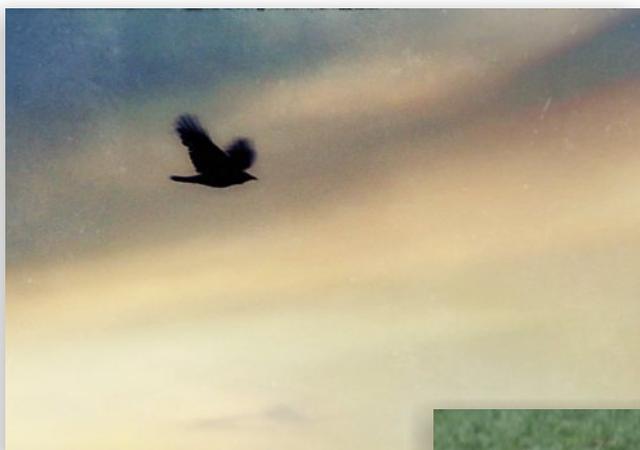


## Totems and Moieties

Whadjuk Nyungar society is traditionally divided into two moieties or groups: the Manitj (White Cockatoo) and Wardung (Australian Raven). The moieties are matrilineal, that is, determined by the mother. Traditionally, every person belongs to a moiety and marries a person from the other moiety.

A Totem Being is the ancestral form of an animal, plant or other object. Totemic Beings belong to one or other of the moieties. Each Whadjuk person or family identifies with one or more totem(s). It is the responsibility of that person or family to care for that totem. For example, if your totem is a swan then you make sure that not too many swans are killed for food and there are plenty left to breed and maintain the population. This system of totems helps create a sustainable balance between consumption and conservation.

Totems also help define a person's relationship to the world and to the Dreaming: past, present and future.



photos: Sam Blight

