5. Song as Artefact: The Reclaiming of Song Recordings Empowering Indigenous Stakeholders—and the Recordings Themselves

Genevieve Campbell

The culture of the Tiwi Islands, northern Australia, has been the subject of much anthropological literature but none focuses on music. Since 2007 I have been working with senior Tiwi song-men and -women and studying contemporary Tiwi song culture in the context of the maintenance of traditions in the development of new music forms. In 2009 I was closely involved in the return to the Tiwi community of a large amount of ethnographic song material housed at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra. In this chapter I give an account of the process undertaken by a group of Tiwi people to reclaim[1] that song material, including the emotional, socio-political, legal and ethical issues that my Tiwi colleagues[2] and I encountered, as well as the effect that the material is now having on Tiwi song tradition itself. Documenting the experience of the group of Indigenous owners of the material is essential to an understanding of how their journey to Canberra has informed the reception of the recordings in the context of the four areas listed above. Importantly, the pro-active nature of the Tiwi group's involvement with the repatriation has added an extra level to their understanding of the procedure and therefore resulted in a personal investment and heightened sense of ownership of the recordings.

Repatriation

The repatriation of recordings to Indigenous stakeholders has, over the last two decades, become a central consideration of ethnomusicological research in the

1 I use the word 'reclaim' here because that is how the Tiwi people regarded the purpose of the journey to the Institute.

2 Throughout this chapter I refer both to my Tiwi 'colleagues' and 'consultants'. I use both terms to reflect the (small but meaningful) differences in our relationship. As peers working together on professional performance and recording projects we consider ourselves colleagues. In the context of the audition, transcription and documentation of archive recordings our relationship is more one of researcher/informant and in those cases I use the term consultant.

Australian region (and indeed all over the world), with the return of recordings itself becoming an object of research.[3] Reported motivations for repatriation that are relevant to my engagement with the Tiwi recordings include:

- a response to direct request from (Indigenous) people with direct ownership claims;
- the facilitation of analysis and collection of essential accompanying metadata;
- as source material proving ownership in land-rights cases of Country and kinship affiliations;[4]
- the enhancement of cultural maintenance activities within the stakeholders' community and;
- because it is the right thing to do.[5]

The power of repatriated recordings to reinvigorate interest in song practice (which has been the focus of my recent work on the Tiwi Islands) is only one of the benefits. Old recordings hold great social and historical significance, as well as holding ancestral and cultural knowledge of Country[6] and kinship relationships.[7] One of the key themes to emerge is the emotional response of Indigenous owners to the material.

There have been three important and distinct areas of response to the Tiwi recordings that I can report on directly:

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3 Linda Barwick and Allan Marett, 'Endangered Songs and Endangered Languages', in *Maintaining the Links: Language identity and the land; Seventh Conference of the Foundation for Endangered Languages*, eds Joe Blythe and R. M. Brown (Bath: Foundation for Endangered Languages, 2003); Robert C. Lancefield, 'Musical Traces' Retraceable Paths: The repatriation of recorded sound', *Journal of Folklore Research* 35:1 (1998); Stubington, Jill, 'Collecting Folk Music in Australia: Report of a forum held 4-6 December 1987' (Kensington: University of New South Wales, 1989); Thieberger, Nick, and Simon Musgrave, 'Documentary Linguistics and Ethical Issues', *Documentary and Descriptive Linguistics* 4 (2007); Peter G. Toner, 'History, Memory and Music: The repatriation of digital audio to Yolngu communities, or, memory as metadata', in *Researchers, Communities, Institutions, Sound Recordings*, eds Linda Barwick, Allan Marett, Jane Simpson and Amanda Harris (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2003); Sally Treloyn, Rona Googninda Charles, and Sherika Nulgit, 'Repatriation of Song Materials to Support Intergenerational Transmission of Knowledge About Language in the Kimberley Region of Northwest Australia', in *Endangered Languages Beyond Boundaries: Proceedings of the 17th Foundation for Endangered Languages Conference*, eds Mary Jane Norris, Erik Anonby and Marie-Odile Junker (Bath: Foundation for Endangered Languages, 2013).

4 Amongst the recordings made by Groger-Wurm in 1965 is a segment in which a Tiwi woman lists family names and the Country groups they belong to. It has been used by one of my consultants to contest a current situation in the Tiwi Land Council.

5 Anthony Seeger, 'Do We Need to Remodel Ethnomusicology?', *Ethnomusicology* 31:3 (1987); Sally Treloyn and Andrea Emberly, 'Sustaining Traditions: Ethnomusicological collections, access and sustainability in Australia', *Musicology Australia* 35:2, Special Issue: Sustainability and Ethnomusicology in Australasia (2013).

6 I capitalise 'Country' because this term is used as a proper noun to indicate the area of land with which each Tiwi person identifies as a spiritual and ancestral home.

7 Toner, 'History, Memory and Music'.

Emotional, Personal Responses

Hearing their own voices, those of ancestors, or deceased loved ones has had a powerful effect on some Tiwi people. There have also been strong (positive and negative) sentimental reactions to songs with subject matter pertaining to Tiwi social history. More than with just the recordings themselves, there has been a powerful sense amongst Tiwi listeners that, with their 'trapped'[8] voices being back on the islands, a tangible, almost physical part of the ancestors has been returned home.

Questions of Ownership

a) Differing understandings and opinions have emerged regarding the cultural, physical and intellectual ownership of Tiwi song material. The moral and legal rights of Indigenous 'traditional owners'[9] and non-Tiwi copyright holders, the archive (in this case AIATSIS) and the researcher is an issue that is an ongoing underlying concern for me and my Tiwi colleagues.

b) Questions of ownership have been raised amongst Tiwi people with regard to individual and/or family associations with particular (recorded) songs, ceremonies or singers and therefore the use of those recordings and the documentation, transcription and translation of the songs.

The Effect of the Recordings' Return on the Future of the Song Tradition

Tiwi song culture is primarily based on occasion-specific improvisatory composition. There has been significant (sometimes negative) impact, from an artistic point of view, of hearing old recordings that demonstrate higher quality linguistic and performance values and therefore confirm perceptions of cultural loss. This is a very sensitive issue, especially amongst senior men in the community. In the face of language loss and dwindling numbers of singers with knowledge of composition, the old recordings are becoming a resource of song text to be learned by rote. This has the potential to create, with a library of recorded material, a canon of songs that might eventually take the place of the Tiwi tradition of improvisation.

8 Leonie Tipiloura, personal communication, Canberra, 18 November 2009.

9 This is a term widely used in Australia to indicate the Indigenous owners and/or custodians of Aboriginal land and extends to cultural knowledge and heritage.

Gaining Access to the Recordings

The desire (the women's group's and my own) to find the old Tiwi recordings came about largely through the process of workshopping the *Ngarukuruwala* music project, a contemporary performance collaboration between Sydney jazz musicians and Tiwi women singers, founded in 2007. Questions asked by the Sydney musicians about the meanings, melodies and functions of Strong Women's[10] songs sparked conversations about the lineage and associations each song had, as well as notions of how 'old' the songs were. A can of worms of ownership, copyright and intellectual property was opened when we decided to produce a CD, which also necessitated a deeper inquiry into songs than simply their subject matter and melodic structure. I became aware of a large amount of Tiwi song material housed at AIATSIS and, after discussions with the Tiwi women and members of the Tiwi Land Council I requested the material listed in Figure 1.

Collector	Year
Baldwin Spencer	1912
Charles William Hart	1928
Colin Simpson	1948
Charles Mountford	1954
ABC Radio (collection of Alice Moyle)	1955
Helen Groger-Wurm	1965
Sandra Holmes*	1966
Jack Doolan**	1967
Michael Sims***	1972
Alice Moyle	1976
Charles Osborne	1975
Andrée Grau	1981

Figure 1: Ethnographic Tiwi song material housed at AIATSIS.

* At the time of writing permission has not been secured for release of the Holmes material.

** Jack Doolan was superintendent with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and living at Milikapiti when he made these recordings.

*** Father Michael Sims was a priest at Nguiu at the time he made these recordings.

10 The term 'Strong Woman' is a designation given to elder women who hold a particular degree of cultural knowledge.

The recordings housed at AIATSIS (and problems arranging their repatriation)[11] became the focus of my activities with the Tiwi women during 2008 and 2009. It was from this point on that the idea of reclaiming recordings began to generate talk around the Tiwi community about ownership, stakeholders' rights, why they had been 'taken away' in the first place, and that elders felt a sense of duty to arrange for their return.[12] In April 2009 I was advised that the only way to have the material digitised and processed for release was to have Tiwi elders audition it to assess potential cultural restrictions.[13] The material was not in line for digitisation because it had not had cultural restriction appraisal (which could only happen if the elders listened to it). This posed somewhat of a 'Catch 22' problem. The elders could not listen to it unless it was digitised and sent to the islands (in effect, released). With time stretching on, and potentially running out for older Tiwi people with direct interest in and knowledge of this material, it became imperative to the Tiwi elders that they take affirmative action.

Songs as Artefact

In November 2009 I accompanied seven Tiwi women and four men to Canberra to visit AIATSIS (see Figure 2). The group was made up of men and women representative of different Country and family groups in order to have as broad a spread of cultural authority as possible. The aim was to spend two days auditioning the material in order for elders to give authorised permission for its release. In all, we spent one week in Canberra, also visiting the Tiwi collections at the National Museum of Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive. While not pertaining to song material, I include here an account of these adjunct visits because they had a direct impact on the attitudes the group had during their time at AIATSIS.

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11 While it is not the aim of institutions to make access difficult for Indigenous stakeholders there is evidence that it is by no means a smooth and easy process, and the experience I had reclaiming recordings on behalf of my Tiwi colleagues is not an isolated one, with recent reports indicating that this is not unique to Australia. See Samuel Kahunde, 'Repatriating Archival Sound Recordings to Revive Traditions: The role of the Klaus Wachsmann recordings in the revival of the royal music of Bunyoro-Kitara, Uganda', *Ethnomusicology Forum* 21:2, Special Issue: Ethnomusicology, Archives and Communities: Methodologies for an Equitable Discipline (2012); Don Niles, 'The National Repatriation of Papua New Guinea Recordings: Experiences straddling World War II', *Ethnomusicology Forum* 21:2 (2012); Don Niles and Vincent Palie, 'Challenges in the Repatriation of Historic Recordings to Papua New Guinea', in *Researchers, Communities, Institutions, Sound Recordings*, eds Linda Barwick, Allan Marett, Jane Simpson and Amanda Harris (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2003).

12 A repeating theme of discussions I witnessed was to wonder why these recordings were in the collection without the elders and/or the Land Council having been officially informed already.

13 Although Tiwi songs are not affected by secrecy or gender-restrictions, none of the metadata accompanying the material specifically noted this and so AIATSIS, rightly, was unwilling to release the material without Tiwi approval.

Figure 2: Tiwi delegation to AIATSIS, Canberra, November 2009. L to R (standing): Regina Kantilla, Francis Orsto, Agnes Kerinaiua, Walter Kerinaiua jnr (Wally), Stephen-Paul Kantilla, Eustace Tipiloura (seated), Genevieve Campbell, Mary Elizabeth Moreen, Teresita Puruntatameri, Jacinta Tipungwuti, Leonie Tipiloura, Sheba Fernando.

Source: Photograph by Terrilee Amatto, used with permission.

The equivalency of songs with paintings and artefacts as items of cultural and artistic heritage and as physical 'ownable' objects became clear to my Tiwi colleagues over the course of the week, and I am certain that this has had an ongoing effect on the way the *palingarri*[14] recordings are regarded amongst the Tiwi community.

At the National Museum of Australia the group was shown a large collection of Tiwi artefacts, including ceremonial spears, woven pandanus arm- and head-bands, message sticks, sculptures and paintings on bark, both on public display and in the Museum storage building. To the surprise and dismay of the group, none of the items[15] was marked with the name of the (Tiwi) person who made it, but each was labelled with the (European) collector's name. The painted designs, specific to particular skin groups and Country groups, helped identify

14 *Palingarri* translates as 'the deep past', 'forever' or 'long ago'. The repatriated recordings have come to be called the *palingarri* recordings.

15 Apart from a collection of carved poles on public display which did include the names of the artists.

the artist in a number of cases (knowing the year in which they were made and who would have been the senior artist then) and this information was added to the Museum's metadata.

The group was shown photographs of four *Turtuni*[16] *Pukumani*[17] poles collected by Herbert Basedow in 1911. Basedow's notes say these poles were from a *Pukumani Yiloti* (Final) ceremony held for a baby some years before he was there and that the body was exhumed, but was deemed to be in too poor condition to collect.[18] Basedow had these poles repainted (by Tiwi men) and then removed from the site and shipped to Adelaide, where they were eventually housed at the South Australian Museum in 1934. This caused great sadness and some anger amongst the group. There was much discussion as to how the Tiwi locals must have been coerced in some way—either through payment (cigarettes or food perhaps) or a perceived position of power held by the stranger/white man—because no-one would normally ever remove *Turtuni* poles, or even suggest it. They agreed the Tiwi men must have had little understanding of the reality of these poles leaving the Island and being displayed elsewhere.[19] Teresita Puruntatameri said, 'I can't believe they pulled them out of the ground. That is bad for the spirit of the child. It breaks the spirit of the place. They should never be moved.'[20]

At the National Film and Sound Archive a large collection of film material was made available (for viewing on the day and for repatriation). This again was a moving experience for the group. All saw family members, either at a time before they themselves were born or when they were young men and women. Leonie Tipiloura saw herself as a four-year-old, in news footage about the evacuation of mission children from Bathurst Island during the Second World War in 1942. She did not recognise herself because she had never seen an image of herself as a young child. Those in the group agreed with Leonie's feeling that it was an uncomfortable experience to see her 'twice at the same time'.[21] This correlates with consultants' reaction to song recordings when they speak of the singer in the present tense and say that they are present when their voice is heard. As well as the emotions of sentimental reminiscing and curiosity in images from their past, people reported that it was unsettling to have the past overlapping

16 Most commonly referred to as *Pukumani* poles.

17 *Pukumani* is a term that refers to mourning restrictions and rites connected with mortuary rituals.

18 Herbert Basedow, 'Notes on the Natives of Bathurst Island, North Australia,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 43 (1913).

19 The men resolved to return to the place and perform Ceremony to attempt to heal the situation.

20 A collection of Tiwi *Turtuni* poles on display in the New South Art Gallery, Sydney were, in 1958, the Gallery's first Indigenous Australian objects to be commissioned as works of art rather than acquired as artefact. Since then so called *Pukumani* poles are painted as artworks to be sold, and they are not associated with Ceremony.

21 Personal communication, Canberra, 18 November 2009.

with the present in this way. Accompanying these experiences was a growing consternation as to why this very significant material was in Canberra, owned by collectors and not available in the Tiwi community.

The issue of ownership came to a head with a holiday movie taken by (Anglo-Australian) tourists in Milikapiti, Melville Island, in 1965. It contains images of men making preparations for Ceremony (painting up) and a dance and song performance. Mary Elizabeth Moreen Mungatopi's father, Allie Miller, is the song-man featured. This footage of her father in 1965 was particularly significant to her, as an active member of the Strong Women's group and a central protagonist in the trip to Canberra. We were not able to give Mary Elizabeth a copy of the footage because the copyright holder, whose parents (now deceased) were the tourists who took the footage, would not agree to its release without substantial payment.[22]

It was within this context of discussions about the collection and ownership of Indigenous cultural property and heritage, as well as a heightened sense of pride and purpose,[23] that the group arrived at AIATSIS ready to reclaim their song material. The older members of the group found it particularly powerful to hear familiar voices amongst the recordings. They expressed their concern at the songs (and the singers' voices) being trapped in recordings and removed from the community in just the same way as some of the objects had been, and their sense of duty to return them to the islands was strong. Amongst the younger members of the group there was the opinion that they were also the rightful owners of the recordings themselves and that there should be no impediment to their being given compact discs to return home. These discs became objects emblematic of the artefact in the other institutions and 'holding on to them'[24] became just as important as listening to them.

Although most of the requested material had been cleared by the copyright holders, digitised and was ready to be auditioned, only the Hart material was on a CD ready for repatriation (pending the elders' approval). Holmes had not given permission for the release of her recordings[25] and the Mountford, Sims and Osborne material was in stasis because the copyright holders could not be traced.

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22 The National Film and Sound Archive has approached him since, with no success. When I contacted the copyright holder directly he was very unhelpful.

23 They also met with the then Federal Minister for the Arts, Peter Garrett, at Parliament House, and were praised for their pro-active role as community leaders and negotiating directly with the national institutions.

24 Sheba Fernando, personal communication, Canberra, 19 November 2009.

25 In 1966, Mary Elizabeth Moreen Mungatopi was the twelve-year-old daughter of Polly and Allie Miller, Holmes' primary consultants. Holmes' recordings were very moving for Mary as they contained the voice of her father (as lead singer) and of her mother and her sister Eleanor as informants. It was with understandable confusion and sadness that Mary learned that Holmes had not given permission for the recordings to be released to the community.

There was an expectation amongst the group, the Tiwi community, and the Tiwi Land Council (which had given significant financial support) that the group would return with some song material.[26] With the copyright issue the only impediment, the elders signed the required request forms and cultural authority forms[27] so it was hoped that the process of release would, from this point on, be relatively smooth. Unfortunately, at the end of our time in Canberra only one disc, the 1928 Hart material,[28] was ready for the group to take home and there was a clear frustration amongst the group that they were not being given what they deemed rightly theirs. Overall, though the experience had been invigorating and powerful, as each member of the group had had at least one deeply personal discovery amongst the recordings and all felt that going in person had been the right thing to do. After some discussion, the Acting Director gave discretionary permission for release of the Holmes,[29] Osborne and Sims material and these were posted to the group eight months later.

Engagement with the Recordings

The recorded Tiwi song material that I have been working with falls into four broad categories (labelled as they are referred to on the islands). I have seen a clear difference in the way Tiwi listeners relate to these four types of recordings, depending upon their provenance, perceived ownership and archival significance. I will briefly outline them here in order to place the repatriated AIATSIS recordings amongst those already on the islands.

1: The *palingarri* (old) songs recorded by researchers as part of wider anthropological study and housed at AIATSIS, Canberra.

The material repatriated from AIATSIS has an aura of specialness about it and people approach the auditioning of it with a heightened level of interest and concentration. The material that pre-dates living singers (the 1912, 1928, 1948, 1954 and 1955 recordings) and involves song texts in 'hard language'[30] is listened to with reverence for the culturally significant heirloom that it has become. Older people who recall having researchers around in the 1950s, 1960s

26 Considering it had been eighteen months since I first requested Tiwi song material, and for four months AIATSIS knew of our planned visit (partially funded by AIATSIS itself) it was disappointing that only the Hart material had been made available for repatriation.

27 Some of these had already been signed and posted in 2008.

28 The Hart material is out of copyright and so was a simpler process. The quality of this recording is very poor and much of it is inaudible.

29 In late 2011 I was advised by AIATSIS that the Holmes material had been released to the Tiwi individuals for personal use only and I was not authorised to use it for research. This issue has not yet been resolved.

30 The language used in songs is referred to as 'hard language' because it is a form that is no longer spoken or understood by anyone but a few elders.

and 1970s did not know there were resultant recordings kept in Canberra.[31] Elders' engagement with the material is therefore not as peers, nor as students, but as descendants discovering an old relic, such as an old family photo album or piece of estate jewellery.

2: 'My Recordings' are those made by me. This category falls into two areas.

> a: the recordings I have made at the request of elder singers with the conscious motivation of preserving their songs for future generations. They want to add their own contributions to what they now understand as being a long-term archive that will become more and more significant and revered as time passes.[32]
>
> b: the recordings I have made of the Strong Women's group for immediate dispersal and entertainment amongst (mostly) the women themselves. On a number of occasions I have recorded their song in 'draft' form, so that the following day they can listen back to it, or play it for women who have just arrived to be part of the process of composing and rehearsing in preparation for its performance at a funeral or community event.

3: The 'Ngarukuruwala recordings' are commercial or publicity audio and/or video recordings made of Ngarukuruwala performances, small pieces made about the group for television and radio and the two CD recordings we have produced together. The few television and radio pieces that have been made about the project have been transmitted around the community via DVD and I have helped the women create a website on which we can post photos, music tracks and YouTube clips of their new arrangements and compositions. We have used our recent recordings to reclaim ownership of some old material, by sampling it into newly produced tracks.

4: The recordings at 'Literacy' are cassette tapes kept at the *Nginingawila* (story collecting) Literature Production Centre in Nguiu/Wurrumiyanga (Bathurst Island). They were made by Tiwi people and by nuns, teachers or other non-Tiwi people living locally. This material has never left the islands and so is regarded quite differently from that repatriated from Canberra. Older people seek out the recording of a ceremony led by the senior man in their family (for example) to listen to his voice and reminisce about him, not generally as a source of study into the songs themselves or the linguistic or musical techniques therein. These recordings are (at the moment at least) largely ignored with their

31 Osborne made recordings in 1975 of senior songman Justin Puruntatameri. I played these to Justin in 2012. He was by then aged 87 years and had never heard them before. To hear his own voice, strong and much younger, was, he told me, a marvellous but also upsetting experience.

32 A group of elders wanted me to record Justin Puruntatameri, for example, because he was the oldest man left with the 'proper' singing skills. Mr Puruntatameri did not want to sing for the recorder, however, because he felt his voice was no longer good enough. He passed away in 2012.

existence in the Literacy Centre taken for granted. It is only in the last five years that the need to digitise this material in order to preserve it has become an issue for discussion.[33]

It is definitely the first category, the *palingarri* recordings repatriated as a result of the visit to Canberra, that holds the most value, as much for its significant cultural and historical content as for its story of having been 'reclaimed'.

Uses for the *Palingarri* Repatriated Recordings

The fact that the AIATSIS recordings' return was a result of pro-active engagement on the part of the Tiwi people themselves has informed the way they have been received. Rather than being lodged (by a non-Tiwi visitor) in a library, school or council office, the CDs went directly into people's homes. The physical CDs were, at first, the property of the people to whom they were posted, who then decided which family or individual should be given particular material—a renegotiation of the ownership of the recordings and of the songs on them. Certain people, for example, were given CDs (which contained the voice of their direct ancestor) even though they had no way of playing them, but because it was decided amongst the group that they should be the 'custodian' of that particular material. A Tiwi song is owned by its composer, and then by whoever he/she has taught it to (if it has been passed down). The vast majority are, however, unique to the point at which they were first performed and so today's listener delegates ownership to his/her direct family. Usually people felt that the (long deceased) singer owned the song, but that his/her family now owns the recording. Amongst several hours of material are numerous singers with different Country and kinship affiliations, so sections of the recordings belong to different people. I have been asked to create 'playlists' of sections of different collections that relate to a particular family, or hold particular interest for an individual.

Discs are played at informal gatherings and, especially when children are present, the material often becomes the subject of talk ranging from family to language to hunting to geography. They are played in vehicles' CD players and in people's houses. At the towns' social clubs, where the music is usually firmly in the realm of rock and roll hits from the 1970s and 1980s, a few times I have been present when someone has put on a *palingarri* CD.

33 With the approximately twenty-year break in engagement with these recordings it is likely that when they are digitised and installed in a publicly accessible database they will be the object of a 'rediscovery' much as the AIATSIS recordings have been.

The women's group has used the material as a starting point for new song projects, incorporating old recordings into arrangements by playing them through the sound system either as introductions to songs or with live performance accompanying the recording. Although it has proved difficult and time-consuming to organise permission to play the recordings at public performances it is a matter of principle to the group that they be able to use their own cultural material. The fact that they have had to ask permission from AIATSIS to use segments of the reclaimed recordings in our performances and new recordings has been perplexing for my Tiwi colleagues. From the point of view of the Indigenous stakeholders, the songs belong to them as items of cultural heritage, but from the point of view of an archive (such as AIATSIS) it is more complicated than that. There are many other considerations for an archive charged with the protection of intellectual property of the collector, of usage (commercial or otherwise) and of protecting the Indigenous community in terms of respect for the voices, images and names of the deceased, all of which make this an area of ongoing debate.[34] One outcome of this is that, in applying for permission to use a section of an old recording for a music project in 2011, the same Tiwi elder signed both the request form and the authorisation form for AIATSIS. This adds an extra element to the story of the recordings, with issues of ownership, legalities and cultural property never far from people's minds.

Recordings as Archive and as a Teaching Resource

The recordings are important as an archive for preservation, as a focus for active engagement in the continuation of song traditions, and as a primary resource for learning language, song poetry and vocal technique. From a musical point of view, the recorded songs represent an important piece of cultural heritage. Individual creativity is highly regarded in Tiwi song culture, so, ideally,[35] it is not so much a matter of learning from these recordings by rote, but learning words, phrases and the required poetic devices to be able to create one's own song. A result of the current, topical and context-specific nature of most Tiwi

34 Jane Anderson, 'Access and Control of Indigenous Knowledge in Libraries and Archives: Ownership and future use', *American Library Association and The MacArthur Foundation*, 5–7 May (2005); Linda Barwick and Nick Thieberger, 'Cybraries in Paradise: New technologies and ethnographic repositories', in *Libr@ries: Changing information space and practice*, eds C. Kapitzke and B. C. Bruce (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006); Michael F. Brown, J. A. Barnes, David A. Cleveland, Rosemary J. Coombe, Phiilippe Descola, L. R. Hiatt, Jean Jackson, B. G. Karlsson, Darrell Addison Posey, Willow Roberts Powers, Lawrence Rosen, Fernando Santos Granero, Carlo Severi, David J. Stephenson, Jr., Marilyn Strathern, and Donald Tuzin. 'Can Culture Be Copyrighted? [and Comments and Reply]', *Current Anthropology* 39:2 (1998); Kahunde 'Repatriating Archival Sound Recordings'; Niles 'The National Repatriation'; Martin Thomas 'Taking Them Back: Archival media in Arnhem Land today', *Cultural Studies Review* 13:2 (2007).

35 In the opinion of older singers.

song, we find amongst the old recordings a wealth of social, ancestral and ritual information embedded in song texts. They are also an invaluable resource for a new method of teaching song composition skills.

From the mid 1970s, the marked changes to the spoken Tiwi language and the shrinking attendance at (and involvement in) *Kulama*, an annual ceremony centred on the attainment of cultural knowledge, language and song composition skills,[36] fewer singers were able to compose. This saw people beginning to use cassette recorders to capture the songs of a highly regarded singer, not with long-term preservation in mind, but as a means of entertainment. Venbrux noted that 'relatively few people were able to ''copy'' (re-enact) these [songs] themselves'.[37] Grau noted (speaking of the changes in instruction in *Kulama* singing):

> [F]rom what I saw it seems that modern technology in the form of cassette recorders has helped a great deal … Every Kulama is taped by a number of people and these tapes are played over and over during the following weeks … Few people state [learning] as the reason for listening to the tapes, and usually say they just enjoy listening to them.[38]

Listening to *Kulama* songs on tape was also a modern means of dispersing the messages within the songs themselves as it became more difficult for people to attend ceremonies. The songs composed for the first day of the *Kulama* ceremony that celebrate deceased kin, for example, remain important as a way of remembering and respecting lost loved ones. Listening to recorded performances of these has become a soothing, healing and almost spiritual experience, for some, replacing the actual ceremony. The thought of archiving these recordings was, however, not on the agenda. One wouldn't want to hear the voice of a recently departed loved one. Venbrux mentions a cassette-tape being destroyed after the man leading the singing had died, making his voice *Pukumani*.[39] Venbrux and Grau also report men in the 1970s and 1980s learning songs via cassette tapes and many of the older men with whom I have spoken (who are the leading singers today) say that they mostly learned this way too. This might have been the beginning of a shift away from what was traditionally an oral and heuristic learning process. Coupled with the almost complete loss of a spoken command of the language in which these songs were composed, there has been a demonstrable change from unique, performance specific composition, to rote-

36 See Genevieve Campbell, 'Sustaining Tiwi Song Practice through Kulama', *Musicology Australia* 35:2, Special Issue: Sustainability and Ethnomusicology in Australasia (2013).

37 Eric Venbrux, *A Death in the Tiwi Islands: Conflict, ritual and social life in an Australian Aboriginal Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 122.

38 Andrée Grau, *Dreaming, Dancing, Kinship: The Study of Yoi, the dance of the Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands, North Australia* (PhD, The Queen's University of Belfast, 1983).

39 Venbrux, *A Death in the Tiwi Islands*.

learning from stock phrases.[40] The atrophying of the text resource material is the result of men learning from recordings, from finite performances, rather than learning the skills to create their own word patterns.

At Figure 3 I present the translation of part of a song composed by Joe Puruntatameri in February 1981 in honour of Long Stephen Tipuamantimeri, a well-respected singer, culture man and leader of ceremony.[41]

They all say ''that man from Irumakulumi he is a good singer''.

People from Nguiu send tapes to him saying ''sing for us so we can hear your voice and your words and know what is right.''

They all make tapes of him singing

He has got to sing in this tape *imerikungwamili*, *imerikianuwa* and ajipa [first, second and third night of *Kulama*]

We will have every word in the tape and everybody will listen

People will listen the meaning of the right words

They all say ''he had *ilantjini* [special necklace worn by the initiates, thus he went through all the initiation grades] it is why he is a good singer, we know about him''.

All the government, really old men and ladies come to listen to his songs.

Figure 3: Joe Puruntatameri's song about Long Stephen Tipuamantimeri.

Source: Grau, *Dreaming, Dancing, Kinship*.

The song text says something of how conscious people were of the role of recordings as a teaching tool and as a means of preserving knowledge held in song. It also suggests that there was a sense of what was being lost, even thirty years ago. Just as in 1981, today there is a sense of reverence towards those few left who can sing and a desire to learn from them, using recording as a means of preserving their knowledge. The senior men, on whom the responsibility of performing at funerals falls, have described to me their anxiety at the thought of not being able to sing the required Country, ancestral or Dreaming songs at funerals.[42] Some songmen are turning to the archival recordings as source

40 A fuller discussion of this can be found in Campbell, 'Sustaining Tiwi Song Practice through Kulama'.
41 I do not have a recording or the Tiwi text of this song, but the English summary is interesting and sufficient for the purpose of making this point. Grau, *Dreaming, Dancing, Kinship*.
42 Some Tiwi songs include reference to all three of these within one text, but many songs are specifically about Country, tell ancestral stories or refer to Dreaming animals.

material for their own compositions. As I mentioned above, creating a digital archive from this collection of locally made recordings is now on the agenda with the Indigenous Knowledge Centres in Pirlangimpi and Milikapiti (managed by the Northern Territory Library) and the Literacy Centre at Wurrumiyanga (managed by the Catholic School Board) the likely venues.

At this stage there is no evidence that recordings are replacing live performance in Ceremony. Apart from the handful of songs (no more than about a dozen) that can be successfully repeated because of their direct function as Dreaming *Yoi* songs,[43] the vast majority of songs are of the moment, and not ever intended to be repeated. There are a number of dances through which a member of a certain Dreaming will embody the animal or entity (Turtle, Shark, Crocodile, Rainbow for example) that is that Dreaming. As one dances Crocodile (for example) one becomes the ancestral crocodile and sings/speaks as that totemic being. Perhaps due to the individual and 'one-off' nature of Tiwi song, the idea of learning a particular song from the recordings by rote for repetition is outside of current thinking. The current, topical nature of their text and the over-riding culture of the individualism of composition and artistic ownership make most Tiwi songs unsuitable for long-term repetition.

There are some songs that, while they are not repeated exactly, are relatively stable. These are the songs that mark kinship and the songs that accompany the Dreaming dances. Both of these are essential for the mortuary-associated *Yoi* events performed at *Pukumani* ceremonies and at funerals. In the face of dwindling numbers of singers who can compose these songs (as would traditionally have been the case) there is talk of 'setting' a list of the required songs that would be taught to young people, enabling the ceremonies to continue to be held in the proper way.[44] It is in this context that the repatriated recordings have the potential to change the entire basis of Tiwi song practice, from one that was primarily about extemporisation, to one that is based on the rote learning of a finite set of songs. Deciding which songs these will be is something that has already begun to cause some concerns amongst elders. The 'privileging' and reification of particular songs over others due to their inclusion in recordings is a problem that people are just starting to think about.[45] Preserving an orally transmitted tradition by making it finite brings with it complications of ownership of the songs themselves and of the associated connection through esoteric knowledge that is passed on through oral transmission.

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43 *Yoi* songs, and their corresponding dances, refer to specific Dreaming groups and are owned and passed down through those Dreaming groups. See Grau, *Dreaming, Dancing, Kinship*; Campbell, 'Sustaining Tiwi Song Practice through Kulama'.

44 I was present at a meeting at the Literacy Centre in late 2012 where this was discussed.

45 Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, museums and heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Treloyn, Charles and Nulgit, 'Repatriation of Song Materials'.

Mary Elizabeth's Song

While the overall and community-wide results of the repatriation of recordings are broadly the subject of this chapter, I now discuss one woman's personal experience of the return of some of the material. Many of the songs sung at *Kulama,* a now almost defunct annual ceremony, were a record of current events, including announcements of births and the naming of babies, thus creating an aural historical record. There have been many instances of oral history current to the time of their performance (as well as record of people's actions or opinions that were previously unknown) being reflected in the recordings.

Mary Elizabeth Moreen Mungatopi is a member of the Strong Women's Group. As a young woman she was sent away from her parents (in Milikapiti) to board at the mission school on Bathurst Island. She returned to Milikapiti as a seventeen-year–old wanting to learn the language and culture she had been removed from.[46] Mary Elizabeth was among the group that travelled to Canberra with me in November 2009 to make the initial audition of the recordings at AIATSIS. Amongst the recordings made by Mountford in 1954 was one song that had a profound effect on those in the room. People had always known anecdotally that Mary Elizabeth (full Tiwi name: Kuwiyini Mirri Ilityipiti) had been named after the Queen.[47] Mary's father, Allie Miller Mungatopi, travelled to Brisbane in March 1954 as part of a group that performed for the Royal visit.[48] He had taken the opportunity to embed the name in his *Kulama* song, in effect naming her in honour of the experience.[49] Now, all those years later, in what was a very moving moment for all present, Mary heard her father singing the announcement of her birth. The text (shown at Figure 4) alludes to the telling of an important piece of news (symbolised by the radio). It also records the current event that was the Queen's visit to Australia (with the Queen literally being heard on the radio). The third layer of meaning is the naming of his daughter in honour of the event.

46 While at the mission school, the children were not allowed to attend ceremonies and the girls were full-time boarders (the boys were allowed home at weekends). Many of my elderly female consultants report on feeling disconnected from their culture and their parents and not being able to speak their language when they returned to their families as young adults.

47 Queen Elizabeth II of England.

48 The Queen was in Brisbane 9–18 March 1954. Cardo Kerinaiua, Allie Miller Mungatopi and Aloysius Puantilura were among a larger group of Aboriginal men performing at this event.

49 This is a *Jipuwakirimi* song (see Campbell, 'Sustaining Tiwi Song Practice through Kulama') that Mountford says was performed at the *Yilaniya* stage of the *Pukumani* Ceremony.

Gloss of text:

Kuwiyini mirr- ilityipiti ritiya wu- ni- wati- pa- wa- ningi- yangirri

Queen Mary Elizabeth radio np- to- morn – vol- talk – send- push*

Free translation: Queen Mary Elizabeth sends a message on the radio

np: non-past
morn: morning time prefix
vol: volitional

Figure 4: Queen Mary Elizabeth's song.

Source: Allie Miller, 1954, C01-2916-37, AIATSIS, Canberra.

* Charles Roland Osborne, 'Tiwi Chanted Verse' (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microform International, 1989), 842.

The discovery of this song is emblematic of the significant personal effect the recordings have had on many people.[50] It has become a tangible piece of Mary Elizabeth's family history, documented evidence of what had always been anecdotal. Mary Elizabeth has played the recording to her children and grandchildren and it has become at once an item of sentiment, a family heirloom and a piece of Tiwi social history. As well as the value of Allie's words and the story gained from the text, his voice is a powerful conduit between Mary Elizabeth and her father.

Responses to the Recordings from the Point of View of Current Singers

Respect for Singers of the Past

Amongst the recordings repatriated from AIATSIS are performances showing a high level of vocal talent. The strength of tone, length of phrasing and quality of diction and pitch of some recorded performances can objectively be regarded as being at a technically more difficult level than is found today. Over the years, through the process of oral transmission, song-men have made their own variations to vocal techniques and rhythmic and melodic ornamentation.

50 There are numerous other instances where individual personal connections have been found in the recordings.

It is only by hearing the 'old men' again after sixty years or more[51] that these incremental changes become apparent. The singer who had attained the skills of composition through *Kulama* was a highly respected person in the community. There is a sense of performance as a means of impressing those around. In a recording made by Jack Doolan of a *Kulama* ceremony in 1967[52] we hear singer Karla's[53] performance inspiring enthusiastic response from the 'audience'. While not a performance in the sense of him being on the stage, Karla's singing was of a particularly impressive quality both in terms of words and in the vocal strength, tone and length of phrases. I have played this file to a number of Tiwi colleagues and they have often given the same spontaneous response (like bravo) at the end of his songs. In this case, the recording itself has become a performance by Karla, because, although he is not physically present, his recorded voice manifests his presence and (Tiwi) listeners respond to that presence as a tangible experience of the man himself. Well-respected senior singers are anecdotally remembered for particular performances and for the Ceremonies they have led. Hearing them in recordings confirms this collective memory and, for younger listeners, adds their voices to the lineage of songmen.

Elders recall being present (as children) at Ceremony when these men sang. Current song leaders at Wurrumiyanga[54] have been very interested to hear the stylistic differences between their way of performing particular parts of Ceremony and that of the men on the old recordings. While novelty and change are inherent in Tiwi song practice, it was a difficult experience for the men to hear so clearly the degree of quantifiable loss that has occurred. The numbers of people singing, the 'strength'[55] of people's voices, the length of phrases, the linguistic complexity and the number of songs in each event are all elements that my consultants had to admit to themselves have been diminished in the last fifty years. This is a difficult thing to accept, especially for those elder men and women who feel the responsibility of sustaining the traditions.[56]

Rediscovering Song Traditions

The reverse can also occur, and rediscovering an element of song practice can be exhilarating and empowering for the song leaders. One such instance occurred

51 The 1912, 1948, 1954 and 1955 recordings have had the biggest impact in this regard.

52 DOOLAN_J02-000628A 05:32, AIATSIS, Canberra.

53 Karla (Tractor Joe) was also known as Prijina Lokemup. He is remembered as a particularly talented singer and the older men are listening to his recorded performances with the aim of emulating him.

54 Stephen-Paul Kantilla, Eustace Tipiloura, Roger Tipungwuti, Robert Biscuit Tipungwuti and Walter Kerinaiua snr. Mr Walter Kerinaiua and Robert Tipungwuti are recently deceased but I have permission to use their names here.

55 The strength and dynamic of the lead voices is a feature of the old recordings that a number of consultants have remarked upon, comparing their 'short wind' when singing today.

56 My role in analysing the songs has necessitated sensitivity in this area and respect for senior singers. I therefore note only those examples of loss of quality that my consultants discussed openly.

during our visit to the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra when the group was shown a collection of film footage with Tiwi content. Amongst this was film of a *Tepuwaturinga* (Wallaby) *Yoi* dance (filmed by Spencer in 1912) that has not been performed for many years. Wallaby had been 'forgotten',[57] having fallen out of practice because the men who would have danced Wallaby had stopped leading Ceremony. Wallaby is not amongst Spencer's audio recordings, but the visual footage had a great impact regardless. Basedow (1913) describes the Kangaroo[58] dance but there is no further mention of it in the literature until Grau, who writes that she never witnessed it and was told that 'at Pularumpi only one old man, Mickey Geranium Warlapini, knew the dance but that he was too old to perform it, the series of jumps requiring a lot of stamina'.[59]

We know from the recording made by Alice Moyle in 1976 at the Pacific Festival at Rotorua that Aloysious Puantilura, Leo Tungutalum and Max Kerinaiua performed Wallaby, but without video it is difficult to make a comparison with 1912.

Figure 5: Watching the 1912 (Spencer) footage of Wallaby *Yoi,* Nguiu March 2010.

Source: Author's collection.

57 Walter Kerinaiua jnr, personal communication, 18 October 2009.

58 Among the native fauna of the Tiwi Islands are wallabies (not kangaroos). It seems to have been a matter of using the generalised term that has meant that at times in the Tiwi literature we read about kangaroos. Basedow 'Notes on the Natives'; *The Tiwi of North Australia*, 3rd edition (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1988).

59 Grau, *Dreaming, Dancing, Kinship*.

The group was invited to give a performance in the outdoor courtyard at the National Film and Sound Archive. This was a free lunchtime concert that was very well attended, with about 100 people in the audience. The men and women performed *Kulama* songs and *Yoi* songs and dances and Walter spontaneously performed Wallaby. It was a marvellous moment, one that the audience would not have been aware of, but one in which the other Tiwi performers suddenly found themselves also amongst the audience. Walter had brought this *Yoi* to life again. Walter Kerinaiua (jnr) has been watching the 1912 footage to learn the dance. He intends to bring it back to Ceremony when he next has the chance. The Spencer footage has been viewed around the Tiwi community since then (see Figure 5), with Walter's performance in Canberra now part of its accompanying story.

Embedding the Songs Back into the Continuum of Tradition

While the vast majority of recorded Tiwi songs are unique, there is a strong degree of continuity of text elements and melody, especially along hereditary lines (of singers) and this has had an important effect on those directly connected with them. It seems likely that each few generations have a horizon of living memory of knowledge; one's father learned from his father, who learned from his father—that being about as far as it goes back. By the time the current grandfather is passing on his knowledge, he has defined and perhaps refined the knowledge he was taught and now owns it in order to pass it down. So we find in Tiwi songs a clear correlation and some exact stability of text and melody, but with a large degree of individual imprint and expression and a moving away from the old to create the new. This movement is so imperceptible that the elders themselves only realised it when they heard the old recordings. The *Nyingawi* song gives us one such example of the transmission of a song text through nearly seventy years. In March 2010, old lady Stephanie Tipuamantimeri (shown wearing headphones in Figure 6) listened to the *Nyingawi* recordings made in 1928, 1954 and 1975. She then spontaneously sang her *Nyingawi* song, saying that she remembered the words from the old days.[60] Stephanie sang three lines that compare very closely to the old recordings and one that she created. Although she only sang four lines (whereas the old recordings had up to seven lines), she told me she was singing it 'the old way'.

60 This was an informal meeting on 5 March 2010 and I did not record Stephanie. She died a few months later.

Figure 6: Stephanie Tipuamantimeri listening to the *Nyingawi* recordings (with Leonie Tipiloura) 2010.

Source: Author's collection.

When Casmira Munkara had recorded her *Nyingawi* for our CD in 2008 she told me she was singing it in 'the old way'. Although it contains some text that is identical to the old recorded songs, Casmira's performance is noticeably different, rhythmically, from the 'old way'. People's perception, however, (not having heard the recordings) is that she sings it how it always has been sung, continuing the transmission of this song through her family line. It has become a point of pride for Casmira that she sang it at exactly the same pitch as her predecessors even though she had not heard the old recordings when she made her recording. This connection, through a recording, directly to the voices of her ancestors is another powerful and tangible outcome of the recordings' return.

The Effect of Recording on Performance

A repeated point of discussion during listening sessions has been whether the singers were aware they were being recorded and how that might have had an effect on performance style and song choice. When basing analysis on recorded examples, one must take into consideration the fact that a performance will most likely be affected by the relationship between the singer and the researcher. The reason for the performance is necessarily altered, as are the social, functional and performative contexts. The venue (indoors or outdoors) has a marked effect on both the quality of the sound and the way the singer will relate physically

to the microphone. Sitting in a room across the table from the microphone will result in a very different performance from one recorded sitting outside on the ground with birds, dogs, children, cars and passers-by distracting the singer and adding to the sound that is captured.

The audience aspect is perhaps the element that most affects the performance. I have had occasions, during a recording session, when a palpable sense of respect and import is felt by the group, witnessing an elderly woman recording her song, or a group of three senior singers correcting each other's performances as they sing. The desire to be correct, preserving the song (and the performance) for posterity that the singer might (or might not) have been experiencing can be heard amongst the repatriated recordings. Amongst Osborne's recordings, for example, we hear some singers correct themselves as they sing, reiterating a line of text with the syllabic count corrected. This is how it would be done in a 'real' performance context and this suggests that the singer is approaching his task of recording a song in much the same way as he would a performance in Ceremony. My experience is somewhat different. Perhaps it is the result of hearing their antecedents make mistakes that has meant some of my consultants ask me to delete a recording if they make a mistake, or they ask me not to record until they have practised a few times. There might well have been similar re-takes during recording sessions in the past, but it is certainly a feature of my consultants' recording sessions that they are aiming at a correct performance to be recorded for posterity. Perhaps this is due to a heightened sense of creating an archive in the light of the repatriation of the *palingarri* recordings.

Amongst songs recorded by Mountford as part of a *Kulama* ceremony held on Melville Island in May 1954 is an interesting example of the self-awareness of the research subject with the singer using the performance to comment, in song, on the process he is going through at the time. It is most likely Ray Giles, the ABC radio recordist who worked with Mountford, to whom the singer, Allie Miller, is referring. The text is at Figure 7 (translation given by Eustace Tipiloura).

Ngilaghama karirijiyo waliji miningu merreke wanga pinguwangamini
I am the radio talking
Ngiyawungarri karra apuji yintawayalangimi
I am putting it in the radio
Kalipulijimani rijio yinuwalumurri
He is talking on the radio

Figure 7: Radio song.

Source: Allie Miller, 1954, C01-002917-38, AIATSIS, Canberra.

Listening to the recording, Eustace Tipiloura told me, 'he's telling people about something new. That's the main part of the ceremony, around about 3pm. He must be talking about the white bloke being there with his recorder I think.'[61]

There will inevitably be questions as to the motivation of both researcher and performer in anthropological research, especially in the context of perceived cultural loss. While Tiwi people filmed and/or recorded by Spencer and Hart may well have had very little understanding of the long-term implications of their participation, the fact remains that they were being asked to sing for a visitor and this must have had some effect on their motivations and resulting performance.[62] Singing into a machine that could play sound back immediately, the singer would have been aware that their voice was being reproduced and stored in some way. The experience of hearing their own singing replayed would have changed the nature of performance as a one-off. As any musician will perform in a slightly heightened state in front of an audience or at a recording session, so too Tiwi people may have altered their performance when they were being recorded or filmed. The sense of presenting the culture in the best possible way for the cameras (or recorder) might arguably result in a performance that is not entirely natural. It is very difficult to decide whether this is a problem or not. If being recorded (or having a non-Tiwi audience) inspires a more elaborate version or a more enthusiastic dance or more rehearsal then that is a valid part of the notion of performance.

Amongst my consultants there have been widely differing opinions as to the ethics of the collection of some of the recorded material, especially the recordings of mourning songs in the *Pukumani* (mortuary-associated) ceremony. Some (Tiwi) people listened with interest to the melodic and linguistic artistry of a performance, some recognised the voice of a deceased loved one with sentimental joy, and some heard personal grief and pain and thought it inappropriate for anyone other than close family to listen. I have witnessed a number of heated discussions about the difference between singing for family and singing for visitors/researchers (in the context of a ceremony), with many people concerned that singers might not always have been aware of the intrusion of the recorder, or of the long term ramifications of being recorded. In the following quotation, Holmes makes the distinction between a ceremony and performance. The *Pukumani* ceremony for Polly and Allie Miller's young son was held in May 1966 at the then Bagot Aboriginal Reserve in Darwin.[63] The segment below indicates that the occasion was seen by the government Welfare Department as a good opportunity to give (white) people a new cultural experience. The Tiwi people do not seem to have been given much of a choice in the matter. Allie is

61 Eustace Tipiloura Wurrumiyanga/Nguiu, personal communication, 18 March 2010.
62 Venbrux, *A Death in the Tiwi Islands*.
63 The ceremony was held in Darwin because the child had died in Darwin en route to hospital.

quoted as having been upset at the lack of understanding and respect for his son's Ceremony: 'Too many white people come … we never ask them to come, only Welfare man can say.'[64]

> The Welfare Branch had declared an Open Day for tourists and locals … Polly sang softly to the ghost of her dead son and signalled for me to record it … Crowds of white visitors jostled each other for photo opportunities, staring expectantly up the hill to where the Tiwi mourners were assembled in full ceremonial regalia.[65]

By Holmes' account, the ceremony was just as it would have been (in terms of structure and ritual) without any non-Tiwi onlookers. Clearly though they were being watched as spectacle. Holmes goes on to report:

> At this point a senior welfare officer stood up and made a speech to thank the public for attending the ceremony and the Tiwi people for the performance. By prior arrangement the sculptures and grave posts would be sold to various dealers and other outlets.[66]

The distinction between 'ceremony' and 'performance' in the welfare officer's words (or in Holmes' reporting of his words) implies there was a difference in perception between the audience's and the mourners' experience of the event. It should really have been the other way around; the white audience was watching a performance (although with the extra exoticism of knowing it was a ceremony), while the mourners were attempting to have Ceremony, knowing they were being watched and photographed. Yes, the mourners knew they were being recorded, but it is arguable whether they were aware of the legal and moral ramifications of that recording's journey to Canberra and eventual return to the community.

Conclusion

This example brings us back to the notion of a performance, and a song (owned by its performer) becoming an item, trapped in a recording which then becomes an artefact (owned by its collector). In the moment it is recorded the song's ownership shifts and it is only the process of repatriation that enables that ownership to be shifted back. I have explained how the 'discovery' of the recorded song material in the AIATSIS catalogue, the process of going to Canberra to reclaim it, and the ongoing associated negotiations regarding

64 Sandra Holmes, *The Goddess and the Moon Man: The sacred art of the Tiwi Aborigines* (Roseville East: Craftsman House, 1995), 31.
65 ibid., 22.
66 ibid., 29.

usage rights have created a story around the repatriated recordings. The fact that they have been 'reclaimed' gives them a presence in the Tiwi community as highly valued and important cultural property that has been returned. The repatriated recordings have been the focus of close study, from the point of view of their historical, cultural, social and artistic significance and their return has had substantial positive and empowering outcomes for elders as they share the knowledge in the songs with young Tiwi people. While some feel that many of these recordings should perhaps not have been taken in the first place, others believe that with the tenuous state of Tiwi song, language and ceremony they are now of great value to the community for the preservation of culture as well as being a meaningful resource for the continuation of existing and new forms of Tiwi music making. Whatever the differing opinions as to the ethics of such recordings being made and collected, it is evident that the process of their return, even with (and perhaps due to) the difficulties and lengthy bureaucratic processes, has imbued these old recordings with an extra significance. It has also opened a new chapter of engagement between Indigenous knowledge holders and researchers in the recording and documentation of song.

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