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Represented experience in Gun-nartpa storyworlds

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The Gun-nartpa people of northern Australia use represented experience to mark prominence at narrative highpoints. The term ‘represented experience’ refers to verbal expressions that form paratactic relations with surrounding discourse. It encompasses the speech of story actors, environmental sounds, and sound-symbolic renderings of events. Such representations impart moments of drama to narrative discourse, in which shifts in perspective position the deictic centre at an imagined interpersonal space within the storyworld of the narrative. It is here, where the storyteller and audience enter the subjectivity of story actors, that elements of the narrative most clearly express its underpinning cultural proposals. The Gun-nartpa construe the cultural proposals that make up the notional structures of narrative discourse in terms of relational knowledge, in which conceptualisations of ‘belonging’ are of primary value. This relational frame of reference provides context for the interpretation of the evaluative implicatures that arise at highpoints, and lends coherence to Gun-nartpa narrative discourse.

Keywords: Australian Aboriginal languages, narrative, evaluation, represented speech

Introduction

Stories about the ancestral past, historical events and aspects of traditional life are highly valued by the Gun-nartpa — an Aboriginal language group from north-central Arnhem Land, Australia. These stories are rich in meanings that express aspects of identity and morality important to Gun-nartpa people. As Polanyi writes, “stories are told to make a point, to transmit a message — often some sort

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of moral evaluation or implied critical judgement — about the world the teller shares with other people” (Polanyi, 1985, p. 12). Gun-nartpa storytellers use various rhetorical and deictic strategies to impart prominence to actors and events at narrative highpoints. From the viewpoint of an outsider however, the significance of prominent actors and events is often unexplained and the point of the story can be obscure (cf. Walsh, 2016). Narrative highpoints are marked events or episodes that correspond to climaxes in the notional structure of a story (Longacre, 1985), and cue evaluative implicatures that relate to the ‘point’ of their stories (Labov, 1972; Margetts, 2015; Polanyi, 1985).

Polanyi frames the notional structure of narratives in terms of cultural proposals — the self-evident truths that the teller shares with others. Cultural proposals have the form of propositions, and thus are logical reference points for evaluative implicatures that are generated through narrative (Polanyi, 1985). I contend that the Gun-nartpa construe the cultural proposals that make up the notional structures of narrative discourse in terms of relational knowledge, in which ‘belonging’ — conceptualisations of social connection and shared identity — is of primary value. Sets of related cultural proposals form a relational frame of reference. This frame of reference provides context for the interpretation of evaluative implicatures, and lends coherence to Gun-nartpa narrative discourse.

In this article, I examine several excerpts from Gun-nartpa narratives, demonstrating the importance of what I term ‘represented experience’ as a marker of prominence at narrative highpoints. ‘Represented experience’ encompasses represented speech and other represented forms of direct interaction, such as non-verbal sign, between story actors. Within the rubric of represented experience, I also include representations of significant sounds, such as bird calls, and mimetic renderings of events such as movement and impact. In this article, I focus on verbal expressions of represented experience that form paratactic relationships with surrounding discourse, particularly ‘represented speech’ and mimetic sound symbolism. Alongside such verbal forms, narrators also call upon a range of multi-modal resources to represent experience, including mimetic action represented by the movements of parts of the body and the engagement of ‘props’ (Green, 2014, 2016). Represented experiences impart moments of drama to narrative discourse, in which shifts in perspective place the deictic centre at an imagined interpersonal space within the storyworld of the narrative (Segal, 1995). It is here, where the storyteller and audience encounter the subjectivity of story actors, that elements of the narrative most clearly express its underpinning cultural proposals.

The next section of this article provides background information about Gun-nartpa people and their distinct social identity within the north-central Arnhem Land region. Throughout the article I draw attention to deictic resources in Gun-nartpa grammar that support the shifts in deictic centre accompanying represented

experience — an overview of the indexical features of Gun-nartpa grammar is provided in the subsequent section. I then describe the Gun-nartpa concept of *joborr* ‘interpersonal ethics’ and explain its significance to Gun-nartpa narrative discourse. The following section provides an overview of beliefs about ancestral beings and their atemporal reality. Then excerpts from two ancestral narratives are discussed, highlighting the function of represented experiences involving ancestral beings as assertions of rights to cultural property. Finally, two examples of historical narrative are discussed, showing how represented experience is a key strategy for evaluating the actions and lifeworlds of Gun-nartpa forebears and their experiences of historical events throughout a time of social upheaval.

Background

The Gun-nartpa people

Gun-nartpa is one of a set of dialects which has come to be referred to as Burarra (Glasgow, 1994). Burarra/Gun-nartpa, also called Gu-jingarliya, is a member of the Maningridan language group, along with Ndjébbana, Na-kara and Gurr-goni (Green, 2003). The traditional territory of the Gun-nartpa speaking clans lies on the inland rivers and freshwater swamps of the north-central Arnhem Land floodplain and as a people they largely distinguish themselves socially and linguistically from their neighbors from the coastal and estuarine country to their north, who speak other Burarra dialects. They regard themselves as inland ‘freshwater’ people with a distinct social identity and emphasise their social and ceremonial connections with other inland language groups to the west (Gurr-goni, Kuninjku), south (Kune, Rembarrnga, Dalabon) and east (Djinang/Wurlaki). The Gun-nartpa live in several outstation settlements, primarily Gochan Jiny-jirra, Ji-bena and Ji-balbal and in Maningrida township. While Gun-nartpa is the dominant language used in everyday interactions, the community has a multilingual profile, with most adults proficient in a number of languages of the region including local varieties of English (Carew, 2016).

The Gun-nartpa Stories project

Most of the narrative examples discussed in this article are drawn from a corpus of recordings made between 1993–1996 during fieldwork at Gochan Jiny-jirra, a homeland community to the east of Maningrida. This country is owned by the An-nguliny clan, and the resident community comprised members of this clan and others, reflecting customary social alliances and marriage arrangements. As

part of a repatriation, language documentation and publishing project called Gun-nartpa Stories (2010–2015) the current author and a team of Gun-nartpa people selected a number of stories for inclusion in a book called *Gun-ngaypa Rrawa* ‘My Country’ (England, Muchana, Walanggay & Carew, 2014). In this article I present excerpts from narratives recorded from †England Banggala, a senior owner of the An-nguliny clan. Banggala was a reknowned artist and produced many paintings during the period that the author lived at his homeland. Many of his narratives are exegeses of these artworks. This is the case with example (5) presented in this article, a story he told about *wangarra yerrcha* — the ‘ghost spirit ancestors’ of the An-nguliny clan. Other stories were collected as accounts of the travels of Ancestral beings, such as the story fragment in example (6). I have also drawn from stories told by †Harry Litchfield, a member of the opposite moiety clan Gurnimba and his wife †Jane Litchfield, also of the An-nguliny clan. Litchfield was a noted purveyor of stories about historical events and traditional lifestyle practices, and told many stories with support from Jane, such as the fragments in (7) and (8). Gun-nartpa men Crusoe Batara, Patrick Muchana and Raymond Walanggay worked with the author to transcribe, translate and unpack the multiple implicit references made by the storytellers in their narratives. An excerpt of one of Crusoe Batara’s own stories is also included in this article as example (4). No attempt has been made to maintain the anonymity of the storytellers in this article where examples are drawn from stories that have been presented in the public domain with permission from family members (Carew, 2016). However several examples are drawn from conversational narrative, and the identity of the storytellers is not provided in such instances.

Overview of Gun-nartpa kinship based social norms

As is typical for Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land, Gun-nartpa people are part of a society in which everyone knows everyone and is connected within a network of classificatory kinship. Gun-nartpa social norms prescribe the veneration of senior people and detailed genealogical knowledge of kinship connections with deceased family members is salient to current day social arrangements. All Gun-nartpa people, including young children, have comprehensive knowledge of where they fit in this network, along with the normative constraints on behaviour and reciprocity that pertain between kin relationships of different types. *Mirriri* ‘restraint, social avoidance’ and its social converse *mu-japurra* ‘joking behaviour’ between certain categories of kin are significant relational practices in this society (Garde, 2013; Hiatt, 1965).

These practices are reflected in both the lexical and deictic resources used in personal address and kin reference. The wide use of kinship terms reflects a

cultural orientation towards circumspection in the use of personal names to refer to people and kinship terms are used in a wide range of social settings. Garde writes of the deictic and pragmatic functions of the Bininj Kunwok kinship, in terms that apply equally to the Gun-nartpa:

... Aboriginal kinship systems are used to establish reference and address but also to create, maintain and manipulate social relationships. In an ideal sense, kin relationships also determine appropriate behavior according to socially established conventions (Garde, 2013, p. 25).

A perspective on kinship as oriented towards action and sensitive to agency has utility in the analysis of Gun-nartpa narrative, where kinship terms and other forms of deictic reference enable the expression of social connection and concepts of belonging. The concept of *joborr* ‘interpersonal ethics’, discussed below, provides an avenue for exploring how Gun-nartpa people express normative stances and behaviors between kin in the idiom of represented speech situated within narrative. This is relevant to the way that Gun-nartpa people assert and negotiate their connections to various forms of cultural property (Lyons, 2002).

Indexical features of Gun-nartpa grammar

In this section I provide an orientation to some indexical features of Gun-nartpa, which is a prefixing and noun-classifying language. Gun-nartpa has a four-way noun classification system which reflects a semantic categorisation of entities in the world, aligning with the focal categories of male (*an-* I), female (*jin-* II), vegetable (*mun-* III) and land/neuter (*gun-* IV). Many nouns lack noun class prefixes (e.g. *bugula* ‘water’, *gurlpuru* ‘yam species’). Other nouns bear prefixes that occur as part of their lexical form (e.g. *mun-banda* ‘long yam’, *jin-gombula* ‘marsupial mouse’).

Noun class prefixes also occur on nominal words to express agreement under control from a head or from a semantic antecedent (Corbett, 2006). For example, the nominal descriptive word *-bachirra* ‘dangerous, potentially harmful’ inflects for noun class in noun phrases and nominal predicate constructions, yielding expressions such as *bugula gun-bachirra* ‘salty water/the water is salty’, *wurra an-bachirra* ‘dangerous man / the man is dangerous’. While the referents that control agreement forms on nominal words may not be explicit within discourse, the prefixed forms are referentially anchored by an entity that is (more or less) accessible within the discourse context. Thus the nominal expression *an-bachirra* refers to a ‘dangerous man or animal’ with the referent indexed by the choice of noun class prefix and interpreted in context.

The indexical functions of noun class prefixes interact with deictic and attributive expressions to identify referents, even when these are construed generically or in situations where social restraint or circumspection is required. This is illustrated in (1), the opening lines of a narrative about two lovers who break traditional law by running away together from the woman's rightful husband. In the examples, represented speech is indented and turn taking marked by a hyphen at the start of each turn. Intonation units are indicated and more information about annotations is provided in the list of abbreviations at the end of this article.

- (1) *ah jinyena nula,*
jiny-wena=nula
 3II-speak.PC=3OBL
 - *alay / anngayp angab an.gora \ anga — an.gora, ngubawa barra *
alay an-ngaypa an-gaba an-gora ngu-bawa barra
 ATT.M I-1NOM I-there I-bad I-leave FUT
 - *gala barrinybawa *
gala barra nyi-bawa
 NEG FUT 2-leave
 - *wurra?*
 why
 ‘[The woman] said to him, “Hey, that man over there is no good. He’s bad, I’m going to leave him.” [The man said] “You can’t leave him.” [The woman said] “Why?”’ (T14B-07: 1250–57720)

The story opens with a quotative expression introducing a stretch of represented speech; a dialogue between the pair. The two are plotting their escape, and the woman covertly identifies her husband with a series of nominal words each bearing the male noun class prefix *an-*. These provide relational information (*an-ngaypa* ‘my’), deictic spatial information (*an-gaba* ‘over there’) and a predicative attribution (*an-gora* ‘bad’).

Gun-nartpa has several sets of pronominal forms: free pronouns, pronominal prefixes and pronominal clitics. Taken together, bound pronominals (prefixes and clitics) and noun class prefixes are a central resource for the marking of grammatical relations and semantic dependency in Gun-nartpa grammar. Their indexical functions enable referent tracking in discourse even in the absence of free nominal or pronominal expressions. For example, in (1) the woman is introduced into the narrative indexically, encoded as the subject of the quotative verb (*-yena* < *wengga* ‘to speak’) by the third person singular female prefix *jiny-*. The man — her interlocutor — is indexed as the 3rd person singular oblique clitic *nula* ‘to him’.

In (1) the choice of 3rd person pronominal forms reflects person deixis, with the deictic centre aligned with the narrator’s perspective. With the change to

represented speech, a deictic shift places the deictic centre in the imagined interactional space shared by the two lovers. This is reflected in the choice of free pronominal (*ngaypa* ‘first person singular’) and the pronominal prefixes *ngu-* ‘first person singular’ and *nyi-* ‘second person singular’ hosted by the verb *bawa* ‘to leave’.

Along with person deixis expressed by the basic person categories of first, second and third person, an additional parameter is inclusion and exclusion, a typical feature of the pronominal systems of Australian languages (Dixon, 1980). The Gun-nartpa pronominal system encodes whether or not the speaker and audience are both included in the referential set expressed by the choice of pronominal form. Choice between inclusive and exclusive forms is another pivot for deictic shifts between narrative voice and represented speech. This point is illustrated in (2), a fragment from a different text, a conversational narrative about events involving family members.

- (2) - *yeya? ma, wal, gurdarr barra nguwurrboy *
 yes ma well gurdarr barra nguburr-boy
 OK tomorrow FUT 12A-go
 gurdarr nyuwurrbona /
 gurdarr nyiburr-bona
 tomorrow EXC.A-go.PC
 [Narrator, representing self as story actor, says] “‘Really? Ok, well we’ll go
 tomorrow.” We went the next day.’ (T03–02)

In this example, the storyteller switches between inclusive and exclusive forms of non-third person plural pronominal forms (*nguburr-* ‘we — including you’ ~ *nyiburr-* ‘we — not including you / you all — not including me’). In so doing, he shifts the deictic centre from the represented interaction within the storyworld to the world of interaction. With the deictic shift the pronominal form changes from the inclusive form as he indexes himself and the family group as ‘all of us, not you’, where ‘you’ is the person listening to the story.

In summary, noun classes and pronominal prefixes are semantic and grammatical resources that enable non-specific reference and function to track reference in discourse. Gun-nartpa pronominals provide deictic pivots in discourse that are finely attuned to shifts in perspective, and mark the transition from narrative voice to represented speech. I draw attention to specific instances of these functions in the ensuing discussion.

Joborr — ‘interpersonal ethics’ and represented speech

In an analysis of Kunwinjku pedagogy, Etherington describes narrative discourse as a central mode of socialisation for young Kunwinjku people. Through narrative, Kunwinjku senior people enact and represent a “methodology of mutuality” in their approach to instruction in the “ideational and moral curriculum” (Etherington, 2006 p.146). Similar socialisation practices are also important for the Gun-nartpa, as they develop and reinforce cultural proposals that are shared in their society. Gun-nartpa people often express cultural proposals relating to important social values in terms of idealised/prototypical interactional scenarios. These involve hypothetical actors and are framed in the “idiom of kinship” (Hiatt, 1965). These scenarios are presented as exemplars of *joborr*, the Gun-nartpa concept of appropriate and ethical social conduct (Gurrmanamana, Hiatt & McKenzie, 2002).

The interactions of everyday life provide a template for *joborr*, which is conventionally expressed as represented speech (and other communicative behaviours) and situated within narrative and exhortatory discourse. For the Gun-nartpa, the alignment of dramatised interactive scenarios with represented speech is ubiquitous within conversation, personal narrative and more formal styles of discourse such as political oratory (Clunies Ross, 1983). Represented speech is an iconic signifier of interaction, a narrative device that imparts prominence and provides the context for the evaluation of actors and events, both reenacted and imagined. It is important in canonical storytelling occasions as well as in everyday conversation, when narrative discourse emerges (Ochs & Capps, 2001). For example, in one discussion of *joborr*, a Gun-nartpa woman explained to me how she had instructed her children well in the norms of conduct around kin, including the practice of physical avoidance between sisters and brothers. In a short stretch of conversational narrative she provided evidence of this by telling a story about how her young daughter had warned her that her brother was approaching. At the high-point of this brief narrative she represented her daughter’s speech, as shown in (3).

- (3) *muma, anaguwal anabamburda* \
 muma ana-guwala a-na-bamba-rda
 mum I.kin-your.brother 3I-TO-go.along-C
 “Mum, your brother is coming!”

Through representing the speech of her daughter in a moment of conversational narrative, the woman provides an example of appropriate social conduct and also highlights its significance. Her example indexes salient cultural proposals around the relationships between opposite sex siblings in Gun-nartpa society — i.e. ‘contact with a sibling of the opposite sex is dangerous’ — and the importance of teaching norms about social conduct to young people.

An example is provided in (4) of represented speech in a narrative reflecting social norms relating to child socialisation. The example is an extract of a longer narrative in which a Gun-nartpa man tells the story of the life of his *jungurda* (father's father) who was a very old man when the storyteller was a young child (England, Muchana, Walanggay & Carew, 2014, pp. xxix–xxxiii). The extract contains a highpoint of this narrative, in which the storyteller dramatises himself as a toddler representing his realisation that the old man was a family member, and the part played in socialisation by his kin.

- (4) *ngurrenyjingjarl guga, ngunana /*
ngu-rrenya-nga ngu-jarl guga ngu-na-na
 1-tread-RLS 1-go.quick sudden 1-see-PC
*gala bulay ayurrarnaworkiyarna *
gala bulay a-yu-rra-rna a-workiya-na
 not far 3I-lie-C-CTF 3I-do.habitually-PC
layk ngaypa gunngaypa, wal nguborrwurra,
 like ngaypa gun-ngaypa well ngu-borrwa-rra
 1NOM IV-1POSS 1-think-PC
 ÷ *aa an.guna wayji ngunyun an.ginda,*
 aa an-guna waygiji ngunyuna an-gu+yinda
 I-here perhaps here I-DER+do.thus
ngunyun ayurra aworkiya \ ÷
ngunyuna a-yu-rra a-workiya
 here 3-lie-C 3-do.habitually.C
awurrwenapala,
aburr-wena=apala
 3A-speak.PC=1OBL
 ÷ *jungurda jungurda, an.guna na \ ÷*
jungurda an-guna na
 grandfather I-here see
*awurrwena *
aburr-wena
 3A-speak.PC
 'I was walking by then [i.e. a toddler] and I saw him, he slept fairly close by. And then I had an idea, it occurred to me, "Ah! this man, maybe he belongs here! He always sleeps here!" Everyone said to me, "It's your grandfather, your grandfather, look at him here!" They said that.' (20130517-12-01:910235–925218)

In (4) the storyteller represents his thought processes as a child as speech, as if talking to himself about his emergent recognition of the old man as a familiar person. He subsequently depicts a common type of interaction that people have

with babies and toddlers, again as represented speech, with their comments *jungurda, jungurda, an-guna na!* 'It's your granddad, your granddad, look at him here!' This style of caregiver-child interaction occurs when another family member approaches. The caregiver will call the relevant kin term of that person to the child, using a child-directed speech register and co-ordinating these various multimodal components of the interaction by pointing to direct the child's gaze (cf. Sidnell, 2006). In this speech register the voice is high pitched and has an excited quality (indicated by ÷*text*÷), and key words are repeated, just as the storyteller demonstrates in this excerpt. Through enacting interactional scenarios within his narrative, the storyteller shifts the deictic centre from his current life stage to an earlier one, placing himself within his own imagined life world as a toddler. This lifeworld is clearly distinguished from the 'storyworld proper' by the use of represented speech.

The represented speech in this extract is bracketed from surrounding discourse by quotative expressions that explicitly flag the shift in deictic centre from the storyworld to the imagined world of the toddler (*lika ngu-borrwurra* 'then I thought'; *awurr-wena* 'they said'). There are also prosodic and paralinguistic features that accompany it, such as globally raised pitch and excited quality (cf. Blythe, 2011). These features combine to mark represented speech within the surrounding discourse and give it prominence as a highpoint. The prominence cues an evaluative implicature that can be interpreted in terms of Gun-nartpa cultural proposals around the value of social connection and of appropriate modes of conduct with kin (e.g. 'people address their kin with the right kinterm'). Within the storyworld that is evoked by this stretch of narrative discourse, the storyteller positively evaluates the pedagogical approach of his kin and the social connections they helped him to develop with his grandfather in the last years of his life.

Gun-nartpa ancestral narratives and signifiers of belonging

Gun-nartpa relational knowledge includes knowledge of the activities of totemic ancestral beings, their analogues in landscape, ritual and social organisation and their social significance as signifiers of belonging. Gun-nartpa narrative practices project an ideology of eternal and immutable connections between kin, *wangarr* 'ancestral beings' and the places where such beings travelled and now repose. The activities of *wangarr* predate the present and often involve genealogical ancestors integrated within the array of cosmological actors (England, Muchana, Walanggay & Carew, 2014, p. 11). Many accounts of Aboriginal discourse on ancestral creation also emphasise its atemporal character, in which the ancestral past is presented with a sense of immediacy that captures its immanence in the present (e.g.

Keen, 1990; Morphy, 1990). Stanner used the idea of “everywhen” — the apparent simultaneity of past, present and future — in his discussion of the Dreaming, writing that “[O]ne can’t ‘fix’ The Dreaming in time: it was, and is, everywhen” (Stanner, 1956/2009, p. 58).

The corporate notions of *yakarrarra* ‘connection through clan lineage’ and *bapurrurr* ‘regional clan network’ are central to the explanations of ancestral connections to landscape and the nature of the connections between clans. Clan identities represent an ontological integration of genealogical descent, land and the sacred *Mardayin* law. The ancestral journeys of totemic beings are central to this law and form the basis for the connection between land and clan group, expressed in songs, objects and rituals ceremonially exchanged between groups that share totemic ancestors. This points to the important fact that stories and other forms of oral tradition are economic commodities, “owned by clans, executed by other clans who stand in a managerial relationship to the owners ... and sometimes exchanged with other groups in return for rights to perform an alien song or dance or in return for desired trade-goods and ceremonial artifacts” (Clunies Ross, 1986, p. 238).

A Gun-nartpa story about the female ancestral clan spirit Jin-gubardabiya provides an example of how Gun-nartpa people express conceptualisations of belonging in narrative through the powerful signifiers represented by ancestral creator beings. This story demonstrates the ways that the array of ancestral actors can be construed so that they signify identity through *yakarrarra* ‘clan lineage’ and simultaneously the wider social connections expressed in terms of *bapurrurr* ‘regional clan network’. Jin-gubardabiya is owned exclusively by the An-nguliny lineage and is thus a potent emblem of a separate identity for this group. She is associated with a site called Wangarr A-juwana, a monsoon vine thicket that is restricted to initiated men, and associated with a cluster of meanings, many of which are secret. The spirit is usually depicted in art as a woven conical mat, an item of material culture associated with women and, by extension, fertility and reproduction. Jin-gubardabiya is also thought of as a ‘mermaid spirit’, a corporeal conception that is associated with her role as the protector of the spirits of An-nguliny people. An An-nguliny person’s spirit returns to Wangarr A-juwana when they die and waits there to be reborn.

An-nguliny people also have rights to the creation spirit Ji-japurn, who lies on the bottom of the deepest part of Boporlinymarr billabong — a deep long watercourse in the heart of An-nguliny country adjacent to Wangarr A-juwana (England, Muchana, Walanggay & Carew, pp. 1–14). These are not exclusive rights however, as Ji-japurn represents one of the “parochial powers” of this region, “closely associated with the creation of individual clan estates and striking natural features” (Clunies Ross, 1986, p. 239). Also known by its Gurr-goni name Ngurrurtpa (England, Muchana, Walanggay & Carew, 2014; Green & Nimbadija,

2015), this ancestor travelled a route which today connects the An-nguliny with Yirrichinga clan groups from the floodplain area to the north of An-nguliny country, also speakers of Gun-nartpa, and clans from the Gurr-goni language group, whose country lies to the west. For these groups, the story of Ji-japurn/Ngurrurtpa represents jointly held ritual property and shared rights to country.

The following extract (5) is from a telling by England Banggala, a senior An-nguliny clan member. In this part of the story, the An-nguliny clan ancestors are instructed by the creation ancestor Ji-japurn to take Jin-gubardabiya and place her inside the monsoon vine thicket at a site called Wangarr A-juwana.

- (5) *ay jijapurn / jijapurn jinyjurrmurrma,*
 ji+japurn jiny-gurrma-rra
 DER+?:spirit 3:3II-lay-PC
barragijirra ayunyurra, barragijirra ayurra /
 barra gu-jirra a-yunya-rra barra gu-jirra a-yu-rra
 bottom 3IV-POSS 3I-lie-C bottom 3IV-POSS 3I-lie-C
awena,
 a-wena
 3I-speak.PC
*jin.guna jin.gubardabiya bubuga *
 jin-guna jin+gu+bardabiya bubu-ga
 II-here II+DER+waving:mat 2A:3IMP-take
jin.gubardabiya bubuga barra, nyuwurrambarra=
 jin.gubardabiya bubu-ga barra nyiburr-bamba barra
 mat 2A:3IMP-take FUT EXC.A-go.along FUT
boporlinymarr yi — nyibina barra, boporlinymarr yigapa /
 nyibu-na barra Boporlinymarr yi-gapa
 2A:3-see FUT <place> away-over.there
wangarr ajuwana wupa \ nyuwubarnja barra \ nyuwubarnja barra /
 wangarr a-juwa-na wupa nyibu-barnja barra
 spirit 3I-die-PC:place inside EXC.A-put FUT
*nip jijapurn awena, nganajirra *
 nipa jijapurn a-wena ngana a-jirra
 3NOM spirit 3I-speak.PC mouth 3I-POSS
 ‘Ji-japurn put her. He, who lies at the very bottom [of the billabong]. He said,
 “You all take this woven mat. You all carry it along. You will see
 Boporlinymarr over there. You will put her inside Wangarr A-juwana.”
 He, Ji-japurn, said this, from his mouth.’ (T07B-29:740–31980)

This facet of the Jin-gubardabiya story presents an explanation for the ontogeny of the An-nguliny. It articulates the Jin-gubardabiya spirit with the actions of the creation ancestor Ji-japurn and his interaction with the An-nguliny ancestors,

bringing two totemic signifiers into close association and linking a locally specific signifier of belonging with a regional one. The story also highlights the social value placed upon clan forebears, the group of elders that preceded those living today. In the Jin-gubardabiya story these ancestors, *gapala yerrcha* ‘the old people’ interact directly with the creation spirit Ji-japurn. They are thought of as a group of people who lived, yet who are now integrated with the time of ancestral creation. As Etherington writes, they are “simultaneously those intimately connected with the speaker, but also those associated with the collective authority of past generations” (Etherington, 2006, p. 143). Etherington’s characterisation captures a sense of the atemporality of social connection evident in narrative discourse, where actors are commonly identified through their relationships with those that went before them and those that came after. The story foregrounds the relational frame of reference in which the social connections between the An-nguliny clan, their forebears and the powerful beings that created their country are highly salient.

The prominence of these social connections is conveyed by the use of represented speech, which imparts vividness to the narrative as the powerful being is represented as speaking directly to the An-nguliny spirit ancestors — a deictic shift that places Ji-japurn at the deictic centre of the story. This involves a realignment of the frames of reference of time, space and interaction within the narrative. These are encoded by pronominal agreement and tense/aspect/mood marking. Examples of these encodings are shown in the glossed fragment in (5a), which straddles the deictic shift. Square brackets enclose clauses and standard brackets enclose represented speech.

- (5a) [barra gu-jirra a-yurra] [a-wena]
 bottom 3IV-POSS 3I-lie-C 3I-speak.PC
 ([jin-guna jin.gubardabiya bubu-ga])
 II-here II.mat.spirit 2pl.IMP-take
 ‘He lies at the bottom (of the billabong). He said, “You all take this mat.”’

In (5a) the first clause is an existential clause, depicting Ji-japurn’s posture and location. The verb *yu* ‘to lie’ is inflected for contemporary tense, expressing the eternal presence of the spirit *in situ*, and the choice of pronominal prefix encodes a third person singular male subject. The quotative verb *wengga* ‘to speak’ shares the same pronominal prefix as the preceding verb but is in precontemporary tense, indicating a time prior to the temporal origo and flagging the ensuing deictic shift. The verb in the represented speech clause is in imperative voice, thus orienting the action to a subsequent event, and encodes a second person plural subject that agrees with the addressees in this represented interaction (*bubu-* 2nd person plural imperative). The deictic shift also provides the spatial context for the interpretation of demonstrative forms. The proximal demonstrative *jin-guna* ‘this female

one here' is semantically dependent on the nominal word *jin.gubardabiya* 'woven mat', a referent within the imagined scenario in which Ji-japurn is speaking to the An-nguliny spirit ancestors.

This narrative moment is rich in evaluative signifiers of belonging that can be read in terms of the relational knowledge that underpins the story. One reading relates to the strategic purpose of the storyteller, who asserts his position as the senior member of the An-nguliny clan by also positioning himself at the deictic centre — in effect, as Ji-japurn's proxy. In terms of cultural proposals about belonging and social connection he, and by extension other clan members, are unified with the creation spirits of their own country and their forebears through whom they trace their *yakarrarra* 'clan lineage'. This is validated by the words of the regional creation ancestor, Ji-japurn/Ngurrurtpa, and by extension this consolidates the storyteller's assertion of his cultural authority throughout a wider social network.

Sound symbolism in ancestral narratives

I now extend the discussion of represented speech as an evaluative strategy to consider the similar functions played by sound symbolism in narrative. Gun-nartpa storytellers use both the speech of storyactors and sound symbolism to index shared knowledge and cue evaluative interpretations. As discussed above, Gun-nartpa ancestral narratives focus on the activities of ancestral beings, which are powerful signifiers for Gun-nartpa people. Their meanings are both ambiguous and complex, and often characterised in terms of 'inside' and 'outside' knowledge — a distinction that refers to the fact that such signifiers have both public and secret meanings, that exist in parallel (Clunies Ross, 1986). Much of this knowledge is expressed in esoteric form, through song and non-verbal symbology. As Clunies Ross comments in relation to the ancestral narrative genre,

The esoteric nature of most Aboriginal song has made the development of spoken texts which interpret the song to various audiences well-nigh inevitable ... The repertoire of recorded Aboriginal tales, in which we find many narratives of wandering creator beings and the sites they created, and tales of supernatural beings who have human as well as animal characteristics, corresponds to the repertoire of sacred song and dance, and almost certainly acts as a sort of Begleitprosa [ancillary prose text] to it. (Clunies Ross, 1986, pp. 241–242)

There are unrestricted versions of the meanings of these signifiers, such as those told in narrative for a public audience. Their deeper and more potent meanings are linked to restrictions on access to knowledge that are released within ceremonial contexts. These restrictions are gendered and linked to various stages of

initiation for men. They are tied to the learning of songs within relationships of tutelage between senior men and novices, and their performance in ceremonies that involve the viewing of sacred representations of these beings. Restrictions on knowledge and its representation in speech represent salient cultural proposals for Gun-nartpa people, and narratives about ancestral beings take account of these restrictions in various ways.

As Hoffman states, ancestral narratives frequently depict only a small part of a major story, narrating “episodic instances focusing on particular sub-events” (Hoffmann, 2015, p. 16). This is especially the case when different owners along a major route hold shared rights in ritual property, as is the case with the Ji-japurn/Ngurrurtpa story discussed in the previous section. It is also consistent with postulates about Aboriginal narrative discussed by Walsh (2016) — that they tend to be elliptical and tolerate the gapping of contextual information. As verbal narratives their interpretations rest upon the implicatures made by the storyteller and shared knowledge of the world outside the storyworld. In Gun-nartpa narrative such implicatures are cued by representations of subjective experience at narrative highpoints. These representations include represented speech, but sound symbolic representations of sensory experience and action also play an important part. Gun-nartpa storytellers use sound symbolism to dramatise events through representations of natural sound such as the calls of animals, environmental sounds such as the movement of water, the sounds of ceremony and of groups of people.

I contextualise this discussion with a fragment of a narrative about Murlurlu, an ancestral being. The name Murlurlu refers to two sisters who travelled into Gun-nartpa territory from Mewirnbba, a place to the east of the Blyth and Cadell river system. Murlurlu is a locally named variation of the Djangkawu story, owned by clans of the Jowunga (Dhuwa) moiety of north-east Arnhem Land.¹ The ancestral sisters danced as they travelled, carrying sacred dillybags and digging sticks, creating and naming places, and placing the various species of animals and plants in the landscape. The storyteller, England Banggala, was a senior member of the Yirrichinga moiety and thus not an owner of this story. He held managerial rights to it through his matrilineal kin however, and told a variation of the story that intersects with a number of other ancestral beings that are closely associated with the estates of his own clan. The story is a typical travelling narrative in which episodes of action are linked by locational and motion expressions grounded in a spatial field (Hoffmann, 2015). At narrative highpoints, the storyteller dramatises the interactions of the story actors as represented speech, expressing a deictic shift

1. Moiety names are shared across Central and Eastern Arnhem Land languages. Gun-nartpa patrimoiety names are written as Yirrichinga and Jowunga, which parallels Yirritja and Dhuwa elsewhere, among other variations in form, pronunciation and spelling (Garde, 2013).

to an imagined interpersonal space within the storyworld of the narrative. At such moments, other aspects of the subjectivity of the actors, such as their sensory experience, frequently accompany the deictic shift, as shown in (6).

- (6) *awurrinyjarl gurd awurrinyjamana=*
 abirriny-jarl gurda abirriny-bamana
 3UAF-go.quick towards.here 3UAF-go.along
ngunyun awurrinyjaliyana /
 ngunyuna abirriny-galiya-na
 here 3UAF-hear-PC
guguna gochan jinyjirra \ jawak awenani,
 gu-guna Gochan jiny-ji-rra jawak a-wena a-ni
 LOC.IV-here subsection.name 3II-stand-C koel 3I-speak.PC 3-be.PC
!jawak! !jawak!
 <mimesis: sound of the koel>
 - *ajay, anguna jawak aweya anirra,*
 ajay an-guna jawak a-weya a-ni-rra
 hey I-here koel 3I-speak.C 3I-be-C
*yinda barr ayma *
 yinda barra ay-ma
 where FUT 12:3-get
 - *yigab arrjeka *
 yi-gaba arr-jeka
 away-there 12-return
*jonama gijirra guwurrinymenga, awurrinybamana *
 jonama gu-jirra gubirriny-ma-nga abirriny-bamana
 back 3IV-POSS 3UAF:3IV-get-PC 3UAF-go.along.PC
 ‘They travelled along quickly in this direction, and they heard it here, right here at the place called Gochan Jiny-jirra the Eastern Koel was calling, “jawak! jawak!” [One woman said], “Hey! the Eastern Koel is calling, where are we going to go?” [The other woman said], “Let’s go over that way.” They went up to the high ground and went along there.’ (T12B-06: 476679–504372)

The sudden appearance of the bird called *jawak* marks the start of a narrative high-point, a prominent stretch of discourse, which disrupts the sequences of motion and action predicates that depict the predominantly travelling mode of the narrative (e.g. *abirriny-jarl gurda abirriny-jamana* ‘they came quickly in this direction’). These make way for representations of sensory experience and interaction as the women hear the bird call and decide to take a different route. The call of the Eastern Koel, is represented several times throughout the whole story through the conspicuous sound symbol *!jawak jawak!*. The storyteller represents the call mimetically, as an onomatopoeic sound, following the characteristic high-low-high intonation

pattern that is iconic of this bird (and reflected in *jawak*, its Gun-nartpa name). Each time it attracts the sisters' attention, and a stretch of represented speech ensues as they discuss their next move. These events have significance within the story, but contextual information that could be used to interpret them is not encoded in the text. Thus, someone new to this story may ask these questions: what is the significance of the bird? Why do the two sisters decide to take another route when they hear it call? From the perspective of narrative analysis we can also ask, if we knew the answers to these questions, what features of the discourse might lead us to evaluate these actors and events in terms of the underlying point of the story?

Gun-nartpa people interpret the meaning of this story in terms of their shared knowledge about *jawak* — a signifier that forms part of a cultural schema replete with meanings derived from religious cosmology. Gun-nartpa people know this bird is an emblem of the storyteller's clan and the secret Mardayin ritual objects associated with it — these embody the authority of senior men, traditional cultural law and a distinctive identity for that clan lineage. While not all Gun-nartpa people are privy to the secret and sacred dimensions of this knowledge, all women and children of the An-nguliny clan identify with this bird as a clan emblem and other Gun-nartpa people have rights to it through kinship connections with its owners. With the appearance of *jawak* in this story, the storyteller cues evaluations that rely on shared cultural proposals and, for some, restricted 'inside' knowledge.²

The frame of relational knowledge associated with *jawak* aids in interpreting the implicatures that are cued by the proximity of the ancestral women to An-nguliny territory and the prominence given to this episode by the vivid dramatisation of the bird's call. The sound of *jawak* is an iconic signifier of both the bird and its cultural significance and in the deictic shift to their experiential subjective space the women interpret it as a warning; that is, women must avoid Mardayin sites. Thus the normative perspective of the storyteller is enacted through a deictic shift to represented sensory experiences and interactions between story actors within the narrative. The strategy of dramatic representation — of the conspicuous bird call, of the speech of the sisters — is used by the storyteller to lend prominence to the highpoint. In this example the representation of the bird's call is tightly integrated with the represented speech of the women, in that the bird is a supernatural being with both animal and human characteristics, and its call is not merely an aspect of environmental sound. The bird can be seen as a party to the interaction in this instance, even through what is represented is 'bird call', and not 'speech'.

2. In referring to 'inside' knowledge I acknowledge the sacred dimensions of this knowledge and the social restrictions that apply. The information presented here has been published in the public domain with the permission of An-nguliny custodians (England, Muchana, Walanggay & Carew, 2014, p. 29).

Both represented speech and sound symbols are conspicuous expressions within discourse, and occur frequently at narrative highpoints, where they express deictic shifts to the sensory and interactional experiences of story actors and open up subjective spaces within discourse. This identifies clear parallels between represented speech and sound symbols, and suggests the usefulness of ‘represented experience’ as a broader category than ‘represented speech’. One can go further to include ‘represented actions’ within multimodal composite utterances. That is, there is a clear parallel between mimesis in sound, via the auditory modality, and mimesis as ‘constructed action’ in the kinesic-visual modality (Green, 2014, 2016). An example of aligned ‘represented action’ with sound symbolism is discussed in the next section, although a full discussion is beyond the scope of the current article.

Represented experience in historical narrative

Narratives about individual and family histories in the recent past are also important as markers of Gun-nartpa social identity. These comprise a well-established set of narrative plots that are customarily told by certain senior people in which Gun-nartpa people are positioned as actors throughout various phases of contact with outsiders during times of great social change. These histories are imagined locally in terms of a series of ‘times’ that align with historical events, such as contact with Macassan traders from Sulawesi, military activity during the second world war, demographic changes in the post war period, the settlement of Maningrida community by the Northern Territory Welfare branch and the return to country during the outstation movement (Bond-Sharp, 2013; England, Muchana, Walanggay & Carew, 2014). Aspects of traditional lifestyle, such as warfare, sorcery, mortuary practices and food gathering are also prominent in historical narratives. These are also imagined in terms of ‘times’ — in particular, Gun-nartpa people identify historical experiences associated with traditional warfare as *an-dakal* ‘warriors, warfare’.

In the stories about traditional warfare, the forebears of Gun-nartpa people are depicted as fierce and powerful warriors and these stories cue powerful memories of older people (who are today deceased) (Carew, 2016). These stories embody a theory of continuity between the past lifeworlds of Gun-nartpa people and their descendants in the current day. This continuity is expressed as a connection with the lived everyday past and indexed by the signifiers of traditional lifestyle, including the people who lived it (Carew, 2016; Hill, 2016).

Among the Gun-nartpa, Harry Litchfield was noted for his knowledge about *an-dakal* ‘warfare’ and *an-muragalk* ‘sorcery murderers’ and he skillfully invoked a storyworld of the traditional past during storytelling sessions focused around the recounts of dramatic events. Within these recounts, he frequently used sound

symbolism to represent a subjective perspective on events. Sound symbolic items occur in discourse in the same paratactic templates as represented speech. For example see (7), where a group of people, including the storyteller who is positioned within the narrative as a youth, hear the sound of warriors rattling their spears.

- (7) *ganapiya, nyuwurrgarlmana nyuwurramana,*
ganapiya nyiburr-garlma-na nyiburr-bamana
 finish EXC.A-get.up-PC EXC.A-go.along.PC
waypa nyuwurrgaliyana /
waypa nyiburr-galiya-na
 when EXC.A-hear-PC
 !arrrrrrrrrr!
 <mimesis: warriors armed with spears>
*aburryinagatpatila, andirra awena, andakal *
 aburr-yina+gatpa=atila an+rrirra a-wena an+rrakal
 3A-do+that=3UA.OBL I+tooth:spears 3I-speak.PC I+white:war
 ‘That was the end [of the previous activity], the whole lot of us got up when we heard “arrrrrrrrrr”. They went like that to us, the war party was rattling their spears in preparation for an attack.’

In this example the speaker uses mimesis (!arrrrrrrrrr!) to create the sound of the warriors rattling their spears in preparation for an ambush. This sound is bracketed by a quotative expression, *aburr-yina+gatpa* ‘they did that’, analogous to the bracketing of represented speech. Another quotative expression, one of a set that commonly brackets represented speech, is the verb *galiya* ‘to hear’, which introduces the sound of the warriors.

The represented experience of the group of people hearing the war party does not involve an encoded deictic shift in the same way as the tokens of represented speech discussed thus far. The mimetic unit is non-linguistic to the extent that it does not express a predicate-argument structure. There are none of the shifts in pronominal agreement or tense/aspect/mood variations that express deictic shifts between narrative and represented speech. The mimetic unit is syntactically and referentially independent in these terms and yet in terms of its paratactic relationship within discourse it is part of an interclausal structure, linked to the verb *galiya* ‘to hear’ as a non-obligatory complement. While there is no grammatically encoded deictic shift, the mimetic unit shifts the perspective in the narrative from the storyteller’s perspective into the remembered lifeworld he inhabited as a young boy, camped with his family on the Tomkinson River and hearing the approach of the warparty. In this respect it is evident that sound symbolism has similar functions to represented speech, in creating represented experiential spaces within narrative discourse.

I now turn to a final example, a complex highpoint episode from a story about *an-muragalk* ‘sorcery murderer’. By way of background, many people in north-central Arnhem Land believe that sorcerers are active and are to blame whenever there are unexplained major problems, including weaknesses, illnesses and death among close family. These beliefs have been taught by older people, who recount instances of sorcery murders from the past. Gun-nartpa people can be circumspect about the activities of sorcerers in contemporary life, but they are significant agents of social disorder in stories about the traditional past. These beliefs represent significant cultural proposals in terms of storytelling, and are linked to relational knowledge about social connection. For example, groups of people with strong connections to each other will blame someone from a rival group for conducting sorcery against their own family (cultural proposal: ‘sorcery is practiced on others, not immediate kin’). Beliefs about sorcery also reflect cultural proposals about the importance of remaining with family at all times, and not travelling alone. Even sorcerers usually work with an accomplice.

A highly salient aspect of these stories is the murder method — these murderers use a sharp wooden spike (*ragalk*) to pierce their victim in the neck. They then revive their victim, who returns to their family but eventually dies (England, Muchana, Walanggay & Carew, 2014, pp. 53–54). This is what happens in the following extract, in which a woman is depicted alone, digging for spike rush corms, a food plant that grows in swamps. Two men, a murderer and his accomplice, are hiding among the spike rushes watching her; she is unaware of their presence. One crawls through the spike rushes and suddenly appears next to the woman, before attacking her.

Example (8) demonstrates mimetic representations of actions and speech alongside rhythmic repetition of clauses, a ‘cinematic’ style that enables the backgrounding and foregrounding of participants and events. These involve shifts of the spatial deictic centre between the two murderers, the murderer acting on his own, and the woman. The role of Litchfield’s consociate, Jane Litchfield, is also of interest here, as she provides a non-verbal narrative resolution. Non-verbal mimetic and signed components of utterances are presented beneath the line of accompanying speech in {}.

- (8) *awurrjarlpa, juwurrinana, jinyjarramurra jinyu,*
 abirri-jarl+pa jibirri-na-na jiny-garrma-rra jiny-yu
 3UA-go.quick+IND 3UA:3II-see-PC 3II-dig-PC 3II-lie.PC
gulach mbarrbuna \ + mbarrbuna, mbarrbuna, mbarrbuna, mbarrbuna +
gulach m-barrba-na
spike.rush 3:3III-put-PC

*!rlurlurlurlu! ngunyjutpa !dol! aji *
!rlurlurlurlu! ngunyjutpa !dol! a-ji
 <mimesis:crawling> here.opposite IDEO:appear 3I-stand.PC
 {mimetic action: hand movement shows the trajectory of crawling}
mbarra \ jinyjarrmurra jinyu, nipa abena arrkula,
m-barra jiny-garrma-rra jiny-yu nipa a-bena=arrkula
 3:3III-eat.PC 3II-dig-PC 3II-lie.PC 3NOM 3I-arrive.PC=12OBL
!lerrt! jindana, mobulinyjirra,
!lerrt! jiny-rra-na mobula jiny-jirra
 IDEO:force 3II-spear-PC nape 3II-POSS
!waaw!
 <mimesis:scream>

{consociate points to neck; makes clawhand ‘death’ sign}

‘They went immediately, they watched her digging along for spike rush corms and putting them [into her dillybag]. She put them, put them, put them, put them. [One man] crawled along till he reached her, then suddenly appeared standing there. She was eating, and digging away, then he emerged ‘on us’. He violently speared her in the neck and she screamed, “Waaaw!” She died.’ (T17A-02:HL:167718–182580)

The extract opens with motion and perception events in which the men are referred to using grammatical subjects, and the women with an object. The events in which woman is a subject are expressed as action predicates (*jarrma* ‘to dig’ *bay* ‘to eat’, *barrba* ‘to put in a bag’). The choice of pronominal prefixes encodes the referential structure of these separate, but integrated, events.

Rhythmic repetition of the verbal predicate *m-barrbuna* ‘she put it’ expresses the continuity of this action and in this episode it forms a thematic background to the actions of the men. In the next part of the episode the murderer leaves his accomplice and crawls up to confront his victim. This includes a motion event — crawling — expressed by sound symbolism (*!rlurlurlurlu!*) and mimetic action, using the movement of hand and fingers to depict a murderer stalking their victim by crawling through the spike rushes. The crawling action follows a trajectory from a hiding place to where the victim is sitting, and the deictic centre of the narrative also follows this trajectory to the point at which the murderer and victim are co-located. At this point, the demonstrative adverb *ngunyjutpa* occurs. This is one of a class of ‘oppositional’ demonstratives in Gun-nartpa that indicates a point counter to the established deictic centre. Here it expresses a shift in deictic centre from the hiding place to the scene of the crime, where the murderer suddenly appears.

For the purposes of this discussion I maintain a distinction between ideophones and mimetic sound symbolism, based on their functions as syntactic words within clausal structures. Ideophones are, like mimetic sound symbols,

conspicuous elements in discourse, codified as “marked words that depict sensory imagery” (Dingemanse, 2012, p.655). In (8) the ideophones *!rdol!* and *!lerrt!* both function as adverbial modifiers to verbs (*!rdol! a-ji* ‘he stood up suddenly’; *!lerrt! jin-dana* ‘he speared her’). Both ideophones and sound symbolic components of these motion and action clauses represent sensory and experiential dimensions of these events, adding vivid dramatic detail to this evaluatively salient episode.

The impact of fear and pain on the victim is expressed as a represented vocalisation, a scream (*!waaaw!*). One could interpret this experience as taking either the viewpoint of the victim or a witness, or perhaps the murderer himself. Another layer can be applied here however, in which the woman’s scream is a reaction to the evil deeds of a wrong-doer. As such, the scream brings the audience close to the subjective horror and fear the woman feels, and thus functions as an evaluative stance upon the events. Non-verbal signs are also resources that express evaluative meanings. I noted Jane Litchfield’s nonverbal communication while she and Harry Litchfield told the story represented by example (8), one of several that I recorded from them on this topic. The stories contained many instances of sorcery murderers, as groups took revenge on perpetrators by inflicting sorcery themselves in retaliation. When the story reached the cyclical highpoints in which the current murderers attacked their victims in the neck, she would turn to me and make two signs in sequence, using the same hand. The first was a pointed index finger to the side of the neck, and the second was a claw-like hand presented with a light tremble of the hand. The index finger to the neck signifies the act of sorcery and the claw sign means ‘death’. The combination of the two signs means ‘death by sorcery’. Jane’s signs for sorcerer and death in (8) are lexical signs, conventionally associated with narratives on this topic. In this instance Jane’s non-verbal contribution to the narrative functions as a resolution of the story, indicating the death of the victim, as well as an evaluation of the cause of death. This evaluation indexes cultural proposals about social connection and appropriate conduct that underpin Gun-nartpa society. When the Gun-nartpa Stories team listened to these stories two decades later, they also made the signs for ‘sorcerer’ and ‘death’. These signs are conventional affective evaluations of the actions of *an-muragalk* ‘sorcery murderers’ and the threat of death. In terms of cultural proposals, the actions of sorcerers represent the antithesis of *joborr* ‘interpersonal ethics’ and the fate of the woman is a grim cautionary tale about the collapse of the norms that contribute to social order in Gun-nartpa society.

Conclusion

In this article, ‘represented experience’ has been proposed as a useful rubric for two related discourse features in Gun-nartpa narrative — represented speech and mimetic sound symbolism. Both involve a shift in deictic perspective from that of the narrator to a subjective space within the story. Tokens of represented speech and sound symbols are linked paratactically with surrounding discourse, bracketed in particular by quotative expressions. While sound symbols are distinguished from ideophones in this discussion, it is important to note that, for Gun-nartpa people, tokens of mimetic sound are rarely ad hoc. They represent the auditory dimensions to experiences, actions and motions in highly conventional ways. The meaning of sound symbols were accessible to the members of the Gun-nartpa stories project team during transcription and translation sessions. The richness of sound symbolism as a component of verbal art is evident within many of the narratives in the Gun-nartpa stories corpus of ancestral and historical narratives.

The article has discussed a number of examples drawn from the Gun-nartpa corpus. In the ancestral genre, ancestral beings and are invoked as signifiers, although their deeper meanings are often obscure. Historical narratives represent secular events, and storytellers draw from their own experiences and those of their kin to tell these stories. Both kinds of narrative index ‘belonging’– conceptualisations of social connection and shared identity — as a primary social value. At narrative highpoints, key referents and events are given prominence by their associations with represented experience. Cultural proposals about kinship, norms of social conduct and religious knowledge provide the points of reference to interpret these implicatures. This indicates that relational frames of reference about belonging and social connection are important structuring principles in the storyworlds evoked by Gun-nartpa narrative discourse.

What is meant here by ‘relational frames of reference’ aligns with various labels (eg. schemas, frames and scripts) used for ‘data structures’ within structured representational approaches to the comprehension of meaning in discourse (Segal, 1995). These include the ‘cultural schemas’ of traditional narratives, as described by Klapproth in her study of Anangu narrative (Klapproth, 2004). While the notion of ‘schemas’ has some utility in terms of understanding the conventional forms of narrative genres, it is important to recognise that relational frames of reference are dynamic and contingent upon social processes in a changing world. Gun-nartpa people do not always tell the same stories. As aspects of their society have changed shape since pre-contact days, the cultural schemata that are available for narrative practice has been extended and elaborated. The cultural proposals that provide the logic for the schemata of narrative are actively maintained

through narrative-based socialisation practices, and through these practices the local concept of *joborr* ‘interpersonal ethics’ continues to be validated.

Relational knowledge can also be understood in terms of ‘cultural property’ — those nameable aspects of ‘culture’ that people hold as central to who they are, and which belong to them and not others (Lyons, 2002). *Jawak* the Eastern Koel is a clear example of a signifier of belonging for the An-nguliny clan — it is a localised clan emblem. The ancestral creator being Ji-japurn connects this clan group within a wider social network that recognises shared rights in terms of ritual property and land tenure. The notion of cultural property extends to intangible forms such as a group’s language, kinship system, beliefs and ethics, and the various expressions of these cultural forms through verbal, performance and visual arts. Gun-nartpa storytellers index such relational knowledge through an eclectic and strategic approach to the expression of relationship and belonging within their narrative practices. These expressions draw down from customary social arrangements presented in terms of ancestral and immutable connections between kin and country. As Carew (2016) shows in more detail, they also reflect individual and family biographical experiences since the second world war and the social upheavals associated with outsider contact and colonisation that stem from this time.

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Abbreviations

Gun-nartpa language examples are shown with three lines of text followed by a free English translation. The first text line represents speech orthographically, providing a rough approximation of how units of connected speech are spoken. It shows intonational phrases and indicates prosodic boundaries with their approximate intonational contours, using the following notations: [comma] prosodic edge marker, / level contour, / rising contour, \ falling contour. Other paralinguistic features are indicated: = extension prosody (final or penultimate vowel extended to indicate duration), *+text+* : rhythmic repetition, *!text!* : ideophones and sound symbols, *÷text÷* : excited voice quality. The second line shows segmentation into words and morphemes: [hyphen] : inflectional morpheme, + : derivational morpheme, = : clitic. The third line is an interlinear gloss. Note the following: I, II, III, IV : noun class categories of male, female, vegetable, land/neuter, f : feminine gender marking within pronominal prefixes, Loc : local case, 1, 2, 3 : first, second and third person categories, 12 : first person inclusive, EXC : exclusive person

(either speaker or addressee is excluded from the referent set encoded), UA : unit augmented number (base number for person category plus one), A : augmented number (plural), IMP : imperative prefix form, C : contemporary tense, PC : pre-contemporary tense, RLS : realis status (for verb conjugations where tense distinctions are not made), FUT ; future, CTF : counterfactual, TO : movement towards, NOM : nominative pronoun, OBL : oblique pronoun, POSS : possessive pronoun, kin : kinship prefix, DER : denominaliser/deverbaliser, IND : individuation suffix (individuates events and referents), IDEO : ideophone. Mimetic sound symbolism is enclosed by carets, ie. <text> and non-verbal components are enclosed by curly brackets, ie. {description of sign or gesture}. The symbol † placed before a personal name indicates that the person has passed away.

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