing to have knowledgable and pragmatic, responsible critique from locals such as Latz, Rod Moss, Peter Hay, Fiona Walsh, Peter Yates, Jude Prichard, Ilan Warkevich, et.al. who neither idealise nor denigrate.
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Another notable Intjarrtjama based influence or maybe medium, was Gordon Wayne, an artist and at that time a deeply troubled man, diagnosed as possibly psychotic. His paintings, visionary reports of conversations with ‘spirit beings’ and his alcohol troubles, subtiley confirmed the direction the story would take and helped lay a foundation for much of the imagery.  

I recall, for instance, his description to me one night of how he had a ‘hole’ right through his heart, through which a cold wind blew. That event is acknowledged in the script in the scene where Sugarman goes mad, (Story Three Scene 2) and in the line “...A man is sleeping and the wind is cold”. And in the three inserts; “When I was conceived my parents were drunk. When I was born, my parents were drunk, and now I am a man my parents are still drunk and I am drunk too”; which was a quote by Barry from one of the Intjarrtjama residents.

When Barry writes his legend, he has those men and some other mysterious and chilling events in mind. He tells the story of how I arrived at Intjarrtjama and Barry took me over to meet Gordon, who was working on a painting. Gordon looked up from the canvas with his slow and slightly askew smile saying quietly; “I was expecting you, is this the picture you are thinking about?” Barry says he had not mentioned either the story or me to him. Whether this was true prescience or Gordon’s wicked ways, I will never know. The picture was the ‘Lightning Man’ and another canvas which features a massive snake, circling and enclosing a scene of cosmic planets and landscape, reminiscent of the Wind Snake Creation Story which eventually began the Sugarman performance (Story One Scene 3). In our conversations Gordon would tell of how he travelled in meteor like rocks all over the country and it was the scenes witnessed from this ‘vehicle’ which inspired many of his vibrant hallucinatory paintings.

Another formative encounter was in Ali Curang in late 1992 with Lesley Japananka Williams, two other older men and a ngankari (traditional healer) who was having trouble with the grog. We were sitting quietly under a shade shelter eating grapes and talking about drunkenness and healing methods. It became obvious to me how perplexed ngankaris could be in handling alcohol, not only their own consumption, but also in the use of their ngankari skill and spirit companions in dealing with illnesses related to intoxication. Something from this event is reconstituted in the scene where the old man tries to fix Sugarman (Story Three Scene 5)

2. TALKING ABOUT SNAKEBITE

The conversation which we are trying to reach and will reach despite these circuitous diversions, had been preceded by Andrew recounting how his father, Jungarai, knew songs to cure snakebite. Andrew had been bitten by a poisonous snake and his father had treated him by 'singing' while they waited for the evacuation plane to arrive. Andrew said that he should have died. They put him on the plane. They took off. He was lying there in the plane. He heard them say he was dead. He vomited. He sat up.

"The people on the plane thought I was dead, then I woke up."

He smiled, remembering the impact on the plane crew when he sat up and 'came back to life'. He attributed his recovery to the power of his father's 'singing'. That is to say, the singing of a specific song with words of power which have the psychic effect of decreasing the impact of the poison upon the bitten man.

Strehlow, in *Songs of Central Australia* (1971) reproduces several songs which are used to bring about either health or sickness. The presence of a serpent in the curative procedure is very specific. Strehlow quotes a song against snakebite⁴, told to him by a Western Arrernte man. Strehlow notes that it is actually in Warlpiri. As such it may be related to the actual song sung by the old Jungarai to protect his son, when bitten.

A verse goes;

\[ \text{Wana kukuhana lyrana} \]
\[ \text{karkurbana- karkurbana;} \]
\[ \text{karkurbana- karkurbana!} \]

which Strehlow translates as;

May the serpent turn back and its coils be utterly broken!
May they be utterly broken!

The translation of other subsequent verses repeats the same sense of the body of the snake being broken.

May the serpents coils be shivered in pieces!
May they be shivered in many pieces!
May the serpents coils be cast out utterly!
May they be cast out utterly!
May the backbone of the serpent be smashed into pieces!

⁴. p 257-258
For the full text in language and the exact phonetic transcription according to Strehlow’s method the reader is referred to the text in *Songs of Central Australia*. It must be pointed out, however, that this book is now rare, is somewhat restricted in access and quoting it is considered by some local people as dangerous. I have to quote an extract because the reader must appreciate the subtle significance of the conjunction of thoughts about snakes, thoughts about various poisons, thoughts about cures and the importance to the Centralian people of songs which carry the curative power needed to set a healing process in motion. The presence of snakes becomes a leitmotif of the Sugarman Project.

From a psychological point of view we are beginning to deal with another motif of the project, that of totemic symbolising and ‘magical’ thinking. I see magical thinking as a unique way of linking cause and effect. It underpins the *ngankari* methodology. The snake seems to be one of the primary carriers of the magic, linking cure and poison, death and recovery. The ‘snake’ attains status as a totemic symbol in a mythopoetic language system, perhaps a ‘primary signifier’, in Levi Strauss’s sense. The snake becomes an icon and the activities of the icon tell a story.

It is crucial to recognise that theriomorphic imagery associated with the presence and activity of snakes figures potently in Centralian *ngankari* procedures and in European, Asian and African healing and shamanic traditions. I need to underline that the snake motif appeared and I am recognising it. I did not enter this project with the intention of projecting snake symbology into it.

Strehlow’s comment on the songs and how they are understood to effect the cure or decrease the impact of the snakebite is very illuminating.

“The venom is understood to ascend through the body from the wound to the ear. Once the ear has been reached the unfortunate person falls over (loses balance) and becomes unconscious. The invisible snake inside his body then constricts its coils around his throat, so that his breathing becomes laboured. He is choked. The charm (the song) first bids the snake to turn back from its progress towards the ear. It then commands the coils and the backbone to be broken into pieces so that the snake cannot choke its victim to death.”

Strehlow then notes the resonance between this Warrpiri/Arrernte song and an Old English (Anglo Saxon) snake-bite charm where Woden breaks a snake into nine pieces, thereby apparently halting the effect of its bite. He quotes the translation thus;

“A snake came crawling, it bit a man.
Then Woden took nine glory-twigs,
He smote the serpent so that it flew into nine parts.”
The reader may note that the body of the Dionysos/Sugarman Song Cycle is divided into nine parts. This decision was taken deliberately because the number nine recurs in association with Dionysos, the nine in relation to Woden’s snake was not intended but the coincidence is worth noting.

Japaljarri Spencer’s story about his recovery from snakebite lends some significance to the notion of finding ‘songs’ to send the ‘venom’ of alcohol away. The snake of the alcohol can be figured or imagined as travelling through the body of the drinker, reaching to his ear, causing imbalance, rendering him unconscious and coiling around his throat, finally choking him. This is a useful theatrical image.

In the discussion in the HALT office, we mulled about the idea of alcohol as poisonous, a potentially dangerous venom, and the idea that alcohol could be presented or understood, in the metaphorical sense, as a poisonous snake. Alcohol workers, as the potential new ‘singers’, needed to know the ‘facts about the snake’ in order to know how to treat it and work a cure for the poisoning. How might a traditional ngankari ‘shiver the coils’ of the Parma Warna (grog snake) into many pieces and prevent it from throttling healthy Aboriginal life?

The significance of the emergence of imagery about snakes might be further appreciated when one recalls the snake Tjukurrpa of the Japaljarri/Jungarai skin group with which Andrew is associated. In particular the Tjukurrpa to which he introduced Petchkovsky and I, and, as noted in Chapter 7; Petchkovsky’s dream of the oil from the body of the snake and Andrew’s reciprocating dream of the snake sent by his Jungarai father for the ‘white doctor’.

It should be apparent by now that some kind of intercultural communciation process is operating here, collecting spontaneously around the image language of the activity of serpents. A language which is familiar to a psycho analytic mind frame, attuned as it is to the interpretation of the mythopoetic imagery of dreaming and the transformations of experience through bodily sensations, emotion packed images, dream shapes, myth thoughts and thence into concepts which aid therapeutic transformation.

If we think of this exchange in terms of Winnicott, the interactive space between us is being filled with specific objects destined for serious play. Not teddy bears but snakes.

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5 also note the coincidence of the snakes associated with Boggy Hole near Palm Valley which is connected to Elva Cook and the other coincidence of the character of the Intjartnana sacred site, one associated with dismembered bodies (as stones) and the other with an entrance to a domain of death -Urama. Both images feature in the Dionysos saga.
3. A PICTURE OF SUGAR.
THE PARMA PAINTING.

In the HALT office, we are looking at the Parma painting, which was, as I recall, leaning against a wall. Andrew notes that it is painted by himself but is from his mother, Nangala. At that time his mother was alive and painting and had been specifically asked by Andrew to work with him so he could know/show the Parma Tjukurpa, of which she was an owner. This was prior to her death and the deeply grievous, tragic loss of her other son and family in a vehicle incident on the Nyirripi road in early 1991.

The painting and interpretive notes from the HALT exhibition catalogue is reproduced below. This includes a definition of Parma and why alcohol has come to be categorised as parma as a sweet, desired substance and source of energy.

6 Linguist, David Nash (ANU) - personal communication - points out that Parma and Wana the Warlpiri and Pijitjyanjara/Luritja/Pintupi words for these substances actually refer to substances which are considered as ‘delicacies’ and not simply 'the sugars'. The Arrernte word, which has been used for 'grog' (Ngkwerle) does specifically refer to sweet substances. These are significant language factors which linguists can hopefully investigate further.
As far as I know the interpretive links between alcohol and sweet desirable substances still holds. Nash has begun to research this and notes other word/concepts which have been assumed into the linguistic imagery of alcohol, with variations according to language and geographical region. This includes the words derived from sea waters which help to form the penumbra of linguistic associations around the liquids and the experiences of alcohol.
The use of the title “Sugarman” as a referent to Wati Wama or Wati Parma which translates as the ‘sweet man’, the desirable man” or the ‘man of sugar’, still seems to hold up, in our region at least. It has interesting associations in English, with referents to cocaine and drug dealing in popular culture. See for instance Rodriguez’ song ‘Sugarman’, about a dealer and his effects.
The name has stuck and it appears to have coinage in Aboriginal and European circles in different parts of the country. Whether it will last, remains to be seen.
Patterns in grog terminology in Australian languages
David Nash
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**bold**: a term which has been extended to include some or all alcoholic beverages

Appendix 53
Not to be reproduced.
*Hakea divaricata* (fork-leafed corkwood)  
(*H. internedia, H. cyrene*)  
**Family:** Proteaceae

| Alyawarr | nyuyu-wuradj | 
| Western Arrernte | nyuyu | 
| Pintupi | pirranu | 
| Pijanjatjara | piguma, wiijinti, ngyanyu | 
| Warlpiri | kampalpa, nyuyu-piwarra, parrarum, pirrwa, purraja, yarrunpyu | 

A small gnarled tree up to 7 m high with characteristic thick, corky bark, smooth, branched leaves and yellow-green flowers. The woody fruits contain two winged seeds. It occurs in the southern three-quarters of the area as scattered trees in woodland communities, usually on river flats. Flowering often occurs in early spring but is dependent on rainfall. This is a fire-tolerant tree.

The seeds are eaten by Warlpiri and Pijanjatjara people without preparation. The honey is either sucked from the flowers or the flowers are steeped in water to make a sweet blackish-coloured drink. This drink is reputed to sometimes have a slightly alcoholic effect.

Emus feasting on the flowers are reputed to become somewhat stupefied and easy to kill.

**Habitat**  
Woodland, mallee, spinifex hills

**Distribution**  
Southern three-quarters, common

**Fire tolerance**  
Fire tolerant

**Portion used for food**  
Seeds

**Other uses**  
Decoration, medicine, mythology
This is a women's story, for which the artist obtained permission to paint from its senior owner.

The Warlpiri word *pama* refers to forms of concentrated sugars which can be gathered from some flowers and insects. It is a category of foods which is differentiated from meat and vegetables or fruits. The story of its creation and gathering is enacted in ceremonies which are shown in the painting. The symbology is also a choreographic notation for dancing.

This kind of food is deemed to have a special spiritual power and meaning perhaps reflecting the experience of a rapid boost of energy when it is consumed.

When alcoholic beverages were introduced to Warlpiri people, this word was applied to the new substance, before its destructive power was known: a semantic shift. Andrew intends to reaffirm the healthy values and practices of traditional *pama* in contrast with the harmful power of alcohol.
4. SONGS FOR PETROL AND ALCOHOL.

Japaljarri is speaking. Phrases are verbatim. Bracketed phrases are my explanation notes to clarify the sense as understood at the time.

Looking at the Parma Painting.

“This is about ‘sugar ant’- different to honey ant. It is like a fly.

We have the song for Parma and for strengthening Parma
(increase ceremony?)

We haven’t got the song to send the Whiteman’s Parma away.

We can’t get rid of this one. We can only strengthen the good Parma.

The songs for petrol and alcohol must come from the Whiteman.

or we must dream new ones.

The children can’t save the world.

‘You (The white people) have lost your dreaming.

Maybe you don’t know the songs for alcohol and petrol.

You have to learn (reconnect to) your songs -

your Whitefeller Tjakurrpa.

To turn to us, to me (ie. Andrew and to Aboriginal people)

for the (alcohol and petrol dreaming) songs is not right.

(it would be irresponsible).

To expect me (Aboriginal people) to dream petrol/ alcohol songs is too much”.

Later Andrew asked straight out.

“Do whitefellas have Tjakurrpa for parma?”

(I understood parma as referring to alcohol and its effects on people)

I exchanged glances with Petchkovsky.

We nodded to each other, both obviously doing a quick resume of the Western mythological repertoire.

I said “Yes”.

He said “Well, maybe you’d better go and get it. That’s your responsibility”.

I nodded “Alright Japaljarri”.

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5. **COMMENTARY**

My understanding of the main points and implications arising so far in this conversation and its preceding contexting, is as follows:

1. *Yappa ngankaris* have realised that the job of diagnosing and treating alcohol/petrol related conditions is too big, or rather the power of the alcohol is too strong for traditional Aboriginal therapeutic process.

2. The *ngankari* tradition does not have the authority or means of sending the alcohol ‘spirit’ away. Furthermore, it is unclear as to how *Yappa* conceive of or represent to themselves the ‘shape’ of the alcohol ‘spirit’.

3. *Yappa* can only strengthen and increase the (spiritual) presence of *parma*. The strength which comes from the *parma* as an energy source is desired and it has high priority as a survival food.

   If *Yappa* want *parma* and need it as an energy source why would they want to decrease its availability and influence?

4. But alcohol as *parma* is a different business altogether, so we are deep into a dilemma, a 'catch 22'. If the Aboriginal tradition does not conceive of decreasing or sending *parma* away then once alcohol and *parma* are associated linguistically and mentally as belonging to the same category of desirable and delicious life enhancing delicacy, how would anyone in their right mind want alcohol/parma to be decreased or sent away?

   If alcohol had become associated with poison, from the beginning then the story might be different.

   (It is, of course, in the nature of alcohol to be both toxic and delightful. Two things at once, one life enhancing and one death enhancing.)

5. There are no songs or ceremonies to decrease the power of *parma*.

Therefore there are no songs or ceremonies to decrease the power of alcohol (as a dangerous or toxic substance).

This is probably what he means when he says that there are no songs and ceremonies which describe the origins, nature and activities of alcohol and of intoxicated states.

6. Therefore there are perceived to be no laws and no *Tjukurrpa*, as the basis of lawmaking, to govern the use of alcohol in Aboriginal culture.

   There is no precedent in tradition which would back up moderation of destructive behaviour while people are under the influence of this new substance, known now as *parma*.

   Alcoholic drink has emanated from ‘whitefeller’ sugars. Hence control of its increase, decrease or moderation does not lie within the knowledge of Aboriginal cultural precedent. It is outside the area of responsibility.
7. Either Europeans have to teach their song to Yappa or Yappa have to dream up a new story/song for parma which would contain implications for control of its use and management of the cure of alcohol related ‘poisoning’.

Is alcohol a dangerous spirit or is it a sweet and desired delicacy?

If it is both at once then how is this contradictory capacity to be managed?

Surely there is precedent in Aboriginal experience to handle paradoxical substances and situations. This may be so, but at the moment of the conversation, in the mind of Japaljarri, the bringers of the substance bear the responsibility for the dreaming story (Tjukurrpa).

It is their responsibility to own, manage, police and teach the story and the law of the substance to those people to whom they allow the drinking of it.

6. A CULTURAL DELUSION, THE POLITICS OF DENIAL OR AN INNOCENT TRUTH?

Further reflections on the non existence of a cultural lore.

1. Centralian Aboriginal people do have or used to have mildly intoxicating drinks made from some fruits or flowers, such as Corkwood, as Latz suggests in Bushfires and Bush Tucker, (p207 corkwood, p 57 honey/nectar,p63 native tobacco, p68-69 plants in religion, ceremony song and art) However the songs or ceremonies specifically about the intoxicants or even the sought after nicotine source pitjuri, do not seem to be known or to be publicly available. In any case they are probably intoxicant increase ceremonies and not intoxicant decrease ceremonies. Since the corkwood or grevillea fermentation does not seem to have produced a strong or reliable supply of intoxicating liquid it would have been in people’s best interest to get more. I doubt if it was particularly toxic or dangerous.

Drunkenness, if it existed prior to European or Macassan visitations did not seem to be a trouble, did not appear to be recognised as life threatening or related to illness or sorcery. There do not appear to be any items or activities of intoxicated creation beings borrowed from the Indonesian Archipelago. The law/Tjukurrpa is significantly silent on the treatment of alcohol or intoxicant related disturbances in mind, body, spirit or culture. There appears to be no available Central Australian local knowledge of whether or not tales of Macassan visitations and their possible use of alcohol or other drugs, has ever filtered down into Central Australia.

I find this very curious, given the reality of Aboriginal trade routes, the travel of ‘song lines’ and the family connections between the Kimberleys, the Top End and the Centre. Either we are dealing with a conspiracy of secrecy or an unaccountable lacunae in general knowledge, or perhaps a lapse in marketing.
Ted Strehlow in Journey to Horsehoe Bend (1969 p. 205) mentions that his father had allocated several bottles of whiskey to be given to Arrnte men as beneficiaries to his will. This is early 20th century Lutheran Hermannsburg. It could be important to undertake a detailed research project into the history of alcohol use in Hermannsburg, given the Namatjira saga, the experience of the introduction of the first drinking club (wet canteen) and the current state of Hermannsburg inhabitant’s petrol and alcohol dependence.

2. We know that there are songs for healing poisoning by snakebite. There are instructions for handling poisonous plants and food sources. (Latz p60) There are Tjukurpa events which deal with interpersonal violence, but not in so far as it is related to intoxication. The preparation of pitjari (native tobacco) is a carefully followed procedure but whether this is linked to any ceremony or story defining or governing its origins and use still appears to be awaiting clarification. My own questions about possible Pitjari Tjukurpa or as to who might own the story for pitjari, has been met, so far, with uncertain responses.

“Maybe the Pitchi (Pitjantjatjarra) mob know” said Bertha Nakamara Dixon while sitting concentaritely over the fire, preparing the white coolabah bark ash for mixing with the pitjari leaf compound. It didn’t seem to bother her.

3. There may well be Tjukurpa events which deal with the primal states identifiable with stages of intoxication as expressed in the Sugarman Dionysos story. For instance, dismemberment and gathering together of the parts of dismembered body or spirit, but there appears to be no definite or conscious link made by most Aboriginal people of my acquaintance, between those events, that is, between specific derangement or dismemberment Tjukurpa events and intoxicated states. Those links are occurring now, perhaps, by a process of learning from bitter experience over the two hundred years of white occupation. However the presence of drunkenness does not seem to have been internalised or elevated into a 'new’ or adapted Tjukurpa. One has to wonder why this is because it does appear that Aboriginal song men and women do invent new songs or adapt current ceremonies to include new elements.7 — see the Honey Ant Dreaming Mens’ Love Songs in Dixon (1990p53) where the apparently traditional song gives the lover a red shirt as an update. the Saga of Captain Cook (Rose,1984) describes the fight between Cook and Satan that formed the Cahill Expressway tunnel in Sydney and the Yuendumu Warlpiri/Amatjerre Christian pulapa reenacts ceremonially the story of Jesus.

Furthermore it can’t only be because alcohol is parma and therefore only open to increase singing because in other parts of the country alcohol is associated with other substances such as sea water and froth. (David Nash pers. comm 1997, see appendix)

Is there ‘no story for alcohol’ because no Aboriginal skin group really wants the responsibility of managing it? Or is there a genuine lacuna in the mind of those responsible for maintaining traditional Tjukurpa and inventing new dreamings?

7 The Yuendumu region Night Patrol instigated a Night Patrol ceremony in February 1998 to pass on the ‘ownership’ of Night Patrol responsibilities to a younger woman following the decease of a senior member.
I am afraid it is beyond my capacities or competence to investigate this question adequately. I don't have the linguistic knowledge or the anthropological skills. I can only take the problem at face value as described by Spencer and other Aboriginal associates such as Randall. The problem as they see it is that traditional lore does not handle alcohol. It was not my task to establish the objective truth of this statement. It has become clear that a critical mass of people both Aboriginal and those who live or work within the Aboriginal domain, take this statement as reflecting accurately the state of affairs and so a reasonable attempt to address it seems justified.

I am also aware of how 'grog psychology' works around the issues of denial, codependency etc and there is plenty of justifiable criticism of the argument. "We got no dreaming for grog. Its your problem" or "You fix it, you brought it". This position of abnegation of responsibility can be rightly criticised.

4. Although alcohol has been nominally included into the food category of *Parna* it is probably, in effect, part of a different category of substance which may not have a significant place in Aboriginal tradition anyway. There don't appear to be any serious hallucinogens or drugs in traditional use, although there certainly is a knowledge of poisons and curative herbs. Nowadays of course, marihuana, kava, heroin and the whole chemical pantheon of drugs, volatile substances and intoxicants is becoming available even in the remotest communities.

5. It is also worth noting that for many Aboriginal people, being Christian is associated with being a non drinker. It could be argued therefore that the Christian mythological (*Tjukturpa?*) framework provides the facilitating link and the facilitating cultural environment for a sober life. Andrew, in personal and intimately confidential conversation with me attributes his giving up of alcohol directly to a dramatic and painful visionary event which included a near death experience and an act of intervention by the spiritual presence of Christ, in a manner which will be familiar to the Christian. Maggie Brady, in her useful collection of recovery stories *Giving up the Grog* (1995) (from Northern NT Aboriginal ex drinkers) demonstrates how often the Christian story or the Christian community helps establish for people a position from which to eschew the drinking life.

6. It would be helpful to thoroughly research the historical relationship between the Dionysian mystery cults of the Graeco Roman era and the evolution of the Christian way of life, noting where and how the Judaic traditions handle wine and how the Dionysian activities overlapped or influenced the Judeo Christian traditions. I have taken note of this as a line for further specialised research but have refrained from doing so within the bounds of the thesis, in the interests of economy, although reading in this area has definitely influenced the Sugarman Script. The Travelling Stories section give some indication of the rich possibilities of Middle Eastern mythological story as a source for healing paradigms and angles on intoxication psychology. A starting point for a research effort could be the Passover Ceremonial meal, the Last Supper and the evolution of the Christian liturgical drama of the Mass, where bread and wine are shared as the transsubstantiated body and blood of Christ.
7. I suppose it would be generally true to say that health promotion campaigns fit alcohol into the category of drugs and mind altering substances rather than into that of food. The majority of health promotion strategies attack alcohol as a potentially dangerous drug rather than as a potentially dangerous food. However, when Aboriginal people began to accept and categorise alcohol it seems to have readily flowed into the category of sweet, desirable foods and not into the category of toxins, poisons or even of those bush foods which needed to be treated, with respect, as toxic, requiring careful handling and preparation before human consumption, like, for example, one species of bush tomato. This would seem to be a problem for medical anthropologists to investigate.

8. Japaljarri Spencer’s point was that unless Aboriginal people can dream up a new Tjukurrpa or the Europeans revive their ‘dreaming’ then we are both at a stalemate. Apparently, no one can do anything about this ‘problem’ unless there is Tjukurrpa/Law to frame responsible social actions for its use. Responsibility exists, therefore, in a sort of limbo, a no man’s land, where no person, no family and no skin group has the job of owning or managing the substance, its secrets and its ceremonies.

In fact, as I understand it, if there is no law inside the indigenous culture then anyone can drink it, anyone can sell it, anyone can do anything they like with it and no one can be held responsible for the consequences. This sounds like a suicidally hopeless cultural delusion. Ngankaris might know how to distract or extract poison from the body after snakebite, or extract psychic poison after sorcery but they don’t know the law of extracting the alcoholic poisons from the spirit body of Aboriginal people. Why then do they not attempt to adapt technique and theory to meet the new situation?

9. If the white people do have or can revive their own alcohol Tjukurrpa then they might be able to pass it on to the Yappa or give Yappa the authority to use it. So goes the suggestion.

Alternatively Yappa and Kardia (white people) together can dream up a new one, if this is cosmologically possible. And why shouldn’t it be?

On this issue, I pointed out to Andrew that Kardia have AA and other methods of treating alcohol toxification and that some Aboriginal people do rely upon and advocate AA. (CAAAPU and Aboriginal Alcoholics Anonymous were beginning to operate in Alice at that time.)

I asked if this wouldn’t be the Kardia Tjukurrpa base that Aboriginal people could draw upon, since it relied upon a higher power that could easily be re construed as Tjukurrpa. Andrew was emphatic that he did not recognise these methods as being true Tjukurrpa, and that it would be necessary for me to understand Tjukurrpa and how it works in order to grasp the significance and implications of the point he was making.
Whether AA and the 12 Steps are or can be recognised as fitting into Tjukurrpa did not become my business. This in no way implies that I or Japaljarri were being critical of AA. He simply did not see the AA story as being relevant as Tjukurrpa, at the time of our conversation.

7. A PLACE FOR THINKING AND A MOMENT OF PASSION.

I have no further comments on that day’s conversation except to note a journal entry: ‘HALT is a thinking place’ where contemplation can take place, outside the dogma of the conventional, politically correct, rationalist alcohol treatment theory. In this note I re-emphasised to myself the hunch that the HALT practitioners are in fact extending the boundaries of what is normally considered as traditional healing, to include innovative consideration of how customary methods could encompass the treatment of alcohol toxicity.

I have a clear memory of the impact made upon me of that sequence of conversation and the rapid thought assessment I made of possible mythological stories and events from several cultures which possibly might be equivalent to my (naive) understanding of Tjukurrpa, and hence might be useful to Japaljarri’s purposes.

The exchange of glances with Petchkovsky and our mutual nod of assent were not idle gestures, nor an act of polite conversational compliance.

I recall the experience of heart stopping recognition that a moment of passion had arrived, which, in retrospect, re-oriented the direction of my thinking about the practice of therapy and sowed the seed for a radical redirection of my professional work.

In order for the reader to appreciate the weight behind the simple assent to Andrew’s enquiry as to whether Europeans do have a story, as a mythological schema for intoxication and alcohol production, it seems to have been necessary to carry out a retrospective analysis of the preexisting conceptual matrix which I implicitly brought to this meeting. This matrix included a foreknowledge of Western mythological traditions, the use of myth in therapeutic procedures and the value of symbols and the symbolic function in communicating between people.

This conversation marks the point of conception of the project.
CHAPTER 4

PASSING THROUGH THE GAP

1. RETURNING TO THE DREAM WORKSHOP

That evening, after the events at the HALT office, Petchkovsky and I continued our workshop on ‘The Archetype in Alice’.

One of the participants told a dream which then became the subject of a dream analysis culminating in a very moving psychological ‘operation’ by Petchkovsky. which demonstrated the way he worked psychodramatically with the scenario of a dream.

The conversations with Jpaljarri, we noted, were also subtly reorienting our sensitivity to the dream and the dreaming process and the way in which we handled such material.

We were beginning to appreciate the probability of some authentic congruence between local indigenous and Jungian approaches to therapeutic process, specifically the way in which a group of like minded people could handle the dream of one of their ‘kin’, which in turn, had impact not only for the individual dreamer and her problem but also had implications for the whole group.

I am speaking, not so much about the content of the dream (which it is not appropriate to describe here, outside the confidentiality of the group). I am speaking about an approach to the content and interpretation of a dream.

The formulation of a person’s existential problem can occur quite spontaneously in that individual’s dream. Metaphorically, one can think of the dream as the womb and the problem as the foetus. Both can then be set within the body/context of a ‘bigger story’. We might say that a traditional myth or creation story is the bigger story. The bigger story is part of the communal infra structure of a cultural group.

Interpretation in terms of individual ego problems, trauma theory etc. is a common method for psychotherapists to pursue. Jung extended this approach by redefining patients’ problems or distress in terms of their psychic absence from a spiritual nexus. From this point of view, a curative process can be set in train by establishing a relationship between the individual’s ego position and his or her personal story and the nexus of the
cultural dream. In some cases the cultural dream could itself be creating the dysfunction and hence a process of individuation needs to be inaugurated in terms of the individual getting free from the social repression of a ‘big story’. In other cases the solution to the patient’s problem can be found by reestablishing contact with and commitment to the ‘bigger story’. In this sense the ‘big story’ holds the cure while the ‘little (ego) story’ holds the illness. Discerning which is which and how to negotiate the relationship of ‘big’ and ‘little’ story in the interests of the patient’s and community’s health is the task for the therapist, operating in collaboration with the positive purposes of the spiritual ecosystem.

When, during the day’s meetings, we explained to Japaljarri that our thinking about therapeutic method ran along these lines and this was what our teachers, especially our ‘grandfather’ Jung advocated, Japaljarri indicated that this approach was consistent with Yappa thinking. So when we came to the dream workshop we found we were more sensitised than usual to the way in which the dream of the particular individual could be related, not only to her specific individual situation but also to the group itself and to a ‘bigger story’.

In the workshop, the sessions continued on from the dream psychodrama by leading into an enactment of a fragment of a classic Greek myth, as opportunity for the group members to get a working knowledge of the power and usefulness of traditional mythological (archetypal) stories as ‘big stories’ in providing a framework for approaching a matter located in the contemporary reality of an individual’s ‘little story’.

2. KORE or A GIRL GOES UNDERGROUND

The story chosen was that of Persephone.

Especially her induction/abduction into the underworld by Hades.

The simple structure of the story is as follows:

Demeter is the goddess (power) associated with and responsible for maintaining the fertility of the fruit, grain and vegetable food sources.

Her daughter (Kore) Persephone, having reached puberty, (capable of fertility herself) is attracted to or abducted by the underworld.

Her abductor is in fact her uncle, Hades.

He is responsible for the regions below the earth, which include the region of the dead as well as the riches of the sub soil and minerals.

She enters via a split or chasm in the earth.

A change occurs in the temperament of her mother; with a sustained period of loss, separation mourning and search for the absent daughter; which manifests as paralysis in the seasonal cycle and a shutting down of the natural fertility of the earth. Eventually the daughter’s location is established as well as the permanence of
her marriage to Hades, who will not give her up. A deal is struck whereby Persephone spends part of the year in the underworld (winter), part of the year with her mother (spring and summer) thus the continuity of the seasons is ensured and explained.

In addition to its use as an allegorical tale on the play of the seasons it also has a use as a rite-of-passage ceremonial for adolescent girl/mother couples. In fact there are many dimensions of meaning in this succinct tale but these two tend to predominate in interpretation.

There is a particular point in the story that began to capture my attention during the re-enactment. The point that caught my interest was not why the young woman went underground, or what happened to her there, but rather, it was the question of precisely, where she went in, and where she came out.

The arrival of the metaphor of ‘passing through a gap’ into another world was an echo of the preoccupation, perhaps, of both Petchkovsky and myself as we found ourselves, tentatively poised, at the entrance of another world. In this case the other world was the region of thinking and feeling which was opening up in the conversations we were having with Japaljarri and which were having the effect of drawing us into his world and he, perhaps, into ours. A point of liminal intercourse was emerging, or in Winnicott’s sense, we were approaching a ‘potential space’ located at a point of overlap of two worlds.  

In the group session, by use of an imaginary map, we tried to establish the idea of psychic geography and locate not only where and what the ‘underworld’ might be for different participants but most especially where and what the ‘entrance’ would be, in terms of actual geography, internal geography and anatomy. This is about an emotional experience, which has the effect of taking an individual from one to another state of being. We found that we were contemplating psychological passages of transition, using Persephone’s passage into the underworld as the guiding metaphor. Her mother’s anxiety about the unexplained disappearance of her daughter became a metaphor to get at the sense of panic and anticipated disorientation of ‘passing through the gap’.

In my own case, passing through the gap into another world was the moment when Japaljarri framed the request for knowledge about the existence of a European parma story. The throw away statement, “that is your responsibility”; was an instant of a gap opening up; and my reply, “alright Japaljarri”’ was a spontaneous decision to pass though it.

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3. A DREAM COMES THROUGH

The next day Leon, Andrew and I met again. Andrew remembered a dream he had which he felt was necessary to tell us. The essential features (described in more detail in Chapter 7) are as follows; Japaljarri, in the dream, saw a snake which he identified as being the Snake from the Japaljarri/Jungarai Tjakurpa, associated with the travelling ngankari story which he had described on the previous meetings.

The snake is travelling on the ground.
It travels toward Petchkovsky.

His father (Jungarai) appeared in the dream and spoke to him, conveying to his son, Japaljarri, the sense that Andrew should introduce the snake story to the Kardia doctor.

As a consequence of this dream Japaljarri told us more details of the Wana Snake story, taking the dream as a confirmation that we should be systematically inducted into the detail and implications of this story, as a basis for acquiring some understanding of how the ngankari induction process worked.

Over the years, subsequently, we have absorbed more of the story, and visited many of the sites associated with that particular Tjakurpa. By visiting 'sites' I also mean visiting the states of being which are present at those sites.

It is not appropriate for me to write in an unguarded way about this story, but some acknowledgment of its significance is necessary for the reader to make sense of the direction the Sugarman Project took, wherein the Wana story has acted as a reference point for the structure of the activities and travels of the Sugarman/Dionysos on his own painfully dismembered journeys. 'Morphic resonance' is a more accurate term than 'reference point' and I simply note these resonances without making any claims about 'collective unconscious' or archetypal transmigrations. Poetically, this kinship of snakes is rather useful in catching the attention of a mixed race audience.

Dionysos, of course, is represented in the tradition as taking the form of a serpent, or is associated with serpents as well as having the capacity to take on animal shapes. (The bull, the goat, the kid, deer, panther.) According to Kerenyi, in his wonderfully useful work on Dionysos, in Nonnos' epic of Dionysos, it was a snake which first gave Dionysos the clue to wine; seeing the snake suck from the grape; the juice run down his jaws, then plunge into a rock hole, gave him the idea to make it, or reminded him of an oracular statement he had heard earlier from Rhea ‘his grandmother’. (Kerenyi 1976 p57-58). Another version links the discovery of the vine with a dog (Sirius and Orion where Dionysos and Orion the hunter are somehow synthesised as one figure. (Ibid p 77)
The snake figures evocatively in the history of Thebes. Cadmus, the father of Dionysos' second mother Semele, founds the city on a snake's abode and fights it for possession of the place. When Cadmus and his wife are exiled at the end of the Bacchae, (by Dionysos himself) he transforms them into two travelling snakes. This particular reptile, therefore, has a significant position in the heritage of Dionysos through Semele. So, surprisingly, or coincidentally, a kinship system of snakes is already well established in the mutual traditions of the Western Desert and ancient Mediterranean. Japaljarri's dream snake opened a gate in the mental world whereby something came out and something went through. Persephone's passage into the underworld prepared us for the visit of the snake from the old Jungarai.

Arrangements were made for Leon and I to return in October that year (1990) when Andrew took us to meet one of the other old Jungarai, (Larry Jungarai Spencer, now Kumanjai). He was Andrew's father's brother. We met one afternoon, by an overturned motor vehicle and a corrugated iron humpy. Then later that night, then again next day. The exchange was delicate and simple. The old man drew the specific snake and other figures associated with Japaljarri/Jungarai Tjukurrpa with which he was associated. He gently and elegantly confirmed his willingness to introduce us to the Warna story and sweetly confirmed the allocation of Peichkovsky and myself to the Jungarai skin/kin position so that we could legitimately absorb Japaljarri/Jungarai stories and responsibilities in so far as was appropriate.

The implications and meanings of inclusion into the Yappa Waltyja or family system deserve attention for its own sake but it is not my business here to describe the complexities of the Central Desert kinship system nor the way in which it works to include outsiders/blues into the family. Suffice it to say that such an inclusion is a very practical action which facilitates communication and relationship and establishes identity, responsibilities and obligation which is both a delight and a fairly taxing experience for the white person so included. For an introductory account of the kinship system see Franks, Poulson et al. (1995)

The old man passed away, about a week after that meeting, (October 29 1990) The responsibility for instruction in the story seemed to rest from then on with Andrew, who has consistently maintained the relationship to both of us, in different ways. Paddy Japaljarri Sims has also played his part, along with Paddy Japaljarri Stewart, whose exquisitely raw rendition of a lightning dance and an eagle (wallawarna), has given shape to the character of Lightning Man/Zeus and given the form to the 'lightning travels across the plain' text in Story Four Scene 1.
4. LEGENDS LIVE WHEN LEGENDS ROAM²

Thoughts on cross cultural archetypal infection, therapeutic initiation process and travelling.

It should be clear by now that the Jungarai/Japaljarri Warna story is acting as an underlay to my thinking about therapeutic training. Furthermore, the Warna Tjukurpa has emerged as a companion story to some aspects of the mysteries of the Dionysos song cycle. Andrew has made it clear that I have the responsibility to speak about those parts of the story which I have been told to therapeutic/professional colleagues who are sincere in developing an understanding of Two-Way therapeutic process. I am also aware of a need for circumspection. This is a dilemma. The reader may, regrettably, have to be content with minimised detail of the Warna tjukurpa study’s structure and psychological content. But apparently, the knowledge matrix contained in a creation story or Tjukurpa generates specific and unique ways of practice and a practitioner is empowered to act within the confines of this generating myth, by virtue of the experiences induced in him or her by the influence of the particular Tjukurpa being. A spiritual transmission occurs between individual and Tjukurpa site or being. This transmission can affect anyone, black or white, who enters its field but not everyone can contain or utilise the ‘power’ with effect or integrity.

There may be negative consequences for both indigenous and ‘exogenous’ practitioners who operate outside their own lineage or cross over naively to another culture’s archetypal form. While being interested in the potential for authentic cross cultural collaborations, I am also aware that one of the negative consequences of cultural crossover is a state of confusion and ungrounded spiritual inflation, but I also suspect that one of the consequences of failing to develop cross cultural collaboration, in a swiftly changing multicultural world, is that ethnocentric traditional practitioners may, within one more generation, lose their effectiveness and meet their demise. At the same time there must be some conscious attempt to maintain integrity of commitment to the essentials of tradition.

I suspect that a therapist of any culture, who tries to practice without feeling and knowing the whole cultural mythosem which backs one’s therapeutic method, will always be practising on unstable and infertile ground. Alcohol counsellors who practise without knowing the full Dionysos story as a genuine ‘Tjukurpa’ may well eventually find themselves in trouble or out of their depth.³ The Warna Tjukurpa, for instance, proceeds by a series of westward travels, which induce a series of physical and psychic losses until a period of restoration and ‘rebirth’ sets in, after which the trainee/traveller become imbued with ‘mapanpa’ or curative power and then is fitted to practice. Taking on a bit of the story, e.g. one instance of wounding, without being aware of the full sequence, might leave one stuck in the wounded position for a long time until the restorative part of the story is witnessed, learned and internalised. I suspect that the same psychological logic applies to the Dionysos story, where being stuck inside ‘dismemberment’ as a position could have rather desperate consequences.

2. Harley Davidson Motor cycle rider’s 1 shirt. Coober Pedy

³ This may be a way of explaining the high drop out of Aboriginal alcohol counsellors in the Centre and partly explain the demise of HALT and CAAAPU.
Travels, traumas and losses underpin the acquisition of therapeutic capacities in many cultures and it would seem that travelling initiations are part of a common spiritual heritage. The essence of the process would appear to be about transformations and a reorientations of one's being. Meher Baba, whose work in India with the Masts (pronounced 'must' commonly used to mean 'mad' or 'out of mind') divinely intoxicated souls, recounts archetypal ego loss procedures succinctly and deftly in his Discourses in the section on 'The Nature of the Ego and Its Termination' and in William Donkin's The Wayfarers, an account of his work with spiritually intoxicated sadhus, yogis, and madmen; especially in the chapters on 'The Difference Between Ordinary Madness and Mast States' and 'The Journey Of the Masts And The Role Of The Master'. An essential feature of Meher Baba's work was long expeditions, from sacred site to sacred site throughout the Indian subcontinent. Perhaps it is in this mysterious activity of moving across country for spiritual purpose that we will find that the Western traditions, the Eastern traditions and the Central Australian traditions are fellow travellers.

In a final note of clarification about indigenous Australian procedures, I do not presume to represent how traditional Aboriginal practitioners consider the processes which Westerners would call psychological or spiritual initiation. This study is not about how Andrew or any other Japaljarri or Jungarai frames or interprets the experiences of becoming a ngankari or how the Tjukurpa works in them. Almost everything I write here is based entirely upon my own experience. Andrew and his associates can speak for themselves, if ever a proper opportunity were created for them to speak to the therapeutic community. However, it has become my business to accept my own experience as valid and acknowledge that as I become exposed to the activity of a Tjukurpa, I attempt to carry that experience into my work with the Sugarman, for the benefit of others. Synthesis of the two cultures seems to occur personally and at personal cost.
INTRODUCTION

The three chapters in this section are studies undertaken during the research phase of the Sugarman Project.

Chapter 5, 'Deaths in Custody' places the project in an historical context of the developing initiatives in Central Australia during the late 1980s and early 1990s. This period included three significant events in Aboriginal-Australian relations;
The celebration of the 200 year anniversary of European Australia.
The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC).
The High Court Native Title (Mabo) decision which recognised that Aboriginal people had pre-existing possession of the land, thereby revoking the so called Terra Nullius position, a legal fiction that Australia was effectively empty prior to European occupation.
These events were emotional provocations which added strength to the will for Aboriginal self determination and for Aboriginal controlled initiatives in law, culture and also health care, including alcohol treatment of Aboriginal people by Aboriginal people.

Chapter 6, 'The Use of Stories' presents examples of therapeutic metaphor. In this study I was interested to explore how an archetypal story, a procedure or a myth could serve as imaginal backup to the practice of particular therapeutic schools. Tjukurrpa as backup to indigenous practices of healing is not so very different to the European practice of reliance upon an implicit guiding myth as a way of ordering clinical procedures and training.

Chapter 7, 'An Overture of Snakes' presents more details on the events surrounding the meeting with Andrew Spencer Japaljarri described in Part One, and gives further considerations on engaging with an Aboriginal epistemology.

These three pieces are like preliminary studies for a large painting, there is some repetition and some elements may be unnecessary but they can stand as they are in order to help build up the layering of the whole canvas.
CHAPTER 5

‘DEATHS IN CUSTODY’ AND ‘HEALING OUR PEOPLE’

Exploring intercultural treatment approaches.
The rationale for the Sugarman Project.

1. THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody drew attention to, among the many issues under its consideration, the influence of alcohol and petrol sniffing upon the life and death of Aboriginal people.

In the report to the Commission by an Expert Working Group on Aboriginal Alcohol Use and Related Problems (Alexander ed.1990) there was included a review of treatment and education methods which had been in use among native peoples, in Australia and abroad, especially North America, up until the time of the Royal Commission. The working group suggested strongly that more attention be given by practitioners in substance abuse work to identifying and developing indigenous methods of treatment. This would involve the encouragement of the use and development of therapeutic methods consistent with Aboriginal cultural values, derived from Aboriginal perceptions and based upon the accumulated knowledge and experience of Aboriginal healing practice.

Implicit in the recommendations was a request to practitioners who rely upon Western or particularly the dominant Australian/Anglo American therapeutic ideologies, to examine their own assumptions and develop a more self critical attitude about the value and application of their practices within the indigenous circles.

The report’s chapters considered the following issues;
1. The Prevalence of Alcohol Use and Hazardous Use Among Aboriginal People.
2. Consequences of Alcohol Use Among Aboriginal People.
3. Causes of Alcohol Misuse and Alcohol Related Problems.
4. Programs for Prevention, Intervention and Treatment of Alcohol Related Problems.
5. Implications for the Royal Commission.
All in all, this is an exceptionally useful reference document, which has provided a foundation for subsequent reviews and a summation of references which form the body of literature relevant to the Central Australian experience. Many of the contributors continue to be influential on matters related to Aboriginal Substance Use and Misuse.

In Chapter 5, on Interventions, note is taken of a number of projects and intervention issues. Under the heading of 'Community Development Projects' (p71) the working group refer to preventative Aboriginal programs. In particular they note the work of the Healthy Aboriginal Life Team (HALT) and the significance of the Outstation Movement.

In a succinct, three paragraph review of HALT, one paragraph is dedicated to underlining the intriguing point that alcohol/grog has been incorporated into the traditional food categories of the sweet substances known locally as pama/wama. (These are Warlpiri and Pitjatjanjarra language terms for sweet substances or delicacies and are now also used for alcohol. The Arrernte word is ngkwarte.) The point had been made by HALT workers that the spiritual dimensions of these rare substances have become perverted. There is a suggestion that some kind of linguistic slip has occurred which tacitly gives permission for Aboriginal people to drink as much as they wish.

The Report acknowledges the Aboriginal outstations as locations for indigenous initiatives in controlling or containing the excesses of alcohol use;

"Outstations represent, among other things, an attempt by Aboriginal families to get away from the well meant interference of non Aboriginal people and institutions, as well as from their fellow Aboriginal people. Representing as they do, an effort to reassert Aboriginal control over day to day life, they are not readily amenable to cooption for the purposes of non Aboriginal health, welfare or judicial institutions." (ibid, p73)

The report gives further attention to HALT and the outstations as local community interventions, and addresses the influence and impact of (Christian) religious groups in ameliorating alcohol problems. It then goes on to look at ‘Treatment Issues and Options’, at ‘History and Current Options’, and finally comes to a ‘Consideration of Traditional Indigenous Treatment Approaches’ (ibid pp103-104).

The writers note that Native Americans, in particular, have attempted to incorporate or adapt traditional healing methods for substance abuse work and also note that;

"in Australia, traditional healing practices .....are rarely if ever applied to substance misuse as far as can be ascertained." (ibid p 104)

They suggest that the reason for this may be due;

"...in part to the paucity of funding and coordination and the lack of a milieu within which such progressive moves might occur."
It is this matter of - "the lack of a milieu" - which has caught my attention. I believe that this is indeed the heart of the problem. Creating effective programs and developing indigenous methodologies of treatment are first dependent upon establishing a stable environment in which critical observation and informed understanding of local conditions can generate specific methods that work in the local context. I would suggest that the creation of the necessary milieu begins by creating conditions whereby frank and reciprocal exchanges across cultural enclosures can take place. Andrew Spencer's wife Marlene Nampitjimpa Ross puts it thus; "first we have to talk story". (pers. comm).

2. 'HEALING OUR PEOPLE' - A CONFERENCE

In 1991 the Institute of Criminology hosted a conference in Alice Springs entitled; 'Healing Our People' - An Aboriginal Community Justice and Crime Prevention Forum.
2-5 April 1991 held at The Red Centre Resort.

The opening quotation on the program reads as follows;

"We can't go back. The old law was for the old problems. Now we get this new law- this Whiteman's way. And we got these new problems. This law doesn't fix them either. It's no good. What we got to do is put them together- the old and the new. Mix them up. And they'll be hard and strong like cement."

Elder from Kowanyama Community, Queensland.

The conference organisers specifically addressed the RCIADIC recommendations and provided an unrestricted opportunity for Central Australian practitioners to consider methods of substance abuse work which included indigenous methods, indigenous experience and indigenous aspirations.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a spirit of enthusiasm erupted during the conference which brought with it a sense of hope, based upon the enthusiasm of the Native American participants, that something could be done, the problem could be fixed and the two laws/lores could mix together to good effect.

This conference marked a significant point, perhaps even a watershed in Central Australian substance abuse work.

1. It marked a crucial stage in the development of CAAAPU (Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Programmes Unit) and their relationship with the Canadian Native American groups associated with Alkali Lake and Poundmakers Lodge, Canada. (Eric Shirt and Associates later became the consultants to CAAAPU, during the development of the residential alcohol treatment facility in Alice Springs)

2. It marked a point of acknowledgment and support for the Cook family's remote area alcohol rehabilitation outstation at Injartnarna, 130 km west of Alice Springs, near Naria/Hermannsburg.

3. It marked a significant point in the culmination of the work of the Healthy Aboriginal Life Team
(HALT) with the presentation of a sociodrama workshop based upon the painting, ‘Reconciliation’ by Andrew Spencer Japaljarri, featured on the cover of the conference program. There was also an exhibition of paintings and photographs that would become published as Anangu Way (1993).

4. It marked a point in the advocacy for the mix of the two laws, the indigenous and the ‘exdigenous’ (if such a word can exist). The work of the Aboriginal community Night Patrols, Correctional Services initiatives, and many other Aboriginal/Australian Law related working partnerships were presented and shared in an appreciative and constructive environment.

3. RESPECTING ANCIENT HISTORY.

That conference caught a spirit of the moment by establishing a milieu for many concerned people to integrate their experience of handling the disarray of social order by intoxication. This matter has tried the patience, intelligence and initiative of the preservers of cultural sanity for thousands of years.

The Greek tragedy The Bacchae written by Euripides (circa 407 BC) remains one of the most vivid portrayals of the dilemmas which face a community as they try to reconcile the needs of order and stability with the equally powerful desires for looseness, freedom and intoxication. The fact that such desires conflict with those of the guardians of order and regularly explode into violence was clearly shown by Euripides, in his way, in his times and in a medium appropriate to the times; a theatre piece presented at a community festival dedicated to Dionysos, the supernatural power associated with intoxication and liberation from constraint. The play is now a part of European cultural history.

The tragedy, once more is in full enactment. The Bacchae, in a new variation is being repeated not on stage but in the streets of Alice Springs, on the back roads of Central Australia and in the ‘city/states’ of the Aboriginal nation. There are lessons to learn from ancient European history.

4. BEGINNING A LOCAL HISTORY.

There were three influential speakers at the ‘Healing Our People’ Conference who managed to spark enthusiasm in many individuals and institutional representatives. Those three were native Americans, Brie Shirt, at that time associated with the Canadian, Poundmakers Lodge, Native American Treatment Project and Andy and Phyllis Chelsea from Alkali Lake, also Canada. The positive response to their charismatic urging to the local people to take control of their own situation demonstrated that there were Aboriginal people who had the ability, resolve and expertise to tackle the problem, provided that financial backing and professional cooperation would be forthcoming.

It appeared that support was available and so began a five year period of intense, generous, intercultural cooperation intended to ‘beat the grog’.
The full story of that period has not, to my knowledge, been written, though elements of it are there in various documents from, for instance, HALT, Menzies School of Health Research, CAAAPU, Intjartnma, Night Patrol, Territory Remote Area Health, Living With Alcohol, ADRES, Tangentjerre Social Behaviour Program, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Family Resource Service, Petrol Link Up, Correctional Services. The story is not all in documents for some is recorded in social action paintings such as those referred to or reproduced in the Intjartnma Correctional Service Consultancy document (1994).

The Institute of Criminology will have its own records. Kayleen Haslehurst who acted as principal convener for the 1991 conference has subsequently published a review and commentary on Aboriginal alcohol treatment endeavours and methodological principles. (Haslehurst 1995)

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies contributes to the Centralian story through some of the works of Maggie Brady, particularly her paper (1995) *Culture in Treatment, Culture as Treatment*, which gives a comprehensive survey and critique of North American and Australian Aboriginal initiatives and various attempts to synthesise indigenous healing philosophy with Western methods. She draws particular, critical, attention to the incorporation of the dogmas of 12 Step/Disease model approaches, advocated especially by the Native American consultants associated with CAAAPU’s efforts. Her succinct analysis of the problems of ‘culture’ and some implicit difficulties in adapting traditional *ngankari* methods of healing is thoughtful and provocative. Brady is concerned to introduce some critical consciousness into the indigenous substance abuse debates. Although she does not specifically mention Paulo Freire’s work it would seem that she is alert to issues which Freire (1972/73) conceptualises in terms of different dimensions of awareness which pervade intercultural working relationships. Freire’s terms are ‘magical awareness’, ‘naive awareness’ and ‘critical consciousness’. Freire does not, as far as I know, write about magical thinking or naivete in terms of indigenous alcohol use and treatment but some of the difficulties which beset intercultural relationships in the alcohol treatment field may well be usefully framed in these terms. Brady seems to be particularly concerned to introduce a critique of states of ‘magical awareness’ and ‘naive awareness’ which pervade the thinking of both Aboriginal and white Australian advocates of indigenous/cultural approaches.

Aside from the more academically oriented stories of Central Australian efforts, of which Brady and the Menzies group, (D’Abbs, Rowse, Scrimgoeur and their associates) are perhaps the most informed and competent, there are hundreds of personal stories from people linked to communities such as Ntaria, Santa Theresa, Yuendumu, Kintore, Docker River, Tennant Creek. The painful tales of those years is held in the hearts and minds of the many individuals and ‘local heroes’ who have given so much of themselves over those years. Lana Abbott’s story for instance in Chryssides’ *Local Heroes* (1993) gives an account of the formative period of the life of CAAAPU.

A critique of the attempts by a variety of Aboriginal people and their associates in Central Australia to find and form an indigenous *milieu* for treatment is necessary, and there is also a need for the artisans of the intellectual metaview to acknowledge the difficult detail of micro events, the intricate accumulation of
experience which is slowly, fitfully, going on week by week in the remote areas of the Centre. Furthermore any critique of Aboriginal efforts needs to be balanced by a hard look at Government infrastructures which themselves are systemically dysfunctional.

It has been my fortune to have participated in some of the Centrallian efforts to handle the ‘grog’. I have a view on the drama, the triumphs, the tragedies and the follies but it is not my purpose to construct a critique of Aboriginal culture, of alcohol intervention initiatives or the behaviours of the involved organisations. I am noting here, however, only the hope and enthusiasm of the 199091-95 events, acknowledging that a fascinating story is waiting to be told, a comprehensive recollection of what went right and what went wrong. Perhaps, one day, someone will have the courage to do just that. In the meantime there is still much to explore, develop and document in the sensitive business of employing ‘culture in treatment and culture as treatment’. The last word has not been said.

5. DEVELOPING A COLLABORATIVE ATTITUDE AS A FIRST STEP IN CROSS CULTURAL HEALING.

The Recommendations of the Royal Commission’s Expert Working Group (ibid 1990) were very clear on the need for incorporating into Australian Health and Correctional Service initiatives an authentic indigenous response to the ‘alcohol problem’. They were not clear how this might be done. That was not their job.

As a result of the conference, the influence of HALT and a visit in April 1991 to Intjarnamera Outstation I found myself, somewhat to my surprise, engaged by the therapeutic problem, signalled in the RCIADIC reports, of understanding, finding or recognising what might be the baselines of an indigenous response and an indigenous method of handling the alcohol ‘plague’.

The nature of that engagement is demonstrated in the co-written account of Intjarnamera outstation’s work Story About Intjarnamera (1993) in The Petrol Link Up Report (1995) and other projects associated with the work of ADRES, which preceded the Sugarman venture.

That experience leads me to advocate for the very obvious but strangely neglected proposition that the first step in any cultural healing project is the development of a collaborative attitude and the establishment of working partnerships across the cultures. An example of a successful, though difficult, collaboration can be found in the Remote Areas Night Patrol work, but the procedures of intercultural collaboration are so time consuming and challenging that few people manage it. Hence little authentic intercultural healing work, which values the autonomy of indigenous cultures, ever takes root.
The derangement of Aboriginal families and culture through alcohol is not just a ‘blackfella’ problem. In a new reading of John Donne’s poem it would be fair to say that ‘the bell tolls’ for all of us, ultimately all Australians are psychologically involved in what happens to indigenous Australia. Morally, economically and culturally, as a social ecosystem we are interdependent. How we negotiate our interdependence seems to be the problem of the hour.

6. QUESTIONS ABOUT TWO WAY THERAPEUTIC PROCEDURES.

The Sugarman Project has become my way of creating a *milieu* for engagement in that matter. I have few pretensions that the Sugarman will solve anything or that it will provide another messianic salvation instrument. I became engaged in this rather specialised and perhaps eccentric occupation simply because a friend who I respected asked me to think about it and because apparently, no other European practitioners were taking seriously that vital question which Japaljarri Spencer had identified as a missing link in the line of the strategic thinking about drinking.

This thinking link was not an issue of administering treatment centres or facilitating Aboriginal control of programs or even political rhetoric etc but was simply a conceptual issue as to how a way could be found of matching Aboriginal lore with European lore, i.e. is there a way of ‘care’ or ‘control’ of drinkers which could be seen as having an authority derived from the matrix of creation itself? That is to say from *Tjukurrpa* or *Alyerre*?

If there exists anywhere in the world a creation law for grog, then such a law might be experienced as having a power based on spiritual and cultural values recognised by Aboriginal elders as having legitimacy.

Since drinking is seen by many Aboriginal men as an action of defiance it is unlikely that they would give it up merely to satisfy transient economic and politically expedient wishes of the current government. Many Aboriginal people feel that alcohol is still being made available as a deliberate instrument of genocide and some accept the poison as a gesture of self defeat. The paradoxical nature of this position is not resolved by rational argument, hence the search by some Aboriginal people for a spiritual solution, a kind of lateral thinking move that takes the issue into a different realm of discourse.

On the basis of a matching at the level of the ‘deep structures’ of culture then perhaps a genuine adaptation or a new synthesis can emerge or be achieved which is like ‘cement’, as the Queensland elder says or “like two trees becoming one”, as Japaljarri Spencer advocates. This kind of synthesis seems to be more dignified, more satisfying and enduring than temporary compliance with the demands of the dominant bankrollers, and less repressively degrading to both parties than a path of degenerative defeat and cynicism.
I realise that a very complex debate is raised here - of the relationship of law and codes of behaviour to past, present and future and to matters of the cultural origins of Australian Aboriginal people. While acknowledging those complexities, the singular track being selectively defined in the Sugarman Project is based on the following premise sequence;

1. Effective patterns for the control of human behaviour and the cure of human disease and distress are to be found in the patterns of creation itself.

2. These patterns are recognised and named through a process of intense and consistent observation of human behaviour and human distress over many generations.

3. These observations, or the condensation of those observations are recorded and passed on through the medium of all the cultural arts (geometry, mathematics, architecture, music, poetry, philosophy, sciences, etc) but most originally through creation stories, or myths of origin, which hold in memory the templates of human behaviour and of human distress and are an expression of, what we might call, primary psychology.

4. Any contemporary attempt to generate controls, care and a culture of cure, might, in order to make sense to the 'target population', try to show how its methods of control and cure connect to the patterns of creation as understood and valued by that 'target population' - in particular the Aboriginal population.

5. Mythology and the mythopoetic expression of human nature, with its active interplay of fantasy, reality and imagination, is one mode by which observations of the patterns of creation are encoded and decoded.

The scientific method of rational investigation into and observation of the templates of creation, is a mode which some cultures favour.

Introspective observation, developed through the ancient traditions of contemplative practice and more recently through psychoanalytic phenomenology, is a third method of observation of the patterns of creation.

The bodies of knowledge which are born from intense introspection, observational research and the codes of myth are all useful to us. Each has their place and their way of finding truth.

I see no reason to give up on the task of setting in place genuine opportunities for satisfying intercultural conciliation, not only between races but most particularly between the 'three sisters', observational science, introspective method and mythopoetic instruction.
7. OBSERVATIONS ON ORIGINAL CAUSES.

This line leads inevitably to acknowledgment of Tjukurrpa/Altyerre as a source of symptom and as a source of therapeutic action. Tjukurrpa, as part of an individual's personal and collective history may have a specific role in generating the specific psychosomatic symptoms of an Aboriginal person, and the story of the relevant Tjukurrpa, as a personal creation story, may also generate directions for relief of psychosomatic symptom and also teleological directions for regaining spirit. To read an Aboriginal patients symptomatology and therapeutic action in terms of their dreaming matrix is, I suggest, a logical conclusion of the cultural world view.

It also leads to some hard questions about the value of the Tjukurrpa as an aid to survival in a new world and the usefulness of relying upon traditional lore as a way of handling matters that are not told about or prefigured in traditional Tjukurrpa.

8. WHOSE LAW HEALS BEST?

Many people hold to a belief, as an article of nationalist faith, that in contemporary Australia there must be One Law for everyone and that the Aboriginal people will simply have to adapt to and conform with the dominant culture, its singular legal system and the dominant therapeutic systems. That is that.

The reality of our polycultural life is probably much more anarchic. The lesson from Euripides is that zealous suppression of the anarchic elements of the human spirit results eventually in the dismemberment of the guardian of order, unfortunately, with tragic consequences for all.

The wise recommendations put forward to the Royal Commissioners, by the expert working group, to examine, develop and implement indigenous methods of control and healing, is not, in my opinion an instance of 'bleeding heart liberalism'. The recommendations are based on a sage recognition of a psychological reality. The problem is that an adequate analysis of the psychological realities of the Aboriginal world has hardly been begun and so the reality of their position has barely been recognised. In this sense Terra Nullus (Mentalis) still exists.

It could also be argued that the mental world of the Australian Aboriginal culture is very powerful. Suppression or denial of its authority and logic will lead to a chronic wounding of the social and economic order of 'normal' mainstream Australia.

A kind of spontaneous and undivertable payback may ensue.

A policy of collaboration and coexistence, as the Kowanyama elder quoted in the 'Healing Our People' program suggests, may make us all stronger, like 'cement'.
9. HAUNTING LESSONS FROM THE PAST.

Those of classical turn of mind may study the allegorical history of the Greek city of Thebes to good effect. This city bred the incarnation of Dionysos, as described in *The Bacchae*. Thebes later was house to Oedipus, vividly portrayed by Sophocles in his play of that name. Thebes, apparently, was founded as a Phoenician colony, based on the business of cattle. Mythologically, the colonising history is told as the destruction of the serpentine occupant of the local waterhole and the subsequent displacement of the original inhabitants and the eventual demise of the intermarried royal family by internal warring. Though a truce was reached between the original and settler inhabitants the unresolved chronic disquiet continued over seven generations, leading by a process of psychically transmitted revenge, to the demise of the city.

Glenda Cloughley’s analysis of the history of the House of Thebes and the family of Oedipus,¹ provides a basis for using the allegory of Theban history as a cautionary tale for those who would advocate for an optimistic assimilation of an indigenous culture.

Rational explanations for recurrent health problems of the Aboriginal population rarely give credence to the mythopoetically expressed dynamics of cause and effect which many indigenous people invoke as explanations of their condition, expressed poignantly by Alex Minikujur in *Anangu Way*, and others in phrases like; “We are sick because we have lost our law”.

It was the Institute of Criminology, rather than a health department which supported a conference entitled ‘Healing Our People’. There is an implicit message here (consciously made or not) that matters of justice are linked with matters of healing and health. Aboriginal deaths in custody may be a symptom of an unresolved ‘crime’, which continues to generate a collective Australian psychopathology.

The recommendations of the Royal Commission contain, by implication, a prescription for healing of the national psyche.

The famous sign, said to have been inscribed over the door of the ancient Greek medical school of Asclepius, is as suggestive now as it was then; ‘Physician, Heal Thyself’.

Perhaps it is just as pertinent to heed as that other famous injunction, attributed to Socrates, which was said to be inscribed over the door of the Socratic/Platonic Academy; ‘Know Thy Self’.

These two doorway messages invoke a methodology.

I interpret the phrase ‘Know Thyself’ as implying ‘know your own history’.

I interpret ‘Physician Heal Thyself’, as initiating a process of questioning the assumptions which have formed most of the health interventions so far sanctioned by European based practitioners in their work with/in indigenous people in this country.

My guidelines in this endeavour have been the recommendations made through the collective astuteness of mind of the Royal Commissioners inquiring into Aboriginal deaths in custody.

That inquiry, (like that of Oedipus who initiated an inquiry into the cause of the illness in his own city, Thebes), took on the fate of investigating the causes of the mysterious malaise which afflicts the Australian state. Oedipus’ inquiry turned in a chilling verdict, the sick condition of the state was due to an unacknowledged series of crimes, the climax being the murder of the old king. Oedipus himself, it is revealed in the inquiry, has unwittingly been the murderer, through what was allegedly ‘an accident’ but in fact, a fatefully deliberate revenge. The mother of Oedipus suicides, having realised that she too has unwittingly committed a crime, that of incest, having married her own son. The present condition and the past conditions are linked sequentially.

The message from the two inquiries ironically reflect each other across two and a half thousand years of history. The words of the blind seer Teiresias to the desperate young king are;

“The killer you are seeking is yourself”.  

When it comes to seeking the cause of life destruction through alcohol abuse the phrase is just as relevant today and the various possible interpretations of the phrase are evocatively relevant to custodians of both Aboriginal and European law.

10. LITERATURE SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS THERAPEUTIC PARADIGM.

Obviously, it is impossible to assist in facilitating or supporting the incorporation of indigenous therapeutic practice into mainstream practice unless one knows what indigenous attitudes, theories and methods are. Little has been written on the subject, or little is available because of restricted access.

The domain of comment on indigenous therapeutics in the medical anthropological literature has been pegged out through the works of Elkin in Aboriginal Men of High Degree (1945 and 1977), John Cawte, in Medicine is the Law (1974), Janice Reid in Sorcerers and Healing Spirits (1983), her edited, Body, Land and Spirit (1982), and Peggy Trompf in The Health of Aboriginal Australia (1991).

Some of the articles in the Aboriginal Health Worker Journals, originally edited by Cawte, trace, by their presence, the developing awareness of the cultural and intercultural aspects of healing practice. So too do various commissioned reports, referred to in the bibliography of the RCIADIC Expert Working Group edited by Alexander (1990), especially Dunlop’s That Rama Rama Mob (1988).

1 Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex line 362
There is a range of the many Menzies School of Health Research collections including consistently appearing contributions by Rowse, Scrimgeour, D'Abbs, Hunter, et al, particularly the *Review of HALT (1991)*, the Review of CAAAPU (1995) and most recently their 1997 Review of N.T. Remote Areas Health Service.

Most of this work is concerned with health administration worries and the adaption of Eurocentric methodologies to the indigenous setting or an attempt to measure up the indigenous practices according to prevailing paradigms sanctioned by the administrative priorities or the conventions of academic scientific research. An exposition on concepts of Aboriginal healing with reference to alcohol abuse treatment was still practically undeveloped when I began this project in 1990/91, except perhaps by Bobby Mcleod for his Doonooch centre near Jervis Bay in NSW; and of course the 1992 CAAAPU document by Lyons et al, *The Way Forward*, (which includes a comprehensive literature review), produced to support the setting up of the treatment facility in Alice Springs. The Menzies Review of CAAAPU (1995) shows how those original conceptual intentions were implemented. It could be argued that CAAAPU took a direction that was somewhat different to expectations, under the influence of the Canadian Native American consultative team, Eric Shirt and Associates, who despite their advocacy of an indigenous approach actually drew heavily upon adaptations of North American counselling psychology and the 12 step method. It is not my brief to attempt a critique of CAAAPU or the Menzies researches and reviews. This work is substantial and to some extent represents the mainstream of the Northern Territory's initiatives in indigenous substance abuse work.

*Keeping Company; An Intercultural Conversation* (Franks, Poulson et al 1996) is an informative collaborative work from Central Australia, establishing many aspects of indigenous cultural practice relevant to health professions. It was facilitated through The Centre for Indigenous Development Education and Research, University of Wollongong, and includes contributions from local Aboriginal people, many of whom were associated with HALT.

All of these works include bibliographies or recommended readings which establish the parameters of current and past pioneering attempts at grasping the mind frame and the methods of indigenous therapeutics.


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3 particularly in the research and draft film script prepared by David Roberts & Ranald Allan,1990, from a draft by McLeod and Robert Lawlor.
Geza Roheim, with sometimes controversial interpretations of Aboriginal sexual symbology, draws on Freud in *The Riddle of the Sphinx* (1934) and *Psychoanalysis and Anthropology* (1950). The perspective of the visiting European, Roheim, does not please his contemporary, Ted Strehlow, who having spent most of his life in Arrernte country is justifiably reserved about commentators on Aboriginal life and psyche who have not had the benefit of close contact and sustained relationship with Aboriginal daily life. This experience was available to Strehlow who was born and brought up in the N’taria /Hermannsburg Mission area, being the son of Lutheran Pastor, Carl Strehlow. The father translated the Bible into Arrernte, and made many ‘anthropological’ observations first hand. Ted continued the practice, becoming a professional anthropologist, his scholarship culminating in a monumental work, *Songs of Central Australia*, published in 1971 but substantially finished in 1953. He sets the Arrernte traditions favourably beside the body of (northern) European poetics and mythological literature. This is perhaps the first Australian work to demonstrate the subtlety of Arrernte civilization and it goes a long way to disperse the disparaging primitivist fantasies about Aboriginal culture which were held by the majority of Australians up to that time and perhaps still are. *Songs Of Central Australia* is stunningly rich in its complexity, erudition and mass of invaluable recording of songs, context, interpretations and cross reference to comparative literature.

It remains, for my purposes, a crucial foundation piece, is continuing to be so and has in fact been more helpful to my purpose in developing the Sugarman Project than any other ethno-psychological, or medical- anthropological literature precisely because it is addressing the problem from the same orientation which I have been attempting to develop as a direct result of advice from Aboriginal associates to ‘start with the stories’.

By beginning with addressing the body of the poetic texts of Arrernte and European culture we are led toward comparative metaphysics, toward the way the mind frames itself and its relationship with the environment, towards psychology and toward articulation of the contemporary situation. By beginning with poetics we arrive at psychology.

The poetic texts of both cultural streams encode observations on human nature and environmental nature which are detailed and specific. The anthropological literature has been useful to the development of the Sugarman Project but only in so far as one finds there recorded stories. The commentaries, the interpretations and the sociological, medical anthropological literature have been helpful as an orientation but the real stuff is to be found, and yet to be found in the oral traditions of the region, and that seems to emerge only through patient listening in situ.

An associate on the Sugarman Project, Elva Cook, an Arrernte woman from the same region whose songs Strehlow recorded, has begun to research and recover her own traditional stories and this has come about in an intriguingly paradoxical way. Elva often spoke despairingly of ever being able to fully tell her traditions to her children, buried as so much of it was with the bodies of her elders, most of whom had succumbed to
alcoholic ennui or christianised paralysis of their poetic faculties. Hearing a part of Sugarman in Arrernte translation in August 1996 moved her to realise it was possible to recover her traditions just as I had begun to do for my own. I had been inspired by 'Songs of Central Australia' and she in turn by the Sugarman Song Cycle. A reciprocal process of mutual encouragement began to revive our joint cultural traditions, the irony of which appealed to both of us.

Thanks to the Alice Springs Collection of rare or virtually inaccessible texts which are kept available for locals in the library we are both able, in the company of her husband (for the men's sections) to return to source Arrernte texts and oral histories and research together the Arrernte stories in English and in the original language. By decoding the stories recorded by Strehlow she is recovering memory of her childhood and her family links and thus her confidence. This as a preliminary to further family and country researches, with a view to reestablishing a ceremony on her traditional sites.

There is of course a vast body of anthropological literature on Australian Aboriginal mythology, religion, magic, kinship, ritual, ceremony, which Charlesworth for instance succinctly surveys in his introduction to Religion in Aboriginal Australia. (Ibid ) This foundation work has been influential background orientation to the mythic dimension of indigenous therapeutic practice but I do not pretend to be competent in Anthropology.

Dr. Leon Petchkovsky in Alice Springs is currently (1997) surveying and commenting on this body of literature as part of a Doctoral study in ethnopsychiatry, primarily as an investigation into an epistemology of Aboriginal mind. I am indebted to his many personal communications and reflections.

The literature referred to by Petchkovsky indicates possible future directions for psychologists entering work in indigenous health and substance abuse and can be taken up by those still responsible for implementing the RCIADIC recommendations.

Having considered the basic repertoire of useful written documentation on indigenous therapeutic practice available at the time and being aware that the healing methods were held in person, passed on by example, and, like most oral traditions, yield themselves in detail only within the bounds of trustworthy personal relationship, it became obvious that I would have to become personally associated with practitioners, living exponents of indigenous tradition, wherever they might be found, and so this project became a venture in research by active participation, in living situations.

The thesis is not an account of or synthesis of the ethno-psychological literature, even though it is clearly needed, but a narrative of the actions and activities undertaken as learning from experience.

This brings me to summarise the lines of inquiry which I began to explore within the context of the living situations, in communication with Aboriginal practitioners and their associates.
11. HOW DO WE LEARN?

- What is the nature of the process by which an indigenous healer is trained?

- What is the nature of the process by which a therapist who follows a Western tradition is trained?

- Are there common experiences and a common ground?

- What is the nature of the relationship possible between an indigenous practitioner and a Western practitioner?

- Most especially when an aspect of that relationship involves a teaching exchange.

If an exchange were to be possible or if aspects of the Western therapeutic or treatment models were to be replaced by indigenous methods then the next questions follow.

- What are the key/core elements of both the Western traditions and of the indigenous traditions?

- That is, if you want to tell your cross cultural colleague about the essence of your method, what would you say?

- Similarly if you want to keep the essential elements of your own method and willingly abandon the rest, what would that be?

- Which aspects of practice within Western psychology/therapeutic practice might be congruent with which aspects of indigenous method?

- or at least recognisable by each other?

For example the use of bush medicines might appear to be congruent with the pharmacology of Western treatments, if analysed, but what about the practice of psychic extraction of objects from the patient's body, or the use of chants?

- What is too Eurocentric in the practice of Western medicine, psychiatry and therapy to make much sense to Aboriginal practitioners?

- What is too 'Aboriginal' to make sense to the average European practitioner?

- How to find or create a middle ground?

- How and where to look for opportunities for exchange and intercultural collaboration?

- And what if we discover that the cost of initiation into each other's practice is prohibitive?
12. NARRATIVE AS COMMUNICATION.

In 1991, Margaret Borger with the support of the then Regional Director of Territory Health asked me to carry out a brief consultancy project to explore the viability of the use of traditional stories as a means toward formulating alcohol education/treatment methods that might be congruent with local Aboriginal teaching and communication method and content. I did this and reported that such an approach was viable.

When I became permanently employed in the Territory as a psychologist (July 1992) my work included a component of developing some preliminary efforts at bi cultural psychological work. The use of story, visual narrative, and person/place mapping rapidly emerged as the preferred way of communication, in history taking conversations, in formulation of the client situation and the healing options.

The projects which the Injartnman managers, Barry and Elva Cook, and I subsequently undertook do not presume to go as far as successfully implementing indigenous healing methods in substance abuse work. A much more preliminary move had to be initiated, albeit in that general direction, by starting an examination of the basis of both Aboriginal and European therapeutic methods. ‘Whitefeller’ alcohol treatment did not begin this century and it did not begin in the Chicago AA meetings.

From a position of informed knowledge about both traditions it is more likely that European based practitioners will form an appreciation of indigenous culture and gain some understanding of the environmental conditions and history which generates Australian Aboriginal therapeutic practice.

I argue that one needs to know and acknowledge the complex and perhaps painful realities of our respective histories before any authentic intercultural collaboration on alcohol treatment or psychological work can fruitfully occur. We can move from ‘magical awareness’, through ‘naive awareness’ to ‘critical consciousness’ of each other’s traditions and methods and still work together.

The results may not be extraordinary, just simple things like this; that I can sit down with two senior Warlipiri men at a cafe table in the banal normality of the Alice Springs shopping mall and converse freely and equally about our own respective traditions of law and the upbringing of young men and then can sit with a group of young male petrol sniffers and speak simply and with some authority about toxins and the brain and it can be made clear and visible to boys who have never done science at school and mostly can’t read or write. I can exchange a joke with a wild old man from the far western desert region who has a formidable reputation as a ngankari and take him to the DSS office and help negotiate a pension for him and then later, in my backyard, noncommitally unroll a Dionysos/Sugarman painting for his attention and we can talk about Crow and swallowing babies.
I can do this without fuss and make sense and be made sense of in a low key, undramatic way that is typical of backyard, neighbourly exchanges anywhere, which, somehow, may be more realistically lasting and more practically a reconciliation, than conferences, policy meetings and strategic planning sessions.

Perhaps we will never manage to make any grand milieu for exchanges on 'Indigenous and European Treatment Processes' perhaps it will always be at the level of these small micro exchanges. A bit here, a bit there, gathering momentum. In the words of the Paul Kelly song:

"From little things, big things grow".
intoxication two

linking passage between Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

Culture in treatment; culture as treatment.

As a linking passage between Deaths in Custody; Healing our People and the Use of Stories the following extract from Maggie Brady (1995) is particularly informative and thought provoking. It is included without comment:

The Cultural Approach in Australia.

In Australia the appalling health status and life expectancy of Aboriginal people are associated with a complex of factors including brutal dispossession of people from their land, a poor history of race relations including the forcible separation of children and the grossly inadequate provision of accessible health care services. In addition, Kunitz has argued that Australia’s dysfunctional form of federalism, which gives the states and territories (rather than the federal government) extensive powers over the indigenous population, is also at least partly to blame....

However, during the 1970s Aboriginal units in health and other agencies were developed and simultaneously, specifically Aboriginal controlled services became established....

It has been through the development of these Aboriginal run services and agencies...that the significance of cultural identity and its associated benefits has blossomed. Aboriginal run medical services along with other Aboriginal organisations now produce posters, T shirts and resource kits incorporating Aboriginal art and drawing upon selected aspects of what is described as Aboriginal ‘culture’. This usually takes the form of stressing family and community as idealised centres for ‘caring and sharing’..... and promoting pride in being Aboriginal.

In the addictions field.... Aboriginal groups have harnessed the notion of ‘the Aboriginal way’ in their prevention and treatment efforts, often using (the only partially correct) argument that alcohol and drugs were introduced by Europeans, therefore they should have no part in Aboriginal life now.

Overwhelmingly though, the rationale for the use of cultural elements as a tool in addictions intervention, rests upon the interpretation of the etiology of drug and alcohol abuse. Eschewing all other etiological theories of addiction, addictive behaviours are largely interpreted by Aboriginal people (as well as by many commentators) as having come about because of their status as a colonised and dispossessed people. Because dispossession is about loss of land, land rights with their accompanying spiritual and cultural markers are deemed to be the basic solution to Aboriginal addiction problems.

The land itself is perceived to have regenerative and redeeming features and Aborigines have special and spiritual relationships with the land. Renewed contact with the land, regaining what was lost, has thus come to be associated with pathways out of addiction.
Healing Practices in Australia.

... it appears that traditional Aboriginal healers... have not extended their skills to the treatment of addictions. This is because until now, substance abuse in general has been perceived to be 'non traditional' and as a consequence to lie beyond the influence of the traditional healers....

There is no tradition of the group therapeutic event as there is in much of North America although Christians in many remote communities conduct large healing sessions....

There is some scattered evidence of healers having worked with addicted individuals; for example, ritual singing is thought by some Aborigines to be of potential help to petrol sniffers...

Overall though;
...the particular nature of substance abuse means that other forms of traditional care fail, either because there is no respect for the traditional authority structure, or because there are no existing ways of curing the physiological effects of sniffing and alcohol... What is emerging is a combination of the traditional (such as concern for children... and respect for the value of going 'out bush') and non traditional (such as community wide coercive action) to cope with a very non traditional problem. (quoting Dunlop; That Rama Rama Mob)

...Aboriginal rehabilitation (Brady continues) and treatment programs do not, then, have access to medical tradition which can be easily incorporated. Much religious knowledge is secret and can only be imparted strictly within the ceremonial context to those novices who have undergone preliminary rituals.

Culture, Addiction and Treatment; Some Conclusions.

...The challenge for Aboriginal people involved in treatment programs in Australia is to move beyond the idea that 'Aboriginal culture' is something of the past and, like the Canadians frankly assess the strengths of customary ways of doing things as well as their weaknesses. Dealing with culture in treatment, therefore, is a double-edged endeavour.

...Aboriginal people have spoken publically of the manipulation of tradition by drinkers who assert that they have the 'right' to demand financial and welfare support from their families. I have suggested... that in Australia, the absence of pan-Aboriginal healing techniques that can be easily adapted to the demands of addictions treatment (such as the sweat lodge in North America) may be a disadvantage, but allows for regionally specific flexible programs to be formulated.

...The role of health professionals...is to offer our sensitive expertise to Aboriginal people so as to ensure that the best possible range of approaches is available to them, and to make considered comment and advice on all treatment approaches, whether or not they be Aboriginal, and whether or not they incorporate 'culture'.
CHAPTER 6

THE USE OF STORIES

Cultural stories, as mythic patterns or relationship metaphors underlie therapeutic training and therapeutic methodology. The following four are considered as a preliminary study to the use of the Dionysos mythologem as metaphor.

1. OEDIPUS
2. THE ALCHEMIST
3. THE DOCTOR
4. MOTHER/BABY

Four stories presented are representative metaphorical modes by which therapists present to themselves a rationale for their practice and their training methodologies. Additional stories and metaphors may occur to the reader. The original study included eight stories and reference to several more.

A cautionary note must be made on the differences between men’s and women’s experiences of myths. Gender experience may generate different models of ‘rites of passage’. Dominant political, racial and sexual paradigms may have suppressed alternative metaphors and mental frameworks for therapeutic practice. Prevailing ‘spirit of the times’ is clearly a factor in the generation of how a particular cultural group frames its definition of mental suffering, of normality and abnormality, the causes of psychic illness and approved methods of cure.

Some other myths, referred to below, might indicate to the reader the complexity and richness of the heritage of Western cultural traditions, which in turn helps to create the healing metaphors of the West. The interaction of therapists with their own history and world cultures has clearly helped to form the philosophical backup to the practice of analytical psychology and psychoanalysis. A review of the sources in Jung’s works would reveal this complexity and richness in detail.

Some well used instances of cultural metaphor matrices, with a simplified indication of a theme are:

1. The hero cycles for encouragement of adolescents
2. Inanna/Dumuzi for depression and paranoia
3. Isis/Osiris for psychic dismemberment
4. Jesus of Nazareth for greater love
5. Psyche/Eros for sorting things out
6. Parsifal for the value of remaining naive
7. The Fisher King for the wounded healer
8. The Bhuddha for self examination and ‘negative capability’
1. OEDIPUS

Origin. Greece.

A segment in the saga of the Theban city state.

An analysis of the history of the seven generations of the Theban families places Oedipus’ family drama into context. This story has deeply influenced Freud and as such has become embedded in psychoanalytic methodology.

Vivid presentations of the Oedipal drama are found in Sophocles and Seneca. (Ted Hughes version)
Contemporary versions include works by Cocteau, Stravinsky, Pasolini, Peter Brook.

See also the examination of the story from a feminine point of view by Glenda Cloughley. (1997)

Basic Story line.
The Delphic oracle declares that the infant Oedipus will grow up to marry his own mother and kill his father.
Oedipus is abandoned to be killed, by his father’s order.
The infant is smuggled to another city.
He grows up not knowing his true family of origin.
He returns, as a young man, to his native city.
He kills an old man on the road.
He solves the riddle of the Sphinx who holds the city in the thrall of a plague.
He becomes the new king (the old king is dead).
He is married to the queen (his mother)
Both are apparently unaware of what is coming to pass.
The plague returns. The people entreat him to protect them.
Oedipus resolves to fix it.
The plague’s cause is diagnosed as the unsolved crime of patricide/ regicide.
He calls advisers, including the blind seer, Teiresias.
It emerges that Oedipus is the murderer whom he himself seeks.
The tragic consequences unroll.
His and his mother’s (unwitting?) incestuous relationship is revealed.
His mother commits suicide.
Oedipus is exiled.
His brother in law becomes king.
His sons engage in a bloody civil war and destroy each other.
The daughter, Antigone is walled up in a cave/tomb.
Oedipus, an old man in exile, at his death becomes a mythical being.

We can now make a simplified indication of how this story has been and can be used as a matrix for holding and generating psychotherapeutic procedures.
The Oedipal setup points to:

1. An existential conundrum-
   The crime of being.
   The riddle of one’s true identity.
   The inevitability of fate, destiny and psychological cause and effect over generations -
   As Cocteau calls it ‘The Infernal Machine’.

2. Trauma theory-
   The origins of present distress, (social, family and personal) in past events.
   The significance of psychohistory.

3. The riddle-
   Therapeutic method as inquiry into riddles and the detection of solution
   by revelation of repressed memory.

4. The analyst as detective-
   Teiresias as role model, custodian of cultural memory,
   interpreter of oracular conundrum,
   the bringer of consciousness,
   target of projections,
   solver of psychological crime.

5. The parental drama as psychological driving force-
   including dynamics portrayed in the Theban drama:
   unresolved immigration violations (Cadmus and the serpent)
   matriarchal curses (The Sphinx and the matriarchal payback agents, the ‘furies’)
   obscured homosexualities (Laius)
   the abandoned baby (Oedipus)
   the silent mother (Jocasta)
   the pathological patriarchy (Laius and latter Creon who walls up Antigone)
   the repressed sisters (Antigone)
   family incest
   the collusive sociocultural system.

6. Illness as a problem of tension between consciousness and unconsciousness.

7. Self knowledge as a goal-
   Analysis may lead to self knowledge but may not result in cure.
8. Teiresias' life history as a model for the training experience of a therapist—especially as /detective/seer- based on key incidents in Teiresias life we have-oracular capacities (bird lore)
  witness to primal scenes and acts of creation.
  witness to activities and intimacies of the gods.
  afflicted by gods
  cross gender experience.
  interpretive insight/ blindness obtained through trauma.
  long memory, holder of history.
  cultural and family negotiator.
  modesty, self effacement yet fearless in confrontation.
  participant and supporter of bacchic ceremonies.

9. The method of Teiresias—
  Inquiry, interpretation and exposures of the 'truth of being' based upon knowledge or intuition of original trauma. repressed facts of identity and family dynamics or unconscious crime.

A psychotherapy training devolved from the Oedipal paradigm will expect trainees to cultivate the attitude of the detective/seer, with consequent pretensions of (secret) wisdom, the right of inquiry and the confidence that a traumatic truth or psychological crime lies at the heart of a contemporary distress.

The therapist will, for instance, learn to nose out identity confusions, false selves, incests and defenses and will find much useful material in the drama of the family.

Teiresias as a custodian of memory and interpreter of signs serves as a model of the analytic seer.

It could be argued that Freud's method is very much at home within and founded upon the Oedipal metaphor, or rather that the Freudian psychoanalytic school is in reality the 'Oedipal/Teiresias School'.

2. THE ALCHEMIST

Origin. Primarily a middle European medieval preoccupation, derived from esoteric traditions, both Egyptian and Arabic, filtering through into 15/16 Century, with some Christian/European revisions.

Alchemy is also seen as one of the precursors to the development of scientific experimentation and observation and relies on the capacity of physical and chemical base elements to interact, combine and transform. The implication is also present that psychological elements can undergo metamorphosis and thus alchemy can also be seen as the precursor to psychology as a science and as a therapeutic occupation for those who wish to engage in a process of interaction and transformation.
Researched by C. G. Jung and taken up into his archetypal psychology as a metaphor of individuation and therapeutic method, alchemy has become one of the primary generative images for classical analytical psychology, just as the Oedipal myth is a primary generative image for classical psychoanalysis. Jung's most succinct exposition of the alchemic metaphor is in the chapter 'The Psychology of the Transference', a psychological commentary on the alchemic text *The Rosarium*, with direct application to the psychotherapeutic relationship, in *CW 16*. Jung's Alchemical researches are also in *CW 12, 13, 14.*

**Basic Story line.**

Base metal (lead) can be converted into gold by sweating over a series of disciplined transformations. The desired outcome depends upon the unpredictable grace of God; thus prayer, meditation and inner (moral) transformations must be taking place in the psyche of the alchemist as a parallel process. If gold is made then this is the manifestation of the spiritual transformation of the alchemist. A resonance is thereby set up between physical and psychological procedures.

In the *Rosarium* the primary image is that of a marriage between the king and the queen, whereby the male and female bodies enter a symbiotic slide through a kind of regressive, de integrative implosion. This erotically charged transformative enterprise passes through specific states and stages derived from observations of the breakdown of chemical and organic elements and their reconstitution into a new order.

The Jung *Rosarium* lists the first stages as:

1. The Mercurial Fountain
2. The King and Queen
3. The Naked Truth
4. Immersion in the Bath
5. The Conjunction
6. Fermentation
7. Death
8. The Ascent of the Soul
9. Purification
10. The Return of the Soul
11. The New Birth

Jung's creative achievement in psychotherapy, by using the alchemic metaphor, was to dramatically revise the way psychotherapists think about and use the transference and countertransference relationship. He noted that erotic, regressive, highly emotional and volatile states were inevitable by-products of an effective therapeutic engagement. Rather than attempting to expunge these embarrassing manifestations from the doctor-patient relationship Jung advocated that the therapist's task was to recognise, name and incorporate these states into the service of the psychological transformations. The therapist, like the patient, had to be willing to be changed by the process. The analyst's job turns out to be his/her own alchemic discipline
wherein the soul of the 'doctor' is converted from base metal to gold by the effects of regular immersion in the laboratory of the consulting room. A parallel process is therefore consistently evoked by the interactions between the psychic energy complexes of therapist and patients. Furthermore, the consulting room/laboratory becomes a kind of nodal point in the interaction between many 'streams of consciousness' within a given community; the consulting room, far from being an isolate enclosure of narcissitic seclusion has a (potential) and actual, significant function in influencing alchemical transformations within a community of souls, and as such functions in society as a Temenos, or sacred /secret potent space, an intimate crucible of cultural significance.

A trainee therapist, therefore, may have to learn to manage him/herself in several dimensions both personal and collective. In terms of moral and technical discipline, if the analyst accompanies the patient on his/her regressive and erotic slide through the primary matter of the psyche then the doctor should be trained adequately enough to be able to handle the exigencies of this demanding companionship.

Profound implications for the phenomenology of the training process begin to emerge. The analyst is no longer only the detective/seeer/doctor derived from the Oedipal mythologem, revealing the truth about a crime or unravelling the consequences of a trauma. The Jungian therapist becomes, in addition, a participant in a teleological transformation, which can end badly in a mishandled 'chemical' explosion, an incestuous pairing, a death, a loss of soul or a psychological 'still birth'. (to borrow the alchemic metaphors). An alchemical analysis if it goes well can end in a psychological metamorphoses or 'new birth', a transformation into 'gold', for the patient and perhaps for others in the patient's family and circle as well as for the analyst. Everyone is touched by 'the gold' once it is consolidated psychologically in the individual.

The analyst/alchemist's capacity to rely upon the 'grace of god' is also significant and compels the therapist to cultivate a moral and spiritual discipline whereby a reliable working relationship is established with the Self.

The Alchemist's story fits in the context of therapy as a transformative process. Illness, rather than being cured may be sloughed off, much as a snake may divest itself of a redundant skin. Neurosis is subsumed into the teleological aim of the soul/Self. But neurotic or psychotic illness may also arise as a result of e.g. an erotic fermentation, a regressive collapse into the underworld, a self negating consumption by a 'dark night of the soul' or a depressive 'putrefaction', (to borrow again from the alchemic imagery). A diagnostic interpretive frame on pathology, derived from metaphors of alchemical process is available. Trauma in various dimensions is recognised (personal, familial, cultural) but may not be the focus of the therapeutic job once the metaphor of alchemical teleological transformation is accepted.

Negotiation of the exigencies of the transference and countertransference and interpretation of archetypally charged fantasy, imagination, projection and desire is, however, a crucial element of the psycho/alchemic work.
A trainee would be expected to have passed through his/her own version of the Rosarium and be familiar with the states, stages and images of the process and acquire a competence and confidence in accompanying both males and females through the immersion, the conjunction, the death, the ascent and loss of soul, the purifications, the return of the soul and the new birth, in whatever specific and individualised form these events may take in a contemporary context.

A number of familiar traps for new players requires noting and a training based on the alchemic metaphor would take these into account. Traps include variations of inflation, grandiosity, erotic mergers with patients, regressive exhaustions, overheating, broken containers, persecution fantasies, losing the lost soul, sexual and gender confusions, misinterpreting the ‘voice of god’ and of ‘angels’ (intuition) and generally failing to keep a good laboratory.

Many a Jungian therapist becomes enchanted by the soul making/goldmaking fantasy of the alchemic model. The operative fantasy and ambition is to transform themselves and others without undergoing the supervised discipline of a training or taking on the humiliations of public accountability to seniors and peers. Naive arrogance of this kind gets psychotherapy a bad name, especially when it gets mixed up with currently fashionable quasi-shamanic practice, borrowed or stolen from indigenous traditions. The purpose of a training, based on the alchemic model, is to equip people to negotiate the immersions, the conjunctions, the deaths and purifications with an economy of effort, with economy of magical thinking and with respect for the client’s objective reality.

A cross cultural comparison of the states and stages of the training rites of passage of a therapist/doctor is very illuminating, taking together, for example the Alchemic process, the Teiresian life story and the Central Australian ngaŋkari pasē, as in the Djabu Cycle. The actual method of practice, of course, is another dimension of useful comparison, revolving around, for instance the way pain and psychic pain is construed, identified, objectified, personified, handled, extracted, or modified.

3. THE DOCTOR

Origin.

The medical practitioner has had a function in almost every group of humans in every culture in the world. To do justice to the evolution and formulation of medical practice is obviously beyond the scope of this chapter. I wish to concentrate on the simple and obvious elements of the doctor’s role. There is a sense in which the ‘doctor’ is an archetypal role and as such is a mythic form in itself. Trainee doctors become invested with the mantle of the doctor story.
The Basic Storyline

1. Someone is sick.
2. They are presented to a doctor.
3. The doctor tries to relieve suffering and cure the problem.
4. The ‘patient’ tends to move toward occupying a role where specific psychological expectations and projections are called into play.
5. The doctor has internalised a diagnostic criteria and a set of responses and has available a repertoire of remedies or therapeutic interventions which he/she is empowered to deliver and for whose effects the doctor is accountable.
6. The doctor’s skill is traded for a fee, often backed up in Euro/ American societies by powerful bureaucratic, professional institutions including hospitals, academic associations, drug companies, health insurance, compensation and legal systems or in other cultures by a powerful assemblage of ancestor spirits or supernatural powers with whom the doctor mediates.
7. Ethical standards and quality controls are strictly monitored.
8. The therapeutic interventions are applied and reactions observed according to current criteria of scientific method.
9. Personal and clinical experience and speciality as well as the phenomenology of the doctor/patient relationship figure in the therapeutic equation.
10. Treatment usually involves the prescription of a medicine or a physical operation.
11. The patient gets better or is referred on.
12. Satisfaction is achieved if pain is relieved or an illness cured.
13. The relief of pain is a guiding ambition of the ‘good’ doctor.

A psychotherapist who proceeds from a conventional medical base is likely to employ psychology as another technique in the medical repertoire. The relief of psychic pain may well be the guiding ambition. Such a ‘compassionate’ desire might be at odds with the alchemical metaphor, where pain may be considered as essential in the process of transformation. Discussion about the use and abuse of pain, symptomology and ambitions of cure are part of the medical metaphysic. As are variations according to whether a practitioner works from an allopathic or homeopathic position etc.

The training of the medical psychotherapist requires the internalisation of diagnostic criteria according to currently recognised psychopathology (DSM IV), the development of competency in making therapeutic interventions based upon a currently accepted and sometimes fashionable body of theory and the handling of the psychological aspects of doctor/patient relationships.
The acquisition of these skills does not necessarily imply that the student doctor should pass through an internal psychological examination or undergo transformational ‘rites of passage’. Personal analysis is usually required by most responsible psychotherapeutic training bodies but is not expected of conventional psychologists, psychiatrists or specialists, whose function becomes the rational manipulation of remedies and therapeutic techniques. The traditional Asclepian injunction, ‘Physician, heal thyself’, seems not to apply, if you can get away with it.

The medical practitioner metaphor probably underpins most conventional European/American psychotherapy, deeply influenced as it is by psychiatry but it is neither an essential or necessary condition that psychotherapists should be doctors or use ‘the doctor story’ as their exclusive guiding metaphor of healing or of the training process.

An examination of gender specific ‘rites of passage’ should also be taken into consideration since most Western medical training institutions seem to be implicitly male dominated and are probably still influenced by men’s club politics and phallocentric initiation patterns. A consideration is indicated, for instance, of how experiences of undergoing circumcision and physical combat and experiences of giving birth and breast feeding generate specific kinds of metaphors for negotiating psychic pain. The ‘story of the doctor’ and its relationship to the ‘story of men’ and the ‘story of women’, especially how physical and psychic pain is felt and understood from the different gender positions, needs attention.

The Djabudi Cycle (in Elkin 1945 ibid) described here in Chapter Eight is an instance of Australian Aboriginal male mythology and a rite of passage for training a healer, as is the Japaljarri - Jungarai Warua Story referred to in Chapter Seven. Whereas it would not be appropriate to naively confuse aspects of the male Western models of training ‘rites’ with the patterns of the Central Australian Aboriginal male process, a careful and informed comparison of the psychological experiences undergone by initiates in the respective professional realms would be an instructive enterprise in comparative therapeutic mythology.

4. THE MOTHER AND BABY STORY

Origin. The British ‘Object Relations’ psychotherapy schools introduced the metaphor of Mother/Infant relations as a therapeutic paradigm.

The experience of conception, pregnancy, birth, child care, development and parenting is of course universal but perhaps Eurocentric practitioners have their own preoccupational angle. The archetypal patterns of Birth Death/Rebirth, common to many mystery religions and culturally specific initiatory practices may be included in the Mother/Baby paradigm.
The primary experiences related to birth and maturation tend to be phrased in terms of human relationship but of course from an evolutionary point of view the primal experiences are part the experiential repertoire of all living cells, from the most elemental and original to the most complex. The psycho ecology of the mother/baby couple is fundamental to every insect, reptile, fish, bird, animal and plant.

Basic Story line.
1. Primal scene intercourse  
2. Conception  
3. Pregnancy  
4. Birth  
5. Nurturing  
6. Childhood developmental experiences at the stages to adulthood.  
7. Negotiations in the relationships from dependence to independence to interdependence.  
8. Sequence repeated generationally, complied with, resisted, transformed etc and family systems revealed.  
9. A new primal scene, conception, pregnancy sequence initiated...

Each phase and experience has its own complex of psychological experience related to primal relationship states and biological/body phenomenon. Various therapist writers have concentrated on different details in various stages and aspects of this sequence.

The therapist generally assumes a position of facilitation appropriate to each phase or appropriate to the activation of the particular primal experience in the patient/therapist relationship. Transference/countertransference dynamics are part of the interaction, as for instance, when infantile projections come into play and the therapist is converted into surrogate mother or father.

Highly developed use of the mother/baby paradigm in psychotherapeutic phenomenology is found in the theory and practice of the following major streams of psychotherapy:

The Kleinian development, the Lowenfeld play therapy initiative, the Winnicottian movement, related to the British Object Relations approach, linking to the Kohutian movement. Developmental Analytical Psychology, R. D. Laing and existential family psychiatry and Archetypal psychology, revolving around the motifs of the ‘Great Mother’, rebirth and goddess phenomenology, trans-personal elements of the interior (symbolic) world derived, perhaps, from infantile and childhood experience. Various techniques of regression, rebirthing and body work rely upon the evocation of psycho-somatic mother/infant experience.

Therapists with this orientation are sensitive to the handling of failures in parenting, family dysfunction, childhood and intrauterine trauma as well as to what may be called the existential positions of child development, which include; infantile separation anxieties, the development of the mental world, psycho sexual energy transformations linked to biological development, abandonment, containment, play and creativity.
The training of therapists who identify with the mother/baby story requires that they develop the capacity to observe, recognise, handle, contain and facilitate the development, regression, rebirth and redevelopment of the patient as an infant. The patient/infant borrows or is adopted into the therapists maternal 'maturational environment' for the duration of the therapy. A complex, metaphorical language has developed, for instance, within the Kleinian schools to describe, interpret and elucidate infantile experience in terms of adult patients psychosomatic phenomenology. (see Melizer, Bion, Klein in bibliography)

The personal analysis of the therapist is directed toward enhancing sensitivity to pre-verbal primal experience, and to articulating the states of being which are experienced by patients while engaged within infantile primal states. This involves developing the capacity to maintain a sustainable environment (the consulting room) for the patient in transition through any or all of the states encompassed by the mother/baby paradigm. Acquiring skill in reading and using the transference relationship and symbolic communications is essential, since establishing good psychosomatic communication between parent and baby is crucial to 'good enough' development.

Because the metaphor of parenting is so strong in this mode of therapy then the rites-of-passage for trainees are deeply influenced by the metaphor. Trainees, for instance, often experience themselves infantilised by the process, giving rise to interesting reactions and counteractions between trainees and their seniors which can be interpreted in terms of parent/child dynamics. The mother/baby paradigm has a profoundly significant status in the repertoire of psychotherapists.

CONCLUSION

We have briefly considered four patterns of therapeutic practice and note how the methodology is implicitly ordered by a guiding myth or metaphor. Classic psychoanalytic practice has a mythological heritage in Oedipus, classic Jungian practice is influenced by the metaphor of Alchemy and both have come under the guiding influence of the constellations of the 'Doctor' and the 'Mother'.

In considering historically the development of treatment procedures for drug and alcohol it could be argued that these four constellations also have had a role to play in backing up drug and alcohol counselling approaches. It is not my purpose to develop that argument here but it seems reasonable to suppose that European practice has been deeply influenced by guiding metaphors and myths, such as these four and including the Christian myth of the wounded healer/divinely inspired and compassionate saviour.

It is not so difficult then, to recognise that Aboriginal therapists might also have mythological backup systems to their practice. That is to say, a story or procedure held in the Tjukurrpa. A request for 'a story' which provides the conceptual justification for a given practice is quite a reasonable request.
intoxication two

linking passage between Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

James Hillman, A note on Story.

The extract from Hillman’s opening essay in Loose Ends (1975) provides a link between the Use of Stories and the Overture of Snakes. It is an eloquent and indeed seminal instance of post Jungian development in therapeutic psychology, which probably transcends cultural provincialism and underlines the insistence by Aboriginal people upon the value of ‘story awareness’.

“From my perspective as depth psychologist, I see that those who have connection with story are in better shape and have a better prognosis than those to whom story must be introduced. .... to have ‘story awareness’ is per se psychologically therapeutic. It is good for soul.

To have had story of any sort in childhood- and here I mean oral story, rather than watching story on screen-puts a person into a basic recognition of and familiarity with the legitimate reality of story per se. It is given with life.... Coming early with life, it is already a perspective to life. One integrates life as story because one has stories in the back of the mind... as containers for organising events into meaningful experiences. The stories are means of telling oneself into events that might not otherwise make psychological sense at all.

... Having had story built in with childhood, a person is usually in better relationship with the pathologised material of obscene, grotesque, or cruel images which appear spontaneously in dream and fantasy...through story the symbolic quality of pathological images and themes finds a place.

... story awareness provides a better way than clinical awareness for coming to terms with one’s own case history...

Jung said that patients need ‘healing fictions’...

This brings us to the question of content. Which stories need to be told?
Here I am a classic, holding for the old, the traditional, the ones of our own culture; Greek, Roman, Celtic, Nordic myths; the Bible, legends and fairy tales. And these with the least modern marketing (updating, cleaning up, editing etc)...

Even if we be not Celtic, Nordic or Greek in ancestry, these collections are the fundamentals of our western culture and they work in our psyches whether we like it or not...

These basic tales channel fantasy. Platonists long ago and Jung more recently pointed out the therapeutic value of the great myths for bringing order to the chaotic, fragmented aspect of fantasy. The main body of biblical and classic tales direct fantasy into organised, deeply life giving psychological patterns; these stories present the archetypal modes of experiencing......

My interest in story is as something lived in and lived through, a way in which the soul finds itself in life.”
CHAPTER 7

AN OVERTURE OF SNAKES

1. INTRODUCTION. TOWARDS A GEOGRAPHICAL EYE

Some material in this chapter was prepared for the International Congress For Analytical Psychology, Zurich, August 1995. 1

Dr. Leon Petchkovsky and I were to give a joint presentation. As it happened Petchkovsky was unable to attend. Once on the podium, alone, I abandoned the prescribed ethnopsychological position and lapsed into storytellers' mode, which I felt would give the unexpectedly large audience a more authentic feeling for the teaching styles characteristic of the Central Australian bush. So called 'teaching' takes place within a context of personal relationship, its making and its maintenance. It is formalised within ceremonies but in an entirely different style to the pedagogic formalities of the Western teaching institutions. Sometimes an Aboriginal discourse appears to meander along a track, now precise and complex in detail, now in reverie, now amplified with ideas and snatchets of song, now interpretations, linking back to collective bodies of thought, sometimes European and sometimes Aboriginal. The structure is based on the experience of making topographical journeys - topographical reverie.

I am aware that ungrounded reverie tends toward the dissociation of ideas. In my Warlpiri conversations the flight of ideas is contained and regrounded by the body of the Tjukurrpa, as the recognised presentation of a shared reality and collective container of thought.

The narrative of a Tjukurrpa tale, which covers specific tracts of country provides the stimuli for mental work of reflection, interpretation and theorising. The ground of a discussion when localised in this way has an inherent discipline, determined by the Tjukurrpa story and its travels. What may appear as a meander can perhaps be better described as an exercise in geographical phenomenology. The subjective text of the discourse is based on the text of the country.

1. Zurich Proceedings IAAP 1995
The character of the structure of this thesis owes something to that method. I work through a cluster of narratives and in the Sugarman script, similarly, I work through a series of narrative scenes which locate mythological/psychological events at specific places.

Whereas the Dionysos myth is originally located in the geography of the Mediterranean basin, it is now becoming located in the geography of Australia. But that becoming has a liminal nature, now you see it now you don’t. Now it is here now it is there, in the territory of ancient Greece, then in the territories of Central Australia.

To some extent the telling of the story of Dionysos on local ground helps to establish a conscious recognition that the archetypal activity is taking place; that is to say, something considered past or non-existent and out of mind is now located in present consciousness. The facts of intoxication are harder to deny. The logic is that once the story is earthed in an Australian landscape the responsibility for the actions of the story and the consequences of it become the responsibility of the inhabitants.

It is likely that alcohol treatment as an indigenous practice will remain outside the Aboriginal mind frame until the activity of treatment is located at a place which exists inside the Aboriginal mind frame. Putting treatment in place is not the same as putting a building down in some place. Becoming conscious of the story is linked to being conscious of its geography. Telling the Dionysos story means locating it in specific tracts of country, visible to the Aboriginal eye. It has to be put on the map of the country otherwise it can conveniently remain out of mind.

A geographical locationing of mental states, somehow brings the psychological facts home.

Artists and filmmakers are familiar with the idea of locating psychological events along a geographical track. The Road Movie genre is a classic presentation of it. The interplay of psychotic fantasy, clear thought and so-called objective external reality is also a matter which has intrigued psychiatric investigators. Wilfred Bion and Jung are mentors in this regard, but neither of them had the opportunity to work with Australians. I believe that the mental location of Australian Aboriginal metaphysic is startlingly different to the European location of mental life, which tends toward an interior body locus of thought and feeling as well as towards a location in building enclosures and institutional systems. The so-called traditional Aboriginal mind is located in country to an extent that Europeans might find difficult to grasp. Indications of that metaphysic emerge in this chapter, with the telling of the snake story.
2. THE ARTS OF INTERPRETATION

I have become fascinated with the arts of Aboriginal hermeneutics.

_The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought_ defines ‘Hermeneutics’ thus.

(Greek. Hermeneus, an interpreter)

"...the art, skill or theory of interpretation, of understanding the significance of human actions, utterances, products and institutions, concerned with the special methods of human studies or Geisteswissenschaften, which do not merely order the raw deliverences of sensation but must seek an understanding of their essential meaningful subject matter."

In Aboriginal discourse much is conveyed or rather encoded in the apparently ‘raw deliverences’ of stories, wound around accounts of the activities of people doing this or that and _Tjukurrpa_ beings doing this or that. Hence the value of noting what may be being communicated through an anecdote or reference to a dream or a _Tjukurrpa_ being’s activity, such as the passage of a lizard or a snake through a particular stretch of country.

Abstract discourse in the manner developed within Western philosophy or psychological theorising is very rare. Almost every philosophical message is conveyed, wrapped in the detail of a literal event. The art of understanding the message depends upon one’s ability to decode the literal into its symbolic content with reference to another actual event. The boundaries of the action required or the understanding expected are usually determined by one’s place in the kinship relationship. This, at least, has been my experience.

Petchkovsky and I travelled regularly to Central Australia during the late 1980s, sometimes as clinicians, sometimes to lead study groups. We became involved with the Healthy Aboriginal Life Team (HALT), an indigenous health education team which had been set up to meet and perhaps halt the ravages of alcohol and petrol sniffing in Aboriginal communities. An influential intellectual force within this small group was Andrew Spencer Japaljarri and it is he who becomes one of the main protagonists in our tale.

HALT was innovative at the time, because the team used congruent cultural forms such as sand painting iconography and an understanding of the mythological underpinnings of the kinship organisation—the kinship/dreaming/totem systems—to get its message across among the family networks of the remote area communities. The use of local iconography and cultivation of kinship vectors is now normative for every health organisation that aspires to address Aboriginal people. Employing the indigenous communication methodology in conveying messages to indigenous people seems so obvious, in retrospect. So too does the methodology of linking relevant dreaming stories to contemporary actions, as guiding imagery for therapeutic conversations. But then, it appeared to many health practitioners and commentators as merely magical or naïve primitivist thinking.
The manner in which we, as clinicians, with an interest in the development of a self determining indigenous practice, began to appreciate the significance of the dreaming as the missing mythic link in treatment operations occurred like this.

During one visit, April 1990, (as also recorded in Part One: Conception Stories) Leon Petchkovsky shared the following dream with Japaljarri.

"The dreamer (Petchkovsky) is lying on the ground, on his back, quite ill.
(at the time he had in fact had a dysrhythmia)

The locale is like the desert of Central Australia.

He can see a wooden structure, a sort of scaffolding of ritual poles.

There is a group of Aboriginal persons approaching him, men and women.

They carry a snake, which they apply to his chest and heart.

Oil exudes from the snake.

This is rubbed into his chest."

Japaljarri listened attentively, nodded non committally and went about his business.

The following day, when we met again in the HALT office to continue conversation, Andrew mentioned to Leon that he too had had a dream in which:

"he saw his father (who was known as a ngankari - a traditional healer)

His father bade him approach and sent a snake, along the ground toward him, the snake was to be for Leon."

Japaljarri indicated that he took the dream as a positive indication from his father to develop further the relationship with Leon.

The motif in both dreams of the snake, an illness and a cure arising from the activity of the snake seemed to Andrew, to Leon and to myself to be establishing a language of symbolic communication.

Andrew understood the snake sent from his father to be the snake which features in their mutual dreaming. The Warua Tjukurpa. The same one, which Andrew had already introduced us, through a painting and which is described below and also in Part One.

Later, Leon, by now back home in New South Wales, received a phone call from Japaljarri, inviting him to visit again and indicating to Leon that his relationship within the skin/kin system had been determined as being that of Andrew's son and hence grandson to Japaljarri's father, Jungarai, the one who had appeared in the dream and sent the curative snake. Andrew conveyed to Leon that he could/should take on the position and responsibilities of a Jungarai, which qualified him (since he was also a doctor) to be instructed in the particular Jungarai - Japaljarri Ngankari Snake Dreaming, of which Andrew was an hereditary custodian. 
Central Australian Warlpiri society is organised carefully and with mathematical elegance into two principal moieties, each being divided into four clans or subsections, for the males. The female with some variations, is organised into the same moieties and subsections.

Jungarai/Japaljarri form one father-son classificatory pair. Thus, a Japaljarri’s sons are always known as Jungarai, and a Jungarai’s sons are always Japaljarri, which means that Jungarais of different generations are in a Juruie-grandfather/grandson relationship.

All Jungarais are, therefore, brothers and hence San Roque, by virtue of his professional ‘brotherhood’ relationship with Leon, qualified as a Jungarai. The invitation to return to Central Australia was also extended to San Roque.

During the earlier, April 1990, visit we had given Andrew a copy of Jung’s *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* to read. He had asked us,

“What is your relationship to this wati (man), Jung? He seems to think yappa way.”

(i.e. like Aboriginal people)

We pondered this rather surprising comment and one of us replied -

“I suppose he’s a sort of grandfather to us.”

After all, Leon analysed with Irene Champernowne, who analysed with Jung and then Toni Wolff; San Roque had been in his training analysis with Norah Moore, whose connection, through the Michael Fordham analytic family was also to Jung.

Andrew said, “That’s good, grandparents are the teachers, that’s yappa way.”

We now had two sets of grandparent teachers. Some from the psychoanalytic moiety and subsection, ‘Jung’ and some from the *Yapya* Jungarai subsection. The ironic coincidence of the two names was not lost on Japaljarri. "You are Jungaarai both ways": he laughed.

A person who has not been given a subsection position and role is in limbo in Central Australian Aboriginal culture. The name establishes your relatives (wulyija), dreamings (ijukurrpa) songs and sacred sites. The Jungarai/Japaljarri wulyija line into which we were being absorbed was responsible for a potent Ngankari (healing) lineage. We had been put on the map. That is to say, our minds and psyche had been located in a specific tract of country with a responsibility to be responsive to the story contained in that specific tract.

This was not, on our part, an intentionally solicited event but it did, in fact, respond accurately to our implicit desire to come into practical working relationship with the indigenous healing tradition.

Petchkovsky’s dream, the acknowledgement of his own illness, the curative response of the snake visitation
and the exuding of the oil from the snake portrayed exactly his situation and his need to be fixed. On being fixed he became more deeply inculcated into the structure of Aboriginal ritual and psychophysical healing. (viz. the ritual pole scaffolding in the dream)

His qualification as a psychiatrist and analyst made the transition between two therapeutic worlds possible, with a touch of ‘good enough’ authenticity. By virtue of being his professional and kinship ‘brother’, San Roque rapidly found himself being dragged into the same vortex.

More than seven years later (1997) we are still students of ngankari epistemology and practice, still naive and still outwitted, but we have acquired a certain non committal, laconic familiarity with the procedures. Petchkovsky has concentrated in the field of psychiatric interaction and ‘theory of mind’. San Roque, in the field of alcohol and drug practicum and an exploration of the missing mythic links in therapeutic interaction of which this thesis and project is a demonstration.

On our next trip (October 1990) Spencer Jupaljarri set about assiduously introducing us to the relevant Jungarai grandfathers and we were taken, not into a classroom but to a site of the Snake Dreaming Track. Principally, this is a mountain, which features notably in the local landscape.

A year later we were invited to another site, much further west, which marks the border between Andrew’s country and another tribal region, within which he has no direct authority.

This site, a waterhole, of little obvious topographical consequence to the untrained European eye, is the place where the beleagured snake went into the earth to create a spirit site of profound consequence, one link within the sequential enactments of the snake’s westward journey.

Petchkovsky writes:

“Our Western epistemology, traditionally, tends to be organised diachronically; Chronos rules. Aboriginal ontology is geosopic; time is measured as travel from one locus to another. Ngarra (place), is all. As Swain (1988) points out, the ubiety and ahistoricity of the Aboriginal world struggles to accommodate a ubiquitous understanding of the religious universe predicated on Christian historic universalism - Christ was born and died, in historic time, to save us all.”

A new Hegelian synthesis is discernible, however. The Warlpiri now have ‘two laws’ because they have taught Wapirra (God the father) to talk Warlpiri.

He is kinda or owner of the Law but they are kurdungurra or ritual custodians, who make sure the law is performed properly.\(^2\)

What strikes me as fascinatingly paradoxical in this observation is the reversal of the usual story the white man tells himself. The convention is that we taught them about God or Wapirra and we translated His word into their language and they accepted it and were ‘saved’.

\(^2\) Zunz & Proceeding, ISAP 1995
But a characteristic Warlpiri view, is that Warlpiri was taught to Wapirra and this qualified Him to become Warlpiri and thus a holder of the Aboriginal law. The Christian God was initiated thus.

The Warlpiri in fact accommodated (swallowed) God and made Him theirs.

In just the same way, as I learnt a particular Tjukurrpa. I experienced that the Tjukurrpa and the wulyju swallowed me.

So far as most of my Warlpiri family are concerned I belong to them. Most of my negotiations revolve around how far I can allow myself to be swallowed. That includes my family, my house, my work, my vehicle, my time, my money and my abilities.

David Tacey (1995) talks hopefully and positively about the possibility of a new Australian dreaming, a synthesis of the black and the white.

I am not sure if that is really achievable, as a national accomplishment, because it looks to me that the unconscious assumption, or the unconscious conflict is about who is really going to swallow (accomodate) whom.

Even when both sides talk about working by and using 'two laws', it has been my experience that a synthesis of the two laws is not really what is assumed. Mostly, the Warlpiri seniors I know, assume that eventually the white law will submit to the black. On the other hand, the white law keepers, including police, ministers for corrections, attorney generals, magistrates, and chief ministers all assume that the accomodation will eventually come out with the black law being digested by the white, (once the old men die out and the rest are too drunk to notice)

Which snake will swallow which? The real action is a kind of cultural cannibalism.

Is reconciliation as an erotc union of the two snakes really likely?

The Jungarai Warra story reflects or anticipates this titanic undercover Australian struggle.

Here is a reading of the Tjukurrpa as told on one occasion by Andrew, in the earlier days of our association.
3. A COUNTRY STORY - Warna Tjukurpa.

There are two versions of the beginning. Interestingly Petcheykovsky is more aware of the first, 'the male dispossessed by the female' version, and San Roque of the second.

"A black snake lived in a waterhole near this mountain.

He was a Jungarai.

One day a female snake, a Nungarai (a sister) came
to his waterhole from the east.

He wanted to have intercourse with her (incest),
but she fought him off.

They had a huge fight, rearing up miles into the air,
and she bit him on the head and won.

He had to leave, and began travelling west."

In the other version, the male is a usurper who tries to appropriate the female's waterhole, after he himself has been usurped by two invading snakes.

"Two snakes were travelling from the east.

They drove the Jungarai snake from his waterhole.

He left, travelling west, and soon came to a Nungarni snake's waterhole.

She was a sister, but he wanted to have intercourse with her, and he wanted her waterhole.

They had a huge fight, and she bit him on the head and won.

He had to leave and began travelling west." 3

The story of the ngankari snake's journey to the west has many aspects not mentioned here but the straightforward account begins with him heading west, wounded in the head after the fight and intercourse attempt with his sister. The narrative below is based on a video recording of a version told by Andrew, early one morning (August, 1995) to ourselves and a group of Aboriginal men visiting from NSW, including B.K. who eventually took the role of the eagle/Hermes in the August, 1996, Sugarman performance.

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3 Please note. This version of the story is not being told as an anthropological specimen and should not be used as such, it is shared here in the context of the developing relationship between ourselves and Japaljarri, between ourselves and the readers. Nor is it complete nor necessarily accurate since it is only one version as told on that occasion to specific people for a specific purpose. Names of sites are deliberately omitted. It is not to be copied or quoted. Permission has been given to tell it for the purpose of study in intercultural healing exchange.
"That Jungarai was travelling west, travelling, travelling.
And the wakaljarru, like little wallabies,
they hit him with sticks, cutting him up real bad,
cutting him to the bone,
losing his flesh.
They cut his balls,
but he keep travelling right up to that lake,
(a waterless, horizontally vast, salt lake)
He thought it was water and he went to roll in the water to ease his pain
with the salt getting in his cuts, and hurting bad,
but that Jungarai he keep on going, until he got to that place.
Nyampa, and the killipi, (described as dog-like creatures, but also apparently one of the Western Desert words for stars?)
They cut his guts out and his heart.
(The parts of his body) went three ways.
His heart and blood went north up to that place.
(an important ngankari site)
His guts and liver went south, (unspecified site)
and his skin, that eagle, wakaljarru lift him up,
but his skin was too heavy and he drop him in the sea near another place there (also south).
His spirit, karumpa, went into that waterhole there, (another important ngankari site)
and ngankari men, they get their karumpa, their mapumpa, (healing energy), from that spirit.
And his spirit was strong, and some kept going west,
travelling to the sea."

After reading the script the kinship between this snake’s epic journey of de-integration and transformation and that of the Dionysos Sugarman snake’s journeys will become apparent.
The reader will be able to discern how this story played a role in creating the form of the Sugarman storyline, not quite a prototype, because the Dionysos epic of dismemberment and dissolution exists in its own right, but more like a parallel tale from the northern hemisphere. Perhaps we could say that the two stories are cousins. Stories from two different geographical regions which are now contesting occupancy of the same bit of country.

Perhaps Dionysos’ serpent, as an embodiment of deranged drunkenness will oust the Warlpiri/Pintupi serpent, perhaps they will combine to create a synthesised caduceus formation, with healing properties.

A sketch map of the main incidents in the Warnu Tjukurrpa follows, showing specific ‘stops’ as he moves west, undergoing injuries, splittings, rests, recovery.
1. Storyline comes from East. Two brown snakes travelling.

2. Black snakes' water hole invaded;

3. displaced

4. travels west,

5. enters sisters water hole. Conception attempt. Fight + wounded, travels west.

6. Multiple attacks + wounds.

7. Rolls in salt lake;

8. more wounds, castrated,

9. gutted + skinned,


11. Spirit enters water-hole, refuge and travels;

12. Emerges as healer.
intoxication two three studies

linking passage between Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.

This extract from Hillman and from an Orphic fragment (according to West) provides a transition passage from Part Two to Part Three, which begins to detail the process of finding and developing the Greek version of the disintegrating and integrating states of the polymorphous natural power named in the traditions as Dionysos/Bakkos/Brimo/Zagreus.

James Hillman reflects upon a psychological rationale for the Europeans recurrent urge to ‘return to Greece’; it is extracted from Revisioning Psychology pp 26 and quoted in Thomas Moore ed. A Blue Fire. 1990. the chapter, Many Gods, Many Persons.

The mention of polytheism vs montheism is considered pertinent, as an indication only, of a discussion awaiting to develop on the conflict between Christianised western notions of One Australia, One Law and One Culture and the more polymorphous or polytheistic nature of a multi cultural and indigenous version of the reality of the Australian country and its spiritual population.

Australia’s indigenous metaphysic is not monotheistic in any Judeo Christian sense. It consists of a multiplication of linked stories and beings in action, integrated perhaps into an elegant cross country network but also undergoing adaptation, disintegration or breakdown.

Possibly, an appreciation of the psychological realities of a polytheistic state of mind (such as that of the Greeks) may provide a conceptual bridge, for those brought up on a monotheistic diet, to cross over into an Aboriginal mind frame, which, it could be argued is closer to a multifaceted consciousness than a single ego centred monoculture and, to some extent, is composed of independent psychic systems operating in looser connected kinship, perhaps similar to an early Greek picture of the place of the human in a supernatural ecosystem.

Hillman on Polytheistic urge and the return to Greece.

“Polytheistic psychology refers to the inherent dissociability of the psyche and the location of consciousness in multiple figures and centers...

When the monoteism of consciousness is no longer able to deny the existence of fragmentary autonomous systems and no longer able to deal with our actual psychic state, then there arises the fantasy of returning to Greek polytheism. For the ‘return to Greece’ offers a way of coping when our centers cannot hold and things fall apart.

The polytheistic alternative does not set up conflicting opposites between beast and Bethlehem, between chaos and unity; it permits the coexistence of all psychic fragments and gives them patterns in the imagination of Greek mythology. A return to Greece was experienced in ancient Rome itself, and in the Italian Renaissance, and in the Romantic psyche during the times of revolution. In recent years it has been an intrinsic part of the lives of such artists and thinkers as Stravinsky, Picasso, Heidegger, Joyce and Freud.

The ‘return to Greece’ is a psychological response to the challenge of breakdown; it offers a model of disintegrated integration.”
On the Death and Rebirth of Dionysos

"let him collect the raw pieces."


This fragment is included as an evocative, if subliminal glimpse into the Dionysian mysteries, as reflected in the Orphic poems. Perhaps also as a libation or dedication before we enter properly into the precinct of Dionysos.

West introduces it thus;
"From about the end of the third century BC we have a fragmentary papyrus giving instructions, partly in note form, for a religious rite. It was discovered at Gurob, a village in the Fayyum (Graeco-Roman Egypt) Its evidence is of much interest and importance despite many obscurities, that it deserves to be set out."

(reproduced in facsimile from West p. 171)

THE DEATH AND REBIRTH OF DIONYSUS

... having what he finds | ... [Let him] collect the raw pieces | ... on account of the sacrament:

'Accept ye my [offering] as the payment [for my lawless] fath[ers].
Save me, gr[eat] Brimo[
And Demeter (and ?) Rhea[
And the armed Kouretoes; let us[
    ] and we will make fine sacrifice.
    ] a ram and a he-goat
    ] boundless gifts.'

... and pasture by the river | ... [a]king of the goat | ... Let him eat the rest of the meat | ... Let x not watch | ... consecrating it upon the burnt-up | | Prayer of the [ ]:

'Let [us] invoke | | and Eubouleus,
And let [us] call upon [the Queen] of the broad [Earth],
And the dear [ | ]s. Thou, having withered the [
[Grant the blessings] of Demeter and Pallas unto us.
O Euboul[leus, Erikepaioi, Hurler of Light[ning]!"

THERE IS ONE DIONYSUS.

'Tokens | ... GOD THROUGH BOSOM | ... I have drunk. Donkey. Oxherd | ... password: UP AND DOWN to the | ... and what has been given to you, consume it | ... put into the basket | ... [c]one, bull-roarer, knuckledbones | ... mirror.

fragment from orphic poem in M.L. West The Orphic Poems, p171
1. WHERE DO THOUGHTS COME FROM?

An idea arose in the conversations, described in Intoxication One, that European culture might hold a Creation Story for alcohol and intoxication which might be useful as a conceptual tool for Australian indigenous people to use in figuring the problem of control over alcohol related destruction to Aboriginal lives, family structures and a cultural future. It may be helpful to lay out a selection of experiences which had unwittingly prepared the way to see the potential of this idea and develop it in a particular way. The primary focus of interest in this chapter is upon mental processes and the role of symbols and symbol formation in building thought. I am concerned with symbol formation as explored and developed by classic poets and also within the psychoanalytic domain. I draw, not only upon Jung and the post Jungians but also upon the work of Wilfred Bion, an original though difficult to decode, psychological metaphorician whose work develops out of Melanie Klein’s investigations on the interior life, for instance, in her Contributions to Psychoanalysis. (1950).

What I introduce here, as a way of approaching thoughts about Tjukurru and its function as a mental or conceptual system, is extremely tentative. However, I would suggest that the Bion/Jung nexus offers potentially a very powerful schema by which Western psychological thinkers and poets might come to appreciate the intricate beauty of the structure of the Aboriginal mental world and the significance of Tjukurru as a metaphysical and hermeneutic matrix. I am reminded of a startling phrase used, I think by Ely White (1991, per.comm) in conversation about a Pitjatjanjara word and its derivatives: kulini which means ‘to listen’ and also ‘to think’. She went on to say that, according to her understanding, “the real business of Aboriginal men is to think; Kulini; to listen.”
In this chapter I am concerned with the business of thinking and how and where we find the physical and mental objects with which we think. My concern is that the ‘objects’ with which the Aboriginal men think and hold their mental world together, are rapidly becoming lost or corrupted and that this has something to do with a progressive cultural (mental) breakdown which is assuming catastrophic proportions. Furthermore, most Europeans involved in mental work with Aboriginal people also do not know how to think with, think about or thoughtfully create communications between the two mental worlds. The thinking - linking system is at fault, or put the other way, the listening - linking system is at fault - *Kulini wia*. - ‘Noone is listening’.

Bion in *Attention and Interpretation* (1970) advocates that a therapist should come to an analytic engagement with an open mind, uncontaminated with ‘memory and desire’. It could also be advocated that one should come to an interracial engagement with a mind uncontaminated. I came to my meeting with Japaljarri Spencer with prejudice, expectation, memory and desire and I came with questions and a pursuit in mind. This was a desire to get a grip on how the exponents of European and Aboriginal therapeutic traditions/cultures might beneficially find a way of talking to each other about the practice of their craft.

When Japaljarri raised the matter of concern to him, in 1990/91, described in the chapters in *Intoxication One*, he, naturally enough, couched it in terms which made sense to him. Whether I fully understand his issues and communications, or not, is open to question but it would appear that my mind had been prepared in a certain way to make sense of what he was saying even though, at the time, I knew nothing of the language and little of the mental structure of Central Australia’s inhabitants.

Since this project is an exploration of the dynamics of intercultural communication, it seems imperative to declare the contents of my own mind. This is part of the psychoanalytic discipline, the ongoing analysis of one’s own countertransference. Such a discipline of reflective self observation seems as useful in the practice of intercultural communication as it is in therapeutic interchange and I have come to appreciate that my training as a psychotherapist has also been a training for cross cultural engagement, or - training as a psychotherapist has prepared me to attend to communications in a particular way. It would appear that there is some value in the mode of receptive attention which a therapist cultivates in order to practice the craft, attuned as it is to the dynamics of symbolic and unconscious communications and to identifying the purposes of the soul (psychic teleology). The emphasis I wish to place is upon the mode of human attention cultivated and applied within the discipline of personal engagements and not upon the theoretical constructs of the psychotherapeutic profession.
2. PSYCHOANALYSIS. BLACK AND WHITE.

In November 1986 I presented a paper at the Nepean Conference on Aboriginal Studies. (Nepean, 1986). The paper, *Psychoanalysis Black and White* was an attempt to foreshadow a way of communicating across the black/white divide by looking for similarities in the respective psychological constructions of reality and by noting the way in which therapeutic training was conducted by indigenous healers and by psychoanalytic therapists.

In 1977, Queensland University Press published a revised edition of A. P Elkin’s 1945 study of Australian Aboriginal ‘Medicine Men’. His book, *Aboriginal Men of High Degree* was described as:

“the first general account of the subject, being a review and study of indigenous healing practices”.

Elkin was perhaps attempting to address the prejudices prevailing at the time by pointing out to the public and to the custodians of the Commonwealth’s Health Services that Aboriginal people have an active system of healing physical wounds, illness, social and psychological disturbance. He demonstrated that traditional Aboriginal practice involved a rigorous training procedure which was logically derived from Aboriginal cosmology and specifically attuned to the Aboriginal experience of environment.

After presenting his material, giving examples of how Aboriginal healers worked, the effectiveness of the practices, examples of the therapeutic paradigm and the pattern of training, Elkin advocated that a logical enterprise facing practitioners who worked in Aboriginal country, was to establish a milieu within which to consolidate a working partnership between indigenous healers and their European Australian counterparts. This was Elkin writing in 1945. His effort complements attempts by at least two other notable anthropological writers of the time to induce the academic, religious and political power brokers of post colonial Australia to recognise the vitality, logic and complexity of Central Australian culture.

The two writers, whose particular locus of activity was Central Australia were T.G.H. Strehlow (*Aranda Traditions* (1947) and *Songs of Central Australia* (1971) and Olive Pink in her numerous papers, personal letters and communications, which to date (1997) have not been formally collected and made publicly available. No matter their different positions on some matters, the point of congruence was their earnest request to the public to recognise and acknowledge the value and validity of the way Australian indigenous people went about the process of looking after themselves, healing themselves and describing the nature of reality.

At the end of his book, Elkin proposes that a conference be held (forthwith) to provide a forum within which matters of concern to European and indigenous practitioners could be discussed, compared and a working partnership consolidated.
The subject of the bicultural conference proposed by Elkin, (ibid p. 176/7) is as follows:1

"The business of the conference would be:

1. For all present to consider the relevance of medicine men and the contributions, if any, they could make in the present phase of contact and of increasing Aboriginal self-determination; then if a favourable opinion be reached.

2. For medicine men, being 'men of high degree' to discuss the ritual of 'making' (i.e. becoming a healer) as they experienced it, and to suggest what parts, if any, should be retained or modified - e.g.;
   a) the retreat with its discipline, fasting, meditation and mystic experience and
   b) the teaching given on manipulation, on the new psychology of their own people and on psychic powers and

3. For all present to consider the place of the medicine men, 'the doctor man' in the health services."

The contemporary reader may note in Elkin's wording his attempt to mollify potential prejudicial criticism. He appears to be alert to cynical and prescriptive frames of mind, hence, perhaps, he tries to translate Aboriginal experience and practise into the Christian concepts with which he and his colleagues might be familiar; (i.e. retreats, mystical experience and meditation) and he defers to the established medical powers by only tentatively suggesting that there might be something valuable in an Aboriginal doctor's repertoire.

In the book, Elkin marshalled what evidence he could and presented it formally, requesting that some kind of bi-cultural exchange occur, which could give an opportunity for practitioners to meet, evaluate and even validate each other's methodology.

By making such a proposal he intended this to happen formally, in a public domain and not in the underground of marginalised practice. The reader may need to be reminded that at that time in Australia, although, (e.g.) Aboriginal men had been recruited into the armed forces, often in responsible and valued positions, and the cattle industry depended upon skilled Aboriginal labour, no Aboriginal person had the vote, citizenship or equal recognition before the law.2

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1. note: see also page 170 (Medicine Men: Their Psychotherapeutic Role) quoting Dr. John Cowie (1974) for a view which notes the probable passing away of the ngankari traditions and the requirement for the 'modern medical practitioner' to become 'the nucleus for social integration, thus replacing the (indigenous) doctor.

While acknowledging this pragmatic assimilationist approach, which would probably be shared by many at the time, Elkin went ahead to advocate for the forum. To my mind this is a manifestation of the same reasonable desire for establishing a milieu for intercultural dialogue which is recommended by the RCIADIC working party and which Spencer Jalajjarri advocates and implements in his working life and his painted discourses.

2. note: To my knowledge that congress did not take place and even today, 1997, more than fifty years later it is still extremely difficult, for acknowledged and reputable Aboriginal healers to work in Alice Springs Hospital, to consult with patients and conduct therapeutic procedures in any protected, reliable or supported way. When it happens, and it does, it is almost always covert or at the invitation of a specific doctor who has to ride protective shotgun on their Aboriginal counterpart while he or she works.

There is no funding available for ngankaris to practice, no financial or infrastructural recognition or support whatsoever, no system of formal acknowledgement of qualification, reputation or ability. Not even, for example, a minimum support pension available for elderly and acknowledged practitioners.

One may argue that any formal attempt to incorporate authentic indigenous healers into the institutional system would, in any case be profoundly restricting to them. This is a possibility but as far as I know there has not been any formal discussion on the difficulties and advantages in policy or practice or financial support for such practitioners, even though I am personally aware of number of attempts to get the matter onto the agenda.
In 1986, at the Nepean Aboriginal Studies Conference, I attempted to reintroduce the notion of collaborative exchange on matters of practice and training in the field of mental health. I took Elkin's account of the training of a traditional healer, comparing it to the stages of a typical psychoanalytical training process. Awareness of these two training procedures was a part of my experience when Japaljarri outlined his ngankari snake story and made his point about the absence of a Tjukurrpa to address the abuse of intoxication.

3. THERAPEUTIC TRAINING

There follows a summary of the Djabudi training process with brief reflections upon it, in so far as it pertains directly to the preparation for the Sugarman projects and the notion of comparing the iconography of psychic process across cultures. I will concentrate on only three phases of this sequence. In analysing it in detail I found that each of the phases, numbered by Elkin as six, could be further subdivided into twenty one significant experiential 'bits' or elements. A diagram of the process is given below.

Each element in itself denotes a particularly poignant moment or point of maximum psychological stress in the rite of passage of becoming a ngankari, but the psychic imagery of both Aboriginal and European experiences resonate with each other, though I do not suggest that these experiences are necessarily induced, felt and interpreted in the same way. It was quite clear from the reaction in the Perth conference, 1996, that Western therapists, trained in psychodynamic schools, experience a series of primal states in the course of personal analysis and that some of the states as described (or implied) in the Djabudi sequence, 'strike bells' with many therapists/trainees. Some found themselves in identification with all of the states described in the Djabudi sequence. The series of images, when decoded into a sequence of experiences, allows practitioners of both traditions to contemplate the possibility that 'under the skin' there are points of reconciliation based on clusters of psychic experience, held in common.

The complete text from Elkin's Djabudi Waterhole drama with some contexting is reproduced on the following pages, with the diagram. (page 102-105, are reproduced in full in facsimile. Elkin: 1977.)

The tribes of the western desert of South Australia gathered around Ooldea in 1941-42, may be considered as one cultural group, because of the fundamental unity of their language, social organization, totemism and mythology. Amongst them, the kinkin (doctor) is also said to be a clever man. Like other individuals in the tribe, he can practise sorcery, but he is also a healer (nangaringu, one who sucks out), a rain-maker, an oracle, and a diviner of the cause of deaths. As well he can counteract alien magical influences, and can send his spirit in the form of his cult-totem to gather information from a distance.

The ritual and experience of the making take place at Djabudi water-hole, south-west of Ooldea, which is associated with a great snake, Wonambi, who is alive today, even though his mythical exploits belong to the ancestral dream-time. He is the guardian of all doctors.

1. The postulant, who must have shown leanings towards the profession at an early age, goes to Djabudi accompanied only by kinkin. He is mourned for as a person just dead, because he is going to be daramara, that is, "cut into pieces", but signifying that he is to receive power. At Djabudi, he is blindfolded with a hair-girdle by two doctors, and given to the monstrous snake, which swallows him whole.

2. After the postulant has spent an undefined period of seclusion inside the snake, the two doctors, who have been camped nearby, give the latter two kangaroo-rats, in return for which he ejects the postulant into the air so that he falls alongside a certain rock-hole.

3. A little later, the doctors begin a journey of search for the postulant, visiting and camping at each of a series of rock-holes until they find him at the last one. But he has become a baby, Wonambi having made him like that. Taking him in their arms, they fly back to their camp.

4. Here songs are sung and ceremonies performed by a group of doctors, who have gathered from adjacent
“countries”. The postulant is placed within a circle of fires, and as a result, he grows and attains again man’s size. He then announces that he knows Wonambi, having been inside his stomach. He and Wonambi are friends.

5. He next begins a period of seclusion, during which he meditates and has converse with spirits. At the end of this, doctors take him into the bush and red-ochre him completely. He is made to lie full-length on his back before fires, and is said to be a dead man. The head doctor proceeds to break his neck and his wrists, and to dislocate the joints at the elbows, the upper thighs, the knees and ankles. A black stone, a charmed australite, is used to “cut” the above parts of the body in this daramara rite. Actually, the operator does not amputate each part properly, but rather makes a mark with the stone. It is interesting to notice that before the “cutting”, the postulant’s limbs are taut like those of a corpse, but at the touch of the doctor, they become limp. This reviving of the limb is connected with the fact that the doctor puts into each cut a maban shell of life-giving properties. Maban are also put into his ears and into the angle of his jaw so that he can respectively hear (understand), and speak to, everything—spirits, strangers, and birds and animals; into his forehead, so that he can divine and see through anything; and into his neck, so that it may be turned in all directions. His stomach is also filled with maban in order that he may have renewed life, and become invulnerable to attack by any weapon. He is then sung by the kinkin and revives. After this, all return to the main camp.

6. On arrival there, a test is held. All the fully initiated men, when ordered by the head kinkin thrust and throw their spears at the aringbulga, as the postulant is now called. But the spears glance off because he is full of maban. He is now a kinkin and can practise his profession.
This is a remarkable, but not unexpected, ritual pattern. It consists of:
(a) the postulant being swallowed by a mythical snake and reborn as a child;
(b) a fire ceremony and growth or restoration to adult size; and
(c) the treatment of the postulant as a corpse which is ritually cut into pieces, each piece or part being made to live by the introduction of a magical life-giving substance; indeed, the “cutting” with the charmed stone-knife is a life-giving act.

The new life, so gained, is on a higher plane than the former one; the new doctor can see, hear, and say anything, and is invulnerable. No one concerned has any doubt that this sequence of events occurs; nor need we have any doubts; some do occur in ritual and symbolic action, and some while in a state of trance.6

When I was in the Musgrave Ranges, northern South Australia, in 1930, an informant told me about a big waterhole in the country of the Pitjantara (Pitjindara) tribe to the north-west, in which a big snake, Wonambi, lives. He is fed with kangaroos. Men going to visit this place are met by local men (that is, men of the local Wonambi cult-totem), who blindfold them and throw them into the snake’s mouth. They are swallowed, kept inside for four days, and then vomited out. After this, they must remain four days, getting rabbits and other food for Wonambi. Men who have had this experience, have permanent red piebald “markings on their backs”.

This is probably an exoteric and garbled account of the making of medicine-men, or else of a totemic rite which is performed from time to time at this waterhole. Some weeks later, and 320 km east, I was shown a stone tjurunga (totemic symbol), the markings on which depicted the tracks of Wonambi. It belonged to a man whose cult-totem was Wonambi.

I also heard of Wonambi in the Laverton district of
Western Australia towards the end of 1930, and in addition recorded an interesting, though brief, account of the making of medicine-men. The latter referred to the Mandjindja tribe out Waib Burton Range way. Wonambi is a cult-totem and, as well as dwelling in certain sacred sites, appears in dreams. If a woman dreams that she kills and eats Wonambi snake, she will bear a child whose conception totem will be Wonambi. At one waterhole, Kolornga, the Wonambi is 36 m long and 1 m thick. Wonambi at another place, Kadada, stands up as tall as the sky, and can fly to other places. Wonambi plays an important part in the mythology and cult-totemism of western South Australia and the adjoining region of Western Australia, which can be justly described as a great desert region. In such a region, where water is precious, a recognized function of the great snake, as the guardian of at least some special waterholes, is understandable. Wonambi takes the water away when he “smells a stranger”.

The account of the making which I recorded for the Mandjindja contains no reference to Wonambi, and a cave takes the place of a waterhole in the rite. The postulant goes into a cave where wega (the wild cat), and kalaia (the emu) “kill” him and cut him open from his neck down the front of the body to the groin. They take out his heart, intestines and other organs, and insert marbain (magical substances). They take out his shoulder bones, cut along the thighs and take out the thigh bones. They dry the bones and, before putting them back, insert marbain. They cut round the ankles and stuff marbain into those parts. Finally, they take the frontal bone out, clean it, and insert marbain in the head before returning this bone to its place.
1. Mourned.

2. Blindfolded. Taken to site of snake.

3. Swallowed.

4. Seclusion (inside snake).

5. Ejected by snake in exchange for feeding snake.

   Becomes a baby.

6. Mock search, found as baby.

7. Return to camp (flight).


   Announcement of 'friendship with snake'


10. "Death". Dismemberment.

11. Insertion of powers 'maban' for communication with the spirit.

12. Revived test + defense of powers.

   Practice.
Three of the six part sequence are selected for comment, as representative:

a. Coming to the waterhole where Wanambi lives.
b. Being swallowed by the snake and converted into a baby.
c. Being disjointed and having 'power' inserted in the joints.

a. Entering the creation

"The ritualised 'making' event takes place at a specific site connected with the activity of Wanambi"
Elkin Section 1. Page 102

This signals that the activity of a Tjukurrpa being is associated with specific parts of the country. In this case a water site which is the location for Wanambi. Throughout Central Australia and perhaps much of the rest of the country, certainly the north and western sectors there is a particular creation power associated with water, water sources, water courses and water holes. Water in the arid lands is a precious commodity and sometimes tumultuously overwhelming in deluge or flood. The snake, associated with the qualities of water, embodies the essential life preserving vitality of that most essential and primary element. There may be other qualities, activities and functions associated with Wanambi. It is unusual for an Aboriginal people, brought up in the bush to swim or otherwise enter into a water hole associated with Wanambi. When one approaches such a place it is customary to alert 'him' to your presence, often by throwing a pebble into the pool, and hence ask permission for entry to the area.

This section underlines the significance of specific sites for the activity of psychologically significant events. These things do not merely happen 'in the mind' or in some metaphysical reality absent from actual geographical location. When Napaljarri spoke of a Tjukurrpa story for alcohol I took this to imply that such a story, like Tjukurrpa, would need to be rooted in actuality of site, geography and traceable travels of creation beings: connecting drinking and drunkenness to specific lines in the country.

There is a further emphasis here of the association between serpents, healing activities and initiation into specific states of being on the edge or overlap of dying and creating.

b. Becoming a Baby

"The postulant is swallowed by the snake .... a little later the doctors begin a search for the postulant... but he has become a baby... Wanambi having made him like that..." (ibid sect. 2)

The aspirant healer enters into this significantly charged body of water and is 'swallowed' by Wanambi. I took this to mean that the person enters right inside the being of creation and gets to know it from the inside.
Following this most primal of experiences, he is converted into an infant and ejected. I have taken this to indicate that transformation into infantile states is recognised as an inevitable and necessary ‘bit’ in the rite of passage.

Analysis of this event in terms of psychosyndric experience is revealing and resonates with the experience of many people who, within the containment of analytic transformations pass through a stage of acute sensitivity that re-invokes or parallels infant experience. Those familiar with the process of rebirthing practice might have similar points to make. The Aboriginal story seems to take into account transformational metamorphoses in much the same way as noted in psychoanalytic symbolic process. I was encouraged that ngankari teachers, like psychoanalysts, take account of the way adults can become babies in psychic reality, (regression) and that adults can find a symbiotic identity with their creation powers by allowing themselves to be psychologically consumed by an image or representation of something which most Jungians would probably identify and name as ‘The Self’. This similitude gave me confidence in supposing that there might eventually turn out to be psychological resonance between the procedures of the Dionysian mystery ceremony and some ngankari procedures.

It is not my purpose in this chapter to make a psychological analysis of the sequential stages of the Djubardi process. The point to note is that, at the time, I thought of this entire sequence as indicating that the psychophysical experiences through which a ngankari might pass were similar in symbolic sequence to the rites of passage for some Western therapisists. I concluded that if the symbology of experience could run parallel then significant stories of both cultures might also find parallel companionship.

c. Becoming Disjointed

"... the doctor proceeds to break his neck and his wrists, and to dislocate the joints at the elbows, the upper thighs, the knees and the ankles... the reviving of the limb is connected with the fact that the doctor puts into each cut a maban shell of life giving properties..." (ibid sect 5.)

In this de integration (?) experience, the ngankari goes through the drama of dismemberment and then insertion of Maban or healing power into his joints in the form of shells or crystals. Might this be the equivalent in Western psychophysical experience and mythology of being taken apart and reassembled about a new pivot of vitality and perception? A de integration of the conventional ego, either through natural breakdown, a psychotic episode or an induced breakdown as can sometimes occur in analysis. Successful recovery from such a derangement or psychological dismemberment can lead to positive reconstitution of the psyche. Jung’s own breakdown, as described in the early chapters of his biography, Memories Dreams, Reflections is an exemplar of the curative and transformative ordeal of the ‘wounded’ and aspirant healer.

Being alerted to themes such as these prior to the meeting with Japaljarri Spencer, meant that when he started raising the question of a ‘story’ that might serve as the base for an alcohol recovery process, I was
attuned to the probability that such a myth, as a psychological container, would have to hold elements of symbolic action which could recognise and name psychic pain associated with disintegration and reintegration.

During the period of cross cultural research it began to appear that basic patterns of both Aboriginal and European/Middle Eastern foundation/creation stories reveal a remarkable repertoire of commonality. The question was there however- would this repertoire have the necessary bits of psychological symbolic material which would, in fact, be able to be used, as myth/thoughts to help us recognise, name and hold psychic pain associated with alcohol related derangement? - And also generate forms for the healing of psychic and organic pain?

Some of the common 'bits' include:
1. Going to specific sites and the action of those sites on the visitor.
2. The presence of snakes, reptilian beings and other proto-uminous animal activity.
3. Acts of being swallowed and regurgitated by these creatures.
5. Disappearances into the earth, into landforms, into the sky, appearances out of the sky, out of the earth.
6. Travels, over ground, underground, in the sky and among the stars.
7. Being made small, infantile or the significant presence of a baby, to whom some traumatic event occurs.
8. Acts of creation from every possible bodily fluid or function.
9. Losses (and sometimes recovery) of body parts, various.
10. Male/ Female/ Supernatural Beings gender politics.
11. Erotic adventures, comic, tragic and epic.
12. Fights.

This is by no means an exhaustive list but every item can be expanded in fascinating and fruitful ways. The processes already briefly mentioned, for example, of disjointing, dismemberment, de integration; and described variously as occurring to an individual’s lover, place, possessions, body, mind, spirit or ego after a fateful or deliberately induced breakdown, seem to be an essential element in the archetypal repertoire of healing stories or therapeutic training experiences common to shamanic practitioners, psychotherapists and spiritual healers of many cultural traditions and is referred to in the psychoanalytic/mythological literature encompassed by many writers in many of their texts among whom the most obvious include;


4. TOWARDS AN INTERCULTURAL METAPSYCHOLOGY?

When Petchkovsky and I first heard the simple outline of the *Warra Tjukurrpa* with its reference to waterholes, snakes, displacement, rejection, attack, virtual dismemberment, then entry, after perilous journeys into caves and water, we realised we were on familiar symbolic territory.

People sometimes ask, “Why the Greeks... and why Dionysos?” (as a link to Aboriginal stories).

My answer is that the image sequences in the Dionysian epic present a repertoire of incidents which are congruent with incidents, symbolic shapes and patterns (signifiers?) in those traditional dreaming stories with which I am, so far, personally familiar. The Berndt’s excellent book, *The Speaking Land* is an encyclopaedic collection and can be used as an extra reference. However the stories with which I have become physically involved are the only ones I wish to refer to here. These include the following, many of which interrelate with each other at specific sites in the web of *Tjukurrpa*.

1. The Alice Springs Dog Stories
2. The Yepperenye Caterpillar travels
3. The Intjartnarna warriors and Urana death story
4. The Yarrapalong/Karrinarra Mt Wedge Snake Story
5. The related Japanganka Lizard story from Mt Theo
6. Two Sisters travelling
7. The Seven Sisters and Wati Niru Story
8. The Yuendumu Giantess Story
9. The variations of the Punkalunka Woman who steals or eats babies
10. The Anguja Ngintaka (Perentie) Story
11. Lightning Stories
12. Eagle and Crow
13. Various women’s bush food stories (Yam and Bush potato)
Such creation/Tjukurrpa events detail the activities and the presence of powerful or numinous theriomorphic beings engaged in a variety of:

1. eventful journeys,
2. flights,
3. fights,
4. erotic acts,
5. seductions, incests, rapes
6. shape changing,
7. pursuits,
8. entries into water, caves, seclusions,
9. encounters with snakes or similar creatures,
10. swallowing and regurgitation,
11. things that happen to babies,
12. dismemberments and reassembly of bodies,
13. insertion or incorporation into (spirit) bodies of items which give power,
14. tricks, betrayals, disguises
15. hiding and discovery
16. trials of endurance
17. displays of knowledge, discretion, cleverness.

Events of similar nature figure prominently in the Dionysos cycle. A more thorough detailing and interweaving of these primal procedures and states will be revealed by a reading of the full text of the Dionysos/Sugarman cycle. However, at this earlier stage of my entry into the problem and before the writing of the Song Cycle, I was but dimly aware that some kind of congruence at the level of primal imagery could be discovered and worked with. Some of this I knew before April 1990 and the seminal conversation. Most was acquired after, by systematic study and reflection upon the experiences accumulated on the ground in Central Australia, and through the research workshops into various aspects of mythological congruence.

Possible congruence of the shape of the significant objects in these stories is one category which we felt worth noting, as were the themes of the story and the activities of the beings or characters in the story. What happens to people when they enter the ambience or country of the Tjukurrpa beings is another.

An intriguing or perhaps perplexing category of experience hangs around the phenomenon of metamorphosis and transformations, not only of the objects and creatures in the myths but also the transformations that occur to the people who participate in or perform these stories, in ceremony. Attention to the changes in people who submit themselves to the transformations generated by the presence of creation/Tjukurrpa beings includes noting the way in which the thoughts about what is going on are revealed. The psychological work of engaging with archetypal 'fields' involves tracking the moves to consciousness made by the participants.
as they pass from participation mystique to reflective review, if any, to actions in the world. Both Aboriginal and Western participants are emotionally affected by the psychic content of these archetypal stories in similar ways but whether changes in consciousness related to the ceremonial participation are the same for Europeans and Aboriginal participants, or not, is open to question. The valuing of ‘consciousness’ for instance, as a sought for outcome of psychological work by psychotherapists, led me to wonder how Aboriginal ceremony bosses understood the process of performing ceremonial enactments of creation myths/ Tjukurrpa. I wondered what kind of meaning they ascribed to the symbolic accounts, or indeed whether they were seen as symbolic or as actual concrete events. That is to say, was some person actually swallowed, actually digested, actually vomited and actually dismembered, or did the Aboriginal participants see a series of Tjukurrpa acts as metaphorical, or as a fiction, as belonging in an imaginal reality?

I had to begin to investigate this dimension of our enchantments with different dimensions of ‘reality’ so as to know how to present our stories effectively. I realised we didn’t know whether the European myths would be perceived or read by an Aboriginal audience in the same way as Westerners did. It is my understanding, so far, that Aboriginal Tjukurrpa events and the ceremonies associated with them are neither fictions nor metaphorical nor symbolic of some other or higher reality. The ceremony and participation with the Tjukurrpa beings in the ceremony is held as being real, present, concrete and actively present. I have rarely encountered an Aboriginal person who views these events symbolically or psychologically in a Western sense, but I am aware that such interpretations do occur. The metaphorical and metaphysical use of the Tjukurrpa as a secret or esoteric level of teaching is also mostly unknown to me, however. William Armstrong, ex HALT worker, has shared some of his personal and interesting interpretations of Alice Springs region creation stories in terms of a psychological explanation of contemporary events, especially the Dog Story as portraying the invasions and rape of Arrente space and an interpretation of the Heavitree Gap as part of a body system linked to the invasive impingement of ravaging ‘dogs’ from the South. Mostly, it seems as though the imaginal or fictional elements and the concrete reality elements of the Tjukurrpa are held in the mind simultaneously without any sense of contradiction. I have so far never heard an Aboriginal person say, much as a European might about Santa Claus, “Well we know its not real but we agree to believe in it anyway”.

Working on the Sugarman Project, we discovered that the reading of a particular event in the Dionysos cycle might vary somewhat between the cultures and the understanding of what was metaphorical, symbolic or real might vary for some people, but the power of the impact of exposure to the Dionysian story was confirmed. In the end, perhaps these questions don’t matter much, so long as the story is authentically presented and enjoyed. Experienced cross cultural metaphysicians such as Tony Swain would probably be in stitches if I recounted some of my earlier magical, naïve conceptual struggles to reach some kind of critical consciousness of what was going on in the enchantments of the dreaming. Finding out how to think into this project has been the most gruelling but exciting part of it. I suppose I am describing yet another bewildered venture in cross cultural metaphysics, something that ethno theologians and translators of Biblical texts undertake over breakfast every day, in Alice Springs, Hermannsburg and Santa Theresa.
I was supported intellectually and theatrically in these reflections by the prior work of Jung, Bion and Peter Brook, among others. They became like grandfathers to the project, which paralleled the occasional eye cast by the elder Jungarai and Japaljarris and Nakamara mothers, who conceptually “supervised” my explorations of local metaphysics. Jung’s introduction to Evans Wentz’ translation of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, (CW 11) provided early on, a stimulating opening into the study of cultural relativity and the way in which different cultures treat psychic and symbolic process. His and Bion’s work gave a position from which to work, a foothold in the realm of mental transformations within psychic and physical reality. Dante’s Divine Comedy also prepares one on the realm of mythopoetic ceremonial reality. Dante’s circumambulation of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven in the company of Virgil and led by Beatrice provides a guiding image and example of systematic travel through states and stages of psychic transformation within a political/spiritual world. The “two men travelling” even arrive in the Antipodes, the setting for Purgatory. The Divine Comedy trilogy is a great post-Genesis, renaissance (Tjukurpa) journey.

See illustrations of Dante and Virgil on route to the underworld in Jung CW 12. p142

5. BION AND HOW THOUGHTS MIGHT ARRIVE

“Where thoughts are things and things are thoughts.”

Bion in Elements of Psychoanalysis (1963, pp22-27), describes the terms he will use throughout his project on thinking, thought formation and transformation and the use of mental ‘objects’ in psychotherapeutic activity. He develops the theme throughout the five books, now in the Maresfield Reprint Series (see bibliog.) For our purposes here I deal only with the simplest use of Bion and three of the elements of his system.

These are Beta elements, Alpha elements and Alpha function.

Beta elements refer to “the earliest matrix from which thoughts can be supposed to arise”. In this orison state of thought the proto elements of the thought domain have the quality of inanimate objects and psychic objects without any distinction being experienced between the two states. In this most primal state of mind: “thoughts are things; things are thoughts and they have personality”.

“Beta elements are not amenable to use in dream thoughts but are suited for use in projective identification. They are influential in producing ‘acting out’. They are objects that can be evacuated or used for a kind of thinking that depends on manipulation of what are felt to be things in themselves as if to substitute such manipulation for words or ideas”. (Bion. Learning from Experience p.6. 1962/84)

I was wondering then, and I still wonder, if we could think of Tjukurpa as the - “earliest matrix from which thought can be supposed to arise”; using Bion’s way of thinking about the matter of mental life. Perhaps one might suggest that in the Tjukurpa state of mind, one might be feeling and seeing inanimate objects and psychic objects as one and the same.
In the Tjukurpa state of mind, it would seem that thoughts are things and things are thoughts. Mountains are snakes, snakes are mountains, rocks are bits of people, bits of people are rocks and they have personality. These ‘things’ project themselves into the minds and lives of people and they act out stories in the topography of the country, rather than in the topography of the interior mind, where mind is considered conventionally as an ‘internal’ domain.

I have been with Aboriginal people while their minds dwell in and roam among ‘snakes as mountains, mountains as snakes’ - the rocks are people, people are rocks, living breathing, doing things in the world, not in the mind, as such. The mind is in the country, or the country is acting in the mind. The question: “What is going on in the mind?” can be rephrased as, “What is going on in the country?”

At some point in time, in mental evolution, while people let their minds play, alpha function, as Bion formulates it, begins to operate on beta elements, those concrete, primal, mental things; when something called alpha function (as Bion proposes) starts to come into play some kind of psychic work is done, mental transformations take place. The beta elements become alpha elements. They acquire a psychic reality and somehow begin to enter into human experience as ‘dream thoughts’.

“Beta elements... differ from alpha elements in that they are not so much memories as undigested facts, whereas the alpha elements have been digested by alpha function and thus made available for thought. It is important to distinguish between memories and undigested facts.....If the patient cannot transform his emotional experience into alpha elements, he cannot dream. Alpha function transforms sense impressions into alpha elements, which resemble, and may be identical with, the visual images with which we are familiar in dreams, namely, the elements that Freud regards as yielding their latent content when the analyst has interpreted them......Failure of alpha function means that the patient cannot dream and therefore cannot sleep.” (Bion. 1963/84 ) p7 Learning From Experience)

I wonder(ed) if ceremony might be and might have been, the communal milieu, the communal container wherein these subtle psychological transformations take place. Somehow inside and outside the human mind at the same time, ceremony can be understood as a humanly constructed domain where evolutions of consciousness take place and thinking as a mental condition begins by manipulation of internal/external objects carried out in a place which, by virtue of being a sacred ground, is somehow inside the mental world.

If this is so, and I am coming to the conclusion that it is, then this is further justification for the decision to present the Sugarman cycle within the format and psychic (trance) space of a ceremony/performance. rather than, for instance as health promotion material, video clips or academic reports - such complex and abstract mental constructions are too far along the continuum, too far from the Tjukurpa state of mind, where rocks are thoughts and thoughts are rocks.
In the Tjukurrpa state of mind, if you want to move ideas you have to paint and move ‘rocks’. A ceremonial enactment in song and dance is where, collectively, individual and group beta elements are worked on and transformed into alpha elements, into dream elements and meanings.

The ceremonial enactments present simple things as simple moving thoughts. They move, through the container of the ceremony, from a location in country into a place in someone’s mind and thus into everyone’s mind. Thus land forms and mind are fused consciously. (The ‘someones’ who facilitate this process are the owners of the ceremony, the Kinda, bound in reciprocal relationship with the Kurungulu ‘policemen’, and in the non Aboriginal world the facilitators of the psychic and spiritual transformation are sometimes the priests/priestess as poets of ceremony and sometimes dramatic poets as the creators of theatre.)

I suggest that as psychic work (alpha function) is being done through the singing of a story line, e.g. the ‘mountains as snakes’ become ‘snakes as dream’: then ‘snakes’ as dream images assume meanings for men and women; then thoughts; then as strings of thoughts and strings of songs and then fragments of ceremonial action which are dreams in action and; thus as psychic work is done, new members (those still out of their mind), the young, or uninitiated in the family, are brought into conscious containment by the communal thought systems. Participation in ceremony is participation in the container of shared and developing thinking. Ceremony is, I think, in Bion’s terms, alpha function in collective action, psychic work in operation.

With this possible procedure in mind, perhaps one can understand the significance of what Jaljaljarri and others are saying about the absence of a necessary Tjukurrpa to hold the thinking about alcohol.

When he searched the earliest matrix of Aboriginal experience, (from which thoughts can be supposed to arise), Jaljaljarri could not find beta elements there (psychically significant objects) which are imbued with the spirit of intoxication. He could not find, or could not recognise an element/object which could be used to do psychic work upon, to convert into dream imagery and then thoughts. He needed dream thoughts located in the Tjukurrpa before he could authoritatively and passionately form mental conceptions about the behaviours of intoxication. Even if there were to be a container made for a ceremony Jaljaljarri did not know exactly what ceremonial thought objects had to be brought out from the ‘earliest matrix’ and placed into the field for conscious attention by the gathered potential thinkers. He did not know (I conjecture) the shapes of the animals or plants, nor the painted designs for the body, nor the physical or mimetic actions, nor the words or rhythms of the songs which could be authoritatively sung to give shape to mental concepts and to consciously held prescriptions for action in response to intoxicated behaviours. He literally did not know what to think.
Taking it further, if he wanted to send the spirit of alcohol away, that is, become dispossessed of intoxication, he could find no psychic objects in the ‘earliest matrix of thought’ which he could manipulate physically or mentally in order to use psychic authority over the substance and the behaviour.

If he wanted to become a healer of alcohol induced sickness he could find no dream thoughts and no sustaining psychic or physical objects in the ‘earliest matrix’ of local Tjukurrpa which could form the basis of procedures, ceremonies, songs or psychic manipulations which would have effect in the mental domain of his own family. No one listened because there was nothing to sing, except country and western rock; *wama wamit* ‘give up the grog’ songs. OK, but not deep structure *Tjukurrpa* music.

Alcohol and intoxication therefore remain as undigested psychic facts, for which no one has responsibility, other than to attempt to ‘excrete’ them. Intoxicated behaviours remain undigested acts, human objects in chaos in the landscape of the dreaming but unrelated to or dissociated from the dreaming, with a life of their own, recognised but not internalised, remembered but barely owned as real memories, hardly even dream fragments. Drunks become something which one cannot wake up from, and one cannot go to sleep from; something which exists outside the reach of thought, yet is ever present as psychotic fact.

As Bion says “The patient who cannot dream cannot go to sleep and cannot wake up, hence the peculiar condition when the psychotic patient behaves as if he were precisely in this state.”

(*Learning From Experience*, p.7)

Literally speaking, Japaljarri as potential healer could not find or see the psychic objects to extract from the spirit/dreaming body of his patients nor could he find or see the psychic empowerment objects (*mabun*) which he could use to insert into the disbanding bodies of his patients or his trainees and bring about the restoration of their senses. This is why indigenous healers have trouble dealing with alcohol ‘sickness’.

Restating this complex, subtle and probably abstruse theme;

When faced with a request to fix a drunk, the indigenous healer, surveying his/her repertoire of medicines and manipulations to handle a spiritual or bodily sickness, could find none of the necessary ‘thoughts as things, things as thoughts’ to manipulate shamanically and no story lines to hold or direct the travelling reveries of the healer’s mind or hands.

No ‘snakes as mountains, mountains as snakes’, to use.
No ‘rocks as people, people as rocks’
No ‘objects as power or powers as objects’
No ‘words of power, or powers as words’.

The potential healer could find no *ngankari* sequence of psychically effective operations, where any of the usual natural objects, geographical sites or activities at sites could be brought to bear to transform the minds of drunks.
Drunks are literally, out of mind. Literally lost in the country of intoxication. No reference point in the topographical dimensions of Aboriginal being or psyche. No place (in mind). No story (in mind). No way of empowering action. Alpha function impotent.

The consequence of this void is that a collective psychosis as a cultural plague is imminent. In Bion’s way of thinking; No one is dreaming these things; No one is waking up and no one is really sleeping the sleep of healthy restoration; so the intoxication events remain as undigested dissociated beta elements. When dreaming, waking and sleep become disturbed and their realities confused with one another then a person begins to inhabit a psychotic state. In a psychotic state personal relationships disintegrate.

6. RESTATEMENT; CATASTROPHE, BREAKDOWN AND STORY

I am well aware that many Aboriginal people adapt or imitate Western concepts and actions without making any connection to Tjukurrpa activities. You don’t need to own the whitefella’s Tjukurrpa for Motor Vehicles to get in one and drive. Although you do need to learn to drive it and even fix it. People appear to do this without worrying about ceremonies, songs or even licences so what is the difference when it comes to alcohol? The capacity of Homo Sapiens to adapt and manipulate various multiple realities is probably what makes us ‘sapien’; and Aboriginal people are certainly sapient (wise and sagacious) on many matters. Sometimes, so called, animistic or magical thinking dominates Aboriginal discourses on the framing of a problem and other times it is conveniently forgotten. I have to remind myself that it was a Japaljarri who pointed in the direction of Tjukurrpa as the essential and missing element in the capacity of traditional people to introduce internal controls, understandings and responsibilities for intoxicated states and the consequences. My effort is to try and articulate why that might be so, psychologically.

Anything borrowed, begged or bought from the European domain of beta elements i.e. “from the earliest matrix (of European experience) from which thoughts could be supposed to arise” (Bion ibid), would have to be a matrix recognisable by an Aboriginal mind and contain objects recognisable by an Aboriginal consciousness. Without these physical/psychic objects, (thoughts as things, things as thoughts with personality) no alpha function or psychic work could be done on these objects in order to convert them into dream thoughts that would hold truth in an Aboriginal mental domain.

I suggest that Andrew could barely think about alcohol and treatment because he had no recognisable thought objects to manipulate mentally or physically, anywhere in his country. We would drive through his country, he would point out places and stories and ‘snakes as mountains’ etc and relate some of those stories to everyday realities, or the behaviours of people. He would bring them, as it were, out of the infinite Tjukurrpa dimension and into the finite three dimensional world. But he did not go as far and as fast as I expected in using the Tjukurrpa dimension as a way of pragmatically generating solutions to contemporary problems.
Even when close members of his own family were ragingly, persistently, stupidly drunk there was nothing he seemed to be able to do to modify or control their behaviour or mentally make them listen.

The best he could do was make paintings, as with HALT, and somehow bring the painted objects into shape as thoughts. 'Thoughts as paintings, paintings as thoughts'. This was the beginning. But a marvellous beginning, the significance of which is barely appreciated by those who take for granted that thinking is easy.

I realise that what I am exploring here is tentative and its comprehension depends on some familiarity with Bion's 'grid' and his notions of psychic transformations, the origins of thinking and the use of thought in the psychic life of normal people and of those suffering under catastrophic change, socially and with psychosis. So far Bion's is the best tool I have found to describe what might be going on in the transformations and translations that occur in the area of overlap between the Aboriginal state of mind and the Westernised state of mind. When we try to be accurate in understanding about Tjukurpa as a matrix for thought, imagination and action, then we have to work with theories of mind. The therapeutic task presented is to find or invent a way by which the mind can work upon itself in order to produce an effective survival action in a disintegrating mental world. Some people, naturally enough, experience the disintegration of their mental world as a psychosis. They think and feel that they are going mad. But they may not be organically or clinically insane. A man who is not psychotic but is compelled to live in conditions which are consistently mad will begin to react in specific ways. He will call into play the mind's instinctive defenses against mental annihilation. These defenses require studying because I suggest that much of the so called irrational and perplexing behaviour of the Aboriginal and white population of Central Australia can be understood as defenses against perceived or expected madness. Experienced individually or collectively.

If the mental objects of the Australian Aboriginal mind are degenerating and not maintained through lack of access and ceremonial participation then the current catastrophe anticipated and being lived is in fact in the order of a collective mental breakdown. Politicians interpret these conditions economically, but from a psychotherapist's perspective, the catastrophe is also psychological.

The nature of the Aboriginal breakdown is almost 'unthinkable'. It is too emotionally disturbing for most people to comprehend and that 'unthinkability' is the therapeutic problem to be investigated and solved.

The instinctive attempt at self organised healing, which Andrew Spencer generated through HALT also presented itself as a request for an object of therapeutic power. It was not a request for a tranquiliser and not for a gun. The request was for a story. A narrative with substance with which to make sense of a senseless and unimaginably psychotic existential condition.
7. BLACK DOCTOR-WHITE DOCTOR-WHICH DOCTOR?

If one were to think of the function of this thesis and the Sugarman Project upon which it reflects, as doing 'psychological work' in Bion's sense of alpha function, i.e. - transforming unintegrated bits of feeling, sensation, mental objects and dream hunches into some cogently satisfying humanised story then it is possible to view everything I am writing as a psychoanalytic reverie, the purpose of which is to circumambulate the awesome Sphinx like riddle which we know to be seeking conscious and crucial life enhancing attention.

In Sophocles' Oedipus the issue was the plague and the undisclosed family crimes. In Australia the issue is the existential catastrophe which Andrew has articulated for and from himself and on behalf of his family, culture and country. He has articulated it clearly, through succinct compacted and complex paintings and through the discourse unfolded from those images. He has articulated the need for a healing of some kind, drawing attention to communications through dreams and visitations from his fathers. His own dreams contain and unlock therapeutic directions and so do those of the white doctors where (as we have already described in Chapters 3 and 7) a curative operation was set going for the 'white doctor' (Petekhovsky) and where the 'white doctors' of whom both he and I have become representative, in turn were requested to help find a solution to the 'black doctor's' trouble.- this trouble turned out to be not an illness, as such, but a cultural catastrophe, speeded up by the impact of alcohol and volatile substances over which the 'black doctors' had/have no control.

The 'black doctors' suggested a solution in three dimensions.
1. First cure the 'white doctors' of their own illnesses.
2. Incorporate the 'white doctors' into the 'black doctor's' family system and indicate to them their family obligations and responsibilities to the country/Tjukurrpa.
3. Ask the 'white doctors' for a story from their country/mind which has therapeutic efficacy to contain or control the irrational activity of the intoxicated.

Observation and experience may then become empowered by sanctioning from a traditional lineage of therapeutic knowledge, even if it is white and European.

The 'white doctors' considered this problem for a very long time realising that a very particular kind of therapeutic task was being required of the story. The story had to do psychological work. It had to reveal 'facts about the black snake; songs about the cure'.

Sometimes, deep within the concentration of an analytic session the therapist realises that a moment has arrived where the patient's most hidden self recognition has become tangible, or a moment of most painful self revelation has arrived and requires a response from the therapist, a response of complete presence where
the therapist brings to bear all one’s available experience, understanding and eloquence. These moments are rare but totally demanding. At such times of intense relational connection it is as though all of one’s life and the patient’s life passes before one. Such a moment may not last long but much is packed into it.

Another mode familiar to analysts is the long discursive rambling circumambulation of a matter in hand which does not yield to concise penetrating interpretation. Sometimes for years this circuitous reverie may play like a base theme, just out of consciousness until the moment of insight arrives and an entire complex falls out upon the day, in solution. Afterwards one may joke, or go and have a drink but at the time the sustained subliminal concentration is quite absorbing. Something like this has been going on in the seven year session between myself and Japaljarri, the thesis is the discursive circumambulation of a sphinx like matter in hand which, in itself, is still only liminally understood. The Sugarman events and performances are enactments, hypotheses, experiments, attempts at consolidating a communication——“Is it like this? - Might this be how you see these things? - Do you understand me? - Are we listening properly? - Do I understand you?”

The moment of insight may not yet have come. However the request for a story, understood as an attempt to determine if there is any fabric of meaning available with which to negotiate the present catastrophic change in Aboriginal existence, may now make more sense.

Meltzer, (1978 p.62) in his series of lectures on trying to understand Bion, describes Bion’s formulations on ‘Catastrophic Change’- as including: the search for a ‘container’ to relieve the stress of fragmentation and the hopelessness of ever attaining an integration. Evocative words and phrases grow, change and fall out of the Meltzer/Bion text straight into the lap of the Central Australian psychological landscape. Out of these bits of naming one can begin to compose a poetic. These words were there as generative background to the Sugarman Scenes, Story Two - the baby being ripped up by the Crows and later recapitulated as Dionysos being psychically invaded and sent mad. This is one psychological poetic formulation which emerged out of a clustered nest of broken verbal beta element shells. Eggs as thoughts- words as eggs.

“Psychotic panic, cloud of uncertainty, cultural anxiety, feelings of depression- persecution and guilt roving like things in themselves, aimless defenses, greedy beta elements full of a sense of catastrophe, searching wildly for a saturating realisation in the absence of the container (breast), hair raisingly real….. the role of myth in the employment of thoughts…..” ibid.
8. DIONYSOS AS A ‘SONG’ LOOKING FOR A SINGER.
OEDIPUS AS THE WARM UP.

In 1988 I had the opportunity to give another presentation to the Nepean Aboriginal Studies Conference. The third in the series. This time, unlike the first attempt, I refused to give an academic paper. I felt there was something wrong about standing up alone in front of rows of people and giving out rows of words which allegedly held rows of linked thoughts that might mean something. Basically I was also sick of being misunderstood and misinterpreted by racial cross dressers and politically righteous folk who did not appear to listen to what the speaker said but took a line or a phrase as justification for an attack on the personality, race or perceived politics of the presenter. I had a dose of that in ’86 and ’87 and that was enough to make me review not only my own assumptions but also the mode of communication appropriate for intercultural settings. I was to see failures in communication and projective cross cultural intolerance happen many times, from Sydney, at a National Aboriginal Mental Health conference, to Alice Springs at many gatherings including the ‘Healing Our People’ Conference in Alice Springs in 1991 and on the Murri Stage at the Aboriginal tent forums at the Maleny/Woodford festivals.

At Nepean in 1988, I resolved to present something in and as a group, not as an individual, and to present it as a series of dream like thoughts enacted with psychically charged objects, in the round, as a story.

We presented Oedipus. The event is described in the proceedings of the conference. *Oedipus As Inna* Nepean. 1988) This experience too, acted as a reference point in a response to Japaljarri’s query about whether Kardia had Tjukurpa of their own. I remembered, yes, we have Oedipus.(see appendix)

Petchkovsky and I and others experimented with showing Oedipus’ story at Nepean to a mixed Aboriginal and white audience as a sample of a likely traditional European rite of passage story for young men and women. Even though it had been presented as a work-in-progress rehearsal I knew that it had worked and instead of provoking a walk out (as in ’86) those people who watched were intrigued and even moved. Some wept at the plight of Oedipus because it reminded them of the the children taken away from family, brought up in other places then returning not knowing what their right family relations were. Oedipus is a Stolen Generation saga.

When pondering the question with Japaljarri, I knew, from this experiment, that we did have suitable stories and we had a way to tell them that would somehow fit into the matrix that Japaljarri spoke of as Tjukurpa.

At that stage I did not have Dionysos, but having Oedipus and Oedipus’ family and the history of Thebes led us to Oedipus’ ancestry, the incident with the snake at the water hole, the founding of the city, Cadmus and his friend, the investigative seer Teiresias, Cadmus’ wayward daughter Semele, her illicit affair with Zeus and thence to her son, Dionysos.7

7. The Sugarman Script Notes and Appendix for a Theban genealogy (from The Meridian Handbook of Classical Mythology by Edward Tripp) and an extract on the life of Dionysos.
It began to emerge that Dionysos' turbulent family history, his own life and activities represents an 'earliest matrix from which thoughts' about intoxication could be supposed to arise. The story is told, by Euripides in *The Bacchae*, not with abstract concepts but with physical and psychic objects which are melded into one breathtakingly dramatic sequence of images which shows human and divine nature at its most paradoxically wise and manic. The intuitive 'click' onto Dionysos, as a most relevant container for the therapeutic task required, came when I saw on SBS, by chance, sometime late 1990, when slightly drunk, a flamenco version of the *Bacchae* by a Spanish dance company. (Alas, I don't know who, maybe Antonio Vargas). The Spanish performance, coming straight out of the gypsy traditions, revealed a 'country' within which to place the passionate activity of intoxication, rage, ecstasy and most significantly a model of survival of cultural persecution. The place where we could start to identify, dramatise and build thoughts about intoxication became identified as the domain of Dionysos.

Dionysos' character and his activities represent a complex, fragmented interlacing of provocatively irrational, amoral and contradictory adventures. His name changes, his face changes, he carries out acts of apparently mindless violence, disordering the settled world, provoking rage and eroticism. He travels, he appears, he disappears, mysteriously. He journeys across countries to the sites of significance in the ancient world, he marries a refugee and paradoxically, holds together a stable marriage. He institutes mysteries of death and renewal, he institutes ceremonial dramas and acts as guardian of theatrical endeavour. He is a spirit of natural fertility, of fluent vegetation, the vine, the fruit, the power of fermentation and essence of alcohol. He is attributed with being the essence of human soul, the avatar of intoxication.

In his dramatic travels it is possible to see *beta* elements and *alpha* elements tangling together. It could be said that the phenomenon of human mind 'code named' Apollo is an attempt to represent the moment where clear and organised thoughts have arrived, whereas the phenomenon characterised as Dionysos presents us with the domain where thoughts are in flux, where bodily emotional processes are fluid and where the reality of derangement is the fact of life. If 'thoughts are people' and 'people are thoughts', then in Dionysos' symbolic dramas, thoughts present as mad people and mad thoughts manifest as gods but despite the chaotic derangements of isolated acts, the whole network hangs together in a loose knit container of fragmentation and integration which somehow holds sanity.

In the 'dreaming' of Dionysos, mad things travel all over the place, dream passions arise ungoverned, mythic acts take precedence over individual wishes, delusions abound, strange and distressing feelings arise, thought disorder reigns and yet there is a peculiarly liberating logic at work. This has something to do with the fact that the acts of Dionysos' maturity, show him as introducing liberating ceremonials into the rigidifying city states of the then developing world. A world which was in transition from hunter gatherer nomadic negotiations to the social negotiations and politics of agricultural settlement, organised trade and land wars. A position which the nomadic hunter gatherers of Central Australia are now being required by necessity to rapidly negotiate. The negotiation is also psychological and the knowledge and use of the *Tjukaarpa* in negotiating the transition is as crucial psychologically as it is in terms of native title.
With the arrival of the Dionysian story, I recognised that we had a matrix from which to work which could encompass nomadic and agricultural realities, transitions, order, disorder of settlement and the desire for a magical irrationality. But considering the violence and unashamed primitiveness of the Dionysian characters, e.g. the maenads, the satyrs, and the irrational Dionysian contradictions, I felt myself nervously uncertain as to whether any of these psychically rich proto European mythic objects could usefully be carried over into the somewhat paranoid protocols of Aboriginal country or find roost in the intricate but somewhat rigidly built nest of Aboriginal custom. A kinship relationship between Tjukurpa and European mythology might be recognised but nominated as negotiable. "No room".

9. DIONYSOS AS METAPHOR MATRIX WITH WHICH TO APPROACH A STATE OF PSYCHOSIS.

Having followed Oedipus to Dionysos we now had to undergo a period of intense research to strip the romanticised classical legends down to simplified, psychically telling images, words, objects and actions. I wanted the story to be recognised and felt as having come directly out of a stark, primal eloquence, expressing a communal Creation time, with warmth and humour but also fully cognisant of the Dionysian violence and paradox.

The Mahabharata.

If Peter Brook had not brought his theatre research company's production of the Mahabharata to Australia in 1988 I doubt if I would have been able to envisage the manner of bringing Dionysos to production stage. I wouldn't have known what to do with his peculiar energy field.

I went to Adelaide, to see the Mahabharata in the Quarry, with my, then, 19 year old daughter Mehera, a skillful theatrical thinker who helped conceptually, with the Oedipus experiment. I have seen or studied almost all of the Brook company's works. The Mahabharata is very familiar. The paradoxical core of the epic is expressed in the Bhagavad Gita, following Arjuna's questioning, where Krishna reveals, that in order to do his avatari job of saving the universe and guaranteeing the destiny of mankind, Krishna's own family has to be induced to tear itself to pieces. Arjuna's revelation vision of the real Krishna is terrifying and awesome and at the same time his love for his brother-in-law is established as is his commitment to see Krishna's job through. Thus the poetical history of the Mahabharata unfolds until all is lost and mankind is in ultimate shredded ruins. Somehow out of this phoenix like apotheosis, where all is in ashes then all is transformed, an image emerges that it is possible for human nature to sustain and survive the most awful dismemberment of spirit.

Mehera and I sat, totally absorbed all night through, witness to the family catastrophe, imbibing the colour in the rockface arena, witness to a revival and revolution in theatrical ceremony and a reincarnation of creation beings. There were Krishna, Arjuna, Draupadi, the lot, doing their business in archetypal time.
Leaving the world in ruins and somehow achieving for the audience a genuine (cathartic) serenity. The Brook company gave a dignified demonstration of archetypal theatre as reached for by Artaud. The action conveyed the paradox, sustained the violence, maintained the compassion and attained the serenity.

In the morning, after the dawn conclusion to the epic, the two of us were drinking tea from a battered antique silver teapot on a rickety hotel verandah overlooking the old Adelaide fruit markets. Absorbing the impact of the night’s events, without sleep, enwrapped in the theatre and the play of wind, fires, sand and stars I said to Mehera, “Now that I have seen that I can die happily.” She replied, “Now that I have seen that, I can live happily.”

I guess, somehow, then, I formed the ambition to create for/or with my children and her generation, a similar spectacle with similar impact which would help carry on the weaving of our wondrously rich traditions. I envisaged a time when I could be again sitting with a post-production tea pot and say; “Now that we have seen that, I can die happily.” my children or their peers might respond, “Now that we have seen that, we can continue to live.”

As far as I can tell, ceremonial theatre is not about art, it is all about family obligations and maintaining cultural blood lines and this responsibility cannot always be left to the professionals. Hence the enactment of Dionysos as a community theatre spectacle in the sandhill arena at Injartnam. Swirling through smoke and fire, beneath the canopy of wind and stars, the Bacchae arrived on Australian sand with Crow, cheerfully spearing father, gleefully swallowing children ‘for their own good’, resolutely accompanying Captain Cook, dragging a boat up onto the beach, unloading laws, split brains, broken families, fences, holes in the mind, bottles of rum, bladders of piss. These are images of the "greedy beta elements" of Western civilisation arriving on the fatal shore “full of a sense of catastrophe, searching wildly for a saturating realisation in the absence of the container (breast).” (Bion/Meltzer, ibid)

The invasion of the domain of the Tjukurrpa by Crow and his desperate cohort (us) is “hair raisingly psychotic” (Bion, ibid) whenever we glimpse the reality of it. Such glimpses are often only possible to sustain within the containment of a theatrical space which can set a boundary around the visions, such as was done by the poet Vyasa for his time in the Mahabharata and then Brook for ours and of course, by Euripides in the Bacchae.

The Sugarman Story may be understood as a composition of loose knit myth-thoughts which I have put together in a mood of psychoanalytic reverie, in order to catch a glimpse of a psychotic reality. That is to say, the invasion of the realm of the Tjukurrpa by thought-deprived aliens whose wildly greedy activities set a catastrophe going in the mental links of the Dreaming. We, the Europeans are the bringers of the frenzy, and the substances we bring generate physical and mental breakdown. Searching for a response to this ‘unthinkable catastrophe’, in which I too participate, Japaljarri had mused if there might be held somewhere a mental map.
(a story) which could help him to hold in mind an explanation for the pattern of madness he was witnessing as he and his family came under the spell of alcoholic intoxication. A spell of derangement lucidly portrayed in Euripides' Bacchic invasion of the city of Thebes. The offering of the Sugarman/Dionysos myth-thought/dream-thought composition is best understood if one considers it as a handy image, reached for in a psychoanalytic encounter at a particularly tense moment. Perhaps when the diagnostic statement has just emerged or the desire for cure has been admitted and the patient, experiencing the full impact of a realisation, gropes around for some image or word to hold the mind in its stable for a while.

The Sugarman work, understood in this way, is not offered as an interpretive framework on alcoholism nor even a curative formula but it is one necessary link in a sequential dialogue about intoxication and madness. The goal of this dialogue is to loosen the collective mind from the stranglehold of a venomous paralysing existential condition. The reader may appreciate being reminded of two incantations from Strehlow's Songs of Central Australia, introduced earlier: First the ancient Anglo Saxon verse and then Arrernte/Warlpiri.

A snake came crawling, it bit a man
Then Woden took nine glory-twigs.
smote the serpent so it flew into nine parts.

Wana kankurhuma hyama
karkurhuma-karkurhuma
karkurhuma- karkurhuma.

May the serpent turn back
and its coils be utterly broken!
may they be utterly broken!

May the snake be broken
and split into many pieces!

Dionysos' story may not hold the full map, nor the adequately healing breast. Furthermore the 'catastrophe' may be too advanced. The snake may have crawled all the way to the throat of the bitten nation. But when Crow steps onto the ceremony ground, displaying the beginning of whiteman's madness as the swallowing of children and 'Captain Cook' puts on the mask of Dionysos, promising joy but dealing in mayhem and when poor Pentheus paints up his face to quell the manic entourage and ends up dead himself, perhaps then, those who sit to watch will find some of the images they need with which to think. Theatrical images can become 'objects' with which to think. Bits and pieces of sense with which to compose the mind and thence compose a healing action. That, at least, is something.
CHAPTER 9

PROCESSION OF EVENTS

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF THE SUGARMAN PROJECT

WITH REFLECTIVE COMMENTARIES

The process by which we arrived at the performances of the Sugarman is, in itself, a major project in community mobilisation. Although tempted to devote space to a thorough documentation of the collaborative process, a condensed version will suffice.

For convenience, the development of the project is organised into phases over seven years, from 1990 to 1997. The phases, to some extent are arranged in terms of a linear time frame but some elements of the project are simultaneous.

DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES OF THE SUGARMAN PROJECT SUMMARISED

1. 1990-1991

Stimulation of the concept of an alcohol story as potential link to Tjukurrpa.

Evolution of a methodology of approach.

Workshop explorations on mythology, identifying the Dionysos myth as useful.

Preliminary investigations into psychological structure of the myth.

Confirmation of direction through consultation process.

2. 1991-1992

Visits to Central Australia.

Introduction to Aboriginal cultural process and dynamics of alcohol and petrol sniffing.

3. 1991-1992

Experiments in poetic language and decoding the myth into visual imagery.

Composing the graphic ‘storyboard’ first as a large ground design then the 10 metres, coloured ink on paper, Intjartnama Scroll.


Relocation from Sydney to Alice Springs, Northern Territory July 1992.

Experience in intercultural substance abuse work as a Community Psychologist with Territory Health Services.

Extensive bush work.

Association with the Intjartnama Aboriginal Rehabilitation Outstation. Writing the book Story About Intjartnama (1993) and working with volatile substance abuse project, Petrol Link Up. (1994-95)
5. 1993-1996

Development of the draft Sugarman Script. Part 1. The Creation Story Stories 1,2,3,4,7.


Radio interview Ramona Koval. ABC. Beginning of serious plans to effect a production.

CSR; Research trip in Greece/ Turkey. September-October 1995, which produced the draft text for part 2. Travelling Sugarman. Stories 5,6,8,9.

Continued consultation with Barry and Elva Cook on development of format for production.

Grant applications.

6. 1996. May-August

CSR resignation from Territory Health.

Preparation for the first demonstration performance in bush location at Intjarmama Outstation, under direction of Christopher Brocklebank. Formation of Sugarman Ensemble.


Beginning filming for documentary with David Roberts, Antipodes Productions. Guerrilla Doco funded by Australian Film Corporation.

7. 1996. August 23


(see review in Alice News. 18-9-1996)

8. 1996-1997

Rest, evaluation and consolidation. Follow up workshops Sept-Dec 1996.

CSR. Psychological work continues with Intjarmama Rehabilitation projects. further considerations of use of story in counselling work and plans for future performances in bush communities.


Research trip to India, (December 1996) exploring the relationship of Shiva/Dionysos/Soma and the Indian traditions; as part of the Travels section.

Script refinement.

Presentation of project concept (May 1997) by CSR in San Francisco at seminar on indigenous culture, shamanism and intercultural therapeutic practices; then in Santa Fe. Sponsored by C G Jung Institute of San Francisco and the Van Waveran Foundation. New York.
9. 1997 June-September

Reconstitution of the Sugarman Ensemble including new and skillful performers from interstate. Preparation, development of Phase 2 of the project, 'Travelling Sugarman', a combined exhibition of art works, seminars and performance at the Araluen Gallery/Theatre Complex, Alice Springs. (August 23 to September 14); see review Alice News.

Performance covers the five last stories, Recapitulation of the Creation Stories then 'The Travels of Dionysos and Ariadne'. The recovery scene from 'Semele in the Underworld' and the 'Council of the Gods'. Including special performance event at Intjartnama Young People's Bush Camp in lieu of 'Grog Running Stories' which was cancelled due to NT elections.


Event funded by NT Office of the Arts with contribution from the C.G. Jung Institute of San Francisco and 'in kind' help from Intjartnama Aboriginal Corporation.


Reflections, composition of interpretive document (thesis) timed to keep pace with evolution of the project and due process within intercultural context and requirements of project maturation.

Completion of performance cycle (September 1997) as end point for purposes of thesis documentation.

Development continues.

(Hopeful) Funding submissions:-

- for translation of text into Western Arrernte and Luritja.

- for development of Video and CD Rom for educational purposes.

- for touring performance in local communities in association with proposed community events in Western Desert area linked to Intjartnama's Remote Area substance abuse prevention programme which begins April 1998.

Extract from Sugarman text (Road Stories) shortlisted for the Newcastle Poetry Prize and published in Anthology.

Invitation to CSR present in depth workshops in San Francisco for CG Jung Institute, Public Programmes, on development and application of Sugarman for substance abuse work.

Video Documentary in final edit stage. (expected April 1998)

Thesis completed March 1998
DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES OF THE SUGARMAN PROJECT

DETAILED

1. 1990-1992 Evolution of methodology of approach

Workshopping and collecting the fragments of the Dionysos story.

The roots of the methodology can be found in the theoretical works of D.W. Winnicott, in particular in *Playing and Reality*. (Winnicott 1971) Chapter 4. ‘Playing - Creative Activity and the Search for the Self’.

There are two elements of Winnicott’s work to acknowledge. One pertains to the theme of creative research. Especially the enhancement of creativity within the ‘interactive space’ of collaborative action research.

The other has to do with the practice of ‘negative capability’ (a concept introduced to me by Martha Harris and Donald Meltzer at the Tavistock in the early 70’s, based on a notion of the poet, Keats.)

‘Negative capability’ refers to the capacity to sustain ‘not knowing’ - to be able to dwell in the ‘negative’ spaces of experience without rushing for ‘positive’ outcome. This is about surviving depression and being able to sustain oneself in the midst of perceived chaos.

Winnicott takes this up exquisitely (in Chapt. 4) by describing his experience during a long two hour session with a patient who was (unconsciously) attempting to convey to him what it actually felt like to experience ‘formlessness’- what it felt like to exist in a ‘neutral zone’- to be alive in the unintegrated state of the personality- to be communicating hopelessness and to be nothing but ‘nonsense’.

Winnicott makes the point, as it emerges through his commentary on the session, that it was imperative, for the sake of the patient’s authentic experience of ‘formlessness’ and making ‘no sense’, that he, the analyst, refrain from trying to make sense of her state. He describes the effort to restrain himself from making preemptive positive or helpful interpretations. Above all, Winnicott advocates the necessity to cultivate the capacity to rest, to be and do nothing, as a prerequisite for the emergence of something authentically creative in the patient and in the analytic relationship.

Having the skill of ‘negative capability’ implies having the capacity for suffering reality in the presence of chaos converting to creativity.

Winnicott’s attitude underlies my own approach to recovering the Dionysian experiential state for use. The Dionysian experiential state is not necessarily positive and helpful, it is closer to the unintegrated and chaotic. It is a contradiction in terms to expect to produce positive outcomes from the Dionysian state. Every time some well meaning person asks if the ‘Sugarman works’ and if the ‘Aborigines are stopping drinking’.

I nearly throw up at the naivete of such an attitude.

A quotation from Winnicott may help clarify my meaning;
He is talking about achieving the -

"testing state out of which a creative reaching out can take place".

He notes that psychological work that attempts to (prematurely) reveal for the patient -

"a coherent theme is already affected by anxiety...

the (wish for) cohesion of ideas is a defence organisation..."

He continues:

"Perhaps it is to be accepted that there are patients who at times need the therapist to note the nonsense that belongs to the mental state of the individual at rest without the need even for the patient to communicate this nonsense, that is to say, without the need for the patient to organise nonsense. Organised nonsense is already a defense, just as organised chaos is a denial of chaos.

The therapist who cannot take this communication becomes engaged in a futile attempt to find some organisation in nonsense, as a result of which the patient leaves the nonsense area because of hopelessness about communicating nonsense.

An opportunity for rest has been missed because of the therapist's need to find sense where nonsense is. The patient has been unable to rest... (ie find themselves)...because of a failure of the environmental provision, which undid the trust.

The therapist has, without knowing it, abandoned the professional role, and has done so by bending over backwards to be a clever analyst and to see order in chaos." (Winnicott 1971 p.65)

How does this possibly abstruse and typically Winnicottian proposition apply to the Dionysos research methodology and work within the Aboriginal domain?

I have already suggested that I did not arrive at that particular myth by a process of rational literature search to compile a version based on a synthesis of the texts. I have also said that Dionysos 'presented himself, and arranged everything'; This, of course, is nonsense. However, because Dionysos can be considered as embodying chaos and 'non sense', then it is a contradiction to attempt a method of working with Dionysian realities which attempts to find or force organisation on nonsense. Pentheus tried it and ended up in pieces.

The method of working with Dionysos has to be consistent with the nature of Dionysos. It certainly could not be organised according to Apollonian principles of order or rationality either in process, in presentation or expected outcome. This is why I settled on a music theatre piece, which might resonate with European mystery/ceremonies and Centralian ways. As the outcome, perhaps an emotionally charged illumination might satisfy. Performance workshops seemed appropriate as the means to uncover the psychological authenticity of the story, to recover the bones of the myth and to formulate the mode of presentation.
The most useful source material was principally:

Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*,

*The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*.

*The Dictionary of Classical Mythology* by Edward Tripp.

Diana Wolkstein's works, *Inanna* and *The First Love Stories* (See bibliography) and various classic Greek dramas and fragments from ancient sources available in translation from Ovid, Euripides, Aristophanes, The Homeric Hymns, Apollodorus, Nonnos etc., as detailed in the bibliography, along with interpretive works from a range of scholars and commentators particularly Danielou, Eliade, Kerenyi, Otto. (all of whom are cited in the bibliography)

The synthesising of this readily available, but perplexing, dissociated literary material came from the intense, concentrated psychological performance experiments undertaken through 1990-1992 by a group of approximately fifty friends and colleagues who participated in three weekend camps in three different sites, Kiabra, Jervis Bay and the mountains behind Berry, NSW. These workshops were backed up by a regular series of meetings over the three years in three mythology study groups in Sydney, Wollongong and Canberra under the aegis of the Australian New Zealand Society Of Jungian Analysts professional development programme, facilitated in all cases by myself, with skillful assistance from colleagues who include Dennis Miller, Glenda Cloughley, Randal Allan, Susan Maher and many others too numerous to mention here.

I developed a method of working these myths which relies upon the approach indicated by Winnicott's example - self discovery and self arrival at the archetypal experience by a method of sustained concentration on the facts of the story, reliance on the trajectory of the story line and reliance on the ability of the participants to intuitively perceive and reveal usable truths encoded in the myth. By honest exploitation of personal experience and knowledge, by sustenance of phases of 'nonsense', and by the art of 'negative capability', a group seems to evolve into a collective incarnation of the myth under consideration. That method was used in the rehearsal workshops in Alice Springs.

The performance development style, relying upon an evolving poetic text and improvisation, responsive to the character of the local population and landform, owes something to the working process developed by Peter Brook, which I have witnessed and is described, for example, in: *The Conference of the Birds - The Story of Peter Brook in Africa* by John Heilpern (1977) and by A. C. H. Smith on the work in Iran with Ted Hughes and Brook and company - *Orphast at Persepolis*.(1972)

2. 1990-1992 'Field trips' in Central Australia. Introduction and Induction into a sense of *Tjukurrpa*.

During this period, I began to sense how *Tjukurrpa* stories are constructed and see how the structure of the Greek myths and *Tjukurrpa* might be related. This included becoming familiar with modes of storytelling and how *Tjukurrpa* is presented graphically, in dance, song and body painting as *inna* (in Pitjatjanjarra) or
*Pulupa* (in Warlpiri). This period represents essential experiential groundwork with Andrew Spencer Japaljarri and family, with some incursions into Pitjatjanjarra country.

The following description of *Inma* by Ann Marshall (with Gordon Beattie, in *Nepean Proceedings* 1987) then theatre studies teachers at Nepean College, is based on their experiences with the student theatre exchange project in Mimili, Pitjatjanjarra Lands during 1986/8.

The succinct summary of the function of *Inma* gives a helpful indication of the nature and uses of local ceremonial performance and its relationship to *Tjukurrpa* events. This will lead us back to methodology and Winnicott with thoughts about the location of cultural experience, the capacity for play and why words want to become pictures and why pictures dance. What is *Inma*?

"An *Inma* is a song cycle which has several functions:

1. A religious, ritual function.

   It is a specific ritual connected to the dreamtime ancestors, totemic figures and the land and is the means by which these figures retain a living presence in Aboriginal life. It is also the means by which access to these beings is passed on to the younger generations.

2. An historical function.

   Aboriginal history, detailed in the *Inma*, is interlinked with religious beliefs. It is all one lore. The past, present, future and infinite are all intertwined, so that singing about episodes in the dreamtime (*Tjukurrpa*) does not imply that everything is set in the past. It is all happening now, too. There is a different sense of time. The historical perspective is not based on (a) concept of linear sequence.

3. A topographical function.

   The *Inma* details dreaming pathways and sacred sites. Each verse has a specific setting in the landscape, (at) places where events occurred and are still occurring.

4. A sociological function.

   The *Inma* is a record of the relationships of the people— their totemic, tribal and family relationships, and the rules that govern this complex system. Without the oral records, the origins and relevance of these rules would be lost and the structure of the society undermined.

5. An expressive function.

   The *Inma* is at once all the above and at the same time an all-encompassing expressive arts medium in which the aesthetics of music, poetry, dance, costume, makeup, staging and performance are housed.

   The auditory vehicle is the sung words, rhythmic accompaniment and the melody. The visual manifestation takes place in all the theatrical elements of costume, body paint and staging, and the imaginative extension occurs within the performers themselves when they enter and perform the *Inma* in the many different roles/characters.

This last, and most important, the imaginative realm of belief in and identification with the role, is enriched at many stages through the various rites of passage which add layers of meaning depending on:

a. your age

b. your level of initiation
c. whether you are male or female (different interpretations for individual verses)

d. your family relationships

e. your totemic connections

f. whether you are an 'owner' or 'inheritor' of the Inma

g. whether you are a skilled performer, dancer, musician

h. your readiness to learn deeper meanings (the getting of wisdom)

i. and in these days, a belief in traditional ways to begin with

The Inma exists in its own right. You are not singing the Inma, it is singing you.”

Marshall (ibid 1987 p505)


It rapidly became clear to me that the “location of cultural experience”, which Winnicott (1971) describes in his thoughts on playing and reality, as evolving from the ‘area of play between’ child and parent etc., could be found within the Aboriginal world in another very specific area of creative play between adults. The location of Aboriginal cultural experience was to be found in the overlap of the relationships that revolved around making, remembering and using Inma or ceremony.

The description of Inma offered by Ann Marshall and her colleagues reflected my understanding at the time and confirmed that if Dionysos wished to become located in Aboriginal cultural experience and even eventually transformed into Inma then the Dionysos story had to be told so that it worked in each of the five functions expected of Inma - the ritual, the historical, the topographical, the sociological and the imaginative/expressive. Dionysos had to find his way into an “all encompassing expressive arts medium” as Marshall and Beattie suggest (ibid). There was no good simply handing over to Japaljarri a book: and saying, for instance:

“Here you are Japaljarri, here is a copy of Robert Graves.... Everything you need is in him, just turn to page 29 and start with the Pelasian creation story. Dionysos’ bit is on page 103, after that, talk to the Pastor about Jesus and wine and what they say about drinking in the Old Testament, ask him how they started the passover supper and the communion ...” That would have been easy but to what avail? (In fact I did give him a copy of Graves, he asked for something to read, I saw it disappear under a pile of blankets and petrol cans in the back of the truck, on the way to Kiwikurra. It never appeared again.)

The period 1991-1992 saw the attempt to distil the complex sequences of the Greek Creation myths into graphic pictures as a story board. I considered this to be the foundation move that would allow the story to be played with, improvised upon in conversation and absorbed into an Aboriginal mind frame through the medium of the graphic iconography that was recognisably close to Central Australian iconography.
There were three reasons for this translation of a Greek epic into Warlpiri iconography.

- As an aid to communication.

- As a discipline for myself to ensure that I knew the story so well that it could be condensed into a visual code.

- As a preliminary step in finding the language for Sugarman, not only the visual language but also the oral/poetic language which would have to emerge in company with the dance and music.

The Intjartnama Scroll, a 10 metre collaborative effort, made at the outstation in June 1991, is probably the most expressive translation effort, but there were many other attempts as sketch books and photographs will reveal.

Working with drawings can also be seen as a form of play, in Winnicott's sense. Play in the potential space between two cultures. One could also put a research methodology twist on Winnicott's famous statement about interactive therapeutic endeavours: (1971 p63)

"Psychotherapy is done in the overlap of two play areas, that of the patient and that of the therapist. If the therapist cannot play then he is not suitable to the work."

The twist would be; collaborative research is done in the overlap of two play areas, that of the researcher and that of the collaborators...If the researcher cannot play then he/she is not suitable for the work.

The drawings served as a basis for storytelling, sometimes casual and intimate and then later more ceremonial and spectacular, approaching the "all encompassing expressive arts medium" (Marshall and Beattie ibid) which is Inma.

The intention was not to imitate Inma but to be able to accompany it, to be able to engage in exchange on the same ground. This meant that the shape of Dionysos story had to be recognisable by those Aboriginal people, who were interested, as somehow belonging in the same category of reality as Inma.

I recall going through the long scroll, bit by bit with Marlene and Andrew in the yard of their house in Hidden Valley camp in Alice, June 1991, after finishing the painting at Intjartnama Outstation.

At the end of the session Andrew said;

"Uwu. That's a really one.

That's like the son of god. That is a number one story."

This approval did not mean the job was finished but only that it was going in a direction that made sense.

Up until July 1992 I had been living in Sydney and making occasional trips to Alice Springs. In July, I accepted a position in Alice Springs as a psychologist with the NT government's local drug and alcohol agency. From the point of view of the needs of the project it was essential that my experience of substance abuse be extended and that I become located in Aboriginal culture. Four years working within the Territory Health Service has been very instructive. The sum total of the accumulating association with friends, working partners and family encountered in all these projects has provided the experiential base to Sugarman and helped form theoretical positions developed in this thesis. In particular the concentration upon the issue of 'story' as part of the therapeutic repertoire. The focus on 'story' and narrative, rather than on, say, treatment methods or indigenous ngankari practices as counselling technique, has come about because of the perceived absence of any conceptual base which can empower an alcohol treatment process for a people whose existential base is the 'country'. Stories seem to be the way to get at concepts and story telling seems to provide the spinal column for serious discussions. The story, i.e. the conceptual base for a 'model of treatment', has to come first.

Using stories as part of a therapeutic repertoire also means that difficult issues can be wrapped and unwrapped as the story unfolds. Issues such as physical and sexual abuse, child neglect, blame, grief over death, responsibility for personal tragedy are all personal and communal matters. It is sometimes almost impossible to approach these matters in any public forum, in bush communities, without considerable care and attention to the milieu, cultural protocol, and follow-up.

Establishing 'cause of death', and in particular, establishing responsibility for an alcohol related death is one situation of difficulty encountered by many 'professional' workers. Working around the matter, obliquely, without direct questions, is often the preferred approach. It also leaves room for contradictory explanations to exist simultaneously.

One might ask, for instance, "what is the story about you know...what happened when that man...poor thing... Kumanjai ... passed away? I heard that old Jungarai say that it was because he was drunk, but I don't know..."

"Oh no...", might come the whispered reply, "...someone sung that car... you know it was because of what happened to his wife a long time ago."  

One might discover, thereby, not only a particular version of the incident but also a local conceptual base for explaining and understanding the causes of death generally.

Two explanations for a given death may remain intertwined with the contradictions left unexplained.

One account will (possibly) acknowledge the so called natural or medically defined causes, a heart attack, a vehicle rollover, kidney failure, a murder. Another might attribute the death to 'someone else', perhaps
neglect by someone who should have been responsible for them, or to ‘pay back’ or sorcery. Both explanations might be right, according to two different orders of reality.

The case of a young petrol sniffing man’s death in Chapter 13 gives an example of the fluid attribution of responsibility that can arise from an apparently straightforward event.

I realise this statement is oversimplified but I would argue that the single conceptual problem which underpins the failure of treatment services in the Central Australian region can be traced to the complexities of attribution of cause of death and attribution of responsibility for one’s own actions, whether drunk or not.

An investigation of how therapeutic procedures handle causality and responsibility is an essential part of the development of a satisfactory bi-cultural treatment process. Studying how rumours and stories work and how stories can be used to hold in place contradictions and grievous events became part of the research task.

Stories converted into performed imagery can probably allow to exist simultaneously, magical thinking, naïve awareness and non-defensive insight; and then the procedure of attaining a critical consciousness about a given incident or sequence of cause and effect can begin.

In the Sugarman script, in the Grog Running Stories (Story 4) in Sugarman Returns (Story 7) and Sugarman’s journey to the location of death (Story 8) I have attempted to lay a foundation for such explorations by recounting the series of deaths associated with Dionysos’ arrival and presence in different communities and creating opportunities for discussion of who is to blame, who is responsible for this or that.


During this period the main body of the script was developed. Various attempts, struggling with finding a form that would convert the fragments of original text into a living form. The relevant sources include, especially, the dramas of Euripides, Aeschylus, Aristophanes (The Frogs), Sophocles (Oedipus Rex), Ovid (Metamorphosis) Apuleius (The Golden Ass), Homer and the Aenid. (see bibliography). These are all wonderfully constructed and rich in history, comedy, tragedy and spectacle but the form does not directly translate into story-telling modes familiar to traditional Inma / Pulaapu structure or fit within the understated, laconic humour style of the Centralian vernacular.

It is worth noting that the Yuendumu Baptist Christian families have created a Christian Pulaapu which ceremonially dances the story of Christ and his crucifixion. Old Tjampijimpa Ross, probably the oldest living Warlpiri elder (as of 1.11.97) usually dances the part of Jesus, carrying the cross.

The poetic form at which I arrived, came inspirationally, as these things often do, in the middle of the night, as though it were being dictated. I wrote, almost at one continuous sitting, the version of Euripides’ Bacchae. Of course this was after the homework of analysing the structure of The Bacchae and distilling the essential events that might make sense in this part of the country. After the Sugarman Bacchae (Sugarman Returns) the rest of first four stories 'arrived' and the outline of the other five. The preliminary homework included
the hundreds of hours becoming imbued with the patterns of the language, the humour, the turns of phrase, listening to Aboriginal people ‘talking story’ as Marlene Ross calls it.

Five influential poetic works must also be acknowledged.

Ted Hughes' Crow

Strehlow's Songs of Central Australia

Dixon and Duwell’s edited work The Honey Ant Men's Love Song

Barry Hill’s Ghosting William Buckley

Diane Wolkstein’s Innana

The first serious trial reading of the full, up to then, draft script, occurred in Alice Springs (late 1994), in the company of Barry Hill, Diane Wolkstein and Peter Lorz. I could not have wished for a better combination of poetic consultants, except perhaps with the addition of Hughes.

Their encouragement and critique gave me the confidence to continue to develop the style. Short, image packed scenes in simple vernacular, based upon the repetitive action descriptions which accompany dance sequences. The whole built around a kind of spiral pattern where one story lifts into the next cycle or can act on its own or be returned back to its predecessors as a kind of internally linked, cross reference system. Linear time structure is available but not necessary and any one section can be enhanced to stand on its own or dropped, condensed or folded back into another story. Words and descriptive passages can be omitted once the image action sequence is enacted or new words can be improvised in the act of witnessing the actions allowing improvisations by the performers.

When we came to the Injintamana performance this pattern worked beautifully. When we had to condense, adapt and retell bits for the Arraluen performance of the lengthy Travell stories, we found that the structure still worked.

It is my understanding that this is exactly how it works, where fragments of a 1000km long Tjukurrpa story can be told out of linear sequence, satisfactorily, because everyone knows the whole story and so fits the bit into the context. A bit can be told at one geographical site of the Tjukurrpa and another at another site, even if the two sites are not directly linked in the geographical or poetic linear time sequence. The Tjukurrpa gestalt allows the participants to know what bit fits with what and how one part links to and reflects the whole story. A commentary on the structure and the details of Innua requires fuller elucidation but is not possible within this thesis.  

1. The Ngintaka, now available on a CD, recorded, 1994, at Angatja, Pitjatjanjara Lands, South Australia, through Desert Tracks, gives an accessible and perfect example of the poetic structure and musical mode of Innua.
The first Sugarman trial performance of extracts that would appeal to children, the Start Up Ceremony, The Birth and Rip Up of Sugarbaby by the Crows, occurred at Hermannsburg School as a school Christmas play in December 1994. The simple participative action sequences worked and the simple narrative delivery of call and response set the patterns for further development.

I gave several public recitations, gauging the reactions of a different kind of audience. Publication followed in *Temenos Journal*; of *'The Bacchae'* and then *'The Creation Story'* featuring illustrations by Louis Pratt.

An encouraging event was the ABC radio interview with Ramona Koval for *Books and Writing* 'Writing from the Centre' 1995. The programme included fascinating interviews with translators of the Bible into Arandic languages, describing some of the questions, I too, had encountered in cross cultural concept translation. The Christian translators described the problems in dealing with the different cultural, linguistic image bases of Judeo Christian- English- Greek- German linguistic and metaphor image structures and how these translate within the mind frame of the Australian, arid land, geographical; human relationship systems and the mythological characterisation patterns of the Centre’s indigenous inhabitants.

For instance, consider, key Biblical metaphors of a divine father in heaven with the sky as the location where ‘good’ souls go or underground (hell) as the location of evil or the realm of ‘the devil’. Locations of sacred activity up or down are to some extent derived from vertical, dualistic constructs, using geographical locationing in quite a different modality to most Aboriginal sense of place, which tends to be horizontal/ travelling over or through land, and upon which orientation most *Tjukurpa* metaphor is founded.

The Aboriginal understanding of the spaces of the body, location of the spirit and the use of body space and body parts as spiritual metaphor may be unique to itself and different to the European. Obviously, there are complex packages of cultural and historical assumptions built into our heritage of spiritual metaphor. And whereas the passage of ‘translation’ between traditional Aboriginal and Eurocentric mind frames and their respective image banks would make a fascinating project in itself, the poetic task required that I be as alert as possible to the limits of the Mediterranean metaphor pool, in translating Dionysos’ activities into a central desert context. There is not much, for example about ships and dolphins. The vine, viticulture imagery is downplayed, the vegetation god business is reinterpreted mostly into bush food gathering activity, the hunting imagery is enhanced, the weather features but not the European seasonal cycles and I must confess that the detail of the brewing and fermentation alchemy is not, as yet, developed adequately.

2. *Temenos* Issues 1 and 3
A reading of the Sugarman script will show that much of the imagery/metaphor is based on metaphor derived from characteristically recognisable Aboriginal activity such as:

1. travelling
2. sitting down
3. going hunting or gathering
4. doing things with things collected
5. the use of simple containers
6. watching
7. attention to geographical directions
8. eating, swallowing, regurgitation
9. taking apart bodies (based on hunting activity)
10. the activity or passage of birds and animals
11. observations of the activity of wind, rain, sun
12. the movements of spirit beings through country
13. the movement of vehicles
14. family and kin relationships
15. dreams

There are almost no agricultural metaphors, hardly any reliance on architectural and military metaphors, although there are plenty of fights, and nothing much of post modern industrial, internationalist celluloid or Eurocentric gender politics, for instance. There is nothing particularly abstract, philosophical, moralistic or spiritualised except for the quotes from Euripides.

This pattern shifts in the second part, particularly the Travels Dionysos and Ariadne sequences. Here, the metaphor patterns and the conceptual imagery becomes more complex because of the countries travelled and the references to foundation sites of Western Asian civilisation from Greece via Turkey through Egypt, Persia, India etc. The travel stories shift Sugarman into another gear and are consciously less deferential to the Centralian Aboriginal landscape, at least as the script stands at the moment. When and if we come to perform the Travels of Dionysos/Sugarman and Ariadne on actual Aboriginal country, as distinct from a gallery in town, then I expect the script will be specifically modified to suit the new location. Mindfulness of the location and the overlap of the European myth and the Aboriginal country will produce another challenge in intercultural play and communication.

The ABC interviews with the Arandic Biblical translators emphasised the care which has to be exercised in the choice of words and poetic structure, in image clusters and metaphor matrices which might work cross culturally to convey the essential elements of the Christian myth to the Arrernte congregations. The same considerations are needed for communicating and transforming any core European concept, metaphor, cultural image or mythologem, from one mental country to another, including of course, the myths of drinking.
In the interview with Koval, she asked what my 'dream' for the future of the project might be. I said, rather hopefully, that I would like to see a full performance of the script but I couldn't foresee how. Christopher Brokebank, a neighbour and local theatre producer had coincidentally sat in on the interview, which took place in my backyard. He began to speak to Ramona on the theatrical possibilities of the concept and by the end had offered to help realise that dream. He set in train a submission to the Australia Council, which eventually provided the core funding for the August 1996 events.

During mid 1995 the writing lay fallow. The second half, including the Travels and Mysteries, had not been written, although I had mapped out the bones, I couldn't feel the form and no 'dictations' emerged from unconscious processing. That situation changed with the trip to Greece and Turkey during September/October 1995. Jude Prichard and I travelled from Athens to Ios, Naxos, Ikaria, via Samos to the coast of Turkey, landing near Efes, thence along the south coast, up to Konya, Cappadocia and back to Istanbul.

Suddenly, and not surprisingly, since I was now on Dionysos' home country, the texts began to flow and the local landscape and conversation and present historical/mythological traditions began to weave itself like carpet.

On the return, in November 1995 Barry Cook and I went to Canberra for a workshop on the Travels at Mirramu on Lake George, co facilitated by Diane Wolkstein, who came from New York. I recited for the first time the draft, complete version of the Travels, concentrating on the metaphor of the travels as gathering parts of the dismembered Dionysos; collecting his spirit by visiting countries associated with his extended ancestral family, each a custodian of a particular story or location of a fragment of spiritual, psychological or cultural history. Each archetypal divine figure or couple having custodianship of a particular healing secret: from Cybele, via Isis and Osiris to Shiva. The workshop participants included many of those who had contributed to the formulation of the project through the earlier Canberra workshop. We needed this opportunity to consolidate the meaning and structure of the travels with a group of people sophisticatedly informed in the traditions of mythology and history upon which the travels are founded. I remain eternally grateful to the subtle contribution of each and every one of these people.

The Travels are something of a Romance, poetically more complex and rich than the first four stories. The structure here, as I mentioned above, is not particularly deferential to Aboriginal landscape or poetics and the image language is more polymorphous. It wasn't a particularly conscious choice, it just happened, no doubt under the influence of the intoxicating Mediterranean ambience, but then again Sugarman is intended as an intercultural mix. It is intended for anyone engaged with the themes and problems of intoxication and therapeutic process, regardless of racial or cultural origins. A further project development might include the stripping of the travels back to the bones and a translation into a Centralian language, at which point the visiting of countries and visiting family for healing stories will undergo a more minimalistic and maybe animistic, Australian transformation.
The influences on the second part, mainly The Travels and the Mysteries, are primarily from the metaphorical journey tales of the Sufi poets and story tellers, some ancient and some living, particularly Attar’s allegory *The Conference of the Birds*. (1984), Francis Brabazon’s neo-Dantean spiritual journey epic, *Stay With God* (1969), and then personally through Eruch Jesswaalla, Bhanu Kalchuri, Mani Shriar Irani and family in the old garage meeting hall at Meherazad, India, teachers well versed in pragmatic updating of Sufi hermeneutics.

In the background are the intricate tales of the Mahabharata and the Hindu traditions. Readers familiar with those traditions will detect understated cross references and allusions to the weave of Middle Eastern and West Asian spiritual heritage, which Dionysos, in his cultural traverse, intersects.

6. **1996 May - August. Preparing the Intjartnama Performance.**

Serious preparation for performance began in late May 1996 with confirmation of the Australia Council grant for 26,000 dollars. Brocklebank’s courageous willingness to take on the direction of the community theatre project and the unambiguous backing of Elva and Barry Cook.

The first workshop took place as a weekend camp in May at Intjartnama Outstation. This has been videoed and compiled into an edited version by David Roberts.

On May 10, I had resigned from my position as psychologist with the Territory Health Service, partly as a result of the total disaffection with the way the temporarily appointed manager of my employing alcohol and drugs agency had been peremptorily implementing the unsubstantiated recommendations of an internal departmental review - particularly as far as it pertained to the Aboriginal and remote area projects for which I had been responsible or engaged in supporting. The departmental seniors had also failed to adequately and humanely support me or untangle two (again unsubstantiated) allegations about my supposed misappropriation of Aboriginal secrets and Aboriginal consciousness. It was also becoming increasingly clear that I could not devote myself to the demands of the Sugarman Project while remaining in the employ of the department. The resignation was a traumatic but calculated risk. At the time of resignation we had no indication if the grant submission would be successful.

In June, I flew to Townsville, Queensland, for consultation with theatre director Jean Pierre Voos, formerly of the innovative European based theatre research company Kiss and now director of Tropic Lane Theatre in Townsville. I had been associated with him in London in 1967-9, when I had been involved in some interesting theatrical activities. Jean Pierre’s evaluation and confirmation of the direction we were taking was essential. Jean Pierre came to Alice for the performance and his presence and review comments were especially encouraging to the ensemble’s efforts.

During June and July, the crew gathered, the work took fire. David Roberts began filming for the documentry, financed by an Australian Film Corporation, ‘Guerilla Doco’ grant given for documentaries on innovative projects with unpredictable but possibly significant cultural outcomes.
The three film crew members became intimately and, fortunately for us, involved in the construction of the performance. The production process, in itself, deserves fuller detailing than is possible here, but the video documentary and the unedited footage give some indication of that process.


Several of the participants or witnesses of the performance agreed to write their accounts. This is in addition to the review in the Alice News by Kieran Finnane and the Real Time review.

The accounts include David Robert’s interviews with Andrew Spencer Japaljarri, Jean Pierre Voos, Brendan Kellaher (Aboriginal Substance Abuse Officer Coordinator with NSW Correctional Services, who also took a role) Bob Randall, from the Institute for Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs, Barry and Elva Cook and other members of the cast.

Jane Barton, Michael Rohan, Gabrielle Star, Karen Hethey, Jenny Knott, have offered personal, written accounts. Extracts from Karen’s is reproduced as a representative description of the process and impact. Bobby Randall’s interview in the Introduction; Country Voices and Reviews Chapter 13, gives another perspective. Some of Jane Barton’s material is included in the Finnane review. (see Chapter 13 and 14)


In September, while Barry was in Alice Springs Hospital, recovering from yet another heart attack and the depleting effects of a progressive arthritis, Elva painted two exquisite canvasses, representing in dot style the performance ground set-up and the scene of Semele Burning. These can be conveniently reproduced here. The reader may be interested to compare the structure of the Parma painting by Andrew (based on his mother Nangala’s instruction), with the structure of the painting of the Sugarman performance by Elva, also of the Nangala skin subsection but on the Western Arrernte side. There is a definite similarity in formal organisation which I find coincidentally curious, since both are in a sense about Parma ceremony, the one clearly and originally Pintupi and the other by Elva, a bi-cultural synthesis.
The Performance Ground

The yellow background dots show the bush flowers which were out and carpeting the Intjartnama area during August.

The white and dark blue dotted patterns represent the stars which shone down on the night scene.

The plant tendrils emanating from the central circle represent the vines and the pole around which the maenads danced for the powerful Bacchae scene.

The human icons (horseshoe shapes) represent the two groups of performers, stylised as nine men and nine women, in formation on the dance ground with a group representing narrators and musicians to the sides.

The tracks of birds represent the crows and eagle woman and the coolamon, the baby Dionysos/Sugarman and his mother, Demeter/Seed woman.

His father, Zeus/Lightning is there.

This, in traditional style, is a representation of the main characters and elements of the ceremony of Sugarman.
The Fire Painting

This painting will be reproduced on the cover of the forthcoming Office Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service Report on the National Aboriginal Substance Abuse Strategy.

It depicts the Semele Fire scene, reinterpreted.

At the centre, in the circle is a dimly perceived body of the baby Sugarman in the womb of his mother, Semele, while she goes up in flames.

Beyond and surrounding it, are women, as in the performance, crying out to save the baby and lamenting the mother’s death.

Beyond them are groups representing the Night Patrols who work to rescue children and young people from the consequences of petrol sniffing, alcohol related violence and family breakdown.

At the four corners are groups of grandmothers and mothers sitting at small, controllable community fires.

Elva urges that the young people and young mothers return to their bush communities and leave the conflagrations of the city Alice Springs where they are consumed by alcohol and the agitating seductions of western culture. She urges them to return to small, human scale and containable camp fires and continue teaching the young the stories of traditional family and cultural sustaining ‘real’ values.

However, it is unlikely that her and her companions’ urgings will be heeded.

These two paintings, which Elva uses as teaching tools, illustrate the way in which the Sugarman story is being applied and adapted to reflect upon current circumstances.

This is a stunningly apt interpretation of the Semele story.
After the first demonstration performance we wondered how next to proceed, gradually collecting reactions and direction signals. Speaking with Andrew Spencer on the Roberts interviews he made two particularly pertinent points. One suggestion was that we shouldn’t force anything. Word of mouth messages passed through Aboriginal circles. White people liked to get everything organised but in the Aboriginal way, word would pass. People would remember things, maybe six months later someone would come back and say “You know that Sugarman Story, you should come and tell me about it.”

Recollecting the scene with the Lightning/Zeus, he made the second suggestion, indicating - We have stories like that too. The next time we should do it together, we will show ours, side by side, together, We will do it like a proper corroboree, Yappa way. Kaelia and Yappa together.

These two suggestions laid out the way I resolved to continue to proceed, when the timing appeared right, and patiently, if I am still alive. As an illustration of how this procedure happens the following coincidental event might amuse the reader.

As I was writing this chapter, (1.11.97) late on a Saturday night, Jilly Nakamara Spencer was visiting from Yuendumu, staying with us. That night she suggested definitively, “Jungarai, tomorrow you have to take your mothers to collect mulga seed.”

“Alright Nakamara” I muddled, trying to put the prospect out of my mind. “But I’m busy, we’ll have to go really early…”

In the morning things kind of muddled around and I was feeling tired (after a 2 am writing session) and generally put upon by having too many Warlpiri mothers (Nakamaras) present. Where are all your other sons? I was thinking.

Jilly said “We should go and collect the other Nakamaras”.

Since the Nakamaras are my ‘mothers’ according to kinship relationships I am fairly definitely obligated to drive them when they tactfully remind me that, “You are our sonny boy”.

So I go and collect Bertha and Ruby with Jilly and we drive the 40 or so km north to the mulga seed site. Alas the seeds have all fallen.

“The trees are dry,” say the women “There’s been too much wind.”

“What do you want to do?” I say, lamenting the wasted time.

“Take us back home, we are busy, we’ve got to do a painting.”

Driving back Bertha asks “What are you doing about Sugarman?”

“We finished the exhibition.”
"I know, but what next?"

"Nothing" I say "If I do anymore Nangula (my wife) will divorce me."

The mothers (mothers in law now) start laughing.

"Don't you worry Jungarri, we'll break her arms for her."

A bit later, coming past the Yuendumu Yanami road turnoff I mutter that we might do something out bush next.

They say "We'll talk up for you."

Then Bertha, who lives mostly in town, says "You should do it in town. Plenty of people are in town. They all come in to drink. You should show it in town. You should do it at Hidden Valley."

(this is one of the Warlpiri frequented town camps)

"That's a good idea Nakamara.. you mean up the back behind Dorothy's house?" (Where there is a good open space.)

"No, up the front, near the road where everyone can see it, whitefellers too."

"Liwa" say the other women, lapsing into a vigorous Warlpiri conversation. "We'll talk up for you."

"Thanks", I say "That's a really good idea", mentally preparing for the divorce. But there it is. No mulga seed, but the instructions for next year. We'll see.

1996 India, Shiva and Soma.

After the dust from the Intjarnama events had settled, by October 1996, I realised there was still work to do on the script in preparation for the Travels section performance, if the opportunity arose. We had done a test run workshop with the cast but had decided to leave that undertaking and concentrate, wisely, on limiting ourselves to the first part for the first bush demonstration performance, mindful of the complexity of the second section.

The Greek and Turkey travels gave the support for most of the Dionysos' journeys but I was still uncertain about the Shiva end and particularly where Dionysos and Shiva connected around the mysterious phenomenon referred to in the literature as 'Soma'.

Danielou's book, Gods of Love and Ectasy (1982) on the traditions of Shiva and Dionysos, was brought to my attention by Peter Holt, well known in the Centre for his work on and with Aboriginal communities, in Kintore and then the Tanami Network. Danielou suggests that Soma, as a sacred drink associated with Shiva, is a liquor resembling bhang, derived from the crushed leaves of hemp. (Danielou 1982 p 155 etc)
The Sanscrit texts (Hindu Myths. O' Flaherty 1975) and the texts of Ayurvedic medicine (Fawley 1989), refer to Soma significantly. Danielou makes myriad fascinating connections between Shiva and Dionysos. To some extent this is the esoteric side of the Dionysian mysteries and it may not be of immediate or pragmatic concern to Aboriginal substance abuse work, however it felt to be a significant and missing link in the cultural net.

In December 1996 I took advantage of an opportunity to return to India to check out the Shiva/Soma connections and, as it were, to complete a reenactment of Sugarman’s pilgrimage to the east.

There were some very interesting and unexpected results, including another ‘dictation’ of what may become the third part of the cycle which includes an anarchic and irreverent journey undertaken by Jesus after his crucifixion to Kashmir/India in the company of Crow and Dionysos. As well as further details of the mysteries of Sugarman and a rite of passage ceremony for young men that will probably only appeal to a select, eccentric few.

Something of the Soma connection is indicated in a separate (optional) chapter ‘Approaching Shiva’. For our immediate purposes the trip to India, and particularly to Meherabad, near Ahmednagar and then to Pune to meet Dr. Nanal, one of India’s leading Ayurvedic teachers, completed a research cycle and prepared me, psychologically, for the performance of The Travels, should it eventuate in 1997.

In May, 1997, at the invitation of the San Francisco Jung Institute I gave a seminar workshop in San Francisco on issues in intercultural shamanic practice, using the Dionysos/Sugarman project as experiential base. I was astounded at the positive impact which the project, the paintings and a recitation of extracts from the script had upon the audience, many of whom are distinguished practitioners in psychotherapy, anthropology and shamanic practice.


In June we had an invitation from the Curator of the Araluen Gallery in Alice Springs to consider submitting for an exhibition of the Sugarman paintings, photographs and performance objects. A three week gap in the programming arose, unexpectedly, for the main gallery. We filled it and fell somehow, into planning full scale gallery performances as well, without any confidence in being able to finance it. N.T. Office of the Arts generously agreed to a 9,400 dollar grant which came through just in time.

I had expected the next set of performances would be ‘out bush’, although Barry and Elva always wanted a show in town. But here we were, set up for full artistic event in Alice’s mainstream gallery/theatre complex.

We had already begun discussions with the administrators of Papunya about a series of events there, but Barry’s illness, funerals and an increase in petrol sniffing activity in Hermannsburg took their attention elsewhere and the discussions lapsed. In any case, the Araluen event seemed to take on a life of its own.
SUGARMAN PERFORMANCE

"A Multi-media musical storytelling"

THE TRAVELS OF DIONYSUS

THIS SATURDAY
6th September
ARALUEN GALLERY I
7.30 to 10pm

$5

Northern Territory Government
Arts and Cultural Affairs
We found that there were some 90 art pieces available for showing. The gallery was arranged as a quasi theatre space, with sculptural theatre objects, canvasses and installations, including a dismembered Holden car body, which served as Sugarman’s vehicle for the Travels and the entrance to death for the Semele recovery scene. The gallery was a rich, cave-like setting, with a somewhat anarchic ambience. It was also the setting for the workshops, seminars and children’s day performances. About 1,600 people passed through the gallery during the three week run.

Four separate performances were devised from the scripts of the second part, comprising the essence of the last five stories. One for each of the Saturday nights. Under the joint curatorial and theatre direction of myself, Christopher Brocklebank and Karen Hethey, Sugarman and his crew reassembled and with some notably talented and competent artists, performers and musicians. We, somehow, satisfactorily managed to present the substance of the entire cycle in public view. Presenting to a very mixed audience, a condensed multi media recapitulation of the Creation story, an elegant compressed version of Ariadne and Dionysos’ travels, poignantly coinciding with the night of the Princess of Wales’ funeral, an association which was not lost on the audience. The Grog Running Stories coincided with a rapidly called Northern Territory election so we moved the show out bush to Injarnama to the petrol sniffers’ camp and ended up with an improvised outdoor circus, fire twirling and a petrol sniffing ‘morality play’. The finale night was an evocative rendition of Dionysos’ descent to the Underworld to recover Semele, rounded off with a comic Playback theatre version of the Council of the Gods.

A brief, selected edited video of the exhibition, the programme, photographs and reviews is available

10. 1991-1997 Continuing

The Sugarman Project is obviously set to continue, especially if the Nakamaras have their way, but at this point, it would be circumspect to make an expedient ending for the purposes of the thesis narrative.

Selected photographs of the Sugarman Project follow:
Aspects of Domysos, portrayed by 4 different men in different scenes
for Mark Hunter, Martin Proctor, Malcolm Mitchell, Jonathon Sinatra
CHAPTER 10

THE SUGARMAN CYCLE STORY LINE

We can now set down the main details of the Dionysos/Sugarman story.

The complex and often bewildering tales of Dionysos, his family and entourage have been usefully collected by Robert Graves in his 2 volumes on the Greek Myths. Graves cross references the myths to historical movements of peoples and conflicts across the map of the developing ancient world, including, struggles between patriarchal and matrarchical societies, and the movement from nomadic tribal patterns to settled agriculture. The metamorphosis of Dionysos/Bacchus/Zagreus has a part in this cultural drama.

Edward Tripp (1970) turns, like Graves to a cataloguing search of original texts and compiles a non linear web of the appearances and relationships of the Dionysos/ Bacchus/ Zagreus in a version similar to Graves but with different emphases, noting variations and contradictions in the available fragments of Dionysos’ activities. Tripp puts some emphasis on the psychological and notes variations on themes of ‘madness’ in Dionysos’ nature and actions. I have found his notations particularly useful to the purpose of considering the pathologies of intoxication and indications of cure. As for example, the reference to his visit to Cybelle who is attributed with restoring him to his senses and instructing him in her mysteries.

A comprehensive work by Carl Kerényi, Dionysos. Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life. (1976 reprinted 1996) provides an interpretive history of the myth, with many invaluable story fragments collected, annotated and contextualised. I understand that this was Kerényi’s last work, and hence is the fruit of his life long erudition. It is a most valuable source and secondary reference and is probably the definitive text on Dionysos.

Sometimes I think of the work of collecting and cataloguing ancient stories as like the cataloguing of plants which are known to have been used in traditional medicines. Sometimes the exact properties, preparation and use of the plant (and the story) have been half forgotten, remnants of truth and use, confusion and fantasy tangle together. Healing properties and toxic properties are dangerously muddled, but a careful contemporary tasting and testing reveal once again the dormant healing qualities of both the plant and the story.
Whether there was ever a complete Greek storyteller's version of Dionysos or not is open to question. Sometimes it feels as though one has encountered a grave site and one only has, archaeologically, a few bones, beads and pottery shards left with which to reconstruct what was once a living breathing body. At other times it feels as though the stories of Dionysos, like him, have always been disordered, canticles of derangement, left for the poets of the time to rearrange as they wished.

The *Larousse Encyclopedia* writer attempts a somewhat ordered storyline, and we usually rely on this version, in our workshopping, to introduce and orient the uninitiated to the myth.

Rather than attempt to summarise these source works and do injustice to the contradictions I have reproduced in the appendix to the Sugarman script, the entire Tripp entry on Dionysos.

(The Story of Dionysos According To Edward Tripp in *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, p 203 - 211)
THE SUGARMAN STORY LINE

Faced with the tangled web and many shapes of the traditional versions of the Dionysos story, as revealed in ancient texts and collections by scholars, we were presented with the problem of how to make sense of it and construct a coherent story line. The Injjarinama Scroll condensed the epic into nine strong images and story 'packets', which were used to give a disciplined form and create a dramatic convention of linked, and potentially interchangeable scenes. That Scroll has continued to be used as the basis of the story board, and although it is not reproduced here the Sugarman script story line follows it.

The Introduction.

A Short History of the World.

This comprises a history of the discovery and use of wine, set in a context of developments of 'Western civilisation' through prehistory, hunting and gathering, settlement, agriculture and the various flowerings of culture, technology and food cultivation.

He came to Australia with Captain Cook.

A history by Barry Cook recounts the coming of the Whiteman and his goods and chattels, with special attention to the coming of grog, its uses and abuses.

He poignantly details the toxic effects on Aboriginal family and culture, the despair and the yearning for a solution.

He recounts the coming of the Sugarman Story.

The Start Up Ceremony.

Is introduced, like a key into a motor vehicle, to get the show rolling, to introduce the characters and to display the ambivalence about Sugarman's entry into community life.

"Some say Yes and some say No"

The resolution to the conflict is the request to hear his story. With community agreement the performers assemble to begin. The theatrical device used to begin the storytelling is the presentation of Sugarboy as sick and asking for cure from his grandmother. Her therapeutic method is the request to her deranged, enraged and exhausted grandson that he must attend to the tale of his own history. This time he must swallow his story, not vomit it.

"You've got to swallow your story, boy, bit by bit"
The First Story.
How It All Began.

This episode collects and summarises Sugarboy’s ancestry, beginning with the creation story of Euronome.
The Wind Snake and the Egg which gives birth to the cosmos.
We then trace the tumultuous history of Gaia, Rhea, Uranus, Cronos and company, the birth of the Olympian family and the establishment of Zeus’ dynasty.
This is a psychobiography of intoxication with implicit messages about the precursors of the alcoholic state, exemplified through the dynamics of Dionysos’ ancestral family system.

The Second Story.
Sugarbaby, Crow and the Mother on Fire.

Details the parentage and first birth of Dionysos/Sugarman, with the subsequent dismemberment and scattering of his body parts.
He is gathered, saved and enclosed (drunk) by his father, as an act of primal restoration. Zeus reconceives Dionysos (the twice born) with his second mother Semele, a mortal woman, descended from Cadmus of the house of Thebes. His recovery is threatened, however by the machinations of Hera, his mothers rival.
The attempt at rebirth is foiled by Hera as the pregnant Semele goes up in flames.
A parable of hubris—the young woman being seduced into wanting too much divine power too soon and unprepared. This tale works as a reflection on volatile substance abuse, the danger of hallucinogens and related addictions to powerful psychotropic and erotic ambitions. Burn out.

The Third Story.
How the Wine Begins.

Dionysos’ youth and coming of age returns him to Hera’s persecutions, this time by a madness inserted into his ears in the form of three deranging dreams.
One, the dream of primal ancestral violence, the Uranos, Cronos, Zeus succession, mirroring the histories of many disturbing family dynamics and the impact of archetypal complexes.
Second, the traumatic recollection of dismemberment, mirroring infantile anxiety and catastrophe, familiar to contemporary psychology through the developmental work of psychoanalysts.
Third, the devastating experience of the conflagration and annihilation of Dionysos mother, re experienced by the infant Dionysos from within the uterine chamber.
This recalls, among other things, the experience of the loss of the container of cultural integrity, familiar to many indigenous peoples, victims of holocaust, genocide and politically motivated invasion.
Given these conditions, it is no wonder that, with the failed attempts at relief and cure, the Dionysian victim seeks and accepts oblivion through intoxication.
“Sugarman travels the country, mad, outside the law”

The Fourth Story.
Road Stories.

These, the grotto running stories, draw upon the repertoire of classic myths which recount Dionysos’ travelling visitations upon several kingdoms. His effect is always paradoxical, bringing the valuable culture of the vine but also drunkenness, licentious murder, disturbance of the social order and erotic entanglements with usually dire consequences. These can be read as cautionary tales on intoxication, pathological repetitions of alcohol related psychosis, in various modes, of the three Crow implanted dreams.

Ancestral family incest and violence, infantile psychic dismemberment and maternal annihilation.

A line is drawn by the women in the Road Block scene, perhaps modelled on Dionysos’ war with the Amazons, who in at least one version are Herce’s female consorts.

The relief comes through the meeting with Ariadne. The refugee woman versed in the arts of the labyrinth. This relationship is the stimulus for the re-collection of Dionysos. Repetitive cycles of degenerating oblivion begin to pause and transform. The marriage of Ariadne and Dionysos, each with their own traumatic histories, constitute a partnership which allows the beginning of what could, tentatively, be formulated as the shamanic procedure of ‘recovery of soul’.

The Fifth and Sixth Stories.

Travelling Dionysos. Travelling Ariadne.

Travelling Dionysos/Sugarman begins, after the interlude introducing Ariadne and the romance of Sugarman and his abandoned lover. Through the dramatic convention of another consultation with the grandmother, the travels begin.

The Travels are not an exercise in personal psychohistory. The Dionysian soul has now, as it were, negotiated the labyrinth of personal or even narcissistic wounding by having swallowed his life story up to now.

The grandmother urges him and his partner, Ariadne, to begin a long journey of ‘visiting countries’. The countries are the locations of their cultural and spiritual ancestry and heritage.

They trace their interwoven but unique paths to the sites of significance, populated by the mythologised custodians and creators of spiritual tradition.

Each country holds a secret, a task, a meeting, an illumination. Each country reflects a state of being familiar to the psychology of addiction.

This travelling pilgrimage is rich and complex, involving the couple in witnessing reenactments of classic stories from their cultural psyche. It is a coded journey in psychological maturation based upon a retracing of the routes of trade and intellectual dissemination which held together the traditions of the ancient world, from Greece to India and back. Our version of the travels of Ariadne and Dionysos/Sugarman have been used to encode a sequential metaphor series of therapeutic narrative. I do not know if this was intended by the ancients or whether they ever used Dionysos’ travels as a teaching matrix.
However, for people of European/Mediterranean/Eastern orientation or identification, The Travels set out an actual geographical ‘prescription’ for cure by means of an investigation into specific cultural heritage. It is not intended as exclusive. Followers of Sugarman from other cultures, including the indigenous Australian will have their own sites of significance and their own spiritual landscapes to explore or recover. Recovery of Tjukarpa is available to anyone, in one’s own form and one’s own culturally sanctioned or reinvented way. Travelling to recover, reinvent or recollect the big stories of humankind is a therapeutic act in itself, requiring discipline, endurance and wits.

**The Seventh Story.**

**Sugarman Returns.**

The climactic and cathartic drama of ‘The Bacchae’ can be placed here or as part of The Grog Running Stories.

According to one reading it is the final straw, the deepest pit, marking the turning point, where Sugarman is thrust back to his grandmother for the final desperate throw at ‘cure’ and hence precedes the Travels. Another reading places it after The Travels, as Dionysos’ homecoming as a fully fledged ‘god’. The awful events of the Bacchic mania become the stimulus to descend, consciously into the underworld and recover his mother, Semele.

At no point does Dionysos become a morality hero. He is not an incarnation of Vishnu, the preserver and protector, he is not a saviour. Such tasks are left to Krishna and to the Christ. If anything, Dionysos is an incarnation of Shiva. This is a somewhat difficult paradox to swallow as many folk have instinctively expected that Sugarman should become sober, a reformed alcoholic on the A.A. model. He does not become a reformed drunk but his nature does change.

**The Eighth Story.**

**Semele in the Underworld.**

The ability to successfully negotiate with death and recover his mother is the test of the effectiveness of Sugarman’s pilgrimage. In the classic tale he enters the underworld by plunging into deep water after agreeing a deal with a homosexual lover. Our version does not include this homo erotic contract, but there is no reason why it cannot be written in. The actual negotiations with Hades and Persephone for Semele’s release have not been stated, but potentially, this too can be investigated, if culturally appropriate.

Here also is the place to open up, carefully, questions about the responsibilities for the deaths caused by Sugarman’s actions while in a state of intoxicated delusion.
Sugarman's return with Semele brings him to the domain of the gods, Olympus, and the negotiations with his family and the reconciliation of past actions, both his and his families.

It turns around the matter of acceptance, both of him and his nature and that of Semele and the events which led to her physical or psychological annihilation and his derangements.
It is, in a sense, the big family therapy session, the court drama.

The Ninth Story.
The Beginning of the Mysteries.

The final scene builds upon the recognition of Dionysos as a divine being with responsibilities for theatre and ceremony and the creation of 'stars'. It allows the place for Sugarman/Dionysos role in society to be recognised, established and boundaried.
This story provides the opportunity to place Dionysos and his partner, Ariadne, into the domain of the Mysteries. Psychological models perhaps or at least guiding images.

Crow returns, this time not as the exiled and rejected traitor but as the paradoxical shamanic initiator. The introduced Inset story from the novel, Nightwing by Martin Cruz Smith, with reference to an apocalyptic Native American detective mystery, is whimsical but with serious intent. It leads eventually to Sugarman Two, an anarchic account of Dionysos' travels and initiations in the company of Jesus and Crow, as an apocryphal journey, as yet unfinished. Crow, Shiva and Dionysos form a triumvirate.

Dionysos may not be the Vishnu of the human spirit, not the creator and preserver but as the incarnation of the dancing god of destruction and of change he has his exquisitely necessary role in freeing the human spirit from rigidity, repression and obsessive fundamentalism. Dionysos alias 'the liberator' is a relevant as Dionysos as 'the destroyer'. How these two contradictory aspects are balanced by individuals and communities becomes the problem of the pragmatic mysteries.
1. Creation beginning.
   Women dancing.
   Wind. Snake. Egg.

2. Mother cave + 3 fates + eros.

3. Mother Rhea (earth).
   Uranus sky.
   Titanic turmoil.
   Excessive lust.

4. Son (Kronos) castrates father.
   Incestuous marriage to mother.

5. Kronos swallows infant gods (5 out of 6).


7. Zeus + 5 siblings set up new order.

8. Activities of new family of Gods (Olympians).


10. Constellation of Demeter + daughter Persephone's abduction by Hades. Zeus fathers Dionysus with Demeter or Persephone.
   Shape changes; snake, goat, bull, human.

2. Infantile dismemberment.

3. Raw pieces processed & drunk by father.

4. Re-conceived with Semele.

5. Semele’s conflagration

6. Infant saved.  
   Brought up secretly by women, disguised as girl + goat.

7. Adolescence, inflicted with madness.

8. Cure attempts:  
   Discovery and use of wine.

   Delusion + dismemberment events.

10. Marriage of Dionysos + Ariadne.

11. Travels across country (India) and to the underworld.

12. Council of gods, setting role in culture.
CHAPTER 11

THE PRECINCT OF DIONYSOS

Notes on the structure and interpretive possibilities of the Sugarman Cycle

The Dionysos epic cannot be taken as a whole, or integrated story. It is a fragmentary composition made up of elements from locations as far apart in geography as Crete and Northern India. Appearances of Dionysos as a named figure cover a time scale in Pre-Christian Europe of possibly 2000 years, and maybe more if one considers prehistoric sources, with a recognition that 'Power' of Dionysian properties appears in many guises and under many names or alias, including those familiarly available to us as Dionysos, Zagreus, Iacchos, Bromios, Bakkos, as described and unearthed by scholars such as Kerényi (1976), Otto (1965) and Nilsson (1957).

The Dionysos story can hardly be presented as a singular and coherent 'song line' even though in the Sugarman Song Cycle, an attempt has been made to shape it in terms of a linear progression through time, from ancestry to maturity as well as a reasonably logical linear progression in an easterly direction through the Travels.

When it comes to the question of how to interpret the story and apply it to pragmatic treatment problems we have to recognize straight away that we are not dealing with a rationally constructed 'treatment paradigm' which can be somehow unearthed archaeologically from the Greeks. It is possible to draw upon incidents and images which can inspire or stimulate thoughts and action, in exactly the way Bion describes in his essays on the role of myth in the formation of thoughts and in the employment of thoughts, (explored by Meltzer, 1978) and that may be enough as a start. I consider that it is far too early in the maturation of this project to present any definitive interpretive application of the myth, either for indigenous or non-indigenous purposes, except in a heuristic way in which we learn from using bits of the story in therapeutic conversations to illustrate points and indicate ways of thinking about intoxicated behaviour, in specific circumstances.

A useful, if not integrated, interpretive matrix of the Dionysos myth with reference to its therapeutic and treatment potential, is I believe possible. However the realization of that potential depends upon one's attitude to the use of myths, and a recognition of both the limits and the richness of myth as a source of therapeutic metaphor, within the realm of European psychotherapeutic sciences as well as within indigenous practice. Jung approaches this problem in his volume (CW 6) on Psychological Types, especially in his Chapter on the Appollinian and Dionysian character, a commentary on Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy and on Schiller and then developed more in Chapter 4 on The Type Problem in Poetry.
Jung quotes Schiller thus (p. 136):

"In order to make life possible the Greeks had to create those (Olympian) gods from sheer necessity...They knew and felt the terror and frightfulness of existence; to be able to live at all, the Greeks had to interpose the shining, dream born Olympian world between themselves and that dread. That tremendous mistrust of the titanic powers of nature, Moira (fate) pitilessly enthroned above knowledge, the vulture of Prometheus...the awful fate of the wise Oedipus...the family curse that drove Orestes to matricide...all this dread was ever being conquered anew by the Greeks with the help of that visionary, intermediate world of the Olympians..."

Jung then comments; "That Greek 'serenity', that smiling heaven of Hellas, (is) seen as a shimmering illusion hiding a sombre background..." (ibid)

I would argue that the Greeks are not alone in their terror of a dimension of existence. This same "sombre background" lurks in the dark surroundings of an Aboriginal perception of existence. The fear of the spirits of the dead perhaps illustrates this vividly, as in the 'taboo' against mentioning the names of the recently deceased which may be an indication of the existence of an almost nameless terror as a background to living. When death occurs as a result of alcohol it is almost impossible to negotiate with the reality of the death. It is as though there is no symbolic figure, no symbol uniting life and death and alcohol. It is possible that the figure of Hermes enabled the Greeks to establish the idea of a conscious link between the departed souls and the living. I am not aware of any Central Australian mythological figure who embodies this linking (transcendent) function. It is possible, also, that Dionysos, for the Greeks was a linking image between creation and destruction, between psychic dismemberment, the terror of annihilation and rebirth or the return to the living state. I am so far not aware of any Tjukurrpa figure who plays this mediating role. If this is so then the useful uniting symbol, in the sense that Jung uses it, is not present in the consciousness of the Aboriginal domain.

If Aboriginal people are to negotiate the issues of alcohol related death how is it to be done if there is no mediating symbol, no mediating story, with which to logically think through the drama of dying by drink? The issue is further complicated by the realm of 'dread' which also exists between white and black.

Whereas there is a willingness to take and use the objects which come from each others world, in the form of vehicles say, or indigenous art, there is a persistent reluctance to exchange mythological realities, to exchange the 'shimmering illusions' which make the terror bearable. It can be argued that the Christian myth, however, has been taken into Aboriginal mind by some people and the actions of Jesus and the presence of Jesus as God does in fact perform the function of mediating between the living and the dead. The bright presence of Jesus and Wapirra as God the Father serves perhaps as a uniting symbol between black mind and white mind. But there is still something missing unless Dionysos and The Christ can be experienced as some kind of reciprocal (symbolic) brotherhood. Dionysos as a therapeutic mediating function may only become workable if he is seen to be connected in some fruitful way with the culture of Jesus.
Considerations such as this require much more development, but Jung gives a hint of the possibilities when he writes in Chapter Four (CW 6 ibid) of the mediating function of the God image as a unifying symbol. In particular (section 3 p. 189) where, in developing his idea of ‘the significance of the unifying symbol’ he writes; “The invasion of evil signifies that something previously good has turned into something harmful... the idea that the ruling moral principle, although excellent to begin with, in time loses its essential connection with life, since it no longer embraces life’s variety and abundance...”

I am reading this in a somewhat unique way, first that the invasion of ‘evil’ can be applied to the experience of the ‘invasion’ of alcoholic intoxication. Wine, which previously or for the Europeans signifies something good, turns into something harmful and the use of alcohol although perceived as excellent to begin with, in time loses its essential connection with life and the use of alcohol no longer embraces life’s variety and abundance but destroys it. This is a perversion of the Dionysian spirit, as understood in his benevolent aspect, Dionysos embodying an experience of vitality related to life’s abundance becomes converted into an ‘evil’ force. The only way out of this impasse, according to Jung, is to initiate a new birth. That is, Dionysos is killed as an evil figure and gets reborn as a new symbol, a new god who can help people “embrace life’s variety and abundance”.

If the Christians revile Dionysos/Sugarman as a devil then a splitting occurs which may be helpful in casting out the devil drink, but if the Christians can somehow recognise Dionysos myth as also presenting a new birth and a way of harvesting and harnessing nature’s abundant life, then a new symbolic image might work its way into the healing metaphor of Jesus. Ceremonially this brotherhood can be shown if a figure representing Jesus and a figure representing Dionysos/Sugarman can meet and work out a life enhancing reconciliation. For this reason, in presenting the ‘Travels of Dionysos’ in the Araluen gallery performance (1997) we included a scene of the Last Supper, where Jesus offers his body as bread to be eaten and his blood as wine to be drunk in remembrance of him etc as in the Liturgy of the Mass. In the performance Sugarman/Dionysos was present at the Last Supper and it was he who gave the cup to Jesus and helped serve it to the companions at the table. Then in a following scene Dionysos descends into the dreaded spirit world and speaks with the departed—bringing his own mother back from the spirit world to be accepted and given a new name. Dionysos ceases to operate through the mode of terror and dismemberment by becoming ‘sorry’, that is, he acknowledges his depression and grief at the loss of his mother and his family and instead of defending against it by more manic destruction, takes courage in his hands and descends into the pit of death himself, but alive, not as a suicide. He finds the ashes of his mother. His symbolic act joins the image of the terrifying or terrible mother together with the good and sustaining mother. He brings her back and faces the family council with her, demanding she be given her seat. Somehow, in this action a profound psychological truth of recovery of abundance is enacted.

In devising the performance of this event, we were struggling with the taboo, struggling with finding a way to show that it is possible for a mythological figure to face the terror of the death and bring the realities of an
annihilation to consciousness. Some people argued that we should not show this scene in the presence of Aboriginal people. The dead should not be shown or named. ‘People will walk out’ we were told. In fact I suggested that a large group of adolescent Aboriginal children should perhaps not see this scene and as it turned out they left at the interval to return to their college because of a curfew time restriction. (see Article Chapt 14, by Greg Snowdon *Alice News*, September 1997)

But other Aboriginal people, including a group of young petrol sniffers from Injarnama, did witness it and were deeply moved. Elva Cook’s painting of *Semele on Fire* represents this event in an act of great pictorial bravery because her painting acknowledges Semele’s death and shows it in the image of the fire and the baby on fire. Her painting calls out to the Night Patrollers as the ones to bring the spirits back from the verge of extinction and restore life and abundance to the communities. She specifically connects the Night Patrollers with the figure of Hermes, the one who had the courage to negotiate between the living and dead.

My point is Jung’s point, that at a moment of existential impasse, at a moment of dread and paralysis of thought by primal terror the only way out is to find or form a new symbol, a new god image, as it were, which enables the paralysis to shift. Borrowing from Klein (1950) it is possible for those familiar with psychoanalytic constructs to experiment with the thought that the current collective Aboriginal mind state is caught in the ‘paranoid-schizoid position’. A movement to the ‘depressive position’ on the cultural level is possible but only if an encouraging new symbol is available to bring a sense of purpose to birth or rebirth.\(^1\) and this involves a very special confrontation with mourning.

\(^1\) See for example the definition of Kleins ideas on states of psychological development in *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis*, Samuels, Shorter, Paul, 1986. and in e.g. her own papers in Klein, (1950) on Symbol formation in ego development, p236. The psychogenesis of manic-depressive states, p282 and Mourning, p 311.
THE PRECINCT OF DIONYSOS

As a foundation for further development, I would like to offer the following diagramatic structure, as a way of organising thoughts about the myth and its use. I have called this 'the precinct of Dionysos'.

Imagine an architectural structure. Perhaps four free standing walls or enclosures arranged in a geometrically defining open space. A rectangle, a square or a circle. The enclosure could be rather like an art gallery cum theatre space, as was used in the Araluen Sugarman performances, or if outdoors, an arrangement of poles or columns surrounding a performance and discussion arena. Even a court yard would do. Two illustrations of Greek enclosures are shown here. A Labyrinth floor pattern and the ground plan of a temple which I have adapted as a stimulus to the idea of a precinct of Dionysos.


Plan of typical Greek temple with pronaeas (inner portico), opisthodomus (rear chamber), peristyle, and two rows of columns in the cella, illustrated by the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, c. 460 BC.


A late, complicated representation of the labyrinth, framed by meander pattern. Mosaic from a family tomb in Hadrumetum in North Africa
The Araluen Gallery as a Precinct

The Araluen Gallery was set up in the September 1997 exhibition as an experiment with this idea of a precinct. It had a somewhat pulsating cave-like quality into which people entered for an experiential session, rather than into a static painting exhibit.

On the left hand wall, coming from the entrance was a the long Intjartnana Sugarman Story board, giving the nine main parts of the myth, as an introduction, accompanied by a video display including scenes from the earlier performances and talks on Aboriginal alcohol issues by Elva Cook and Bob Randall.

The far end was the performance area backed by images, sculptures or masks of the main mythological characters in the story as used in performance.

The right hand wall featured paintings of scenes which were commentaries on various states of drunkeness or disorder, in social realist or symbolic form.

The wall and corner to the right of the entrance featured displays on the history of wine making and its dissemination as well as an active display of wine making, the fermentation actually in process using local native corkwood and grevillea flowers. This wine was bottled and sampled in due course. It had an intriguing, spicy sweet sherry like texture.

The floor was at times covered with other paintings which were taken up for performances. Various seminars on themes from the paintings, the myth or the theatre performance were conducted during the day for children, young people, health professionals and interested visitos. The whole gallery became an interactive education space.

Emerging from this experiment, it was our suggestion that a relatively permanent shed space could be set up on these lines which could then be used by various groups of people for specific sessions or performance events on themes related to the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs as well as relevant social and cultural matters.

With an informative, experiential and preventative intent we saw such an interactive educational environment as being useful to and usable by a wide range of local schools, youth groups, treatment clients and professionals.

There was talk about setting up the meeting hall at Intjartnana in this manner, however a cyclonic storm took the roof off and the initiative lapsed. The same idea was suggested as a kind of tent travelling exhibition and performance tour of Western desert Aboriginal communities.

These three photographs illustrate the idea of artists in action, teaching at the same time.

Top to bottom.

1. Louis Pratt working on his canvas depicting the sexual conflagration of Semele with Zeus and explaining to the watchers what it means to him.

2. Christopher Brocklebank in action in the gallery during part of a rehearsal scene open to the public.

3. Painter Rod Moss, in the midst of a seminar talk about his paintings and the history of the scenes depicted, all of which cover the use and abuse of intoxicants.
THE PRECINCT OF DIONYSOS

The facts of Viticulture

Elements of the Dionysian 'Syndrome'

The Dionysos Myth

The Dionysian Therapia
Four sections or walls can be used to represent four functions of the story, as follows:

1. **The facts of viticulture.**
   Which includes the history of the discovery and spread of the cultivation of the vine and the making of wine as well as the stages in the process of cultivation and the biochemistry of the vintner process. (see *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry on Alcohol and Brewing for a succinct summation of the viticultural process.)

2. **The Dionysos Story.**
   represented by the nine Sugarman stories and their main scenic images.

3. **Elements of the ‘Syndrome’ of addiction and alcoholism.**
   On this wall can be chalked out the symptomatology of alcoholism and addiction as understood conventionally through the various Western medical and psychological models.

4. **The Dionysian Therapeia.**
   On the fourth wall can be chalked, the elements which might go to make up the composition of a Dionysian therapeutic metaphor matrix. The images from the Dionysos story arranged to describe the significant primal states of intoxication and the states and stages of the therapeutic journey, exemplified in the Travels.

    With this structure to assist it is possible to systematically take each element of the story, either from the Sugarman construction or from original sources and relate them to the matters represented or held in place by the other three walls.

    A three dimensional grid is constructed, into which a person or group can enter, as into the precinct of a temple or a church where iconic forms from the religious myth are often exhibited around the walls as teaching tools or contemplative aids. As eg. in the Stations of the Cross, or on various cultural ceremony spaces where a ground painting is constructed for spiritual instruction or healing purposes, displayed appropriately, perhaps danced and sung with, then erased. eg Tibetan mandala sand paintings, Hopi sand paintings and certain Australian Aboriginal ceremonies.
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Reading of the adapted Zeus temple Precinct illustration:

The entrance.

1. The wall painting of viticulture.

On this wall, which is perhaps rightly considered as the entrance, are displayed the facts of the history and manner of viticulture. The cultivation, harvesting, fermentation and production of wine (and other alcohols). This could be a very enjoyable task for a winemaker to execute and sponsor.

One can then use the wall to reflect upon the history and geography of viticulture and on the 'way the wine is made'. Including the full chemical/alchemical procedures of harvesting, processing, fermenting, bottling etc.

The stories of Dionysos' arrivals in various countries and communities, (see Kerényi's Chapter 'The Myths of Arrival' in Dionysos, 1976) demonstrates the various (historical) reactions to the arrival of the vine and wine as an intoxicant, along with the arrival of the cult of Dionysos. The Road Stories in Sugarman give a representative sample of these 'myths of arrival' which parallel the arrival of alcohol in the various Centralian communities, where the cult of intoxication finds a new incarnation. This wall then covers two aspects. Winemaking itself and the spread or distribution of the product, including its uses.

2. The wall painting of the Dionysos story.

Along this wall are placed the iconic images of the Dionysos myth.

3. The wall painting of the syndrome of addiction and alcoholism.

Any one of the nine stories, or a part there from, casts a reflection upon the wall of the symptomatology and pathology of addiction and alcoholism, but first the facts of alcohol dependence, addiction and its psychological and physical effects have to be charted. There already exist succinct depictions of much of this in terms of health promotion literature. Designing and executing this wall would be a challenge for Drug and Alcohol Health promotion specialists.

It has to be noted that Dionysos is not all madness and destruction and the convivial, life enhancing qualities of wine and the cult of Dionysos have to be given due place.

4. The Dionysian Therapeia.

On this wall are the iconic clues to linking the other three elements into a Dionysian therapeutic model. It is appropriately the last of the four since it requires more developmental work and is arrived at after passing down the precinct.

In the Sugarman structure the generation of a pathology is figured in terms of the three dreams and the consecutive traumatic experiences undergone by Dionysos;

Sugarman's inheritance through his family ancestry is covered in the 'dream of family violence'.

Sugarman's two births and the two primal traumas, the infant rip up and the conflagration of mother are encoded in the second dream.
His adolescence and the induced madness at the point of his coming of age, institutes a rite of passage into the varieties of Dionysian delusion and the enactment or acting out of his historically established psychic states. The repetition compulsion.

It is possible to take each scene in the entire epic and consider it as a stimulus for a reflection on symptomatology, or pathology, drawing upon ancient sources as well as contemporary reflections. Euripides Bacchae, for instance, is a brilliant elucidation on delusional states.

This wall includes the characterisation of the range of primal states within the Dionysian culture, without implying that the Dionysian primal states are all pathological. Note is taken of the animal forms (theriomorphy) associated with Dionysos and his entourage. Satyrs, centaurs, goats, bulls, snakes, panthers, etc all carry within them particular somatic sensations related to psychic experiences.

Comprehensive possibilities for reading therapeutic metaphor have been encoded into the Travels, which in turn evolve out of the consultations with Grandmother and the relationship between Ariadne and Dionysos. I have presented this in the script as a kind of geographic mnemonic where each country visited and each archetypal being encountered, holds for Sugarman (or a follower of Sugarman) a particular therapeutic task or developmental state or stage to negotiate. This does not imply that negotiation of all these states is possible or even likely for any one person, but they sit there to be sampled perhaps, in homeopathic doses.

Very succinctly summarised the geographical locations of the collecting of Dionysos/Sugarman wits are as follows:

1. Crete-Naxos. Acknowledgment of family links and family histories, perhaps some lost in the mists of time, and also tragedies (the minotaur murder) and yet potential for the positive relationship between male and female, (anima/animaus) presented as the romance and marriage of Ariadne and Dionysos.

2. The islands. Integrating or at least visiting the scattered locations of the self, the polymorphous psyche. The islands are locations of specific gods or events in Dionysos history. Ikaria and Samos being two.

3. Anatolia and Cybelle. An encounter with primary maternal dependency. (Cybelle) and possible emasculation in the service of the dependency.


5. Israel. Messianic promise. (or delusion) self sacrifice and resurrection.


7. Libya/ North Africa. A diversion but also acknowledgment of the festive and ceremonial aspects of conviviality and the drinking companies.
8. Sumer. Inanna/Dumuzi. Descent, depression, paranoia and revival or a livable compromise with opposing forces of human nature.


10. Afghanistan. Silence. As a location of self containment, self reliance and positive introversion.

11. India. Shiva/Kali. As facing or acknowledging the absolutes of destruction of and by the self and the capacity for survival nevertheless.

12. Returning Home. As indication of ability to 'return' whether heroically or not and put what has been met to use - following the demonstration of an actual attainment by the recovery of Semele and the engagement in the family meetings and the establishment of a creative role.

These geographically located therapeutic events can be easily idealised and fancifully systematised but this is not my intention. However by chalking the map on the fourth wall, in the containing context of the other three walls, ie the story, the facts of viticulture and the biochemistry of alcohol along with the known facts of addiction and alcoholic pathology there is something visible and structured symbolically from which one can imaginatively work, adapting the work of course, according to the character of the person and the prevailing culture.

Once the European story facts are displayed there is then opportunity to systematically articulate local (indigenous) experiences, find formulations of the same events and scenes and cross reference to local stories which may have healing efficacy or can act as a metaphor base.

A location is thus established, a precinct or a milieu where the necessary facts can be assembled in one place, leaving room for magical thinking, naive symbolic converse and critical consciousness to exist in the same enclosure and through which individuals of different sensibilities can pass.

An experiment of this kind was attempted in the Araluen gallery exhibition performances in August 1997. The next step will be to formulate another way of setting up the precinct idea, 'out bush' perhaps at Injarnima in the cattle yards, or in a specially constructed windbreak shelter or gorge.

A brief summary follows in the next Chapter of the Genealogy of the Grape and Primal States which may indicate further possibilities to develop.
CHAPTER 12

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CODE

1. THE GENEALOGY OF THE GRAPE.

To get to this idea I have to borrow a metaphor from the structure of the DNA.

The structure of the DNA, (deoxyribonucleic acid), the biochemical molecular base of life forms, at the simplest, can be described in terms of a unique combination of elements, a sugar, either ribose or deoxyribose, a nitrogen containing base and a phosphoric acid, set, as it were in various combinations around two connecting threads to form a polynucleotide which has the shape of a double helix. (see illustration) Each such base defines a distinct nucleotide. This is the genetic code by means of which genetic information is embodied and transmitted. The flow of information from DNA into proteins begins with the transcription of the double stranded DNA into a single stranded item, the RNA which in turn assembles amino acids into combinations of peptides and proteins which then constitute as the most primal structures of all biological matter including the human body and organs.

This simple description of the basic processes in building life forms, as a bio metaphor, helps describe the structure of the Sugarman story itself and contains an interesting image for understanding the way the myth of Dionysos can be considered as an encoded cluster of psychobiological states. The pantheon of the gods can be envisaged as combinations of nucleotides arranged in combinations to form a psychological pantheon.

One could begin with a bunch of grapes and then envisage the genetic structure of the grape in terms of a unique combination of chemicals and sugars which ferment and transform into alcohol. Alcohol can be described in an equation representing the molecular biology of the grape.

One may also shift to describe the molecular archaeology of the grape in terms of the genealogy or family tree of Dionysos. Dionysos being understood as the ‘power’ of intoxication which inhabits the wine. And the wine as being composed of all the elements of Dionysos’s genetic history.

From a metaphorical point of view one can consider the ‘genealogy of the grape’ lightly, without necessarily confusing such a view with serious scientific observations of the actual structure of the chemical DNA of either the grape or wine. The metaphor is simply there to allow the development of some thoughts.
To get to this idea I have to borrow a metaphor from the structure of the DNA.

Structure of a chromosome during the early stage of meiosis. A chromosome consists of a protein-coated strand which coils in three ways during the time when a cell prepares to divide by meiosis (or mitosis). This strand contains DNA molecules, arranged along its length. The DNA molecules are coiled into a shape known as a double helix.

Exact duplication of a DNA molecule involves specific base pairing. The two resulting molecules are identical.
One can ask, "Of what is wine composed?"

The DNA metaphor might go like this:
The liquid is composed of a series of basic elements which pass through transformative procedures. The elements are coded in terms of the divine powers which constitute the kinship system of Dionysos, his ancestral parentage and the elemental characters which interact with him and influence and structure his life pattern. These elements combine in a particular way to create a cluster of psychic states.

The effect of alcohol on the drinker is encoded in terms of the behaviours of Dionysos. When you drink you incarnate Dionysos, in one or many of his various states of being. When you drink, the Dionysian DNA becomes transmitted to your own system. When you drink, one or many of the elements of Dionysos’ ancestry and story will be reactivated and reenacted in your personal system and in your relationship system.

There are a specific number of Dionysian ‘nucleotides’ which connect with and pass into the human psychobiological DNA setup. A tentative genealogy or psychological archaeology of Dionysos might run along these lines.
THE FEMALE

The mothers of wine.
Demeter as his mother, embodies the primary and sustaining vitality of fruit.
Gaia and Rhea, as his grandmothers, embody primary maternal comfort, for which satisfying, if dangerous state many a drinker seeks. This state is neutly presented in the tale of Cybelle, her myriad breasts, beehive cities and castrated devotees.

Semele, as the second mother of Dionysos, holds the youth, vitality and erotic risk of Zeus’ young and mortal mistress, who tragically goes too far in her desire. Semele, reincarnate as Thyone is ecstatic rage, or raging ecstasy, which links her to the maenadic element.

The companions of the drinker.
The Hyades, Pleiades and Maenads as the female carers and companions of Dionysos, signify the company of women, music, dance, the companionship of animals, the hunt and the pleasures of ‘the mountains’ which, in the events chronicled by Euripides in The Bacchae, turn from pastoral delight to manic mayhem. The grape, as springing from the tears of the lovesick Dionysos after Aphrodite has loved and abandoned him, according to the legend on the island of Ikaria, reveals wine as inductor into the arts of seduction and love.

Ariadne, as the seasoned companion of the mature Dionysos, in her stability and adventurous independence seems related to the esoteric enjoyment of refined wine drinkers and thence to generate the mysticism and celebratory ritualised use of the spirit of the grape.

The opposition.
Hera, as the offended first wife of Zeus, embodies the defence of the social order, prohibition and also, paradoxically, the avenue through which emotional terrorism enters the grape. Somehow in opposing the vitality of Demeter and the vivacity of Semele, Hera brings into play the dismembering entourage of Cronos/Crow. Prohibition, like licentiousness also breeds crime and violence.
THE MALE

The fathers of wine.
Zeus, as the father of Dionysos, contributes his creative power, and promiscuous sexuality as well as perhaps the containing qualities of the company of men. When one drinks and incarnates Dionysos, the qualities and nature of his fathers are somewhere, in association.

There is something in here too about the power politics of ‘heaven’ and the ambivalent relationship between Zeus, as ruler and possessor of a “bliss a million times more”¹ than anyone else, and Dionysos, his anarchic son, also possessor of a version of bliss/ecstasy/ intoxication. His son, in a sense, disorders Zeus’ rule, through drunkenness (and the drug trade). Dionysus may be the shadow ruler of the world; but he draws upon his grandfathers, Uranus and Cronos/Crow whose violence, split-brain trickery and omnivorous swallowing constitute a primal dimension of alcoholic greed and pathology. Without the genetic ancestry of Crow and Uranus, Dionysos would be rather effete.
In his grandfather Crow’s behaviours we can find a location for alcoholic sociopathic violence and the hallucinations of delirium tremens.

The Companions of the drinker.
Silenus and the Satyrs along with the Donkey embody the comic good nature of the drinking circle which also converts into grotesque, obscene and rapacious violence of the drunken sub human orgy; All of which is chronicled in the legends of Dionysos, his arrivals, his travels, his apparitions, and his rages.

The opposition.
Pentheus in The Bacchae is the epitome of the opposition to the Dionysian party, but other male characters and kings’ who resist Dionysos’ arrival invariably come to a bad end, usually sent mad or induced to kill their own family members.

When the full range of major and minor archetypal beings associated with Dionysos are set in order around the spiral of the ‘DNA’ of alcohol we have a dynamic composition which reveals much of the nature of the spirit of alcohol and the nature of intoxication in all its variation.

¹. Bhau Kalachuri/Meher Baba in The Nothing and the Everything elucidating on the qualities and attributes of Zeus and his Hindu counterpart Indra.
2. PRIMAL STATES.

During the performance preparation workshops, a number of themes were identified which recurred throughout the life cycle of Dionysos/Sugarman. There were nine upon which we concentrated, but there are many more sub themes. The nine, seemed to us to be fundamental to the story itself and to human experiences, which somehow or other become associated with intoxication.

The Primal States, as we named them, are clusters of experience which are generated when one combination or other of the basic elements described above get into active relationship and enact a drama. The main clusters, given with the scenes or interaction, are;

1. The Ancestral Encounters and Conception events:
   Uranus, Rhea. Cronos, Zeus and siblings
   Zeus, Hera and Demeter
   Zeus and Demeter

2. The Birth Events:
   Demeter and the Crows/Titans
   Hera and Semele
   Zeus, Hermes and the infant (twice born) Dionysos
   Dionysos and the caretaker women

3. The Childhood Developments:
   The seclusion and disguise as a girl
   Dionysos, Hera and the third attempt on his life
   Adolescent madness.
   The capacity to change shape and assume animal form
   Bull, Goat, Snake, Panther etc

4. Initiations:
   Dionysos and Silenus
   Dionysos and Aphrodite

5. The rage:
   The arrivals of Dionysos (grog running travels)
   Dionysos and the Maenads
   Dionysos at war with the Titans
   and the Amazons (devotees of Hera?)
   Dionysos and Pentheus
6. relationships:
Dionysos and Ariadne
Dionysos and Semele in the underworld
Dionysos and the Council of the Gods

7. Dionysos as culture hero:
Travelling consultations in foreign lands:
Dionysos and Cybelle
Dionysos and Adonis
Dionysos and Osiris
Dionysos and Christ
Dionysos and Innana
Dionysos in Persia, the Zoroastrian fire - Phoenix or Homa
through to Dionysos and Shiva
and Dionysos "bringing it all back home".

Each of these combinations of the basic elements produces a state of being, feeling and mind. Some erotic, some ecstatic, some manic, some delusional, some deranged, some eloquently supportive of the human spirit through the relationship or combinations with Orpheus, Persephone and Demeter in their respective 'mysteries', including the mysteries of the (ceremonial) theatre, over which Dionysos, in his mature state, presides.

The nine states which we identified inhabit the events or characters assembled in the epic and generate metaphors which reflect the experiences of people who become involved with or dependent on alcohol and other substances.

Many a time, in a counselling conversation for instance, Barry, Elva or I have found ourselves drawing upon these scenes to illustrate a point or reflect on the experience of ourselves or a client who is undergoing an experience just like 'such and such' a scene in the story. Similarly, in the experience of those who took part in the performance, many scenes resonated deeply with their own life events, as Karen Hethey describes in her paper, Spinning Yarns.

These primal states include feelings, images, thoughts and dream myths about:
1. Creation. Accounts of where and how we began with variations on the primal scene and sexual couplings and family violence.

2. Cycles of swallowing, vomiting, ejection which reflect upon projection/introjection processes and are based upon the various things we do with body fluids.
3. Dismemberment. The various ways in which the body and psychic body is torn apart/ disassembled/ de-integrated or de-constructed. I include delusions in this as perhaps, a special form of psychic dismemberment.

4. Gatherings and Containment. Variations upon the ways in which pieces are put back together.

5. Family and Political Power Plays.
   Intrigues and Betrayals.

   Metamorphosis and trickery, also including delusional states.

7. Deaths.
   Griefs. Revival and Resurrections.

8. Travels and Journeys of the inner/outer worlds.

9. Silences, Emptiness and Rest.

This list does not exhaust the potential of the myths primal states, but the nine selected constitute significant dramatised states which seem to be explicitly evoked in the consciousness of the participants and recreators who took part in our rehearsals, workshops and performances.

It is beyond the present scope to elucidate these states. At this point we can do no more than suggest the potential of this epic collection of primal scenes as a stimulus for a radically different approach to tracking the consequences of alcohol possession, addiction to or immersion in the baptismal liquid of wine. Immersion in the archetypal field of Dionysos predictably evokes such states.

A note on the structure of the Sugarman cycle.
Diana Wolkstein has commented that the structural shape of the Sugarman is like a kind of upward spiral.
Or perhaps it is two spiral shapes which intersect and reflect each other.

The first spiral constitutes and collects the Creation stories, up to the end of Story 4. The second spiral begins with Story 5 and collects the Travelling Stories, bringing things to an open resolution with Crow's Dance. The form is like a double helix, where any one scene (as a nucleotide) can reflect or connect with another, hence the interesting analogy of the DNA structure. There might be more in this metaphor than I realise but at least it may give the reader a grasp of the structure of the song cycle which otherwise may appear too long, too intricate and too unwieldy.
For instance;
Scenes in the Creation sequences match scenes in the Travels.

The Road Stories and The Bacchae reflect the family violence of Dionysos’ ancestry.

The Cretan labyrinth encounter with the minotaur and the escape sets a pattern for the Travels.

Semele’s burning ferment echoes the transformation of sugar into wine and wine into intoxication.

The dismemberment of the infant Dionysos reflects his adolescent psychic dismemberment and the dismemberment he inflicts upon the communities he visits as the viticulture hero.

The grandmothers collection of the pieces of the body reflects his recollections on the Travels.

The descent into the underworld to collect Semele reflects the grandmother’s gatherings and the recollective meetings with Osiris, Isis and Innana.

Consumption in Semele’s uterine fire recalls the Phoenix.

The confrontation with Shiva/Kali, recalls the confrontation with the minotaur, the Titans and the swallowing of the gods by Cronos/ Crow.

The swallowed and regurgitated gods recall the swallowing and vomiting of drunkenness, (depicted vividly in Louis Pruitt’s massive canvas).

The dance of Shiva, evokes the dance and frenzy of the maenads, but transposed as an apotheosis to another order.

The labyrinthine Crane dance of Ariadne recalls the labyrinthine epic of the journeys of recovery.

The point where one spiral line of the story gives birth to the other is contained in Sugarman’s meetings with his grandmother.

“You’ve got to listen to your story boy
You’ve got to swallow your story bit by bit.”

From this point the outward spiral converts into the inner and the possibilities of a change of heart begin.

When Crow appears in the finale of the text as the presiding nihilistic shaman this is deliberate in order to counter any idealistic flights to a recovery fantasy. If I were to suggest that the Dionysos myth can be read as a shamanic text I mean that there is a pattern to it and the pattern will be familiar to shamanic practitioners or those familiar with shamanic procedures and imagery. The Sugarman text attempts to take in the shamanic elements of the myth and convert it to use.

It was Dr. Peter Tait who suggested at one of our rehearsal workshops that Crow is the one, in the end who must assume the authority of the shamanic healer. A healing paradox is always more satisfying than a neat Hollywood resolution. I like this twist. I think it is going to turn out to be very useful.
CHAPTER 13

REVIEW WITH RANDALL

BOB RANDALL Interview with introductory comments.

The other part of the Randall interview, Part I, occurs in the Introduction, Country Voices.

In the opening section of that interview, with the director of the documentary video of the August 1996 performance of Sugarman, Bob Randall spoke about the basic principles of Aboriginal culture. He then related this to the problem of alcohol, drawing attention to the way in which excessive use of alcohol leads to a breakdown in the care and responsibility for culture.

In this, the second part the focus is on the possible usefulness of Sugarman.

Bobby Randall is an influential figure in Australian Aboriginal cultural affairs. He is well known for his music, in particular the song 'Brown Skin Baby', a lament by an Aboriginal mother whose baby has been taken away by government order. A stolen generation child. His current work is in the development of 'cultural medicine' and with the Institute of Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs. Primarily this is an educational institute which many hope will become the basis for a Central Australian Aboriginal university campus.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bob Randall has supported the Sugarman Project, taking a part in the performance as the old man who tries to cure Sugarboy of his madness, first by traditional healing methods then, by giving him alcohol to relieve him of his pain. This character is based upon the role of Silenus, who is attributed with inventing wine and using it partly as method of relief for the young Dionysos during his period of madness. The character portrayed by Randall also supervises Sugarman's initiation. In European times there were (and still are) rite-of-passage mysteries into which young people were introduced to help them understand the basis of life. This scene also raised the vexed matter of the overuse of alcohol in some men's ceremonies. This is a matter which particular local men do not want mentioned or interfered with, but other senior people, both men and women consider that the presence of alcohol and intoxication during instruction camps is a dangerous practice and a perversion of the ceremonial integrity. Some argue that coming of age in European culture is marked by the permission to drink and that getting drunk is seen as a mark of manhood among many male white groups. They also see that intoxication linked to football, celebrations and funerals is part of white culture and part of the culture of alcohol and therefore a justified practice. Some folk, recognise the role of alcohol in celebratory occasions but point out that drinking ( drunkenness) during ceremonial events is a corruption of the intention of ceremony. Drink confuses the instruction and the cultural integrity, and most of all it corrupts the practice of proper care. It is "like people being drunk in church, and doctors drunk at work". Some thoughtful Aboriginal men and women (including Barry and Elva Cook) are declaring that young men should be properly instructed in the uses and dangers of alcohol/drugs as part of the process of 'becoming a man'. The question is there to be answered as to how to bring modern (spiritual) survival instruction together with the needs and setting of the bush traditions.
Some influential men, of both Aboriginal and white descent, base their power on keeping alive an alcohol dependent kinship/mateship network and so keeping control over the supply of 'grog' supports status, power and lack of accountability. According to this logic, the more young men who can be initiated into alcohol dependence, the happier are the grog based power brokers. In Sugarman, this kind of corruption is satirised in the character of 'split brain' Crow, as the trickster, swallow of babies and deranger of young men. Also in the Donkey Council/Ceremony. We are highlighting this issue, then, in the Sugarman script, through the scenes which show the events of Sugarboy's initiation, his madness and the attempts at cure. It arises again in the Bacchae section where, in the Intjartnarna performance Bobby Randall and Peter Latz who play the classic parts of the old King Cadmus and the wise man Teiresias, come upon the mayhem of Penteus' dismemberment and admonish the women for their folly in allowing their son and relative to be torn apart during their delusional and manic state of intoxication.

The problem is highlighted in the script and also by Randall, in his documentary video interview section, on the breakdown in family care and responsibility; Walyjja, and the failure or inability of senior men and women to be able to use their authority to govern the behaviour of their own family members, when drunk. Conventional alcohol theory might nominate such activity as co dependent behaviour. This may be so but co dependency as manifested in European family dynamics may well be a different matter when it manifests in Aboriginal family systems. The structure of Aboriginal families is unique to itself and so is the pattern of rights, responsibilities and obligations. One could argue that the character of Aboriginal family systems makes it vulnerably open to infection and perversion by alcohol dependency and that treatment methods within Aboriginal culture have to be carefully adapted or re invented to take the pattern of family dependency into consideration. I do not have a mandate to analyse Aboriginal family systems in this project but Bobby, Barry and Elva Cook, Andrew Spencer Japaljarri and the HALT team have laid out an influential foundation for such a study, if it were ever to be taken up and developed further. Reference to these matters are contained in the Sugarman script, through the behaviours of Sugarboy, the women in the Bacchae section and in the display of the four parts of Sugarbaby at his birth. The Snake, The Billy Goat, The Bull and the Baby. Each of these display different categories of behaviour of intoxicated people or different modes of Dionysian possession. They are of course charicatures of reality, but then, that is the poetic licence of dramatic presentations. Punch and Judy, for instance or the Ramaysma puppets and Greek tragedy are effective just because they are overstated and enhanced in characterisation.

The Snake could be seen as symbolic of the insidious, poisonous, secret, manipulative drunk.
The Billy Goat as the lustful, drink anything, eat anything, screw anything, good time drunk.
The Bull as the aggressive fighting drunk, who tries to boss many a brawl and frequently ends up behind the wheel of a lethal machine.
The Baby drunk who could symbolise most of the qualities of infantile dependency. The drunk whose idea of love is just to 'suck on you'.
These four states of intoxication, when represented by the three creatures and the baby seem to find immediate and amused recognition among Aboriginal people. When drunks are spoken of in terms of these symbolic figures, for example, at Injiramna by Elva or Barry, it provides a useful 'rule of thumb' way of describing the characters of various states of drunken dependency.

In the interview Bobby begins to open up the possibility of discussing these matters, within the terms of the imagery and metaphors of the Sugarman Story, giving some indication of the potential and potency of the myth in generating ways of using the Sugarman/Dionysos drama as the basis for elaborating 'Teaching Stories'.

2. SOME EVENTS

To illustrate and give some preparatory context for the comments made by Bobby Randall in his interview it may be helpful to describe several incidents which are common enough knowledge in Alice Springs.

(Some changes in name or place have been made to protect identities where appropriate)

1. The Ambulance.

Reported in Centralian Advocate Friday 18 April 1997.

An Ambulance crew are summoned to a town camp on the outskirts of Alice Springs at 8.30 pm.

A man is said to be having a seizure.

When the ambulance arrives they are faced with a crowd behaving in a threatening manner.

The Ambulance crew attend to the man, who does not appear to be in a life threatening state.

He is sitting on the back step of the ambulance for treatment.

Someone from the camp gets into the cab of the ambulance and drives off with it.

It is now technically stolen. Police and another ambulance are summoned. The ambulance crew withdraw from the fracas and begin walking the 6 kms back to town.

The ambulance is recovered about 1.30 am, significantly trashed, after having been driven 'wildly through bushland. $10,000 damage is reported including damage to a resuscitation unit.

2. The bridge.

Reported Alice Springs newspapers over Easter 1997 and also local knowledge.

A young woman is riding her motorcycle cross the bridge, heading east.

A blue car approaching the bridge, swerves across the road into the face of the oncoming motorcyclist and traffic.

The motorcyclist is struck.

The blue vehicle stops. A man and a woman get out, look, get back into the car and drive off. Witnesses notice they are staggering (drunk?).

A man is later arrested. The young woman has passed away from her injuries.
The story which then begins to circulate through his family and some Aboriginal circles is that it wasn’t his fault. “The white woman was driving on the wrong side of the road.”

The man is charged and bailed. The rumour or denial of his innocence persists.

3. Petrol


A group of young Aboriginal men, known as petrol sniffers, steal a Night Patrol vehicle and drive 300km into town. They abandon it and steal another.

At some point police give chase but withdraw from pursuit on the outskirts of town, as the stolen vehicle heads west.

30 kms later the car rolls. One boy is killed and another injured.

The boys are well known as petrol sniffers.

The rumours begin and the boy’s family blame the police for edging the car off the road.

The police take great pains to show that they had withdrawn 30 kms before and that there is not evidence to indicate any other vehicle was involved in the rollover. A grumbling rumour persists that the police are to ‘blame’. An Aboriginal police officer visits the community, speaks with the senior men and council and a community meeting is arranged on the grounds outside the mourning (sorry) camp. The question of responsibility is thoroughly discussed in open meeting.

The young man who drove the car and in a sense is responsible for the death, is reprimanded, thoughtfully and appropriately when he returns to the community. The degree of retribution is worked out. However, he returns to sniffing. The Aboriginal police man, despite having done an excellent mediating job finds himself ostracised by some of the community and vows never to place himself in that situation again.

“They can send a white policeman”.

4. The Rage

Personally observed incident.

A woman leaves her two year old child on the lawns of the local park and goes off drinking in the river.

Other members of the family pass by (coincidental?) and find the child. They go looking for the mother and not finding her leave the child with a white family trusted by them, where the child’s grandmother is thought to be staying overnight. The grandmother turns up at 1 am after having been searching the streets for the lost child, she takes over care of the child.

In the morning the mother comes round. The grandmother roundly admonishes her daughter for neglecting the child and going off drinking. The daughter retaliates by blaming the mother for taking her child care money (the grandmother, it turns out is the legal recipient of the childcare money because of the daughter’s habitual neglect of the child).

The abuse becomes violent. The daughter accuses her brother who found the child in the park, of stealing her handbag. Somehow this is seen by the mother as her justification for leaving the child and/or blaming the brother for stealing the baby off her (?). The mother leaves.
Later in the day she returns in company in a motor vehicle belonging to another brother. An argument arises and the mother smashes all the windows of the vehicle, from inside the vehicle with a brick. The smashing has the quality of a theatrical demonstration of rage.

Everyone leaves, abandoning the vehicle on the road outside the white family house. Later on she comes back with her husband and pleads with the white householder to tow the trashed car to the garage because it "has broke down". The white man declines to accept the responsibility, refusing further involvement but offers the phone to her to contact the garage.

(on a point of inter racial ethics, by recounting these stories I am not implying that Aboriginal individuals or family systems are any worse or better than other Australian individuals or family systems, whether drunk or sober. But the reader may require some comprehension of the reality of some of the characteristic, demanding situations which confront people such as Barry and Elva Cook or Bob Randall or Spencer Japaljarri in the course of normal lives and work. The 4 incidents described are reported in the newspapers or based on direct personal experience and are not from professional records.)

These incidents would appear to illustrate an almost pathological inability by the principle actors to take any responsibility for actions, to consider the consequences of their actions or to engage with the realities of motor vehicles, intoxication or the law, whether it is Aboriginal or European family based laws of concern and care, as Randall describes, or whether it is simple expression of compassion for another human being. It is as though these incidents demonstrate the degree to which the social and humanitarian contract has broken down, not only between white and black people and families but also within the Aboriginal family system. Much of the blame for this breakdown is attributed to alcohol. The stories told in the Grog Running Travels of the Sugarman provide mythological precedents for such behaviours and incidents. As the Sugarman stories are told people say, "ah yes that is why such and such happened" or "that is like when such and such happened," drawing connections between the Sugarman’s exploits and contemporary events. In this way the incidents can be raised without specifically naming, without directly shaming or blaming individual families. The stories can clearly state the problem and the matter raised, for instance, of “who is responsible” can be approached directly or obliquely. In much the same way, Jesus of Nazareth used the parables of the Sower, The Samaritan or the incident of the Woman Taken in Adultery to raise to conscious communal awareness, matters of responsibility for others and compassionate attention to one’s own failures and follies before blaming others.

Bobby Randall addresses the difficult matter of responsibility for offences when drunk. It would seem that the most recalcitrantly paradoxical problem facing those who have to deal with the consequences of the Dionysian mania revolves around this matter of responsibility.

Who is responsible for the care of whom?

Who is to blame when the care cycle breaks down?

Who is to be held responsible for offences committed by drunks or by otherwise ‘sane’ people when they are intoxicated?
These are issues which face the guardians of the social contract and social order in any township, city or culture, of course. But it has become particularly vital and poignant in Central Australia, given the phenomenal number of illnesses, injuries, accidents, and deaths attributed to intoxication.

Stories like those briefly outlined above are typical of the issue, which is debated one way another in countless meetings and in the pages of the local newspapers. Their tone is full of exasperation with the problem of how Aboriginal law and culture can accommodate and adapt itself to handle the problems raised by cultural contracts broken or corrupted through intoxication, as well as how European law can hold sway when many Aboriginal people, including the younger emergent generation, have little comprehension of European law (and sometimes, now, less of authentic Aboriginal law)- and have little interest in following it, anyway, whether it be the white law, customary law or humanitarian common sense.

A most pernicious aspect of this debate is the way in which the failure by a critical mass of Aboriginal people to control the social disorder or their own people, while intoxicated, is being used as justification to undermine the rights of Aboriginal people on native title and land access issues. The perceived irresponsibility of Aboriginal drinkers leads to ascribing to Aboriginal people, in general, an irresponsibility and lack of care for family, environment and nation. It is a small step from there to the argument of withdrawing rights and favours from indigenous people on the grounds of moral incompetence.

Shane Stone, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory has placed himself (and his party) firmly into this area of the debate in a newspaper interview *NT News*, April 1997, a point taken up in subsequent comments by other residents and politicians.

It can be seen from this, perhaps, that the Sugarman Project occupies a difficult terrain, fraught, as it is with political and social consequences. Alcohol abuse is not merely a health or law matter but cuts right into the heart of Aboriginal cultural integrity and its survival in an increasingly unsympathetic mainstream Australian population.
"This used to be a fighting camp, people were shouting and banging on doors," says Kevin Japaltjarri Wirri, boss of Mpwetyerre.

It is the only one of 17 Aboriginal town lease areas in Alice Springs from which alcohol is banned.

"The place was green because it was covered in beer cans and Moselle casks. Police and ambulance were here almost every day and night."

Today, the camp on South Terrace, opposite the casino, is green again, but the booze rubbish is gone; kids play on well-watered lawns and sleep soundly at night.

Kevin and his wife Doris imposed the grog ban late last January.

"No-one told us to do it," says Kevin, "not the government, not Tangentyere, not even the police."

"The missus and I thought 'Why can't we change it?' and we did."

It was a two year battle for the burly Luritja man and his Western Arrernte wife, with many discussions and disagreements.

In the end they put their foot down: A majority of the camp agreed - and those who didn't were asked to leave.

Support for the ban is now unanimous within Mpwetyerre, say Kevin and Doris.

"For weeks, Doris and I were standing at the gate, making sure no grog was being brought in," says Kevin.

Kevin moved to Alice Springs from Docker River, where his community involvement included publishing a magazine, in the early seventies.

He is a past president of Tangentyere Council, an ATSIC-funded organisation with an annual budget close to $9m ($8.7m in 1994-95), providing support to the "town lease areas" which are run as independent associations.

Kevin says it was the "train the trainer" program for town camp people, initiated by Tangentyere and offered by the Institute of Aboriginal Development, which equipped him for his leadership.

The program, he says, teaches people in the "camps" self-esteem, pride - and how to stay away from grog.

The couple's task to keep Mpwetyerre dry is made easier by the relatively small size of the lease, by the fact that it is fully fenced and has only one gate.

There's still drinking going on in the vicinity - but it now happens across the road, in the bed of the Todd, and on its banks, "it's really nice in our place now," says Kevin. "We should be an example for other camps."
BOB RANDALL  
The interview  
Commenting on The Sugarman.

"The Sugarman Project, I feel, brings in a perspective which I think our mob can really understand where alcohol came from. Because it isn't in our Tjukurpa so we've got no laws pertaining to treatment of people who may commit traditional offences when they are under the influence of alcohol.

I remember when alcohol first came in, in 1967. I was in Darwin at the time and everyone wanted to try it. I had a taste, I didn't like it, others didn't like it, but they thought there must be something good about it, otherwise why do so many of our mates do it. They made themselves do it.

They just got crazy. They started yelling out the names of the dead. They started talking loudly about parts of the ceremonies which they should not have. All these sorts of things started taking place. It was embarrassing everybody.

I got terrified because I saw the power of it, but when I raised it with my family in Central Australia I said "Yeah, its our problem"

And they say "Its not our problem, we don't get (earn) money from grog. We don't make grog. Grog is not in our Tjukurpa, in our Alcheringa. It belongs to white man. White man have got to do something for our people when it happens under grog."

These old men just refuse to accept it as their responsibility, even in telling our mob not to drink, because it isn't their role.

Our mob can only pass down the stuff from Tjukurpa which is in our law and is our obligation through Tjukurpa entitlement and expectations of who can pass the story down... through the old men.

Alcohol doesn't fit in there. Its kind of outside the way, so no one knows how to control it. or who should control it.

We see the problem it creates, we really do see it and feel it... but we still turn and walk away because we don't know... its a mystery thing.

The Sugarman Story can bring, I think, a way to get rid of the mystery.

The Sugarman story shows how alcohol was created at a certain place. It went through... walking...travelling...it went and did things at different places. All our ancestral stories are like that.
They started somewhere and they did these things before they went to another place (and did things there). That's what I found in the Sugarman Story. I could really fit it into Tjukurpa as I listened to it and saw it unfolding.

I reckon where the Sugarman Story can be of great value for a lot of our people who are working in Rehab programs and centres and even community programs. People can tell it in whatever way they wish to tell it and use it in whatever way they wish to use it.

We did it for the Alice Springs area, in Arrente Country, under the advice of Warlpiri, Arrente, Luritja, Pintupi, you know, they were all involved here in Central Australia. But when you take it out of Central Australia they have to reassess it and localise it into family groups where they wish to use it. For example, what we may say may be like Crow is here, tricky, causing trouble, ripping things up, swallowing babies, like it shows in the story. But Crow might be a really good thing elsewhere, or a different thing. But there are lots of birds and animals that can be used to tell the story.

My involvement with the Sugarman Project came because I said, "Hey, here is a new way of dealing with the problem which we have not been successful with." We need to try many different ways, honestly, until we get on top of it.

The story telling on its own is not going to do it. As I said, its got to be linked up with Kanyini (care and responsibility) The caring has got to be given back to the people. The responsibility has got to be given back to the people. Its got to be there. Their thing.

When I talk to the doctors and nurses who come to my course I say, "Quite often you guys do so much for me that you make me sick". I am talking on behalf of my people, you know? What I say is "Stop doing it. Allow me to have access to the resources. I really don’t need you. I can do it myself".

Only then will we be able to do it and correct what we determine is wrong. Alcohol is doing a lot of damage but at the moment it is (still) a fun thing. That's the sad part about it; (the idea is that) as long as its there it can never be wrong. As long as its got so many outlets.... Its there, really, because its everybody's problem, not only Aboriginal people’s.

The majority of our people don’t drink. Its the party times that really get the problems going. But of course we have a few really long termers who drink often and get into trouble.

* Roberts: The Sugarman is a story and the storyteller can take it in their own way and make it theirs? Randall: Everything has got to start off from story. My first life experiences were listening to story. Then the story was linked up with things. Stories related me to people. It all started with story and story is the way to go.
You can open up the story because none of us understand where this alcohol came from. Its just there... and everyone likes doing it.

Its important to be telling about it as a story, bringing it in as a ceremony and performing it in public, so a lot of people can see it and think about it. That's the way to go.

You know, I'd like to see that Sugarman Story used widely, right throughout this country. And elsewhere, for all people to see it. Everybody must see it.

Roberts; In the performance you and some of the other men come in and pick up the pieces of the cousin/king Penteus after he was ripped apart by the women, who had been sent mad by Sugarman
(In the old Greek language 'Penteus' means 'Sorrow'. So his name, the one who was ripped up, his real name is 'Sorrow'.)

In another scene in your role as the old man, you try to look after the young Sugarman and cure him from his madness. You finally give him wine to drink, to help ease his pain. Tell us about that.

Randall; When the performance was on (at Intjartnarna) I was asked to do that scene.
The old man looking after his son, or his grandson. That is really a real case. That actually happens and you know it. Its like you can't deny your child what you think may help them get better.

And until our old men can get back to that role and understand that alcohol isn't the good thing to share with the young, with your children or grandchildren... our old men must realise that because they were the ones who passed everything on... that doesn't mean they have to pass on the drinking

I saw that myself... in my son. I felt sorry for him. I was drinking and I thought that same drinking will help him feel better. That's how it happens.

Once us old men can say "This drink is not good. I will no longer pass it on to my children" and really start working towards teaching our kids that its not the way. We can do it by redirecting and strengthening that caring again. While there's no caring and no responsibility, there's nothing to build on. When you've got nothing then everything (about grog) might look like being worth following. but in the process of doing that, trying it out, one can do so much damage.

You can break, shatter, that link between you and your country, you and your family, you and your spirit, you and your beliefs, while trying out different ways of linking yourself with it. And alcohol is one of those ways of saying "Ah, this might help me get back ....".

That's all you are trying to do but it just doesn't work and its too late. You've physically made yourself sick. You've done too much damage to your society to your family. You've done too much damage. Nobody wants you if you are going to be a nuisance drinker. They keep pushing you away, hunting you away.
The old men say "We just don't know how to deal with it. It too big." and they keep referring always to... you know..." Its the Whiteman's thing".
Roberts; Do you think that the old men can connect with this Whitefella story, the Sugarman?

Randall; I think they can, judging from the comments by the older women, the grannies, who were there at the performance. I think the old men can connect with the Sugarman, once they see it they’ll really understand because it (alcohol) has got a beginning and that beginning is from outside. We are only one country of many and we were just a group of people of many that have to learn to live with it. It is there. It is powerful. It can make you happy but it can also make you break up your family and break up yourself.
Once we can understand it we can start warning our children. Society as a whole has got to help because our kids are part of the wider community now too.

With the teachings there must be legislation in place as well. You can’t have teachings with no support. You can’t have a society that believes in total freedom and do whatever you wish to do. You’ve got to have laws because it was the laws that made sure we are looked after properly. The laws that were handed down by Tjukurrpa, from Tjukurrpa.

Roberts; It seems as though; that if there is no story then there is no law?

Randall; Before grog came in here we had no drugs. We have got this tobacco (pitiuri or minkalpa) which is a pleasant thing for old people who want to chew it, as they do. They reckon it makes them feel good but it never ever made people go silly. It never made people get drunk, go silly like alcohol does.
So in our culture, in our Tjukurrpa way, as far as alcohol, there is no story there. And the story of Sugarman is, I think, the way to introduce it for an understanding so our people then get a chance to start to establish some punishment for crimes that are committed under the influence of alcohol.

The spearing of the leg…. (sometimes used as a form of punishment in traditional law)…. you know, it still isn’t the right punishment for that one because the person isn’t himself. They are walking with this alcohol.
You are only hurting the physical by then the alcohol has gone away. What you have got to do is spear the alcohol.
Unless we can get to that understanding, as old men, our job is going to be really difficult, but of course, the Sugarman Story is the way to begin to give that understanding.

Where I see Sugarman Story coming in; we need people, old people, young people to see it and then accept it and start developing that caring. From that caring then it will raise up their own story. Kanyini is gonna start again. (good title for song)
The young people might say “But this makes me feel good”.
The old people, they’ve got to learn to say “Well then, why don’t you stop at that point?”
“When you feel good, you know, walk away.”
Roberts. There are punishments related to stories?

Randall: In olden times we had criminal offences which could be punished and people knew about the punishment, if you did certain things. This other one (intoxication by alcohol) you are not really the same person, you’re somebody else. So who are you punishing? (laughs) The one who is really causing it, which is that person with the drink inside him; and his physical behaviour, or after he’s finished getting drunk and he’s sober and he doesn’t remember what he was doing. Are you going to punish the poor fellow for the thing that isn’t him really?

See. We’ve got no law dealing with that drunken, angry, ugly person. We’ve got nothing because we can’t find him when the alcohol is not there in him. We can only find him when the alcohol is in him. OK?

I don’t know how to (handle) that. That’s where the old people stop because that person is still my son, he’s still my nephew, she’s still my niece, he’s still my brother. But I don’t want to know him when he’s sleeping with that other bloke. I don’t have nothing to do with him. But when that other person is not there, that Sugarman is not there with him, he’s a really good person. But when they team up together (my brother and the Sugarman)... man... they can be really rotten.

Now its the Sugarman Story that helps when they’re together; they’re bad. Who are you treating or who are you punishing? And how can you punish them when they’re both together. That’s when you get them both, not when they separate after they’ve sobered up.

I don’t know what the answer is but I know that each of our people have got to be there, to see the story.

If I was one who knew that the punishment for doing a certain crime would be “I’m going to get a spear now”. I’ll think twice about doing it. But if I still do it I still have to offer myself to be punished. Today, that caring strength is so weak in a drunken person that they’ll run away from punishment. They’re weak. They know, they say “I didn’t do it, that other thing made me do it”. They blame that Sugarman, they blame him (laughs) so they’ve got an excuse not to be punished. So they run away. This new thing...what does the old man say today? “Alcohol, it’s not in our Dreaming, it’s not in our law, it’s not in our Tjukurrpa.”

But it can be once its performed to everybody and maybe we’ll have an understanding of something we can create or base the story on so that we can do something about it which will help our young people and ourselves and make the family strong.
Sugarmen Story

A one hour documentary for television

An extraordinary performance in the red sands of Australia's Central Desert near the spectacular MacDonnell Ranges is part of a new approach to dealing with the devastation of alcohol amongst Australia's indigenous people.

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CHAPTER 14

NEWSPAPER REVIEWS AND COMMENTARIES

This chapter collects together a selection of newspaper reviews of the performances of Sugarman during 1996 and 1997. The Review and evaluation process included videoed interviews and written comments from invited audience and participants and a full meeting of the cast and some audience over a weekend afternoon after the August performance 1996 in the rehearsal shed. This was filmed in entirety and is available.

The 1997 events also collected many conversations, written comments and three review articles. A selection of the reviews is reproduced in facsimile followed by Karen Hethy's article in full as a comprehensive representative account by a participant. Further commentaries and interviews have been recorded by Christopher Brocklebank on Video and David Roberts, some of which is edited and appears on the documentary video film.(enclosed)

1. ALICE SPRINGS NEWS. September 1996 by Kieran Finnane
2. REAL TIME REVIEW. December 1996 by Joy Hardiman
3. THE REPUBLICAN. May 9 1997 by John McBeath
4 ALICE SPRINGS NEWS. August 27 and September 24 1997 by Kieran Finnane
5 ALICE SPRINGS NEWS. October 8 1997 by Greg Snowdon
6. SPINNING YARNS. September 1197 by Karen Hethy

Written review comments not reproduced here, only because of economy of space, but which I wish to acknowledge came from Michael Rohan, Gabrielle Star, Jenny Knott, Jane Barton, Rhona Jason Smith, Jean Pierre Voos.

NB. This chapter was originally established to collect the above items. They were presented under separate cover for examiners information. Most of these items are now included in:
• The Sugarman Performance text
• Appendicies to PHD document
• Sugarman Papers Vol. 1. (INTJARTNAMA Publications)
The page numbers 222-235, I retained to preserve the original page formatting.
CHAPTER 15

APPROACHING SHIVA.
A little foray into to the possibility of Dionysos as an incarnation of Shiva.
A note on Soma and the metamorphosis of sweetness.

"They sit there forever gleaming, shining and gleaming;
They keep on carrying nectar in brimful vessels.

The red earths burning incessantly like fire;
This is where they have been living.

They are flaming forever like blazing fires;
This is where they have been living.

They are forever performing ceremonial quivering with their chests;
This is where they have been living”.

from T. Streblow’s rendition of the Honey Ant Song vs 2-24 Songs of Central Australia. p. 690

1. TRAVELLING DIONYSOS; INDIA AND AUSTRALIA
In the course of researching into the Travels of Dionysos, I was fortunate to be able to spend a brief six weeks, during 1995, in Greece, some of the islands, Ios, Naxos, Ikaria and then continue into Turkey. The experience of actually moving through that country, backed up by previous passages through Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon and Syria has given some weight to the script and the imagery of the Travels of Dionysos. I am only too aware of how cursory that engagement has been, but it was better than musing at home in the travel section of the Alice Springs library. Ideally I would like to expand upon the Notes to the Script with a chapter on each of the sites of Dionysos’ travels, with an attempt to make more accessible the implications for therapeutic recovery which can be derived from a ‘spiritual DNA chain’ of the linked stories comprising at least those of Cybele - Istar/Adonis - the Israel traditions - Isis/Osiris - Inanna/Dumuzi - Zoroaster/Homa/Phoenix - Silence (symbolically located in the Afghanistan region) and finally the Shiva composition. This is far too large a task to undertake as an exposition here, although it is hoped that in the Script itself I have managed to plant some of the seeds of such an exposition.
I make, in this chapter, a little foray into Shiva’s territory, at least to indicate the rich possibilities of taking seriously the legend of Dionysos’ travels to India and his acquisition of ochre or saffron robes. Alain Danielou (1992) in his study of the relationship between the Dionysian and Shivite traditions takes this matter much further. My main interest, however, in this chapter, is to open up some discussion about the mysterious substance referred to in Hindu and Sanskrit traditions as ‘Soma’.

Since 1969 I have made several visits to India, mainly to the Deccan Plateau region around Pune/Ahmednagar/Aurangabad and in particular to Meherabad, the site of much of Meher Baba’s work, where I have friends/family and connection. This has established some experiential foundation for an appreciation of Indian traditions. In December 1996 I made another trip, specifically with the intention of trying to get some embodied sense of the Shiva/Dionysos connection. This was done by observation and by conversation with some erudite and experienced interpreters of the avataric traditions of Rama and Krishna and classic mythologies of Shiva and Vishnu; and included the varieties of intoxication associated with Shiva/Vishnu, be it by alcohol or other substances, or more purely through divine intoxication.

There exists a fascinating and comprehensive introduction to the variety of spiritual intoxications in a first hand observed study by Dr. William Donkin (1971) in The Wayfarers, an account of the Indian travels and work of Meher Baba with the mad and the divinely intoxicated ‘masts’. For a period at Meherabad I had the opportunity to act as a carer to one notable ‘mast’ known as Mohammed described in Donkin’s book (p43). I had the responsibility for helping get him to and from his toilet and bath. These were epic journeys, sometimes taking half an hour to shuffle the twenty metres or so from his room to the bath house. Mohammed, who might be erroneously diagnosed under DSM4 as some kind of catatonic schizophrenic exudes a sweet, humourous spirit sometimes piquantly spiced with streams of abusive invective. He is in a state of permanent spiritual intoxication.

Of the people I spoke with on the 1996 trip, particular Bal Natu, who as a Brahmin is considered by Hindu custom to be qualified to comment on the Vedas, prolific writer and poet, Bhai Kalchuri and leading Ayurvedic practitioner based in Pune, Dr. Nanal, all placed the spiritual complexities of the relationship between Shiva, (as Destroyer), Vishnu, (as Preserver) within the context of ordinary human struggles and also indicated a place in this dynamic of Soma, the intoxicating substance of creation. All three were explicit in the way the Avatars (the ‘descent’ or incarnations of divine powers) of Vishnu embodied the spiritual fire and the divine sweetness of ‘God’ and that contact with those embodiments, be it Rama, Krishna or Christ or other authentic manifestations, could produce in the ‘lover’ an ecstatic and sweet bliss, a divine frenzy and even a madness. Musical and poetic expressions of this intoxication can be found in devotional qawwals songs (of which Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan was a contemporary exponent), in Hindu bhajans, epitomised by the songs of Mira, as well as in Sufi music and verse, available in the West in the works of the poets, Rumi, Hafiz, Kabir and Attar, who represent the best.
The following reflections, although sparing and simplistic, at least begin to fill out the notion of Dionysos as an ecstatic and dangerous Western bound incarnation of Shiva.

2. A BRIEF HINDU COSMOLOGY

I am indebted to O’Flaherty’s (1975) edited Hindu Myths for help on the formulations and sources below and to Danielou’s (1992) scholarship which traces many intriguing links between Dionysos and the Shivite traditions.

The activities of the Hindu cosmology revolve around the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In their male and female (anthropomorphized) shapes these three are the fundamentals of existence.

The Creator, presented as Brahma and his female consort, sometimes figures as Laxsmi, sometimes Kali or simply called ‘The Mother’. Another version is as Maya, The Mother of all Illusion - The Universe itself. Kali, and sometimes Maya, is often conceived of as the primary divine female who can incarnate as the consorts of Vishnu or Shiva. She has, in that sense multiple identity and a fierce independence, yet at the same time is the female gender aspect of the basic trinity.

The Preserver is presented as Vishnu, with a principle consort as Ruhada.

The Destroyer is presented as Shiva with Parvarti/Sati as beloved.

These three elements operate in constant interdependence and opposition to each other. The mythological dramas of the incarnations, struggles, alliances and love play of these six main male/female characters embody and display the cosmic elements of creation. The subtlety and complexity of this play, is displayed in ancient texts such as the Upanishads, the Vedas, the Puranas, the Mahabharata, and the Ramayana, which constitute the main scripts of a richly entangled metaphysic.

These texts could be described as the main body of the Tjukurpa of India. Using “Tjukurpa” here to mean the acts of the fundamental creation beings whose activities generate all subsequent living beings and natural phenomenon and whose doings and sayings prefigure and place codes of living and dying into the cultural, social ecosystem.

The themes of creation, or rather the ways by which creation comes about in various versions are variations on themes such as:

1. activities with fire or sacrifices into the fire,
2. dismemberments, including multiple beheadings,
3. incest and variations of sexual violence,
4. a stirring or churning process which involves fire, conflict and conflagration as much as it involves the emergence of the sweet liquids of life - milk, honey, nectar and wine.
Two principle gods or powers who regularly participate in creation acts and in further dramas of the gods are Agni as elemental fire and Soma, defined according to a Sanskrit glossary:

"Bliss or pleasure principle at work behind mind and senses".

It is these two elements of Soma and Agni in relation to Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu (in male and female shapes) then, perhaps Indra (as Zeus), Kama (as original Eros/Love), Yama (as Death) and the Demons as a version of anarchic and titanic spiritual powers - who provide us with the core pantheon of Indian creation acts in so far as it pertains to Dionysos' drama.

We are looking at nine primal elements or twelve or more, if we consider the female partners and their various incarnations of the trinity as separate entities. However at this stage I will keep the list simple, including male and female as one composition.

1. Brahma/ Laxsmi/Kali
2. Vishnu/ Radha
3. Shiva/Parvarti
4. Agni
5. Soma
6. Indra (Lord of the natural worlds)
7. Kama (Love)
8. Yama (Death)
9. The Demons.

A few descriptive words on the nature and qualities of each is necessary.

1. BRAHMA

Brahma, as the primal creator force is often referred to as:

'The Grandfather', this name is preceded in some myths, perhaps dating back to more aboriginal times, by a being named Prajapati and by a 'cosmic man' named Purusha. From whose body parts the visible universe is composed.

Prajapati's primeval creative act is incest with his daughter. (Rig Veda quoted in O'Flaherty, p.251)

Purusha's dismemberment contains the concept of creation by the "formation of distinct elements out of the primeval cosmic flux, the evolution of order out of chaos, the propping apart of heaven and earth". (ibid)

The concept of creation as ‘separation’ remains at the heart of much later Hindu mythology and forms the animating spark of the conflict between gods and non gods (demons or human beings).

The creator as Mother sometimes is incorporated into the image of Brahma and sometimes as a separate Goddess, with her own creative adventures. She appears as Devi, Ditt, and as Kali and is variously capable
of metamorphosis into becoming the consort of the members of the trinity. This process of transformations of the primal gods and the interchangeability of their functions is a feature of Hindu cosmology which is bewildering to the uninitiated but makes sense once one becomes familiar with the basic elements. Indeed Hindu thought and feeling patterns move in interlacing cycles and can happily maintain contradictory systems of logic at the same time, not only in metaphysics but also in the ordinary activities on the roads, on building sites and in commerce, as many Westerners who are novices to India discover to their perplexity. Given that so much of Dionysos’ creation mythology is composed thematically around variations of dismemberment, and is equally contradictory, and can be seen as a metaphysic of the irrational, it is worth being on the alert for resonances. Further study and a detailed comparison of creation processes found in Hindu cosmology, in the Dionysian dynasties and in (Central) Australian Aboriginal cosmology may reveal significant parallel themes of creation via acts of incest, sexual deviations, swallowing and regurgitation and partitions of bodies, operating on a dimension of logic confounding to rational containment.

II. SHIVA.

The history of Shiva is perhaps too complex to convey in this brief summary. Suffice it to say that this figure is named Shiva/Rudra while his female element is Parvarti/Sati.

His seat is usually located in the Himalayas, with Parvarti, on Mt. Kailash (often also named Mt. Meru), where the divine couple spend a long time in erotic engagements. Shiva is fond of plunging under the water into divine lakes and emerging a long time later. In one story he is entrusted with a major act of creation by Brahma, he accepts it and disappears under the water for so long that everyone gets fed up and the job is given to Vishnu. Shiva emerges at last, sees that Vishnu has been active in his absence, gets very sulky and commences dismantling Vishnu’s work. Hence the pattern of Vishnu as the preserver and maintainer of creation and Shiva as the recurrently emerging destroyer.

These acts of destruction are carried out in various ways, but fire seems to be Shiva’s favourite. His aspect is described as terrifying. He is usually naked, covered in ash or ochres, carries skulls and his third eye blasts anything in its path, including Eros/Kama, who he petulantly destroys at one point. He is generally fairly moody, dramatic and remote in his concerns for others. Death is his business but so too are intoxicants. It is worth noting that devotees of addictive substances and drugs find their place in Hindu society as the devotees of Shiva. It would be unfair to demonise Shiva as an anarchic and amoral drug baron of heaven, for his nature is in fact composed of enormous energies which can be harnessed by Vishnu when required, as in the destruction of the three cities of the demon dynasty who got out of hand. He is also portrayed as the ‘dancing god’ and his erotic powers and the martial drama between Shiva and his wife sets the pattern for tantric relationships.

A particularly moving archetypal drama of love and separation is revealed when Parvarti wills herself to death when her father omits to invite her and her husband to the universe’s first great party. When he finds her body, Shiva is cosmically distraught. He attempts to preserve her life and refuses to leave her. He carries
her, striding in grief across the continent. Her wondrous body decomposes. Where parts of her body fall so are established sites sacred to Shiva/Parvarti. (See Diana Wolkstein’s version in her First Love Stories (1991)

To my mind this poignant cosmological tale is truly in the dimension of Tātakramya; and it is for this reason that the recommended inset into the travels of Dionysos includes this story as representative of the mysteries of Shiva.

III. VISHNU

The interplay and interdependence of the three fundamental forces in creation is characteristic of Hindu cosmology and is expressed in everyday interactions. In this sense the Hindu position is radically different to the more dualistic Christian position which is probably deeply influenced by its ancestry in Middle Eastern and even Zoroastrian notions of an eternal conflict between two forces; such as:

1. light and dark,
2. good and evil,
3. Christ and Satan,
4. Mohammad and Shaitan,
5. the saved and the damned,
6. the believers and the infidels,
7. heaven and hell,
8. the above and the below,
9. the in and the out,
10. the male and the female.

This divisive, dualistic and often brutally splitting cosmic morality is rapidly dissolved in the intoxicating tumultuous brew of Brahma - Shiva - Vishnu.

Vishnu, in his sublime original role and his various incarnations is responsible for preserving and maintaining the movement and play of creation and destruction. Because Vishnu intervenes benevolently in human affairs he is held most reverently in mind by the general Hindu population. Rama/Sita and Krishna/Lakshmi/Radha are the divine couples through whom or in whom Vishnu has historically most visibly incarnated. Zoroaster, the Bhuddha, the Christ as Jesus, and the Prophet Mohammed are also considered by some who follow the Hindu metaphysic, as among the great incarnations of Vishnu, acting as recurrent cosmic preserver and saviour. A new incarnation, Kalki or the White Horse Avatar is anticipated to bring this current age to its end. He/it may already have arrived. It is also quite within Vishnu’s capacity to take minor and stimulating incarnations at any time to preserve and protect his lovers or to safeguard the course of creation and balance the activities of Shiva. The mysteries of the incarnation of divine beings or powers in both the Hindu and ancient Mediterranean cosmologies need to be understood somewhat to appreciate the behaviours of Dionysos as an incarnation of (what exactly?)

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The Avatar of Vishnu is held responsible for preserving the life of creation and the progression of souls through it. To do this particularly interesting job the Avatar is spoken of (by Bhanu Kalschuri) as managing the ‘divine plan’. *The Mahabharata*, looked at in this light, is the account of how Krishna managed his job, in his time. *The Ramayana* was Ram’s effort. Brahma is the ‘boss’ for creation but Vishnu is ‘the manager’, as in the *kirta/kundungurru* relationship familiar in the Central Australian ritual management of creation. Shiva could be said to represent that part of *Tjururrpa* which acknowledges that things will fail if ceremonies are not carried out and that a destructive aspect pervades reality constantly and must be constantly watched for and contained. Whether there are, in fact any connections between Australian *Tjururrpa* and the imaginative transmissions of prehistorical Indian populations is a matter worth investigating.

In terms of the Dionysos epic, Vishnu embodies those aspects of the story where gathering, containment and healing appear. Whereas most of the encounters in The Travels involve Dionysos in meeting his divine kin, who have themselves experienced various forms of dismemberment, conflagration or de-integration, the underlying presence of a preserver is also there. In the Sugarman text, after the final meeting with Shiva, as a conscious confrontation with the extreme polarity of the destroyer, there is a swing towards the pole of Vishnu, the gatherer- together aided by love. Thus the idea of there being a healing process is kept in motion.

The story of Shiva’s destruction of the three cities by the titanic demons (because of their Hubris), by using the arrow of Vishnu, is worth noting in the context of the reciprocity of preservation and destruction. The arrow (missile) which Shiva launches acts in a remarkable way. The three separate cities are destroyed by one arrow simultaneously. The arrow is composed of Vishnu, Agni and *Soma*. It acts by collapsing compressing or imploding the three cities not by exploding them. In a sense they are destroyed by an overkill of containment. (ibid *Hindu Myths* page 125)

IV. AGNI, FIRE

Agni is the constant companion of the creators and the destroyers in the Hindu universe. It takes shape as forms of light, heat and energy, first as the sun, but also all the way through to the essential life support system of the cooking fire. There is a lot of excitement in the texts about Agni and particularly in his incarnation as a sacrificial fire which ‘eats’ offerings and bodies. Sacrifice in fire seems to figure preeminently in the minds of the early people. Agni is referred to as the ‘mouth of the gods’ who ‘eats’ what is offered to them. He *has* a function of purification and companionship (as in the *dhuni* fire ceremony which I have witnessed) and it manifests as the will of the Creator, Preserver or Destroyer according to circumstances. In Ayurvedic medicine, Agni is identified as one of the basic elements of the body along with *Soma*.
V. SOMA. NECTAR. INTOXICATION.

Soma is one of the three components of Shiva’s arrow, one of the three Ayurvedic elements and like Agni is constantly incorporated or involved in the primeval creative acts.

Shiva, when requested by the sages to describe everything about him and his ways declares;

“ I am Agni joined with Soma and I am Soma mingled with Agni...”  (Ibid. Hindu Myths, p 147)

I must confess that, at first, I found myself puzzled by this ‘Soma’ and what it might have to do with the Dionysos Project. Except in so far as it seemed to be suggesting that a particular nectar-like substance and a particularly pure form of intoxication or blissful ecstasy is considered to be a fundamental and endemic element in creation.

Soma is spoken of constantly in the texts as ‘the nectar of the gods’ and seems to be related to a similar substance Homa referred to in ancient Persian spiritual literature. Homa is also the name for a mythical bird of perennial resurrection, of phoenix like qualities; (which, incidentally, is the source of the Persian Phoenix scene in The Travels.) However, at least to the uninitiated, little about the actual substance or composition of Soma is clearly declared or described.

In India, By questioning in different directions and through an exploration of Ayurvedic medicine, which is derived from the Vedas I began to get the sense that Soma is a way of referring to the vital substance of creation. Shiva speaks of it as Ambika his wife and the moon. The creation myth of the ‘churning of the waters by the great mountain’ describes the gods attempt to produce ambrosia/nectar from that operation, for some very significant purpose. It takes them many cataclysmic operations to extract the ambrosia/Soma, including a terrifying war in heaven. Finally Indra secures the substance from the enraged and cheated demons, who expected that ownership of the ambrosia would fall to them. Indra (considered to be the equivalent of Zeus) gives the “treasure of ambrosia to the diademed Vishnu to guard and keep very safe”. (Hindu Myths page 273-280). Another version, quoted by O’ Flaherty (p280) describes how Indra rescues the ambrosia from the demon Susna, who carries the precious matter in his mouth. Indra tricks him by turning himself into a globule of honey, Susna swallows him, Indra turns himself into a falcon inside Susna, swoops through his mouth, grabs the ambrosia and escapes. O’Flaherty makes some interesting comparisons to the theme of swallowing and regurgitation in the Greek legends, particularly the familiar Kronos’ swallowing of the baby gods, Zeus’ siblings and the later swallowing/vomiting exchange between Kronos and Zeus, which we take up in the Sugarman script. Story 1. Scene 8.

“crow was sitting thinking/ the young man said: hello old man/ I brought you something.... what? really sweet...baby blood... give me that.... crow sipped it/ hmmm he said, really sweet.. he drank the lot/he fell out of the tree....he hit the ground/ he started vomiting...”

Throughout the Hindu early mythology, Soma is specified as the food and certainly the drink of the gods. Its sweetness as nectar is declared, it is desired and an essential ingredient in the basic stuff of life. It combines...
with fire to make up Shiva himself- *Soma* as the ‘bliss or pleasure principle at work behind mind and senses’ and from Shiva himself comes the statement, “All this universe has Agni and *Soma* as its soul”.

My current understanding is, that *Soma* is indeed a way of referring to the the soul of mankind, an image of the perennial and indestructible life of nature, as Kerényi suggests in his work on Dionysos, where he refers to this ‘substance’ as *zoe*: (Kerényi, 1976. Introduction) *Soma* seems to be a way of describing, nominating or personifying the substance of which we are composed and which the gods consume or drink. Whereas it is described as a nectar and ambrosia, the essential spirit of *Soma* would seem to be its nature as bliss, as ecstatic sensation, as intoxication in a sublime sense. Perhaps ‘*zoe*’, as Kerényi suggests, is the closest the Greeks come to nominating the same experiential material, and it becomes personified in Dionysos, or maybe Dionysos is the custodian of at least some part of this ambrosial substance. It is worth noting that the Orphics eventually identify Dionysos with the Soul of Man, humanity being composed partly of the Titans and partly of Dionysos. The spiritual discipline of life becomes the task of extracting the sweet Dionysian soul from the embroiling and perpetual tyranny of the Titans.

Wine, in the Vedas, is listed among the essential fluids and elements and it is a by-product of the churning operation set upon with intent by the early creation beings as they try to manufacture *Soma*. (ibid 273) There is a distinction made between wine, milk, honey, *Soma*; yet it seems that what is being described as *Soma* is not so much a substance but a highly refined or purified energy form which is compatible with fire. It is not consumed by fire and holds in perpetuity the experience or sensation of intoxicating bliss. Is this a way of personifying the mysterious element which comprises our fundamental nature when it is referred to as ‘the wife of Shiva’? As such, *Soma* probably manifests itself in the presence of the gods as a feminine element, as food and drink, as song and as the excitement which people feel when the gods become a presence. The movement of the gods is accompanied by intoxication. The very substance of the divine beings themselves may be figured as *Soma* and it is this substance which humans yearn to partake of, yearn to imbibe... ‘the wine of divine love and divine being’ as the Sufi poets figure it. Those familiar with ecstatic states, with the bliss induced by contemplation, by devotional music and ceremony and by a participation in the processes of nature will find this concept easy enough to grasp and appreciate.

It is my feeling that we are brought now to the relevance of *Soma* to Dionysos. If the Orphics speak of Dionysos as the soul of humanity. If we consider engaging with ‘Dionysos’ as a way of incarnating or personifying the spirit of intoxication and as a representation to humanity of the possibility of feeling the active and actual fundamental forces of vitality in nature (*zoe*) then I think we are getting close to associating *Soma* with Dionysos in at least his benevolent and joyous aspect. Somehow the god of wine and the ‘wine of gods’ epitomise an image of some elusive but sought for experiential state which is felt to be exquisitely essential to life. An essence of vitality. I confess it all seems a bit elusive to the rational mind but I suppose we are talking mysticism.

*Soma*, as an actual concoction of a specific recipe of now unknown ingredients, seemed to have existed. Dr.
Nanal (pers. comm.) speaking on Ayurvedic medicine mentioned the loss of the actual recipe. Bal Nauti, in conversation, suggests that the substance was used in ceremonies to keep participants awake and alert during long hours of singing and devotion. He suggests that its use became degraded as an intoxicant for its own sake and the ceremonial use was lost. Whether or not there was an actual substance, what its properties were as a stimulant or psychotropic drug is beyond the scope of this research. O’Flaherty (ibid) suggests an interpretation of Soma as a psychotropic mushroom but her evidence is not currently available to me. There may have to be a distinction made between Soma as a herbal or intoxicant cocktail and Soma as an essence of creation. It is difficult to conceive of Soma, simply as a drink or drug as being elevated to such a position as to be spoken of as the essence of Shiva in the primary sacred texts. This might be rather like saying that wine is (always) actually the blood of Christ. Some form of mystically induced transubstantiation may take place within a ceremonial boundary and in the mind and heart of the communicant, to make it so. The rest of the time wine is simply wine. It is likely though, that Soma exists on several planes of reality. Hindu’s speak of the three worlds. The physical plane, the subtle and the mental and Soma no doubt has its place in each of the three worlds.

3. ON A SPIRITUAL KINSHIP OF DIVERSE CULTURES AND METAMORPHOSIS OF SWEETNESS

In the mythological account of the churning of the waters by the mountain, where the gods are attempting to create the nectar which becomes Soma, it is clearly stated that poisons also arise. Shiva himself absorbs the poisons into his own body. It gives him a blue throat.

When I look at the churning scene (Hindu Myths ibid 273 etc) from the point of view of Tjukurrpa it seems quite clear that we see here a creation action in process which seems closely akin to behaviours described or witnessed by the aboriginal/ original inhabitants of the Australian sub continent:

1. A series of creation figures dismantle part of the landforms and create a turbulence.
2. They collect substances. They churn, rub or combine these substances with tremendous energy being invested and evoked. Mountains, trees and lakes are used to do the work.
3. Fires and cataclysmic events occur. Poisons and the nectars are released.
4. An immensely powerful creation figure takes care of the problem of the toxins by absorbing them himself and then provides the substance for the use of the other creation beings.
5. It is henceforth considered to be part of the essence of life and can be used from then on in vitalising people, gods and creation itself.
6. It is twinned with fire and is, henceforth, part of the principal creation beings themselves.

It is thought provoking compare this story to the Ibinalija Song Cycle quoted by Strelohow in Songs of
Central Australia, which recounts the emergence of a creation being, from a deep hole, sometimes in the form of a ceremonial pole, at other times as a mythic figure. After the emergence there follow various battles, his wounding and eventual subsidence into the earth followed by a massive release of honey, a deluge of sweetness which covers the ground. It brings into focus the same pattern visible in the Nazareth saga of a divine being whose self-sacrifice also produces an imperishable sweetness, symbolically represented as wine. Jesus poignantly declares at his last supper that the wine in his cup is his blood and the bread on his plate is his body. The blood/wine and the bread/body becomes an expression of and incarnation of his spiritual presence/essence, which will be perpetually available to his lovers after his departure and sacrificial death. The wine itself is felt as both wine as fermented grape juice and also a spiritual substance through which he nourishes and communes with his Christian family. The dismembered body of Christ is distributed among his devoted circles and the wine is passed out as a substance which animates the soul. There are resonances here with the Mithras ceremony and the Dionysian. The Communion in its origins, apart from the obvious connection to Passover, perhaps has been adapted from a kind of spiritual increase ceremony which is not all that far, in essence, from the sharing of Dionysos’ dismembered body by the maenads in their ritualised post-hunt feast. Soma or the nectar of Shiva/Vishnu, rolling flood of nectar of Ilbalintja, the blood/wine of Christ and the intoxicating essence of Dionysos are somehow in some kind of subliminal conjunction. How has this kinship of nectar and kinship of intoxication developed through the long history of ceremony in many nations and continents? Obviously that needs a prolonged and careful study into the phenomenology of religion and probably also into the history of psychotropic plants, drugs and intoxicants.

If the stories about these substances, or ceremonial rites and beings are a way of trying personify and catch and convey the sense of ‘bliss’ that lies in the substance of creation then it makes sense that people would take pains to recreate the stories as mnemonics of the sacred.

There seems to be recorded also, the tension, and maybe confusion, between bliss as a spiritually induced experience and bliss as a substance induced experience. Also between intoxication as regeneration and intoxication as degeneration.

In some cultures this tension is managed ritually, by binding the pursuit of, let us say ‘Shiva’s wife’ (Ambika/Soma) within ceremonially managed structures or spiritually disciplined relationships. My understanding and observation is that the Arrernte and other Centralian indigenous groups have ceremonial structures for managing such an affair and they have Tjukurrpa beings with whom a relationship induces that intoxication. Whether these fundamental ceremonial structures can and will be extended to incorporate the intoxications available through strong alcohol, a new comer to the Aboriginal pantheon, is the question of the hour.

I conclude with an extract from Strehlow’s translation of the Ilbalintja Cycle. (see his full version Songs of
The song describes, according to Strehlow- a great flood of sweet *nijuamba*- the dark nectar of the honeysuckle blossoms- which comes down from the honeysuckle totemic sites of the east. It roars across the Burt Plain like a great river and sweeps Karora (the venerable paternal hero of the Ilbilintja cycle) with his sons back into the depths of the Ilbilintja soak (water hole). Strehlow notes that the whole set of songs belongs equally to two clans and *‘establishes an indissoluble bond of friendship between them’*. ‘The eastern owners of the Nijuamba Song chant these verses in order to produce an abundance of honeysuckle blossoms in good season.’

It is my hunch that it is song cycles such as this which hold the clue to the adaptation and development of a matrix of Central Australian *Tjukurrpa* which are already in existence and *‘qualified’* to handle alcohol intoxication and its consequences. I have in mind, possibly the grevillia and corkwood cycles, the honey ant and other *parma/wama* cycles combined with already extant song cycles which deal with matters of justice and the handling of incest and violence. A bond of indissoluble friendship could be established between ‘two clans’ - Those who are custodians of the cycles such as these and those who are custodians of the song cycles which have travelled from the far north, from the countries which found and created fermentation in its most delightful and dangerous forms. The countries of Dionysos.

Whether it will ever be possible to significantly arrange such a creative and significant *‘meeting of the clans’* within a properly constituted ceremony milieu, remains to be seen. There are many problems, not least of which is the passing away of significant elder custodians of many of these song cycles and the reluctance of the custodians of Western alcohol culture to engage with bush Aboriginal people on the same plane of existence, preferring to advocate for the rationalist behavioural quasi scientific approach which tends to be nervous of the mythopoetic code. At least the Sugarman Project has laid out some of the groundwork and discovered, in experience some of the difficulties and the potentials.

The extract from the Ilbilintja/Nijuamba song cycle finale is interspersed with explanatory notes condensed from Strehlow’s (p141-142) notes. It would be inappropriate to reproduce this extract for any public use outside the context of this document without first ascertaining the current protocols re its use.

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Ilbilintja Cycle extract.
1. The honeysuckle ancestor is coming down from the east with his sweet river of nju'amba, composed of drops of nectar from untold thousands of honeysuckle blossoms, uniting to form a great river. He sings proudly about its strength

"The sweet dark juice is flowing forth;  
From the centre of the chalice it is flowing forth.

From the slender pistil it is flowing forth;  
The sweet dark juice is flowing forth.

From the wrinkled cup it is flowing forth:  
From the centre of the chalice it is flowing forth.

Let our sweet sap sound afar like a torrent;  
Let our sweet sap rush along like a torrent.

The river rolls down over the parched plain, seeking to encircle and engulf all things.

On the fringes of the cracked rolling plain,  
On its fringes let the flood of nectar roll along!"

2. It reaches the ceremonial site and encircles the place where a significant ancestral being was hunted. It fills up all the hollows in the parched ground and then surges forth once more

"Let our sweet sap encircle them with rings;  
Let the flood of nectar encircle them with rings.

Let our sweet sap ooze forth from the ground;  
Let our dark honey ooze forth from the ground!

Let our sweet sap rush along like a torrent!  
Let our sweet sap sound afar like a torrent!

Let it break strong intertwined roots in its course;  
Let the flood of nectar break down the thicket in its course!"

3. The flood reaches the Ilbulunja site and casts out a stranger, a character in the story.

"Let our sweet sap cast him out and away;  
Let our sweet sap ooze forth from the ground!"

4. The flood swirls around the father Karora and all his men. The foam rings rise higher on their bodies, till the flood has engulfed them all.

"Let the rararara (nectar) flood encircle them with rings  
Let our sweet sap encircle them with rings!"

end
CHAPTER 16

CONCLUSION
Politics of Dismemberment

'What giants?' asked Sancho Pancha.
'Those you see there,' replied his master, 'with their long arms. Some giants have them about six miles long.'
'Take care, your worship,' said Sancho, 'those things over there are not giants but windmills, and what seem to be their arms are the sails which are whirled around in the wind and make the millstone turn.'
'It is quite clear,' replied Don Quixote, 'that you are not experienced in this matter of adventures...'
Cervantes p 68

It has become obvious that the Sugarman Project is a work in progress. It will continue.
The thesis work has been crucial discipline for and support to the thought and action in developing the project, in bringing it to performance production, in considering the methodology of intercultural relationship and in evaluating the therapeutic potential of the story for a number of purposes, not only in Aboriginal Alcohol rehabilitation practice.

There are formulations on theory and interpretation of the myth and the experience of the performance which are in process but not matured enough for inclusion. There are possibilities opening up for implementation of the Sugarman as a cultural therapeutic event in remote areas and in the city but such implementation still depends upon the exigencies of funding. Aboriginal family politics, the health of some key people and a sense of appropriate timing. I do not want theory to get ahead of observable practice.

For these reasons the Conclusion may best be framed as an evaluation of the project so far within six categories.

1. The adequacy of the response to the seminal question from Andrew Spencer, which provoked the project.

2. The adequacy of the actions taken in the 'real world', especially in terms of a community action research enterprise.
3. The adequacy, quantity and quality of the artistic or cultural presentations of the Sugarman as a performance offering.

4. The quality and manner in which the intercultural collaborations were initiated and maintained. Particularly viewed from the point of view of the original intention to create a *milieu* for such a process.

5. The adequacy of light shed on therapeutic practice or therapeutic metaphor, including particularly any contribution to an understanding of *Tjukurrpa* and the Dionysos story as potentially useful in that context.

6. Theoretical possibilities for further development.

**1. ADEQUACY OF RESPONSE TO THE SEMINAL QUESTION.**

The purpose of the thesis, as stated in the introduction has been fulfilled.

i. to identify a useful and evocative European based myth which deals with the origin story of alcohol.

ii. to present the story in a form recognisable by Aboriginal people as being consistent with traditional creation stories (*Tjukurrpa*)

iii. to learn from the experience.

iv. to establish a *milieu* within which detailed and pragmatic Aboriginal oriented alcohol treatment paradigm and methods could be considered and developed.

v. it was not my intent to prove that 'Dionysos' (as the selected myth complex) would serve as paradigm for Aboriginal treatment. Nor did I take on the task of attempting to 'inject' the story into Aboriginal culture.

The burden of proof is neither an appropriate or necessary undertaking at this early stage of the maturation of the project.

The matter of responsibility for passing the story over or teaching it within Aboriginal cultural circles is an issue I have deeply considered. The subtlety, sensitivity and sophistication required to negotiate such a process, wherever requested, has occupied the front and back of my mind since 1991 but at no point was it my intention to make this particular thesis into an exposition on indigenous health promotion tactics. I have dealt with the story according to the four criteria above and brought it to a certain point as intended.
Handover, promotion or promulgation of the Sugarman is an entirely different matter and may never be my direct responsibility. It must also be clearly acknowledged that my initiative was in fact a response to a and not a self generated idea or a theoretical hypothesis which wanted testing ‘in the field’.

The process of incorporating, adapting or rejecting the Sugarman Story must lie equally in the hands of those who raised the idea and the in the first place.

The desire to follow through the response and make it into a serious and consistent project was probably irrational, an act of passion, toned by a desire to engage in the reconciliation process, as I have already confessed. But most of all I took up the challenge because I am a psychotherapist and Andrew presented me with a therapeutic problem. It was in a sense a response generated out of professional ‘duty of care’. For this reason I sought out the discipline of making the project into a doctoral study as way of ensuring supervised progress, reasonable professional objectivity and accountability to a suitable professional collegiality.

The thesis, then, has served the development and implementation of a practical but exploratory project in the ‘real world’, meeting real psychic and physical pain. In my opinion this has been the strength of the Social Ecology method, which allowed me to follow the demands of ‘duty of care’ and the dynamics determined by intercultural engagement and remain accountable to psychotherapeutic methodology and to local Aboriginal ethics while acquiring a new discipline.

2. ADEQUACY OF THE ACTION

It has been pointed out to me hundreds of times that ‘ Aboriginal people are the most researched group on earth’, that ‘they are sick of research projects and reports’ and that ‘if you are going to do anything it has be practical, visible and useful’. Whereas there might be some flaws in this argument, the sentiment is clear. For this reason the work of the Sugarman Project has to be judged in terms of its practicality, visibility and usefulness as contribution to action in the ‘real world’.

Four factors to consider might be

1. - numbers of people involved over time.
2. - consistency of the project development and its duration.
3. - evidence of entry into community consciousness.
4. - evidence of resistance and criticism.

Early on, through conversation with Andrew, it became clear that any project that was to be concerned with Tjukurrpa in any way, would have to proceed slowly and with deferment to Aboriginal process. Attention to Aboriginal process included noticing that most teaching takes place within the conventions of the ‘oral tradition’ and according to the demands of family and skin relationship and responsibility. By implication, what had been suggested by Andrew, and later by the Cooks was the need for a story that could be told,
shown and performed and made sense of within the Aboriginal milieu. Not a health promotion 'programme' disguised in a story as a sweetener. It had to have power of its own, just as the dreaming stories have a unique power of their own. This implied that there would have to be people who had the authority and intelligence to manage the story in the same way that Tjukurrpa is managed. A story floating in books or even on videos might amuse or instruct but may not have authority or command attention.

Aboriginal Tjukurrpa is managed according to the kirdal/kurdungurlu system. The Christian story is similarly managed with clergy (inakata) who are responsible for it. An alcohol 'dreaming' story if it is to have healing efficacy or establish a system of control and law over behaviour must, by implication, be more than a good story. It has to have a lineage and a custodianship in place. Furthermore the project has to last, be consistent, take time and avoid fizzing out because of the usual short term funding 'syndrome' which seems to have plagued most Aboriginal focussed health programmes in the Territory.

Andrew's suggestion was that first I did my own homework, understood my own story lineage as a European and a 'doctor'. If I could demonstrate the strength of the story and my own authority as a 'custodian' and took time to develop relationship with appropriate and close Aboriginal family then the Parma Story Project would take care of itself, in due time. Nothing could or should be forced. Andrew also pointed out that he and those of his generation learned by observation, imitation and participation over time in ceremonies at deepening levels of knowledge and sophistication.

The Sugarman project has been shaped with these principles in mind and has developed as a community project, through grass roots or community grapevine connections, through voluntary commitments and enthusiastic participation from a range of talented artists and workers of several cultural backgrounds. At the same time the integrity of custodianship has been developed and extended so that a small core of people, black and white, are assuming a capacity to manage and expound the story.

This is not the same as Tjukurrpa management, since Tjukurrpa management is related to conception and birth sites, to land locations and to skin relationships, nevertheless a kind of de facto Sugarman kinship relationship has developed. The site management is particularly related to Injarrnamu, on the Cook's out station, where the story first 'came out' or as some people say, 'where Sugarman landed'. This kind of management and responsibility would probably not be possible if Sugarman was a programme managed by a department, with transitory staff, a faltering corporate memory and a system of responsibility and accountability determined by political expediency. Most Aboriginal people in the alcohol game are familiar with that system and know how to avoid or exploit it. The Sugarman management is clearly quite different. It appears to be and can, if needed, be presented as congruent with traditional Tjukurrpa custodianship. I suspect that the management system is one of the most interesting, if as yet only implicit and unformulated, aspects of this project, particularly for anyone interested Social Ecology and cross cultural collaboration. Sugarman has developed as an artistic cultural project funded through Arts and Cultural resources and not
Health. It has never been presented as a health programme, and as such it may eventually become much more effective as a way of informing cultural consciousness than if we had attempted a “Sugarman Careful Drinking Campaign”. (A proposition, by the way, which fills me with horror and would certainly be subverted by Dionysos.)

The effect and impact of the project, so far, can best be judged within the terms of its reception as an artistic or theatrical event. It’s entry into community consciousness has been gradual and subtle (intentionally) and resistance and criticism has been consistent, and even predictably cautious from mainstream health professionals. I cannot however, present any objective evaluations, or critique other than the reviews, the collected comments of participants and the sense of goodwill which the project seems to generate. Perhaps the video documentary will add to the opportunities for critique.

To restate; if Sugarman/Dionysos exists in the same domain as Tjukurpa then it demands to be presented within the terms of that domain. This includes its expression through cultural/artistic forms of performance, music and oral teaching, bearing in mind degrees of initiation and family or ritual relationships and obligations for custodianship. This is a long term undertaking. If it fails it will probably be because I or others responsible for its continuation become impatient or cannot last the distance, or cannot afford to.

Once upon a time, I felt, or there had been conveyed to me that there was a crisis in Aboriginal cultural survival and the Alcohol Story had to be delivered quickly as a possible solution. I no longer have that sense of crisis of urgent delivery of a solution. Although I still have the sense of catastrophe. It may be that the desire expressed by Andrew in 1990 should have been met there and then. Because the Sugarman has taken so long to develop it may be redundant, too many bush people have died, too many politicised changes have exhausted the good will of the committed few, too much coolibah has flowed under the bridge.

Nevertheless, at Intrarmama anyway, we haven’t given up. While the relationship strengthening continues, the bottom line still seems to be that Dionysos’ story stands up as a good story, that European and Aboriginal people find it interesting, want to see and hear it and acknowledge it as having an authentic place in living European tradition and culture. I doubt if any Aboriginal would want to buy into Sugarman if the white fellers thought it was a ‘rubbish’ story anyway. So has Dionysos/Sugarman been judged as ‘rubbish’?

3. ADEQUACY OF THE ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL EFFORT.

The quantity and quality of events placed within the artistic/cultural domain can be indicated simply by listing the events, then referring to the representative reviews (Chapter 13 and 14) and future projects. In briefly listing those events I am not including the detail of the long comprehensive process of workshops and research discussions which preceded these public performances, all of which is outlined in Chapter 9.
Notice in Petrol Link Up Newsletter and the Family Resource Centre's Family News which serves the Centralian Aboriginal Communities, especially women's centres.

2. Interview with San Roque on ABC Radio. Books and Writing. 'Writing from the Centre' with Ramona Koval 1995, based on interest in the project expressed by the writers Barry Hill and Diane Wolkstein and by ethno botanist Peter Latz.

3. An Australia Council grant and then NT Arts, makes a major performance possible. August 1996.
Approximately 50 local community members, musicians, performers, artists etc contributing. Audience of invited, Aboriginal and Europeans estimated at 250.
Successful and exhilarating event for the majority. Quality of the music remarkable, the script structure stood up under the pressure of performance, some memorable scenes and a satisfying demonstration of the myth.

4. Australian Film Commission grant to David Roberts to make a documentary on the performance and project. Began August 1996.
Completion date early 1998. Includes performance and comprehensive interviews on rationale for project.

5. Article in the Republican May 1997 on the project and Intjarnama's substance abuse work.
Prototype Sugarman Web Site established courtesy of Michael Rohan.

6. San Roque invited to San Francisco, C G Jung Institute, May 1997 to give workshop on intercultural therapeutics which includes presentation on and recitation from Sugarman. Warmly, even enthusiastically received. Board members of Van Waveren Foundation N.Y. present and spontaneously offer to contribute funding to project. C.G. Jung Institute donates $500 US.

Performance of remainder of cycle including the Travels.
Exhibition of (90) art works associated with project. Approximately 50 artists, performers, speakers and workers contributed to the even, over the three weeks. Quality and range of art works commended. Innovative use of Araluen space, musical and performance standard acknowledged as 'riveting' and emotionally inspiring.
Support from some key Aboriginal spokespersons and general sense of encouragement to continue. Some enigmatic reactions to a fairly unconventional presentation, in terms of customary Alice Springs culture.
Extensive radio coverage and pre and post production articles in local *Centralian Advocate* and *Alice News* and *Family News*.

Comprehensive review especially by Kieran Finnane in *Alice News* Sept. 24, 1997, gives sense of having established credibility of Sugarman in a mainstream local context.

7. Extracts from Sugarman (Semele) performed at Eco Philosophy Colloquium, Hamilton Downs October 1997.

Video and visual display at NT Arts regional Arts Conference Alice Springs, October 1997.

Extract from script presented with music at the Woodford Folk Festival New Year 1997/8 as part of the Folk Lines project. Entitled - Travelling the Myth.


10. Translation of script into Arrernte and Luritja as next project beginning. Funding application to Institute for Aboriginal Development successful. Requests for copies of the script. Discussions re publishing.

11. Video documentation and editing proceeds.

General commendation on quality of performance from video impressions. Possibility of CD Rom or multimedia performances of Sugarman mooted. Application to ind TV Opera Project not successful.

12. Proposal for Bush Tour of Western Desert under development for 1998. Funding applications for travelling treatment setup approved by Territory Health Services, within which project the use of Sugarman stories will have a discrete part.

Overall it will be apparent that the Sugarman Project continues to attract positive attention and that it has quality as a performance piece in its own right.

The project has received over the two years, in Federal and State government Arts and Cultural funding approximately $46,000.

The Documentary video project by Antipodes Productions has received $100,000 from The Australian Film Commission.

The Commonwealth Drug Strategy gave $7000 toward project development and a report on interpretive implications for indigenous substance abuse.

Alice Springs Town Council contributed approximately $2000 for the exhibition gallery expenses.
(Personal voluntary contributions in time and work from a range of people and artists can’t be calculated but probably equal the $46,000 given as grants).

Intjartmama Aboriginal Corporation has given in kind support, through office space and facilities.

The C.G. Jung Institute San Francisco contributed $500 US and the Van Waveren Foundation of New York which funds innovative projects consistent with the principles of C.G. Jung’s work, has committed $6000 US for 1998, which will be used to complete an edited video of the performance and for preparing the script for publication and possibly translation.

In all the project, between August 1996 and January 1998 has attracted direct funding grants or contributions of $160,600.

Numbers of people involved directly, including the two main performance events could be estimated at 2500, including 100 or so directly involved in creating or supporting the project. It is impossible to estimate numbers who have heard of it through the media or the community grapevines.

According to Araluen records approx. 2000 people came to the gallery and the performances August - September 1997. For Alice Springs with a population of 27,000 this is considered to be a very healthy proportion, around 13% of the population, however many visitors were tourists and some were repeats.

The artistic innovations and overall success of the exhibition/performance has established a degree of credibility in Alice Springs culture which I would never have thought possible. This has to be handled carefully if the Aboriginal aspects are to thrive but nevertheless even within the Aboriginal circles, Sugarman has become known, spoken of and certainly seems to have got past the ‘rubbish’ category.

The forthcoming Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health Services, Review of the Commonwealth’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Substance Misuse Programme, which is a complete national survey and review of current activities, policies and priorities will have as its cover picture Elva Cook’s painting from the Sugarman performance. Her version of Semele Burning. The Fire painting.

The therapeutic and intercultural aspects of the project can be considered next.

4. INTERCULTURAL COLLABORATION.

The stated purpose of the project, based on the Royal Commission recommendations was to explore what might be needed to establish a milieu within which indigenous treatment methods could develop.

Much of my own professional work has had that as an aim and particularly over the years with Intjartmama Rehabilitation Village. The account of their work Story About Intjartmama can be considered as a contribution toward forming and holding that milieu. The Sugarman project is another aspect of the milieu creation. Whereas Sugarman is not a place or a programme it could be argued that the creation of a mental container
or a cultural form and process which the story/performance project embodies is in fact part of the *milieu* creation. With a good story people can have something in mind through which and by which relationships can be built.

I think the potency of the Dionysos story has been established. Trust and familiarity with it is also established within the performers and production team. As such the Sugarman version now dwells reliably in the mind of several score of people, and is known of by several thousand. From that base we might carefully move to the next stage which has two parts.

One is to establish its credibility as a potential therapeutic metaphor complex for substance abuse work within European derived culture and psychology. I may attempt this in San Francisco in November 1998. This thesis, of course, provides the intellectual stability and foundation for such an enterprise.

The second is to move to the next phase of telling it adequately to a wider Aboriginal network in a manner appropriate, as already outlined by Andrew Japaljarri. This looks likely in 1998 with the remote area tour, which Barry and Elva Cook, primarily, are musterminding. Barry’s health however is not stable and it is possible that family priorities will restrict any ambitious plans for Sugarman in the bush for ’98.

We shall see.

5. THE POTENCY OF DIONYSOS AS THERAPEUTIC METAPHOR AND AS TJUKURRPA.

This is the core matter.

It has been our experience so far that the primal elements of Dionysos epic do resonate with Aboriginal *Tjukurrpa*. I do not assert that Sugarman is *Tjukurrpa*, but some kind of parallel process seems to be authentically established, in terms of recognition of the quality and content of the myth.

I say this with cautious confidence, bearing in mind the number of times Aboriginal people have spontaneously quoted or referred to parts of the story with respect and ease, and also because of the spontaneous offer of parallel stories from the Aboriginal repertoire.

It is possible to say that there is confidence in the integrity of the story for it to be ‘laid on the ground’ as a European Dreaming Story. This is deemed to be because key elements in the activities of Dionysos, as we have portrayed it, resonate deeply with traditional Aboriginal people’s experience of intoxication and the issues which its misuse raises.

The mythopoetic metaphor system contained within Sugarman/ Dionysos seems to work. The job has only just begun of articulating this system. Perhaps it can only happen gradually. Theoretical interpretive work should not get ahead of practice.
Given that the Sugarman story is not, so far, perceived as a ‘rubbish stop’ and that enough of it works as a teaching metaphor matrix, is acquiring the status of a ‘dreaming story’, is exciting to watch and take part in. what then do we do with it?

The nub of the matter is whether it will be recognised as having any authority in or authority over Aboriginal drinkers. This issue could be stated as a hypothetical comment-

“Oh yes, I know about Sugarman, I know the story. But who cares. It has no authority over me. That is a whitefeller story...I can do what I like.”

The establishment of Dionyso’s story as authoritative within Aboriginal culture has not been my responsibility to initiate. I have agreed to demonstrate, however, that there is a story within Western culture which could be recognised by Aboriginal people as being a genuine ‘dreaming’ story for alcohol, if anyone wanted to seriously take it up.

The problem remains of how to use it and who can use it and whether sufficient concerned Aboriginal senior people want to take responsibility for knowing and managing the story.

So far Barry and Elva Cook at Intjarnama have given the mainstay support and have the vision to carry Sugarman to the next stage within the Aboriginal domain. Their initiative is essential but there may be reservations about their capacity to carry it through, mainly, as already mentioned, because of Barry’s failing health and the extent of Elva’s family responsibilities. Andrew Spencer remains present to the project, and frequently he and Marlene and other members of their family, inspire, suggest and nudge the direction, however the two spheres of activity which are holding his attention now, after HALT, are the church and the law. He works as an Aboriginal Community policeman in a remote western desert community and until or unless the Parma Tjakurrpa project becomes incorporated into police responsibilities then his capacity to act is somewhat restricted. As a Baptist lay preacher, the possibility of introducing Dionyso/Sugarman through the Christian circles is an intriguing irony, since it would appear that in Christian history, Dionyso’s mysteries were incorporated by the early Christian liturgies, superceded and then repressed.

There are in fact many sensitive issues of Aboriginal protocol surrounding the introduction of a story into various Aboriginal countries, whether by Europeans or by Aboriginal people. Meanwhile, we proceed according to Andrew’s advice. Slowly, doing our homework and waiting for the invitations.

A grant to Intjarnama from Territory Health has been specifically committed for 1998 as a pilot project in Remote Area Aboriginal Treatment. The plan includes performance events and workshops linked to the Sugarman in specific bush communities with ownership and management of sections of the story being negotiated according to the methodology of dispersing and teaching a dreaming story through traditional
family lines, as is congruent with bush protocols. The preliminary negotiations and locations for the events is established and a small ‘guerrilla’ performance group composed from ex Sugarman performers is ready to participate, pending a funding agreement.

I remain healthily sceptical about the likelihood of an effective incorporation of the story into desert culture or its use as a treatment platform by indigenous people. I have become too aware of the difficulties in the implementation of such an initiative. Most of the difficulties revolve around the matter of who is to take responsibility for the story and who manages the infrastructure needed to hold it in place as a therapeutic venture. It would take a Don Quixote to muster the necessary mob of enchanted idealists, from both sides of the racial border, and it would take more than one Sancho to govern the practicalities in both domain.

6. THEORETICAL POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

There is no doubt that the fundamental ambition of the Sugarman project is Quixotic. Don Quixote specialised in acts of the imagination. He specialised in reconstructing or reinterpreting reality in terms of his prevailing fantasy. Sancho Panza, his offsider, tolerated, abetted and administered his master’s adventure of chivalrous romance. At times I have played Sancho to Japaljarri Spencer’s Quixote. At times I have aided and abetted Barry Cook’s Quixote and his mine. Perhaps it is the nature of friendship that people from vastly different worlds suffer each other’s prevailing romance. There is no doubt that in continuing and carrying the Sugarman fantasy, I too have attained a Quixotic status.

The notion can hardly be taken seriously by sensible people. That a story, a composition of imagination, could effect a change in the behaviour of people plagued with an addiction to alcohol- that a myth, no matter how stunningly presented or cunningly disseminated could actually alter the progressive degeneration of one single alcohol dependent man or woman, let alone a community or a cultural ecosystem in catastrophic implosion.

The fact that the poetic theatrical events have attracted some acclaim is gratifying.
The fact that the project has attracted the involvement of some talented and creative people is encouraging.
The fact that there is some kind of recognisable kinship between western ancestral traditions and Aboriginal mythological iconography is potentially useful in the reconciliation process.
The possibility that there is, potentially an alternative view on alcohol dependency treatment modes, by using ancient sources as the stimulus, is definitely refreshing.

However, the chances of the Sugarman being taken up by a critical mass of traditional Aboriginal people and being used as a base for healing practice or instruction or as a basis of control of abuse is almost nil. The likelihood of such an approach being authentically supported, in the current atmosphere, by Government health organisations appears less than nil. There is no point in holding such illusions. It would take a massive
subtle grassroots programme or a collective decision in the bush by the ceremonial elders to put such a project into operation in time.

Theatre/storytelling as a milieu for the creation of thought and social action is widely enough used internationally to suggest it as an engaging activity to be worth supporting in remote area Australia. But Sugarman is a little more complex than an entertaining health promotion exercise, such as the Yothu Yindi Raipiri Safe Drinking Tour 1993.

To date (March 1998) despite the publicity, no government health representatives have engaged us in even a preliminary exploration of the rationale of the project let alone the possibilities of seriously taking it up. The widespread and now endemic youth unemployment, poor education, roving recklessness and simmering violence within the Centralian Aboriginal areas might even suggest that anything imaginatively engaging would be better than nothing. Nevertheless, it is with a measured, even laconic scepticism that I confront now the practical procedures needed to take the Sugarman project to a next stage of implementation, aware of the resistances, difficulties and the dynamics of the Centralian social system.

For the future there are four areas of theoretical interest but practical implication that need attention, which I have not yet been able to satisfactorily develop within this thesis, but may be possible in another context.

1. A systematic and detailed expository analysis of the structure and content of the Dionysos myth matrix with reference to alcohol dependency, addiction and intoxication.

I have begun this here but really it is very preliminary. What I have actually worked at is to concentrate upon encoding into the Sugarman script the messages which need elaboration. In the writing of the script I invested or if you like, planted into it seeds which create the image links, dream thoughts and myth thoughts which are a preliminary to the development of linked thoughts and systems of interpretation and systematic (therapeutic) action. If the Sugarman story script is the horse, the Sugarman therapeutic script is the cart. I had to get the horse before the cart. The cart work is the next obvious job.

The baby rip up scene, for instance shows a dismemberment in action. This scene can be interpreted and applied in a number of different dimensions.

The travels also are part of the record of the legend but I have reframed it in terms of a journey of cure. Each stage of that journey requires systematic elucidation in terms of therapeutic process and useable therapeutic metaphor. I would probably undertake such a task if there were a critical mass of practitioners who felt that it was worth the trouble.

An elucidation on the psycho-history of Dionysos for its implications for the psycho-history of addiction is an intriguing line to follow. We do this now, at Intjartnma, as part of the counselling process, intuitively in therapeutic conversations but it is not systematised overtly.
2. More work is needed on the use of stories in Aboriginal culture, and the adaptation of traditional healing metaphors (songs) and practices to meet the current pathologies, individual and cultural.

3. The phenomenology of living in the overlap of cultures.
I find the centre of my attention roves, sometimes concentrating within (1) the indigenous domain, sometimes within (2) the Australian non-Aboriginal, which is of course my own cultural location and sometimes (3) in between, the domain, politically constructed as 'reconciliation' which psychologically, I would argue is the shadow area of Australia and the most fraught with potential for creative new life for the country and disaster. These three areas interact somewhat chaotically in my own mind. It is difficult to systematically isolate them and their specific issues, when one lives in a place like Alice Springs which is situated right in the shadowy in-between region.

This is the third area of future study. The actualities of the experience of living in the chaos of the Australian shadow region. And particularly how love, hate and power are used and abused.

Finally I return to Quixote and the uses of enchantment.

4. The study of acts of the imagination or the phenomenology of enchantment and delusion.
Cervantes died in 1615, in the same year as Shakespeare. Both these authors have made an immense contribution towards creating acts of the imagination. A form of imagination which gives a consistent mental and emotional nourishment that sustains the European heart and mind.

It is my view that the Tjukurrpa fulfills a similar function and the progressive loss of the Tjukurrpa is catastrophe for the mind of the country. The psychological and spiritual value of the Aboriginal imagination can be appreciated by those Australians who also value acts of the imagination, who passionately feel that fiction, theatre, film, music, poetry have a part in sustaining the humanity of humanity.

It could be said that the mental world of the Australian continent was formed by poetic acts of the imagination. (Tjukurrpa) and the loss of that script and the remembering of that script is the responsibility of the descendants of the dreaming, the custodians of our mutual national cultural treasure. The psychological implication is that the vitality of the whole collective Australian country depends for its foundation upon the presence of the Tjukurrpa being regularly sung. If Australia suffers a collective depression, ever, it may be traced in a Teiresian manner to an early archetypal crime, a crime of murder of the primary imaginative beings of the continent. If not murder then at least abandonment.

The other side of this issue has to do with the phenomenology of enchantment. It could also be said that the Tjukurrpa is a collective, shared enchantment; with an implication that enchantment is an ambiguously dangerous state of mind to dwell in.
At the beginning of Cervante's novel, Quixote, sets out with his mind full of outmoded chivalrous romance, he recreates every event within the terms of his vision. He becomes a ridiculous, sorry and melancholy figure, obsessively insistent on preserving his enchantment, despite all the evidence to the contrary that the world has gone on and the ideals of his romance are superceded. There are those who would argue that the maintenance of the Tjukurrpa is a Quixotic enterprise, measured by one more generation and that is it. The only thing that keeps Tjukurrpa going is its coinage in property disputes; i.e. Native Title, and as an economic and artistic commodity.

Cervantes, in the second part of the adventures, has Quixote descending by rope into the cave of Montesinos in much the same manner as initiates into the Eleusinian mysteries were let down into a pit and presented with a formative vision. It goes like this in many cultures, where a heroic but perhaps despised being makes a descent into a pit, as in Apuleius' Golden Ass adventures, and returns with a vision which determines future actions. In the pit something happens to Quixote. A vision arrives which seems neither fantasy nor enchantment, and which somehow honours and vindicates the old knight's former impervious eccentricities, yet Sancho, who once tolerated and supported his master's aberrations, by now becomes utterly convinced that the good Don is irretrievably mad. And so the tale continues to unravel, a great discourse on the varieties, uses and abuses of enchantment. Quixote himself, in the last pages, on his death bed, confesses that he has indeed been mad and that now he revokes his former fantasies. There are those who would argue thus about Tjukurrpa and the uses of the mythopoetic imagination to solve a pragmatic matter. The sooner the old people wake up and revoke their former fantasies the sooner the health, well being and economy of Aboriginal Australia will improve. I don't know which side I support, my position fluctuates several times a day. All I am sure about is that the matter of 'enchancements' is significant and the role of alcohol in preserving and destroying enchantments needs attention.

Why would an investigation into enchantment matter?

Euripides makes it quite clear that Dionysos works by creating enchantments and delusions. Time and again in the mythic tales, Dionysos sends such and such a person mad, the delusions are usually quite specific, often temporary but nearly always disastrous. Dionysos method is madness. He does not really introduce laws, except for a demand for respect as a god, he possibly does not, in the myth, become a healer or establish a therapeutic method. The only thing he clearly does is send people into a variety of delusional states, frequently the result of which is a frenzied act of dismemberment of a family.

Alcohol, petrol, heroine, marijuana and other drugs induce forms of enchantment. So too does theatre and ceremony and certain nights which promote 'religious awe' as Teiresias comments in The Bacchae. It is the process or if you like, the phenomenology of enchantment and delusion which Dionysos' activity brings most vividly to our conscious attention and it is this state, I believe which requires the respect and the study.
It could be argued that Aboriginal people, as poetic creators of the Australian landscape are hereditarily adept at creating and sustaining a particular form of imagination that is related to natural enchantment.

The enchantments of the dreaming and the enchantments of alcohol; the delusions of Dionysos are not in the same category but somehow, in a way I can only dimly perceive, the Sugarman/Dionysos story is providing a way to grasp after the intangible but influential realities of acts the imagination, the uses and abuses of enchantment and the deadliness of delusion.

There must be a job here for some delicate collaborative psycho cultural research.

At the 1998 Australian New Zealand Society of Jungian Analysts Congress in Dunedin, several members presented cases where the themes of dismemberment and delusion were startlingly revealed. One, a case of a war veteran from the Indochina theatre of war suffering from ‘flashbacks’ of violent incidents, some committed by himself and some witnessed, another, a case of a young man who had undergone childhood sexual abuse, successive disemboweling accidents, and had witnessed the death of a friend, whose throat was cut in a South American ‘revolution’. Another presenter had witnessed first hand, actions of alcohol ‘rage’ and physical mayhem in Aboriginal country. Some doubt was raised as to whether the incidents reported by the patients were delusions or fantasies. This questioning of the reality of the reported events is reasonable. The discussion then turned to the psycho dynamics of post traumatic stress resolution at both a personal and collective level. Themes arose of dismemberment in the ‘theatre of the body’, in the theatre of the family and in the multiple theatres of war, whose refugees or victims Australia now receives.

Dale Dodd drew our attention to a suggestion that the Mysteries of Demeter, known as the Eleusinian, were used as tools of post traumatic stress resolution for the returning combatants of the Greek wars. Returning soldiers were initiated into the mysteries, let down into the pit where the ‘great mothers’ attentions were devoted to them, as a way of restoring them psychically after the derangements of the war zone. Whether this suggestion is accurate or not it is a very evocative thought in two dimensions.

One, it raises the possibility of the adaptation of pre existing rites of passage ceremonies for the healing of trauma in Aboriginal culture as well as modern European culture.

Secondly, it raise the question of the role of symbolic transformations in processing psychosomatic trauma. Some experts argue that profound trauma is lodged or encoded in the lower or primitive brain centres and that proper steps have to be systematically undertaken to bring the experience successively up the ladder from ‘hind’ brain level to the higher cortical (conscious) functioning. This implies successive decoding and recoding from one level to the next, in the appropriate symbolic representations, as Bion suggests in the processing of beta elements into alpha elements via the psychological work done by alpha function. In this sequencing, the collection and ‘fixing’ of dream fragments, myth thoughts, and physically present enactments of the dream thoughts etc are necessary steps in a post traumatic stress debriefing.

1 P. Levine a neuropsychologist working with trauma. (pers comm. David Roberts 1998)
In this sense, it makes sense that one considers finding or creating a rite-of-passage that works all along the route of the nervous system of the animal/human composition. A victim or perpetrator of violence, could be envisaged as passing through a ceremonial event, held by a story such as Dionysos/ Sugarman, which chronicles the varieties of dismemberment and delusion associated with alcohol related violence. It is remarkable that theriomorphic metamorphoses are a consistent part of the Dionysos story. Animal, reptile and human shapes change places. This is not, I suggest mere mythopoetic fantasy but an accurate depiction of the varieties of transformation that take place in the nervous system when the Dionysian archetype is activated.

Aboriginal dancers are adept at depicting and assuming the 'shapes' of theriomorphic ancestors. Snake, lizard, eagle, emu, kangaroo. I suggest that the ceremonial depictions of these animals recapitulates evolutionary transformations along the continuum of the brain's systems. Enactments in ceremony stabilise the individual and group psyche in a 'great chain of being'. This is not an illusory or delusory 'enchantment' but a holding-of-being in place.

However, if the individual and group nervous systems are deranged through excessive or un-moderated alcohol abuse, people forget who they are and where they come from. Furthermore, Aboriginal people mimicking the European creates a false self structure, superficial perhaps and inadequately related to the theriomorphic coding in the brain.

Assimilation by the European structure spells the death of the indigenous animals and reptiles and the death of connection to the Aboriginal chain of being. The cultural catastrophe being experienced now is the death and dismemberment of this chain of being, prefigured by Andrew Japaljarri in the story of the cut up persecution of the snake. Alcohol anaesthesises the psychic pain and stimulates the dismemberment simultaneously.

Maybe a new adaptation of self is being painfully achieved through the medium of drunkeness, maybe not. These matters need some profoundly thoughtful observation. I would suggest that a treatment programme that has to handle the facts of personal and cultural dismemberment needs to take the phenomenon of traumatic stress and psychosomatic transformations of dismemberment shock accurately into account. Also the phenomenon of the varieties of delusion.

The Dionysos' story provides a way of tracking the derangements and the transformations, in the interests of restoring sanity of the whole human being. I suggest that it is no accident that Dionysos is shown accompanied by an entourage of animals and part animals. Centaurs, satyrs, bulls, deer, goats, snakes and particularly the predator cats; lions and panthers, whose work is to hunt or be hunted. To dismember or be dismembered. An intoxicated killing frenzy is part of the Dionysian archetypal action and so too is a delusional state of mind where gods, humans, animals or plants (the vine) become transformed into a melange of interchangeable and interacting shapes. Where metamorphosis is the order of the day.
I need, here to turn to Aristophanes for some help. In his play, a so called comedy, *The Frogs*, Dionysos descends to the underworld to find a poet to bring back to the living world to help in his theatre projects. He laments that the contemporary dramatists are useless. Euripides and Aeschylus and Sophocles are found to be involved in a competition for the underworld chair of poetry.

Sophocles withdraws but Euripides and Aeschylus debate who is the better poet and what their functions have been. The weight of their works is established by weighing their words on a scale.

Aeschylus says; *(Frogs* line 1030)

"From the earliest times the really great poet has been the one who had a useful lesson to teach. Orpheus gave us the Mysteries and taught people it was wrong to kill - Musaeus showed us how to cure diseases ... and Hesiod explained about agriculture..."

Euripides explains his function thus; *(line 960)*

"What I did was to teach the audience how to use its brains....
The public has learned from me how to think, how to run their households.
How to ask Why is this so! What do we mean by that?"

I suggest that the process of learning to use ones brains...of learning to think, is far more complex than is generally assumed.

I suggest that the desire for a ‘grog story’, such as we have begun to put together, is a poetic project directly in line with the sentiments of Aristophanes’ Euripides and Aeschylus, that is to say, the use of the powers of the mythopoeic ‘to teach us how to use our brains’. Participation in poetically heightened dramatic enactments of primal states is one necessary step in a procession of transformations of consciousness. A *Tjukurrpa* epic such as that of the dismembered *ngankari* snake has a similar function. It brings things to mind.

The dismemberment is now being brought to mind. The healed and healing states are yet to arrive.
7. SUMMATION.

Part One. Conception Story.
The Central point of the Conception Chapters involved a recognition, expressed by Andrew Japaljarri, among others, of a state of crisis in the Aboriginal domain.
This is communicated through telling the injured Snake story coupled with an acknowledgment of family breakdown through alcohol intoxication.
A need is poignantly expressed for a story which has the authority and efficacy of *Tjukurrpa* which will provide the missing link in the task of handling the crisis.
The missing link identified as a ‘story’ is actually a missing conceptual link. A story is useful as a mental framing of the issue and mental tool with which to begin operations involving transformations in consciousness about the catastrophe.

Part Two. Studies
Consists of studies which attempt to locate the issues in an historical context elucidated through the Deaths in Custody Inquiry and Recommendations. It then points to the way in which various paradigms of therapeutic practice are backed up by stories held sacred to a specific school or cultural nexus.
In ‘An Overture of Snakes’ a way is cleared to appreciate that personal engagement in intercultural reconciliation reveals the difference in cultural epistemologies and also how symbolic communications across the cultural boundary can occur, fruitfully.

Part Three. Preparations
The development phase recounts a process of the research into primal states including: conception, violence, grief, dismemberment, delusion and intoxications. The preparation for a ceremorial enactment of these states reveals that the putting of all these elements together in a story is one step in linking unconscious psychosomatic experiences to conscious apprehension of the significance and meaning of apparently random acts of violence. A container for thought begins to be formed. Factors or vectors in the psychology of indigenous people begin to be revealed and factors or vectors in the psychology of the European mind are thrown into relief. Confusion and lack of any systematic clarity about the operation of intoxicating substances is also revealed.

Part Four. The Story
Composing the script and performance, itself, highlights that active participation in the preparation and performance of an embodied enactment of the specific primal states does something mentally. Unthinkable anxiety, catastrophic change and unconscious thoughts begin to find a container for expression. Incomprehensible actions are located in a story which helps the mind to grasp the panoply of contradictions and gives a place for grief and the location for thoughts about the responsibility for unmanageable deaths.
Part Five. Review

Evaluation of the Project so far, is couched in terms of a review of artistic success or failure, and can be read as such, but also as evidence of the success or failure of Sugarman as an intercultural 'intelligence' operation. The Sugarman Project is located in a subliminal combat zone. In this theatre of a 'war against grog' cultural genocide is the real issue. The catastrophe is the demise of indigenous life and the derangement of the mental world inhabited for thousands of years. We witness the end of an enchantment or the de integration of a mental geographical reality which is almost totally incomprehensible to the settling European invaders. The psychodynamics of cultural grief presents itself as an urgent study requiring urgent therapeutic action.

Part Six. Considerations and Conclusion

This work in progress conclusion, identifies at least the states of dismemberment and delusion as two vectors in the activity of intoxication, two vectors in the Dionysian archetype. The study of 'transformations in consciousness' are indicated as a potential line of inquiry. The psychology of post traumatic stress resolution in an indigenous population is suggested as a similar task. The procedures of symbolic function or the 'transcendent function', in Jung's sense, is offered as fruitful line to pursue. The Tjukurrpa for Intoxication is the place where dream fragments, myth thoughts, embodied actions and proto-thoughts about intolerable realities can be seen to coalesce in a manageable form. We do need a 'story' about the grog. A 'healing fiction'.
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Stowe, Christopher Brocklebank, Dig Jamin, Mark Wohling, Ben Eweld and friends.

Sugarman performance (1996 and 1997) directed by Christopher Brocklebank in association with Craig
San Roque and the ensemble.

Acknowledgements, Personal Conversations and Consultations..

As has been indicated in the literature review sections, especially in the Chapter 5 on Deaths in Custody; at
the time of the inception of this project many ‘on the ground’ activities or projects were being conducted
by workers within specific Central Australian Aboriginal or associated groups concerned with the effects of
alcohol and other substances on Aboriginal life and culture; Those organisations require acknowledgement,
because workers within them represent or embody accumulating knowledge on the subject.

Healthy Aboriginal Life Team. HALT (workers and associates from 1988 to 1991)
Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Programmes Unit. (CAAAUP),the staff, residents and trainees
including Eric Shirt and Associates from the North American Indigenous Alcohol projects which they
represented during their consultancy.
Intjarnarma Rehabilitation Village residents and occasional workers.
The Night Patrols, Alice Springs and Remote Area.
Tangentyerre Council, Community Service Section especially
Tangentyerre Social Behaviour Project and the Night Patrol Coordinators office.
Yuendumu Petrol Sniffing Prevention Community Group.
Drug And Alcohol Services Association. (DASA).
and the Remote Area Aboriginal Alcohol Strategy (RAAAS) managed by DASA.
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and the Living With Alcohol Programme.
Petrol Link Up.
Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and NT Remote Health.
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Tangentyerre Land Care
Desert Tracks.
The Family Resource Centre (FRC) now called Waltja Tjutangku Palpsyi.
Sam Miles and Associates.

Note: Much of the work undertaken by these organisations relevant to a indigenous treatment paradigm and
methodology has not been collected or collated, or the literature on culture/treatment/indigenous initiatives
has not caught up with the activities. Some has been documented or interpreted by Maggie Brady in her
1995 article, Culture in Treatment, Culture as Treatment. also by Tim Rowse and colleagues at Menzies
School of Health Research. On a national level Hunter, Kahn, Heather, Tebbutt in their comprehensive
review (Kahn et al. 1990) help set a context for thinking about Aboriginal alcohol use elucidating, as they do a variety of very relevant sociocultural factors. In my opinion these three works, along with Pam Lyons literature review and annotated bibliography for CAAAPU, constitute the foundation platform, from the perspective of academic sociocultural/medical researchers. This work was an invaluable background to my reading and thinking.

Even so, much of the detailed 'grass roots' or should one say 'spinifex roots' work in Central Australia, as a specific unique regional phenomenon is only slowly (1997/8) being formally acknowledged. When the CAAAPU residential treatment programmes was disbanded through 1995 the heat of academic interest seemed to fade, this was exacerbated by Federal Government changes in ATSIC and Health (Alcohol and Drugs) following the installation of the Howard Government as well as a change in actual priority by NT Health administration during that period, away from proactive support for indigenous (bush) culturally congruent treatment initiatives.

There is an absence of useful academic commentary. The Commonwealth, OATSIS Review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Substance Misuse Programme. Feb. 1998, currently in draft form, may rectify this. The Menzies School of Health Research Review of NT Govt. Remote Health Services in Central Australia, August 1997 by a facilitation team led by Wakerman, Bennett, Healy, Warchiver, has also now been published.

For this reason a bibliography and review of the relevant literature preceding the inception and development of the Sugarman project had little actual Central Australian documented experience to draw upon. On the other hand there were many local individuals whose active, developing and constantly reconsidered, experience, conversations and consultancy has contributed to the project and to the growing body of knowledge in this field of endeavour. The individuals and their contributions are acknowledged as being, as it were, living embodiments of the literature, some of whom are not particularly literate by European criteria but who may have represented their thoughts in terms of iconographic representation, storytelling and anecdotal summations.

Clear acknowledgement is given therefore, to the many individual and individualistic workers associated with the organisations listed above during the ten year period, beginning around 1986 up until approximately 1997.

An appreciative acknowledgement to the members of the Mythological Study Groups and Workshops conducted in Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong under the auspices of the Australian and New Zealand Society for Jungian Analysis Professional Development Programme 1988-1992 and then further developed at the camp sites of Kiabra, Jervis Bay, Berry (Kunnapippi) and Mirramu. Lake George between 1990 and 1995 where the European mythological matrix associated with Dionysos was fearlessly and intimately researched.

Finally an acknowledgement of the talent, enthusiasm and dedication of the some 75 local community members and travellers who made up the Sugarman Crew during the winters of 1996 and 1997. In presenting the two major performances and the Araluen Exhibition, we confirmed for ourselves the richness of the European and indigenous traditions and relished the stressful challenges of negotiating the crossing of many borders of self, race and culture.

Thanks to assistance with funding various aspects of the Sugarman Project; the Australia Council, Community Performance Development; Northern Territory Office of the Arts, The Australian Film Commission; Antipodes Productions; the Commonwealth Health; National Drug Strategy, especially the section managed during the time (1994-96) by Julie Wade. The Van Waveren Foundation New York. The San Francisco CG Jung Institute and Intajrtamia Aboriginal Corporation.

The Social Ecology Faculty, University of Western Sydney, especially my supervisors, David Russell and John Merson. U.N.S.W.

Sam Miles and Associates; Alice Springs, and the incomparable Linley LeFay who mastered the Apple and the labyrinth.

And finally, with the greatest affection, the extended networks of the Cook-Abbot family and the Spencer family. Central Australia. Thanlouy.
Sir, Over the past few weeks, those of us who have experienced performances of the Sugarman story have been variously entertained, enthralled, confused, bored, entranced, marginalised, looked after, challenged and provoked.

At another level, like many good Greek plays, I believe that we have been tricked into thinking we are watching one story when we are really partaking in another.

The Sugarman project has been explained as a way of giving Aboriginal people an insight into "the Dreaming Story" of alcohol.

The assumption seems to be that this understanding will allow Aboriginal people and communities to deal with the current devastating effects of alcohol.

Alcohol programs for Aboriginal people could be developed from understanding the different ways that alcohol, and the spirits around alcohol, have manifested through non-Aboriginal cultures.

The Sugarman project is saying that the issues and the problems and the effects relating to alcohol have been very similar to all peoples through the ages.

However, the majority of the Sugarman performances at Araluen during this part of the project have principally had a non-Aboriginal audience.

Many Aboriginal people who attended the Araluen performances left during the intermission or earlier.

For the Yirara students, they had to get back before their evening curfew. For others, though, the response was remarkably similar to non Aboriginal people during performances of traditional Aboriginal dance and song.

After the thrill of the initial spectacle, many find it difficult to follow and understand the more complex aspects of the performance and drift away to things more familiar.

In the Araluen performances, it was the non-Aboriginal people who stayed, who watched, who wanted to dig deeper into their own stories.

So what does this say about the Sugarman project that it fails its aim - or that perhaps there were other agendas being met.

The project certainly showed that non-Aborigi...
ARALUEN SUGARMAN EXHIBITION
PROGRAMME OUTLINE.

This exhibition is planned as an unfolding and developing event, which will include live presentations of extracts from the SUGARMAN performance cycle. These will be featured mainly on the Saturday evenings. Saturday afternoons will be of special interest to people who wish to observe or participate in works-in-progress, since these times will be devoted to rehearsals and preparing the space for the evenings events. On Sunday afternoons and at certain times during the week there will be special lectures, workshops and guided tours. These will introduce people to the many layers of this unique project. Some of these workshops will be for special interest groups but all are open to the public.

The use of the gallery and the exhibits themselves will change over the three week period. This will be a dynamic development and visitors may be better prepared by considering the gallery as a theatre space rather than a gallery, in the conventional sense. You may wish to return several times and participate in one or many of the various events.

In some sense the Sugarman Exhibition is a mini festival.

The programme outline is pretty well set but there may be some change, expansion or improvisation within the mainframe since it is in the nature of this community project to make space for unexpected events or artist's work.

WEEKEND PROGRAMMES

SUGARMAN COMES TO TOWN.
OPENING EVENT
SATURDAY 23 AUGUST.
10 am - 5 pm.
Open rehearsal and setting up

6pm- 7.15 pm OPENING PERFORMANCE.
'Dionysos........this most sweet and most bitter of gods'
"Welcome to Sugarman"
Multi media showing of key scenes from the original performance at Intjartnma Outstation: introduction to the meaning and purpose of the project.

SUNDAY 24 AUGUST 2pm - 5 pm
TALKING UP THE PAINTINGS
(The Inaugural Sugar Salon)
A relaxed afternoon visually exploring the Sugarman Story through the paintings eg, original drawings, The Intjartmna Scroll, Brain Story, Trouble Story, Thinking About Young People, Two Laws etc and Louis Pratt’s spectacular "Bellies of God" and Elva Cook's, exquisite paintings "Semele Burning " and the "The Performance Night "

1
SATURDAY 30 AUGUST
7.30 pm - 10 pm.
ROAD STORIES
'.. legends live when legends roam '
THE SUGARMAN GROG RUNNING STORIES
Local storytellers/musicians recount dramatic and poignant events
from the roads of here and ancient history, hosted by Barry Cook and old
friends.
NB Due to unforeseen circumstances, this event has been relocated to
Intjartnanya Outstation near Hermannsburg. For directions phone 89 532567
Camping area is available.

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST 2pm-5pm
Sugar Salon
" DISCOVERING THE INLAND SEA "
Featuring local painters ( Rod Moss and Friends and Musicians )
with illustrated talks on Central Australian landscapes, social history and
personal views and experiences related to the themes of the European
Cultural traditions and the Sugarman epic.

SATURDAY 6 SEPTEMBER
1pm - 5 pm. Setting up and rehearsal, open to the public.
Preparation of sites which feature in the travelling stories of Dionysos
from Greece to India, via Egypt and the Middle East and completing the map
painting. Music rehearsals

7.30 pm - 10 pm
TRAVELLING SUGARMAN: PERFORMANCE
A multi media musical storytelling " a grand cultural tour of ancient
civilisations ( for folk of all ages ) showing how wine and music travelled
and the foundations of western civilisation were laid by the ancestral
creation stories. An evening of special interest for those concerned with
fostering positive intercultural relationships.

SUNDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2pm-5pm
Sugar Salon.
THE WAY THESE STORIES WORK.
"Culture, dreams, myths and healing "
pictures and conversations with psychoanalysts,
Dr Leon Petchkovsky, Glenda Cloughley, Craig San Roque and friends,
describing the Sugarman travels from the point of view of the spiritual
value of creation stories and myths.
SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER
1pm - 5pm Setting up and open rehearsal

SATURDAY 7.30 pm
IN THE LAP OF THE GODS: PERFORMANCE

The finale of the Sugarman epic featuring Dionysos' descent to the Underworld. The recovery and return of his mother from the dead and the final council meeting of the gods to sort out "what to do about Sugarman"

An entertaining and satirical evening based on the 'actual' 5000 BC meeting of the Gods of Olympus, (?) hosted by Robin Laidlaw (as Zeus) with the Playback Theatre ensemble and guests, unexpected.

FOLLOWED BY DANCE PARTY

SUNDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2pm-5pm
Finale "The Last Call........"
An opportunity to review all the exhibition material, discuss questions with the Sugarman crew and wrap things up.

WEEKDAY EVENTS

Throughout each week special events, talks and workshops will be scheduled. These details will be available closer to the date.

Presenters will include artists, local experts, members of the Sugarman Crew who will speak on themes related to the project, to intercultural reconciliations, cultural exchanges and many irrational matters.

Special workshops for young people, health and law professionals, educationists and aboriginal organisations by arrangement.
Phone Sugarman office 89 532567

People who are interested or available to help this project along or take part are warmly invited to come and find out what is happening or what to do.

SUGAR SALONS ARE OPEN CONVERSATIONS WITH ARTISTS.
ALL PERFORMANCES $5.
HOW THE SUGARMAN STORY GOT STARTED

Hi, I would like to know if you have any stories about the alcohol that is making our people sick. Parents are not looking after their children in the right way anymore, and the kids are forming groups, and snipping petrol. Everything is wrong, we never had this sort of things in our culture, so we don't know what to do.

Yes, there are stories about Brog. They are very old stories, always in dreaming stories. But we must learn them properly. There are many parts and parts for the women.

We will have to start where this wine was first made when we learn and grow. We can tell others.

And the Brog stories will run into the petrol sniffing stories. Let's go to Papunya. They wanted to know the Brog stories.
SUGARMAN
SONG CYCLE

by Craig San Roque
and company

Illustrations by Sally Mumford
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning the following pages. The best possible results have been obtained.
THE ANCIENT AEGEAN WORLD

The Greek world with names used in the Dionysian times, e.g. in Euripides Bacchae from Monuments of Greek Civilisation, ed. Agostino

Design and layout by Glenda Cloughley
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INTRODUCTION

HOW THE SUGARMAN STORY GOT STARTED

with Elva Cook

Three men were talking. One Aboriginal man. Two whitemen.

One Japaljarri, two Jungarrai.

They were thinking about these things.

Drinking, drunks, family breakdown, too many funerals, who is to blame, who is responsible. They talked like this.

Japaljarri said:-

"Grog is European. You made it first and you brought it here.

You made the grog and you sell it to Aboriginal people but you do not pass on the story that goes with it. You don't tell us the Tjukurrpa for grog, the Alijerre. Your grog is strong. We don't have the songs to send it away. We have to know the story. If we don't have the story how can we control the drinkers? We've got nothing to fall back on."

"That's true Japaljarri, we made grog in the beginning; a long time ago we worked out everything about it, beer, wine, whiskey, rum. It all comes from fruit and seeds and sugar. Maybe our old people have the kind of story that you are talking about."

The Aboriginal man, Japaljarri, looked down at the fire for a long time, then he spoke very quietly:- "Any chance, maybe you could pass it on?"

"Alright Japaljarri"; one Jungarrai said, "I'll look around. When I've found the right one I'll come back and show it to you. Then we'll see what we can do with it." And that is what happened.

Jungarrai came back with the Sugarman Story.

He took it to show Japaljarri. He made a big painting.

Japaljarri said:- "This is a real one. A really strong story about the grog."

Jungarrai said:- "What will we do now? This is a dangerous story. I can't just
walk around and tell anyone. It's got to have proper managers."

Jungarral went to see Barry and Nangala Elva Cook at Intjartnarna. They thought about these things.

Barry said: "We'll have to work on it. This story makes sense. It might take us a long time to get it straight but we'll do it. This story holds the law for drinking. It helps us think.

We should make it into a performance, like in the old way."

That is what we did. We cleared the spinifex and fixed up the sandhill so people could sit down and watch the play. We asked people to come and some of them said,

"It really opened our minds."

And that is why we tell it to you today.
THE IMPORTANCE OF STORY

by Karen Hethay

To understand why we are telling this story, and the way in which we are telling it, you need to know a little bit about the importance of Tjukurrpa to Aboriginal people in Central Australia.

Tjukurrpa are the stories which have been passed down from generation to generation, they come from the time people call ‘the Dreaming’ or ‘the Dreamtime’. They tell the stories of how everything began, the first ancestral spirit beings, the journeys of these ancestral beings, where they sat down, who they met, who they gave birth to, where they left their tracks, how they made mountains, rivers, waterholes, stars, plants and animals and where the ancestral beings went back to the earth; and where their spirit lives today.

The Tjukurrpa contains the information about how people are descended from those ancestral beings, where their own spirit comes from the earth and one day will return. Tjukurrpa teach people about their relationship to the land, their father’s and grandfather’s country and their mother’s and grandmother’s country. It teaches them about their responsibilities for looking after the land, maintaining their country, their ancestors' spirit and their own spirit.

Tjukurrpa also teach people about their relationship to other people. Who are the right people to marry, who they are responsible for looking after, their obligations to other people and who is responsible for and have obligations to them.

Tjukurrpa hold information about the law. There is men’s and women’s law business which is secret and sacred. The Tjukurrpa holds the information about what happens when people go against the law, and do not honour their obligations to look after the country or fulfil responsibilities to other people.

Tjukurrpa hold the stories about healing and medicines. They teach people about life and death and the transformation from one to the other.

Tjukurrpa are stories with many layers of information and meaning. People must learn these stories. Tjukurrpa are taught through oral traditions, song, dance and ceremony. They are taught by the elders and the people who hold the stories. Different people are responsible for looking after and teaching different stories or parts of stories, while others are responsible for making sure that the songs and stories are danced and told in the right way. Children start learning stories when they are little, when they travel with their mothers, aunts, grandmothers, fathers, uncles and grandfathers. When they go hunting and visiting they learn stories
about the country, about bush foods, what can be eaten and the times they should be eaten.

As children get older they are taught more of the deeper meanings of these stories. When young boys become men and young girls become women they must go through rites where they begin to learn the law business. As women and men grow older they learn more meanings and become the holders of the stories and become responsible for looking after the country, enacting the law and teaching the stories to the next generation coming up. This is the cycle of life. This is the Aboriginal way.

Tjukurrpa is at the heart of Aboriginal people's being. It connects them to the past and the present and provides them with the systems of meanings, knowledge and law which forms the basis of their world view. Those of us who are not Aboriginal, but who live and work with Aboriginal people find that to understand the importance of Tjukurrpa and the ways in which it informs people's lives is a key to finding ways of working together. Understanding Tjukurrpa is a key to Reconciliation.

Historically, for desert people in Central Australia, where food and resources were limited, finding food and performing the ceremonies for the Tjukurrpa to ensure the increase of those food sources was and continues to be a primary responsibility in peoples lives. People have three main categories of food sources, the meats (Kuka or Kuuyu), the grains/fruits vegetables (Mai or Mungari) and the third which is called 'Parma' in the Walpiri language, or 'Ngkwele' in the Arrernte language or 'Wama' in the Pitjantjatjarra group of Central Desert languages. These words refer to rare delicacies and especially to the category of naturally occurring concentrated sweet bush foods. As in all desert cultures concentrated sweet foods are an essential life preserving source. They can provide an almost instant energy boost and can sometimes give enough energy to be the difference between life and death. Food within the category of 'Parma' is also attributed with special spiritual powers and meanings.

Given the scarcity of such foods and their importance, people value Tjukurrpa and the ceremonies which increase the supply of Parma, naturally enough, because everyone wants it and needs it to keep on coming out. On the other hand there is no Tjukurrpa to stop Parma increasing or to send it away. This didn't matter before the white people came but when alcohol and refined sugar products were brought into Aboriginal cultures, people incorporated these new foods into the category of 'Parma', but, unlike the life preserving qualities of bush Parma foods, the effects of alcohol were and continue to be devastating.
The problem is that indigenous people hold the stories for increasing the positive powerful qualities of Parma, but indigenous Australians hold no specific Tjukurrpa for this new 'sugar', which explains where alcohol comes from, how it affects people, how to use and respect it and more importantly how to decrease its devastating effects.

This is a very important point, the significance of which might take people who are not indigenous to Australia, some time to study and to appreciate.

It is because of Tjukurrpa that this story is being given here in the way that we have written it and the way that we have performed it. We do no know how it will be used by Central Australian people or if it will help in the long run. Our Aboriginal friends and family asked for the story and so we give it. The creation stories from our own past do not belong in the past, they live in the present too, and creation is taking place all the time. The creation stories from our past began in the Northern countries, but they come alive and work in Australia too.

We hope that this great European story chain can link to Tjukurrpa. We think that our European families of Great Stories have cousins in Aboriginal Australia. Perhaps they can meet and help each other.

There are more than twelve epic tales or myths referred to and made room for in the Sugarman Cycle. These include the familiar ancient Greek creation stories, which also give the family history of Dionysos, leading into his own adventures. But Dionysos' activities interweave with the foundation stories of Western and Near Eastern culture. When we reflect upon these epic myths we will grasp something of the importance of story in forming the minds and actions of the people who have occupied a central role in the formation of Western Civilisation. We do not assert that the story of Isis and Osiris, or Inanna or Shiva or Jesus of Nazareth or Dionysos is Tjukurrpa, this is a matter for careful and sensitive research, but we have found that understanding our Western cultural stories deepens our appreciation of the power of Aboriginal Australian Tjukurrpa and hence we have come to appreciate the poetic reality of our country even more than we thought possible and we have strengthened our resolve to remember and maintain our joint traditions. Two lores in co existence and maybe, eventually in collaboration.
THE SUGARMAN SONG CYCLE
Some background
by Craig San Roque

This is the core text for the Sugarman Story. Unless otherwise stated the script and introduction has been my responsibility to write, but many people have helped to shape it, as we took it through the research phase and then the performance rehearsals.

There are nine main sequences which have been adapted from the traditional Mediterranean myths of Dionysos. All of the stories presented here have been through the tempering of performance. Broadly speaking the cycle is divided into two main sections. The First comprises The Creation Stories which include Story One, Two and Three, Four and Seven. The Second part includes The Travelling Stories which comprises Five, Six, Eight and Nine.

Story Seven which is an adaption of Euripides The Bacchae fits equally well into Part One or Part Two.

The written script is presented with the understanding that it can be selectively adapted or translated for a variety of performance setups. The core text can be thought of as a skeleton. It provides the bones on which the muscles and flesh of performance can hang. It can act as a guide for an exploration of innovative presentation depending upon the cultural and geographical setting. It allows for the incorporation of new stories, whenever they might need to arise.
A first version of the Creation Story was performed in August 1996 at Intjarnama Aboriginal Alcohol Rehabilitation Village, a small community roughly 130 kilometres west of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. It was performed in the open air, under the stars in a circular space of red sand, cleared of spinifex, lit by fires. There were dancers, musicians, narrators, giant puppets, and symbolic objects. Some of the characters were played by people, some were played by puppets and others were built into the totemic sculptures. The performance time lasted over 5 hours, with leisurely breaks for meals.

The Second Part, Travelling Dionysos had its premiere inside, in a large gallery space in August 1997, in the town of Alice Springs. This was a more intimate, in the round performance. Much use being made of art works associated with the project. The text was edited and recomposed as a condensed form of the Travels and the mood was more compressed and focussed than the outdoor spectacle and more use was made of 'closeup' detailed physical acting.

The narrative/dramatic style used in the script draws upon styles of early European/Mediterranean theatre and upon the storytelling methods of Central Australian Aboriginal performance (Inma/Pulapa). As such this script represents a two-way cultural mix, or at least it represents a lot of work that went into linking Warlpiri, Arrernte, Pintubi and European people who were learning from each other, trying to find ways to tell a good story. Our joint traditions were there to lead us and feed us, but we also have the opportunity to keep on creating our traditions and to remake our world. We hope that this story can become a culturally useful tool, perhaps through which other people can be inspired to create their own updated versions from the old teaching tradition.

It may be helpful to give a clue as to how to read the text.

First of all, punctuation. There is almost no punctuation but each line break represents a comma or a stop, that is to say a breath or a pause. The rhythm of recitation will catch on if you are mindful of the line length structure and use it too effect so that the narration rolls in easy breath sequences. Readers familiar with Aboriginal speech patterns and Aboriginal English will find much of the Sugarman text familiar and this will act as a guide but the script is not intended as a mimic of Aboriginal English dialect.

It should also be pointed out that in performance I often change bits and improvise and other narrators tend to do the same, adding their own style or regional dialect-ics.
Samantha Cook, for example has a wonderful Western Arrente street rap patois while Karen Hethey tends toward the Centralian feminist blues/cool.

Secondly. The words describe actions. You read or narrate as though the events were taking place now, before your eyes. This is like Aboriginal performance where the chorus of singer musicians narrate the story, the scenes are strings of images which the dancers enact and everything occurs now and in ancient or mythic time simultaneously. The subjective and objective position and experience of the poet/storyteller become interchangeable, as Stephen Wild points out in his astute introduction to Warlpiri/Anmatjarra song style in The Honey Ant Men's Love Song (Dixon 1990.p 49.) An extract from this love song is offered as an insert at the end of Story Four, as Sugarman walks down the road looking for a wife.

The narrative style is not drama as in conventional European theatre/film, which depends upon speaking characters, specific parts and dramatic exchanges and conflict to hold the audience's attention.

In the Sugarman, the narrators describe the action, comment upon it, pause, improvise and stay in tune with the music and the rhythm of the enactment, which in turn, while sticking to the story, may also allow for improvisation.

In performance, sections of the written text may be unsaid, since it describes images in action.

Since most of the characters are mythic or divine beings it is possible for several actor/dancers to be portraying the same character, or displaying different aspects of the same character. Similarly different actors might come and go, portraying Sugarman, for instance, at one stage of his life then passing the role on to someone else. Again this is similar to enactment of some Aboriginal stories in Inama/Pulapa, where a whole group of men might portray or embody the spirit and character of a Tjururrpa being in a simultaneous dance, or one old man might perform by himself, having the right and responsibility to show a certain element of a long song line.

The text sometimes is quite simple and graphic in these descriptive sequences, particularly in the first four stories and in Story Seven. The narrative tense is more often set in the present.
The Second Part, comprising The Travels of Dionysos and Ariadne is more of a romance, it owes less to Aboriginal theatre tradition and is probably less mindful of Aboriginal conventions or audience. The narrative tends to be set in the past tense. The narrative style is intentionally reminiscent of the epic poets. The use of repetitions, rhythmic, rolling cadences of feeling, geographical description, location of events at sacred places and cross references to known stories, heroes and mythic events.

The imagery is more complex and associations to the riches of Western cultural traditions will be obvious to some, but it is never, I hope, particularly ‘literary’ or intellectual/academic. Figures, stories and events referred to come from many sacred sites and sacred times of Western culture. This is intentional so as to provide opportunities for more detailed amplification of relevant intersecting stories, particularly if the Travels are used as the basis for teaching and healing metaphors. An example would be in the reference to Osiris and his dismemberment which resonates with Dionysos dismemberment and provides opportunity to reflect upon alcohol related dis integrations.

However, nowhere in the text is this connection overstated or made crudely explicit. That is the task of the interpretive work.

Whereas the first part, The Creation Story could be thought of as structured upon a fairly clear straight line or at most as a spiral, the second part is best imagined as letting one’s eye rove over a collection of middle eastern carpets. First the richness of colour and pattern creates an atmosphere, only after time and familiarity with the carpet and the regional styles does one become aware of the intricacy of pattern, story and symbology.

The music and the dance is an integral part of this pattern. Ethnomusicologists and folk musicians will note that the travels of Dionysos and Ariadne span regions rich in music and dance. Dionysos was a culture hero, carrying with him musical and dance traditions of the countries he visited. The opportunity to explore this lineage within the Sugarman framework is intentional and recommended. Readers might be reminded of the power of Peter Gabriel’s work for the film on Christ, The Passion (The Sources) or of the film tracing the Gypsies from India to Spain, Latcho Drom.

The work of contemporary new Australian ethnic groups such as Xenos and others presented on the Folk Lines stage of the Woodford Festival in S. E. Queensland each New Year, are similarly exploring and developing our Australian cultural song, dance and folk line traditions from the many countries from which we come.
Story Nine, The Mysteries, which is currently the finale of the cycle, has been described as ‘post modern surreal’ by musician James Harvey. This may be so. I think of it as ‘post modern inter-digienous laconic’.

There is a sequel, in this somewhat bleak, anarchic mood which has not been completed and so not presented here, where Crow, during his black hole dance, enters Jerusalem, helps Jesus down from the cross and takes him travelling toward Kashmir and together with Dionysos, along the way, begin new rite-of-passage ceremonies for suicidal young men and enraged young women. But that, I suppose, is a performance set for the future.

There are moods, rhythms and scenes in the Sugarman story which we believe should not be changed because they are essential bones in the skeleton of the myth. There are also scenes which can be altered for select audiences and still others which can be played with, changed, dropped or added to, with integrity. For example in the performance at Intjarnama, certain traditional scenes from the ancient Greek story were changed for public showing because it emerged that they were too close to local indigenous mens’ and women’s secret/sacred matters.

Barry Cook’s story, about the Sugarman, which follows, is an example of how the essence of the story can be retold in a way which fits into local experience of the excesses of drunks and the loss of soul which follows from failing to respect the power of the Sugarman. Barry, as an alcohol work practitioner is not telling his tale according to the conventions of social scientists. He is telling a story which fits within the conventions of poetry and Australian bush folklore. This is the most effective way of speaking the truth as you can get, if you are yarning to people in the back of a Toyota, on the Council Lawns of Alice Springs, or around a fire in the creek bed.

In the poetic story form of our play we have worked into it opportunities for people to throw in local stories and experiences about the ways in which alcohol has affected them, their families and communities - the ways in which Sugarman has touched their lives. This helps to bring the old timer’s yarns up to date.

Many people have helped to make this story over many thousands of years and their work is honoured. I have written it down, again, for today and for our place.

This version is dedicated to my uncle, the poet Francis Brabazon, who gave me a start on the idea of updating and Australianising the spiritual epics. His grave is on the hill on Keil Mountain, South Queensland overlooking Marrochydore.
On the night the Sugarman had its first performance there was a funeral pyre
smouldering on another hill, faraway in India, at Meherabad, near Ahmednagar.
This was the last resting place of Mani Sheriar Irani, a great storyteller in the
intimate and fiery Zoroastrian Parsee tradition. She passed away on 19 August
1996. While we were in final rehearsal, the news came. The premiere night was
dedicated to her eloquent spirit.

For some people this skeleton text will become a theatre piece—a tragedy
perhaps and an entertainment. For others, a teaching story. A few will see in it the
bones of a ceremony. A true ceremony which began walking 4000 years ago and is
still walking.
THE SUGARMAN STORY BOARD

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WORLD

This tells where the Sugarman story comes from, the peoples who first made wine and why and what happened. Then Barry Cook describes finding the Sugarman’s tracks in Central Australia. He describes the trouble and the search for a solution. Sugarman agrees to teach about himself.

START UP CEREMONY

This suggests a way to begin the performance. The people in the community are meeting. There is conflict between two groups, some want alcohol (Sugarman) and some do not. Sugarman has arrived with all his mob, there is an argument. The story is offered so that the people can make an informed decision.

Part One
THE CREATION STORIES

STORY 1
How It All Began

This is the story of the beginning. Sugarman is sick and asks his Grandmother for help. The Grandmother reveals the history of Sugarman and the reasons for his sickness. It is the account of Dionysos’ ancestry and what goes to make up his nature. How Gaia, Uranos and Rhea came into the world. How Kronos/ Crow was born. How Crow killed his father and swallowed his own kids. How Lightning tricked his father, Crow, and sent him away and how Crow came back.

STORY 2
Sugarbaby, Crow and the Mother on Fire

This is about Sugarman’s parents, Lightning/ Zeus and Demeter/ Fruit and how Sugarman was born, how he got ripped up by his uncles, the Crow brothers and how he got born a second time. It is the story of how his second mother was burnt by lightning and how he was saved from the fire.
STORY 3
How the Wine Begins
This is the story of how Sugarman grew up and how his mother's sister, Hera/the Eagle came and tried to destroy him again. She sends the Crow Brothers to make him mad. We see how the first wine was made, how the clever old man tried to fix Sugarman then gave him wine, to help him forget his troubles. Sugarman becomes a drunk, he travels the country mad, outside the law.

STORY 4
Road Stories The Grog Running
These are stories about Sugarman's travels when he is young and mad. How he meets Donkey Mueller and gives him the gift of speech and drinking. These are the tales of Sugarman spreading wine, trouble and death. The conclude with the Road Block when the women draw the line and push Sugarman toward recognising the consequences of his actions.

Part Two
TRAVELLING DIONYSOS/SUGARMAN

STORY 5
Ariadne
Begins with a prelude, introducing Ariadne and her history, especially the Labyrinth and Minotaur events. This prepares the way for the story of Sugarman meeting Ariadne, who has run away from her father and has been abandoned by her promised husband. We are invited to their wedding.

Sugarman asks his grandmother again to cure him of his madness.

She tells them they must travel and visit countries, meet the gods of the sacred places and learn.

STORY 5
Travelling Dionysos
Sugarman's adventures in other countries, and the sacred powers (the gods) he meets there. These are the stories about Sugarman's search for cure. He follows his grandmother's direction, visits countries and recover bits of himself which he has lost or forgotten. He travels all the way from Greece through Turkey, Egypt and on to India, he learns many tricks and secrets, music and dances and he faces up to madness, destruction and change and recognises his own nature and his work. He learns the dance of Shiva and returns home.
STORY 6

Travelling Ariadne

These are stories of the adventures of Ariadne and the Seven Sisters as they too travel the same countries and meet remarkable women. These are the sacred stories they learn Ariadne’s travels are also the search for cure. The mysteries of love and of culture are hinted at. They reach India and return home, bringing with them all they have learned. They begin their work of reviving culture and making a new life.

STORY 7

Sugarman Returns

This story tells how Sugarman comes home from his travels, now a god/man. He is put in prison by his cousin, the King. Sugarman escapes and the King is tricked by Sugarman into watching the women’s secret ceremonies. The King is ripped apart by his own mother and family, while they are all mad. Sugarman teaches them a lesson then asks that his laws be respected. If not he will always destroy families and towns.

STORY 8

Semele in the Underworld

This is the story of Sugarman’s descent into the underworld to bring back the spirit of his mother Semele, who was burnt in the fire. He does this and proves that it is possible for the spirit to come back from death and that love is the secret way.

Sugarman meets with the family in council. They sort out their stories and decide who or what was to blame for all the trouble. Sugarman argues for his place and responsibilities in culture.

Sugarman becomes responsible for looking after certain ceremonies, music and theatre.

STORY 9

The Beginning of the Mysteries

These are the stories which begin to open the mysteries of life, death and recovery of spirit. The Donkey Council as one way and Crow’s Dance as the other. It starts off the way by which Sugarman/AIDS can instruct and cure people, but first they have to pass through the black hole into Crow’s belly. Who knows what happens there. Personal stories can begin to be told. Sugarman and Crow begin their next adventure.
(above) Working on the painting of the Mother of Crow, by Louis Pratt
(below) A morning in the Greek theatre ended with a satyr play—a farcical comedy often featuring Dionysos (from whom the whole festival originated) along with Silenus and satyrs. This detail from a fifth century vase shows three actors holding their masks before going on to the stage. One of them has the role of an oriental king, the other two are satyrs.
A NOTE ON DIONYSOS, CEREMONY AND THEATRE

It must be noted that Dionysos, for all of his madness and destructiveness did not only bring chaos to the social order. He did not only destroy culture. He also helped make and maintain it.

It became a custom in the ancient Grecian times to perform with an image of Dionysos watching over the stage of the amphitheatre. Sometimes there was a chair set aside in the front row for him, sometimes there was a mask and a length of cloth hanging from a pole. The pole, like the pole of Osiris and the lingnam of Shiva was a sign that the god was present. Without the mask/pole, as the pivot upon which the god could align himself, or within which he could become located, there would be no presence, there would be no spirit in the events.

Great Festivals (The Dionysia) were dedicated to Dionysos and this dedication brought the best poets, performers and artists from the ancient world together in the same place. Gradually, these festivals gave rise to the theatre as we know it today.

It was also custom, when showing the great tragedies at such festivals to perform comic versions of the serious plays. These 'Satyr Plays' are reknowned for their grotesque and exaggerated comic sexuality. The Satyrs, Maenads, Centaurs and other wondrous animals accompanied Dionysos on his travels, bringing music and joy as well as licentiousness and pandemonium.

In the Sugarman performance at Intjartnana, the Satyrs brought comic relief, to tease the audience and to introduce an anarchic element into the spectacle. (For those interested in the origins of Greek theatre the book The Origins of Attic Comedy by Francis MacDonald Cornford, is a good example.

Cornford, Ovid, Otto, Danielou, Kerenyi (see bibliography) make it clear that Dionysos is connected with the old ceremonial mystery religions of death and rebirth and with the recovery of natural fertility and the revival of the human spirit. Dionysos is not all death, destruction and addiction. We hope that a sense of both the dark and the light sides of the Sugarman come through and that the complex truth of his nature is revealed. This, I believe, leads to the respect he asks for.

Make of this play what you will, but the ceremony pole will always be there, waiting for the unsuspecting and the open hearted to hang their own flesh upon. Some will be destroyed by their participation in the archetypal drama of addiction and some will find relief and new life in the rebellions of Dionysos. One worries about the disorder brought with the drink. This is a fact. Maybe it is wiser to be
prepared and begin one's education where theatre began, with finding first an understanding of the ancient European and Eastern mysteries of life, death and rebirth, which instructed our ancestors in their own psychology, and also note how the Dionysian ceremonial theatre evolved from there and why. One might discover how significant a part wine and intoxication has played in the evolution of culture and in the understanding of the human psyche.

From the simple communal intimacy of shared life mysteries we have extended this story into performance, it can move now in many directions, into music theatre, into the marvels of grand spectacle or back to intimacy. Each actor/director will have their own starting point and their own unique madness seeking to be reborn in the Dionysian image.

- The satyrs in the Injortnoma performance
The world as it was probably conceived by Herodotus. The Mediterranean was relatively unfamiliar, and it was known too that Africa could be circumnavigated—the route of the Phoenician sailors whose voyage Herodotus describes is shown by a dotted line. Of Ethiopia, Arabia, India and the north he had to rely on second and third hand reports, but his accuracy has been vindicated surprisingly often.

A map of the world, as known by the Greeks around 500 years before Christ, from Memories of Greek Civilisation, ed. Agostino.
A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WORLD
WHERE THE WINE CAME FROM

This is a very old story. It comes from the countries of the north.

This is not an Aboriginal story, not Yappa or Arilla, but Yappa (etc) can listen to this story. It comes from the countries of the north, the Kardiya Countries.

It comes from the Countries around the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Red Sea. The countries today that we call Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey, the islands of Crete, Naxos, Ikaria, Samos and the countries of North Africa, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, India. These countries are part of our story.

In the old times these countries had different names. (Arcadia Boetia, Phrygia, Lydia, Cappadocia, Bactria, Sumer), these countries are part of our history.

This is where our old people lived.

After the north was covered with ice, after the dinosaurs, after the north was covered by floods, after the volcanoes and earthquakes, after the stars hit the earth, back when people were walking all over the world. Hunting and gathering. The first stories began.

Then came stories from the people who planted the first crops, who chased the first cattle, who made the first towns.

The first towns of mud and rock are there in Jericho 10,000 years ago and Catal Huyuk in the east of Anatolia, where the mothers lived in beehive cities.

In the ancient times.

People travelled, making the tradelines. They traded ochre and obsidian, hard stone for axes and spear heads. They traded pots.

The broken pieces of their clay pots are still there in the rubbish heaps of the ancient places.
On Crete in the town of Knossos, in Sumer in the cities of Eridu and Ur, 7000 years ago, our old people came down from the hard hills to the water of the flood plains and planted wheat and barley.

The farming people travelled and farming stories travelled. This is how you do it, they said. Plant and plow and harvest like this. And the news travelled north west along the Danube River into Hungary and Germany and the Low Countries and into Russia north from the Black Sea, and west along the coast to France and Spain and up into Britain. 6,000 years ago. They found out the secrets of how things grow.

All this happened after the people came out of the Ice Ages, when the hunters saw that the easy hunting animals were gone and the women were looking around for places to live and the sheep and cattle needed looking after in one place and it was getting too hard to collect bush foods and make ends meet.

People travelled, making houses, fences. They started mining and made metal axes, spears and wheels. They broke in the horses, kept travelling and trading and somewhere, someone started making wine and beer, a long time ago, and people started drinking.

When people sit around and drink they start telling stories, singing old songs, making up new songs and dreaming about this and that.

These are stories from the old people, like old dreams, from a long time ago.

They made pictures on the walls of caves. We can read the walls today and remember the way our lives used to be. We can feel the spirit from the ‘first days and the first nights’, ‘when the first bread was baked in the fires of the land’ and the first stars were named in the skies of the land.

This was the beginning, when all things came out and the first travelling began.

The ancestors made bigger cities in Babylon and Egypt and along the coast of Phoenicia they started writing down, counting the cattle and adding up the debts.

In Sumer, Gilgamesh the first great king wrote the story of his travels on the wall of the city and his sister, Innana, the great goddess had her story written on pieces of clay, 4000 years ago, and we can still read it today.

In the Celtic countries to the west of France, the Celtic people carved picture stories on the rocks. On the rocks at Carnac the pictures are still there.

On the cold coastlands of the north seas, the snow people scratched the faces of their heroes into whale bone and shell and their sagas are remembered.
We forget and we remember. This is the history of our people.

These are stories from the pale people, from the countries where we lived before we started travelling east and west and south, looking for money and looking for room.

The pale people with the great hunger, always moving. These are stories from before Captain Cook, before Jesus.

But later Jesus travelled the countries of these stories. He ate fish and bread and drank wine. He heard these stories too. He heard the old ones and he made a new story.

Jesus remembered the old people and their troubles and how they settled down and looked after their vineyards. They made wine to drink and beer. They planted wheat and barley. They looked after sheep and goats and pigs and cattle for meat. They went hunting but it got too hard. They got frightened and built high walls. People began stealing countries.

They looked around for more minerals and made wheels and sharper axes. They made carts to carry the heavy things. They travelled, stealing more country. They sat down to eat and drink and tell stories then they’d go back to fishing, digging, planting, travelling and fighting.

Homer wrote these things down. Homer and the old storytellers.

The women made stories in the woven colours of the travelling carpets, pictures of eyes and flowers and wheat and many animals, camels, goats, scorpions . . .

The jewellery makers and the clay makers moulding faces and shaping the bodies of women and men out of the dark earth and the hot sun, mud, clay, bricks and walls and then written stories in clay bricks and walls.

Those old people looked after their trees, apricots, oranges, olives, grapes. Catch the rain, make pipes and ditches for the water.

When the grapes were ripe and juicy they’d go around with a knife and cut down the bunches. They’d put all the grapes into big baskets and carry them to
the wine crush. I know how to do this, I used to do this when I was young, and my brother, he still does it like that. They put all the grapes in big buckets and squash them down with their feet to get the juice. The juice is full of sugar.

They leave the juice to sit for a while, maybe one month, maybe six months, maybe one year. The sugar is the secret and the yeast. The sugar changes. When you leave it to sit for a long time in the proper way then the sugar changes. It changes inside itself. It gets a kind of fire. Alcohol.

The wine is white or red, bad quality or good, weak or strong but all the wines and all the beers get their bite and their fire from the alcohol when the sugar changes.

The old people would sit and watch the way a man changed when the spirit got into him. They watched the way a woman changed when the spirit of alcohol got into them. They learned about drinking and drunkenness, about intoxication. They learned the many ways the mind changes shape when the wine gets into your face, into your body. What they saw they made into stories and they passed the stories on. The wine and the beer is part of our life. It travels with us, wherever we go, we bring the bottle. Here is the story to go with the bottle.
SUGARMAN IN AUSTRALIA

by Barry Cook

1  HE CAME TO AUSTRALIA

This is the story of Sugarman, the god of alcohol.

He came to Australia with Captain Cook and then went travelling, making people mad with his spirit, the spirit of alcohol.

He travelled for two hundred years all around Australia and you can see where he has been.

He left pubs, taverns, liquor outlets all over the land, but many of the people did not respect his power and he sent them mad.

For he is a god and he demands respect.

And so it was that he came to Central Australia and found a place called Intjartnarna.

He found a place where people respected him, a healing place where he sat down with the warrior spirits and so his madness left him.

Now he sends out his story with the messengers of Intjartnarna, the Cook family, and this is his story.

Listen carefully, my friends, for to ignore him will bring tragedy.

2  THROWING AWAY YOUR SOUL

The Sugarman works at your soul, he eats you away.

He takes a piece of your soul each time you throw away an empty can, an empty cask. Whatever you drink, the little drops at the bottom are in fact the little drops of your soul.

So, as you travel home to your community, throwing the empty cans and casks out of the window of your car, you are throwing your soul far and wide across the land.

The Crows are a part of his spirit and they are tearing you to pieces. The Sugarman is laughing.

The Sugarman is very cunning. He can change his shape.
He is in your community in the shape of the grog runner.

Some of your communities are dry, but tonight is paynight, he will sneak past the police patrols, he will sneak past your night patrols.....

He will bring his cargo of sugar.

Yes, the Sugarman is coming.

The people in your community see him coming, they cry out,

"Who is that coming from the town?"

"It's the Sugarman!"

Some of your community trembles in fear. Fear, not only for their own safety but also fear for their culture, for they have seen his madness many times before and they cry out;

"No, Go! We don't want your madness here!"

But the other side, the side that have been throwing their soul all over the country cry out;

"Yes, Come. Yes, Come!"

This side wants to use his spirit to change themselves into bulls so they can charge through their community, knocking people down as they go, broad siding their cars, feeling very powerful.

But this power, my friends, is only meant for gods, not for mere mortals. The gods know how to handle this power and when we try to be as powerful as he is, we insult him and his power will send you mad.

This side of your community cry out;

"Yes Come, yes Come!"

The community breaks in two.

A storm is brewing.

3 THE ALCOHOL TAKES OVER

Tonight the Sugarman is laughing. He is laughing because he knows you are going to open up all his babies. Tonight you will open cans of beer, casks of wine, bottles of rum, which are the eggs that hold his babies safe and you will swallow his babies in the form of his spirit.
Now you are drinking more and more, so his spirit is growing inside you. His spirit is growing inside you. His spirit is getting stronger, forcing you out and because there is not enough room in one body for two spirits, your spirit is getting pushed out, getting thrown all over the country.

Tonight, because you do not respect him, tonight, while you are drunk and you think you are as powerful as he is, he will play games with you, he will take you over in body and soul and tonight you will bash your wife, maybe even kill her.

Tonight you will roll your car over and kill your children.

He will show you how to swear at your mother and father and when your grandfather comes to help you in your madness you will tell him to ‘piss off’ and ‘shove his stories up his arse’ because you think you now have his power.

But what of tomorrow, when he has left you?

He has gone to count his money and you feel so sick. You are trembling, you are sweating. Where is the power you felt last night? Why do you feel so empty of life?

You vomit. Your soul has gone. You threw it all over the country, remember? You wanted to be a god last night.

You open your eyes and look around, but what is this?

You find yourself in a jail cell. What are you doing here?

Where is your family? Where are your friends?

Where is the Sugarman?

But he won’t come to you in here. He is off counting his money.

The Sugarman is laughing.

4 THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

The moment of truth is fast approaching. You climb up and look out your cell window.

Is that your car out there in the police yard? The one that is smashed to pieces, the one with blood splattered all over it?

Fear is creeping into you. You start to tremble with fear. You look down at your hands. They are covered with dried blood. Your clothes are splattered with blood. The fear grows inside you.
You cry out “What’s happening? Why am I here?” But no one answers. Suddenly a flash of memory comes to you. You see yourself standing over a woman, a star picket on your hands.

The woman is lying on the ground, very still. Somewhere there are children screaming.

You push these thoughts from your mind. But you will remember, my friend.

At ten o’clock the police will come for you. They will lead you over to the court house where you will see your best friend and his wife pointing at you, saying:

“That is the man who raped our ten year old daughter... and we trusted him.”

You will see your wife’s family pointing at you, saying:

“That is the man who bashed our daughter to death with a star picket”

“Murderer!” They scream, pointing at you.

You will see your own family, heads bowed with shame, and they will say;

“Yes. That is our son, the one who was swearing at us last night. when he was mad with sugar. And your grandfather will say with trembling voice “Yes, that is my grandson, the one who told me to “piss off” last night, my grandson, who told me to “shove my stories up my arse” Yes he is the one who bashed me and took my pension so he could buy more sugar and now we have to live in shame for his doings. Now for many years we will not rest easy for fear of the payback system.”

The Crows have done their job well.

The Sugarman is laughing.

5 THE WIND

The old grandfather went out and talked to the Spirit of the Wind and he asked the Spirit of the Wind: ‘Do you know anyone who knows the story of this god, (the one they call Wati Wama, the Sugar Man?)

We need to know something about him for we have never used his sugar in our culture, so we have no guidelines for alcohol to teach our young.”

The Wind listened to the grandfather’s pleas and said;

“Yes. I will help you. I will look for him on the highest mountains and the deepest valleys. I will look for him as I move across the plains and through the forests, for I travel everywhere. I will ask the eagle to help me for he has a keen eye and can see a mouse running through the grass from hundreds of feet up.”
So the Spirit of the Wind and the Eagle set off in search of the Sugarman, the ‘god’ of alcohol (known as Son of Lightning, Son of Fruit, Son of Mother on Fire, Brother of Death, Cousin of Love, Grandson of Crow, Sugarman, Hunter of Souls, The Loosener, Shape Changer.)

And so they travelled here and they travelled there for many months. And then one day they came to Central Australia and the Eagle cried out;

“There he is, Wind, sitting on a hill, talking to the warrior spirits, at that place called Injarnama.”

So they went to the Sugarman and told him of the old man’s pleas.

“Can you help him?” they asked.

The Sugarman thought for a moment. He felt sorry for the old man and then he said;

“Yes, I will help you, but you must promise to listen. You have seen my power. You have seen my vengeance to those who disrespect me, for I am a ‘god’ and I demand respect.

I have come to Australia and I am here to stay. If you learn my story, where I come from, who my grandfather was, who my family is and treat me with respect, I will sweeten your dreams at night, I will mellow your sorrow when you lose someone you love.

Learn to live with me and I will fill your life with joy.

Go tell the old man I will send out messengers from this place. I will send them to Alice Springs to gather the people who drink at the pubs, the taverns and the liquor outlets. They will take these people on a journey, nine of them in all and while they travel I will show them, through my messengers, how to pick up the pieces of their souls that they have thrown all over the country.

And once again. They will lift up their heads with pride. Their eyes will sparkle with the fire of life for their souls have come back and once again we will hear our children’s laughter.

Our spirit will bond with the spirit of our mother, The Earth.”

And that is what happened.
Central Australian breakdown
LOCATION MAPS:

CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN REGION (From HALT EXHIBITION CATALOGUE 1993)

ALICE SPRINGS REGION: SHOWING ARRERNTE SITES. (From Brooks, 1991 I.A.D.)
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The main characters in order of appearance, approximately.

START UP CEREMONY
The Sugarmob, musicians etc including perhaps the Captain Cook circus crew

MAIN EVENT
Narrators
Granny and Sugarman

PART ONE
THE CREATION STORIES
Night Dancing – the first female elements of the beginning
The Wind Snake Dancing – the first male elements of the beginning
The Egg of the cosmos
Gaia – the first great mother Earth
Rhea – the first mother of living things
Uranos – the first father of living things
Kronos – Crow the first son, grandfather to Sugarman
Zeus – Lightning, father to Sugarman
Hera – Eagle. Lightning’s first wife
Demeter – Seed/Fruit. Lightning’s second wife, Sugarman’s mother
Dionysos – Sugarman, son of Zeus and Demeter
Semele – Moon, Sugarman’s second mother
Hermes – Quicksilver or as Eaglehawk, rescuer of Dionysos
The Titans – Six Crow Brothers
Silenus – the old man who tries to fix Sugarman
Satyrs various
Donkey Mueller – Donkey Man, king of the drunks

THE ROAD STORIES
Icarius – King of Attica
Erigone – Daughter of Icarius
Maera – Erigone’s dog
Oeneus – King of Calydon
Althae – Wife to Oeneus
King Dion – King of Laconia
Carya – Daughter of King Dion
Carya's two sisters
Pirates – the brothers in the Kingswood
The Roadblock Women/Night Patrol Amazons

PART TWO
THE TRAVELLING STORIES

THE CRANE DANCE AND THE
MEETING OF ARIADNE AND DIONYSOS
Ariadne – Sugarman's Wife
The Minotaur – Ariadne's brother
Theseus – Ariadne's first promised husband
The Seven Sisters who travel with Ariadne

THE TRAVELS (main characters and gods)
Kybele
Aphrodite/Ishtar
Adonis
Jesus of Nazareth
Isis and Osiris
North Africans
Gilgamesh and Enkidu
Inanna and Dumuzi
Phoenix and Homa – Persian/Zoroastrian sacred bird and also a
sacred nectar Haoma
Ahura Mazda – Zoroastrian name of God associated
with fire as divine image
Rabia of Basra – a Sufi saint and prostitute
Rumi of Konya and Shams of Tabriz – famous Sufis
Mahabharata characters
Draupadhi – the wife of the five Pandava brothers, Arjuna etc
Krishna and Rhada his partner
Rama and Sita
Shiva, Parvati, Kali

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THE RETURN – The Bacchae (main characters)

Dionysos
Agave – mother of Pentheus, and her female relatives
King Pentheus
Cadmus – Semele's father
Semele's mother
Teiresias – the blind wise man (referred to as the Bird Man)
The Maenads
The Satyrs

COUNCIL MEETING
Characters at the Council Meeting include the major powers/gods associated with Dionysos throughout the story, but particularly the 12 members of the Family, who live on Mount Olympus. The first six:

Zeus
Hestia
Hera
Hades
Poseidon
Demeter

Apollo – the sun, order, music
Ares – war
Afrodite – love
Athene – Zeus brain/wisdom
Artemis
Hermes – communications between souls and life and death
Possibly others, but these 12 powers and qualities should be represented or we might get trouble.
SUGARMAN
START UP CEREMONY

THE ARRIVAL OF SUGARMAN
the entrance music of the sugarman mob begins

the sugar mob unseen until their processional entrance

the narrator begins to recite/sing actors/chorus repeat the narrator’s lines

9 men are sitting in a line
9 men are sitting in a line
9 men are sitting on one side
9 men are sitting on one side
women are sitting
women are sitting

indicating the lines of women on 2 sides

women are singing, men are singing

we are singing the song of sugar sugarman wama parma nkgwerle

sugar sound begins from the sugar mob the sugar mob sound increases

someone is coming
someone is coming from the north

who is that coming

sugar group moves as a procession with some carrying the pole and mask etc and some dance whirling their arms held up and outstretched they whirl slowly between the lines the satyrs in comic grotesque donkey business

sugar man is coming
sugar man yes come!
sugar man no go!

someone is coming
donkey man (either a single actor or a group of satyrs) dance accompanied by the donkey sound teasing the audience
donkey man is coming

who's that coming

the women sugar mob advance in a line carrying the sugar pole and the sugar man mask

they raise the mask

meanwhile the two lines are increasing their repeated shouts

sugarman  YES COME

sugarman  NO GO

repeated

the impression is of whirling ecstatic dancing
and an argument breaking out between those who want
sugarman and his mob to come and those who want them to go

as the dancers raise the mask the two lines jump up and shout
a fight breaks out perhaps as acrobats cartwheel and tug o war
while others continue the Yes/No chant

the dancing mob come down the line
settling the fight with the pole horizontal in front of them
then rest at the place where the pole will stand

the sugarman (mask) is raised between everyone
getting their attention
arms up and whirling

look at me says sugar man
look at me
smiling and dancing
this wine is good
this wine is sweet
dancing on your old country
listen to me
the people sit on the ground
sugarman asks
will you listen to my story?

donkey says
I'll tell this story

donkey shows his grotesque drunk penis dance

everyone laughs at him

the eagle comes  the mother of order
the one who wants everything in place
today she looks like a witch
she says listen to this story  listen to this story
this story will kill you

she moves up and down the line swooping like an eagle
everyone is frightened

tell us the story  sugarman
tell us the story  sugarman
if we die we'll kill you
if we die we'll kill you

sugarman stands on the ground
the pole is tall like lightning
the sugarman face
sugar man dancing on your old country

the pole is raised and secured with the mask

sugar man says
you ready now
people say yes
ok  says sugar man
this is the story and now we tell it

it is recommended to begin with
a smoking ceremony of the performance area if this is customary in the region
or a wine libation to the ancient gods which may also be used to introduce the main characters
Crow Demeter Zeus etc  and their locations in the arena
Part I

The Creation Story

STORY 1

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

IN THE BEGINNING ... 9
GAIA ... 11
NIGHT DANCING ... 13
CROW ... 14
URANOS, RHEA AND CROW ... 15
CROW MAKES THE BABIES ... 17
BABY ZEUS ... 19
LIGHTNING ... 20
SCENE I IN THE BEGINNING

this is the first story

it is a very special one
it tells how everything began
it tells the story of
sugar boy’s grandfather
sugar boy’s grandmother

sugar boy didn’t hear this story
when he was little
or maybe he did
but he forgot it when he went mad

sugar boy heard this story
when he was a young man
he was sick
and went looking for his grandmother
she was sitting there
waiting for him

he said   granny I’m sick    fix me up

she said   maybe
first you’ve got to listen to the story
the story about your
grandfather and grandmother
the story about what happened
when you were a baby
how everything began

I don’t want to hear that   he said
it makes me sick
you’ve got to hear it
take a bite   granny said
a little bite
swallow your story boy
you might get strong

oh no   said sugar boy
I might go now

granny lay down on the ground
she pulled the blanket over her head

alright she said
come back when you're ready to listen

sugar boy walked away
he walked around in circles
he came back
he sat down
you ready now said grandma
yes said sugar boy

well put this blanket over your head
close your eyes
I'll show you what happened
now
this is what the sugar boy saw
this is what the sugar boy heard
this is the first story
SCENE 2  GAIA

The First Mother

a woman is sitting by a fire
the grandmother is sitting
the first mother

she does not move
the rivers move
the mountains move
she does not move
she is sitting where everything begins
she is sitting where everything comes out
everything comes out from her
smoke mosquitoes lizard
fish snake bird kangaroo dogs
people
they all move
but she does not move

she laughs
she smiles
she cries
but she does not move
everything moves
in and out of her
but she does not move
she breathes
she sucks things in
they pass through her
stars  motor cars
me
SCENE 3 NIGHT DANCING

Euronome

in the beginning night was dancing
she was dancing
you feel her in your blood
dancing

who is that coming
dancing

that is my blood
dancing on the water
before I was born

who is that coming
that is the wind
dancing on the water
before I was born

night on the water
snake on the water
dancing
before I was born

what is that coming
shining
on the water

an egg
before I was born

before I was born
my father a snake
my mother dancing
an egg burning on the water
shining and broken

all things dancing
coming out
coming out

my mother dancing
on my own country
SCENE 4  CROW

Kronos

crow was the first one through
her first baby
her first son
her husband too

that big old snake in the beginning
he was the first one for all of us
he took shape and took a name
uranos  father from the sky
uranos is father to crow and all crow's wild brothers
the titanic powers beginning all our time

crow was the first little baby to fall out of mother
the first one through
the biggest shit of all

watch carefully
crow is grandfather to sugarboy
know about crow
understand about sugar boy
SCENE 5  URANOS, RHEA AND CROW

Titanic family violence

crow is watching his father
crow is watching his mother
they explode like rocks
they are fighting

his father is killing the children
he throws them like rocks
they explode like stars
he digs holes
he buries them

they explode like rocks on fire
they make mountains
they make rivers
they make caves in the ground
they make fires
the water comes
rushing
the children rumble
the world is covered
in mud and blood

crow sits watching
the rolling trouble
(his mother and father fighting and fucking)
his head under his wing
watching the rolling violence
the mud and blood
this is how my mother and father do it
he says
when I am big I'll do it too

crow's mother calls him
she gives him a knife
a stone knife
white as crystal
here she says I am sick of this
do something
crow watches his father  
crow watches a snake  
he takes the knife  
his beak is sharp  

his father comes down  
like a pile of mud  
like a pile of mud  
he slops on the mother's belly  

the kids cry out  
the old man's coming again  
he rears up  
he slides rolling and coiling with her  
a snake hard to strike  
the mother cries out  
the old man's coming again  
crow is fast  
fast as an eye  
he comes between them  
he cuts the snake  
he slices the father  
the world is covered in blood  

his mother heaves like a river in flood  

good she says  

enough of him  
now we can start again  

crow looks at the knife  
he looks at the mud boiling  
he thinks about love
SCENE 6 CROW MAKES THE BABIES

Kronos incest marriage

crow is dancing with his mother
he dances the lover boy dance
the larrkin dance
am I big enough yet he says

yes she says
now you can be the father

now you make the babies
crow looks at the knife
he thinks about love

the mother squats on the ground
what's that coming says crow
that's your baby

nice says crow
I'll look after him
I'll keep him warm
look says crow
I'll swallow him like this

what's that coming

that's another baby
your little girl

nice says crow
and swallows her

one two three four five
crow swallows the babies
all alive
just like that
nice says crow
I'll keep them safe and warm
(before crow was swallowing the babies he chucked them round
he chucked them round those eggs he chucked them round like footballs
that was how Australian rules started up
the crows all came put the magpies and the lot of them in teams
and started jumping about after the eggs
crow chucked those eggs like footballs )

swallowing his children
that was when crow started to think

split brain crow they called him
he can think two different things
at the same time and keep smiling
what juicy babies I have he said
gobbling them up
they will be safe in my belly
nice and warm

that was how the whitefeller mob began
crow's kids that's them
that's how they began true story
everything they do has two sides they can swallow you up
and keep smiling this will be good for you they say yum yum
SCENE 7  BABY ZEUS

The god who got away

the mother was getting sick of it
she looks at the knife
she looks at crow
crow said
I love you
let's have some more

another baby came
number six

the mother turned her back
crow's missus turned her back
she picked up a rock
she wrapped it in mud and blood
she gave it to crow
here she said
look after this one

crow did it nicely
he swallowed it

oh he said
that was a big one
I'm full now

the mother turned her back
she hid the baby
the little lightning one
she hid him
she gave him to her sisters
here she said you look after him
the sisters looked after him in secret
they did not let crow know where he was
so crow did not get to swallow the lightning
he swallowed the other five
he swallowed hestia the power of the cooking fire
he swallowed demeter the power of seeds and fruit
he swallowed hera the power of order and women's affairs
he swallowed poseidon the power of water
he swallowed hades the power underground and the power of death
but he did not swallow lightning
lightning makes life
and life came back
SCENE 8    LIGHTNING

The son who came back

Zeus grows up in secret and returns to find his father.
He brings a drink that makes Kronos vomit up the other children.
They take over and become the Olympian gods.

the lightning baby grew up
he came back
he came travelling across the plain
rain and clouds travelling across the plain
the lightning boy
he came travelling
looking for his father
looking for crow
he was carrying something for crow
it was a trick
crow was sitting in a tree
he had opened up his brain
he was looking inside
he was trying to dream himself some food
he was hungry
the young man said
hello old man what you doing
I'm thinking said crow
the young man said ok
I brought you something

what's that said crow
something to drink said lightning
what
really sweet
what
baby blood really sweet
give me that
crow sipped it
hmm he said
really sweet
he drank the lot he drank it all at one go
it hit his belly like a bomb
he fell out of his tree
he hit the ground
and started vomiting
he vomited everywhere

those babies started jumping about
lightning boy was clever
he knew the right thing to do
he sang out to his brothers and sisters
jump he said let's get out of here
the brothers and sisters heard him
they were kicking around
inside crow's belly
let's get out of here they said
they chucked the rock out first
crow kept vomiting

the five of them jumped out
covered with mud and blood
crow was rolling around on the ground
yhey looked at their father rolling
he was a mess
that must be our father they said
ho nooo what a mess

six children got back together
they grew up fast
they picked up rocks
they threw rocks at crow
they threw rocks at their father

we are sick of you they said
piss off
they said
piss off
we'll be boss now

crow flew off
he flew north west
he flew vomiting all the way
his vomit hit the ground
he ended up in england
he settled down there
his vomit hit the ground
all the way to england
where his vomit hit the ground
you know what happened
cities started up
darwin singapore tokyo
bombay london

(he stayed there a long time
he came back one day
he came back with captain cook)

that's it
STORY 2

SUGAR BABY, CROW AND THE MOTHER ON FIRE

CONCEPTION ... 25
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DRINKING IN SPIRIT ... 36
SEMELE BURNING ... 38
SCENE I  CONCEPTION

Lightning Fruit and Jealousy
Zeus, Hera and Demeter

two sisters are sitting down
two women are sitting down

one woman looks up at the sky
she thinks about rain
one woman looks down at the ground
she thinks about seeds
she thinks about fruit

one man is travelling
he travels with lightning
they call him the rain man
they call him the lightning man

he thinks about women he looks for his wife
his first wife the eagle
she flies up to meet him
the lightning flashes
they fight
something is not right
she leaves him
the thunder rumbles

the lightning is travelling round
he thinks about women
he looks for his second wife
he thinks about fruit he thinks about seeds
she thinks about him
they meet
they sit down together
they lie down together
the lightning flashes
the rain falls
the rain fills all the empty ground
hollow ground
she is pleased
the seed woman is pleased
the other sister (hera) the first wife is jealous
she looks around
she looks with the eye of an eagle
she lifts her claws

but the fruit woman (demeter) is happy
she says to her husband
look I might have a baby now
sweet fruit
a little fat grub
you’ve got to give me something
her husband says yes
her sister says no
lightning says yes
eagle says no
lightning and eagle fight

the fruit woman says don’t fight
the fruit woman says we are all mixed up
after crow
we are all mixed up

eagle and lightning stop fighting
they sit down
alright they say
what are you thinking
we are listening
I'm thinking about my baby
don't swallow him like crow
he can look after things for you
he can be boss after you
boss for lightning
boss for rain

the father said
I’ll swallow him like crow
I’ll cut him like crow cut his father before him
I’ll show him the door to death
I don’t want the trouble
no said the mother
he has to take care of things with you
he has to fit in your skin with you
he has to keep things going after you die

the lightning man said to his wife you talk sense

the lightning man said yes
we are all mixed up after crow
we have to sort out who looks after this and that
who is boss for this and that
I’ll make our son boss after me
he can have the whole world to play with
he will fit inside my skin
he’ll travel with lightning and I’ll teach him my way
he can have all the women in the world to play with

the other wife was jealous
eagle looked around
she wanted everything sorted out too but
she wanted everything her way

she said
your sweet little son will be mad
she started a curse
she started a death magic
she lifted her claws and grabbed a snake
she tore it to bits
SCENE 2    SUGAR BOY IS BORN
The birth of Dionysos

two women are sitting on the ground
two women are sitting on the ground
the seed woman
is sitting on the ground
she's heavy with fruit

the mother is sitting on the ground
her baby is coming
her baby is sweet and juicy
her baby is coming
she calls him sweet one (*parma wama ngwerle*)

the baby is born

something is happening
what's that coming
what kind of baby is this

a snake head is coming
a snake head is coming

what's that coming
a bull head is coming
a bull head is coming

what's that coming

a goat head is coming
a goat head is coming

different animals wriggling together
what kind of baby is that

the people all shout
what is that coming
no go
what is that coming
yes come

the eagle comes
she stops she stands
she speaks like fire
she speaks like hot wind from the west
this boy will make you mad
this boy will make you sorry
this boy will make you all forget
don't keep this boy
this boy will kill you

the people say
the boy is sweet
the boy is sugar
this sugar boy is good
we'll keep him

the mother stands and holds him in the smoke
SCENE 3  THE RIP UP

The crows dismember the infant Dionysos

six crows are sitting in the sky
six crows are flying in
the eagle is sitting in the tree
she is whispering
the crows are listening

she whispers
she whispers in the ear of every crow
six crows
six brothers
six nice uncles
they listen to her story

six crows ruffle their feathers
six crows nod their heads
six crows fly out
six crows are hanging in the sky

the eagle woman
is turning in the sky
the eagle woman
is turning in the sky
her eye is bright
her eye is sharp

the crows are waiting
the crows are watching

a woman sitting on the ground
a woman is sitting on the ground

she looks at the sugar baby
she looks round
she's thinking about hunting

her sister says
let's go hunting
what about the baby?
the nice uncles say
we'll look after the baby

the women go hunting
the crows watch the baby
the women come home everyone is happy

next day same thing
the women come home
everyone is happy
sugarboy plays with the presents
the crow uncles gave him presents
a shiny tin just like a mirror
he can see his face inside
he looks and looks
he looks at his face
he smiles
he laughs
the sugar baby laughs

the sister says
let's go hunting
we'll go a long way
the uncles say
we'll look after the baby

crows are hanging in the sky
the uncles watch the sugar baby

they smile
they whisper
they cover themselves in white clay
they cover their beaks
they cover their heads
they cover their black featherskin
six crow uncles are gone

no one can see them
they make no tracks
look inside the sugarbaby's eye
what does he see

he sees six white men with feather feet
they play with him
they grab him
he cries like a baby
they grab him
he fights like a bull
they grab him

he runs like a billy goat
they grab him

he bites like a snake
they grab him
the six crow men
like white spirit men
no tracks on the ground

they don't look like nice uncles now

they rip the baby
they rip him up
they carry bits away
rip
his little hands go that way
rip
his little feet go that way
rip
his sweet head goes that way
his guts go
his heart goes that way
his blood drips all over the country

what happened to his spirit
where did his spirit go
the crows fly off
there is nothing left
the sugar boy is gone
SCENE 4  SORROW

someone is coming
the mothers coming home
hunting finished

they call out across the plain
how is that baby?
ha!
the mother listens
the fruit falls to the ground

the mother looks
she falls to the ground
she covers her head
she covers her head with dust

she cries out

the country stops
dead

the lightning is travelling
the lightning is coming from the west

the father is coming

he stops he stands
he looks
he stops still
lightning strikes the ground
the country stops
dead
he cries
the father cries

he looks for tracks
he looks at the sky

the grandmother comes
she looks around
she covers her body with dust

she looks around she sees what has happened
the grandmother is travelling

she goes this way and that
she travels the country
she picks up the pieces
she picks up the pieces
this is the way the grandmothers work

she picks up every bit

the head the hand the heart
the feet the guts the sweet fruit
the blood

she picks them all up
she is not afraid

poor thing she says
poor thing

this is the way grandmothers work
SCENE 5   DRINKING IN SPIRIT

Zeus is given the spirit of Dionysos to drink and conceive

the father stands
he shakes

mother does not move
the country is dead

grandmother does the work
she carries the bits of the baby
she carries him in her coolamon
maybe it's a billycan
she makes a fire
she puts the billycan near the fire
she looks around for the spirit
she finds the tin
the bright shining tin
it flashes like a mirror

the crows are watching
their eyes flash

look they say
she found the spirit
she found him in that old tobacco tin
they swear
they spit

the granny throws the tin
into the billy can with you she says

she calls the father
she calls the lightning

here she says
you better swallow your baby
you better drink this spirit

I can't do that
crow does that
not me
grandmother said
no not like crow
you've got to swallow his spirit
you've got to get this spirit back
get him back inside our skin

I can't do that
yes she says
you better get him back
here I've made him ready for you

the lightning man moves
he moves inside the smoke
he stands in the smoke
he picks up the billy can

he drinks
the father drinks,
the spirit of sugarboy
is back inside the skin

now say the grandmothers
you better let him be born again
how do I do that? said the man
the grandmothers laughed
do we have to tell you everything?
SCENE 6    SEMELE BURNING

Semele is tricked by Hera into asking Zeus to release to Semele all his power in the act of love. In the act of love she is incinerated.

the lightning man is tall and hard
he looks around for a woman

not me says the seed woman
not me now
not me says the eagle woman
not me
that boy will make us mad

not me say the crows
laughing

not me

the lightning looks at the moon
the moon is sweet
she is dancing

what's that dancing

that's the night dancing
the first dance
the night woman and
the wind snake
remember that one
the dance that started us
I remember that one
the night dancing
and the wind snake
the first dance
a long time ago

the moon and lightning dance
they dance that one
the first one

someone whispers in her ear
it is a trick but she listens
yes she listens poor thing

grandmother says
don't listen to that whispering

that whispering will kill you

she listens
she talks to her husband
she talks to him in the dark
she whispers show me everything
he says no not that
that will kill you
there is too much power
inside me
there is all the fire of lightning
be happy with me as a man
no she says I want to see your power
I am strong don't worry

her husband says no
she says yes
I have to see your power
I have to feel your power
I am your wife now
do it

the lightning man
takes off his skin
he shakes like that
his skin falls
it hits the ground
everything flashes
suddenly the whole world turns inside out
it hits the woman
she burns
she flashes
her skin burns
black smoke goes up in the air
a whirlwind
the mother is burning

look the moon is red
the moon is black
the moon is burning

the baby
the baby
what about the baby?

the father spins

the father shakes he calls out for help
quicksilver comes like a spear like an eagle hawk

the mother is burning

the baby
the baby

the fire is coming
his skin flashes

quicksilver comes
quicksilver eagle hawk
he travels among the living
he travels among the dead

he grabs him
he grabs him

quicksilver grabs the baby
gives him to the father
like that
his father knows what to do
he cuts himself he cuts his skin
he makes a place inside his own skin
he covers the boy
he saves him
he saves his life
he holds the baby inside his own skin

he holds him
he holds him

the mother is burning
her spirit is gone
the women are crying
they throw dust
they throw ashes

the father stands tall and strong
the baby lives
he cries inside his father's skin
he carries him to the women
they take care of him
the clouds build up
the hot winds come in from the west
the clouds build up
everyone waits
everyone asks
what will happen
what will happen
something new is happening
something new is coming
STORY 3

HOW THE WINE BEGINS

SUGAR AND THE WOMEN ... 44
SUGAR IS SENT MAD ... 45
THE TEARS OF THE GRAPE ... 47
WINEMAKER ... 48
THE OLD MAN TRIES TO FIX HIM UP ... 50
GROG BASH ... 52
SCENE I  SUGAR AND THE WOMEN

Dionysos is brought up in secret hidden from Hera

the eagle comes
the sister comes
the woman comes
the first wife
the one whose eye is an eagle eye
she comes
she speaks
her tongue is lightning
her tongue is fire
no rain  no rain
she spits a hot wind
a wind from the west

this boy will make you mad
this boy will make you sorry

this one will make you forget
don't keep this one
this one will kill you

the women said
this boy is sweet
this boy is sugar
this sugar boy is good
we'll keep him
the women kept him
they kept him hidden

they kept him hidden

the women showed him women's song
women's feet  women's skin
sugar girl
lover girl
SCENE 2   SUGARMAN IS SENT MAD

At Dionysos' initiation into manhood Hera catches sight of him
and plots his destruction again

on the day the sugar boy
became a man
the eagle saw him
she watched the men in the ceremony
and when they left the boy
for his night alone
she did her work

on the day the sugar boy
became a man
she caught him

she called the crows
the crows came
she whispered to them
she gave them three handfuls of ash
she whispered
the boy is all alone

(black feather white feet
black feather crow feet)

if you cannot kill with a knife
kill with fire
if you cannot kill with fire
kill with a lie
if you cannot rip his body
rip his mind

with a lie the uncles came
while sugarman was dreaming
with a lie they blew a hole in sugarman's ear

three times
the feathers passed
three times
the ashes blew
three dreams
the black crows passed
and the job was done
no tracks
no blood
no fire

the first dream is the
dream of family violence
his grandmother and grandfather fighting
crow killing his father
and crow becoming husband to
crow's own mother
the mixup

(when I was conceived
my parents were drunk)

the second dream
is the dream of crow swallowing his babies
the baby blood
and the baby ripped to bits

(when I was born my parents
were drunk)

the third dream was the dream
of mothers on fire
of lightning striking his mother's skin
his mother burning and
the boy inside the fire
the third dream
is of all the world on fire
and him
a helpless baby
trapped inside

(now I am a man
my parents are still drunk and
I am drunk too)

a man is sleeping the wind is cold
SCENE 3  THE TEARS OF THE GRAPE

The legend from the island of Ikaria has it that Afrodite heard of Dionysos’ beauty.  
She travelled from Libya to see him and became his lover then left him.  
His tears of love lost fell to the ground.  
Where they fell grapevines grew.

they say that after sugarman went mad  
his reputation as a lover boy travelled  
all round the country and women came from miles  
around to have a go at him  
there was a lot of love magic going on they say

the queen of love came for him  
she taught him everything about love  
and then she left him  
he’s too crazy for me she said  
I’ll wait till he grows up

sugarman woke up in the morning  
and the blanket was empty  
he looks around for her tracks  
he can’t find anything  
nothing

this is what the old story says  
when love came to him  
she left him  
his tears fell

where his tears fell  
grapes grew
SCENE 4  WINEMAKER

Some stories say the old man Silenus invented wine
and showed Dionysos how to make it and drink it
and when Dionysos went mad it was a way of relieving his pain.
Another story says that Dionysos learned it from a snake
and another says he learned how to plant the vines from a dog.

a man is sitting on the ground
an old man
a wild man
a clever man
an old man is singing
he’s singing the song of sugar
fruit sugar
grape sugar
wine
he grows the grape
in the proper way
he cuts the grape
in the proper way
he holds the grape
in the proper way
he crushes the grape
in the proper way
he rolls the juice
in the proper way
he leaves the juice
in the proper way
he waits
he watches
with proper care
he makes the wine

what is in the grape

sugar man’s mother
is in the grape
fruit and seed woman is in the wine
what is in the wine
semele is in the wine
his second mother
dancing and love is in the wine

what is in the wine

sugarman's father is in the wine
lightning is in the wine
crow is in the wine

all his family
and all his story
is in the wine
the wine is sugarman's story
this is the story the old man sings

the old man sits
he makes the wine
food for the spirit
food for the song

the old man sits
he makes the wine
food for the spirit
food for the song

the old man dancing
the young men cry
food for the spirit
food for the song
SCENE 5    THE OLD MAN TRIES TO FIX HIM

the old man tried to fix him
he sang him songs
he sang the song for snakebite
he sent for seeds and leaves
and cooked them up
he went hunting
to feed him up
nothing
he caught nothing
he fixed nothing

the old man tried to fix him
he rubbed his skin
he rubbed his head
he used good oil and good hands
nothing
the old man rubbed him
he took out stones
he took out bones
he took out ash
nothing
the sugar boy was mad
the dreams did not stop

the old man gave him grog
here he said
this will make you forget
the sugarman took the grog
he drank it
he drank it like his father
drank him once before
he drank like crow
swallowed him once before
he drank like his grandfather
drank (blood and sugar)
to make him strong
he drank and drank
and began to forget
you might be right now
said the old man
the clever man
but he was wrong

the grog made sugar man
forget
but it did not fix him

he travels the country mad
and everything mad he does
he forgets

the old woman is sitting by the fire
I told you
this boy will make you mad
this boy will make you forget
this boy will kill you
and you said
no the boy is good
the boy is sweet
now you will see what sugar man will do
when sugarman is mad
when sugarman runs the country
outside the law
SCENE 6   GROG BASH

sugarman is travelling
sugarman mad
remember that baby
that first one ripped up and mad
travelling pushing the law

what's that coming
a goat head
a bull head
a snake head

what kind of man is this
all kinds of animals wriggling together

sugarman billy goat
hungry for women greedy for . . .
your mother
your sister
your daughter
sugarman

baby  let me suck on you

sugarman  bullyboy
looking for a fight
fight you uncle
bash you grandpa
kill you mother fucker
what you lookin' at me for
baammmm
baby let me suck on you

sugarman  baby
sugarbaby  cry baby
cries to suck sweet milk
cries to suck sweet spirit
cries to suck you dry
sugarman crying for more sweet sugar
baby let me suck on you
sugarman snakeskin
slip inside you
crawling up the backbone
inside your throat
poison you
back bite snake
steal your blankets
steal your songs
suck on you
shahaaaa

sugarman changing shape
suck on you
STORY 4

ROAD STORIES
GROG RUNNING

LIGHTNING TRAVELS ... 55
DONKEY MUELLER GETS OVER THE CREEK ... 58
VISITING COUNTRIES ... 63

Sugarman came down from the Mountains
Driving Into Calydon
King Dion and the Toyota
Pirates

Inset story — Drunk on the Road
Road Block
Scene I  Lightning Travels

for Peter Hay, Peter Latz - 'Bushfires, Bushtucker' -
and Paddy Japaljarri Stewart

lightning travels
he moves across the plain
he moves like smoke
he moves like rain

eagles turn on wings
the eagle wheels on thundering feet
his feet dance
feet dance
the eagle turns and turns
in the widening sky

see
the lightning comes
see him come
his face alight
here and there across the plain
like water shining in the morning sun
far away
his eyes are bright

in his left hand
the fighting stick
in his right hand
the spear

the eagles turn on wings
thundering
in the widening sky

moving across the plain
he moves like rain
he moves like fire
the lightning man
the father
he holds all things in his mouth
in his heart
he holds all things
he hears all things
and he thinks in straight lines

the trees bend
the seeds scatter on the ground
the lightning the rain and the smoke
travelling
the sharp grass and the seeds twist in the wind
the lightning strikes fire
the sharp grass carries the fire
sweet life rolls out
and the ground is black

animal tracks appear and disappear
snakes roll and the lizards burrow
teeth bite on black sand

the heat bites on black sand
no one moves
and clever people wait
they look around in the shadows
they wait
the heat bites on the black sand
the tongue begins to roll
the lightning man licks his lips
he licks the sharp grass
he whistles
he rolls his tongue
the seeds roll and scatter
and the rain falls
on hollow ground
underground the maku (witchetty grub) yawn
the mulga leaves make little hands
on the hard sand
the corkwood flowers come out to look around
the honey drips
the birds chatter
the sweet life rolls out

clever people learn to wait
clever people learn to remember
red then black then green again
animal tracks disappear and appear

the lightning man moves across the plain
he brings sweet life
the father
he holds all things in his mouth
he smiles
and animals come out to eat
green moves across the plain
like water shining in the morning sun
the sweet life rolls out
the honey drips
the birds chatter
and animals feed
SCENE 2  DONKEY MUELLER GETS OVER THE CREEK

This story is based on the legend. Dionysos is carrying wine and vines. He comes to a swamp and cannot cross over. A donkey, or some say a mule, is standing silently nearby. Dionysos persuades the donkey to carry the full wine skins safely to the other side. In gratitude Dionysos offers the animal and decides to give him the power of human speech. The donkey immediately asks for the stuff he has just carried the swamp. He drinks from the wine skins until he is full and drunk. From then on the donkey or the mule is seen in the company of Dionysos, representing the lusty, greedy excessive drunkenness. There are old paintings of the mule donkeys taking part on the baccanals. In The Sugarman, Donkey becomes the one who, with his big belly and big ears, becomes the boss of the donkey 'full drunk' way, a comic, grotesque but loveable character, who meets his end fighting the women in the roadblock. See also the donkey council in the last story. The donkey becomes the boss of grog running and this story scene shows how it starts.

the sugar mob are travelling
they load the grog
and hit the road

they hit the creek
they hit the sand
the water was up
they couldn't get through

4 dozen four litre casks
at 15 dollars a cask
is 720 dollars
resold in such and such community
at 50 dollars a cask
is 2400 dollars.
makes a profit of 1680 dollars,
takeaway petrol chicken and smokes

sugarman came to the creek
the engine flooded
foot on the pedal
wheels on the rim

sugarman and all his mob
travelling for grog
wet in the river
engine flat
wheels on the rim
1680 dollars
a good price for a falcon
if we just get across this creek

the rain came down
the women grumbled

out to the north
a flash of lightning
lightning travelling across the plain

donkey mueller
high in his truck
alone no company rolled to a stop
donkey mueller a silent man
steady as a rock
who had no words
not a word from his heart
from the day he was born
married to diesel
'western desert trucking'
carry anything
no questions asked
not even the time of day

donkey mueller
a belly as big as a big mac truck
a tongue as short as a cigarette butt

the sugarman's car bogged in the creek
the women got out mud on their feet

they chucked their blankets
in the back of the truck
they shifted the cartons
they shifted the grog
2400 dollars
takeaway petrol chicken and smokes
they shoved the lot on the donkey man's back
and the sugarman sat on top
over flooded creeks and the dry zone border
they came to a place at sugarman's order
people were waiting like cows by the store
praying for grog and praying for more

now this is the point in the ancient tale
where eyes water and words fail

donk got down from the big mac cab
like a 14 ton new cooked crab

he heard the women unload the grog
and sugarman's thanks to be out of the bog

sugarman said with his hand in his pocket
say what you want and donk you've got it
a fistful of dollars or a day at the races
a vision of god or pretty faces
he knocked off the top of a bundaberg rum
and poured the lot into donkeyman's tum

sugarman said with his hand on the bottle
suck on this and open your throttle

now everyone knows how everything changes
when sugarman touches and sugarman rages

donk had a vision that knocked him flat
it even made him lift his hat
donkey's head flew over the ranges
he swore he'd met one of the sages
that donkey gazed in silent wonder
he looked at the man and started to ponder
if you're as smart as I think you are
you'll give me some words for what's in that jar

sugarman nodded and sugarman smiled
he called for the women, they stood in a ring
and sugarman reached for the secret string
he pulled donk apart like a carton of matches
he hit the ground in separate batches
he started to shout in songs and snatches
they picked him up and put him together
donkey felt as light as a feather
his dick grew long his belly grew fatter
he couldn't remember what was the matter
he talked and talked like a motor car engine
he got as drunk as a fairy penguin
he opened the truck and drove full throttle
wherever he went he carried a bottle
he told the folks he was sugarman's boss
and where ever he went there was trouble and loss

his dick grew long his belly grew fatter
he couldn't remember what was the matter
but he talked and talked and shouted the drink
he opened the road for the donkey think

sugar and the women they bought their falcon
they changed the plates and drove into nazareth

we drove into nazareth the time was half past dead
I said is there somewhere where a man might lay his head

'The Weight' by The Band, featured in the film *Easy Rider*
SCENE 3    VISITING COUNTRIES

These stories are all based directly on the legends of Dionysos' arrivals at different kingdoms and settlements, bringing vines and the vine culture, wine and the art of drinking. In all cases, in these legends a tragedy follows, for different reasons.

1  Sugarman Came Down from the Mountains

sugarman came down from the mountains
he stopped there
by that rock
and looked around
he saw the dust of donkey's truck
he waited by the road
sugarman and donkey met
they crossed the border
they drove into cattle country
they crossed the border
they drove into this country
they saw the sign at the gate

'no grog in here please
save our country and culture'

donkey took out his gun
he shot the sign to bits

they carried the grog in to the old man
the boss for that country
they talked the old man round
they told him
no worries old man just taste this stuff
it's really sweet
makes your blood strong
give you sweet dreams

the old man tasted it
the old man called his younger brothers
his cousins
his brother in law
he gave them every one
a carton each
they drank it
they got drunk
they fell over
they fell like crow
fell out of his tree
they stared vomiting
they shouted out
that old man's trying to kill us
they got a rifle and shot him
they dragged his body and stuck
it up a tree
that tree

the old man's daughter came
she was looking for her father
she called the dog
the dog followed the tracks

she found her father
first she smiled then she cried
she saw her father's body hanging in the tree
she climbed the tree with a rope
she fell
she is hanging in the tree

sugarman watched all this
and he did nothing
the women came
all the women
saw this
and everyone went mad
the sugarman watched
he did nothing to help them
he made them all mad
he took the dog and threw him into the sky
he made him into the dog star
the old man's daughter he threw into the sky
he made her into a star
they call her virgo
the young woman

sugarman looked at the stars
got back into the truck
and kept driving
Driving into Calydon

they drove into calydon
the time was half past ten
they said is there somewhere
where a man might lay his head

the fire was burning
sugarman was looking beautiful
in the firelight
the woman was looking beautiful
she was the wife of the boss for calydon
they drank wine
they drank beer
they drank rum
they all looked beautiful
sugarman went off with the boss's wife
they went inside and slept together
all night
the boss sat by the fire and said nothing
in the morning sugarman
came out and said
thanks for the woman
the boss said no worries
he looked into the ashes and stirred
the smoke
he put his hand in the coals
and said no worries
sugarman unloaded his truck
he gave the boss more wine
more beer
more rum
and kept driving
the woman walked out of the house
three months later
the baby in her belly kicked
for the first time
you know what that means?
around here
when the baby kicks the first time
that tells what the dreaming is for that little one
that little one kicked right there in the yard
by the pile of empties

the boss looked at the pile of bottles
he said
this kid will have grog dreaming
no worries
maybe I better swallow him

3 King Dion and the Toyota
donkey and sugarman kept driving
sugarman taught donkey
the drinking songs and the drinking yarns
he showed him how to sit down all day
drinking and playing cards
he showed him how to sit down all night
drinking
he taught him the law for drinking
he showed him the brain of crow
split brain crow
he taught him all the drinkers’ tricks

the sun came up and they drove through the gap
they drove into town and parked at the truck stop
they filled up and waited

dion drove up in a flash toyota
his three daughters in the back
sugarman lifted the blanket in the back of the truck
they drove out of town
and sat down drinking under the bridge
donkey had his eye on the two daughters
and sugarman had his eye on the one
they drank all day and screwed all night
the old man was too drunk to notice
the two sisters got sick of donkey
and turned their eyes on sugar
they woke up their father and told him lies
he took up a rock
they all started fighting
they just went mad
the way we know about now
sugarman spat at the two sisters
he turned them into rocks
those rocks there
he liked the younger sister
but he didn’t want the trouble
so he changed her into a tree
that tree there on the road to curtain spring
donkey got back into the truck
with one hand on his balls
and the other on a bottle
he was too sick to drive
the sugarman put his hat on
he siphoned petrol from the old man’s toyota
and kept driving west
4 Pirates

So much for the brothers

sugarman was driving west alone
the sugarman driving west and looking
flash in a new car
a new cowboy hat and a brahma bull
on his silver buckle belt

he saw some brothers on the side of the road
a kingswood broken down
they stopped him
he got out to help
the brothers asked for petrol
and hit him on the back of the head
they stripped his vehicle
and left him like a drunk
so none would bother to stop

they got 9 kilometres down the road
and the sugarman started singing his magic
he sung them fast and flash
the magic flying down the road
through the red dust, overtaking the kingswood
the brothers were laughing
having a great time
counting the cash and already
popping green cans out the window

they saw a cowboy hat floating in front of them
and spun the wheel
they saw a silver bull on the road
and spun the wheel
they rolled over
just like that
the lot of them rolled at 98 km an hour
and hit the sand bank
5 INSET STORY
Local Stories – Drunk on the Road

Barry Cook's 'Drunk on the Road' in appendix.
Also his 'How the Sugarman Came to Australia' from the Introduction.
Here may be inserted local stories or songs.

6 Road Block
Based on the legend of Dionysos' fight with the Amazons,
Hera's girls; also the work of the women's Night Patrols.

the women are sitting down
the women are meeting
they stand up they put on their jackets
they pick up their torches
they pick up their sticks
digging sticks crow bars
they go out into the night
they move their feet in a line
they say
it is time we drew the line
they move across the plain

with a wall of sticks they block the road
crowbar blockade

grogrunners roll in from the east
no headlights
taking the backroads
pretending to be 'on business'
pretending to be 'going for funerals'
pretending to be good brothers
full of bull shit
full of donkey piss

crow was thinking them
donkey was driving them
I'm feeling hungry for liver says crow
I'm feeling hungry for kidney
I'm feeling hungry for grog says donkey
they hit the crowbar blockade

the women say nothing
they work in silence
they open the four doors
the boot and the bonnet
they pour out the petrol cans full of wine
they take the car apart
they break it in pieces
they take the brothers up the road
they form two lines and everyone says no

they make donkey and the brother walk slowly down the line
between the wall of women
the wall of sticks
this is the way the women work
they beat them down the line between the women
the women say
now you must face all the families
of all the people you killed
the murderer is you
you with your big belly and little dick
and a face like a bashed up baby
you did it
cut your hair
cover yourself in ashes
say you are sorry

donkey would not say sorry
the women changed into eagles looking for meat
they hunted him
they tore him into little pieces
they ate him
there was nothing left but bones and a few bits of skin

sugarman was standing in the road watching
he did nothing and said nothing
he was watching
the bones of all the brothers round his feet
donkey bones crow bones
the women said this to him
where is your wife?
you should be ashamed
we gave you a job and you did it wrong
we gave you a dance and you did it wrong
you slit the throat of brothers
you broke the neck of cousins
you broke the legs of uncles
you broke the heart of mothers
you burned my brother's liver
you ruined the voice of singers
you broke the knees of dancers
stole the food of children
you took the song of sweetness
you changed it into poison
your greed has killed us
you have no wife
no children
you have brought us all to the end

the women left him on the road
they turned their backs and walked away
the wind was blowing in from the tanami desert
feathers and skin rolled along the red dust
the smell of shit and engine oil
a wreck and a few bones

sugarman looked and said
I have come to the end

he laughed for a long time
then he said
I am the one
and then he began to cry
he cut his hair
he covered himself in white ash
he cut himself open and looked inside
sugarman said
I am the one to blame for all of this
I am sorry he said
sugarman turned his back on the dark night
he started travelling
he went looking for his wife
the one promised to him
'he departed with thoughts of home
he departed with thoughts of home
he departed towards another place'

he was walking down the road
he said I'm sorry, that's true
but I don't forget that
donkey never dies

sugarman is walking down the road
the early morning sun
is smiling on his face
he is looking beautiful in the early morning
the quiet red light and the dawn breeze
he starts to sing a love song

END OF PART ONE
Part II
The Travelling Stories

STORY 5

ACT 1
THE CRANE DANCE
THE MEETING OF ARIADNE AND DIONYSOS

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The Nine Nights of Love's Mystery
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prelude
ARIADE AND THE BULL

I will tell you about the country where Sugarman's wife comes from.

They call it Crete. It is still there. Knossos, where she lived, was one of the first towns. Now there is not much left. Just a few walls and rocks. Once upon a time it was the most beautiful city. I will tell you how this happened.

This was a country where wild cattle lived in the hills. There was one who lived hidden in a cave. He walked around in the dark. Sometimes he looked like a man, sometimes like a bull. His father was a bull and his mother was a woman, the king's wife.

He was so wild and sacred no one knew what to do with him so they locked him up.

Men came from many countries to ride him and fight him, and all were lost. They would go down into the caves and never come back.

From another country came nine young men.

They went down into the cave and killed the bull man and they all came back.

How did this happen?

The wild bull had a sister, Ariadne.

When the nine men came from far away she fell in love with the leader, Theseus from Athens, they called him, he was a hero. You'll hear a lot about him.

He promised to marry her, it was probably a trick. For her own reasons she gave him the secret of how to get in and meet her brother and how to get out again.

She gave him a long string, made from her own hair.

He unrolled the hair string as he went down through the dark in the cave. He did his business with the bull then he followed the string out and rolled it up again, out into the light.
The business was murder. He could have set his brother-in-law free.

He could have done a deal but he killed him. He'd planned to anyway. That's why the nine men came to Knossos.

When he ran out from the caves he picked up Ariadne and her sister and ran down to the ships and rode away.

Behind them the caves collapsed. A great roar like an earthquake ran through the ground and brought down all the houses. The King's house fell down, all the red and yellow ochred walls fell down, all the blue and white and black paintings fell down and everything in that city fell into ruins. It was a mess.

Theseus the eight men and the two sisters sailed north. They stopped at Naxos and lay down to sleep.

While Ariadne was sleeping, Theseus had a dream or something happened because he quickly got up in the night and secretly sailed away with the one sister and the men. They left Ariadne behind. He sailed back to his own place with black sails up. His father had told him, if you kill the bull and come back alive put up the white sails like white flags and I will be happy. But if the bull kills you, get the men to put up black sails like black flags. Then I will know what has happened.

Maybe Theseus was too busy with the other sister but he forgot to put up the white sails. When his father saw the black he was so sad he killed himself. He jumped off the cliff. When Theseus got home he found his own father dead. Maybe it was some kind of payback.
Ariadne was left alone on the beach at Naxos. When she woke up she realised she had lost her country, she had got her bull brother killed, she had lost her father, she had lost her mother, she had told the secret about the caves, her promised husband had left her, run off with her sister, she was a mess.

No wonder she got drunk that day and Sugarman came for her.

She sat there till the sun went down and in the dark she cried.

Then a strange thing happened. She saw a wild bull came out of the sea to her, wounded and bleeding as though from war.

She saw him and fell in love with him.

It is Dionysos. He is her real husband.

Sappho has words that might describe what happened then.

Equal of the gods he seems to me
that man who sits face to face with you
and listens closely as you speak in sweetness
and listens again
as beautifully you laugh;
a sound that sets my wild heart fluttering in my breast
for when I look at you even a moment
I cannot speak at all.
My tongue is frozen, and on that instant
a subtle fire runs underneath my skin,
with my eyes I see nothing and in my ears
I hear a roaring.

Sweat runs down all over my body.
I am paler than grass in summer
and I feel myself close to the edge of death.

Sappho from Lesbos
SCENE I  ARIADNE AT NAXOS

1  A woman alone

a woman was sleeping
she was sleeping in the sand
no blanket
ariadne the woman of string
sleeping on the sand
the black sail of the ship
sailing away like a crow wing
cutting the water
sailing away to the black cliffs

in her dream she saw black sails
and crow wings
throwing an old man
into the sea
she dreamed her husband leaving her
she dreamed herself alone

why do young men forget their fathers
young men without thought
throwing old men
in the back of trucks
letting them die with no blanket

ariadne asleep on the sand
dreaming of him
sailing in
the sugarman
in his dolphin ship
sails of panther skin
sailing in
sails of wine skin
ropes of vine
she dreamed him up
she dreamed him in
her husband  the new one
the right one

on his panther ship

he was watching everything
he was watching
waiting for his move
and chose his moment
he whispered a dream in her husband's ear
and sent him madly home looking for money and power
leaving women
killing off the old men
without so much as a blink of his eye
he went home to be the mafia hero
godfather to all the bankers of europe
theseus rappadopoulos
and sugarman uses him neatly
from that day to this
running the world's economy
on vodka  rum  coca cola  cocaine  and the dealer

but as for ariadne
sugarman cleared the coast for himself
he got rid of the opposition
and lay at anchor off naxos
while he dreamed himself
into ariadne's breath
like a spider dreams a web
he came to her
his hand in her hand
his heart in her heart

ariadne sleeping in the dark
the sea air and the sea sky
the blue night and the blue stars
dancing on the waters
night dancing on the waters

he came to her
he came to her
the snake twisting on the water
the wind beginning
in the beginning
the wind dancing on the water

who is this woman
alone and dreaming
who is this woman
alone and great
a voice like silver
ripples on the skin

with silver ripples a snake he came
he held her the beloved dancing
held her
his hand held her his arm held her
his heart
and the cup of his mouth
held her

he came to her in the night at naxos
the one who loosens
being bound by love
the cause of life
holding her
dancing and rolling
snake on the waters

she asleep in the sand dreaming
the great singer
the great wave
intoxication carried her
2 The Nine Nights of Love’s Mystery
Dedicated to Leslie Devereaux and David Roberts

she joined him
this is my story for you
she joined him
he came to her
he cleared the way to her
he came to her for a reason
the pieces of the broken one
came to her and she joined him
in her dream web
like a spider ravelling
she wove a moving story
and wrapped his wandering pieces together

she dreamed out the line of their travels
she mapped the way on the dusty holes
of his empty heart and his broken skin
the countries to travel she drew in the sand
and she went ahead in her dream body
her ship on the waves of the inner worlds
she entered the countries of her sisters
she knocked at their gates and marked the path
on the walls of cities

she entered anatolia
she entered the beehive
and laid out honey
she entered kybele and
saved the bit she needed for him

she entered egypt
and joined him
and from the fish’s mouth
she saved the bit she needed

she entered phoenicia and canaan
and laid out frankincense and myrrh
and saved the body she needed
she entered sumeria
and marked the labyrinth
and the hook
on ereshkigal’s wall
she whispered to the flies
and saved the spirit she needed

she entered persia
and saved the fire she needed

she entered silence
and hummed directions
to the seven sisters waiting for her
she counted the cups of intoxication
they would need

she entered kailash
and there like shiva and parvarti
she destroyed and remade their union
again and again
until he was wound together and unwound
and wound again until it was easy
to do it blindfold

weeping and crying
on the sand at naxos
she did these things
and laid out the track to follow

this is the story I tell you
the mysteries of love
and the poetic times
from all our beginnings
this began us
and this track will complete us
making gods human and humans god

in the sand and the blue nights
the wind on the water
ariadne and dionysos
alone
with no where to go
that night
with string and sugar
she joined him
and the nine nights
of love’s mystery began

INSET WEDDING EVENT

The Inset Wedding Event can be placed here or as a surround to the Ariadne prelude
scenes so that the stories are told as part of the wedding celebrations. The traditional
Cretan Crane dance is recommended as part of the wedding.
SCENE 2  TWO WAYS

after the wedding dionysos and ariadne begin their travels
at the beginning of travelling
they stand together
she in her shape
he in his
there are two entrances
two doors  two ways
one the way the men go
one the way the women go
SCENE 3  GRANDMOTHER'S GOODBYE

the grandmother sits
she watches them both
she says goodbye
she remembers them
and the stories of their family line
she remembers their countries
and the ones they will visit
she remembers them
and she says goodbye
she closes her eyes
she pulls the blanket over her head
the grandmother sits
she watches them both
she watches them at every moment
of their travels
and at the right moment
she sends parts of herself
to comfort them
she talks in muttering words to shiva
and makes deals
she plays cards she works the horses
she sits under an old tree on the council lawns
now in byblos now at the gates of babylon
now by a well in a persian village
a spice shop in the streets of srinagar
she moves around in secret, she looks like
a bundle of rags like babajan of basra
she watches them at every moment
playing cards

sugarman stands
he begins his travelling
he goes to the gate of the milky way
he takes the road the men travel

ariadne stands
she begins her travelling
she goes to the gate of the evening star
she takes the road the women travel
she passes the place of the seven sisters
they travel together
ariadne and dionysos
their tracks run in the same direction
they go from this place to that
but they travel on different sides
sometimes they see each other
sometimes they miss
sometimes they remember each other
sometimes they forget

their tracks go the same way
they lay down the maps of the human heart
and we follow them
the footsteps are written on our bones
we find them when we take ourselves apart
and trace the maps laid down beneath our skin

we hear ancestral voices
we read the lips of the living
we read the lips of the dead
we travel
and we remember

the grandmother said
you are sick because you have forgotten
go visit your brothers and sisters
go visit countries
follow the tracks of creation
marked by your grandfathers' feet
the dancing feet of your mother's country
the two of them stood there
poor things
I think they were frightened
they stood at the entrance
and shuffled a bit in the dust like this
and then they went their ways
he goes that way
she goes that way
Part II

The Travelling Stories

STORY 5

ACT 2

TRAVELLING DIONYSOS

sugarman stands
he begins his travelling
he goes to the gate of the milky way
he takes the road men travel

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SCENE I   CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
The poet remembers a few things that need to be said first

1
in england
they used to say to me
the poetry is finished
no I said
the poetry is still there
back in my own country
at the other end of the milky way
someone is still singing the morning star

where are you going now they said
I'm going home now it's time

2
when I got home again
back where captain cook landed
I looked around
the sea is so blue
the air is so beautiful and clear
how can people bear to live in such a beautiful country

I met a young woman
dark hair
look I said
the poetry is here
let's make love
she began to cry
she wept for days and days
she wanted to go home
back there
to her old country
where the poetry had died
there was another woman older
she tried to invent a fantasy world
down here to live in
she made it up from the memories of
her mad childhood
it killed her

I said to myself
these people live in such a beautiful country
they cry . . . they go mad
is it because the poetry has died?
no I replied
it might be because their eyes have not learned
to behold it

3
I began trying to 'read the lips of the dead'

4
you remember I said
there was some one here
singing the morning star and I said
I am going to find him
well I did
but he was singing not just one star but
the whole milky way

there he was sitting on the ground
wearing an old cowboy hat

there were two sheets of corrugated iron
by an overturned motor car
and a black dog in the morning sun

oh he said the stars
the stars he said and the snake

that was when I began to read the lips of the living
5
they are shouting down in the creek
the woman is shrieking
they are fighting and everyone is drunk

the apocalypse is here
the plague
and the black rider out of the revelations
drought famine pestilence
the christians said it would come
they opened the bible and they said it would come
it has come
its just that I didn't expect it to come like this
down in the creek
shouting

6
look
I said to the old man
singing the milky way
this world
did you find it like this
or did you make it

the snake he said
that old snake he made it

and you I said who made you
me he said I'm him
he said that's me
he touched me on the elbow
just like that
the softest touch in the world
just like the morning star
or the brush of the milky way
an old man's hand which placed me
solidly on the solid ground
of this continent
thankyou I said
here is a new belt and a cowboy hat
he died a week later
he lay down and died
a jungalai man at the end of his milky way

they go like that
they go quietly the grandfathers of the world

down in the creek
down in the apocalypse
the police have arrived
these things happen
her face is battered in
she is reading the lips of the dead
I think the word she is reading is
‘oblivion’

an old man is singing the milky way
someone is remembering
to read the lips
of the grandfathers of the world

some young men are travelling
they are trying to remember
something . . .
SCENE 2 DIONYSOS TRAVELLING EAST

Through the islands

the sugar man came to ikaria
he came to the place where wine began
he looked at the ground
he wept

the sugar man turned his eye to the sun
he marked the place where icarus falls
he marked the place where wings break
he marked the place where boys fall
out of the sky too fast

he looked at the sea sparkling
he wept for the one thousand boys
he had let fall through windscreen glass
falling out of the sky too fast

the sugar man looked at the tree
the olive tree and the vine
the grape thick and sweet
the tears of afrodite
the place on the coast of ikaria
where the woman came
his first lover
the lover of dionysos and wine
afrodite who heard of him and travelled from libya
to touch for herself
the young god who would terrorise the world
he looked at the place where the woman left
and his tears fell
where his tears fell
the grape vines grew
sugarman remembered the place
where sugarboy grew
the women and the secret places
after his father saved him from the fire
he came to ikaria
here the wine making began so long ago
even homer wrote it in his long book
because the soldiers who went to troy  
were supplied with grog from here  
it's all listed in the accounts

2
sugarman travelled to samos  
the ship with the rope of vines  
the men who tried to grab him  
the hijack and the rape  
who is that in the teeth of the wind  
who is that in the eye of the storm  
travelling to samos  
the ship with the rope of vines  
the sailors ripped in rage  
drowning  no one waving

he passed by samos  
he passed by the island of his father's first wife  
he passed by hera  
he passed her by  
his eye on the crows  
wheeling and dealing on the harbour front  
sugarman was travelling  
he passed her by  
the old lady who whispered  
she whispered stories

she poisoned him  
she bled him  
he passed her by  
his eye on the crows  
wheeling and dealing  
sugarman said  
I cannot stand the pain anymore  
I am travelling for cure

3
the sugarman is travelling for cure  
his grandmother  
she told him  
she told him which way to go
which way to travel
begin where you grew up she said
then travel that way
go that way where the sun rises go that way
and pass by the old lady
your father's wife the whispering woman
the jealous one the one who makes you mad
go travelling sugarman
find the stories
the old stories
the stories from your family line
there is a line it goes that way
follow the line
and find your cure

his grandmother said this
he listened he heard her
he followed the way she showed him

4
he passed by
he crossed the sea
he landed in kybele's country
he landed at efes
his feet cracked the ground
he crushed grapes
he trod carefully among the snakes of kybele
he walked to meet her
he remembered what the old men had told him about her
he walked to meet her
his hand covering his balls like this
he remembered the old men
telling him how to watch himself
round a woman like her
they said
when you are around a woman like her
boy you better watch yourself
don't let her grab you by the balls
SCENE 3  ON BEING PROPERLY BORN

Back to central Australia for another little interlude

1
... an old man said it to a bloke
some bloke out near coniston station
the two of them were talking about country
the black one and the white one
the black man said to the white man
you know you mob were never born
none of you was ever born
you walk around your eyes are open
what do you see
you see nothing like you are not here
you were never born

2
I suppose this is what you might call
an illumination
because suddenly I see
a whole continent populated by 16 million people
most of whom were never born

3
the old man said
which way you going to go now
you can keep on walking around
or you can start to get born

what must I do to get born
must I enter my mother's womb
a second time?

no said the old man just once will do
look I'll show you he smiled little bit
like he was a blind man
and reached out for the white man
alright old man  I said with my lips closed
I'll do it
and with his hand on my elbow
I began to slide through the dark muscle and blood
like a black snake out of a bag

not bad he said  not bad
you come out good
now we'll have to cut you
he started laughing
SCENE 4  WALKING AROUND, SEEING NOTHING

Out bush wondering where I live

1
can you imagine how painful it must be
to be walking around
with a tax file number
bank cards and certificates even
and yet not even born

I used to say when people asked
I used to say - oh I was born here
that was wrong

question  where were you born?
answer    here

question  where do you live?
answer    here

wrong    think again

can you imagine how funny it must look to those old men
us walking around thinking we live here
seeing nothing saying I was born here
and I don't even know the story
for this place where I was born

2  The Second Coming
the people in the creek dying
and the black rider
the second flood coming
of which they are warned and not aware
or warned and not concerned
a flood of sweet wine and bitter beer
no boats  no ark  no noah
marching two by two
with all the malu
no maku  no yipperenye
following the leader in lines
out of the flood
and up the gangplank
no voice of god warning in the ear
not much rain even
just the flood of wine
the final wipe out of the law
and the last wipe of the mouth
on the back of the hand

this is the work of the sugarman
intoxication turning to addiction
addiction turning into a mystery
and after that who knows
just the people in the creek
the black rider and the second flood coming
SCENE 5  SUGARMAN IN KYBELE COUNTRY

Tambourines and the Young Men

Dionysos travels into Turkey, to the country of Kybele, the great queen bee mother whose male devotees castrate themselves for her. Statues in Efesus show her with many breasts, some say 52 and a necklace of men’s testicles. From her he learns a dance and music, using tambourines and pipes which become central to the bacchic ceremonies. He does not lose himself in/her and continues east through her regions, known now as Cappadocia and Kurdistan. The famous biblical confrontation between Paul and the residents of Efesus was about his preaching against Kybele.

There will always be a woman ready with a piece of wire to knot around your balls

There will always be a woman ready with a piece of wire to knot around your balls

She teaches the young ones to dance and to wave their tits kybele with the 52 tits
aside
(st paul had a go at her in the theatre of efes
he never stopped travelling after that

maybe she went after peter
she went after andrew
she went after thomas
thomas ended up in india
andrew ended up ablaze
on a noughts and cross
peter ended up upside down
with a rooster for a tongue)

the sugar man he marks what is happening

he dances
he hears the flute
he hears the tambourine
he hears kybele sing
she looks at the sugarman she looks him up and down
not bad she says
and now we'll cut you

this was the beginning of the cure
this is the beginning of the young men
finding out if they're men or not
it began in this way
but the sugarman didn't lose his balls so easily
he grabbed the music
he grabbed the dance
he grabbed the chance and travelled on

kybele is standing there lions on her left
lions on her right
the animals ringing her
the bees in her breasts
a necklace of figs from the thighs of men
the men who stay with her and lick her milk
lick her honey
good men but men with their wings stuck
in mother's honey
men who drown in mother's milk
she is kybele the oldest mother in the world
some say she's
semele's grandmother

3
he learned from her the sunnet
he took a taxi and a horse and travelled
listening to the old men
no one put a wire around his balls
SCENE 6 TRAVELLING

1
the wine man is moving east across the wide plains
he comes to catyl huyuk
he marks the place of konya
he marks the place where shams i tabriz
will bring tears to the eyes of meviana
he marks the place where the whirling dance begins
he sets up the places where lovers of god will drink in the future

where meviana will say to his old mate shams
"I say - bring the simple wine that makes me loose and free
You say - there's a hurricane coming
And I say - let's have some wine then,
and sit here like old statues and watch"

2
he planted seeds of love and vines of heart's blood
but only the dusty sufi men knew how to harvest properly
the grape that makes the soul expand and float free
like music slowly whirling along the milky way
with one hand in heaven and one hand down on solid ground
dionysos began these things for us
travelling through konya

3
the wine man travels to cappadocia
like a mad snake
he digs holes in the mountains
the volcanoes break
he digs holes in the mountains
he burrows and twists
he twists in the soft rock
he makes caves
he pours out caves
he cries
in cappadocia I tore our valleys for the grape
I tore out valleys for the grape
I hid myself in the long tunnels
I hid myself in the dark

4
sugarman travelled across the wide plains
the dust of kurdistan growled around his feet
he turned and travelled south
he caught the scent
he caught the scent
of ishtar
he heard the lament on the wind
he travelled south
sugar man travelled on the edge of the sea
he travelled south
the salt crackled around his feet

5
he passed through anatolia
the countries of kybele
he passed through the honeyed arms
of the great mothers
he turned south along the sea
to the countries of ishtar
phoenicia syria
sugarman remembered the dream
of when his father uranos was cut by crow
and the fruit of uranos was thrown into the waves
the seed of his great grand father
boiled in the sea
it boiled and made itself into a great living woman
dancing on the waters
they gave that life a name
the name is afrodite ishtar
she came ashore she floated in
the great wave intoxication carried her
the name is ishtar afrodite
the morning star
6

dionysos was heading straight for her
he caught the scent
he was travelling down the coast with the sea on his right hand

it was this place where all those things had happened long ago
where his great grandfather had been cut open
and where crow threw his father's balls into the sea

he was coming right back to the country
the dreams of crow came back to his head
and he saw them for the first time in the right place
in the right light
on the coast of phoenicia
on the coast of the levant
sugarman remembered
how crow cut his great father
he remembered the blood of his grand father
poured out across the edges of the sea
he remembered the foaming waves
and the dancing woman on the sea
in the right light he saw these things
the terror left him
the poisoned dream
poured into his ears by the crows
left him
he pulled them out
he pulled them out like stones
he looked at the black stones
the poisoned stones
the bad dreams
he saw them in the right light
and the terror left him

7

he remembered afrodite
coming in to him across the waves at ikaria
he remembered her
his first lover then
the one who boils always
in the blood of men
he remembers these ancestral things
and the madness begins to lift
here in the second country
tears fall from his eyes
he takes the grapes in his hand and squeezes
the juice pours from his hand
he says that the wine will give relief
and the wine will change shapes
he sees the secret of himself
how the wine changes shapes and how
people will get so drunk they will mix up blood and love
but he marks a place on the sand where people can come
and wake from this nightmare
he names the place 'the end of violence'
some people will never find it

8
he travels deeper into ishtar afrodite's country
he looks for the body of adonis
the young man who was killed by wild pigs
he found him the one whose mother myrrha
had been tricked into sleeping with her own father
she was only a girl she got pregnant
she ran away
they changed her into a tree that tree there
when she split open there was a baby inside
adonis
she had slept with her own father
afrodite mixes everyone up
there has been incest from the beginning of time

when he grew up he was so beautiful
afrodite grabbed him for herself
and he ended up dead
killed down there on the bay by pigs
sugarman loved him like a brother
he held the body of adonis
he lifted his head
he remembered these things how the father was lost
the mother was lost
the son was lost
how ishtar afrodite came and loved him
and she lost
it just goes on and on
from the beginning of time

he poured out wine for the body of adonis
in the same way
he poured out wine for the body of orpheus
he began the song of lament
he marked the song of saeta
he marked the song of grief
he marked the procession of the dying god
he marked the procession of lament
he marked the protest of mothers
who search for lost sons
who search for lost lovers

sugarman marked the time
when women would walk through jerusalem
when women would walk through seville and chile
lamenting their lost sons
like a dog he marked out his territory
he saw the secret of himself
how the wine changes life
how the death of lovers follows him
he marked the addiction to death
he marked a place on the rock
in a circle of trees where these stories could be told
where young men and the young women
would hear these stories and learn
he named it 'the death of lovers'
SCENE 7 INSET STORIES

Using these and other local or traditional stories the theme of incest, addiction to death, loss and grief of various kinds can be opened up.

Ovid Metamorphosis
The birth and death of Adonis,
The story of Myrrha,
Orpheus dismemberment

See Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, Phoenician Section page 81, for Adonis Festival leads.
SCENE 8   THE FESTIVAL OF ADONIS

1
the sugar man walked into byblos
he came into town
he came into town with the wheat men
he came with the men who gather the olives
the goat men  the donkey men
the men who carried apricots and tomatoes
the women with bright colours and the dancing steps
he came into town with the grain and milk
he came and poured out wine
they poured out wine
for the young man

2
the women walked in the street
they walked in black and wailing
they cut their hair
they cut their bodies
the women tore at their breasts where the babies suck
where the lover sucks
where the bright birds flash and dip
at the breast of ishtar
the women tore their hearts
they rose in the streets

the sugar man walked into byblos
he looked around
he said  this is the place of my grandfather
my grandfather cadmus came from here
I've come home to my grandfather's country
tell me the stories my grandfather knew
give me the line of my family
he drew a line on the ground
he sat down and he collected in his memory
all the names and stories of his father's line
the ones killed  the ones forgotten
the ones who had done terrible things and the wonderful fathers
he remembered them all and named the place 'remembering'
these are stories from the beginning of mankind
these are stories from the beginning of women
these are the stories we sucked in the beginning
these are the stories which formed our minds
these are the stories to hold our hearts
these are the stories to set us moving
these stories travel the milky way

there are a hundred names for adonis
and a hundred for the mother who lost him
sugarman knows them all
he is always there
when the terrible things happen

once he always forgot
he used to say
here drink with me it will make you forget
now he remembers

as a man remembers he grows bigger
SCENE 10  CANAAN

1  Sugar Man Keeps Travelling South
he went down into canaan
he went down into israel
he went down into palestine
he went looking for his cousins and brothers
he went looking for joseph and had a chat about dreams
he went looking for david and had a chat about music
he went looking for john the baptist
who lived on honey and washed people free in water

he marked the place
where his younger brother would be born
he marked bethlehem
and the place on the road
where the children were killed
he marked nazareth and the vineyards

he crushed the grapes in galilee
he marked the place
of the wedding and the place of the last supper
he watched into the future and saw the country grow
and the city of jerusalem
he marked the well and the garden
he marked the hill
where his younger brother
was speared
and the place where they gave
his younger brother
vinegar to drink

2
these things happen in a different time
they are happening always
in time past and time future
don't argue with me
don't mix up yourself
I tell you these things happen always so you can step into
this time and breathe these things
the sugar man travelled
the country of his younger brother
jesus of nazareth
he marked the places
he remembered and he wept
he marked the place
where the women came to the tomb
he whispered into the stones
I love you
he whispered into the stones
the message for his younger brother
he told him the road to travel

sugar man went down into israel
he prepared the way for his younger brother
when jesus gave out wine at the last meal
before he passed away
dionysos was there dressed as a waiter
he passed his brother the cup and said
this is for you

and the cup is still there
when you are tired of crucifying yourself

drink
SCENE II  INSET STORY – THE MYSTERIES OF CHRIST

Here as in the other insets a relevant story from the passion and mystery of Jesus can be shown.
SCENE 12  TOWARD EGYPT – THE SCENT OF OSIRIS

Dionysos prepares to travel south to Egypt. He goes to the place on the coast at Byblos where legend has it that Osiris' body floated in a sealed wooden box. The dormant but still alive body was found by Isis, hidden in a tree which Ishtar had in her own bedroom. As recounted in a beautiful story she took him back to Egypt in her boat and revived him.

Dionysos goes to this site and from there he will retrace the voyage of Osiris, with Isis coming to recover and return the body. The image of recovery of a dormant or enclosed soul begins and moves into the image of the recovery and collection of the dismembered body soul.

Reprise

reprise sugar man went down into canaan
he marked the way of his younger brother
he poured out wine for the mystery of life
he poured out wine for the mystery of death
he turned and faced the north

I
he catches a scent on the wind
he smells the scent from the south west
he walks back to byblos
he finds the tree of ishtar
the tree where the floating box from egypt
 tangled in the roots
the tamarind tree by the water
which held the floating body of osiris
the fragrance of the lost husband
 tangled in the leaves of the tamarind

he sits beneath the tree and listens to the birds
the swallows fly in circles
the birds show him how his soul in bits
swings like alarmed magpies
scattered in the air
he remembers how the crows came and tore him apart
dropping bits of him like feathers all over the country
he remembered how his soul fled like a rabbit
and jumped in an old tobacco tin
locked inside and hiding
the birds whisper
the wings of the birds beat into him
the rhythm of the story of osiris
the ants come they move in patterns
the ants lay out before him
the shapes of the story of osiris
the design of the body of man
the pattern of how things work

the sugar man watches

he sits for days beneath the tree
he draws a circle of red sand upon the ground
he sits for days inside the circle
he does not eat
he drinks clean water
he eats nothing
he watches the ants, he watches the beetle
rolling the sun across the sand
he sleeps and he dreams the dreams
that collect the soul

his blood became clean
his blood became clear
the mad wind in the broken brain of sugarman comes clean
it settles, it settles
the birds begin to flock
little finches to the water hole come
in the early morning sun
the pigeons come
and something feels a little bit like gathering

a sweet breeze from the south west
brings tears to his eyes
he weeps for his older brother, for osiris
he sat in the circle of sand till the poison ran out of him
and on the fortieth day
isis came for him
SCENE 13  ISIS

she came in her boat from egypt
she came in her boat and carried him
she carried him south west
she carried him to osiris
she carried him for the meeting
for 40 days he waited and drank only clean water
he remembered many things
on the fortieth day
isis came for him
he travelled southwest with the wife of osiris
she poured out stories for him she poured out stories
she told him stories of the beginning of things
she told him the stories of awakening
she told him the true book of death
she unlocked the box

he remembered something and his heart fell at ease
like the mad heart of the phoenix
fell at ease
rising from the fire at last
he remembered his mother
he remembered semele rising in the fire

and strangely his heart fell at ease
he learned the ways to find her
he learned the place to find her
he learned how to find her
he marked the link of lost mothers and sons

isis travelled with him in her boat
she caught him with the knot of isis.
they travelled south west
to meet his older brother
she poured out stories for him
they stepped off the boat and osiris was there
at the cafe table by the wharf
he was wearing a white suit and looking sharp
he poured out a drink for sugarman
he lit him a nice little cuban cigar
and they started to talk
tell me said sugarman
how did you get yourself together
well said the egyptian
its a long story but it went like this . . .
SCENE 14 INSET STORY – FOURTEEN BITS OF OSIRIS AND A COMPETENT SISTER

The Osiris story can be told here or which ever parts are considered relevant to bring out the envious Seth’s assassination attempts, the coffin floatation story and the dismemberment saga with the restoration of Osiris by Isis recovering the fourteen parts of the body except for the lost penis and the revival of life through the help of his son Horus.
SCENE 15  SUGARMAN'S DIVERSION IN AFRICA
(Sea in the Sahara)

sugar man is standing by the river
he is standing in the sand
the wind is blowing to the south east
he had a hard time with osiris
and he's not sure he's going to make it

going all your bits back together
is too much like hard work
I need a holiday said sugarman

he goes up river
he visits the countries up river

he goes dancing in africa
he learns the story of beer
he tells them all about wine he says here
I'll make some for you
the blackmen say thankyou
they say we like our beer

they tell him the story of beer
he learns a good dance
he keeps on travelling
the sugar man is happy
he keeps on dancing
he forgets his purpose
he sleeps for weeks in zambia
and dreams the african future

his brain splits in two
he puts himself together

he tells all about wine
the black men say thankyou
but beer is best
the wine for you the beer for us
the sugar man laughs too
is about time now he says
he feels the wind from the south
the wind from the south pushes him
he remembers his purpose

he stands by the road
he waits for a lift
he heads to the coast
he travels all day feeling better
with the early morning wind
he takes a ship he heads north east
he crosses into the countries of Inanna
SCENE 16  CROSSING INANNA
Sugarman moves into Sumer/Iraq, the country associated with Gilgamesh, Inanna and Dumuzi.

1  Gilgamesh
sugarman stops on the mountain
he talks to scorpion men
he stops on the mountain
he follows the tracks of enkidu
he stops on the mountain
he follows the tracks of gilgamesh
he comes to the country of utnapishtem
he learns the stories of gilgamesh
he learns the lament for enkidu
he learns the tricks of eternal life

he laughs at the story of gilgamesh
and the trick of seven loaves of bread
he laughs at the story
of gilgamesh and the snake
gilgamesh had the secret and lost it
the snake swallowed the secret plant
the secret seed  the secret leaves
I'm not going to lose it says sugarman
he carved that story into a rock and gave it a name
'not losing it'

2  In Eridu
he comes to the garden of inanna
he comes to the house of dumuzi
dumuzi pours out beer for him
dumuzi sets beer before him

enki the father of waters
pours out beer for him
they welcome him like a son
they welcome him like a brother
sugarman is at home in inanna's country
they tell stories
the smoke rises in the night
they drink beer
they drink wine

inanna comes in the moonlight
she comes into the room like the evening star

she tells her story of living near death
she talks about the hook on the wall
and hanging there for three days
she talks about the flies
and the trick of coming back
she tells how her husband took off
scared out of his wits
like a wild pig in the grasslands

she laughs at them
her uncle her husband and the stranger from the west
sugarman pours out beer on the table and draws a map
with his finger
he shows where he came from
and inanna and her husband draw a map
they show him how to go further east
and where to meet his own brick wall
and his own particular hook
Selected scenes from Inanna, Enki and the beer.
Inanna's descent and Dumuzi's attempted escape.
SCENE 18  THE SUGARMAN TRAVELS ON

inanna gave to sugar man the cup
she gave him the cup of love
she gave him the cup of darkness
dumuzi gave to his brother the hand
he gave the hand of love
he gave the hand of darkness
they welcomed him  they drank with him
they matched him drink for drink
they poured out stories for him
the sugarman listened

the sugarman remembered
he remembered the story of gilgamesh
from gilgamesh he heard the facts of pride
the story of the great man brought down
he remembered the story of enkidu
from enkidu he learned the facts of friendship
brothers in law and the law of the road
he remembered the milky way
the law of the stars
and the young men travelling
the law of travelling
the law of dreaming
these things he heard from enkidu
the dreaming bull from the stars

he remembered the stories
of inanna and the morning star
he remembered the way to the place of the dead
the gateway to the spirits
he drew a map on his heart
he marked the places where he had been
on his skin and saw the map
was beginning to make sense
he remembered dumuzi and his fear
geshtinanna and the love of sisters
he remembered the purpose of men
these things he turned in his heart
and they brought him close to cure
he could feel the song of the new life
ringing in his bones and he travelled east

he composed the 'song of hopelessness
and helplessness' and he marked out a way
with rows of stones
for those who had the guts to follow him
he gave it a name 'finding your guts'

he travelled east to the desert of fire
to the mountains of the phoenix
to the sacred place of the first fire
he travelled to the heart of ahura mazda
SCENE 19  400 YEARS ON FIRE
Persia Iran, Western Deserts and Petrol

I
in the desert he saw the column of smoke
he saw the fire black like petrol burning
he passed the huddled circles of young men
the smoke of petrol hanging in the air

he passed the circles of young men
like skeletons dancing
dancing the song of petrol
the cars on fire and the walls in ruins
he passed the concrete shattered
and smeared with shit
he marked these things for the future
he heard the cries of a japaljarri
he hears the cries of a nakamarra
he heard the voice of the wind
crying
the sorry wind for the young men burning
the petrol hanging on the air

these things sugarman marked for the future
his heart was raw and lonely
a lonely boy a sad boy sniffing the air
for his lost mother and lost father
gone mad
with cutting and blood and the law
twisting loose like wire
with no one to hold it

smelling the scent of petrol
he remembered his mother burning
he remembered his mother

he looked around for fathers
he looked around for uncles
he looked around for the old men
the wind covered them
with dust and rubbish
the old men staggered in the wind
the uncles staggered
the fathers staggered

he smelled the scent of wine
he saw the old men dead with drink

he saw the end of the world that would come after him
he saw into the future again
he saw what he had done
he saw it ahead of him like the open mouth of a great snake
for the first time sugarman really wept
for someone else
suddenly he felt like a baby again
suddenly he changed into a baby again
suddenly he was being swallowed by the great snake
he fell like a burning star
right into the belly of the snake and disappeared

for the first time
he took his eyes off the mirror
for the first time he stopped playing at being a god
down in the belly of the snake
he saw bits of all the gods whirling around him
like bits of broken swallowed rock

he saw the feet of the crows
and he saw where the killers came from
he knew their family
and he knew their song
the crow feet and the crow song
his own uncles and his mother's sister
the disasters of the family
and the killers of children
he remembered the day
his uncles the crows
came for him and tore him
limb from limb
he broke out of the mirror
like a wild bird
he broke out of the mirror
like a mad bird
he roared on the wind
he roared on the wind
like a fire in the long grass
like a fire along the line of a ridge
in the long grass he roared
like a bush fire
the sugar man saw the end of the world
brought about by nice uncles
who tear the limbs of children
he took notice he marked it

he saw his own hands do the same thing,

7
he gathered sticks
like the phoenix he gathered sticks
he built sticks around himself
he covered himself with sticks
he set himself on fire
SCENE 20  PHOENIX

1  The Vision

on the black waters he saw a figure dancing
he saw the wind snake dancing
he saw the dancing woman and the wind snake
he saw them again
he saw the beginning of things again
he saw the beginning of all the worlds again
the beginning of the dream of the world
he saw the gods beginning he saw it all again
the woman dancing on the waters
the snake
and the egg
he saw the winged bird of love
hovering on the bright edges of the shell
he saw homa
he saw the wings of homa
of the wild bird out of the heart of yezdan
out of the heart of the first fire

he saw those things begin
and the groaning of the world
the mountains forming
and the great snakes of the beginning
travelling across the land singing together
and laying down the maps
and him standing there rearing up
looking right across the country from coast to coast
from edge to edge
he saw the open mouth of the lizard
grinding the rocks to seed
he saw the black dog trotting in through the gap
in the mountains
he saw the man from the stars whose name changes
but is always the same hunter
he saw the seven sisters
and the great black penis of the hunter
stalking the sisters flying into a cave
he saw a great lizard rolling in the soak hole
south of mount theo
and a great black snake
rolling west across the plain out past nyinmi
he saw the snake split in pieces
and parts go in four directions

he saw the beginning of all things again
and this time he saw crow and understood
he saw crow and the mind of crow
he saw his grandfather's mind

he saw the split in the rocks
he saw the split in the brain of crow
and he understood the split
in the brain of all things

he saw the two sides
the black and the white
the making and destroying
the male and the female
he stopped running
he held the two sides in his hand
he understood the beginning of things

he saw the lightning he saw the fruit
he saw his first mother and his first father
he saw the beginning of himself

he understood the use of the grape and skin
the use of the blood of gods and the skin of men
and the shapes the spirits take
and how they walk around and why
he understood the fire and his mother's thirst
for love and power
her intoxication her rage
2 After the Vision

the ashes of the fire are black
the ashes of the fire are cold
he painted himself
he painted himself with ash
he cut his skin
he cried in the night
he sang in the night
he called like a dove for the milky way
the stars wrapped him
they wrapped him like a mother
the milky way unrolled and wrapped him
he cooled he cooled
the broken skin of the sugar man cooled

his eyes opened
his eyes opened and his wings grew

he saw hovering above him
on the cross of the tree
the four eyes of crow and the four wings of crow

d four eyes
two eyes sleeping two eyes awake

d four wings
two wings resting two wings flying

crow never sleeps and crow never stops
while he flies he rests and while he rests he flies
3  Crow Speaks

crow told him to get up
crow said what are you doing there
get up
where am I said sugarman

you're in afghanistan
and you got no visa said crow

what happened said sugarman

I swallowed you said crow
that's all

how did I get here said sugarman

it's better not to ask said crow

you swallowed me said sugarman
you swallowed me
shit why did you do that
I was having a good time travelling

crow lit a cigar and said
I wanted you to see what it's like inside
here you did good
have a cigar

I'd rather have a drink said sugarman

4
like crow he rose on his wings
the bird from the beginning
like homa
like the simurgh
like the phoenix
rising from the ashes
he flew out of the fiery heat of ahura mazda
and headed east
he flew straight to the hand of shiva
SCENE 21  SHIVA

Wings toward the glaciers of Kailash,
where the first fathers
nourished the seed of God;
and Shiva gentled Ganga,
and Paroarti walked by streams
of living heart.
For Shiva was Jesus before him
and Paroarti his loveliness on earth—
as was Rama, as was Krishna
as was Abraham, and Bhuddha
and Mohamed and their loveliness.

Francis Brabazon  Stay with God

I
like an arrow from arjun’s bow
he flew straight to the heart of shiva
like a tear from the eye of rama
he dropped straight to the hand of shiva

he nestled like a baby in at the breast of shiva
like a baby in the hand of shiva he sighed

these are the mysteries of the human heart
this is the map of the human heart
this is the way the wild men go
straight to the heart of shiva
where all things change and the dancing god
puts destruction to the use of creation
and creation to the use of destruction
SCENE 22 INSET STORY – THE STORY OF SHIVA

Here can be told a story from The Chronicles of Shiva, perhaps the making of soma (p 273) or one of the weapons scenes also in Hindu Myths by O’Flaherty (chapter 4) or the poignant account of Parvati’s death and Shiva carrying her across the country in Wolkstein’s rendering in The First Love Stories. Some of the Shiva stories are set into the Mahabharata.
SCENE 23  BABBLE

sugar man crawled like a baby cross the sand
he crawled across the floor of the cave
to grasp the finger of shiva
he babbled once then he fell into silence

The inset stories can be placed here followed by:

I  Sugarman's Soliloquy

sugarman went up to shiva
he stood next to him and put his hand on the
polished black rock of shiva's body
him, standing there
he said
you are my father
the destroyer of all things
and the changing face of all things
I am the loosener
the destroyer of many things
I can be no other

with your hand to hold me
I will take men down into their dark
into their madness
and the women
I will take down
this is my job and this is my mystery

I am the dancing god of love
and with your hand to hold me
I will take men down into love
and the women I will take down

I am the loosener the hunter
I can be no other
you have given me the mystery of destruction
he who follows me
she who follows
and comes through the fire
will understand the way of all men
and after me he will live
the man who follows me and lives
that man will love
the woman who follows me and loves
that woman will live

2  Home
the sugarman took the cup
and gathered his blanket around his head
he set his feet on the road and he went home
he travelled home  he travelled west
SCENE 24  FAMILY REUNION
AND THE BEGINNING OF STARS

three dreams going home

1  Recovering Semele
he travelled west
he travelled under the volcano
he went home dreaming
in the dream
he went searching for the hole
to the underworld
he looked for his mother
he looked for semele
he found her and he brought her out
he took her home
he took her home to his father's house
and he sat her down

2  family gathering
the family gathered
like eagles at a body
the family gathered
they sat and they listened
they settled things
and they poured out wine
they poured out stories
and they poured out wine
they drank it in
they drank it all in
and they talked about giving sugarman a job

3  getting a job
they gave sugarman a job
they agreed on it
they gave him the people of the world to look after
some he drove mad and some he killed
some he gave music
and some he gave ceremony
he gave them music and dancing and the words
of the mask
'in your hands is your own death'

4
all things have an end
and this is where we end
the travels of sugarman
the stars above you hold the story
the sugarman made new stars in the old sky
and they tell stories the hunter the seven sisters the dog star
virgo the hyades thyone corona borealis
these are the stories of dionysos
look up and clear your mind
here I end my tale

Go sweep out the chamber of your heart
make it ready to be the dwelling place of the beloved
when you depart out he will enter it
in you, void of yourself he will display his beauties.

Shabistari
STORY 6

TRAVELLING ARIADNE

ariadne stands
she begins her travelling
she goes to the gate of the evening star
she takes the road the women travel
she passes the place of the seven sisters
they travel together

SEVEN SISTERS . . . 145

ARIADNE'S THREAD . . . 146
Through Anatolia South to Egypt
To Inanna
From Afghanistan to Egypt
The Meeting with Shiva
SCENE I    Seven Sisters

ariadne gathered herself
with her seven sisters
they took up their sticks and their billy cans
they took up their bedrolls
and they started walking
they started walking
and they started singing
they started singing these songs
the ones you know
they picked fruit as they travelled
they picked sweet fruit
they picked up seeds
they rolled and sorted and ground them
they carried the grinding stone
they started walking
and they started singing

they did this a long time ago
and they did it their way

sisters travel like this today
we start singing
and we pick sweet fruit
we do it our way
we walk and we remember
we drive in motor cars
we hit the road
SCENE 2  Ariadne's Thread

Ariadne and the Seven Sisters travel along the same route as Dionysos Sugarman. Sometimes they are together or overlap, sometimes separate. The idea here is to allow two complementary journeys, the men and the women, each with their own psychic tasks. Ariadne's journey also takes in the same cultural sites and characters and her company witnesses the enactments, but may make something specific to the women.

The journeys of the Seven Sisters are important to research here, both the Central Australian Seven Sisters and the northern hemisphere journeys of the Hyades and Pleiades.

I  Through Anatolia South to Egypt

she crosses into kybele's country
the beehive and the tambourine
she crosses into kybele's country
she met the grandmothers of semele
she met the family of her mothers in law
she ate honey with them and wheat
she heard stories and wove them into
patterns
she travelled south

she travelled down the coast of phoenicia
she travelled in a ship
and she landed on the beach of byblos

her husband walked into town
she saw him with the coloured women
and the men carrying vines on donkeys
she heard the women lament and
she lost him in the black procession

she met ishtar in the room of the evening star
and the dancing steps of the evening star
she and seven sisters wove into patterns

she heard the lament of the women
and knew it for herself
she wove it with steel strings
into the shell of her heart

she went down into canaan
she travelled on a donkey
she marked the histories of women
of israel and she learned the storyteller's art
she walked on the coast of galilee
and found the footsteps
of the three marys
waiting for a body to fill their hands
she waited and watched
what would happen on the hill
and the streets and
the gardens of gethsemene
and after it was finished
and the body perfumed
and wrapped and laid
in the tomb
they sailed for france and she watched them go
with sarah and the black madonna
weaving the gypsy path
she watched them go
and began to sing the saeta for sarah
sophia and the black madonna

and she went down into egypt
while her husband sailed with isis
she walked through sinai and across the red sea
and the seven sisters wove their
eyes into patterns

she went down into isis country
she learned the gathering dance
and how to tie the knot of isis

she travelled into africa
and the african women
have a way of dancing

while her husband was drunk
ariadne went dancing
the seven sisters danced with her
and they worked the beat

2 To Inanna
she travelled north east to sumeria
she travelled on the early morning breeze
she went north east into the mouth
of inanna's country
into the rivers and down with her
to the hook
hanging
on the wall
she learned the powers
and drank beer with her sisters
every sister
ereshkigal and inanna
geshtinanna
and the seven sisters
learned all the crafts and all the
powers and walked through the high
reeds and the mud flats on stilts
singing the songs of the
morning star
and other songs that are nobody's business
but theirs

after that they kept moving through persia
and saw the smoke of the phoenix
on the horizon
like a column of smoke in the spinifex
or an oil well on fire
in basra
and homa the simurgh the bird heart of zoroaster
carrying the body of his sister
joyfully to the fire of yezdan
the great mystery of fire

and they passed by
preferring to keep to their own way
and their own fire
and sleeping the night with rabia
who was travelling east in a blue bus

they settled in tents in the mountains west of india

3 From Afghanistan to Kashmir
by now with silver earings
and silver rings around her ankles
ariadne and the seven sisters
sat in silence for seven years
and catching the scent of rada and parvarti
stood up and walked into kashmir
with nothing

over in the shadow of a hut they saw
parvati  rhada  draupadi and kali
sitting rolling bread
rolling the stuff of the universe on a tin plate

over in the shadow of tree
krishna  ram and shiva played
sugarman cards for motor cars

the four women made a place
for the travelling women
the seven sisters and ariadne sat down
they rolled bread
they put fingers into each others mouths
passing on bread and stories
tongue to tongue

4 The Meeting with Shiva
she walked into his room
it was 7 o'clock in the morning
he was sitting on an old iron bed
his body was black like polished stone
he did not speak
his hands moved in beautiful gestures
like swallows at a water hole  she thought
he smiled at her

ariadne unravelled a thread
from crete to mount meru
from her father's door to this
her other father's door
from labyrinth of knossos to the ear of shiva
she unravelled a thread
he listened
he held the secret string in his hand and tugged
a little tug and she came apart in his hand
what beautiful women
he thought
what wonderful women
what remarkable women
who travel the world
he listened and waited till she
came together in her new and
wondrous form
in her new and wondrous form
she stood up she could feel
her feet cool on the stone floor
she saw him sitting there on the old iron bed
his hands like swallows swooping at a rockhole she thought
how could such an extraordinary being
be sitting there like that
and so much happen and hardly a moment had passed
the sisters were sitting with their backs along the stone
wall of the little room half in shadow
watching and waiting till the meeting was over
they began to sing
and the seven sisters sang
the only song in the world worth singing
the song of the human heart

5 Traditional Dances
these gestures set the map of where the seven sisters travelled
the gathering gesture with the hands like this
the weaving gesture with arms
thrown back like this
this and all the moves of the hand
and the moves of the feet are remembered
in circling dances of the seven sisters
and so the soul of the buried woman is freed
the woman hanging above the bed is released
the woman locked in the cave is freed
the woman whose tongue was cut begins to speak
the one whose children were taken away
she finds what is lost
the women whose hearts are split find strings
and sing something that makes sense at last
spinning the thread of women unravelling
from the steps of knossos
to the lime washed
steps of kall
rhadra sita parvarti draupadhi...
unrolling meetings with remarkable women

what is the point of all this
travelling
the point of all this is simple
the point is this
that after you travel so far with women
like this you can take anything
anyone throws at you
and you don't go up in flames

ariadne and the seven sisters went travelling
they went and saw themselves
they found what lies at the bottom
and what sits on top
they learned to hold their liquor

they saw themselves in the face
and did not go up in flames

they went away
they came home
they came back with presents
for all their friends
and sugarman had a new motorcar

the HQ shiva special

can this is the song of travelling ariadne
the women know it
and the women sing it
this is their business
SCENE I  SUGARMAN RETURNS TO HIS HOME COUNTRY

sugarman is travelling  
he comes home to his own country  
he comes to the fire  
the fire is burning  
sugar mother burning  
see the smoke  
his second mother  
a spirit now  
he calls to her  
he calls to her  
look at me he says  
look at me from where I come  
does she hear him  
does she see him  
do we know  

my mother is burning  

look at me  
look at me he says  
he looks at us  
the sugar man looks at us  
I came from that way  (east)  

I came out of the snake's mouth  
smiling and dancing  
can you see me  
I am a spirit man now  
I have come to visit you  
my family
SCENE 2 SUGARMAN REJECTED

the old woman said clear off
clear off - you smell like piss

clear off says his cousin
his mother's sister's son
clear off says the king
clear off you lover boy

the sugar man says
look at me that's all I want
look at me
a little bit
my mother's burning there
I came out of the lightning
sweet and thick
like sugar
the old woman stands
she points her finger
she speaks like a hot wind
she says
sugar man go
you smell like piss
she tells the women
hide the babies
she tells the king
your cousin is a madman
she said that and she sat down
she waited
on the ground she drew blood
SCENE 3 SUGARMAN'S TRICK

that's what happened
the sugar man got angry
the women started dancing
they took off that way
up the hill
milk dripping
dancing

just look at me said sugar man
just look at me a little bit

his cousin came and shouted
lock him up
they locked him up
they put him in the jail house
sugar man walked out

look he says I'm free
I can walk around
you can't lock me up

his cousin the king
he came out shouting
my place is falling down
all the bricks are breaking up
all the doors are falling down

my mother where is she

people say -
she's gone dancing
she's a lover girl
your mother
she's gone hunting

the cousin came out shouting
grab that man he said
sugarman says  what you want
you want to see those women dancing
what you saying  says his cousin

you want to see the women dancing
maybe  says the cousin
looking round
ok  said the sugar man
you've got to dress up
you got to dress up like the women

cousin started shouting

don't shout at me  said sugarman
I'll make you really sweet
just like a woman now
why
if they see you like a man
they'll cut you up like this
they're hunting men
those sugar women

now you're like a woman
you can see the women dancing
you'll be right
you'll be safe
you'll be safe with me my cousin

ok  said his cousin
I want to see what's going on
ok  said the sugarman
you'll see now
SCENE 4  THE HUNT

the king is coming
he is looking for the women
the sugarman walks with him
like a friend like a brother
they look like women
sugar women
do not laugh
this time do not laugh
watch and see

the two old men are coming
grandfather and the bird man
two old men coming for ceremony

that cousin is in a dream now
he's inside out
he looks like a woman
he climbs the sugar pole
look said the women
let's go hunting

who is that coming from the north
that's lover boy
coming from the north
who's that climbing the tree
that's lover boy
climbing the tree

we better grab him eh
eh eh eh you lover boy
we can see you now

the women all rushed out
they were inside out
the women mad
the sugar dream inside them now
sugarman
he's got 'em now
see the sweat on the skin
juice on the skin
their eyes like someone sleeping
their eyes like someone dancing all night long
gone
read the signs
this is sugarman inside the skin
they grabbed that cousin
they grabbed his arms
they grabbed his legs
they ripped him
I'm telling you true
they ripped him
they saw that man
the sugar man was laughing
you'll see  said sugarman
you'll see
who is there
ripping up that man just
like he was a rabbit
the aunt is there
the mother's there  she's dancing
look  she said  I've been hunting
look at this  head  she said
look at this fat grub  she said
look at this sweet fruit  she said
her sisters are dancing
9 women  singing  yes come
they come running down the mountain
the old men are standing there
the grandfather standing there
they worry
the bird man says  what  do you see
the grandfather says I see
the sugarman laughing
the women singing

we've been hunting
they sing
I have the foreleg sister
I have the hindleg sister
I have a body gutted
I have the guts sister
I have the heart
I have the sweet fruit
I have the head sister

oh no said the grand father
oh no said the bird man

what's that you got there
my daughter
sweet fruit
she said smiling and dancing
smeared with blood

the 9 women stopped still
they looked down like this

they looked down at their hands
what's that you got there
my daughter
look up at the sky
clear your mind
they look up at the sky
they look down at their hands
SCENE 5  MOMENT OF TRUTH

what's that you got there
my daughter
I have a hand my father
I have a foot my father
I have a body gutted
I have the guts my father
I have a heart my father
I have the sweet fruit
I have a head my father
my father who is this

this is your son mother
you ripped his body

who is this

this is your child mother
you lost his blood
you lost your son
what did you do
my daughter

the mothers fell to the ground
the sisters fell to the ground
they poured dust on their heads
each one was sorry
they painted their skin white
they cried

we lost our children

the sugar made us loose
the sugar gave us laughing
the sugar gave us dancing
the sugar gave us blood

playing with snakes
why did we go this way
help me my son
their son did not rise up
SCENE 6 LOOK AT THIS

sugarman comes
sugarman says
look at me look at this
you played with me
did you see my power
no
did you hear my story
no

you my cousin brother
you said you were king
you locked me out
you locked me up
I walked around you

someone wrote my story down
and this is what I say
he insulted me
in the most shameful way
so death came to him
in the most shameful way
at his own mother's hand

my mother's sister you must pay
for the blood lost
leave this country
you will never come back

grandfather
you will change your shape
like a snake now
people look at you and say
there is that snake

my mother's mother
the same story for you
you two travel
two snakes together going that way
where you travel there is fighting
because of you
sacred places are ruined
the meaning of stones forgotten
this is your sorrow
you see it and you cannot help it

after a long time things will change
you will be free of this curse
people will sing about you
there will be songs about you

I sing about you now
my grandfather the snake
my mother's mother
your family will see strange things
your children and their children
will see strange things

sugarman spoke these words
someone wrote them down
this is what they say

"I who am speaking to you now
am a spirit power
if you had chosen wisdom
in your dealings with me
I would now be your friend
but you know me too late
and now you are torn apart"

this is the way
it will always go
the mothers and sisters go mad
they lose their country
the fathers and brothers go fighting
they lose their children
their eyes change into snakes
the sugarman
the loosener is standing there
who brings laughter and dancing

the sugarman brings
laughter and dancing

who brings blood and death
the sugarman brings
blood and death

he is standing there now
lover boy
blood on his hands
the hunter

listen to my story
I show you the way things go
with him
choose wisdom
he will be your friend
look carefully at him
and read the signs
you will be safe
remember who his father is
remember who his mother is
remember the story of his second mother
remember the story of sugarman
read the signs
you will be safe

the old story ends like this
and that is how we finish up today
euripides says

... the powers of spirit
show themselves in many shapes,
bring many matters to surprising ends;
the things we thought would happen do not happen;
the unexpected, god makes possible;
and that is what has happened here today.
STORY 8

SEMELE IN THE UNDERWORLD

QUICKSILVER, FLASH AND TONGUE ... 167

Reprise

The Character of Hermes

DIONYSOS TO SEMELE – GOING UNDERGROUND ... 169

THE MEETING ... 174

MUSIC AND STARS ... 177
SCENE I  QUICKSILVER, FLASH AND TONGUE

Dedicated to the Remote Area Night Patrols

Reprise
the lightning moves
he moves inside the smoke
the boy is back inside his skin
the message travels
the boy is safe
the men come from everywhere
the men who look after spirit
the men who watch the children
the brothers and sons of lightning
the men who watch the boys
they travel, they meet, they dance

1. the character of hermes
when the boys were burning in the petrol
fire
It was quicksilver speed and tongue
who got them out
when lightning strikes the woman
it is quicksilver flash and tongue
who saves the baby

quicksilver two snakes
black and white together
wings on his feet

when mothers are sick
and burning with grief
it is quicksilver's hands
who finds her spirit

when babies are ripped
by drunken crows
it is quicksilver tongue
on the radio
it is quicksilver speed
and lightning power
who brings the spirit back
when trouble comes
and sickness travels
it is quicksilver speed and tongue
to pass the news
they grab the poison out
with hands so fast
with eyes so quick

he is the one we spit on
he is the one we call on

he travels among the living
he travels among the dead
he crosses borders
he speaks all language
he goes down in the dark
he brings back
the battered woman
the baby crying
the women all gone mad
he talks softly
look up at the clear sky
clear your eye

these are the men who hold
the spirit and keep the spirit strong
lightning his sons and brothers
quicksilver speed and tongue
SCENE 2    DIONYSOS TO SEMELE
GOING UNDERGROUND

Dedicated to Elva Cook

he took a truck and headed west
he heard a rumour
the sisters are coming out
the spirit of our mothers are coming out
he heard a rumour and watched
the women heading that way
on the road
blankets and billy cans going to sit down
with their sisters
we don't know what's going on they said
but we hear our mothers are calling out
we are travelling to sit down with the sisters

sugarman heard this story
he took a truck and headed west
he followed the dust of the women
new business on the road

he was on the radio
he was on the radio
on the side of the road
and broken down

the sugarman travelling
calling on the radio
victor zulu bravo
come in
victor zulu bravo
no voice on the airwaves
no answer
no sound from base

he was on the side of the road
broken down
3 days walk from jupiter well
no water
only rust in the radiator
and no voice on the radio

semele spirit
a barefoot woman
no more than 20 years old
watching her son
broken down on the road
3 days walk from jupiter well
only rust in the radiator

(the things we must do
we may not intend
they come upon us
as the moment presents)

his mother's spirit came out
his mothers spirit came to him
the sisters were right
the mothers were calling out

by the side of the road
a barefoot woman
watching him with no water
and only rust in the radiator

he went to find her
he could see the gap in the hills
the place where the spirits come out
the place where the spirits go in and out

where is the way these days
into the gap
the gap to the underworld
where is the way
to the place of the passed away soul

there are things we must do
we may not intend
sugarman passed through the valley
of the shadow
no water and no radio

he walked into the valley of the lost mothers
he walked exactly
without knowing
he walked to the rock
to the rock that marks his mother's place
the place where she goes in
and comes out
marked by smoke in the air
that no one sees but everyone feels
and cries in grief
when they walk in the spirit smoke
of mothers who have lost their children
sitting quietly

gazing at his mother's rock
he went in

he began to cry
he began to weep
the sugarman remembered his mother
the fire all around him
he remembered her
passing away in the fire
the fire all around him
her spirit leaving her
her spirit leaving him

this is the most terrible thing
a child can find
the ashes of a burnt out mother

the place where the spirit left him
the place where the spirit left her
he began to cry
he began to weep

on the floor of the cave
in the ashes of the fire
he found the place
where her spirit left him

a pole is strong like lightning
a tree is sharp like lightning
a rock is burned with lightning
the marks on the rock where his father
had come
he spoke to him
the father spoke to the son
he loved him
he told him what to do
he sent him speed to help
he came on eagle wings
circling and circling in the blazing sky

sugarman collected the ashes
and rubbed them on his skin
covered in ashes he stood
the voice of his father
holding him
hold on my son
and keep on walking

he stood and descended into death
he went down
he went down into the places of death
with white ash on his face
he went down

the third day
he rose again
with his mother in his arms
carried her
placed his feet carefully
on the sand
placed his feet
I held her in his arms

took her back to the truck
took her back to the breakdown
called on the radio
cor zulu bravo come in lightning
father answered
answered his son
ug her in
said
ug her in
are waiting
sugarman placed the body
his mother in the back of the truck

started the engine
rove 300 miles
jupiter well

called them on the radio
eagle circled in the blazing sky
eksilver kept an eye on his brother

sugarman called on the radio
cor zulu bravo do you hear me

c in sugarman come in
SCENE 3  THE MEETING

they are sitting down
all the family are sitting down
this is them
they sit like this
you can see them

they dance as they come in
and take their places
each one a dance
and by their dance
you know them
lightning eagle wind fruit seeds water
war death cooking fire love the hunters the sun the stars
the whole family is there

the sugarman has brought his mother
her brought her like shiva brought
parvati
he carried her

when he reached the council meeting
he sat on the sand
the old trees on each side
leaning and listening

when he reached the council meeting
he held only one part of her
a handful of ash

in some people's eyes
a heart

in some people's eyes
a full body and spirit

in some people's eyes
what
when a son goes to find
his passed away mother
we can never be sure
how much of her he brings back

the father said
what is the business
the son said
you must give my mother her place

the first wife rose up
like an eagle
she rose up on claws
she shrieked
there is no place for one like you

she ripped open the sky
like this
and a million crows flew out
from the wound
circling over the ashes of semele

the second wife stood and said
I am your only mother
this one is only a dream
there is no place for one like her

she tore quietly at the earth
and out of the wound
a million plants grew
seeds and flowers and food
to eat

she can do nothing
there is no place here for one like her

one by one the aunts and uncles of sugarman
stood and spoke
no one could find a way
to give his second mother her place
then hestia the old lady stood up
she left her place
she did not say a word
she stood and began travelling
she went that way
she sat down with the old ladies
she left the spirit places
she sat down with the old ladies
she began to roll the flour for damper
she stood up
without a word
and left her place
and there was one place left
for sugarman's second mother

semele 20 years old
the one who burnt up
in the lightning strike
the baby inside
fire all around him
drowning
in a 44 gallon drum of petrol

semele that one
she found a home
and she came alive

she was dancing

at the council meeting
the old men and women
moved aside
the family of spirits opened up
and made a place for her
and the sugarman smiled
he was happy for the first time
in his life
he didn't worry anymore
he was happy
SCENE 4  MUSIC AND STARS

after this the sugarman changed
he began to tell stories
he kept his head and he began to tell stories
in the stars he made shapes
in the ears of men
he made music
in the limbs of women
he made dancing
he made all the wild ceremonies
of the world
and everyone was happy

when the sugarman tells his stories
the spirits come and sit in the shadows
people travel for miles in old cars and trucks
they sit in the creek
they sit on rocks
and listen to the stories
nine men on one side
nine men on one side
nine women on one side
nine women on one side
listening and dancing
the stories I tell you tonight
these are the songs of sugarman
these are the stories of sugarman
and this is how he tells them

"in the beginning
night was dancing,
she was dancing . . ."
STORY 9

THE BEGINNING OF THE MYSTERIES

ariadne and dionysos
alone
with no where to go
that night
with string and sugar
she joined him
and the nine nights
of mystery began

THE MYSTERIES ... 179
DONKEY COUNCIL ... 180
CROW SHAMAN ... 183
SCENE I THE MYSTERIES

there are mysteries
which I cannot tell you
we have seen them all
our secrets are wrapped in a little bag

the mother who lost her son
the singer who lost his head
the deep pit and the dark basket
all those things hidden

we saw those things and heard
some we can tell and some we cannot
not even for 700 dollars an hour
but the donkey meeting is free for all
so listen quietly and be a witness
SCENE 2  DONKEY COUNCIL
Dedicated to Fred Webb and Barry Cook

donkey was watching the family council meeting
and it gave him a good idea
he went and made his own council
he called all his drinking mates
they sat around and drank
they did everything in the meeting backwards
they got the chairman to give them all
extra money and holidays
they made long speeches
about how big donkey's belly is
and how big other parts of donkey is
and everyone farted

after a while they played at being judge
and stabbing people in the back
whispering lies
listening in to crow on the mobile telephone
they chucked each other out
they started off as a nice family group
sitting down for a drink with uncle donkey
and they finished up chucking each other out

they made up really good reasons
to chuck each other out
donkey stood up with his penis waving
he bashed people
he sucked on the silver wine bladder
full of donkey piss
the drunker he got the more he chucked people out
he called this the donkey ceremony
when everything happens the wrong way around

in the end everyone was dead drunk or dead
crow came and picked over the pieces
he swallowed them

that is how crow gets his bread and butter
he tickles donkey with wine and jokes
then waits till donkey falls down

donkey ceremony you can see it
time anyone can see
and anyone can learn it

the real sugarman story
not everyone knows that story
they are too lazy

crow sits in the shadows outside the meeting
and waits for his chance to eat people
one day an old man was there
dancing around with donkey
and the dust fell out of his eyes
he saw crow waiting in the shadows
and he saw donkey making a fool of himself
at that moment he changed
he reached back and grabbed his law
and killed crow with a sharp stick

he killed crow and ripped open donkey's belly
he stuck their heads on sticks for everyone to see

that old man had a trick
he knew how to change the law to meet the new situation
so he was the only one who was clever enough to
bring back the law

this is the hardest business in the world
to use the right laws and do it properly
for new situations

the old man sat down with sugarman
and listened to the story
he followed the sugarman's track
he did not follow the donkey track
he was careful about crow because crow never sleeps
crow never dies
no matter how many times you kill him

the old man  the changing man listened
how to watch the sugarman and sing and not die

the old man is still alive
he keeps the secrets
the facts about the black snake
the songs about the cure
SCENE 3  CROW SHAMAN

There is a pale horse coming
and I'm going to ride it
I'll rise in the morning
my fate decided
deadman walking
dead man walking

Bruce Springsteen

I
on the way home sugarman called in to see
his grandfather
he called to see crow
crow was reading a detective novel
he was reading Nightwing
by Martin Cruz Smith
and he was watching a video
at the same time
he was watching The Unforgiven with Clint Eastwood
he was reading about the old Indian
witchdoctor and the snake dance
crow liked the native american mob
sometimes he flew west to Arizona
to talk to coyote or up to Cree country
to talk with bits of Winnebago
he was reading a native american
detective story
page 14 - 21 page 79 - 80 and page 138 - 140
all at the same time
(see appendix for the exact bits)
that's shit he said
when the sugarman walked through the door
that's shit he said
where've you been said crow
I've been to a meeting said sugarman
yeah said crow what about
they gave me a job
no kidding said crow
(he was practising american)

2
crow and sugarman got drunk
ty they got drunk together
they drank each other under the table
it was the biggest drunk the world has ever seen
sugarman and crow got drunk together
drunks came from miles around
just to admire them
to lick the floor

they drank so much
it became the end of the world

crow told sugarman the truth
about himself
fortunately it didn't make sense
and sugarman felt all the better for it
felt all the better
for not being able to make sense of anything

there's nothing left for me
to do but go home he said
go home make trouble
and keep some kind of music going
and tell a few stories what kind of job is that?

listen said crow
I'll tell you something I heard in america

I will tell you something about stories,
[he said]
They aren't just entertainment.
Don't be fooled.
They are all we have you see,
all we have to fight off
illness and death.
You don't have anything
if you don't have the stories.

Their evil is mighty
but it can't stand up to our stories.
So they try to destroy the stories
let the stories be confused or forgotten.
They would like that.
They would be happy
Because we would be defenceless then.

He rubbed his belly.
I keep them here.
Here, put your hand on it
See it is moving.
There is life here
for the people.

In the belly of this story
the rituals and ceremonies
are still growing.

The only cure
I know
is a good ceremony,
that's what she said

leslie marmon silko ceremony

right said crow and now
I'll show you how to fix people
ok said sugarman
but it better not make any sense
leave sensible things to the doctors
said crow
leave reality to me

crow began to dance
this is how he did it
he took out all his bones
he took them out
and danced like this
like japaljarri painting
the napperby death spirit dreaming
(by Tim Laurah Japaljarri and Clifford Possum Japaljarri)

like the two japaljarri men
moving west to east
across the burnt out wrecks
of motor cars
the wrecks of stars
kangaroos
snakes
possums
dogs
the wrecks of lizards
frogs
mosquitoes
flies
spiders
bugs  grubs
and me
the wrecks of me
he danced like this

he danced toward the end of the world
and in
and through
and out the other side
crow's black hole dance
he danced like this . . . .

THE END OF THE PERFORMANCE
NOTES

THE ARRIVAL OF SUGARMAN

The arrival can begin with the Start Up Ceremony. An alternative, which was used at Intjarntarna, was a recitation of the History of the World in both English and Western Arrente. This could be a bit long but it seemed necessary and seemed to work as an orientation to the purpose and significance of presenting the Sugarman story.

An alternative is to begin with a (comic satyr play) arrival of a ship/car which represents the arrival of Captain Cook, Mrs Cook and all their entourage, which could include a version of the History of The World, or Barry's story given in the Introduction.

When the ship arrives they unload all the European goods. This has comic, bizarre and poignant possibilities. Among the goods is rum and wine. Dionysos/Sugarman emerges from the ship. There are many possible ways of presenting the arrival of 'Captain Cook' and Sugarman but I suggest that however the entrance/prologue goes, it then becomes the Start Up Ceremony so as to formalise the beginning. It should be noted that Sugarman is intended to be performed in parts or over several nights, hence all the arrival business could itself occupy one night's performance events.

THE REAL MYSTERIES?

The primal states such as birth, death, dismemberment, gathering, etc are often part of most mystery ceremonies, but the real mysteries as we prefer to work with them now, at this stage in the Sugarman, after people have been through the performances and the performance workshops is to give a chance to find what can be found in the personal stories of the people who take part in the Sugarman or are moved by it, as a performance or ceremony or the workshop sessions which are always intended, by us, to be part of the process.

These mysteries are the personal side of the performances, the inside stories. The stories that only you can go through, guided by those who have gone before.

For more information on the traditional Mysteries of Eleusis, Demeter, Orpheus and Dionysus you may wish to consult sources in Homer, Ovid, The Aenead and commentaries by Kerenyi and others in the reference list.

However, for now, this is as far as we can take you and we hope you have enjoyed travelling with the Sugarman.
NOTES ON STORY 4

Travelling Mad/Grog Running Stories

We begin with two grog stories as prototypes. One is a link between Lightning man’s travels and those of his son, Sugarman. Whereas Lightning man brings rain and increases the bush foods, the fruit and the sugars, Sugarman brings the wine and increases the trouble even if he doesn’t mean to. Donkey Mueller or ‘the Donk’ is based on a traditional legend and helps to show how even though Sugarman tries to help Donkey, Donkey uses the gift in his own way to fill his belly, lengthen his penis and make a lot of trouble and money. The Donkey Road is the road people take when they become drunks and fools for grog. These ones don’t listen to Sugarman properly and don’t respect him. This is why the Donkey travels can be shown by the satyrs, like satyr plays, to bring out the grotesque and comic aspects of drunkeness.

This section follows How the Wine Was Made and shows how Sugarman travels while he is still mad. We call them The Grog Running Stories because the five traditional Greek stories are mostly about Dionysos travels to different parts of the country, bringing wine to different communities. The old stories show what happened in those days when people first got the wine and hadn’t learned how to handle it.

The six grog running scenes are;

1. Lightning Travels Across the Plain.
2. Donkey Mueller.
3. Visiting Countries (Attica, Calydon, Laconia )
4. Pirates.
5. Local Stories.
6. Road block

Local versions of the mythic events can be redrawn according to the experiences of any community anywhere, taking into account the alcohol history of the country from the first colonial Rum Corps, such as is described in ‘The Fatal Shore’ by Robert Hughes. Local stories, specific to the folklore of that region, can be used as the basis for scenes about the way in which alcohol affects people’s behaviour. Barry Cook’s story of finding the Sugarman in the introduction, is an example.

The classic stories of Dionysos travels can be used as the basis for local scenes as we have done here.
Visiting Countries.

1. How Dionysos/Sugarman visited Icarius' country, Attica, and how the king gave the wine to his men and they thought they were being poisoned so they killed their own king, while drunk. How his own daughter hanged herself when she discovered her father dead.

2. How Dionysos went on to visit the King of Calydon. He seduced the kings wife. The king pretended not to notice so in return, Sugarman taught the king how to plant vines and grow grapes for making wine. The king's wife is left pregnant by Dionysos.

3.He went on to visit King Dion's in the country of Laconia. He had three daughters. Dionysos seduces the youngest, the others got jealous and caused trouble so Dionysos made them mad and changed them into rocks. When he left he changed the sister he loved into a tree.

4. The Pirates.

Dionysos/Sugarman went travelling through the islands.

Some pirates grabbed him and tried to make money out of him as ransom but he used his magic powers caused a storm, changed himself into a lion and made many shape changing events to frighten and then drown the pirates. Only the pilot of the ship survived.

The Donkey Mueller story is intended as a prototype for an optional way of showing Sugarman's grog running, beginning seriously when the Donkey joins him.

Lightning Travels Across The Plain, provides an entry for songs about Parma/Warma/Ngwerle or sweet sugar fruits. It is also intended as a contrast to the grog runner travels which, while increasing the availability of grog (Parma) also increases the trouble.

The Donkey story is based on a legend wherein Dionysos is carrying vines and wine and has trouble getting over a river or through a swamp. He uses a nearby donkey to ferry him over. As a reward he gives the donkey the power of human speech. The donkey then asks for a drink and from then on keeps company with Dionysos. The business with the truck in the Donkey Mueller
scene is to set up the theatrical convention of a way that stories can be worked around the travels of the Sugar mob in Donk's truck and the Sugar car.

The 'Donkey way' has come to stand for the more gross aspects of alcohol use and abuse. There will be many local yarns around this theme. Australian bush folklore is full of. Barry Cook has hundreds of such stories, including Drunk on the Road published in Story About Intjarnama.

Donkey Stories are about drunkenness, violence, stupidity, gross sexuality, vehicles, deaths and deaths in custody.

NOTES ON STORY 5

The Sugarman Trade Route
Main Sites and Locations of Cultural Encounters

I. through the islands, Ikaria, Samos, to Ephes.
II. flashbacks to central Australia.
III. turkey Anatolia, Kybele.
IV. Phoenicia, Lebanon, Syria, Ishtar, Afrodite, Adonis.
V. Canaan, Israel, the prophets and Jesus.
VI. by sea to Egypt, Isis-Osiris.
VII. Libya, Ethiopia, African drinking company.
VIII. to Sumer, Iraq, possibly by sea to Inanna.
IX. Persia, Ahuramazda, Zoroaster, Phoenix, Homa.
X. Afghanistan mountain regions. Silence, seclusion.
XI. India, Mt Kailash, Shiva, Kali-Parvarti.
XII. return to thebes.

Ariadne's Country and the Bull
This is told as background to Ariadne and her marriage to Dionysos.

Ariadne comes from Crete. The daughter of King Minos and Pasiphae.

The bull is a very significant image for this island country. Zeus took the shape of a bull and abducted Europa. Europa conceived Minos who becomes king of Crete, perhaps the first great Mediterranean, Greek, sea faring civilisation. They became rivals and enemies to Athens, where Theseus comes from.

Minos' own wife Pasiphae, becomes the lover of a bull as a cruel divine payback act, arranged by Poseidon and she conceives a son, who is half man, half bull, known as the Minotaur.
Europa’s brother is Cadmus who originally comes from Phoenicia (Lebanon). He established the city of Thebes on mainland Greece in Boetia (cow country) after wandering the country looking for Europa after her abduction by Zeus in the form of a bull.

Thebes is hometown to Dionysos, son of Semele. Semele’s father is Cadmus. Dionysos’ father is Zeus, who is also Ariadne’s grandfather because her father is Minos, son of the liaison between Zeus as a bull and Europa, Cadmus sister.

Ariadne and Dionysos are related. Some (Kerenyi) say that Dionysos’ origins are in Crete. This complicated and intriguing family history is worth studying but as a simplified background we tell here the tale of Ariadne and the Minotaur and how Ariadne got to be alone on the island of Naxos where Dionysos picks her up.

Sugarman in Kybele Country

Sunset is a young men’s initiation and circumcision ceremony still practiced in parts of old Turkey, especially by the gypsy families. I saw this in Efes (Ephesus) there is much music, the women surround the costumed boy, dancing traditionally, give him presents and money is stuck all over his body. Then the men come and dance, then he is taken for the operation, men drink late into the night, while he sleeps and next day the boy is driven with much noise and displayed with pride around the town.

I think it is a remnant of a very old ceremonial rite of passage which could well go back to Kybele.

Story 5.9 - The Festival Of Adonis


Here a story or re-enactment of the Adonis festival can be inserted which Dionysos witnesses and remembers. The enactment can provide the basis for a psychodramatic cross reference to participants own experience of love loss and separation grief.

The psychological point of this event turns around the adoration of the mothers for their god/son, his mortality and death.

The Latin Spanish/Catholic processions of the body of Christ through the streets at Corpus Christi and Easter give an indication of the strength of this archetypal pattern and its re-enactment within the Christian myth. The Flamenco Saeta is, I suspect related to the Adonis festival. Miles Davis takes up the same tradition in his Sketches of Spain
Musicians may wish to explore these sources.

Psychologically it raises matters of the Great Mother (Neumann) the Puer, adolescent preoccupations with death and the role of Dionysos and alcohol and drugs in this archetypal mother/son/lover complex. One may wish to explore this scene for its potential in treatment and as part of Sugarman’s curative procession, remembering how the relationship between son and mother was so spectacularly severed.

This episode links back to Kybele and the mother relationship there which seems to revolve around the absorption of the young male into the mother/lovers milk and honey dependency.

Whereas the central sexual imagery of Kybele is emasculation of the youth for the great mothers sake, in Adonis the lament is of the mothers for their lost sons and divine young lovers.

There are metaphors here for intoxicating dependencies.

Notes On Story 5.11 - The Mysteries Of Christ

Inset Story - The last supper seems to work as the best setting for such an exchange, as in the Araluen performance where the funeral procession of adonis turned into the last supper. Both Adonis and Dionysos were present at the table. In fact the man who played adonis also played jesus, underlining the mythological lineage from Adonis to the death of the ‘son of god’. By such manner the historical connections and associations between the main figures of these cultural traditions can be felt.


Here a highlight of the story of Jesus can be told as enactment or ceremony, such as the Christian/Walpiri Baptist ceremony or an extract from the Tony Harrison’s The Mysteries. The Christian myth of the dying and living god is therefore placed in the context of the middle eastern, mediterranean basin traditions of the dismembered and resurrected man/god, son/lover.

As in the former enactments, Dionysos witnesses this drama.

A pattern is being established of Dionysos witnessing or even generating dramatic enactments of primal creation scenes which reflect upon his own life events and contribute to the cumulative cure. This is a reference to Dionysos as the catalytic figure to whom is attributed the
birth of Greek theatre and especially the birth of tragedy.

A workshop could draw out the psychological significance of the Christian event and the relationship between Christ and Dionysos, as well as noting the Orphic mysteries construction of Dionysos as the soul of humanity in opposition to the titanic prehuman elements of life. Note also that Dionysos, the avatar of intoxication precedes Jesus the avatar of love, historically. In our text we suggest that Dionysos is like an elder brother to Jesus and he travels, marking sites and preparing the way for the coming avatar, anticipating also the activities of Jesus' female companions.

Notes on Story 5.14
Fourteen Bits Of Osiris And A Competent Sister.

At this point can be inserted stories or an enactment of key parts of the Osiris story especially the dismemberment and the reassembling by Isis, the Osiris resurrection and the mystery of the eye of Horus.

Sources; Wolkstein The First Love Stories on Osiris/Isis
Goodrich Ancient Myths on Osiris/Isis

The dramatic structure of these story inserts and how they link back into the Sugarman narrative will have to be developed according to the circumstances.

Notes on Story 5.17
The Story of Inanna

Certain parts of the Inanna Dumuzi story and the Gilgamesh Enkidu story have themes relevant to Dionysos Sugarman. I am particularly interested in the scene between Gilgamesh and Enkidu when Enkidu challenges Gilgamesh for his assaults on women and then later when Gilgamesh loses Enkidu and then Gilgamesh's epic journey of search for a substance which will give him the eternal life or immortality he seeks.

Inanna's scene, getting drunk with her uncle, and thereby gaining his powers is valuable and so too the descent to the underworld and the Dumuzi saga of escape.

Source; Wolkstein and Kramer's version of the Sumerian epic of Inanna.

Particular scenes have a direct relevance to Dionysos

Enki and Innana get drunk
Inanna's descent and return

Hunting Dumuzi

Geshtinanna and Dumuzi's deal with the underworld

As in the other inset stories, Dionysos is a guest and witness to the performance.

It should also be noted that the satyrs travel with Dionysos.

There is room for a satyr play burlesque of each of the mysteries.

The comic relief should be obvious as a good dramatic convention to explore.

Notes on Story 5.22 - Shiva And The Weapons
Or The Love Story Shiva And Parvati

Wolkstein, The First Love Stories

O'Flaherty, Hindu Myths an edited source book from the vedas, sanskrit

This insert brings the psychological movement to its climax since Dionysos meets the absolute of destruction and change in the form of Shiva.

In a sense it is the end of himself and the end of his unconscious projection of destructiveness.

We are here considering the nature and reality of the third aspect of the divine mystery. Creator Preserver and Destroyer. Unlike Krishna, who is an avatar of Vishnu, the Preserver, Dionysosis probably an avatar of Shiva. Whereas Krishna also brings intoxication and is known for his music and ecstatic dance with the gopis etc. Dionysos is a mirror image, but from the side of Shiva.
NOTES ON STORY 6

Ariadne

There are five elements to the Ariadne/Dionysos sequence.


2. Ariadne at Naxos and the first meeting with Dionysos

3. The Wedding of Dionysos and Ariadne.

4. The Travels of Ariadne

5. The Mysteries

I feel that Ariadne’s history, her wedding and the travels should be written and devised by women, since Ariadne’s story is primarily women’s business in the same way that Semele’s experience in the underworld is Semele/women’s business. However I have sketched out some indications of how the wedding and travels might go, in the absence, to date, of a female co writer.

The workshops during October and November 1996 which include the emerging contributions from the women who took part in the performance are however beginning to give shape to Ariadne’s story from a feminine and indeed hermaphroditic point of experience.

The contributions of Glenda Cloughley, Judith Parkinson, Amanda Dowd, Leslie Devereaux, Jeanette Bourke and others are also significantly helping to give body and depth to this side of the story.

In the meantime, this script draft can stand to hold open the space.

Theseus And Ariadne

The reference in Ariadne of Naxos to the black sails and the father thrown into the sea is of course a reference to Theseus story, where Theseus and his companions set out from Athens for Crete/ Knossos disguised as the band of youths destined for sacrifice to the Minotaur. With Ariadne’s help, Theseus learns how to negotiate the labyrinth, slays the Minotaur, Ariadne’s brother and then escapes, taking Ariadne and her sister with him. He leaves her on Naxos (abandonment is open to interpretation) and returns to Athens where his father is waiting for the signal. A black sail if Theseus has failed and is dead, or a white sail if Theseus was successful. Somehow or other Theseus forgets to raise the white sail and his father, seeing the black, casts
himself in despair, from the cliffs. Theseus sails into Athens and the kingship passes to him. An act of adolescent carelessness or a clever coup d'état?

The Wedding

The wedding is a very significant point in the overall structure of the drama and will require specific research to devise a ceremonial and festive event in a manner that would be appropriate to Dionysos and Ariadne. There does not appear to be any specific reference in the classic literature to the time or manner of their wedding, although the Pompey Villa frescoes may help. So too will the Cretan Crane Dance, which as a traditional dance, reflects the labyrinth event.

The scene on Naxos is, I suppose, the romance of the story, somewhat in contrast to Crow’s violent procreations and the tragic conflagration of Semele and Zeus’ affair.

The creation scene of Night on The Water and the Wind Snake is intended to reecho with the Ariadne/Dionysos night on the beach at Naxos. It is recommended that the music and dance movement used in the Night Dancing sequence be repeated for the Dionysos/Ariadne love scene.

The wedding is a preliminary to the travels or could be used as the dramatic setting for the tales told of/by Ariadne and Dionysos of their travels. I see the wedding as a kind of prototype of the Dionysia festivals.

The Travels

The travels of Ariadne run a parallel track to those of Dionysos. She visits the same sites, but from the women’s side. There is no classical reference, as far as I know, that would put Ariadne on the road with Dionysos, but it seems, nevertheless, to be psychologically right and evocative to attempt it. There are interesting questions which arise for performance management, for instance:

How to present the parallel travels and whether each is exclusively men’s and women’s business and/or where they would meet. A performance solution must take into account the psychological value of the travels since the travel experience is the container for and metaphor of the recovery process. From that point of view there are different issues in male and female psychology, in male and female rites of passage and in the nature of a Dionysian recovery process which would suggest that the male and female therapeutic travels do require separate domains with opportunities for overlap, cross gender exchange and tracing the labyrinth of masculine and feminine experience and intrapsychic relationship. Jung’s work on alchemy and the delicacies of Tantra as transmitted through the Shiva/Parvarti Kali traditions (Alain Danielou) has helped us.
It may be that the brushstroke outline of the travels of Ariadne and the Seven Sisters will be totally revised when woman writers take it up, meanwhile her profile is held. Suffice it to say that an Ariadne imagery and character is emerging which is supported by the character of the Pleides and Hyades. Two constellations of women whose lives and griefs intertwine with those of Dionysos and Ariadne. The female companions of these two include the Maenads, The Amazons and the female side of the satyr bands, there is plenty of dramatic and poetic potential to be found in the character and skills of this women’s gypsy circus band, as we have already discovered in Alice Springs with the contributions from some members of the Women’s Circus, and a few significant travellers who brought a wildly disciplined anarchic passion to the Intjarnama performance.

The Mysteries

The Mysteries seem to be the joint responsibility of Ariadne and of Dionysos, derived from Demeter, Knossos and perhaps the lineage of Isis, Iris, Innana and their sisters in the Law. Strictly speaking there are two sets of mysteries referred to in this script.

The nine nights of the mysteries of love alluded to in Ariadne at Naxos, which provides an opportunity for explorations into the varieties of relationship which occur within the domain of Dionysos and intoxication.

The other set of Mysteries, which come later, after the travels, relate to the mysteries of remembering, of recovery of spirit, of resurrection which are prefigured in the travels and developed in personal detail within the section on the Mysteries of Life and Death.

To my mind the Mysteries of Life and Death arise out of the experiences of the Travels and the accumulated personal experience of women and of men which requires a separate commentary and a more extensively developed scenario than the allusion to the nine nights of mystery given below, or the hints of therapeutic mystery contained in the meetings of the travels. I consider that the Mysteries are the inner and personal part of the therapeutic process begun in the Travels. The travels lay out the psychological sites and states of mind (The Primal States) which are potentially common to all travellers and unravellers.

The mysteries provide the place for revealing and illuminating personal and confidential experiences, which are not necessarily for performance or public portrayal, but maybe useful in workshops or the process of developing a performance.

The references to Hermes/ Quicksilver are significant in terms of the mysteries.

This relates to the burning of Semele and Quicksilver’s part in rescuing the baby, Sugarman. It shows Quicksilver’s work in sending messages, being able to go anywhere and being able to go to the place of the spirits and come back. He is the guide of souls who travels to these dark or
dangerous places, finds the spirit and brings it back. We are reminded of the work of the aborigina community Night Patrols in Central Australia and the traditional healers.

Semele's burning and Semele's recovery holds a story for Petrol, which is reflected in Elva Cook's Fire painting.
SUGARMAN
Appendices.

The following items are included as background reference material, with thanks and acknowledgment to the authors and publishers.

1. Map showing typical religious/cultural links and routes of classical Greece and Roman period, as simple but useful reference for Dionysos travels. Such routes relate to probable (wine) trade routes.


4. Sample translation into one Central Australian Aboriginal language, Western Arrernte, by Lillie and David Roenfeldt, Hermannsburg. 1998. With thanks to the Institute for Aboriginal Development Language and Culture Centre and ISLIP grant. See Story One, Scene 2 and 3.

5. Illustration of and extract from the great painting by Tim Leura Jaladjjarri, assisted by Clifford Possum. This is the Napperby Death Spirit dreaming story referred to in the final scene of Sugarman, with Crow.
Reproduced from 'Dreamings' edited by Peter Sutton, Viking Press, Penguin Books 1988, but also featured in 'Mythscapes' an art catalogue with an excellent essay on Leura by Jeanes Bardon. Johnny Jaladjjarri Possum, brother of Clifford Possum has participated in Sugarman events, especially the Four Winds festival 1998 at Intjartnana, performing and teaching young people through the Janganpa group's cultural work.

6. Extract from Martin Cruz Smith's novel set in Native American pueblo country. It addresses some issues similar to the Central Australian situation. Crow was reading this while watching the Clint Eastwood movie, 'The Unforgiven'. Note also the extract from Leslie Marmon Silko's excellent novel on related themes, 'Ceremony'; Penguin Books, New York. 1977.

7. Two reviews of the 1996 and 1997 performances from the Alice News.

For further information, references and commentaries see;
Sugarman performance video and Sugarman Documentary video by David Roberts, Steve Ramsay and Antipodes Productions.
The Sugarman Papers. by Craig San Roque. Intjartnana/ Sugarman publication.

contact Craig San Roque... email roq@ozemail.com.au. Or The Cook family, Intjartnana Outstation through PMB133... via Alice Springs NT.0872 Northern Territory. Australia.
1. Map showing typical religious/cultural links and routes of classical Greece and Roman period, as simple but useful reference for Dionysos travels. Such routes relate to probable (wine) trade routes.

Dionysus. A Greek god of wine, and of vegetation in general. Dionysus was also known to the Greeks as Bacchus (Bakchos). This name was also used by the Romans, but they often identified Dionysus with their own god Father Liber and called him by this name as well.

A. There are many versions of Dionysus’ birth. According to the Orphic account, known only from late Classical writers, Zeus lay with Persephone in the form of a snake. The result of this union was the child Zagreus, who was often identified with Dionysus. Zeus’s jealous wife, Hera, persuaded the Titans to tear the child to bits and eat him. Athena saved his heart, however, and brought it to Zeus, who swallowed it. He then fathered the child a second time by seducing Semele, a daughter of Cadmus, king of Thebes. In a variation of this story, Zeus fed the pieces of Dionysus’ heart to Semele in a drink and she conceived. The god’s second birth at Thebes (which in this tale accounts for his common epithet “Twice-born”) corresponds fairly closely to the more usual version of the myth.

The generally accepted account begins with Zeus’s seduction of Semele. (Many places other than Thebes claim credit for Dionysus’ birth, among them Dracanum, Nazo, Icarus, and Mount Nyssa.) When Hera discovered that Semele was pregnant by Zeus, she disguised herself as the girl’s old nurse, Beroë. Without much difficulty she persuaded Semele to insist that her divine lover appear to her in his full majesty, as he did to his wife. The rash girl made Zeus promise to grant whatever boon she asked, then demanded what Hera had suggested. Unable to dissuade Semele, Zeus reluctantly agreed and visited her as a thunderbolt, or else in a chariot amid thunder and lightning. Semele was blasted or died of fright. Zeus snatched the unborn child from her womb and the flames of the burning chamber and sewed it into his own thigh. In due course he opened the stitches and removed the infant, thus providing another reason to call Dionysus the twice-born god. Hermes took the baby to Ino, Semele’s sister (or to certain nymphs on Mount Nyssa, or to Macris in Euboea).
and the power of the Holy Spirit. This was the beginning of the early church, which spread throughout the world. The first followers of Jesus, the apostles, proclaimed his teachings and established the foundations of the Christian faith. The spread of Christianity was rapid and far-reaching, with missionaries taking the message to distant lands. The early church faced numerous challenges, including persecution and doctrinal disputes, but it remained committed to the teachings of Jesus.

The rise of Christianity had a profound impact on Western civilization. It provided a moral framework and a sense of purpose, and it helped to shape the cultural, intellectual, and political landscape of the Western world. The belief in an afterlife and the promise of salvation through faith in Jesus also provided a source of comfort and hope for ordinary people, who were often excluded from the privileges of the ruling class.

Despite its many achievements, the early church also faced criticism and controversy. Some criticized its growing wealth and influence, while others questioned its orthodoxy and teachings. In the course of time, the church developed a complex hierarchy and established a set of doctrines and practices that would shape its identity for centuries to come. Nevertheless, the message of Jesus continued to inspire millions, and the story of his life and teachings remains a central focus of faith and devotion to this day.
Dionysus

In the midst of the confusion, I found myself standing in front of the mirror, trying to make sense of the chaos. The room was filled with the sound of music, the clanging of glass, and the scent of wine. I could feel the heat of the sun on my skin, and the sweat of my brow was gathering in my hair. I looked into the mirror, and for a moment, I saw a reflection of myself, a man in his prime, a god of many names and many faces. But then the image faded, and all I saw was a blank, empty space. I felt a sense of fear, a feeling that I was losing control, that I was falling apart. I reached out to touch the mirror, but my hand passed through it, leaving only a faint outline of my fingers in the air. I closed my eyes, and for a moment, I could feel the weight of the world on my shoulders, the weight of my own doubts and uncertainties. But then I opened my eyes, and the world was still there, beautiful and vibrant, waiting for me to step forward and make my mark. I took a deep breath, and I stepped into the room, ready to face whatever was to come.
The House of Cadmus
A GROG STORY - DRUNK ON THE ROAD - Barry Cook

My wife and I went from Hermannsburg to Papunya to visit her brother. I love Papunya. It is a rough place out in the middle of nowhere, not many white people like it, but to this very day I get homesick to go back there. I don't think it is the ramshackle buildings or the layout of the place. Its the people that I miss and the country around Papunya. My wife lived there for six years and the friendships we made there last a life time.

When we arrive at Papunya it was around dinner time and my wife's brother was boiling the billy for a cup of tea. Elva's brother is a big man, "incredibly" strong and can stand pain like no one I know. We sat with him and had lunch and after he asked me to have a look at his car. He had bought the car through a loan company, a ford falcon, a nice care but the engine was very smoky and did not have much power. He asked me if I would leave my car with him and take his back to Hermannsburg and see what was wrong with it. I told him it had a very good radio in it, it was much better than the one in my car. He went around to the boot of the car and came back with a screw driver and said swap it over. Give me yours and you take mine. That's the way these people are. We spent a pleasant afternoon with him and decided to stay the night and go in the morning. That would give us all a day to get back to Hermannsburg in case we had any trouble with the car.

The next morning we got ready to go home. I though we could go the long way home on the main road and if we broke down we could get help, but if we went the short way and broke down we may not see anyone for a couple of days. Everything went well until we were about twenty seven kilometers out of Hermannsburg, and then both the U bolts came off the diff, the car skidded to a halt. Lucky it stopped on the left hand side of the road (we drive on the left hand side of the road over here) so the car was in no danger of being hit by another car. After I had a look I could see it was going to be a big job to fix it without the proper tools. Elva and I sat in the shade of a bush and talked about what we should do. I told Elva I should stay with the car in case anyone stripped parts from the car and she should take the kids and go on home. In a about an hour, the store truck came along. Elva and the kids got a lift in the truck and I stayed with the car. I began collecting some fire wood for the night. It was winter time and the temperature got to twelve below zero at night. I was working away getting some nice big logs that would burn all night long when a car from Hermannsburg pulled up. They had four cardboard boxes of food and some blankets that Elva had sent out. They were going to town and asked me for a couple of tins of meat and some bread to eat on the way to town. They would bring me back a flagon of red wine and some beer. This was the start of a road stop that lasted for a month.

By late afternoon no less than ten cars had pulled up asking for food and the ones sitting on the back of utes also wanted blankets. They would give me the blankets on the way back and also bring me some grog. By the time it was dark I had very little food left and no blankets at all. I was sitting by the fire having a cup of tea when the first car pulled up. They were a little bit drunk but good humoured and they bought me a flagon of wine, a half dozen beers, two tins of corned beef and a cooked chicken.

Not long after they left another car pulled up with more stuff for me. Beer, wine, food, smokes and so on. This went on until two in the morning. When I got up in the morning I could not believe the amount of food and grog I had collected. There were eight flagons of red wine, three cartons of beer and more food than I could eat in a year. I could live here for the rest of my life I though and just swap things during the day. I asked some people that pulled up in a car to get Elva to send me out a water bag so I could hang it on a tree and have cool water to drink. She sent me a large one out that held about four gallons. When I filled this up I put as much beer as would fit, this made the beer nice and cool to drink and between the beer and wine I did not do much work on the car. A week went by and I was no closer to getting the car fixed. Each afternoon people were still pulling up and borrowing things and bringing food and grog.

It was getting towards the end of the second week when I saw a taxi coming from town and an old friend was in it. He was very drunk but he was also very concerned about me being out there on my own. "What if some spirits come and take you away" he said. "We might never see you again. Let me give you something". He told the taxi driver to open the boot of the car. When I walked around to the boot of the car I saw six cartons of wine were in there. Then my friend told the taxi driver to take the cartons out and put them on the ground. The taxi driver was clearly in a hurry to get back to town. Now my friend said to the driver "take them all out of the cartons and line them up on the ground". The driver was becoming cranky by this time. He was muttering to himself but my friend was determined to have his way. When the driver had all twenty four flagons lined up behind the car my friend said "now have a look and pick out the flagon you like". At this point the taxi driver let out a stream of swear words and said "they are all the bloody same, the same bloody brand, the same port wine". "I know they're all the same" my friend said "but he has to pick out the one he likes, that is Aboriginal law". "I'll give you Aboriginal law" the driver said. "I'll strangle you", and he began putting the bottles back in the cartons banging the bottles together loudly. "I'm surprised you did not want me to get a rag and wipe all the bottles" the driver said. When they drove off the driver was still going mad but my friend was calm and happy knowing he had done the right thing by his friend and the law of the dreamtime. For my part, I was still standing on the other side of the road holding the bottle of wine, still not quite sure what had happened.

I would like to tell you here why my friend had so much alcohol in the taxi. When a taxi brought someone from town, they also brought as many flagons as they could fit in the car. That way they not only got a fare all the way from town, but the driver got all the profit from the alcohol they sold. Say a flagon cost seven dollars, when it was brought to Hermannsburg it was sold to the Aboriginal people for fifty dollars for a flagon. The Aboriginal people who drank were quick to realise that this was a way to make money. They quickly did the taxi's out of business and became grog runners themselves selling alcohol to their own people. One chap sold wine for five dollars a tea cup full for people with hangovers. I have seen them lined up at his door twenty deep and when they have a drink they go to the end of the line and come up again until the money was all spent.
It was getting towards the end of the third week. I was thinking of making a shack and opening up a supermarket so much stuff did I have. I had to hide a lot of it in the bush, alcohol, smokes, food, blankets. Somehow I now had twelve blankets. I could not fit anymore stuff in the car but my wife's threats were getting more and more war like so I thought I had better get sober and fix the car. I would start tomorrow.

I was up early the next day before the sun came up and was having a cup of tea when a car pulled up with my oldest friend and drinking partner. He told me Elva had sent him out to rescue me. My wife must have been having a relapse of some sort because when Gilbert Forbes and I got together anything could happen. I have know Gilbert for thirty three years and there has never been a bad word spoken between us. I cannot remember much about the next two days but I can remember the third day when both our wives turned up armed with fighting sticks. Gilbert and I were accused of everything from the decline of the Australian dollar through to bigamy. The car was hard to fix with Gilbert having to go to Hermannsburg several times to get tools and other things, however, on Friday afternoon at four o'clock we got back to Hermannsburg with the car and so ended a one month break down on the side of the road.
SCENE 2  SUGAR BOY IS BORN
The birth of Dionysos

two women are sitting on the ground
two women are sitting on the ground
the seed woman
is sitting on the ground
she’s heavy with fruit

the mother is sitting on the ground
her baby is coming
her baby is sweet and juicy
her baby is coming
she calls him sweet one (parma, wama, ngwerle)

the baby is born

something is happening
what’s that coming
what kind of baby is this

a snake head is coming
a snake head is coming

what’s that coming
a bull head is coming
a bull head is coming

what’s that coming
a goat head is coming
a goat head is coming

different animals wriggling together
what kind of baby is that

the people all shout
what is that coming
no go

what is that coming
yes come

the eagle comes
she stops she stands
she speaks like fire
she speaks like hot wind from the west
this boy will make you mad
this boy will make you sorry
this boy will make you all forget
don’t keep this boy
this boy will kill you

the people say
the boy is sweet
the boy is sugar
this sugar boy is good
we’ll keep him
the mother stands and holds him in the smoke.

SCENE 2  WURRA NKWAARLA-KA
ALKNGERINTJA

Arrkutja tharra narlaanama.
Arrkutja arrpunha, Marna Anga-nha,
era nama inpura, anga-karta.

Arrkutja mia narlaanama:
katjia-ka alkngerintja arlta ekura kala
etinya pitjima.
Era erinha ilama, ‘Nkwaarla, Kumia’.

Mia era ilkaarta wulhama.

“Nthaakin-h-errama?!
Iwunha laanha pitjima?!!”

“Leltja arna-rinya-ka kapurta pitjima!”

“Iwunha kapurta arrpunha?”

“Tununha kngeirritja-ka kapurta pitjima!”

“Yakai, arrpunha laanha iwunha?!”

“Tununha kurka arrpunha!”

“Yakai! Arrpunh-inthurra-ngai!
Nthurppama n翰ha katjia ku’ka?!?”

Rilha arrpunha ntjaarra-la ilama:
“Iwunha laanha?!
Itja-nga, lha!”

Rilha arrpunha ntjaarra-la ilama:
“Iwunha laanha?!
Awa, pitja!”

Errritja-nha pitjima; era itmaama.
Nkatja ekura wurinpya thukaarra-ngerra
nama: “Arai, wurra n翰ha-nha
itja etatha tryinjitiika:
era rankarra-nha rirt-iltijina,
ltarrra mparritjina,
rankarra itja rraatja etlarijina.
Erihna itja tryinjitiika:
era rankarra-nha errilknga tutjina!”

Kanha rilha arrpunha ntjaarra-la ilama,
“Wurra n翰ha marra inthurra!
Wurra N翰aarrla-nha!
Nurra ekura antja nama:
erinha tryinjitiika!”

Mia ekura-nha-la itnaama-la
erinha ura kwaarta-lela irrku

4. Sample translation into one Central Australian Aboriginal language, Western Arrernte,
by Lillie and David Roenfeldt, Hermannsberg, 1998. with thanks to the Institute for
Aboriginal Development Language and Culture Centre, and ISLIP grant. See Story One.
SCENE 3 THE RIP UP
the crows dismember the infant dionysos.

the eagle is sitting in the tree
she is whispering
six crows are in the sky
the crows are flying in
the crows are listening

she whispers her story
to the six crows
six brothers
six nice uncles

six crows nod their heads
six rows fly out
six crows are hanging in the sky

the eagle woman
is turning in the sky
her eye is bright
her eye is sharp

the crows are waiting
the crows are watching
a woman sitting on the ground

she looks at the sugar baby
she looks round
she's thinking about hunting goanna

her sister says
lets go hunting
what about the baby?
the nice uncles say
we'll look after the baby

the women go for goanna
and then they come home
everyone is happy

next day same thing
the women go out and then come home.
everyone is happy

the crow uncles gave him present
sugarboy plays with the present
a shiny tin just like a mirror
he can see his face inside
he looks at his face

he smiles
the sugar baby laughs

SCENE 3 Urlpilintja
Ngapa ntjaarra-la Wurra Ku’ka Nkwaarla-nha
ltjpa-tltjpa karrama

Ngapa urrputja alkira-nga pitjima.
Érrtja irna-la narlaanama.
Era Ngapa urrputj-urna rritjintja-la
yla llama.

Ngapa urrputja kapurta ngalhama.
Kurunga etna alkira-ka erralalhama.
Alkira kartninya-la etna kaaralhama.

Arrkutja Érrtja-nha turta alkira-la:
era kartninya-nga rraatja inturra
inkarraka arama.

Ngapa urrputja-la kaaralhama-la arama.

Arrkutja arrpunha nhanga,
Nkwaarla-ka mia,
era arna-la narlaanama.
Era wurra ku’ka Nkwaarla-nha arama,
inhaurna turta arama;
era etlarama kara ramla-ka lhijitjika.

Tjia ekura-nha-la erinha ntankama:
"Mpal Karra-ka lhijitjika!"
Mia-la llama,
"Wurra ku’ka nhanha-lua?"
Tjina arrpunha ntjaarra-la llama,
"Kala-marra,
nurna erinha ntarntaritjina."

Arrkutja era-tharra lhama,
kurunga anma-ntama era-tharra
pmar-urna pitj-alpuma.
Inkarraka kankintja.

Arlta arrpunha-la,
era-tharra lhama-ntema,
kurunga pitj-alpuma.
Inkarraka kankintja.

Tjina ekura-nha ntjaarra-la erinha
yultha nthama,
kurunga era arrkan-errama,
yultha nhanha-karta.
Wurra Nkwaarla era aangerra ekura
aralhama.

Era kankintja tharrama.
the sister says
lets go hunting
we’ll go a long way
the uncles say
we’ll look after the baby
crows are hanging in the sky
the uncles watch the sugar baby
they smile
they whisper
they cover themselves in white clay
they cover their beaks
they cover their heads
they cover their black featherskin
six crow uncles are gone
no one can see them
they make no tracks
look inside the sugarbaby’s eye
what does he see
he sees six white men with feather feet
they play with him
they grab him
he cries like a baby
they grab him
he fights like a bull
they grab him
he runs like a billy goat
they grab him
he bites like a snake
they grab him
the six crow men
like white spirit men
no tracks on the ground
they don’t look like nice uncles now
they rip the baby
they rip him up
they carry bits away ... rip
his little hands go that way ... rip
his little feet go that way ... rip
his sweet head goes that way
his guts go
his heart goes that way
his blood drips all over the country
what happened to his spirit
where did his spirit go
the crows fly off
there is nothing left
the sugar boy is gone
the crows fly off
where did his spirit go?
the sugar boy is gone
he sugar boy is gone
Arrutja arrpunha-la ntankama,
"Mpa, kara-ka wutha lhitjika!
Ilirna ilanga lhitjika!"
Tjina urrupija-la llama,
"Kala, nurna erinha ntamtaritjina!"
Etna ekura-lela narlaanama.
Etna tharrama-la rritj-errama.
Etna ama urrkinga tjurikara-la mpar
etna-ka purmalhama: alha, kapurta
ilpalha, inkarraka purmalham
Tjina urrupija etna itja wutha urrup
Rilha-la etna-nga yaarna arama;
titja etna-ka tu
Etna Wurra Nkwaarla-nga etini-err
Era paka etna-nga arama?
Awa, era artwa etna-nga
arrpunha-intharra-ntama arama:
inka etna-ka-nga-ka ilpalha puna
arrarnalhaka-l
Etna ekura-lela arrkan-errama;
erinha errkuma.
Era itnima.
Etna erinha ekarita-la errkumal-
Era arrtan-
Etna erinh
Era leitja arna-rinya-
Etna erinha wutha errk
Tjina urrupija etna ltaama-ngerra
nama: etna-ka impatja yaarna ara
Etna Wurra Nkwaarla-nga urrplam;
Nkwarri-ttllama:
arrpunha-la itja ekura inama-la iw
arrpunha-la inka ekura inama-la
arrpunha-la kapurta inama-la iw
arrpunha-la tntara, tukurta turta,
inama-la iw
alhua inkarraka ekura arna-la inta
Artwa tjina etna erinha impurlalha
Wurra Nkwaarla-ka enka nthau-u,
hlama?
Wurra Nkwaarla-nga itja wutha nk
5. Illustration of and extract from the great painting by Tim Leura Japaljarri, assisted by Clifford Possum. This is the Napperby Death Spirit dreaming story referred to in the final scene of Sugarman, with Crow. Reproduced from 'Dreamings' edited by Peter Sutton, Viking Press, Penguin Books 1988, but also featured in 'Mythscapes' an art catalogue with an excellent essay on Leura by Bardon. Johnny Japaljarri Possum, brother of Clifford Possum has participated in Sugarman events, especially the Four Winds Festival 1998 at Intjarntama, performing and teaching young people through the Janganpa group's cultural work.
Finding ashes of a burnt out mother

Review by KIERAN FINNANE

The teaching and healing propostions of the Sugarman project crystallised in the riveting final performance of this ambitious mini-festival of arts and ideas, held at Araluen over four weeks ending September 14.

The project, involving visual arts, music, theatre, workshops, talks, discussions and readings, centred on an inventive retelling of one of Western civilisation's greatest foundation stories, the myth of Dionysus.

The final episode reiterated the fundamental importance of people being able to tell their stories, those stories being listened to and their meaning recognised.

The Dionysus story is vast in its scope and extraordinary in its detail. People who saw the preceding week's performance, which focussed on Dionysus' years of travels, his descent into alcoholic excess and madness, had a taste of this.

The final performance returned to the beginning. Dramatically, this last scene embraced what were probably the strongest and weakest moments of the staging. The convulsing Sugarbaby, lying on the ground in foetal position, conveyed distressingly well the accumulated trauma expressed in the three dreams.

However, Semele's fate, which seems to me an extraordinary, single-image comment on the consequences of addiction, was under-realised. The intoxicating power of this case, eroticism was treated with, for me, surprising reserve. It also appeared that the painting of this same moment had similarly missed its mark.

(On this point San Roque has commented that the sensitivities of a mixed audience, and in particular of Aboriginal people, had to be taken into account, particularly in the representation of sexuality, childbirth and the spirit world. Rightly so, of course, but therein lies a further challenge to dramatise leaving him...

"This is the most terrible thing a child can find, the ashes of a burnt out mother."

Sugarman collects Semele's ashes and rubs them into his skin, and, in the stuff that myths are made of, rises again on the third day, with his mother in his arms.

He takes her back to the council of the gods, restores her to a place in his family, ceded by the old Hestia.

For the first time in his life he is happy: "He only wanted [his family] to hear his story."

After this Sugarman changed, he had found his job: "He began to tell stories, in the stars he made shapes, in the ears of men he made music, in the limbs of women he made dancing.

"He made all the wild ceremonies of the world and everyone was happy ... listening and dancing." So, out of the depths of 'yog trouble', it is possible, through the work of heart and head - love and understanding - to come to keep on creating our traditions and to remake our world."

It may be popularly assumed that this attitude distinguishes 'the West' from more strictly preserved indigenous cultures, including those of Aboriginal Australia but there appears to be plenty of evidence of interactive cultural dynamism among Aboriginal peoples.

An exhibition called Perpetual Motion visiting Araluen in October last year focussed, via artifacts and art works, on Aboriginal creative re-Ewald on saxophone. At previous performances, Dave Albrecht played drums and Dig Jamin, guitar.


Mabo - Life of an Island Man

The major documentary film on the life of Eddie Mabo will be presented by the Alice Springs Reconciliation Working Group at Araluen on Sunday, 28 September 1997, at 7pm. There will be a short presentation on the issues of land rights, native title and the Wik decision prior to the showing of the film.

This film, voted Best Documentary at the Sydney Film Festival 1997, is supported by the Alice Springs Town Council, Tantentyre Council, Chubb Security and the Alice Springs News.
Dionysis has returned from his travels. In true therapeutic fashion but also - thanks to the artistry of the Sugarman troupe - with great poignancy and poetry, he confronts his family with the story of his beginnings, in the form of three dreams.

The first dream speaks of the violence at the heart of this family in which three generations of fathers have died at the hands of their sons.

Even before there were sons, there was the first mother, Rhea, who made the rivers and the hills, the bees and the snakes. Rhea is killed by her husband, the angry Uranus, god of volcanoes and fire.

Uranus is killed by his son Kronos/Crow who in turn dies when his son Zeus/Thundering smashes his head with a rock.

The second dream tells of the Sugarbabe's dismemberment by the Crows but he will be born again, in the third dream, in the conflagration of his second mother's womb.

She is Semele, the illicit human lover of Zeus, who asks the god to reveal to her too much of his power and love: she is destroyed in the act of copulation.

The drama of the first half of the performance moved on from this point in necessarily summarised form: Sugarman gets no rest from his memories and for the first time drinks wine. It helps him forget but it also brings him enormous trouble.

This is the period of his travels and also of the development of his relationship with Ariadne. Learning to love, Dionysis also starts to learn to put the pieces of his life back together.

Before he can be whole a great task awaits him: he must descend into the underworld in search of the spirit of his mother, Semele.

San Roque's script of this section of the story uses some of the language and images of a road movie. This was taken up in both the Christopher Brookaw's stage direction and in the music: slide guitar as Sugarman left behind his broken down truck and radio, mournful saxophone as he walked into the Valley of the Lost Mothers, percussive cacophony as the gap where the spirits go in and out opens up actually the bonet of a rusty Holden carcass.

"Gazing at his mother's rock he went in, began to cry, he began to weep, the Sugarman remembered his mother, the fire all around him... her spirit left her, her spirit to wholeness, and out of wholeness is possible to come to art, that distinctively human, outgoing energy that shapes our world.

San Roque began his work on the Sugarman project in response to questions from Aboriginal people about: "Grog is a European story... you made the grog and you sell it to Aboriginal people but you do not pass on the story that goes with the grog. It is powerful, to control it we have to know the Tjukurpa."

San Roque told the people he would find the story: "When I know it properly I'll come back and sit down with you and show you."

The implied process of cross-cultural fertilisation immediately raises the spectre of cultural appropriation. However, on the evidence, apart from a few obvious borrowings suggestive of the place and lifestyles of Central Australian, San Roque and the Sugarman troupe, although they have worked closely with some Aboriginal people during the evolution of the project, are nothing so much as rigorous excavators and reinterpreters of their own cultural heritage.

Western culture in the late twentieth century fully embraces a dynamic concept of tradition. In the work of San Roque: "Our traditions are there to lead us and feed us, but we also have the opportunity to respond to the presence of Europeans over the last 200 years."

More recently, R.G. (Dick) Kimber has published an essay on the dynamic history of Central Australian Aborigines. He cites, for instance, the incorporation of rabbits into two mythologies, and the creation of a "Pussycat Dreaming" site.[1] It will be interesting to observe whether, or in what ways, Aboriginal people find resonance in and make use of the Dionysis story.

Finally, to acknowledge some individual achievements in the performance of Sugarman: Peta Morris in the role of Ariadne was a true powerhouse of dramatic talent with a big singing voice; Jonathan Sinatra movingly expressed the childlike vulnerability of one side of Dionysis, while Malcolm Mitchell, during the preceding week's performance and on opening night, with a quite different persona - intense, dark and physical - gave an excellent interpretation of another side...

The list is not exhaustive but space dictates only mention now of the music, beautifully attuned to the script, expressing its huge range of emotions: Dian Booth on violin and percussion, James Harvey on tuba, trumpet and vocal sound effects, Mark Wohlen on guitar, Katrina Stowe on clarinet and percussion and Ben employed to do something they don't want to do. They end up doing it because they don't know how to say 'no'.

"When it doesn't suit them it reflects back on everybody, not just themselves but Aboriginal people in general."

"There needs to be more careful screening but the problem with commercial business is you have to know the right person, you need someone now."

Paul says restriction of alcohol sales has to go hand in hand with employment programs: "Both need to be worked on. As far as I'm concerned there's far too many outlets selling alcohol, I think it's too readily available."

"If not available at all, I have to resign myself to not getting it until tomorrow. This is crucial in attempting to relinquish the alcohol [habit]."

Although Paul would like to be more optimistic about Employ Alice Springs, he does remain pessimistic: "I believe education is the key to making the transition easier from Aboriginals in their community to their dealings with work ethic."

"We need courses that are appropriate and relevant to Aboriginal people and what they want to do.

"Then look at placing them in the work-force in areas that they feel comfortable in."

Price full $10, Concession $8. Tickets at Araluen Box Office, 8952 5022.

Everybody Welcome!
damage he's doing

Sugarmen and the
SUGARMAN

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Craig San Roque

Illustrations Sally Mumford
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The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

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