

A Day with the Pitjantjatjara:
An Australian Aborigine Tribe

Stories by:

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Daughter Nakamarra

Korynn Lacher

I woke up this morning with excitement filling my heart. Today is a big day. I hurry to the bushes and relieve myself. It's so different to see the red liquid released from my body. It makes me feel mature and excited, for I will be able to be a wife! Once I am a wife, my brother Coorain will most likely have his wife, because my husband will give his sister to Coorain.

Once I have finished in the bushes, I look around the camp. The sun is getting warmer and warmer, the dogs are yawning and stretching, and people are starting to walk around. I see my mother Maliki waking up. I see Coorain with the other young men. Yesterday he caught a kangaroo, and I could tell he was retelling the story to his friends. All of them tower over me



now. It's amazing how fast they grow.

I look to my left and see my husbands' clan getting up. They arrived last night, and it has been such an adventure. I have seen my husband, Minma, in passing. He makes my heart jump and my stomach turn upside down. I feel nervous around him, but I love to watch him. He moves with strength, but you can tell he is gentle and kind. I can't believe I am going to marry him!

I look back at my mother and see her go to the bushes. I remember that we must cook her girl-child, my baby sister, so I decide to go back and start the fire. Mother comes back and throws a pile of plants into the fire. We watch as the leaves are burnt down to ash, and Mother takes the ash and mixes it with water. She moves quickly and diligently, knowing exactly what to do. I watch closely because I know that soon I will be having children. I want to be a good mother just like Maliki.

Mother starts to walk away with the mixture, so I grab the girl-child and follow her out. I help Mother dig a hole in the ground. We make the hole deep enough for the girl-child to be set in and her neck and head will stick out. The baby cries and cries as Mother pours the slurry mix into the hole. We must keep pouring though, until she is almost all covered up. I watch as Mother rubs the slurry into the girl-child's skin. Rubbing it into the skin will turn the baby to the land and the Dreaming will know her now because of the plants Mother used and where we dug the hole. Soon, the girl-child starts to scream. Mother takes her and comforts her. It is time to go back.

I pick seeds as we walk back to camp. Mother points out that Coorain and Panaka, my father, are leaving camp with carving boards. Today must be the day for Coorain. Whenever we see boys walking with their carving boards, we know that they are becoming men soon. We are not allowed to know this, but we keep our knowledge of this a secret. I know he is ready!

We get back and Mother puts the baby to bed, she is tired from all of her crying. Mother and I eat a bit of kangaroo. I realize how hungry I am and tell Mother, so we decide to go get some food.

We grab our digging sticks, and Mother goes with the other women her age to gather

while I join my best friend, Manuba. As we are digging for tubers, we talk about my husbands' clan. Manuba is giddy with excitement for me. I am so glad she is, even though I won't see her as much once I am married. She knows this, but we will be friends forever. Soon she will have her first blood and marry her betrothed, and I will be just as excited for her.



As Manuba and I are talking, we hear a fight going on in one of the nearby camps. All of the women that are gathering stand up to see what is happening. The fight is between a man and his wife, and he is yelling very loudly. One of the women runs over to try to calm down the fight. The husband yells that the wife had been taken by another man, and he wants his wife back. As he says this, the wife screams that she does not want him anymore. His face scrunches up and he runs forward to attack her, but her family steps in front of her to protect her. He continues to try to beat her, but she makes it clear that she will not go. I see when he realizes that he has no choice but to leave her be, because she has made her choice.

What if Minma and I get in a fight like that? No, we won't. We can't. My mother has taught me to love my husband and children. You show your love by staying with them. When

you leave your husband, you leave your children with him. I will never do that to my babies.

Anyway, I love Minma. At least I think so, even though I haven't officially met him yet. And I think he loves me too.

Mother comes and finds me, telling me to come and prepare to live with Minma. This takes me by surprise. Already? My mother senses my nervousness and tells me that Minma is a good man, with another wife that will take care of me.

I stand up and look at Manuba, knowing that this is goodbye. I turn and go to gather my things. I must be strong and ready to be a wife now. It takes me a short time to grab everything, but soon I am ready. My mother must not go with me, Mother-in-Laws do not talk to their daughters' husbands. Mother gives me a hug and kiss, and I turn to walk to the other camp.

I arrive and am welcomed graciously by my husbands' family. His first wife grins at me, and I know that we will get along. I see him and he nods and smiles at me. I feel my face get hot, but I look back and feel comfort in his eyes. I think he knows I am nervous, but is kind and has me follow him to eat some meat and berries. I am shy, but it is okay. I feel respect for my husband, we will be great parents to my children.

The rest of the night is filled with celebration, but it is really a blur because my head is full of excitement. I hear the music and singing from both clans, but focus on my husband and his family. My future is just beginning.

Mother Maliki

Jennifer Mylan

As the sun rises in the east, the camp slowly wakes up. Dogs stretch and snuffle among each other as the people begin to move around in their beds. Maliki, one wife of Panaka, sits up and starts feeding her youngest girl-child. It has been several moons since she has had her child, but her husband has not yet taken to sleeping with her again. She can see him, with his other wife, Maliki's sister-wife. Maliki could feel angry over this, but she is the eldest wife, and must be supportive of the younger wife, because it wasn't long ago that she was brought to their camp.



As she is feeding, Maliki looks around at the rest of her family. There is Nakamarra, standing up and going into the bush to relieve herself. She has just started her first blood, so it is time to give her to her promised husband. This is good, because Coorain will need his wife soon. Once Nakamarra has been given, it is expected that her husband will give his sister to Coorain, as soon as she has had her first blood. Maliki tried to remember how old she would be now. She was still young, but it wouldn't be too long now before Maliki would have her first grandchild.

This made her very excited because she wanted to teach her children everything she knew about mothering.

Maliki can see Coorain at the edge of camp, with the other young men. She can remember the day that he decided he was too old to sleep with her. She smiled while thinking about all the times he had insisted that he was a man, and didn't have to do what she told him to. He was so young and naive, but she never disciplined him. She let all her children do what they wanted to, because they would eventually learn how to function in the family. They always did, just as Coorain is doing now. Yesterday, he offered her the kangaroo he had caught before giving it to the elders. He was learning well.

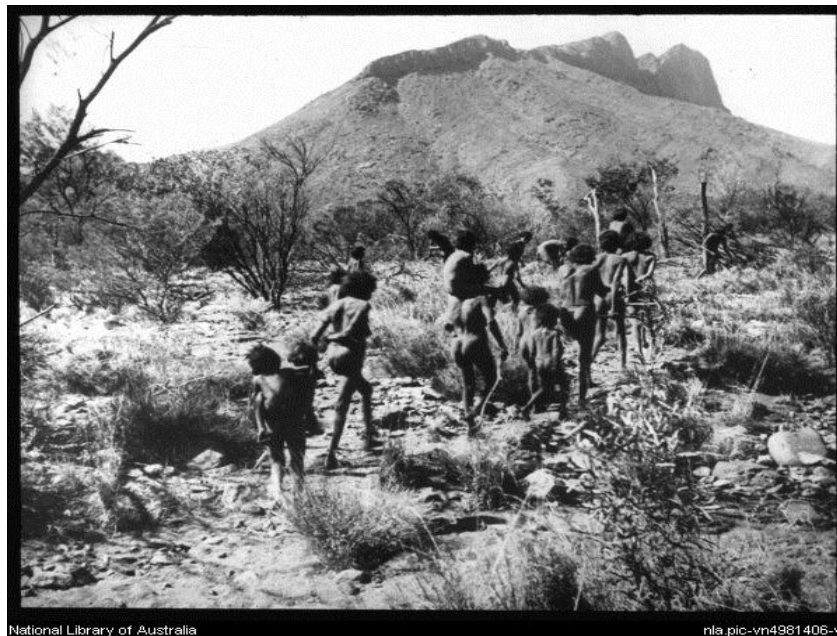
Today was a big day for everyone in camp. Nakamarra's husbands clan had joined them last night, so there was a lot of catching up to do. Maliki thought about everything she needed to do in preparation for that while she nibbled on some nuts they had collected yesterday. But first she must cook her girl-child, as it was getting to that time of year.

Maliki stood up with her baby, and went into the bush to relieve herself. By this time Nakamarra was back and had started the fire again. When Maliki gets there, she grabs the pile of plants she found yesterday and throws them in the fire. When these leaves are burnt to ash, she mixes them with water, making a slurry. Nakamarra stands back and watches her.. She is very observant, and will make a great mother.

When Maliki leaves the camp with her mixture of plant ash and water, Nakamarra follows her with the baby. Together they dig a hole in the ground, using sticks to pull the dirt out. After the hole is deep enough, they set the girl-child into the dirt up to her neck. Even as the baby gets upset at this uncomfortable feeling, Maliki pours the slurry mix into the hole with the baby,

until she is almost covered up. Smiling, she soothes her child as she rubs the slurry into the baby's skin. This will orient her child to the land and the Dreaming. The Dreaming will now know her baby by the smell of the plants used, and where she was placed in the soil. This is very good.

As the baby starts to bawl, Maliki pulls her out of the ground, and brings her in close. Nakamarra leads the way back to camp, grabbing some seeds as she goes. Carrying her child, Maliki sees Coorain and Panaka in the distance, leaving camp in the opposite direction. Panaka is carrying the carving boards, so this must be the day Coorain becomes a man. Maliki smiles to



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herself, because she is not supposed to notice these things, but it makes her very happy.

When the three of them get back to camp, everyone is up and about, talking amongst themselves. Maliki hears the other women mention some of the gossip that the other clan has brought back with them. She tries not to listen to it, thinking that it is all worthless information. She instead looks for the cooked kangaroo that Coorain brought her yesterday, and starts to chew

on that while she pokes the fire. Gently she sets her child in their bed, as the baby's eyes begin to droop. Maliki pats her on the back carefully, wiping her brow with her fingertips. Seeing the sun's shadows beginning to get smaller, she looks up to see what time it is. She must go get some food, for they don't have much in the camp.

Maliki grabs her digging stick, and joins the other women leaving the camp. They don't have to go very far before finding a good spot to dig for tubers. Maliki digs for a long time, eating some as she goes. Once she has an armful of tubers, she heads back to camp. On her way back, she sees a lizard running by. Dropping the tubers, she uses her stick to quickly club it on the head. After it is dead, she picks up the roots and the lizard, and goes back to camp. By the time she arrives, her child is awake and hungry again. Maliki sets down the food she has gathered, and sits with her baby while she feeds. Some of the other women join her, all combining their food together, some of them snacking as they talk. It is strange to be surrounded by all these women, for Maliki is used to a small group. However, she enjoys the company, and likes to share her stories with them. Nakamarra's mother-in-law is with them, and Maliki talks much to her about Nakamarra and her new husband. They decide that Nakamarra should move in with her new husband today.

As the women are talking, a commotion is heard in one of the other camps. Standing up, the women are able to see that one of the men is yelling at his wife. Maliki doesn't know either of them, so she will not involve herself, but one of the other women runs over to intervene. Apparently, the wife has been pulled away by another man, and so the husband is trying to get her back. She yells back at him that she will not go with him anymore. He attacks her with his boomerangs, but her family steps between them and protects her. After the husband tries again

and again to hit her, his family begins to tell him to leave her alone. She does not want to go with him anymore, so he should leave her be. Finally, the husband turns around and leaves her, because she has made her choice.

Maliki watches them with critical eyes. She would never leave her husband, not only because of the children, but also because she loved him. She looks down at her baby, who is again asleep, and wonders if that other woman had any children. When the wife leaves her husband, she must leave her children as well.

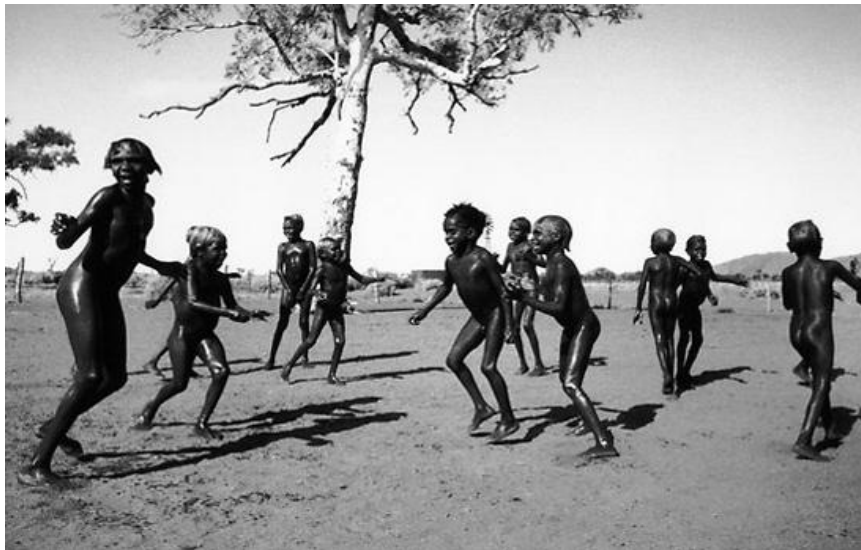
Thinking of this, she is reminded of Nakamarra and her new husband. She searches quickly, and spots Nakamarra sitting with other girls her age, chewing on some cooked tubers. Coming up to Nakamarra, Maliki tells her it is time to go live with her husband. They were betrothed while Maliki was still pregnant with Nakamarra. Panaka had helped circumcise Nakamarra's future husband, and it was customary for him to give one of his daughters to the boy, as an exchange for the circumcision. Nakamarra has known all of this for a long time, but Maliki thinks she is still not happy with going with a man she has never met.

Maliki assures her he is a good man, with another wife, who will take care of her. Her new husband's mother is a nice woman, who has many children, so she will be well cared for in all wifely matters. As Nakamarra goes, slowly trodding off, to gather her things, Maliki walks over to her daughter's husband's mother. She tells her that Nakamarra is ready, and now is the time to bring her over to her new husband. Maliki cannot go with Nakamarra because there is a strict taboo of speaking to or seeing her son-in-law. When Nakamarra has gathered everything she will need, Maliki gives her a hug, a kiss, and watches her as she walks to one of the other camps.

She will of course see her a lot, because they will camp together for a least another couple of days, until food becomes scarce. But, seeing her leave the camp is hard for Maliki. This is her first daughter, and now she is grown up and ready to have children. As these thoughts are going through her head, she spots Panaka and Coorain returning. Coorain is walking just a little bit taller, with a grin on his face. Maliki smiles at them and waves to bring them over.

As they approach, she tells Panaka that Nakamarra is now with her husband, and that they will soon have many children. Maliki can tell this pleases Panaka though he tries to be ambivalent about it. She thinks he is very proud of his children, just as she is.

After a very short talk, Coorain and Panaka grab some cooked tubers and seeds and head out again. They are carrying their spears and talking in whispers as they join some other men with spears, so Maliki thinks that they are going to a sacred site to increase the creation of more kangaroo. Again, she is not supposed to know this, because is is men's business.



Slowly rocking her baby, she walks back to her fire at the camp. It is getting quieter here, now, because all of the men have left, and the women are tending their children. Maliki sees

some boys and girls run off, playing with their sticks and yelling at each other. It looks like one of the boys is pretending to be a kangaroo, while the other children try and capture him. She looks down at her own small child, and sees that she is hungry again. As she feeds her baby, she calls over some of the other women that are walking by. They join her at the fire, eating food and talking about the dancing and singing they will do later that evening.

Once Maliki's baby has had her fill, she lays her down in the bed, for she has fallen asleep. Maliki is very tired too, so she lays down with her, and tells the other women that she will wake up when the men come back. Closing her eyes, she snuggles with her child as she thinks about how the Dreaming has blessed her with two children that grew up in one day.

Later, as the shadows begin to lengthen, Maliki wakes up to the sound of the men coming back. They are in a good mood, laughing and boasting about the kangaroos that will flood the land. The women began to add more wood to the fire, and offer food to the men as they sit around it. After filling his stomach, Panaka stands up and starts chanting and dancing around the fire. His motions imitate the wallaby, which is our totem animal. He is very graceful and strong, and soon more men start dancing and singing with him.

The dancing and singing continued late into the night, as it usually does when different clans get together. Maliki was happy to watch and chant, swaying with the time and smiling at the other wives. Life is good.

Father Panaka

Jefferson Ramsey

I am Panaka of the Pitjantjatjara. I have lived for many years as a child, a brother of the wallaby. In my life I have practiced many spiritual rituals, including board carving, and many sacred sub-incisions. Due to the long time that I have been alive, the many spiritual rites through which I have passed, and my cleverness, I have become an elder in my clan. I am known for being a peaceful, thoughtful man.



I have taken four wives, Najpini was my first, and she died during childbirth. My second, Maliki is now the eldest of my two wives, whom are both hardworking and loyal. Gagalyn, my third wife practiced many extramarital affairs, so many that her chores were being left undone so Maliki and Jupiyana were being forced to do her cleaning and cooking. Instead of beating her, as I am a peaceful man, I simply sent her to the home of the man whom she favored.

Now, I have three children and two wives. I am proud of them for being such upright members in our clan. This story, however, is only the story of one day. You may meet my children, and you may meet my wives. You will be witness to part of a carving board initiation ceremony for a young man who will be introduced later. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be

eaten. And, in the evening an increase ritual will be performed for the kangaroo.

I awake with the sunrise, some days I rise earlier than the sun, and on those days I call on one of my wives, but I never wake after the sun is raised. The first thing I come to in my day is the pee-place, morning pee is arguably one of the most important parts of the day for it sets a course of comfort for the rest of the day. Much like a drink I hear of, coffee, seems to do to the



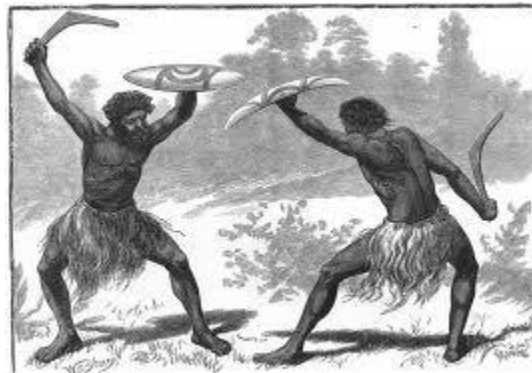
people who consume of it in the mornings.

When I return from my pee-place I find my breakfast which I normally share with Maliki. When I arrive back at our fire-circle, she often provides me with a very interesting collaboration of meat and berries. Today I bring lizard and acacia berries to share with her. It is like a game we have played ever since we were married, and she never fails to impress my tongue with her fresh bouquets of taste. Her food makes me glad she is my wife. She is not at our hut, though, so I leave part of the lizard next to the fire for her to find later.

Going into the hut to get my sacred board which I have carved for my eldest son; I see my youngest daughter, she still has no name because she is so young; however I have really taken a liking to her. She is sleeping, I hope for her good dreams and finish getting my board, and I also choose my favorite eagle bone septum ornament. Then I call Coorain, he presents me

with some berries and I leave those next to the ones that I collected for Maliki.

Coorain and I go to the ceremonial site together and meet the other men who will be there. The storehouse is quite good because the wind is not strong here. I present the sacred board that I carved with a serpents design to Coorain and help him to learn that board carving is very important as boards are a storage unit for life essence. He accepts what I say and we wait



for the group to go back to the village together.

On the way back to the village we hear a man yelling profanities. Interested, we speed up and find a couple having an argument. Apparently the woman has been having an extramarital affair. The husband is enraged and starts throwing things, of course the woman's family steps in, and, when the man finds that he can do nothing to stop the extramarital affairs, he denounces his wife and she leaves him for the other man. This happened to me once, but I didn't throw things. I am a real man.

Coorain and I go back to the camp where we find Maliki who has gathered some tubers for us. We eat them of course, she is my wife. I leave Coorain and move on to the hut where I find the food that I have left for Maliki untouched and the hut empty except for Jupi. She and I share the rest of the lizard and the berries which Coorain and I collected and then the bed. It is a

quick encounter, ending with satisfaction on both ends. By the time Jupi and I are finished, bowel relief is at the top of my priority list. "Hello bushes."

When I am finished feeding the earth I go back to the hut to gather my spear. And meet Coorain on the way to the jabiya. On the way there more men from the clan join our group and by the time we arrive at the kangaroo increase rite there are many of us. I lead the kill and the calling is led by another man. We do not finish the ritual until everyone in the group is satisfied that it will be effective and the kangaroo will be plentiful.



At the end of the increase right we are all happy because we have done our job as well as we could the best that we could and we go home to our wives and our friends. I find Maliki when I arrive home and bed her, and it is good. She is a good wife. She feeds me afterward and then I end the day with a dance. The clans are together so I start a large dance. Many people watch and many participate. It is a very strong chant also. Dancing with many people makes me happy. It is a good day.

Interpretation

In our story, we decided to do important parts of several different rituals and ceremonies, as opposed to focusing on just one. Because of this, we will not go into quite as much detail per ceremony, but we will still identify the important aspects of social science and humanities studies for each different ritual. The four rituals that we will be interpreting are: cooking the baby, marriage, carving board, and the increase rite.

Cooking the baby is a ritual conducted for young babies. It is a three part process, starting when they are only a couple weeks old until they are past their first year and are named. We choose to include the second portion of this ritual. These ceremonies are important to the aborigine cultures because it marks the beginning of their relationship with the land and the Dreaming. Not only are children born to their parents and clans, they are born into the landscape, and have spirits that watch over them. In order for those spirits to recognize the new child, he must be inserted into the ground. The mothers rub plant ashes on the child as well. The plants that they burn and mix with water are used to strengthen and keep healthy the fragile babies, as well as create a strong smell. This helps the spirits in the Dreaming to see and smell him, so that they know where to find him.

Of course, we can see many different reasons that this ceremony might be important to the aborigines. Not only does it provide a sense of identity to the child, it also gives him a place to call home. Psychologically, he will feel he belongs to the land and the land belongs to him because this bond was created. The mother also benefits from this. Continuing these ceremonies creates a sense of belonging in her, makes her feel as though she is continuing her circle of reproduction, doing what her mother and grandmothers have done for years. This creates a bond

between mothers, so that they feel closer together, and more capable of overcoming adversity.

Contrary to many other cultures, marriage is not a big ceremony for the aborigines. In fact most of the rites are completed before the woman is born, promising her to a newly made man. In our story, instead of focusing on that part, we decided to describe the point where the woman actually leaves her home clan and joins her husband's. For the aborigines, this is a very quiet affair; the woman leaving her home with what few belongings she has and joining her husband. This symbolizes the lack of importance with marriage. Marriage is very flexible, women capable of leaving their husbands whenever they are unhappy, and men doing the same. Aborigines don't see it as a permanent thing, so they don't stress it as much as western cultures. For the wife, leaving her own home is a sign that she is now a woman able to bear children and provide for her family. It is a quiet rite of passage that she goes through and creates huge changes in her own self image.

Looking at this from an etic point of view, families giving up their children to leave and live with another clan is certainly very important to reinforce social ties. It creates a unity of different clans and helps them stick together because there are different family members in each band. The giving over of the woman to the man's clan is also used to give the woman a sense of worth. If she is used to create such an important thing as unity within the bands, she is shown that she is worth something. She is not exchanged for something small and meaningless, but something as large as peace and unity within her culture.

The carving board ceremony is just one piece to a large coming of age rite of passage. This is performed after the boy has undergone circumcision and sub-incision, and is prepared to accept his wife. Having the boys hunt food for a feast and cut the wood for the elders to carve is

important in their culture, because it reinforces the principle of taking care of your family and elders. It is important to share everything you have with your entire clan and anyone that is related to you. When the boys accept the finished carving boards from their elders it signifies the passing down of tradition and knowledge is to be cared for and respected. This also gives the elders a position where they are responsible for teaching these young men so that their principles will be considered.

These ceremonies do more than that, though, when we look at it from outside of the culture. Putting boys into age grades that are grouped together for these ceremonies insure that there will always be congruency between the clans and families. This prevents disagreements and unnecessary feuding. Having this ritual also provides a clear transition between boys and men, which solidifies their roles within society, not only for their families, but also for themselves. After this very important rite; they are able to see themselves as men, as earning this, and having the proper knowledge to carry out their roles. Their families recognize the significant ceremony that they have gone through and therefore know how to treat him thereafter.

The last rite we talked about was the increase rite. Aborigines go to sacred sites and perform special dances and chants to continue the creation of a particular animal—this one being the kangaroo. This is equivalent to other indigenous cultures' use of oral storytelling. In performing these rituals, the aborigines continue to do their part in perpetuating the world. Not only are they continuing to do meaningful traditional things that their fathers taught them, but they believe that if they stopped doing these things they would no longer have kangaroo. They believe that, by doing these special chants and dances, they are communicating with the spirits in the Dreaming and letting them know of their needs. This allows the spirits to respond and bring

more kangaroo.

When the aborigines do this, they feel very much in control of their surroundings. This allows them to feel a certain comfort in the homeland, and that they have sway over what happens around them. Doing this also brings groups together and helps mend ties between clans. It creates a sense of solidarity between people, and gives them a common purpose. As well as binding people together, the increase rite binds the people to the land. This is yet another reason that they are so land-bound. Aborigines depend much on their land, and it depends on them to perpetuate it, as well.

Analyzing these rituals, they seem very repetitive. But, they need to be repetitive because the principles that the aborigines believe in are very strong and need to be constantly reinforced. If they did not have all of these ceremonies to keep them together, and prompt them to share, and tie them to their land, then they would not have survived as long as they did. It's the very nature of these ceremonies that keeps them alive in such an arid, and dangerous landscape.

Reflections

Korynn Lacher

I start my story by saying I have started my menstrual cycle. This is important because this is how most indigenous communities determine womanhood. Since it demonstrates womanhood, it means I can get married. Australian Aboriginals betroth girls to men based upon the man's initiation ceremony. The Elder man who initiates the young man may betroth one of his daughters to him. In our story, my father circumcised my husband, Minma.

Another thing I mention is preparing a baby for the "Cooking the Baby" ritual. When first reading about this, I thought it was so strange. Dump a bunch of ash on a baby so the land will remember it? As I contemplated this ritual, I found the relation between this and the religion I was raised in. I was raised as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or more commonly called Mormon. When a baby is born, it is blessed by a man who carries the Priesthood. This blessing is to start the baby's life off in a righteous way and for the Lord to give it blessings. I see the similarities between the two rituals, and I also know that many other religions bless their babies. Blessing a baby to live a prosperous life is sacred and very important to many people.

We then decided to mention a fight between a man and his wife. I think this demonstrates how women have the ability to make a choice just as much as men do in the Australian Aborigine community. Many people have the opinion that men rule in all indigenous communities, but most of the time that is not true. Men and women just have different roles in society. The fight concludes with the woman leaving the man, which is showing that she has just as much of a choice as the man.

I end my day by going and living with Minma, my husband. It made me happy to have the tradition of a wedding ceremony, because the Australian Aborigines do not. They just go and live with their husbands when they are old enough, and that is it. As much as I know that a wedding ceremony is just a materialistic thing, I am a diva and want that!

Researching for this paper made me realize that the Australian Aboriginal community has similar morals and values as most people do; they just show it with different rituals.

Jennifer Mylan

Reading through these stories and rituals, I was reminded more than once about my own life, and the rites of passage that I have undergone. Particularly with the women and mothers of the clan; as I relate more to other mothers than I do with young women, even though I do fall into both categories.

Of course these rituals are very strange to me in their structural form, but I still find that I am attracted to the sense of unity and belonging that they create. It always seems like I have been responsible for myself, going through my own rites of passage as an individual and enduring the ups and downs alone. Yes, my family has been there for me—when it is convenient for them. I have always had some sort of support system to help me through hard times, but this is nothing compared to the sense of connectivity that the aborigines enjoy. Compared to them, we live in a very lonely world where everything we do is reflected back on the individual and does not support the whole.

Religiously, I am raised Presbyterian, but only stayed in the church for a couple years. I was out of it by the time I was 14 years old. Though I haven't participated in the church for many

years, I have always had a sense of a higher power. Whether that is the God of christianity, or the spirits of the Dreaming, I share the concept of the Native Americans: it all goes to the same center of the wheel. In this way, it was easy for me to relate to the aborigines about their ceremonies and rituals concerning the Dreamtime. If I had to compare it to something found in the church, it would be closest to prayer.

Addressing their principles of sharing, unity, equality, and respect, I am simply blown away by the simplicity of it all. It makes so much sense. Our own culture is self-centered, egotistical and arrogant compared to indigenous peoples'. I am almost embarrassed to share my culture with other people, because it is disgusting how much we don't regard anything but ourselves. We, as individuals, *say* that we respect nature, share with our families, feel united against others and promote equality between men and women, but in reality, these are all faint ideals that don't exist in everyday life.

I have been considered a fanatic by some, as protesting too much for something that seems meaningless to others. I refuse to litter, to treat nature with disrespect, to yield to other's opinions about global poverty and Americans rights to food over others. And I am ridiculed for that—which is absurd in itself. Even my father: today he posted on Facebook that he doesn't think that illegal immigrants should be allowed US citizenship. I completely disagree with this because everyone deserves equal rights to happiness, food, and a roof over their head.

My family treats me like I take things too seriously, but, if I was an aborigine, what I do would be considered normal. Even lazy by some of them. This difference in cultural perception is astounding. Americans and other “civilized” cultures need to step back and rewrite their code of ethics, take a cue from the indigenous people that have been around longer than anyone else.

Instead of bettering the world, we are slowly driving it to destruction. In this way, I feel that this project—this class—may create a huge impact on the way that the next generation will deal with problems in society, if they take the time to think about what they are learning and apply it to themselves with diligence and determination.

Jefferson Ramsey

In a day in the life of an indigenous community the men performed two rituals. One of them was very personal to those involved: the main character and his son. It affected nothing but their own world views and spiritual energies. The second was a very outward ritual, affecting many people by manipulating a food source helping the population either increase or falter depending on the amount of energy put into it.

There were two main male characters in the story, one the father of the younger. One has undergone all rituals and it is now his job to help perpetuate the world of rituals by teaching his son and performing as an elder. The son is fresh, only 24 or 25 and he is learning the ways of these rituals, and coming into his “man-duties.” Together their stories provide both ends of the male spectrum.

The first ceremony is a last of a series of ceremonies and teachings which allow the elders in the village to teach the youth how to make, and the significance of, the sacred/spirit boards. While the men who are versed in the creation of the boards teaches the younger different symbols which can be carved into the boards and their meanings they can also, through this series of ceremonies, teach the up and coming men the spiritual and ritual meanings of the spirit boards. Essentially, the spirit boards are a way for the aborigines to hold and perpetuate their

spiritual energy; much like the beings of the Dreamtime did with their boards which they carried with them in their journeys.

The second ceremony is an increase rite. In it the aboriginal men allow and provoke the perpetuation of a species by calling on the spirits of the animals at the animals sacred spiritual breeding grounds. The men imitate killing the animals and chant to them calling them forth into a healthy and flourishing season. "Be many, flourish, breed and be plentiful." When the animals are called upon they must not resist. However, if the ritual is not performed with enough energy then the results may be less than satisfying. The ritual is a perpetuation of what happened during the Dreaming, much like the story of coyote and his angry rock giving mountains different shapes and staining the lake Cour'd'alene blue every time it is re-told.

The aboriginal people live in a very spiritually based community. Spiritual rituals can perpetuate animal populations and not performing them properly can negatively affect those populations, both outcomes drastically changing the landscape. One dance can change the landscape. Likewise, a person can grow and develop their own personal spiritual powers with help from their spirit boards.

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Appendix

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