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CLASS DIVISIONS, etc.,

Southwestern W.A.

Portions of this are from III, 1

Types of persons belonging to
the various class divisions are
described here.

The whole of the Southwestern people occupying the line of coast from (about) Jurien Bay to Esperance have two exogamous divisions. These divisions are called respectively Wordungmat and Manitchmat (or Manaitchmat) and mean Crow stock (wordang = crow; mat = leg, family, stock) and White cockatoo stock (manitch = white cockatoo).

The form of descent of these divisions varies. From Jurien Bay to the Donnelly River, descent is maternal and from Donnelly River to Esperance the descent is agnatic. The area throughout which maternal descent obtains, is smaller than that in which the descent is paternal.

The marriage laws of these divisions are as under :-

Jurien Bay to Donnelly River

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Offspring</u>
Manitchmat	Wordungmat	Wordungmat
Wordungmat	Manitchmat	Manitchmat

Donnelly River to Esperance

Manitchmat	Wordungmat	Manitchmat
Wordungmat	Manitchmat	Wordungmat

Members of families whose descent was maternal were adopted into neighbouring tribes whose descent was paternal, and vice versa. From time to time boys were adopted from one district to another, following the line of descent prevailing in the new district into which they entered.

This mixture of descent was shown in the marriage relations only, as, whether a woman was Manitchmat and her offspring were Manitchmat or Wordungmat according to the descent prevailing in the district, she was still the mother and her children and her own sister's children and own brother's children bore the same blood relationship towards each other and were addressed by their blood relationship terms regardless as to whether their descent was maternal or paternal.

Occasionally breaches of the marriage laws occurred, but punishment generally followed the offence. The terms yurdabilbil and mutch were applied to all wrong class marriages and to those who contracted them. Most of the wrong marriages have been due

to the arrival of the whites in the Southwest, and the consequent immunity of native offenders from punishment by native law for a breach of their marriage rules.

There was no superstitious respect for crow or white cockatoo amongst the Southwestern people, the White Cockatoo being generally eaten. Crow however was not a usual article of food except in cases of necessity. An old Gingin Wordungmat stated that his people did not eat crows "because they were all the same as self". In the Gingin dialect (lat. 31° long 115°) wordung also means "dead" but the Gingin dead go over or under the sea to the "western country of the dead" and do not become crows. With this one exception the crow may be eaten in all parts of the South where the phratry name obtains. The crest and other feathers of the white cockatoo are frequently worn at dances and other ceremonies, and from their gay colouring, form valuable articles of commerce. There is no evidence, traditional or otherwise, of a ceremony being performed for either Crow or white cockatoo. Crow feathers had no commercial value.

Each division, even at the present day, appears to have a distinct and lively fear of the magic of the other, this being particularly noticeable amongst the Perth, Gingin, Vasse and Murray natives. If some Manitchmat are seated at a camp fire and one or more crows suddenly alight in their vicinity, they believe that these are buyungur Wordungmat (stranger crow stock, from a distant tribe) come to work some evil magic upon them, and the bulyagatak (sorcerer) of the tribe will, on his own initiative, "blow" the magic away in the direction from which the crows came.

In the same manner a Wordungmat will be careful not to mimic the cry of a Manitch that flies shrieking over his head, feeling certain that should he do so, the stranger manitchmat whom the bird may represent would resent the mockery by putting "bulya" (magic) into him.

There were no magical practices connected with crow or white cockatoo, no special tribe amongst them, nor individuals, held special ceremonies in honour of these birds. There was no singing either for the increase of either bird, since the white

cockatoo was a general and supplementary article of food, and not a special food which might be allowed to some members and forbidden to others, and the crow was seldom eaten.

In all districts if either Manitchmat or Wordungmat died, no special abstinence from Crow or white cockatoo was observed, and the death of a white cockatoo or crow did not imply the death of a human member of the divisions.

In Gingin, the crow is not eaten, but on the death of a Manitchmat, the Gingin natives do not abstain from white cockatoo.

A myth connects the eaglehawk with the formation of the two divisions Wordungmat and Manitchmat. This bird is traditionally supposed to have been the father (maman) of all the Southwestern birds; and in several districts Manitch and Wālitich (white cockatoo and eaglehawk) are represented as being one or alike, all Manitch being walitch mākin and all walitch manitch mākin (like, similar to, or the same as.)

At the present day, the eaglehawk has no tribal, class or local significance, but many legends give this bird precedence of all the others, and credit him with bringing fire and freshwater to the inhabitants of the Southwest.

In a Vasse legend the eaglehawk and squeaker crow are husband and wife; in the Beverley version the eaglehawk is the kongan (mother's brother) of the Wordung, as he is also in the Southern legends; in the Perth district the legend varies, the eaglehawk dying, but leaving two sons behind. Perth district had three distinct legends of the eaglehawk, one showing him at enmity with the crow, another typifying him as the companion and playmate of the white cockatoo and a third in which he claims the honour of having brought fire to the natives. All these legends show the important place the eaglehawk holds in the myths, since he is credited with forming the phratries, bringing fresh water and obtaining fire.

With regard to the divisions which the eaglehawk is supposed to have formed, every relationship term and every wrong term as well, that is every mūch, yurdabilbil or wrong marriage term

is applied by Perth, Murray, Vasse and Gingin/^{native}to the eaglehawk only. He is demma (grandparent), maman (father), ngangan (mother), wūrdū (brother), jūkan (sister), noba (child), but he is also yūnbūla (giving a wrong class name), walak-walak (taking every woman regardless of class), gūnga-būla (lit. "many backs" - promiscuous cohabiting), and mūтчū (marrying wrongly). Yet he is mamangura (father of all). The Wordungmat are both relations and relations-in-law to him and the Manitchmat are relatives and sister's children.

Walja, Wordung and Manitch are called by the Southwestern people ngalata mūrurt (all our relations).

With the exception of the sea, fire, wind and water, the Southwestern divisions appear to have all natural objects divided between them, the terms used in speaking to the division of the person who is speaking. The Manitchmat man alludes to those objects to which he is kin as nguning, referring to those belonging to the Wordungmat people asenoyāng. Similarly with the Wordungmat who call the objects associated with their division ngāning, those of the Manitchmat being designated noyāng.

These terms also express the human kinship existing amongst each phratry. All Manitchmat whose descent is maternal are ngāning to each other and noyāng to Wordungmat, all Wordungmat being ngāning to each other and noyāng to Manitchmat. The exclusion of sea, fire, wind and water from this general division is owing to their universality, as every native can make a fire, feel the wind and drink the water, and on the seacoast all members can fish or swim in the waters of their own area.

Certain trees within and beyond the timbered areas of the Southwest have both division and sex, the following being examples of those so classed :-

Mari = red gum	Male	Manitchmat
Būlit = blue gum	Female	Wordungmat
Bulit, warnda = white gum	"	"
Tuart = tuart	Male	Manitchmat
peppermint tree	Female	Wordungmat
Mūjar = cabbage tree	"	"

Māngart = jamwood	Female	Wordungmat
Māngaitch = banksia	Female	Wordung & Manitch
Gūlyāng = paperbark	Female	Manitchmat
Yorla mūdūrt = paperbark	Female	Manitchmat
Ngundik = broombush	Female	Manitchmat
Bibārak = wattle	Female	Manitchmat
Koba = stinkwood	Female	Wordungmat
Kalga = blackboy	Female	Wordungmat
Yulak = blackboy	Female	Wordungmat
Jerail = jarrah	Female	Wordungmat
Jura = spearwood	Female	Manitchmat
Wū-i-ām = shrubs (seacoast)	Female	Manitchmat
Karabart = bulrushes	Female	Manitchmat
Iriyāng = bushes (seacoast)	Female	Wordungmat
Kwonert = acacia	Female	Wordung and Manitch
Kwila, kwela = sheoak	Female	Wordungmat
Bērāng = prickly acacia	Female	Wordungmat
Dwalgur ?	Female	Manitchmat
Moa biramitch ?	Female	Wordungmat

This classification of the trees and shrubs was obtained from Baabārgart (Capel), Ngilgi, f. (Augusta), and Bardit, m. (Bridgetown). Babārgart (a Manitchmat) stated that certain of these trees "belonged" to certain sides of his family, as for instance the tuart, dwalgur and gulyong which were on his gi-ana-gur's or demagur's (grandparents) side; Jura (spearwood) which belonged to ngangangur and kongangur (mother's and mother's brother's) side; berāng which were on the kulongar (children's) side.

The tuart, gulyong and dwalgur grew abundantly on Babārgart's father's father's territory, the kwela (sheoak) was plentiful in the Vasse district to which Baaburgart's mother's father (demangur) belonged and the habitat of the bērang or prickly acacia was between Bunbury and Augusta.

The tuart was also called demangur by Ngilgi a Manitchmat, her father's father owning part of the tuart country round Augusta.

The jura (spearwood) was called ngangangur by Ngalyart (a Pinjara Wordungmat) whose mother came from the spearwood country east of Pinjarra.

Dūngunit a Busselton district Wordungmat called the kwela (sheoak) demangur, his mother's mother having come from a district where the sheoak grew abundantly.

In the Bridgetown district, where paternal descent obtained, the jirarl (jarrah) was placed by Bardit (a Manitchmat) in the Manitchmat division, and belonged to his demangur (father's father's) side.

East of Bridgetown at Kurndining and other places, spearwood (dīdar) is the totem of a few Wordungmat who call themselves did-arwuk, and in the Nganajiring district some Wordungmat are goenak, with mar (clouds) as their totem. In these districts the two primary divisions only obtain.

There is a noticeable difference in the physique and coloring of the members of the two divisions Wordungmat and Manitchmat, notwithstanding the centuries of intermarriage between them. The distinguishing characteristics of the Manitchmat division are their warm chocolate coloring and a roundness of limb and feature. There is also a certain fineness of shape, and a more pleasing and open expression will generally be found amongst the Manitchmat. Their temperament too, though impulsive and passionate is, as a rule, neither treacherous nor sullen. Their hair is long, black and wavy, sometimes curly, but the hair of both Wordungmat and Manitchmat is of the fineness of texture and the oval shape of the Caucasian. The brow arches project considerably as in the Wordungmat type, but amongst many of the Manitchmat the fulness of the eye lessens somewhat the prominence of the brows. Wunar, a Bunbury Manitchmat, had fine full eyes even in old age, and although his brows were fully as prominent as those of the Wordungmat in his district, the superciliary arches of the latter appeared to be much more prominent than those of Wunar.

Some Manitchmat were short and of slight build, some were tall and finely formed, (It was usual in all tribes for short and short, and tall and tall, to fraternize, whether these were Wordung or Manitch.) but in all the Manitchmat met with, certain of these differential characteristics were observable. The Manitchmat of the Southwestern districts as represented by Ngandil, Timbal and Dul in the accompanying illustration are good examples of the southwestern Manitchmat. Occasionally Manitchmat characteristics and coloring will be observed in persons who belong to the Wordungmat division and vice versa, but these are generally noticed by the natives themselves and the persons possessing such characteristics are referred to if Wordungmat as Manitch makin (like Manitch) or Wordung makin (like Wordung), as the case may be.

To those familiar with the Southwestern types, the difference between Wordungmat and Manitchmat is at once apparent, without ascertaining from the individuals under observation the division to which they belong. Wordungmat are generally of a duller and darker colour than Manitchmat, acknowledging this difference freely.

the body is shorter, sturdier and more thickly set, the feet and hands, like those of all natives, are small, but somewhat "stumpier" in the Wordungmat, and their character is less open and more quarrelsome, treacherous and sullen than that of the Wordungmat.

Again, every "hairy" native met with in the southwestern camps belonged to the Wordungmat division. In some instances the bodies of these persons were covered almost entirely with hair.

Mogrit, a Beverley district Wordungmat was covered with a thick coating of hair over breast, back, legs and arms, and his son Mōgūgūl although begotten of a half caste woman, had also a thick covering of hair on breast and back.

Nebinyan, a Wordungmat of the Two People Bay district, was also covered with hair on breast, back, legs and arms, also Mungail or Buljir of Benyugain, and many Wordungmat women had not only hair on their bodies, but tufts of hair also grew on their throats and chins, in two instances at Kellerberrin forming a straggling "chin beard".

The question usually asked when a visitor who is not well known arrives at a Southwestern camp is "Yinok mata naitch?" (Your 'leg', stock, family, what?) Wordungmat or Manitchmat is the reply given.

In those districts where the two divisions only obtain and have not been subdivided, the question "Yinok naitch borungur" (Your borungur - elder brother, totem,- what?) is often put in place of "mata" (family), the reply being "Merderung (seamullet) borungur," kardar (lizard), wej (emu) or other borungur belonging to the person questioned, such borungur being either hereditary or localised in the district from which the visitor came.

(Put this in its proper place).