Traditional business on the AP Lands was, and is, a more serious competitor for the time and energy of Anangu. Obligations to attend ceremonies, funerals and the constant round of government agency and community meetings compete for the time of Anangu guides and elders. These customary obligations take precedence over guiding a tour group. If no guides are present for some or all of the tour then the Company can be sued for not providing the advertised itinerary. Obviously, as an Aboriginal cultural tour, Desert Tracks depends heavily on Anangu guides. The Anangu directors have discussed this difficulty and established a system where there is always a guide drawn from a large pool of potential guides. If one is called to traditional business another takes their place in the modern business of tourism; both businesses are seen as important, with law that must be respected.

The difficulty of recruiting younger Anangu as guides is the attractions of larger communities, as the tourist camps are remote. Younger people may find full-time employment in service industries in the larger communities more rewarding than part-time guiding in remote homeland centres. Thus there is a scarcity of younger guides, which is changing to some extent at Cave Hill, with increased frequency of daily tours from Uluru providing regular income.

**Cultural Impacts of Tourism**

This is a central concern of Anangu managing their cultural landscape resources. The issues relating to Indigenous protocols of relations, respect and responsibility were introduced earlier in Chapter 2. A brief overview of the issues is included here to reaffirm the integral importance of the intangible cultural landscapes of their country to holistic resource management on Anangu Lands.

1. **Permits**

Protection of sacred sites, knowledge and photographic images of country and people have been issues that the business, with the assistance of the AP Legal service, has had to address. The Declaration of Intent must be signed by all
visitors to declare that they are coming for personal reasons, not professional journalism, research, or with the intention of making any profit from the knowledge of Aboriginal culture that they gain on tour. All professional journalists, photographers, researchers and writers, prior to participation in a tour, must sign legal contracts. All material must be returned to the Company for vetting prior to publication. Secret or sacred material must be edited out and misuse of information can be prosecuted. Traditional methods of controlling access to sacred sites and knowledge have proved to be insufficient in the modern world of tourism. The senior custodians of Cave Hill, Dickie and Armunta, believed sitting down in country would protect it:

We protect this place and watch over it...in case someone comes in the back way to the cave. This place is a very important place...we are the only ones allowed to take tourists into this place. We teach them about its Creation Law and about the Dreamtime ancestors.

(James 1996a:21)

Unfortunately this method of protection of Anangu cultural and intellectual property has not been sufficient. The problems encountered by Desert Tracks, and the methods used to prevent future misappropriation of cultural material, are discussed in the later chapter, 'Stealing the Grindstone'.

2. Market Commodification of Culture

The highest market demand is for shorter, easier tours returning at night to comfortable hotel accommodation. The strong desire of the elders to teach people properly about their culture has meant that Desert Tracks has not developed a short one-day cultural tour until recently when there was a generational change in guides and directors. Dickie Minyintirri, a guide of many years experience at Uluru as a park ranger, now works at Cave Hill where the one-day Oddessy Safari tour has operated since 2001. Minyintirri argues strongly that this tour is too short for the visitors to gain any real understanding of culture (Minyintirri pers.comm., June 2003).
Younger community members with more knowledge of Western society have to assist the elders in understanding the limitations of tourism. It cannot be the vehicle for cultural teaching in the way they would like it to be. To become more economically viable, Desert Tracks has to fit its product more to market demand for shorter tours. However, it is not yet evident that Anangu on AP Lands are ready to fully adapt to the mainstream tourism market. Economic necessity and a lack of other viable enterprises on the lands may force a more commercial outlook. However, traditional obligations will need to be carefully balanced with the demands of commercial tourist activity if plans for the Ngintaka Trail are to open up tourism access to more of the AP Lands. Two excerpts of the Cultural Heritage Report that I completed in 2005 for the feasibility study of this proposed tourism route are presented in Appendix 9 and 10. Aspects of this report are discussed in Chapter Thirteen.

Environmental Impacts of Tourism

The main environmental impacts of Desert Tracks tourism on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands of South Australia have focused around Angatja in the Mann Ranges 100 km south-west of Uluru, and Cave Hill north-east of Amata. The Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people have had freehold title to these lands since 1981 and have continued the pastoral landuse established in the mission era of the 1940s. The other major natural resource use of the region is mining, but its impact is limited and has not affected the Mann Ranges. The homeland communities of Angatja and Cave Hill have had an obvious impact on their immediate environments, being small villages of houses, sheds, windmills, tanks, fences, roads, rubbish tips and introduced plant species in small gardens. The major impact of modern settlement on the desert environment is of many roads crisscrossing the landscape; 4wd vehicles have greatly increased the web of small roads over fragile sand-dune landscapes.

Tourism initially increased these road networks and contributed new denuded campsites and rubbish at the local tip. For the first three years, campsites were areas of cleared spinifex and prickles in mulga-scrub or, sometimes, dry
creekbeds were used. The pattern was to shift camp regularly, a pattern set by Anangu hosts in accordance with traditional movement of campsites. However, when this practice was applied to frequent groups of tourists with large vehicles the camp clearances proved to be rapidly destroying the fragile desert environment.

Rubbish disposal was a problem; not just that of the tour groups, who could take out non-burnables to recycle or to town tips. There was the rubbish generated by from six to twenty Anangu guides and families. The style of rubbish disposal was to ‘burn, bash and bury’ but this proved inadequate against persistent dingoes and crows digging it up. Local rubbish disposal systems were poorly organised due to lack of facilities in the small homeland centres. Factors such as isolation, having no bulldozer for the tip work and the proliferation of polystyrene from packaging in the local stores, made rubbish disposal difficult. Water cartage of forty-four gallon drums to campsites was difficult and hard to maintain hygienically. Toilets were bush-style dry pits. The problem of flies in summer was a worry. Campsites rapidly felt unclean.

In 1991 it was decided by the co-management team that stronger environmental controls were necessary. The tradition of moving campsites was degrading too many areas so permanent winter and summer campsites were chosen by Anangu. The summer camp is a wide sandy creekbed close to Angatja, with large river red gum shaded areas. The location takes advantage of summer breezes, access to a local waterhole and community showers and toilets. The only additional structure is a pit toilet constructed on site on the riverbank. The winter camp, Atal, is sited in a grove of mulga trees on the northeast side hills.

**Atal Eco-camp**

Camping out on the ground in swags under the night sky full of stars is a new experience for most visitors. Tents are available for those who prefer them. The facilities at Atal were upgraded in 1994-5 with a grant from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Science under its National Ecotourism Program. The aim was to design minimal infrastructure: to provide hot showers and solar-
powered refrigeration and lighting; toilets are the pit design appropriate for this dry desert area. The facilities were designed to restrict water usage to a minimum in this desert location where water is a precious resource. International eco-camp standards were adhered to in the design and waste removal systems (see Appendix 5). The campsite plan was in accordance with Anangu metaphysical and physical concerns of siting living shelters in the cultural and natural landscape. Other crucial considerations were the Western concerns of tourist comfort and the minimal impact of roads, showers, toilets, lighting and waste disposal.

Figure 26: Atal Camp Plan: Architect's View (P Pholeros 1996, in D James 1997)

1. Metaphysical Aspects of Site Analysis and Design

The Anangu decision to choose the Atal site and their brief to the consulting architect was based soundly in their physical and metaphysical knowledge of country. Nganyinyija described the Anangu design principle of living in the open, connected to people and the environment, not in closed boxes of Western housing:
Our spirit stands open. I live in the open, where I can see the hills and the bush. Living in the open, not enclosed, one’s spirit is strong. A long time ago everything became related - the stars, the earth, the hills, the different animals, the different bush foods – everything.

(Nganyinytja 1990)

The design of campsites and the spatial arrangement of wiltja, traditional shelters, allowing privacy and intimacy to each other and the environment, are important to the wellbeing of people. If Anangu live too long inside houses and in large settlements that close them off from their environment, Nganyinytja says, they lose heart. They need to see the country, feel the wind and the early morning sun on their skin. Then they can hear the land and know themselves.

Where Anangu live and how they orientate their camps or wiltja is determined by the spiritual, ecological, topographical, hydrological and sociological considerations. Where people camp in relation to the land and other people is part of their rich cultural life that gives meaning to all their actions and relates them to their living environment and the land. Anangu say something of a person’s spirit is left where he or she camps.

The elements considered in siting and orientation of wiltja and tents are:

- **Spiritual:** Location within walking distance of sacred sites of the Tjukurpa is common during ceremonial times. Respect and awe of sacred sites dictates a certain distance away for campsites.

- **Ecological:** Shelter minimally impacts on food and water sources, while proximity to these resources is a high priority. Spinifex is burnt
as protection from snakes. Existing trees, rock overhangs or low hills are used for shelter from wind, rain and excessive heat.

- **Water**: Proximity to clean, reliable water sources is critical. It was taboo to camp too close to a water source; thus the cleanliness of the drinking water was preserved. This also allowed the animals they relied on for food to gain access to the water.

- **Land**: Shelter is sited and orientated to take account of natural protection from prevailing winds. Valleys or beside ridges of hills or sand dunes were chosen because of the natural protection offered. Orientation of shelters is towards the north-east with movable shade extensions to provide shade in heat and warmth in cold times. Traditionally this meant just moving branches and spinifex; now sheets of iron or canvas can be easily moved.

- **Sociological**: Siting and orientation of shelter is responsive to one’s relationship to other families in the community. Extended families will locate in proximity to each other to allow the free movement of children between many fathers and mothers of extended family and to protect women, children and the elderly from violence. Open living encourages the family resolution of disputes and celebrations.

- **Health and wellbeing**: Anangu say being in and being part of the open environment is essential for the wellbeing of the soul: listening to the wind, feeling the sun on skin, listening to the birds, observing the stars to tell the passage of time and the seasons.

As Nganyinytja said, ‘Open your heart and let the wind that blows across your country talk to you’ (Nganyinytja, pers.comm.,1990).
2. Physical Site Design at Angatja

The mulga winter campsite at Atal is 5 km from Angatja community, so prior to 1992 water and rubbish still had to be carted long distances. In 1992 the community erected a pit toilet on site; in 1993 a water line was laid to the camp from Angatja, and three taps positioned, one in the tourist camp and two in the Anangu guide camp. In 1993 an environmental architect, with many years of experience working with communities on the AP Lands, was engaged to assist in developing a plan for the camp infrastructure. The brief to the architect was to work with the Anangu and manager of Desert Tracks to solve the problems in accordance with national eco-tourism standards of minimal impact infrastructure and Anangu cultural considerations of location and camp design, to best accommodate tourists and Anangu guides. Design of a permanent, ecologically sustainable campsite was necessary to reduce environmental damage from vehicles and camping. This has restricted road access, solar power, restricted water usage, non-polluting soaps and detergents, careful wood lot usage and minimal infrastructure designed to fit in with traditionally designed structures.

Land clearance of the main campsite was planned with minimal destruction of vegetation and ground cover so as not to create a dust bowl, but the need was for comfort and no snakes. Anangu usually burn and clear a wide area of spinifex around their camps to clear away snakes, stinging ants and spiders. They realised that Westerners like camping under shade so located the visitors’ camp amongst the mulga, while they chose the open sandy area for themselves. The assessment of the Atal site by Mike Last, an environmental land management expert from the Pitjantjatjara Council, confirmed Anangu concerns about the flow lines of stormwater from the nearby hills. To prevent too much topsoil erosion, existing roads had to be blocked and a new circular vehicle access route devised for the tourist buses and Anangu cars. All structures were located to minimise erosion damage. It was suggested that there be ongoing monitoring of damage to sites.
The increased use of what had previously been local hunting tracks by buses and 4wd vehicles made some restrictions on access necessary. Tourist vehicles are now restricted to major roads. The practice of taking tourists on cross-country hunting has been limited because of the creation of many tracks, over fragile dunes and through mulga scrub, that take a long time to revegetate. Although hunting is of prime importance to Anangu, and is exciting for tourists, the cultural differences in perceptions about hunting often cause friction and are damaging for eco-tourism. Anangu, with use of guns and 4wds, often kill more animals than they can eat and the ‘skinny’ ones are discarded, much to the horror of Western environmentalists. After several tourists burst into tears at the sight of kangaroos being shot, it was decided to limit hunting as a tourist activity and reduce the impact of overuse of native food resources for tourism. Now the principle is to only hunt and gather for tourists to taste samples of local foods.

The structures for shade, bush kitchen, eating space and sleeping shelter were designed using local materials and incorporated traditional wiltja building techniques. Traditional designs were altered to accommodate tourists’ desires to stand upright and to sit in chairs and use tables. Solar power was used throughout the camp to provide lighting and to provide refrigeration to increase food storage capacity.

The cultural aesthetics suit the place and the combination of Western and Anangu sensitivities. The campsite spatial plan and structures had to reflect traditional Anangu camp plans to enable the flow of people and teaching of traditional activities to take place as naturally as possible. The positions of people’s sleeping structures had to allow for privacy without walls and group cohesiveness by being able to see everyone’s camp, and were based on traditional camp plans. People are encouraged to sleep in the open to enjoy the clear night sky but tents are provided with comfortable swags consisting of a bedroll with mattress, pillow, sheets and blankets.
Improved infrastructure facilities for tourists provided upgraded facilities for Anangu guides. Ensuring good clean water supplies for tourists has improved the water supplies for both Angatja and Cave Hill communities on homeland destinations. When tourism first started at Angatja, water was carted in forty-four gallon drums, often from a community bore supply that was contaminated. The result was cases of dysentery, usually mild, but when several people contracted shigella it became a public health problem. The manager of Desert Tracks contacted the Pitjantjatjara Council Projects officers who were responsible for the supply of safe drinking water on AP Lands. Water quality testing of Angatja bores and water tanks was undertaken and the systems cleaned and upgraded. A new bore was sunk and water to the tourist camp was provided by polythene pipe. The extra precaution of locating a rainwater tank within the ablutions block designed
for the Atal campsite, provided clean water without high levels of mineral salts for visitors with weak stomachs. Cave Hill, similarly, had a poor water supply which was augmented by a new bore, tank and pipeline system after tourists started to regularly visit and it was obvious that the local water supply was inadequate to service this industry.

Waste disposal systems on the homeland communities were inadequate to properly deal with their own wastes and thus were totally overstressed by the additional wastes created by gatherings of Anangu to perform inma and sell artefacts to the tourists. A system of waste disposal needed to be designed to be useable by the tour group and Anangu guides. The tour group can take all non-biodegradable rubbish out, but Anangu cannot, so solutions for both parties’ needs had to be found. An old pit toilet was used to dispose of food scraps safe from dingoes and crows. All paper rubbish was burnt in drums, all cans squashed and carried out and all glass recycled by the tour groups. However, community rubbish disposal was more difficult to resolve. The Western eye is appalled by rubbish, and the rubbish in Anangu communities is a problem for tourists, who cannot understand that people who love the land would leave so much rubbish around. Anangu do not have the same aesthetic problem with rubbish, nor do they have regular community services to collect and bury domestic rubbish. In the shared environment of a tourist camp rubbish is everyone’s problem so cleaning up became part of the Desert Tracks directors’ responsibilities. Communities cannot ignore rubbish if they want tourists.

3. Walinynga Rock Art Site Management

Walinynga is a site of both cultural and natural environmental significance. The landscape surrounding Walinynga is extremely beautiful. The view from the granite rock outcrop affords a sweeping panorama that includes Uluru to the north, Mt Connor to the east and the majestic Musgrave Ranges to the west. The site incorporates natural beauty, desert flora and fauna, a magnificent rock art site and living Indigenous heritage interpreted directly to the visitor by local Anangu traditional custodians.

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The Anangu owner, Stanley Douglas, has continued his father’s tradition of preserving local fauna and flora by proclaiming a no-shooting zone around the site. Walinynga is named after the rockhole created there by the Seven Sisters, a reasonably reliable water source which attracts many birds, large goannas, wallabies, dingo, bush turkey, emu and kangaroo. Anangu traditional land and cultural management practice at the rock art site has preserved it as a wildlife refuge allowing local animals and plants to flourish. Thus, visitors gain an understanding of the rock art and the cultural significance of the site while having the opportunity to see desert animals and learn about Aboriginal plant uses in this region.

When Stanley Douglas joined the Board of Desert Tracks Directors in 1994 he instigated site management planning for Walinynga (Cave Hill) before tours began to increase to the rock art site. Together with the manager, consultation with land management and heritage rock art specialists was undertaken to develop a management plan designed specifically for the
Walinynga rock art and stone artefact sites and the surrounding sand dune area. A program to monitor changes due to tourism was initiated. This land and site management plan combined Anangu traditional knowledge of their cultural and natural landscapes, with the AP land management experience of Mike Last, rock art heritage preservation knowledge of consultant, Katharine Sale, and the cultural and eco-tourism expertise of manager, Diana James. It was a bi-cultural environmental management plan.

The key activities undertaken were:

- restricting vehicle access away from the main cave
- closing access to the original campsite on the dune nearest to the cave as it was too unstable and was a high erosion area
- a new day visitors area on the more stable dune site
- a long term campsite on the protected western side of the hill
- locating two pit toilets between the day and long stay campsites
- planning to use a larger flow bore for water supply and a tank external to the community (Pitjantjatjara Projects)
- defining a single walking track to the main cave, then up to the hilltop lookout around the south-eastern side, avoiding a sacred area on the north-eastern flank and returning down around the western slope and to the wilytja site
- to minimise erosion, Mike suggested following the natural wallaby tracks up to the main cave, putting branches and brush over the rest of the slope, maintaining obscuring vegetation across the face of the cave and discouraging any clearing around the cave precincts
- spinifex matting on the cave floor to reduce dust and erosion.

To protect the rock art itself, one of the recommendations was that Walinynga be regularly re-inspected, every two years if possible, to monitor any changes in the condition of the art and the place. Other strategies included restricted visitors only, with traditional custodian guides. This was
a key conservation measure, initiated by the traditional owners and reinforced by the heritage consultants, to limit numbers of tourists to small groups of 10–14, on foot, always with a traditional custodian guide, and to prohibit photography in the cave ‘in case it damaged the art’ (James & Sale 2004:3-4; see Appendix 7).

**Long Term Desert Tracks Goals for Tourism**

Ilyatjari repeatedly said:

> Long term, the young people will continue. When I’m gone they’ll look after this business…the culture may be lost if they don’t have a reason to learn it…the business brings in money for people to live in their country

(James 1996:19).

The younger generation, especially the grandchildren of the original directors, are keen to learn traditional knowledge because they see that it has economic relevance today in a business. Cultural eco-tourism is an economic interface where traditional knowledge is a valuable asset to be shared, but not sold in tourism.

Training in traditional cultural knowledge can provide a skill base for involvement in modern enterprise. Within the Anangu tradition of *inma*, song and dance, are structures for improvisation and adapting to changing environments. Ilyatjari and Andy Tjilari have incorporated new song and dance performances into the traditional Ngintaka song saga to communicate cross-culturally and involve tourists in the performance. In the following section of this thesis, Act II, a group of tourists travels along the Ngintaka Trail and learns some of these songs and dances. The participants encounter the old and new Anangu cultural management of their environment, and learn a little of the dynamics of this cross-cultural performance space.
ACT II

THE INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCE SPACE:
Songlines of the Odyssey of the Ngintaka

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THE ODYSSEY

Sing to me of the man, Muse,
the man of twists and turns,
driven time and again off course,
one he had plundered
the hallowed heights of Troy.

Many cities of men he saw
And learned their minds,
Many pangs he suffered,
Heartsick on the open sea,
Fighting to save his life
And bring his comrades home.

But he could not save them from
disaster,
Hard as he strove, the recklessness
of their own ways destroyed them
all;

The blind fools, they devoured
The cattle of the Sun
And the sun god blotted out the day
of their return.

Launch out on his story, Muse,
Daughter of Zeus,
Start from where you will
— sing for our time too.

(Homer, from P. Levi, 1984)

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WATI NGINTAKA : LIZARD MAN SONG

'Ngantja kuru kuru nyinara wanaŋau
Ngantja kuru kuru nyinara wanaŋau.'

Sing to me of my country, Singers,
of the Lizard man of twists and turns,
obsuring his tracks,
one he had plundered the
Nyintirri fine grinding stone.

He who travelled far from home,
seeking a sound, the sound of fine
grinding, coming on the wind.
He found the stone and stole it.
Then journeyed home.

The Nyintirri people pursued him,
they who had welcomed him
as an honoured guest
and offered him their food,
and their country to share.

But he was greedy and broke the
hallowed laws of hospitality,
taking without asking
their precious grindstone...

On his travels he created hills and
valleys, rain from his brows
watered the seeds he spread.
He is a hero and a villain,
bringing seeds to the desert people
but taking their grindstone.
In their anger they speared him to death.

Sing his song, people of the desert,
start from where you will
— sing for our time too.

(Anangu story paraphrase by D James 2004)
Prologue: Travelling the Songlines

In ACT II the stage is given to the Anangu storytellers and Wati Ngintaka while the Western bard retires to the wings and draws the attention of the audience to parallels between this epic song saga and that of The Odyssey. The cross-cultural dialogue between host and guest progresses with the tourists’ journey along the storyline of the epic song-poems. The visitors also physically journey the Wati Ngintaka Songline in the tour bus as it follows the winding tracks of the ancestor through the country. The elders in the bus singing the song as they go through Nganyinytja’s clan estate at Angatja in the Mann Ranges of northern South Australia (see Ngura Walytja, DVD, Appendix 2).

Anangu Ask Visitors

What can Western tourists understand of Indigenous culture by travelling the Wati Ngintaka Songline Heritage Trail?

‘I am of the Ngintaka. How can we understand each other, we of the Ngintaka and you of the…? What is your Dreaming?’ Kawaki Thompson asked this of the assembled white advisors at a meeting of the AP Executive and Desert Tracks Board of Directors at Umuwa on 12 November 1998 (see Appendix 4). The meeting had been convened to discuss the possibility of developing the Ngintaka Songline through the AP Lands as a Heritage Trail for tourists. Mr Thompson, as Director of AP challenged the advisors present to explain how this would assist cross-cultural understanding. How could their Tjukurpa, their law, help them understand Anangu who are ‘of’ specific Tjukurpa, related by ancestral ties to Creation Beings, animals and plants today, and the very land itself? Thompson’s question exposed the chasm beneath our feet, the cross-cultural ontological divide our dialogue was attempting to straddle. There was no Colossus or superhero present to bridge the gap for us; we had to struggle to find our own answers to his question.
We stood on either side of the gap, the white advisors on their mixed heritage of Western knowledge, and the Anangu sure of their belonging in the Tjukurpa. The Western scientific secular knowledge tradition offers no similar sense of belonging to land and the natural world. Rather it rationally deduces knowledge from a ‘detached contemplation of the world’ (Russell 1959:20). A clear distinction is made between nature and culture, spirit and matter, morality and reason. This is in stark contrast to Anangu knowledge that holistically incorporates the sacred and physical reality within moral and spiritual laws of their Tjukurpa. The ground of being, the ontology, of these two theories of knowledge is vastly different.

The Western intellectual tradition claims to transcend place and time and provide a rational system of thinking that can explain any situation to all human beings irrespective of language, culture, place, power or status of person speaking. This has been exposed as a Western myth by the work of Michel Foucault on the relationship between power and knowledge (see Foucault 1972). Despite the academic deconstruction of the myth by Foucault and others, it persists in the hegemony of Western language and power in cross-cultural meeting on Indigenous Lands in Australia. Western knowledge claims to be not of a particular place or country, thus western ontology claims a boundless geography of meaning.

The ground from which Western ontology sprang can, however, be identified. Bertrand Russell, champion of the western humanist tradition, tells us it originated in Greece in the eighth century BCE. While proud to claim its Greek roots, he was selective in which roots he considered true and which false. The Greeks were both practical and mystical philosophers. Russell suggests the Greek advances in philosophy, arts and sciences were possible because the Greeks split matter and spirit, and rational inquiry was separated from irrational or mystical inquiry.
However, Pythagoras of Samos was both a scientists and a mystic: he devised the basis of modern mathematics and established the mystical tradition of the Pythagorean school 2,500 years ago. To account for the experiential reality, that the square on the diagonal of a square equals twice the square on the side, Pythagoras developed the theory of ‘irrational’ numbers. The logic of rational numbers alone could not account for reality. Pythagoras believed that intangible or non-sensate knowledge could be accessed by adhering to the Orphic doctrine of asceticism in which a state of mental ecstasy, ‘enthusiasm’ or union with god, could be attained and used to gain knowledge not otherwise available to human beings (Russell 1959: 13).

Bertrand Russell, though he tries, cannot completely deny the importance of ecstasy and mystery as he attributes the ‘extraordinary explosion’ of Greek culture to the heady mix of science and mysticism, the passion to search for truth and beauty. The key he claims is objectivity, ‘passionate yet disinterested inquiry, this is what gives the Greeks their unique place in history’ (ibid). Thus Russell creates the logical arguments that support Western dualism, the division of spirit and matter, thought and feeling, real and unreal. But as Pythagorus found, experiential reality does not always conform to rational logic, the ‘irrational’ must be acknowledged as real.

Western rationalists must acknowledge the limitations of their logical theories and academic disciplines in seeking to understand reality. That which is outside Western defined ‘rationality’ also exists. To begin to understand other ontology and epistemologies of knowledge Westerners must discipline themselves to open their minds and hearts to other ways of knowing. No matter how far one travels and how many wonders of the world one sees, no transformation of consciousness will occur without openness to the new.

What is your Dreaming?
Kawaki attempted to transform the perception of white advisors by asking ‘What is your Dreaming?’ However, with no modern English word with which
to translate this concept the white advisors floundered and could not respond. 'Dreaming' is a common but inadequate translation of Tjukurpa, as discussed in Chapter 2, which fails to convey the omnipresence of this system of knowledge and Law in all ways and all places of Anangu ontology, epistemology, language and land. The Western experts' inability to answer Kawaki's question was largely due to the attrition of sacred language and concepts from the rational Western tradition. Concepts like 'Dreaming' are shrouded in mystery for Westerners because the West no longer has words for omnipresent law or morality in our ontology or epistemology.

**Travelling the Ngintaka Songline Heritage Trail**

In Act II the tourists who travel the Wati Ngintaka Songline Trail need a language in which to understand what they see, hear and experience of Anangu ontology and relationship to country. Anangu know they need to learn by doing. As in many religious traditions the pilgrimage trail is only experienced by walking it, so too, a songline can only be experienced by walking, singing and dancing it in country with holders of the law of the song.

Nganyinyija and Ilaytjari invite visitors to travel the Ngintaka Songline because they know it will transform their relationship to the land. They provide an Inma Ground, a translation performance space, where Anangu can share knowledge of country through performance of Tjukurpa. The tours provide a space within which hosts and guests perform the deep stories of their ontological ground of being; each performs in turn while the others listen, watch and learn.

When Anangu meet in a traditional Inma Ground, the protocol followed is that the hosts first dance the Tjukurpa of their country and then visitors dance. The connections between the places and people who are present are made clear upon the ground by the singing and dancing of joining or crossing songlines.

In accordance with Anangu protocol, Act II allows the epic song-poems of both hosts and guests to be performed in the translation performance space of the
journey. The Western cultural foundation epic is *The Odyssey*, a story over 2,500 years old, which is compared throughout the next chapters with the Anangu epic of the Ngintaka, a story many thousands of years older.

The version of the Ngintaka story used in this thesis was recorded in 1994 at Angatja; the story is told by Nganyintja and sung by some forty traditional owners of the songline. The lead singers and the storyteller were all over sixty years old at the time of the recording. In their oral tradition they are elders and law men and women of high degree and they learnt the Wati Ngintaka Songline travelling on foot through their country as children with their parents.

The Ngintaka Tjukurpa is the vehicle Anangu have chosen for their tourism venture. Not only are they prepared to make this Tjukurpa story public; they are also absorbing tourism into their ontology through this Tjukurpa Law. The Ngintaka man oversees the bus, the guides, the stories, the dances, the hunting and gathering, all activities in which Anangu engage tourists who are on their country. Ngintaka Tjukurpa provides the ontology and the epistemology, the theory and the practice, of cultural natural resource management of the Anangu tourism enterprise Desert Tracks. We learn this as we travel the songline.

The maps of country are written on the performance ground by the footprints of the dancers. Ilyatjari and others say performing *inma* is vital so that:

*Tjukurpa uti ngarinya!* The Law and the Dreaming is clear to see.

(Ilyatjari, pers. comm., 1988)
KURUNPA: SPIRITUAL CONNECTION TO COUNTRY

Odysseus and his fleet sailed south, and were blown off Cape Maleas by a severe storm. They kept sailing on until they came upon the country of the Lotus-Eaters. The inhabitants of this strange land were amiable, but those of Odysseus' men who ate of the lotus, a local plant, quickly lost all memory of home and duty. Odysseus and his men who did not eat the plant dragged the men who did eat it back to the ship and sailed on.

Wati Ngintaka travelled following the sound — ruulmananyi — the sound of really fine grinding coming on the wind. He travelled far from home to the Ngintjirri people near Mintabie. Here he made a separate camp and waited until he was invited in. The people said, 'Who's that stranger?' Then the men came over to talk and asked him, 'Hey, where do you come from?'
Introduction
Odysseus and the Wati Ngintaka were welcomed on their travels by strangers who invited them to stay. Odysseus, like many tourists, had to choose between the beguiling luxury and ease of the lotus-eaters’ hospitality or the bare shipboards and wet cold seas of his real journey. Tourists who choose Desert Tracks, leave the comforts of Ayers Rock Resort five star luxury hotels, air-conditioning, sumptuous buffet dinners and wine to rough it by camping on the hard ground, choked by desert dust and pestered by flies. What sound do they hear on the wind that blows over the desert?

Who journey to these distant lands and who choose to greet them? It is time to introduce some of the groups of companions who travel on these long dusty, bumpy outback roads to visit Anangu. Some are organizations that return each year with new members. Others are composed of free independent travellers, ‘FITS’ in industry jargon, individuals who book a tour directly for themselves. Those travellers who write notes in the visitor’s book or articles about their journey for publication later, have left crumbs for us to follow as their comments illuminate the dilemmas and opportunities that arise for visitors to this cross-cultural tourism performance space.

Visitors Welcome

_Ngalya pitja ngayuku ngura nyakuntjikitja. Manta nyangatja mambilpatjara! Ngayuku kamiki tjamuku ngura iritinguru. Pitjaya! Pina ala, kuru ala, kututu alatjara!_

Come and see my country. This land is sacred! This has been my grandmother’s and grandfather’s country from a long time ago. Come with open ears, open eyes and an open heart. (Nganyinytja, in Desert Tracks Brochure 1988)

This was the invitation in a desert woman’s melodious Pitjantjatjara voice that was carried on radio waves into people’s living rooms or blown by light breezes into people’s hands as they stood idly beside newsstands or in ubiquitous
waiting rooms perusing magazines. Nganyinyija and Ilyatjari sent out their message sticks entrusting them to many hands before they reached those for whom the invitation was meant. The message was translated from Pitjantjatjara to English, twisting and turning through the voices of political, environmental, social justice and adventure writers who wrote the simple words in their own script. Nganyinyija’s call was a surprise to the Australian ear tuned at that time to an Indigenous voice of pain, of anger, demanding land rights and social justice. Many Australians sympathetic to the Aboriginal voice felt guilty for their colonial legacy of Aboriginal land taken by force. The opportunity to share the life and home country of traditional Aboriginal people was not previously open to the general Australian public.

Aboriginal land rights had the positive effect of restoring ownership of country to Aboriginal people but it also effectively locked out mainstream society. The rationale was to protect traditional peoples and allow them to adjust to Western industrial society at their own pace. In practice, the administration of Aboriginal lands was often experienced both inside and outside the boundary fences as overly protectionist. As Aboriginal rights activist Gary Foley said in June 1996 at a meeting in the Aboriginal Heath Service in Prahran Melbourne, ‘I’m black and I can’t visit the Pitjantjatjara Lands with out a permit… I have to apply to some white c… of a lawyer to get one!’ (pers. comm., June 1996).

Nganyinyija echoed this in expressing her perspective from inside the fence: ‘It’s good to have our land, this has always been my grandmothers’ and grandfathers’ land, but we don’t want to shut other people out’ (Nganyinyija, pers. comm., 1980).

However, not all Anangu want tourists to visit the AP Lands. Therefore, the Regional AP Council agreed to allow tours into Angatja but restricted the bus access to main roads and no photographs or visits to other communities without specific permission.
Before Desert Tracks tours started in 1988, Nganyinytja and Ilatjari had been cross-cultural teachers to their own people and kids in schools at Ernabella and Amata, and ran a rehabilitation course for petrol-sniffers at Angatja. They knew the value of balancing Western skills with Anangu traditional knowledge. Non-Indigenous people working on AP Lands also sought their expertise and many attended a week’s course at Angatja called ‘Anangu way nintini’ in 1982.

The First ACF Groups, 1987

It is instructive to consider elements of the tour planning and the responses of participants on these first ACF Tours that formed the structure of future tours. The importance of tour management mirroring Anangu life was recognised from the beginning. The importance of separate men’s and women’s business in Anangu life was acknowledged by providing male and female guides on tour. Cross-cultural family and kinship ties were essential to establishing a framework of trust in the joint-venture business. Children are central to Anangu life and so were always welcome on tours. Linda Rive, a skilled interpreter, brought her young son of two cultures, Pirrantji, on these first tours. One of the visitors, Beryl Blake, commented that Linda’s ‘four year old son, Pippy, and dog Bluey, were soon adopted and loved by our whole party’ (Blake 1987:29).

The first article advertising trips to AP lands was written by the media consultant for ACF, Simon Balderstone, a journalist who had previously worked at the Age for nine years, specialising in politics and environmental issues. His was an advertising article imagining ‘the diary extracts of anyone fortunate enough to visit the region for a cross-cultural, ecological and purely aesthetic insight’ (Balderstone 1987). The emphasis of his article was the rare opportunity these tours presented for small select groups, with expert guides to travel into Aboriginal Lands inaccessible without permits. His language was carefully chosen to assuage the doubts of politically correct Aboriginal rights supporters who might feel tourism was an unwelcome imposition on Aboriginal Lands. The distinction was made between these tours as genuine
travel and other ‘tourism’: this was a ‘small party’ rather than a ‘commercial group’. It had the ACF stamp of approval and was a personal ‘co-operative agreement’ between Phillip Toyne and Anangu. The tour was promoted as ‘cross-cultural and nature oriented’ (Balderstone 1987).

There was also the political agenda of ACF to ‘increase ties between Aboriginal and conservation movements’ which it was claimed had ‘many common interests’ (Balderstone 1987). This convergence of Aboriginal and conservationists political agenda has been a consistent line of the Australian conservation movement. The assumption is that Western ‘love’ of the environment is the same as Indigenous connection to land physically, emotionally and spiritually. Statements expressing the love of nature, not owning the land but belonging to it, and living in balance and harmony with nature, are assumed to mean the same thing in both cultures. This is a fuzzy feel-good gloss that naively links the Rousseau myth of the ‘noble savage’ with the modern political agenda of the Green movement.

However, Indigenous peoples of Australia were not traditionally conservationists; they hunted and gathered then, and still do kill native animals to eat; burn woodlands to create savannahs and utilise all aspects of the natural environment to enhance their survival and comfort. In fact, the environmental history of Australia, as presented by Tim Flannery and others, reveals a landscape dramatically changed by Indigenous hunting and gathering techniques.

Anangu were not, nor are they today, ‘conservationists’ in the sense of conservers of the natural environment as it is, frozen in time. Rather they accepted and promoted change to enhance their exploitation of natural resources. Their impact on the environment was limited by their practice and law of resource management that regulated the balance between taking and ensuring continuance of species. The fact that environmental conservation was not a ubiquitous concept across cultures had to be recognised in the joint
management of national parks like Uluru Kata Tjuta where Anangu maintain hunting rights and patch-burning practices. The Aboriginal and National Park Conservation Alliance has been a transforming one for both cultural perspectives and practices.

**Beryl Blake** was one of the participants in a group of fifteen on the first ACF trip to AP Lands in July 1987. The group was connected by membership of ACF but, as Beryl said, ‘everyone had their own expectations and experiences to bring to this venture’ (Blake 1987:29). She asks, ‘What was I anticipating? Well, to be in this fascinating country was enough in itself...I couldn’t imagine how our first meeting with Anangu (Aboriginal people) would work out. But I was completely open minded, just hoping we would get along with each other’ (ibid). These tours included Indulkana, Mimili, Fregon and Amata on a drive-through view of the Everard and Musgrave Ranges. It was not until they reached the Angatja creek bed that real relationships could be established. Here, after camp was set up, the pattern of the days was ‘a leisurely pace, like reading a slow-moving book in which the atmosphere and sense of timelessness are pervasive and images, once absorbed, leave a lasting impression’ (ibid:30). The importance of providing male and female guides was noted: ‘A most memorable day was when the men and women went in different directions: the men to hunt kuka (meat) and the women to collect mau (non-meat)’ (ibid:31).

The gender separation in Anangu lifestyle includes food gathering tasks, camp construction and knowledge of ritual and sacred law. Westerners often find this very difficult to accept, coming from a society that champions ‘freedom of information’ assuming that surely this separation of men’s and women’s business is archaic and counterproductive in the modern world. Westerners often overlook the ‘secret sacred business’ of their own society: the Secrets Act regarding governmental or military ‘sensitive information’. Australians accept restricted access to the uranium mine at Roxby Downs, the American spy base at Pine Gap, the privacy laws protecting private property and private corporations. Westerners accept ‘secret sacred business’ restrictions based on
wealth and power but rebel at those in other cultures based on physical gender. It is true that we see the stick in another’s eye yet miss the log in our own.

Secret sacred rituals are not restricted to so-called ‘primitive’ societies. Our superior colonial ethnocentric gaze blinds us to the underpinnings of our own cultural beliefs. Distinctions based on gender in Anangu society are not necessarily indicative of inequality: women have a rich and powerful ceremonial life and are holders of sacred objects essential to the life of the community as are men; they hold law that is complementary and sometimes performed separately but also performed together depending on the ceremony. It is important to note in this context of tourism on AP Lands, that Nganyinyija was the prime instigator of cross-cultural tours at Angatja. It is her traditional country and she is a senior law woman of high degree. Her husband, Ilyatjari, moved to his wife’s country after marriage and supports her there. He is a senior medicine man and holder of law, song and dance for his traditional country further west at Wingellina. They respect and balance each other looking after the country around Angatja, managing the homeland community and its associated businesses of training youth, camel ranching and tourism.

Beryl felt that the experience of different learning facilitated by gender separation was another valuable dimension of the tour. What else did she feel was learnt by this first group? Beryl says candidly, ‘Each lesson we learnt sparked off new questions, some unanswered. The message that came to me was these people who have lived on and cared for their land for many thousands of years, take great pride and responsibility in this caring and are closely linked with their environment both spiritually and physically’ (ibid:31). She is an ardent conservationist and political activist for human rights accepted the value of traditional land-care practices that emphasised the human being as part of the environment.

Katy Sher, who came on the second ACF trip in October 1987, agreed with Beryl that the trip left her overwhelmed by Anangu knowledge and spiritual
connection to the land. Katy, a generation younger than Beryl, was shocked ‘to realise that here was the race of Australians of whom I’d learnt practically nothing whilst at school or university’ (Sher1978:10). To meet Aboriginal people was a strong motivation for many Australians who joined the first Desert Tracks tours in 1988. Una, an enthusiastic seventy-seven year old, said she had wanted all her life to meet Aboriginal people and had waited until she felt invited by them.

It is often difficult to meet Aboriginal people in coastal cities because of the destructive results of colonisation and the remoteness of most traditional people makes them inaccessible. The Aboriginal land permits form a barrier, and then there is the individual’s ambivalence, wanting to visit yet knowing that tourism can be just another voyeuristic activity of privileged Westerners. The desire of many Australians to be reconciled through meaningful contact and learning from Aboriginal people is complicated by the shame of the practices of our colonial past and the concern that commercialisation through tourism will sully the exchange, commodifying Indigenous culture for the market. It is necessary to acknowledge these as real concerns of many Australians, rather than simply criticising the domestic market as disinterested or fearful. Recognition of fear and shame may be necessary precursors to change but the compassion and open-hearted invitation of people like Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari is also necessary to achieve reconciliation.

Tourism is a crucible in which many cross-cultural elements of Australian post-colonial society ferment. Reconciliation for the nation is a difficult ambiguous path. Is it better to respect and preserve cultural difference or does this automatically disadvantage Indigenous people by preserving traditional culture in ghettos cut off from the mainstream capitalist society’s benefits of wealth, health and power? Ambiguity lies at the heart of Indigenous cultural tourism: how to make money from a non-moned culture without destroying the reciprocal economy and ontology of that culture. These are real concerns that have to be addressed, even in situations like Angatja where Aboriginal people are choosing to engage in tourism on their own terms on their own lands.
Wheels Roll on Desert Tracks, 1988

To advertise the first tours of Desert Tracks in March and April 1988, Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari travelled with their non-indigenous manager to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, Australian state capital cities, to speak on radio and with journalists about their tours. Snowdon said, ‘Nganyinytja has decided that this is the only way white people can get a feel for what Pitjantjatjara people are all about; their relationship with the land, their whole approach to life, the dreaming’ (Cornwall 1988:1). This report on page one of the Adelaide Advertiser of 7 April 1988, emphasises the reconciliation theme of learning from Aboriginal people: ‘After years of being told how to live by “white fellas”, Nganyinytja thinks it is time we ngaltutjaras (“poor buggers”) developed a feel for life in the Dreamtime’ (ibid:2).

Snowdon claimed that visitors will ‘see it as it really is: ‘the tough bush, real life of Aboriginal people sleeping on the ground in sub zero temperatures, eating half raw kangaroo meat, honey ants and witchetty grubs…it really is culture shock’ (ibid.). This is not the usual advertising for either adventure or gourmet touring which tend to emphasise the magnificent scenery and exotic foods. The tone of the article is almost didactic, with people warned that their behaviour may offend Anangu and that entering their lands is under strict permit conditions. This is because whitefellas are the ngaltutjaras or ‘poor buggers’, the ones who don’t understand this land or its people and Anangu need to be protected from their offensive behaviour. Snowdon make reference to Anangu forgiving past injustices, ‘The astounding thing about these people is their generosity and openness and trust. I wouldn’t want to see that change because of our insensitivity’ (ibid.).

These early articles written by tour participants and journalists about the Desert Tracks experience seem highly idealistic and far removed from the usual tourism reportage. The writers are motivated by social justice and Indigenous land rights issues, by a need for personal and national reconciliation, by an
aversion to superficial touristic experience and by a need to be almost brutally honest about the rough camping conditions on tour. While some of these might be positive advertising angles, the emphasis on the ‘hard bush’ is appealing to only a small niche market within the already limited market for Indigenous cultural tourism. Desert Tracks also engaged in mainstream marketing through Peregrine Adventures, a well-established national and international adventure travel company. Desert Tracks advertisements appeared in environmental and law magazines, in major city newspapers, often with accompanying articles. It was one of the first tours into Aboriginal Land in Central Australia and thus newsworthy.

The early brochures were simple, single sheets, home printed on coloured paper and posted to prospective organizations. The first Desert Tracks brochure read:

An exciting and unique opportunity is now available to live with a family group of Pitjantjatjara people in their own country. This ‘once in a lifetime’ experience enables participation in traditional Aboriginal ways of living. Members of this cross-cultural exchange will take part in a range of activities including:

- collection, preparation and eating of bush foods;
- traditional singing and dancing;
- journeys into different parts of the country which allows participants to see, hear and feel the connection between the country and Pitjantjatjara spirituality;
- camping in swags under the desert stars.

Ten days for $1,000; special children and family rates

(Desert Tracks brochure 1988)

The advertising thrust was initially towards the domestic market, which responded quickly and with enthusiasm. This is interesting as market research indicates a low domestic interest in Indigenous tourism today. This will be discussed later as the market sector attracted to Desert Tracks is examined and
representatives of it introduced. Firstly, it is important to meet the workers, both white and black, who were attracted to Angatja to work on these tours.

**Cross-Border Land Governance and Tourism**

It was a bold decision by Angatja people to market themselves and their country. Not all Anangu on the AP Lands were interested in tourists or wanted them visiting their country or seeing how they lived. This antipathy to tourism was particularly high at settlements that had grown around government or mission service centres. In fact, the ACF groups and early Desert Tracks groups were instructed not to get out of the bus at fuel stops in these communities en route to Angatja. The wariness towards tourists and photographers arose from previous experiences of Anangu at Uluru. This monolith rising out of the desert sands has been sacred to Anangu for thousands of years and a beacon to tourists since the 1950s. It has been a performance space of cross-cultural conflict ever since, with Western conservation and tourism vying with Aboriginal traditional land use. Today under the joint management of Anangu and National Parks there is progress towards a negotiated space, but differences remain between Western and Indigenous concepts of caring for country.

Since the 1950s, state and federal governments have supported the concept that tourism and conservation are compatible, but Aboriginal hunting and gathering, restriction of areas for sacred secret rituals and a proposed ban on climbing Uluru have been deemed contrary to conservation and tourism. Anangu in the AP Lands constantly visit family at Uluru and have assessed the impact of tourism and the National Park on their lives and traditions. The impacts are not all bad; the economic wealth generated by ‘gate money’ at Uluru is valued as positive but some Anangu comment adversely on the perceived trivialisation of culture. Dickie Minyintirri, who had worked as a guide at Uluru and then at Angatja, made a clear distinction between the type of tourism at Uluru and the type he wanted on AP Lands:
Tourist just come one day to Uluru. Too quick, just give little story, not big story. Takes a long time to know Anangu country, better go slowly, listen, learn! (Minyintirri pers.comm., June 2003)

This was a sentiment agreed to by the Directors of Desert Tracks, so for many years one-day tours were not developed despite market pressure.

As discussed previously, Anangu of the AP Lands are neighbours and relatives of those in the Northern Territory living in the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park. It is only the accident of Western government state boundaries that divides them. Nganyinyija’s traditional country extends over the border and into the National Park; she walked all that country with her parents as a child. The songlines of the mala, ‘hare wallaby’, the kungha kurtja, ‘two women’, the walawurr, ‘eagle’ and the kaunka, ‘crow women’, all cross the state, national park and land councils’ borders. These are just some of the tracks created by the ancestors of the Tjukurpa, the Dreaming Law, long before white man walked these sands. The complex or cultural Dreaming Law linking the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people and their lands hold greater meaning to people of this land than arbitrary lines on a map.

Anangu experience of tourists at Uluru, prior to 1985 when the land was returned to the traditional owners, had not been positive. In 1920 Uluru Kata Tjuta and the Peterman Ranges were gazetted as an Aboriginal Reserve for the exclusive use of Aboriginal people. However, after World War II pressure from tourism operators influenced the Director of Native Affairs to excise Uluru and Kata Tjuta in 1958 (Commonwealth Gazette 20 December 1958). It was first administered by ‘the Native Welfare Branch until the Northern Territory Reserves Board was created during 1958 to manage it as a tourist and wildlife reserve’ (Layton 1986:76). When the government declared this region a wildlife reserve the Anangu were no longer welcome there to hunt and perform their ceremonies. The anthropologist, FGG Rose, at Angas Downs in 1962, found few Aboriginal people living at the Rock and commented ‘it is almost certain that if the Aborigines were not kept, or as it is expressed locally, ‘hunted’ away from the
vicinity of Ayers Rock, the Aboriginal population at Angas Downs would largely transfer...there’ (Rose, in Layton 1986:76).

The Northern Territory Reserves Board management, after Bill Harney left in 1962, strongly rejected Anangu traditional land-care techniques so patch burning was discontinued resulting in huge wildfires several years later that destroyed much of the vegetation of the Park. The sacred cultural landscape was also defiled. Sacred caves and sites were not protected, tourists, in ignorance, clambered through them. There was no information regarding the need to respect Anangu as the custodians of their cultural and sacred landscape.

In 1975, when I first visited with Andy Tjilari and his family from Fregon, the ignorance of Indigenous culture and protocols shown by most visitors and tourist guides was appalling. The motels were scattered around the base of Uluru, and Anangu lived in a shanty camp of canvas and wrought iron sheets near the one store. We were camped in the public camping ground when we awoke to a busload of tourists who poured out and lined up to gawk and snap cameras at us. What an interesting picture: a few dishevelled, barely awake Aboriginal people camped in piles of blankets around smouldering fires. Cameras were clicking with no words being exchanged, no ‘hello’, let alone asking if people wanted their photo taken. I surprised them greatly by emerging from my blankets, white, dishevelled long red hair and an angry face demanding that they stop photographing. I soon realised that they did not speak English. There was no guide or bus driver in sight. In those days the driver guides were often extremely ill informed, racist and derogatory about Anangu. They were often the major source of misinformation on Australian Aboriginal people and sites like Uluru that international tourists experienced.

Today tour guides at Uluru Kata Tjuta are encouraged to complete an accredited three-day intensive course offered by Anangu traditional owners and National Parks rangers. Major bus companies like AAT Kings actively
support this initiative. All their drivers must gain this accreditation. They appreciate that knowledge of Aboriginal culture and heritage is essential to understanding the Australian environment. Tourists are more informed and demand higher levels of interpretive knowledge from their guides.

Anangu are now involved in the joint management of Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park and their cultural landscape is protected as well as the natural landscape. Sacred sites are now protected with fences and signs around the base of Uluru and in Kata Tjuta. There is a sign informing visitors of Anangu expressed preference that people not climb Uluru. However, signs and fenced off areas are not the only face of Anangu interpretation of landscape. Anangu are park rangers and guides in their own tour business, Anangu Tours. They provide the Indigenous cultural interpretation of this extraordinary natural landscape. The Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park is listed on the World Heritage List for both its natural and cultural values, and was only the second national park in the world to be recognised as a cultural landscape.

Desert Tracks developed after joint management of Uluru was declared in 1985 and Anangu had seen that positive change could occur at the interface of tourism and their traditional culture within the Park. However, there was no other Aboriginal-owned tourism enterprise operating at Uluru or in the surrounding region until Anangu Tours started in 1995 so Desert Tracks was a trail breaker. It developed as a joint enterprise from the beginning and Anangu management of itinerary content and interpretation was paramount. Being a safari camping tour to a remote location, it was not designed to attract the numbers of tourists who today take a one to three hour tour at Uluru. Even by the year 2000 less than 500 of the 598,000 holiday visitors to the Centre visited the Pitjantjatjara Lands, most to see the rock art at Cave Hill. Fewer than 200 chose the seven-day camp at Nganyinyija’s Bush College. Remoteness and lack of comforts is an automatic selective sieve that sorts the visitor vision. Those who are prepared to get red dust and smoke in their eyes, ears and nose, get their clothes dirty and feel uncomfortable in an alien language and cultural
landscape, are few. The demands on Anangu guides are also very different as short tours are repetitious and demand consistency of time management. The longer tours to Angatja require being on location with tourists twenty-four hours a day for a week.

Anangu who choose to work as tourist guides need to be outgoing personalities who want to work with tourists. All relatives and other traditional owners of the areas and specific sites must give permission for these to be shown to tourists. It eventuated that many elders and traditional owners of the Angatja region joined the tours to check the procedure and protocol. Then a core group of guides who were their close relations consolidated.

The Country Selects its Guides
Peter Nyaningu described the Anangu concept of land ownership as walytjarara walytjarara kanyinma, ‘caring for country together with relatives, together with relatives’: caring for country together in family groups linked to other family groups. Nyaningu emphasised that ‘traditional owner’ is a whitefella term. He objected to the notion of owner as ‘singular’, a concept foreign to Anangu who think of rights and responsibilities to land as they do of their rights and responsibilities to their kin relations. The Anangu concept of ‘walytjarara walytjarara’ is of being together with relatives, going together with relatives, doing together with relatives; it signifies a strong working together with relatives for one’s relatives, which include people, animals, plants and places. He said:

Nganaga walytjarara walytjarara manta kanyini. We care for country together with our relatives, in our interconnected family groups. Our home country is not fenced. Station fences keep people out. We invite people into our country. We say “Camp over there, water there.” Our law includes a law for sharing food that can be hunted or gathered on our land.

(Nyaningu, pers. comm., 26 March 2005)
The right to invite people into country is determined by one’s relationship to that country. Anangu recognize rights to country through more than one connection: being born there, father’s country, mother’s country, grandparents on either side and through one’s totemic ancestor sites in country that extends into overlapping family clan estates. The traditional owners who have the right to refuse or invite tourists into specific regions on AP Lands are not one but many. One man or woman cannot sign on behalf of their family or their clan, Anangu prefer to meet and talk together seeking consensus among themselves before being asked to agree to any development in their country.

Tjulkiwa, a spritely woman in her fifties, is Nganyinytja’s sister-in-law and her right hand woman. She is Tjala, ‘honey ant woman’; her country is Makari, a sacred site south from the Angatja. She is a dancer and superb hunter, who expresses herself in active interaction with her environment. Her embodied knowledge of land and water, song and dance of her country will inspire and lead the group ever deeper into the practice of caring for country.

Sandy Mutju, Nganyinytja’s brother, is husband of Tjulkiwa and traditional owner for the ngintaka site of Tjanmatapiti. This is the place where the Ngintaka Man created tjamata, ‘wild onions’, a tasty food of sandy rocky places. Mutju is not a great talker, rather a person of action like his wife. He is a fine carver of spears and other traditional artefacts as well as the desert animal sculptures favoured by tourists. People will enjoy just sitting and watching this master carver at his work.

Andy Tjilari is kuta, older brother of Nganyinytja, a senior songman for the Ngintaka Tjurkurpa that travels through Angatja. He came as a guide custodian with his wife, Kalkulya. His grandfather was brother to Nganyinytja’s grandfather; we would call them second cousins but in Anangu kinship they are of the same generational level or moiety and call each other siblings.
However, Tjilari’s father’s country is Aranngna, further west just over the Northern Territory border; this is Tjilari’s ngura walytja, ‘homeland’. It is a significant site on the Ngintaka Songline, the place where he is caught and killed. This songline links Tjilari to Angatja, so he and his wife have come here to help teach the tourists, to look after Tjukurpa, his country and his kin. Andy Tjilari has related to me as father since I first worked in Fregon in 1975. My position, then, is daughter to him and all the senior teachers of his generation.

Kalkulya, Tjilari’s wife, sits quietly beside him smiling but saying little. Not all Anangu like up front interaction with the visitors; they come to participate in teaching by example in hunting and gathering bush foods, dancing and singing the Tjukurpa.

Inawinytji is Tjilari’s daughter and I have known her since we were both young women aged twenty at Fregon. We worked together in the arts and crafts centre, a small tin shed in the central compound of the community. Inawinytji has always been an extraordinarily talented artist whose steady hand constantly painted intricate designs of walka, ‘design of country’. Now, years later, we are working together again in this tourism business teaching non-Indigenous people Anangu inma, dance and song traditions. She has been teaching traditional dance and song to non-Indigenous students at Mimili and Fregon for many years with ethno- musicologists from Adelaide University CASAM, the Centre for Australian Studies in Aboriginal Music.

Inawinytji has welcomed the idea of also working with Desert Tracks tourists. She leads a team of senior dance and song teachers, all highly respected in their communities and in demand to perform nationally and internationally. Inawinytji calls me kangkuru, ‘older sister’, but she was already the mother of two children when I arrived in Fregon. At the first Women's Council meeting at Kanypi in 1980, I was pregnant with my first child whom she predicted would be a girl. Sarah was born just five weeks after that historic meeting. So we work together as family, walytjara walytjara.
Calling White Guides

The whitefella side of Desert Tracks required business skills. Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari establish joint management with non-Indigenous partners from the start in 1988. All the initial guides and managers, from 1988 to 2000, have been related into the Anangu kinship system and spoke Pitjantjatjara, essential qualifications to start such a joint business venture with Anangu in their country on their terms. Since 2000 change of management has involved new staff without these cross-cultural skills, however younger English speaking Anangu have assisted them to understand protocols and the kinship system.

The two moieties are called wilytja, ‘shade side’ and tjintulu, ‘sun side’: two opposites together form a whole, black and white come together to form one business, an effective partnership of Western and Anangu. The stories of the white and black guides weave together in the performance space of the Pitjantjatjara tours as we dance in-between our two worlds. Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari have been two of my closest guides and mentors over the many years of learning and instruction that I have received from Anangu. The importance of these kinship relationships in caring for country and in the business management will become more evident as the journey progresses.

The Interpreter

Interpretation of the Pitjantjatjara language is a key to the success of the tours. My training began before starting work on the AP Lands in 1975 at a three-week course in Pitjantjatjara language and culture at Adelaide University taught by linguists and Anangu elders. It was a fantastic, if somewhat daunting, introduction to the complexities of Aboriginal language and cultural protocol. The anthropology I had studied at university had not prepared me for the reality of a living dynamic Indigenous culture existing inside modern Eurocentric Australia. I met for the first time the proud and dignified people of Australia’s remote lands. The so-called ‘empty centre’ was very much alive in these peoples’ eyes as they told stories of their ngura walytja, their homelands.
Early anthropologists had presented Anangu history and culture as a dying tradition. Only a couple of generations before mine anthropologists, like Clelland, in South Australia had seriously been engaged in measuring native heads to prove racial differences in intelligence. The ‘scientific’ evidence of racial difference was part of the justification for the removal of ‘half-caste’ children from their families that began in 1910, a policy that had taken children from Aboriginal families across Australia and even the remote Pitjantjatjara lands. I, as a descendant of Anglo Celtic settlers and trained in the Western anthropological tradition, was humbled and ashamed of the harm of the colonial past and the role of anthropology within it.

Wilfred Douglas, one of the experienced linguists at the Adelaide introductory course in Pitjantjatjara, said to me: ‘You will be useless to Aboriginal people for the first two years, they will be teaching you. If you stay longer perhaps you can become of some use. Know that you know nothing, as a new broom you’ll only create dust. Sit, listen and learn language. That is most important. Learn to listen!’ (Douglas, pers. comm., my diary 1975).

Though I am now considered by Anangu to be a fluent translator of Pitjantjatjara to English, I know the gaps that translation struggles to bridge. Direct word-for-word translation loses much of the contextual cultural meaning that we all assume audiences of our language understand and refer to constantly. Sometimes the translation error is amplified through several languages, the multi-language translation which often occurs from Pitjantjatjara to Australian English, to American English, to French, to German or to Japanese in the translation performance space of tourism.

In translating for Anangu at the interface with tourists, I know we enter a transformative and transforming space of trans-relation. In this space, language is required to hold and convey the cosmology and ontology of Anangu teachers to the visitors sitting around the Angatja campfire. Each person brings a culturally determined mindscape, eye-scape and sense-scape that are unique to
him or her. They will collectively produce divergent multi-faceted story
pictures of this experience, pictures thick with smells, tastes and sounds of heat,
flies, dust, and cawing crows.

Having personally experienced how strange and confusing the Anangu world
can be on first encounter; I have great empathy for new visitors. In a week they
will only experience a little of the complexity of Anangu kinship to country. The
relationships within the Anangu family and the ‘family’ of the tour group are
used to teach relationship to country. All visitors are given a totem, a personal
Pitjantjatjara name of a plant or animal in the desert environment. The Tjukurpa
stories of these totemic beings are told, sung and danced and people are shown
their footprints in the land. This is how Anangu teach visitors to read the land,
teaching them the interconnectedness of people and environment, the Anangu
law of caring for country through kinship.

Visitors
Now it is time for introductions: ‘Who are you?’ ask the people on the bus.
A cross-section of real people who have come on Desert Tracks tours have been
grouped together in this section for the purposes of telling the story of the
tourists’ journey. This group of individuals has been chosen from the several
thousand visitors to Angatja over the last seventeen years, from 1988 to 2005.
They are representative of various specialist cultures and languages within the
Western knowledge tradition that have been drawn to Nganyinyija’s ‘desert
college’. Their comments, made in person, in the visitors’ book, by email or in
written articles on their journey into Pitjantjatjara Lands with Desert Tracks,
will be quoted in the following chapters. This thesis story is a weaving together
of the experiences on tour of the men and women who have reflected upon
their journey and entered into dialogue with me about what Anangu caring for
country and community meant to them personally.

Dawn is the first to respond and is a petite blond-haired woman from Sydney.
She works in Myers department store selling cosmetics. Dawn is immaculately
dressed in casual chic and her make up is perfect despite the long road trip. She
confides that she and her husband have especially come here to celebrate their thirtieth wedding anniversary. Nganyinytja giggles with pleasure like a girl and says she knows Myers. When she first travelled to Adelaide, aged thirteen, the missionary’s wife, Mrs Duguid, bought her first red coat at Myers. She wore it proudly home on the bus though people stared at her, a little black girl in a neat red coat and white socks and shoes. She held her head up; they were just ignorant people. Ngatjutjara tjuta, ‘poor people’; they didn’t know about Aboriginal people. They’d never seen one before. She laughs and smiles at the group who are trying to imagine how it felt for this little desert girl surrounded by staring white faces on a bus in Adelaide in 1943.

**Glen**, Dawn’s husband, is sitting next to her, looking rather too big for the small camp stool he’s perched on. A tall strongly built man in his mid fifties, his ‘country’ is the plains of western Sydney where he coordinates a special drug and juvenile crime force whose tentacles reach through the police network of the city. Ilyatjari and Nganyinytja listen with intense interest as he speaks of the sad side of the city he sees, the young people in trouble. Ilyatjari nods and says:

> We too know of this sadness; our children in Amata are hooked on drugs, sniffing petrol and stealing. We tried to help them by bringing them out to Angatja to stay, get well and find a reason to live again according to our Law. I took the boys hunting while Nganyinytja worked with the girls. They got well and began to eat properly again then their parents would come out to visit and the kids jumped into the cars and headed back to Amata, into the petrol-sniffing again. Their parents couldn’t stop them; they were sitting around playing cards all day not caring for their kids. What could we do?

Glen shakes his head sadly; the problems are the same. They will talk more of this later, a mutual respect growing between the lawmen.

There is a pause, then I ask why they’ve chosen to come here to celebrate their thirtieth wedding anniversary. Glen laughs and puts his arm around his wife.
‘Dawn chose it; she always chooses our holidays. Last year she took me to the Arctic. She likes going to unusual places and meeting local people of different cultures. I trust her choice.’ The incongruity of this small woman dressed in white taking her big burly husband around the world to remote locations is not lost on Glen or the group. We all laugh and Dawn smiles enigmatically.

This is yet another lesson for me as tour manager not to prejudge or narrowly define the people who choose this tour. People are called by their hearts, rather than by their minds, to Nganyinytja’s country.

Kathy is a compact grey haired woman from Adelaide. Her permit application stated that she is seventy-five years old, a Doctor of Botany, in good health and not on any serious medication, sound of mind and body. All this information is necessary to a tour operator taking people into remote locations, travelling over bumpy dirt roads, camping out far from regular health services. Desert Tracks has access to the Flying Doctor Service out of Alice Springs. They can be contacted by two-way radio; the response time is a minimum three-hour flight before arriving at the nearest airstrip an hour’s drive from camp. So it is with great care that potential visitors’ health is vetted. Elizabeth will prove to be excellent at pacing herself to the climatic and physical hardships of the camp. She, like Anangu, gets up early to walk in search of botanical specimens and she rests under shady trees in the heat of midday. Her rhythms are their rhythms, adapted to the land of Central Australia.

Robbie Bosnak from America is the next to speak. Robbie introduces himself as a Dutch Jungian psychoanalyst who trained in Zurich, Switzerland. Since then he has been in private practice in the United States, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is his interest in the dream world as another reality that has brought him to Central Australia to learn from people of ‘the Dreaming’, Robbie says, ‘From the point of view of the dreaming state of mind, dreams are real events in real environments’ (Bosnak 2004 website).
Ilyatjari, Andy Tjilari and Kunmanara nod in agreement. They are all *nganakari*, 'medicine men and women', who travel in the dream world to heal sick souls and keep the balance between the invisible world of the Dreaming, of *Tjukurpa* and its visible created world. Ilyatjari says, 'We will talk more of the Dreaming world later. First you must walk in country, follow tracks of animals and hunt, learn to read the surface of the land then explore the depth.' The *ngangkari* will talk to the group later about their work.

**Felicity Hartigan** is a woman of my generation from Sydney. A mother, a painter and a person passionate about belonging to this country, she is here to learn about Anangu ways of belonging. Felicity has no romantic notions of moving to the country to be close to nature; she is an inner-city dweller and loves it. However, she is one of the many Australians who enjoy living in a city where trees and parks are vital to the urban landscape. She cares deeply about the natural and cultural environment in Sydney. Felicity says, 'Somehow in my upbringing, which was a white Australian upbringing, there was a disconnection between religion and nature. It is a gap I need to heal' (see Bradstock 1996). Nganyinytja understands this sentiment: 'If people lose their land, their law is broken and their spirit dies.' Her words are as true for the descendants of immigrants who left their ancestral lands as for the Aboriginal people whose land they took.

**David Tacey** is a visitor who has chosen to lead two special interest tour groups to Angatjja. He met Nganyinytja and me earlier, at a conference in Adelaide in 1992 where the spiritual rift between Christianity and the land was a core theme. Now he has come to Central Australia, the country of his childhood, to reconnect with the spirit of this place. He has argued that the broader significance of an encounter with the emptiness of the land at the centre, and the peoples who have long survived there, involves the kinds of alchemical processes of individuation articulated by psychoanalysts of Jungian inspiration. 'In Australia, landscape carries our experience of the sacred other...The landscape in Australia is a mysteriously charged and magnificently alive
archetypal presence’ (Tacey 1995: 6). In this he agrees with Anangu conception of landscape alive with the Creation Beings of the Tjukurpa. However, these presences are not mysterious to Anangu but real, and interact with human beings.

**Colleen Burke**, from America, is sitting next to David. Colleen is a strategic consultant to the CEO’s office of the world’s largest consulting firm on the topics of values, organisational knowledge and virtual learning communities. She is involved in ongoing research into the effect of, ‘our ancestors’ dreams, our contemporary metaphors, and the singing of our creation myths in realising and creating our organisational landscapes’ (Burke, pers.comm., 1997). Colleen disclosed her research interest as ‘What is there in the Dreamtime which can help our organisations find the way across the landscape of virtuality to a new economy?’ (ibid), a different yet similar concern to the cry of the lost spirit. She often feels ungrounded in her world of multi-storeyed offices surrounded by computer screens displaying virtual reality.

Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari, though somewhat bemused when her research request was relayed to them, were happy for her to learn what she could from their teaching. The questions people bring do influence their experience of the embodied landscape of Anangu. The relationship of questions to learning will be questioned itself by the method of Anangu teaching; by listening and watching they discourage questions.

**Craig Potter** from England is another guest. He has come because he read *Mutant Message Down Under* and was inspired to meet the wise elders of the Dreaming, the real people. When he sent me this in an email before the trip I was loath to destroy his enthusiasm to bring himself, his wife and young boy from England specifically to come on a Desert Tracks tour. So I cautioned him that the Australian Aboriginal response had been to greatly criticise the book and its author, saying that it was pure fantasy. Then ensued a long exchange of
messages over the worldwide email web in which Craig decided to come and meet the real people for himself.

Nganyinytja again sympathetically responds to people who have lost their spirit and need to heal. Anangu see relationship to land as essential for healing and learning to care for country. However, the modern quest is often for individual healing at the expense of community and common natural resources. Industrial Western culture encourages an ethos of individualism justifying one person’s, one company’s or one nation’s right to excessive use of natural resources. In contrast, Anangu value community above the individual. Caring for country involves caring for the whole community. The health of humanity and the health of the earth are interconnected: they are of one Creation Law, Tjukurpa. All peoples, languages, plants, animals, landforms and waters of the earth are interconnected and have their place in the sacred law of Tjukurpa.

John Broomfield, is a retired academic who organises small group educational tours to India, New Zealand and Australia. His passion is learning from other, as in the title of his book Other Ways of Knowing (Broomfield, 1997). He is a critic of academics ‘who engage intellectually with indigenous cultures but hold themselves at arms’ length from the spiritual and other teachings’ to avoid ‘going native’ (Broomfield, 1999:18). He questions, ‘How can one comprehend Buddhism without experiencing its core spiritual practice?’ (ibid:19). He is fascinated by the different knowledge languages inter-culturally and cross-culturally ‘the paradox that our way of knowing is the very thing that constrains our knowledge is considered …’ (Broomfield, 1997:15). Ilyatjari affectionately calls John, a man with greying hair and beard, tjilpi old man.

Kyoko, a beautiful Japanese dancer, has come with other dancers interested in learning to express the desert in their dance. She is a master teacher of Mobius Kiryuho, a Japanese martial art. Mobius Kiryuho is a Japanese art of movement that uses the mobius loop form to restore balance and harmony to bodies and minds. Kyoko feels that the dance between humans and nature ‘breathes’ the land; it is the giving and receiving of inspiration, the spiritual sustenance and
life force. She believes, ‘We give breath to the land, recognise its sacred energy places, and it gives breath to us renewing our essential source of being’ (see Sato, pers.comm., June 2003). This was a ‘deep law’ from her land that she brought to share in a dance exchange where embodied knowledge spoke across cultural and linguistic barriers. She wanted to learn from Anangu about their traditional dance to better understand ways of being in the land.

**Tony Judge,** a man fascinated by the interconnectivity of virtual reality, flew from Brussels to join the circle around the campfire at Angatja. In his own words, ‘Having coincidentally just completed a study entitled “From the Information Highway to Songlines of the Noosphere” (1996) that dealt specifically with the relevance of Anangu (and analogous) insights into the organization of knowledge on the Web, the temptation to participate was irresistible’ (Judge 1997). Tony is the research director of the Union of International Associations, involved with non-governmental community organisations worldwide concerned with alternative ways of thinking, planning and practically manifesting sustainable solutions to world problems.

Tony chose to meet Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari at Angatja to exercise personally his ‘imaginative learning from a particular cultural perspective’. He was one of the few who responded to their request for assistance in establishing Angatja as a centre for Indigenous knowledge exchange. Tony sent extensive feedback on the future possibilities generated from the valuable cross-cultural learning experienced on the Desert Tracks tour. His voice is one of those seeking a ‘futures landscape’ where diverse knowledge approaches are brought together to seek sustainable ways of caring for people in caring for country.

**The Journey Begins**
Why then have these travellers joined a Desert Tracks tour? They have all responded to Nganyinytja’s invitation to come and see her country and learn about its sacredness. Their specific interests vary: conservation; to meet and get along with Aboriginal people; to engage in reconciliation and social justice issues; to understand the Dreaming; to learn about traditional medicine; to
reconnect religion and nature; to experience the sacred in the land; to connect with ancestral creation myths; to heal a perceived loss of spirit in their Western tradition; to learn aboriginal dance or to experience other ways of knowing from an Aboriginal cultural perspective.

They are all true travellers seeking a transformation of their consciousness through meeting and sharing with people whose worldview and knowledge is different from their own. The Anangu hosts and guides welcome them into their country and their tradition of story, song and dance of the Tjukurpa. During the tour they work hard to increase their visitors’ understanding of the sacred law connecting people to place, nature to culture, and spirit to land. The kinship relationship of Anangu to their country and their communities becomes clear as the cultural landscapes of their country are ‘read’ aloud to them by the people who know the language of the land.

Act II presents scenes from their journey as they follow the tracks of Wati Ngintaka through the country. Anangu say, ‘Inmangura tjina uti ngarinyi: through telling his story, singing and dancing the songline, his tracks become clear on the surface of the land’. The tourists’ stories of their responses to this land and its people, plants, animals, open skies and dry desert surface are also told. It is in the conceptual metaphors of translation that the story of the cross-cultural exchange of idea-seeds is tracked and the story of this thesis emerges on the page.
Chapter 10

NGURA WALYTJA: ECOLOGICAL CARING FOR COUNTRY

After sailing for a few days, Odysseus and his men came to an island of the name of Aeolus. The island was home to the king of the winds. The Aeacheans were greeted with hospitality, and when they were ready to depart from the island Aeolus, the king, gave Odysseus a large leather bag which held all the adverse winds which would drive his ships off course.

As is customary some of the younger women, daughters to Wati Ngintaka, took him seedcakes to eat. They said, 'Hello Uncle, where have you come from? When did you get here?' And he told them about his country and how happy he was to be visiting relatives. One girl bought him a special seedcake. He tasted it and it was beautiful and fine, so he swallowed it whole.


Nganyinytja grinding kaltu kaltu seed to make seedcakes for the visitors to her country.

(Photo: Cousteau, Angatja, 1989)
Introduction
This chapter is an introduction to her country by Nganyinytja, the introduction to Anangu culture and country that tourists experience when they arrive at Angaţja. This is their first opportunity to ‘sit down in country’ with their Anangu hosts and learn about the place and people they have travelled so far to meet. This account includes a translation of an introduction to country by the Traditional Owner, Nganyinytja, in 1988. She introduces tourists to the land, its people, their cultural traditions and recent history. The strangeness of the people and place for the tourists is captured in an overview of questions commonly asked from 1988 to 2000. This narrative follows Anangu cultural protocols of welcome and is only an introduction to the issues that arise in this performance space. Nganyinytja’s welcome can be experienced as beautiful and swallowed at once like Wati Ngintaka’s seedcake, or it can be like the bag of adverse winds offered to Odysseus threatening to blow our journey of cultural convergence off course.

The Circle
The small group of travellers have finally arrived at Angaţja, their first destination on the AP Lands of South Australia. Yesterday they flew in to Uluru traversing the wide western plains and stoney deserts that stretch from the Australian coastline to the centre of the continent. Some are weary after long flights from overseas the previous day; jet lag and exhaustion show on their faces. Yet they are excited and nervous about doing something that might offend their hosts in this alien place and culture. For most this is their first experience of Central Australian semi-arid desert lands and the Pitjantjatjara people whose homeland they have come to visit.

This morning Desert Tracks collected the guests from their five star accommodations at Sails in the Desert, the most expensive hotel in the Ayers Rock Resort complex within Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park. Leaving excess luggage at the hotel, the small bags containing only bush clothes, as recommended in their pre-trip information, they were loaded into the Desert
Tracks trailer. People were advised to carry a personal bottle of water at all times, a hat, sunglasses and camera, along with personal items they might need for the five hour journey to Angatja. In two 4wd buses we travel the 320 km from Uluru to the small homeland of Angatja in the Mann Ranges of South Australia. This journey is a long loop, firstly travelling 90 km east along the bitumen Lasseter Highway to the Mulga Park dirt and gravel road that winds through sand dune country south past Mt Connor. This mesa is the third monolith of the region, located on the huge Curtin Springs Station 90 km east of Uluru. It is significant to the Anangu of the APY Lands: several Tjukurpa Ancestors travelled through this region in the Creation time, the Seven Sisters of the Pleiades and the Ice Man, Wati Ngintaka.

At this stage of the journey there are non-Indigenous accredited tourist guides with tourist bus and truck licenses required to drive these large 4wd buses with paying passengers. The two camp operations staff, Jim and Laksar, are multi-skilled drivers, cooks and guides knowledgeable in remote safari touring, local ecology, geology and history. Laksar is also an astrologer who manages the night sky star talks at Uluru and has joined us as a specialist for this particular tour. Jim stops the buses at the rise that affords a grand view of Mt Connor. He explains the pre-Cambrian formations and geological history of the mesa. Diana, the cultural guide on tour, refers to the bluff by its Anangu name, Atila, and introduces the Tjukurpa associated with the site, telling guests that they will hear more about these Creation stories from Anangu during the tour. They are informed that soon, about 80 km down the bumpy dusty track, we will be entering Aboriginal Lands.

The communities on the Lands that we will visit include Cave Hill, Amata and Angatja. Amata is a large government settlement of about 300 people. We will stop there for fuel and to visit the art centre but no photographs are permitted and tourists cannot wander around without a guide. Our invitation is from the small homeland families of Cave Hill and Angatja with whom we will be camping, and we will be taken around their traditional clan country with
Anangu guides at all times. The group of tourists is reminded that they are entering Aboriginal land and their permits specify that they are not to take alcohol onto the Lands, not to wander into camps or take photographs uninvited. They are asked to recognise that Aboriginal people have a religious relationship to this Land, to respect their cultural beliefs, to observe all protocols or wishes expressed by their hosts and to behave responsibly towards the natural and cultural environment. The most important principle of respecting Aboriginal culture is ‘Always ask.’ Most Anangu understand English even if they do not speak it, but if people have trouble being understood they should ask the bilingual cultural guide to interpret.

After a cup-a-tea break we all climb back on board the high, stumpy 4wd buses. The tour group has separated into two: the red Mitsubishi bus, being air-conditioned and more comfortable, attracts the American ‘high flyers’, while the white OKA bus is more rugged and has broken air-conditioning so the few hardier and more independent travellers are on board. A distinction becomes obvious between the groups, which fit within different segments identified by research into the Indigenous Tourism markets. The red bus, driven by Jim, attracts those fitting the tourism market segments of ‘Connectors’ and ‘Bonders’, the more extroverted people who like to share experiences with their friends or group; these include Robert Bosnak, Colleen Burke, Dawn, Glen and Craig Potter. The OKA, with drivers Laksar and Diana, attracts passengers who are introverted thinkers, the ‘Learners’ and ‘Reflectors,’ valuing time to learn and to think about what they are learning. Members of this group are Tony Judge, Kyoko, Felicity Hartigan and David Tacey.

Leaving behind the majestic bluff of Mt Connor we travel along an ochre red sandy road between blue-grey mulga trees that seem to stretch to the horizon. There has been a noticeable improvement in the country since leaving the denuded paddocks of Curtin Springs along the highway; once south into Mulga Park Station the native vegetation cover improves under less pressure from excessive cattle numbers. After passing the Mulga Park Station homestead and
store we take a ninety-degree right hand turn and head west towards the
distant blue Musgrave Ranges. The country becomes more diversely vegetated
with stands of quandong trees bobbing with red fruit in season, the delicate
pink trunks of desert poplars waving in between the Spinifex and sand-dunes
topped with tall desert oaks. A high cattle-grid hump in the road marks the
border into Aboriginal Land and we enter another country.

The main road west takes us past Amata. We will call in to the arts centre on
our return journey. Visitors need to be gradually introduced to the impact of
Western colonization on traditional Anangu lifestyle. We avoid Amata on the
first day, as the derelict air of the ex-government settlement would shock our
guests: the rubbish, petrol sniffing kids, mangy dogs and unkempt housing. To
new eyes this seems like a mockery of the Anangu invitation to come and see
their beautiful country. It requires some time living out on these Lands to
understand the contradictions of modern culture clash on Anangu life, the love
of land and sacred significance of country coexisting with the discarded rubbish
of a white colonizing civilization.

The two cultures do not always work together to keep the land; Nganyinytja’s
vision is often more hope than reality. The guides on Desert Tracks must
answer questions from tourists who are shocked by this cross-cultural
dysfunction; it is not easy for Anangu or Westerners to understand. Remote
Aboriginal lands in Australia are described by Elspeth Young as a ‘fourth
world’, that of an Indigenous minority inside a first world nation (Young
1995:1). Young rightly describes the impact as an ‘industrial onslaught on their
homelands’ (ibid:1).

The proponents of government development programs for Indigenous
Australians claim they redress socio-economic disadvantage and raise
education, health and housing standards for Indigenous people. While this may
be true, the Aboriginal people are in these dire straits because of the destruction
of their culture, lifestyle and health through the impact of Western civilization.
The negative results surround settlements like Amata: the environment has been degraded by cattle, horses, donkeys and camels to the point where people cannot live off the land or rely on natural water sources; settlement life and housing has brought disease and destroyed traditional patterns of family lifestyle and governance; the protection of women and children through extended family care of the young and aged has been damaged to the extent that children as young as eight sniff petrol and roam in hungry groups around the streets. Western governance and control over their lives has removed Anangu from their intimate relationship with land and destroyed the vitality of their social and cultural well-being.

The depths of this destruction cannot be understood in a tourist trip to the AP Lands. However, the visitors on Desert tracks tours stay a week and camp in homelands with the community; they listen, learn and are keen to understand the cultural world of these first peoples of Australia. These ‘tourists’ have an opportunity to learn more about Anangu life, culture and relationship to land than many people who work in settlements on the Lands for a couple of years. These tourists certainly understand more about Anangu life than most politicians and government agency advisors who fly in and fly out for meetings of a few hours. Desert Tracks has run three-day cultural orientation courses for new Nganampa health staff; some Amata nurses attended and commented that they learnt more in those three days than in several years working in the community Clinic (R Hecker, pers. comm., 1990).

So back to the buses travelling on to Umuțu Umtunya, the place Nganyinytja calls her ‘front door’. Everyone alights from the buses and climbs up the red-gold hill of granite rock to a small rockhole, which was a vital source of water for families travelling on foot in the early 1900s. These were the years of Nganyinytja’s childhood, living a traditional nomadic lifestyle until her family moved to Ernabella, the first mission station on AP Lands, in 1940. She has stood on this low hill half way between Amata and Angatja with myself and other groups many times before. Nganyinytja introduces guests to her country
by pointing to the east with her arm in a broad sweep describing the land of her
Yankunytjatjara grandmother, and then turning to the north-west we gaze
towards the Mann Ranges and follow her hand as she points out the route they
used to walk across this sand dune country to Angatja. This expanse is her
ngura walytja, her ‘home country’, the land of her father and grandfather.

Call to the Campfire
The 4wd bus and OKA finally arrive at Angatja in the Mann Ranges six hours
after leaving the hotels of Yulara at Uluṟu Kata Tjuṯa National Park.
Nganyinytja and her extended family are there to meet the visitors who are
quickly surrounded by the delightful, irrepressibly energetic kids and dogs
while the old people and teenagers hang back watching from a respectful
distance. Greetings exchanged, the trailer is unloaded, people choose personal
sites for their tents or swags, and camp is set up. It is suggested that they follow
traditional camp layout where sleeping areas are segregated into single men’s
and single women’s areas; married couples pitch their own tents. The ‘swag’ is
a canvas envelope that unrolls to reveal a comfortable mattress and sleeping
bag with extra blankets for the chill desert nights. Tents are provided but
people are encouraged to sleep outside, as there is little concern about rain. The
night skies are usually clear, magnificent domes dotted with the southern stars
that can be viewed in comfort from a swag.

When camp is organised visitors are invited to sit around the central campfire.
Nganyinytja and Ilyatjarri sit close to the fire, which is now burning well and
boiling the billy tea. They wait as the circle forms around the campfire. I sit next
to Nganyinytja, in my role as the cross-cultural guide translator, listening
intently and ready to translate as accurately as possible the Pitjantjatjara stories
they will tell. Each time it is slightly different: as with all good storytellers more
and more is revealed with each telling. The details fill out the figures in the
landscape, the light and shade of history and people is enhanced and the multi-
layered map of tracings on the land emerges.
Nganyinytja, her smile broad, welcomes all. She is a small woman of great energy, her eyes aglow with passion beneath a brow lined with care and fringed with soft curling grey hair. The beauty of the young girl smiling out of Mountford’s portrait of her in 1940 is changed by the years but not dulled. Even then, aged eleven, she was an enthusiastic go-between among the worlds of her people and the new whitefella world encamped at Ernabella.

Nganyinytja is now in her sixties and a respected Pitjantjatjara elder initiate of Grandmother law. It is her father’s land in which we now sit and she, as his only daughter, is the senior traditional owner of Angatja in the Mann Ranges of South Australia. She is a storyteller and natural orator, completely at ease teaching her children in the dry creek beds of her homeland or addressing a parliamentary committee in Canberra about her people’s land rights. Her voice is often heard in community meetings, at AP Council, nationally and internationally at conferences concerning Indigenous health, petrol sniffing, land rights, spirituality, women’s law and tourism.

Sitting on a rug by the fire, Nganyinytja folds her legs comfortably under her layered skirts as she waits for people to gather and the chatter to quieten before she speaks. In her wonderful storytelling way she will introduce these strangers to her country and take them on a journey through the history of the last hundred years or so of this desert landscape that is her home. This is the recent history, a mere dust speck in the eye of her people who have roamed these sand dunes for thousands of years. She tells of the time her grandparents first saw white men on camels, strange beasts with two heads and four legs, who brought fear and destroyed precious waterholes. It is a many-layered story of conflict over scarce resources, land and water, of killings and kindness, of greed and giving, both black and white moving back and forth across a fragile frontier. Nganyinytja tells this history without bitterness or anger; the wrongs and rights are plain to all. Tjaka, ‘people’ are like this, she says, good and bad. The story reveals the strength of the people of the Dreaming, the Tjukurpa, to survive, adapt and maintain connection with country, kin and Law. When
everyone is gathered she will tell this story in lyric Pitjantjatjara and I will translate, the emotion already potent in the air from her animated telling.

**Nganyinytja’s Opening Welcome to Country**

*Ngura nyanganka iritu anangu tjuta nyinapai pukulpa. Ka ngura nyangatja tjamuku munu tjamku walytjapitiku, munu mamaku, mama tjutaku munu ngayuku, ngayuku ngura. A long time ago lots of people were living happily in this place. This place is my grandfather’s and my grandfather’s family’s place, and my father’s, all my many fathers, and mine, my place.***

*Iritinguru tjana pukulpa nyinapai ngura nyanganka. Mamanya tjamunya tjana tatilpai pulingku kuku mantjilpai, kuka mantjintjikitja. Kuka waru, kanyala ngintaka. Paluru tjana tatira uralpai kuka. A long time ago they lived here happily in this country. My father and grandfather used to climb the hills to get meat, in order to spear meat. Black footed rock wallaby, euro and perentie lizard meat. He and the others would climb up to get meat.*

*Ka minyma tjuta tjitji tjuta nganaanyanya wantipai kamingka nyinapai, kamingka nyinamtjaku. Ngana kamingka nyinapai tjukutjuku kali pulkanga, kuwaringka. The women used to leave all us children with our grandmothers, to sit with our grandmothers. When we were little we used to stay with our grandmothers in the very hot weather, like now.*

*Waringka nganaça ankupai tjungu, wari wirungka. Munula kukuaka nya? Wayutaku, mitikaku munu tinka munu tjala, munu mai tjuta angurlie, kunakantji, wanguwu, tjutangku tjana ngurilpai minyma tjutangku mununya mai tjuta uralpai pulkara pitingka, urara, urara, urara. Minyma fourpalaya ankupai munuya uralpai, minyma kutiara kutiara, walytja piti tjungu nyinantja. In the cold time we all travelled together, in the nice cold weather. And we hunted which meats? Brushtail possums, rat kangaroos, and sand goanna, and lots of bush foods; wild plums, grass seed, naked woollybutt grass seed. All together the women went searching and they gathered lots in their large wooden bowls, gathering, gathering, gathering. Four women would go together and gather,*
four women, relatives who lived together. Then they would take these back to camp, and come back to camp kalala. midday, to all eat together, with our mother, aunty, grandmother, older sister, mother’s older brother, our big father, all together we’d eat. The men would bring in the meat. Then we would all sit together and eat the baked seed cakes.

Nganana tjitji tjuta pukulpa tjitji uwankarangku kuka nyakupai mamangku katinyangka ka wirtpakalpa pukulpa mununla tjapilpai, ‘Mama yaaltjinka nyuntu wakani? Ka paluru watjalpai.’ ‘Ngayulu puli katuna wakanu.’ Ka ‘Wipu yaaltji?’ nganana wipunku mukuringangi. Tjuta pukulpa ngarala uwankara. All us kids would be happy when they saw our father returning with meat. We would run to him and ask, ‘Father where did you spear the meat?’ He’d say, ‘I speared it high up in the hills.’ Then we’d shout, ‘Where’s the tail?’ We all loved the tail. We all lived happily together.

Munu ngunytjungku mai mantjinangka nganana uralpai, panya nintiringkupai, tjapilpai nintiringkunytjikitjangu. Alatji nganana nintiringkupai, munu nyakupai ngunytju tjuta mantjinangka mai mununa nintiringkupai. Mununa pukulpa nintiringkupai. And we went with our mothers to gather bush foods. Then our parents taught us about this creek-bed and these hills, how to find meat. This is how we learnt about our land, our home country. Other people had areas they hunted for meat and bush foods that was their food. The land around here was ours; this was our meat and our bush foods. Other people’s was over there, their food and meat.

Our family lived in this region and drank from this creek-bed and rockhole and at Tjitapiti. We would stay here and then travel to other places, go to this place and another distant place to visit relatives. During the rain times, when there were lots of rockholes full of water, we would travel. When the rain stopped we would travel to another place. We would travel a long way, over to Amata and those places east, then to Mt Davies in the west and Pipalyatjara, to see our other relatives.
Ngayuku mamangku ngura ngananguru altingu Tjangilanguru, maḻutja tjana maḻuku tjukurpatjara, maḻutjara Dreamingtjara. Ka nganyuku nama ngura ngangatja ngura nunu paluru ma-altling, ka mama kutjupanku Docker Riverla altingu, ka mama kutjupangku Ernabellaongaru alting. Alatji tjana nyinapai altingu. My father from this country called a wife from Tjangi, a woman of the maḻu tjukurpa, ‘kangaroo Dreaming’. This was my father’s country and he married a woman from far away. My other father (my father’s brother) married a woman from Docker River. My other father (another father’s brother) called a woman from Ernabella, a Yankunytjatjara woman. This is how they came to live here, and they all became family. They came from far away but became part of the family by living here. My mother became homesick and asked to go back home, I want to see my relatives, it is my turn, so will you all come with me? They said, ‘Oh yes, OK.’ So we went to Mt Davies and Tjangi and Puta Puta, and we would stay with our relatives, to see my mother’s people.

Before whitefellas came Aboriginal people lived very happily, working and living in their way with their relatives. They were strong and not sick, eating their own food and their own meat, slim and well, not overweight. They walked long distances, carrying their children on their backs, climbed hills to get water; women went to scoop out water and gave their children drinks from their piti, ‘wooden bowl’, and they went for meat. They were always working, always.

The older teenage girls learnt and became strong. They worked well, digging for meat for themselves, building wiltja, ‘shelters’, for themselves, going for water themselves; they didn’t sit around. They would get water and pour it out for their mothers, give it to their mothers, and go hunting by themselves for meat, get meat themselves, dig for honey ants themselves, getting bush foods and meat themselves.

The older boys, the young separate initiates, were taught by the men, they learnt men’s work. To get spear wood, men taught them how to cut the
spears and make the throwing extension, how to go hunting and spear meat for themselves. They went with the men climbing the hills, the men and youth went together to hunt so they would learn. The young initiates grew strong, climbing hills, hunting, the men watched them carefully to see that they were learning properly. Everyone was strong and happy, becoming skilled in their work.

The boys were segregated off with the men from about ten years old, nyilajira, until they were eighteen, nyingka tjuta, then about twenty when they were initiated into manhood, watiringanyi. In the main camp the old men and women, the women and older girls and children lived together. All the kids were good; they listened to their mothers and fathers, their older brothers and sisters, while the nyingka tjuta lived separately, out of sight of their mother and father. People from the main camp sent food, cooked damper and bush foods, over to the separate camp. The young boys and girls could carry it over. They would return with gifts of meat from the young men to their families.

Palanka malangkanka, wati kamilitja tjuta pitjangu. Munu paluru tjana ngintingu maingku, tjukanka, plawangka. Munu tjana rawangku katira ungaryi, katira ungaryi. Munu tjana maiku plawaku ngintini. Munu tjana kulinu muntawa ngangatja munti mai wiringu. Uwankara ngintingu. After this the white men on camels came. And they taught people about new foods, sugar, white flour. They kept on coming and giving food, coming and giving. Then everyone became used to white flour. Then they thought, oh, maybe this is good food. Everyone became used to it.

Kutjupa tjutangkai mai kutjupa tjuta ungaryi, kura kura tjuta. Kutjupa, poiontjara ungu, ka ilunyananyi anggu tjuta, ngaltutjara. Wati Western Australianguru pitjangu munu mai kura kura ungu. Ka kutjupa nganga pitjangu, Mr Waite [White]. Mr White travelled through the country giving good food, flour and sugar. He was kind and came bringing God’s story with a bible. He travelled right through the Pitjantjatjara country to Warburton
where he started a Mission. He gathered up all the children and put the children into a dormitory and taught them at school. He took them away from their mothers. He made them a place and put them there.

Ka kutjupa tjuta camilatjara pitjangu, wati kutjupa tjuta pitjangu, munuya kungka tjuta mukuringanyi. Munuya mantjininingi munuya kanyiningi, munuya kutjupa tjutaya paunyingi. Palawa tjana mukuringanyi munuya palawa mantjingni, ka tjanaya paunu, paura ngulu wataparangi. Other men came on camels. They saw the young girls and wanted them. They took them and looked after them. Some other Anangu saw the flour and wanted it so took it, and they were shot, shot at and chased away.

Palangka malangka, nganampa pukulpa uwanaka kuraringu, kakanakataingu. Munu kutjupa kutjupa wirkangu ngananaalakutungka. After this our happiness, everything, went bad. It was cut up. Lots of different things came into our lives.

Nganana iriti blanketa wiya nyinangi, uvankara pukulpa nikiti uvankara nyinangi. Kututu waru. Nikiti ngarintja palya, ka kurnyapa waru, unytjuppa pulka. Ngananya warungka nyinapai itingka, wiltjangka nyinapai, nguntjungku wiltjanyangka wiru, pukulpa. A long time ago we lived without blankets, we were all happy living naked together with warm hearts. It was fine to be naked when our spirit was warm, living in warmth. We lived close to fire in our wiltja, our mothers made beautiful wiltja, we were happy.

After this came the man who is our relative, Dr Duguid, a really good man. I was a young child growing up, maybe about ten years old. Dr Duguid and others travelled around many places seeking the reasons for Aboriginal people's sickness and break down. Poor things; white people had come and they had pushed Aboriginal people out and put their herds of cattle on the land. There were so many cattle. At Itjintitja, near Indulkana, they put lots of cattle in many different areas, and they dug wells. Many other whitefella came on camels and brought many cattle onto our lands. Everything was destroyed!

Dr Duguid came from a long way away, he came from London, then from Adelaide, and he climbed onto a camel and went looking around. He was searching for Aboriginal people living on their land and he saw everything. To the north in the Petermann Ranges he saw Aboriginal people living in their family groups in the country they were related to. Then he went back to the place where many white people were living at Officer Creek. That's where lots of whitefellas were living; they had dug bores or wells and settled with their sheep. He came and said, when he came to the whitefellas, 'You must all leave and return to your home country.' He told them to go: 'Go back home!' He was a wonderfully strong man. He told them all to go, and they went. After that, after Dr Duguid had gone and all those whitefellas had gone, then others came and took the children away. Welfare people came and took the half-caste children away and put them in school. They took our children away, our black children; we don't call them half-caste because it makes them ashamed.

After this missionaries came. Dr Duguid went and held meetings in Adelaide, with all the bosses: the government, Mr Butler, Mr Miller and those who were elected at that time, a long time ago, the bosses. He went and spoke up for our protection, looking after us. When Mr Taylor was living with us when all the country became dry, a huge drought spread
across the land. Aboriginal people were starving, there was no water for a long time. Before this a lot of rain had fallen and fallen, but then it was dry, a drought.

Other Aboriginal people went to Yallata, others to Warburton; others went north to other places. Others went to Ernabella, everyone from Pipalyatjara and Wingellina. There we joined; everyone went and came together at Ernabella. The missionaries started then, but there was little food at Ernabella so we went hunting for our own meat and the women gathered bush foods. Then after that small loads of food came in, came in, came in, and people became used to this food and whitefella work.

They got work with whitefellas. Because of this lots of Aboriginal got into trouble at Ernabella. They took the sheep for meat, they had learned about eating whitefella sheep meat from whitefellas. The young fellas who looked after the sheep a long way out, killed and ate sheep. Again lots of them killed sheep, so trouble came, the policemen came and took them to jail. This was the beginning of lots of trouble.

We would go hunting for meat and bush foods in neighbouring cattle stations, for a women’s hunting trip, a holiday. They had put their cattle there and claimed the land as theirs, so they would get angry and shoot at us with rifles. If Aboriginal people went there they would shoot us to scare us away. Chase us with horses and whips, shooting over our heads. Everything became terrible.

*Ka palulanguru, nganayampa tjunguringulta, tjunguring whitefellungka, piramangka tjutangka nyinarampala tjunguringkulampa, troublitjaraingkulta. Ngaltjara. Karpintja, kuratjaraingkulta.* Because of this, us coming together, coming together with whitefellas, living with lots of whitefellas brought trouble. Sadly, things became tied up and went bad.
Ka nganana missionaringka nyinapai munula pitjapai ngura walkyjakutu, tjina, kamulangka, donkey, rawa panya nganana piriakutu pitjangi, springtime. Nganana warkara warkara wakara, tiitji tjuta skoolangka nganana tjarpangu. Skoola Ernabellala startarini skoola ngayuku, nganangampa skoola. Ka nganana skoolangka pakanu. Nganana Andynya, Ilyatjirinya, ngayulunya, nganana uvankara skollangka tjaparingi. Dr Duguidala tjunu plan panya, paluru watjanu ngananganha kanyintja, paluru ngananganha artunmankunytiha, munu skoola tjunu munu hospitala tjunu. We lived with the missionaries and we came back regularly to visit our homelands, on foot, on camels, on donkeys, every springtime we came home. We worked and worked and worked; we little children went to school. The school had started in Ernabella, my school, our school. So we came out of school. We kids, Andy, Ilyatjari and myself, we were all in school. Dr Duguid was the boss. He laid down the plan, he promised to look after us, he protected us, he made sure there was a school and hospital.

Ernabellala ngura kutju nyinanyi, ngura kutju pulka, ka anangu winki, mungilyi, tjuta nyinangtu tjunguringkula. Waarka tjuta kanyiningi; sheepi tjuta kanyiningi tjana, boraku nintiringangti, bora windmilla palyantjikitji nintiringangti, wati tjuta youngfella tjuta, fence palyantjikitja. Walerna tjana, Charlinya tjana, Sandinya tjuta nintiringangti waarka palyantjikitja. Ernabella was the only place, one big camp, lots of Aboriginal people, large numbers, many people came to camp together. They were doing lots of work: looking after sheep, learning to drill bores, learning to put windmills on bores. The men and youngfellas, they built fences. Walter, Charlie, Sandy, lots were learning how to work.

After that they started two other places, Fregon and Amata. At Amata, in a smaller community, it was good and we all worked, we were happy. We looked after our children, took them to school. But then things started to go wrong again. Young men started stealing from the store, drinking and sniffing petrol. Lots of trouble came again. So we thought we would move back to our country, our homeland, to live as we did before, hunting and gathering, more traditionally. Some people moved out to Pipalyatjara and
Wingellina, then others moved out to their homelands. It was so good to be back in the quiet, listening to birds and the wind. We were happy to be away from the trouble of the bigger communities. Now we are happy to be living back here, at Angatja. Sometimes our kids go off to school or football, but they come back. We are happy in our country (Nganyinytja 1988, trans. D James).

Tourists’ Questions

Nganyinytja’s talk stimulated many questions in the minds of her listeners. These varied according to their country of origin, their age, sex and educational background and what pre-trip reading they had done. Special interest groups tended to display a group mind or culture which determined the subjects explored at greater depth: groups attracted by Community Aid Abroad have a focus on social justice and alleviation of poverty; school and university groups focus on knowledge of the country and the culture; students of Indigenous studies at the University of Western Australia and Curtin University are often stolen-generation adults who are reconnecting with cultural roots and looking for relationship with these desert people; groups booked through the Australian Conservation Foundation are passionate environmentalists interested in plants and animals; groups lead by Jungian dream analysts seek affirmation of the importance of dreams from the Aboriginal people of the Dreaming; and then there are the composite groups made up of individuals who booked directly with Desert Tracks after hearing Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari on the radio or reading of them in newspapers or magazines and who want to be reconciled with the first peoples and land of Australia.

A great diversity of the tourists or ‘students’ have come to Nganyinytja’s Bush College over the years covered by this study from 1988–2005. They have ranged in age from two to seventy-five; men and women, boys and girls, French, Italian, American, German, English, Nounme, Koorie, and Australian. They have been professional doctors, nurses, teachers, lecturers, draughtsman, architects, film makers, photographers, journalists, orchestral composers,
retirees, unemployed, artists, musicians, botanists, geologists, parliamentary press secretaries, shop assistants, the Chief of Police, dream analysts, philosophers, adventurers, primary school children, Japanese teenagers, bush walkers and masseurs, to name a few. Despite their differences in education, age and gender their questions have clustered around the differences and similarities between the two cultures, Western and Indigenous, and the relationship to place, persons and things.

Relationship to place or land moves from a questioning about the physical topography, plants and animals to questions about how people are related to the land. The cliché, ‘Aboriginal people don’t own the land, they are owned by it’, needs to be unpacked and its complexity explored. The Aboriginal relationship to animals and plants is commonly called ‘totemic’; is this an obscure or offensive anthropological term or does it hold some meaning for Anangu? Questions concerning people in this desert landscape inevitably lead to questions about traditional Aboriginal kinship: how is this different to Western kinship and how is it changing today after colonization? What about Aboriginal languages? How many were there; what do the children here learn to speak and write; why is English not widely spoken on Anangu Lands?

The relationship to ‘things’ like cars, houses, radios, clothes and other accoutrements of Western civilization seems different out here. Many things seem to have been discarded: car bodies dismembered along road sides, houses in disrepair, clothes unwashed, rubbish heaps around dwellings and wind-blown refuse caught in fences. How can people who love their land rubbish it? What is the use of the government providing housing, water reticulation, infrastructure and community services if Anangu appear to be disinterested in caring for these things? Why are the kids’ noses running with snot and their ears pussy-eaten away by maggots? The contrasts are acute: wild beauty and ragged lifestyle; living off the land and corrugated iron humpies; bright laughing-eyed children playing with mangy dogs; poverty in a rich land.
Conclusion

To Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari these tourists are not, in the tourism industry jargon, just 'bums on seats' representing different 'market segments'. They are all students wanting to learn. Angatja elders regard their students as members of a growing family: the emphasis is on relationship to specific persons and place, the people and place of Angatja. Anangu have opened their ngura walytja, their home country, to those with the open eyes, ears and hearts to listen.

Nganyinytja says, 'People come to learn and they listen and their hearts begin to open up and they feel strong' (Nganyinytja, pers. comm., 1990). Anangu are not offering a tourist experience tailored to a specific market segment. They are offering a window into a holistic ontology of being, relating people to plants to animals to earth, air, fire and water; an invitation to all these people and groups to expand their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual boundaries into other ways of knowing.

The tourists who chose to come to Angatja and become students in Nganyinytja’s 'Bush College' are seeking other ways of knowing. These people form a growing segment of the population, both domestically and internationally, that is not identified in tourism market research. They are not seeking social versus individual experiences, nor escape versus enhancement. These travellers may be seeking a combination of some or all of these experiences, but they are primarily seeking release from the segmentation of Western life and knowledge; they are seeking individual learning towards participation in a greater social good; they seek to escape 'back to basics', to relax the boundaries of their ways of knowing, to be stimulated to change self and society.

These people have in common a belief that Western free-market materialism is not providing equal health and wellbeing to the diverse natural and cultural landscapes of the world. These travellers seek reconciliation between their Western civilization and the peoples and environments of the earth. Anangu offer a holistic ontology that does not segment nature, culture and spirituality.
Like the wide-open desert lands, Anangu philosophy offers wide conceptual spaces. However, the impact of colonization has fractured and distorted the holistic philosophy and practice of Anangu traditional lifestyle, destroying the health and wellbeing of their current generations. Thus, their elders are seeking ways in which the two laws can come together to create and sustain healthy lifestyles and communities for their grandchildren.

Within the paradoxes created by the clash of cultures on Indigenous lands, Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari believe, lie the seeds of new growth towards a convergent culture that respects traditional knowledge and connection to the land while providing economically viable industries for Anangu children and grandchildren. That is Nganyinytja’s and Ilyatjari’s hope and their reason for starting a tourism business. The tourists have to face their own distress and disgust at the obvious negative impacts of Western civilization on Indigenous people, their lifestyle and their country, and come to terms with why they have come to visit and what impact their visit may have. Their conscious intent and that of their hosts is to share cultural understandings of people and place, to enhance the lifestyle of all participants in this performance space.

In the next chapter the visitors to Nganyinytja’s country examine their gift bags. Are they full of juicy seedcakes to be swallowed and more desired, or are they full of adverse winds that blow the mind and body off course from the paths usually travelled, to seek new paths through the cross-cultural maze?
Chapter 11

NGAPARTJI-NGAPARTJI: ECONOMICS OF RECIPROCITY

Odysseus: Supplicants' Rights

Odysseus is shipwrecked on the island of Phaeacia, blown off course after his men opened the bag of winds. Odysseus alone survived shipwreck and begs hospitality, food, clothes and shelter from King Alcinous.

‘At last the old revered Echeneus broke the spell, the eldest lord in Phaeacia, finest speaker too, a past master at all the island’s ancient ways.
Impelled by kindness now, he rose and said, “This is no way, Alcinous. How indecent, look our guest on the ground, in the ashes by the fire!
Your people are holding back, waiting for your signal. Come, raise him up and seat the stranger now, in a silver-studded chair.
And tell the heralds to mix more wine for all so we can pour out cups to Zeus who loves the lightning.
Champion of supplicants – supplicants rights are sacred, and let the housekeeper give our guest his supper, unstinting with her stores.”’

(Faoleis 1996:185)

Wati Ngintaka:

Visitors' Rights – to food, warmth and shelter in another's country

The next morning Wati Ngintaka’s brothers-in-law came to welcome him and gift him new spears:

‘Marutju pakala! Kukala ananyi malu, kanyalaku puulingkatjara ma tatini, munula nyaani uwankara – wati uwankara ananyi.

Come! Join us brother! We’re going out hunting for kangaroo, rock wallaby are climbing up the hills – we can see them – all the men are going together.’

So they went off together, as men do, all really happy hunting together. They speared some rock wallaby and kangaroo, brought them back to camp on their heads, cooked them and carved up the meat, sharing the different portions with all the men, women and children in camp. The next day Wati Ngintaka and the men hunted together again. He was happy to be given hunting rights in their country, the rights of marutju, brother-in-law, rights and responsibilities of kinship.

(Noanvintila trans.D James 1994)
Introduction
This chapter examines the economics of the host and guest tourism exchange on the AP Indigenous lands. The performance of Desert Tracks as an eco-cultural tour company is not rated on a stock exchange in terms of its financial profit and loss. Rather it is rated by its investors, both hosts and guests, on its performance as an environmentally and culturally sustainable enterprise. There is a convergence between the best-practice principles of eco-tourism developed both nationally and internationally, with the sustaining principles of the Anangu traditional economy. Both aim to provide income to local people, to maintain their culture and provide employment in a manner that protects the natural biodiversity of their lands. The eco-tourist principle is to ‘take only photos, leave soft footprints’, while Anangu want income from enterprise that sustains them and their country and culture in today’s modern global economy. The exchange in tourism that Indigenous people initiate and manage on their own lands provides the opportunity for a trading exchange between equals, each desiring valued items of trade from the other.

Tourism is one of the few options for Indigenous business on the remote AP Lands. The two other main opportunities for joint business or financial return from exploitation of natural resources are currently cattle adjustment and mining. These two businesses actualise far greater returns to Anangu than do the small tourism businesses of Desert Tracks, Mimili Tours, 4wd tag-a-long groups and university groups studying music or scientists on volunteer Earth Watch tours. However, these ecologically and culturally sensitive types of tourism offer highly enjoyable work for Anangu, employing their traditional knowledge and skills in a modern enterprise on their own country. Whereas cattle and mining are extractive industries, eco-tourism is designed to sustain the ecological and cultural landscapes it exploits. This can be dismissed as an economic necessity: tourism cannot afford to kill the golden goose of exotic natural and cultural landscapes which must continue to lay golden eggs so that business can prosper from the continual return of satisfied customers.
However, I argue, from my experience within the industry both as an owner and manager of a small eco-cultural tour business, research across Australia into similar community based businesses and involvement with both the Australian and International Eco-Tourism Societies, that the motivation of both hosts and guests involved in this type of tourism is not primarily financial return. Their concern for the natural and cultural environments in which they work is genuine and their decision to be involved in tourism is a lifestyle choice rather than for profit. It is a reciprocal economy designed to take from and give back to the cultural and natural environments of people and their places.

**S upplicants Kneeling in the Ashes**

This chapter opened with Odysseus shipwrecked on the Island of Phaeacia, kneeling in the ashes of Alcinous’ fire, begging for hospitality. Odysseus was not reduced to the position of supplicant by accident. Poseidon wrecked his boat because he previously angered the god by killing his son. The person of Odysseus, the archetypal Western traveller, embodies paradox. He is renowned as the conquering hero after the fall of Troy, yet he attacks other settlements, with whom no war has been declared, as a pirate hell-bent on rape and pillage, a bounty hunter. In Homer’s song saga one of the oft-repeated epithets of Odysseus is ‘poliporthos, sacker of cities’. Those whom he visits often ask if he comes as a true guest or is he:

Out on a trading spree or roving the waves like pirates,
Sea-wolves raiding at will, who risk their lives
To plunder other men?

(Knox, in Fagles and Knox 1996:28)

Similarly, the Ngintaka song saga recounts the initial wariness of the Nyintjiri people to guests. As discussed earlier, it is Anangu custom that the guest first camps some distance away from the main camp and waits until the locals ascertain his reason for coming and his relationship to them and decide the trust limits of their hospitality. In this case they were beguiled by his expressed innocent intentions and welcomed him into their camp, as did the Trojans
welcome the wooden horse with Odysseus and warriors hidden in its belly. These two archetypal travellers’ tales hold a moral for both hosts and guests: beware of disguised intentions; the guest may take more than is offered and then the angered host may rise up against their erstwhile guest and wreak destruction. Odysseus emerged from the belly of the Trojan horse to kill its hosts then, when sailing home, killed the son of Poseidon, the Cyclops, who called on his powerful father to wreck Odysseus’ ships and prevent his return home. His curse was fulfilled many times as the seas rose and pounded Odysseus till he was ‘a broken man – all shipmates lost’ (ibid:228).

Similarly, Wati Ngintaka steals the Ngintjiri people’s grindstone and attempts to return home with the plunder, but they pursue and kill him. The lesson for modern tourists is to respect one’s hosts and take responsibility not to plunder their resources, whether natural, cultural or spiritual. Indigenous people are sharing culture and country, not offering it to be bought and taken away in packages. Inawinytji Williamson, a director of Anangku Arts and Culture Corporation, says to students of dance, ‘Our culture and law is strong, we share it with you. Palya, good! But you can’t take it. We can’t give away our culture, give away our Tjukurpa and our land’ (Williamson, pers. comm., June 2003).

The Paradox of Indigenous Tourism
The paradox of Indigenous tourism is that the colonised are being ‘begged for hospitality’ from the colonisers whose industries continue to undermine and destroy their traditional cultural and ecological economic subsistence on their lands. Some Westerners feel that their culture is shipwrecked, foundered on the coast of materialism; they come as beggars to the surviving holders of Indigenous spiritual wisdom (see also Tacey 1995; Read 2000), approaching Indigenous people as supplicants asking to be reconnected with land, people and spirit by those whose lands they have colonised. Rose calls this the ‘paradoxical search for connection’ of non-Indigenous people in post-colonial worlds created through the hope of settlers to make new lives in a new country
that had been fought and won by violence and dispossession of the original inhabitants (Rose 1999b:185).

Nganyinytja recognised this need in Westerners and Indigenous people alike, who have lost connection with country. She said, 'Now lots of people, black and white, are wanting to learn about the old law, from our grandmothers and grandfathers. People are happy to learn from me and my family; we are happy to share our way and pleased that they are taking back this new knowledge to their homes and teaching others' (Nganyinytja 1993). Nganyinytja and I heard this cry for connection poignantly articulated by a young white Australian male at an Indigenous Healing Conference we attended in Kalgoorlie in 1992. He stood and addressed a healer of the Canadian First Nations, another young man of about his age from Vancouver Island, and asked 'How can you help people like me? We have no spirituality.' Lauren, the young Canadian, answered with a story:

My people have always known about you white people. We had a prophecy from a long time ago that you were the first people of the fourth wind and that you would come from across the sea. That you people have a very powerful spirituality and that you’d be spreading it right across the world. That you are travellers and that you are always seeking. My great grandfathers welcomed you and gave you food and shelter and allowed you to hunt in our hunting grounds. But what we didn’t realise is that you would not be content to share. You would want it all and would take it all. You need to take responsibility for your very powerful spirituality and how it has spread over the world, overpowering indigenous peoples and taking their land and spirit.

(Lauren, pers. comm., 1992)

Western travellers from Odysseus onwards, have conquered, pillaged and taken home the spoils. Westerners need to take responsibility for their strong imperialistic spirit that has, and still does, fill the sails of the vanguard of their
troops sent out to bring civilisation to the barbarians. The Crusades, justified in
the name of Christianity and civilisation, but really intent on the wealth and
bounty of other lands, have never ceased. Today the rhetoric of the President of
the United States, currently the most powerful Western coloniser on a global
scale, justifies the invasion of Iraq under the benevolent guise of spreading
democracy while really intending to control its oil resources. Christianity has
long been utilised by the Western state to control the hearts, minds and bodies
of those they colonise. Indigenous people ask that Westerners not disguise their
strength in weakness, not be ‘wolves of the sea’ visiting in sheep’s clothing.

**Surviving Visitors Who Will Not Go Home**

Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari, like the great grandfathers of the Vancouver
Islanders, have welcomed Western travellers as honoured guests to their
country, offering them the right to hunt and gather, to hear the stories and
songs, and participate in dances of their country. Nganyinytja’s homeland and
all her kin clan are there to welcome the visitors and share with them their
knowledge of country and kinship with the natural world. This is in accord
with Anangu traditional law that governs the rights and obligations of ‘owners’
of country to share food and water with visitors. Like the wise and generous
Queen Arete of Phaeacia, Nganyinytja is renowned for her hospitality to guests.
The press heralded her as an open-hearted ‘ambassador’ of hope and cross-
cultural reconciliation (Richards 1988).

However, unlike the situation of the first Aboriginal peoples who welcomed
white man into their lands, Nganyinytja and her family have the advantage of
having survived colonisation and retained ownership of their traditional lands.
Their hunting grounds and water sources have been depleted by introduced
stock, feral animals and plants; their traditional governance and ceremonies
have been disrupted and devalued by Western law; their self-sufficient
nomadic economy has been destroyed and Christianity has modified their
spiritual beliefs, but they have, with remarkable resilience, survived. They have
developed a hybrid economy, culture, law and spirituality, which adapts to the post-colonial state without becoming completely subsumed by it.

Nganyinytja offers the hope of reconciliation for the descendants of these new settlers with the first people of this ancient land. She and her family are aware of the paradoxes involved in their tourism business but they accept that this is *tjaka*, 'how it is'; life with whitefellas is a paradox, a continuation of their *Tjukurpa*, the continuous Dreaming Stories that incorporate paradox as part of existence. Wati Ngintaka is a clever man of deceit and bounty; he steals the grindstone and gives many life-sustaining seeds to grind for bread. *Tjukurpa* is not a series of simplistic moral tales; it tells the stories of the paradoxes of life.

The development of a tourism enterprise at Angatja by Nganyinytja and her family is an adaptive response to diminishing returns from traditional economic sustaining activities. Tourism is one enterprise that offers an economically viable way to live on traditional country. Developing the tourism product around cultural knowledge provides an economic reason for keeping traditional knowledge alive. The fact that Western visitors will pay to visit remote homelands and learn some traditional knowledge reinforces its importance to the Anangu children and grandchildren who are being seduced by Western goods, television and music.

Traditional *Tjukurpa*, the Dreaming/Law with its stories and songs, has a hard time competing with ubiquitous modern media: videos, computer games, high tech music and gospel evangelism. Both traditional and Western cultural streams flow side by side and intermingle on the AP Lands. Traditional law is still strong and the ceremonial life is vital to all Anangu. However, the time needed to learn the complex song sagas and wealth of traditional knowledge of land and spirit is no longer available to the youth, who must go through a Western education system and get work valued in the Western economic system. In this cross-cultural economy, tourism offers the possibility of living in homelands and caring for traditional country while receiving an income from
tourist coming to visit the people and place. This enterprise offers a way of using Anangu knowledge to participate in today's global economy. It is not an attempt to go back to traditional ways but rather, to provide jobs for their sons and daughters and grandchildren in an industry that uses their resources of land and heritage. The careers envisaged for local trained people include land and cultural management rangers, interpreters, guides, drivers and cooks. The aim is to keep alive their own history and culture as well as gaining job skills that are transferable to other employment opportunities as rangers or tour guides in the region's national parks.

Nganyinytja and Iyatjari envisaged the economic exchange of tourism as a way of supporting the continuance of traditional knowledge of their young people in their country, linking traditional knowledge and skills of hunting and gathering to the new economic system, tracking the hybrid resources that now roam their lands.

**Renewal in Disturbed Sites**

Tourism is often blamed for degrading the 'pristine' environments and Indigenous cultures it exploits. While this may be true, few places and people visited today by tourists have not been colonised long ago by other 'tourists': the explorers, anthropologists, missionaries, pastoralists, traders, dingo scalpers, prospectors, and builders of telegraph lines, roads and railways, and other agents of Western government-inspired development. There are no Indigenous people or places in Australia that have not already had their traditional economic base undermined by the effects of colonisation. Modern tourism builds on previously damaged sites. Ironically, building on previously environmentally disturbed sites is one of the tenets of best practice eco-tourism.

While acknowledging that there are no remaining pristine natural environments on earth, the ecological footprint of various peoples differs. Western society has a heavier ecological footprint than that of Indigenous and pre-industrialised societies. Modern eco-tourism recognises and consciously
tries to minimise the heavy print of Western boots on the sensitive ecological and cultural landscapes it visits. One of the ironies of Western colonisation is that the remote Indigenous lands, once deemed barren and useless, are now, comparatively, ‘wilderness’ areas of great beauty desired by over-urbanised Westerners, and thus are a drawcard for tourists. Here, the term ‘wilderness’ is used to describe what the Western gaze perceives when it looks out over the Central Australian desert or the lush green forests of Arnhem Land.

To the local people who live on the ground these landscapes are not wild, but gardened mosaics of vegetation created by thousands of years of patch fire burning and selective hunting and gathering. They are sentient lands in which the bodies of Creation Ancestors inhabit hills, rocks, trees, waterholes and caves, a land that is sung continually into existence by its custodians. Story and *inma*, song and dance, teaches people today of the places where ancestors flesh became rock, water, plant or animal and continually dwells in the ‘speaking land’ (Berndt & Berndt 1988:6). Today some Indigenous people are recognising the value of these landscapes in Western economic terms, as tourists will pay well to come and see these natural and cultural non-industrialised landscapes. These tourists are keen to experience the simple pleasures of clean air and water, starry night skies, wild animals in their natural habitat, and to spend time with people who do not regulate all their waking hours by a watch.

Although the income from eco-tourism may be important to the sustainability of these remote regions, it comes at a cost. The ecological and cultural landscapes have to be packaged to sell in the commercial global market. Tourism is, in bald terms, the sale of product. In this case, the Indigenous cultural and environmental experience must be designed to sell to the market. The challenge for people like the Anangu of Central Australia is to use this market demand to their advantage to sell the ‘packages’ they design, rather than be turned into a product for sale.
Self-reflexive Guests

The performance space of Indigenous tourism in Australia is a space of paradoxes, of which many guests are aware. Many Australians feel great shame regarding our colonial past and are wary of tours offering Aboriginal experiences that might be exploiting Indigenous people, their art and culture. Domestic tour groups organised through the Indigenous Studies lecturers at the Universities of Western Australia and Curtin, and by the Australian Conservation Foundation and Community Aid Abroad, openly express this concern. Desert Tracks, as a company, is scrutinised by these groups for compliance with best practice cultural heritage and Indigenous intellectual property protection. They understand the potential for tourism to be a continuation of colonial objectification of the other and destruction of traditional culture.

Among international guests there is a similar expression of regret over the past and present oppression of Indigenous peoples around the world. However, they can remove themselves from direct responsibility for the Australian situation. They are not embarrassed by the same Australian sense of shame that can result in a paralytic fear of doing the wrong thing (Tacey 1995; Read 2000). International groups generally express their desire to dialogue with Indigenous people as a way to redress the previous devaluing of their cultural estate. Anangu respond to groups as they find them, encouraging the diffident and setting boundaries for the strong. The interpreter must find a balance on the seesawing bridge between; if either side of the cross-cultural exchange feels dissatisfied they are likely to blame the intermediary. My advice to this particular group, including the ‘Thought Leaders of the Western World’, was to try to refrain from energetic Western question and answer techniques with our Aboriginal hosts. This request mostly fell on highly educated deaf ears not attuned to other forms of dialogue.
The Desire for Dialogue

That evening was their first out under the vast night desert sky and the guests eagerly gathered around the fire to discuss their expectations for this cross-cultural exchange. Tinimai, a senior law woman, had offered to come after supper and tell the visitors a story from her country: the Eagle Dreaming of Pirpakalagalingtja, a distinctive sharp-beaked hill that rises from the plain south-west of Uluru. I suggested that we would listen to Tinimai’s storytelling but the group leaders said they would rather use this time to consolidate their group identity and to talk about why they have come, what they expect and how they expect the group to self-organise. So I thanked Tinimai and tjalpawangkanyi, ‘speaking politely’, refused her offer with the excuse that the group were too tired tonight, maybe tomorrow. An opportunity was missed by the group to hear a Tjukurpa about the issue of the power of leaders who take advantage of their rights while forgetting their responsibilities, bringing chaos, death and loss to all.

Instead, the group discussed how keen they were to meet with their Aboriginal hosts and begin the in-depth learning about Aboriginal culture: they wanted to ‘dialogue’. They were all experts in Western dialogue, comfortable in this method of information exchange. Dialogue, as understood in Western culture, is essentially a conversation between at least two different people, imagined or real. It often refers to discussion between different ideologies espoused by groups or individuals. Difference is essential for dialogue. The word comes from the Greek combination of ‘dialogos’, ‘dia’ meaning ‘through, across or apart’ and ‘logos’ meaning ‘the word or reason’. So dialogue aims to talk through, across or take apart the word or reason of the other. This dialogue style is appropriate to the form of critical debate and deconstruction of knowledge favoured by the Western education system. It does not, however, necessarily include the qualities of listening, watching, absorbing and emulating the teaching of elders so highly prized in Aboriginal educational
traditions. Therefore, dialogue that relies on question and answer, discourse and debate across the gap between Indigenous and Western cultures, may not be the most useful way for each to gain understanding of the other's knowledge, in fact it may be counterproductive.

Some of the most lucid and descriptive writings by a Western academic on Aboriginal connectivity to ecological place are to be found in the writings of Deborah Rose on the thought of her teachers, Jessie Wirrpap and others, in the Victoria River District in the Northern Territory. Rose rests her work on 'the belief that knowledge unfolds through dialogue' (Rose 1999a:96). In so doing she is working within the Western tradition but expanding the ethical aspects of dialogue to insist that it is always situated and that it is open, the outcome unknown. 'Openness produces reflexivity, so that one's own ground becomes destabilized. In open dialogue one holds oneself available to be challenged, and to be changed' (Rose 1999a:175). Rose further refines her concept of dialogue by saying that her work with Indigenous people has lead her to 'understand dialogue in the broad sense of intersubjective mutuality, and thus to seek possibilities for mutual care in a system of connections and reciprocities that includes humans, non-humans, living things, and environments' (ibid) [my italics]. 'Inter-subjective' is descriptive of the space on the border between two subjects, giving subjective agency to humans and non-human living things and environments, reinforcing their separateness. An 'inter' space exists between two distinct, different subjects and reinforces the space between. Rose is suggesting that 'situated dialogue, however, is embedded in the histories that scar and divide, and therefore must be based in the kind of action that Frackenheim (1994:310) characterizes as a "turning toward"' (Rose 1999a:184). However, turning towards the other and engaging in face-to-face inter-subjective exchange, listening and learning place based knowledge from local people and their environment, is not sufficient to cross the space in-between. Connectivities can be extended and received but what is understood, how the environment is experienced and interpreted by each group or individual, will
be through the cultural ‘tuning’ of their skin that sees, hears, smells, tastes and touches the other.

The Questions We Do Not Know

I reiterated my suggestion to the group that they try to leave their Western methodologies of learning behind. These ways of understanding were like expensive business suits appropriate to another place and people. I suggested that they would learn more by not asking questions, by trying instead to listen, to observe, to follow and to emulate their Anangu hosts. In my many years of learning from Anangu I have observed how they teach their children and how they teach visitors about their law and country. There is a pattern and purpose in Anangu teaching and exchange that emerges gradually over the few days visitors stay at Angatja. If visitors can restrain themselves from asking incessant questions when they first arrive and wait until they have experienced the place and people, then more significant questions will arise from the experience of being in this place. The Western mind is trained to approach the new with questions. The problem inherent in this methodology is that one can only frame questions in terms of what one already knows, thus limiting the way the new is experienced.

This tendency to incorporate the new into old structures increases as we become more highly trained in a particular field; the edge of the field becomes our horizon. This cultural and disciplinary framework sharpens our awareness of some aspects of experience while excluding our awareness of others. To position ourselves outside our cultural framework and see, hear, feel, taste and touch with fresh senses is difficult, as our idea of self is based on how we have constructed this framework. In intercultural learning it is necessary to allow the deconstruction of our known self to enable us to incorporate the new into our greater self, which recognises commonality with other humans, animals and sentient worlds. The awareness that the questions we already have may not be the questions we need to ask of others or ourselves in a radically new situation is the beginning of being open to learn. Knowing that we do not know, and may
not have the language to express what we need to know, is the beginning of wisdom.

That dialogue could be defined in other than those of the question and answer, debate and dialectic discussion of the Western tradition is foreign to most visitors when they first arrive at Angatja. Lateral modalities of dialogue, non-hierarchical, that require the simple methodologies of watching, listening and repeating, appear primitive to Western thought leaders, whereas this is precisely the methodology recommended as the fastest way to learn a foreign language and culture by the linguists teaching at the Adelaide University Pitjantjatjara language courses (Douglas, pers. comm., 1975). As they suggest, the best way for visitors to converse with Anangu and learn to converse with country, is to position themselves in the landscape in the way Anangu do: sit on the ground, look where they look, listen when they listen and watch what they do with their hands and feet. Then they may enter into intersubjective mutuality with the people, nature and the land. These ways of knowing are not the favoured mode of the Western acquisition of knowledge where spoken dialogue is more direct and can be controlled by question and answer. This group considered the other ways of knowing as intuitive perceptive, the preserve of shamans, artists or children.

However, by the end of the third or fourth day of their immersion in Anangu teaching, visitors are becoming aware of themselves and their environment at many different levels. One amongst the ‘thought leaders’ later reflected on the group’s dialogical problematic:

The group was most challenged by an assumption that information and insights could be obtained from the ngankari by a Western mode of ‘question and answer’ session. Obtaining ‘access’ and ‘getting’ answers became a major source of stress. The notion that there were other means of learning, many common to interactions in Western society, was not appreciated. Professors do not necessarily respond usefully to question and answer where the subject matter is subtle.
This is certainly the case with people in a leadership role, whether politicians or gurus. Significant new learning, involving a shift of paradigm, may not lend itself to responses in the language in which questions can be asked and in which the answers are expected.

(Judge 1997 website)

Walk Country, then Talk Country

The next morning is the visitors’ first full day at Angatja. They have not yet shed their pre-trip expectations for dialogue with ngankari. Robert comes to me during breakfast to ask when the dialogue can begin. I reply that I will ask the Anangu teachers their plans for the day and convey his request to them. Robert is keen to continue his dialogue with Ilyatjari from the previous trip in 1993 (Bosnak 1996). So I take my cup of tea and wander over to Ilyatjari’s camp, waiting just outside the perimeter to be invited in, as is customary. When called I then sit down by their fire. Nganyinytja, Ilyatjari, Tjulkwiwa and Sandy Mutju are all gathered here sharing breakfast. They consider Robert’s request for dialogue, questions and answers about ngankari business, then shake their heads. Ilyatjari as spokesman says, no, they must go out into country first. This is Nganyinytja’s and Sandy Mutju’s country; they must learn first about this place from the people of this place. Ilyatjari says, ‘We can talk later, anytime, after they know country’ (Ilyatjari, pers.comm., 1997).

Ilyatjari insists that the visitors not ask their questions until they have experienced the place and people by kulikatinyi, ‘listening’, nyakukatinyi, ‘watching’, and palyakatinyi, ‘participating’, in the daily tasks of life in the desert. He ignores their request to sit around and ‘dialogue’, insisting instead that men and women split into separate groups and go out hunting and gathering, two or three visitors attaching themselves to an Anangu guide. This grouping allows each person to learn malparara, ‘together with a friend’. Each morning will be spent walking the land seeking food and water then, when everyone comes back to camp, we will watch together traditional food preparation, learning the law of cooking animals and preparing seedcakes. In
the late afternoon the teaching will continue in story, song and dance performance.

**Water from the Well**

So the day unfolds, following a traditional lifestyle rhythm and purposeful engagement with country, getting to know the place. After sitting by the fire and warming up it is time to seek water. Nganyinytja and Tjulkiwa lead the group around the base of the low hills to the nearest rockhole, a waterhole which is the reason for the location of the tourist bush camp: it is within walking distance of this substantial *tjukula*, 'rockhole', called Atal. Traditionally this was a winter campsite for Nganyinytja and her family when she was a child. It is sheltered from cold south-westerly winds by the hills, it is near water and protected by a mulga grove.

The rockhole is still maintained today, in the traditional manner, by cleaning out silt and dead animals and covering the top with branches. This allows it to fill with clean water after rain. People travelled on foot between these rockholes maintaining them as they went. Nganyinytja explains that today Anangu use shovels and rakes to clean waterholes and sometimes cover them with wire netting, using new implements in the traditional way. The covers are often only partial to allow animals to water there. Although most people now rely on bore water and rainwater tanks on house for their water supply, it is still AP land management practice to keep rockholes clean. Anangu value the inclusion of this traditional practice in modern land management as it maintains water sources in country for travellers, hunters and game (see AGSO 1998).

Anangu are deservedly proud of their ability to find water in this harsh desert landscape; some rockholes are invisible to the novice Western eye, as they are reservoirs inside granite outcrops concealed by rock caps. Knowledge of these was essential to our guides in their youth when they tracked these regions on foot. 'No bores, no windmills, nothing!' says Dickie Minyintirri emphatically. 'Poor buggers! We just drank little bit, like this' (Minyintirri, pers.comm., 2003;
see also *Ngura Walytja*, DVD, Appendix 2). He carefully sits beside the rockhole and shows visitors how to sip the water through a soft grass strainer. This method cleaned the water of the larger impurities. It is obvious that Anangu did not drink in great gulps; they drank slowly, careful to preserve limited supplies by not wasting by splashing.

We walk back to camp to gather the cup-a-tea, biscuits and fruit provided for us by the camp cook. Our water flows to the campsite through black polythene pipes buried along 5 km of road from the solar powered bore at Angatja. Rainwater is also available for drinking from a tank inside the appropriate technology shower and toilet block (see Appendix 5 for details of Atal Eco-tour Camp). Our group of visitors learn about living off the land, but are not expected to be self-sufficient hunters and gatherers on this trip. There is only sufficient bush tucker in traditional estates of an average 1500 square kilometres, to support a population of thirty Anangu (see Layton 1986:43). So the tours bring all the food necessary for the tour group and four Anangu guides per ten passengers. The practice is to allow visitors to taste a sample of local bush foods, thus minimising the impact of hundreds of tourists each year on the ecology of this country.

**Women's Business: The Bread of Life**

Food gathering in the desert formed a major part of daily activity for Anangu. Nganyinytja tells us she rose early, before dawn, with her mother, collected water from the nearest rockhole in a *piti*, ‘wooden carved dish’, and took it back to camp for all to sip before going out hunting. The men would head off together with spear and spear throwers seeking *kanyala*, ‘euro’, in the hills or *malu*, ‘red kangaroo’, on the plains. The women would leave the youngest children in camp with grandparents while they went hunting lizards, witchetty grubs, honey ants and gathering the seeds, grasses or bushes to grind into flour to make bread. This work takes hours of careful collection of the seed in deep sided piti, bowls carved from eucalyptus trees, either bloodwood or red river gum. These *piti*, when full, are covered with grass to stop seeds blowing away
or water evaporating, then balanced on the head to walk back to camp. Often a women would carry several *piti* stacked one on top of another on her head and support a child clinging to her back with her left arm, leaving her right arm free to carry her sharpened digging stick ready to hunt or dig for game.

After cup-a-tea we all climb aboard the buses and head out in the south-west direction to a well known witchetty grub site. One participant reflected on this later: 'How to deal with travelling 50 km across the bush with a group of Anangu women to a favoured site for witchetty grubs – only to be told that they only have the opportunity to do so when whitefellas drive them? An important source of bush tucker, the digging experience was genuine to all – whether or not one appreciated the taste' (Judge 1997 website). The men assess the rocky outcrops as we drive by for euro but decide against hunting at this time of day. Instead, a large goanna crossing the road is quickly shot and thrown in the back of Ilyatjari’s truck.

**Men’s Business: Killing to Live**

Back at camp in the afternoon the demand for dialogue is reiterated more than once, but a call comes from Ilyatjari to load up the Toyotas to head out for hunting. The camp is now a flurry of activity. Questions fly from all sides: how far are we going, do we need to take lunch, do we take water? Meanwhile guns are shoved under seats and boys pile into the backs of Toyotas.

To get a tourist response to men’s hunting of kangaroo it is necessary to quote from an article by an Australian writer who came on another trip. Barry Hill described it as men’s business ‘time for the killing’ in which he reluctantly participated. The white man agonises over the slow death of a roo shot then bludgeoned to death by boys with sticks.

He cried out, ‘Shoot the bloody thing. Put a bullet in its head will yuh?’ He (the guide) yelled back ‘This is their way. They’re learning things by doing it this way.’ At last the animal lay still...Ilyatjari, who had seen the white man’s consternation and tendency to interfere – a
familiar tendency among white men! – was kneeling over the animal about to knick the belly. As he cut into the intestine to see how fat it was for eating, he said in his own language: you might not like it, but this is the way we do things here.

(Hill 1991:30)

Hill acknowledges that, on reflection, the killing was necessary to sustain life and ‘in the larger scheme of things Ngintaka country held existence in balance’ (Hill 1991:30). However, this death-in-life reality was generally too raw for most of the conservation-minded Westerners coming on tour so the kangaroo hunting was gradually phased out of the tourist trips. This is an arena of cross-cultural understanding that cannot be moved over, through, or taken apart by intellectual dialogue in order to transform the perspective of non-hunting white man to see, through Aboriginal eyes, the glory of the hunt. The hunter’s heart that Laurens van der Post so vividly describes can only be known directly from hand to eye, the neural synapses at the centre of sensate knowledge (see Van der Post 1961).

**Sharing Bread and Meat**

While the men are gone the women take the opportunity to instruct their female guests in ‘women’s business’ which cannot be openly discussed with men and children present. In fact, only women who have had children can be taught sacred women’s law, ceremony, song and dance. Women progress through years of training in this knowledge and eventually, when all their children have gone through initiation into adulthood, they become ritual bosses like Nganyintja. I am bound by their secrecy laws not to discuss women’s business in public, and the tourists are asked not to even share with their husbands the little they are shown.

Later in the afternoon the men return to camp. The women and children joyfully welcome the hunters’ return. Just as it has been for generations, fresh meat is a cause for celebration in this harsh desert. Nganyintja remembers as a
child camping with her parents, aunty and Sandy’s family near the Atal waterhole:

Later in the day we’d see the men returning with meat, a wallaby curled up and tied on my father’s head. Seeing him we’d happily cry out, ‘Ay, father is coming home with meat. Father, father is bringing meat!’ They would walk back close to camp, then throw the meat onto the ground, have a drink and eat a little food. After satisfying their hunger the men would cook the euro.
(Nganyinyija 1990)

A pit is dug and filled with fast burning, dry kindling and spinifex; this flares up and the animal’s fur is singed off, then the blackened carcass is dragged off while heavy mulga logs are added to the fire to burn to coals. The euro or kangaroo’s tail is cut off, its back legs broken and the pulyku, ‘muscle tendon’, pulled out to be used later in spear making. Then the body is buried in the pit of coals so that only the torn legs protrude; the tail is buried separately. The women sit some distance away around their fires watching; the killing, cooking and sharing of big game meat is men’s work.

The hunter does not cook the meat; his brother or uncle does. When cooked, but still juicy with blood, the body is pulled out of the fire and laid on fresh green foliage. It is carved up into portions according to Tjukurpa Law: the tail goes to the cook, the choice back fillet to the hunter or, if he is a visitor, he’ll give the largest portion to his host whose land he is visiting. Everybody in camp is given meat: nobody goes hungry; the innards are reserved for the elders. All foods are prepared according to Tjukurpa Law: the kangaroo and euro are Creation Ancestors of great importance throughout the Western Desert lands; no salt must be added to cooking or eating these meats, nor can the preparation vary from that prescribed by law.

Andy Tjilari is a great hunter; his totem is malu, ‘red kangaroo’, but despite this association he hunts, eats and shares its meat with his kin clan and offers some
to the visiting tourists. Unlike other regions of Australia, the Western Desert people do not refrain from eating their totemic animals and plants; there is too little food in this sparse land to restrict access to any source.

The women reciprocate by sharing the bush fruits, water and small game they have gathered and the seedcakes they have laboriously prepared from winnowed grain. Seedcakes from grasses and acacia bushes formed the staple of Anangu diet. It is estimated that traditionally women gathered and prepared the majority of the food supply (see Hamilton 1981). Tjukurpa Law prescribes how these plant foods may be prepared; for example, ili, ‘wild figs’, may not be boiled into jam, but can be pounded together into a ball and carried as dried fruit to be reconstituted in water.

Women and men within the group of elders at Angatja have plant totemic ancestors. Sandy Mutju, although born at Tjanmatapiti and therefore a senior owner of the Ngintaka Songline at Angatja, is of the ili, ‘wild fig’ Tjukurpa of Kunamata, while Nganyinytja, born at Piltarti on Wananbi Tjukurpa, is a senior traditional owner of Angatja and custodian of the Ngintaka Songline through her country, as well as holding the sacred objects and being ritual leader of her grandmother’s Tjukurpa, tjuratja, ‘sweet nectar of desert flowers’. Nganyinytja lives at Angatja; it is her homeland but she is responsible for calling the ceremonial gatherings for tjuratja Tjukurpa at a sacred site south of Wingellina. Tjukurpa Law covers all foods: their hunting, gathering, preparation and distribution. Wati Ngintaka himself created many of these valuable seed plants.

**Business Lines and Circles**

‘Can a linear framework ensure sustainability that is dependent on cyclical behaviour?’ (Judge pers.comm., 2002). Tony asked this question about the imposition of a Western business framework, like tourism, onto the hunting and gathering nomadic lifestyle and economy of Anangu. My reply was that this cyclical pattern of the Indigenous economy is not necessarily antithetical to the straight line accounting of commercial business. Tourism itself is a cyclical
economy in many situations where seasonal variations in climate determine accessibility of the attraction, such as snowfields for skiing, wildlife migrations and cool times in hot deserts. Domestically, it varies in accord with school holidays; internationally, people travel south to escape the cold northern winters; festivals draw big crowds annually for short periods; and war or terrorist attacks dramatically affect tourist flows around the world. The global tourism industry has to adapt to these cyclical and sometimes sudden changes in tourist flows.

The challenge of tourism to Indigenous traditional lands is to adapt the tourism cycles to the Anangu traditional business cycles on the AP Lands. As the Anangu elders have been explaining, their nomadic economic activity was cyclical, moving through country in response to seasonal patterns of water, plant growth and ripening, and the movement of the big game, especially kangaroo.

The social aspects of Anangu business included meeting for ceremonies, to arranging marriages and initiating their young men and women in the management of land and water, game and seed harvest, through performance of the rites, songs and dances of Tjukurpa. The Creation Law sustained country and community by prescribing practices that managed the environmental resources of this marginal desert country. These practices were encoded in the songs of the Creation Ancestors learnt from early childhood and enforced in customary law, reciprocity ethics, ceremony, and restricted access to water and sanctuaries of biodiversity, often ‘sacred sites’. These rules and practices that governed social behaviour towards self, community and environment were reinforced by cyclic performance of ritual along songlines.

Nganyintja and Peter Nyaningu describe a traditional pattern of autonomous groups of varying sized kin clans from groups of five to thirty members who pursued independent economic activity, sustaining the livelihood of each group and producing excess to share when meeting for ceremonies. Though travelling
independently, each group was constrained in their exploitation of natural resources by their rights and responsibilities to country, defined by regional Tjukurpa Law. The songlines linked clans across the borders of their country to sites in other clan estates and to totemic ancestor species of animal and plant that all Anangu depended upon to survive. These patterns of connection that sustained Anangu traditional economy can be usefully envisaged as songlines, winding and criss-crossing travelling lines of the Ancestors that connect circles of family groups gathered around campfires and waterholes.

**Traditional and Modern Business**

Ilyatjari says:

> I'm teaching my grandchildren the inma and how to survive in this land. The culture may be lost if they don't have a reason to learn it. The business brings in money for people to live in their own country and keep their culture strong. This is our business, Desert Tracks. We started it for our grandsons and granddaughters to carry it on and grow this business. I am now working and planning for this future.

(Ilyatjari 1996 film transcript)

Ilyatjari lists, in order of importance, the role he sees tourism fulfilling in their community. Firstly, the knowledge of inma, the song and dance of Tjukurpa; in the performance of inma the country and community are sustained. This is of such great importance to Anangu that the following chapter is devoted to what Ilyatjari calls the 'InmaWay'. Ilyatjari says the knowledge of inma is essential to survival in this land; knowledge of country, water sources, food and game sources is carried in the verses of the song-cycles which are place specific, a topographical map of country in song. Tourism is a business that he hopes can sustain Anangu living in their homelands, looking after country and keeping their cultural connections strong. He recognises that survival today includes the money economy: Anangu traditional economy must interface and successfully converge with this global economy. The business must be owned and directed by Anangu; it must be theirs for it to be sustainable in their cultural context. It is
a business with a long-term future plan, to sustain their grandchildren and be a base upon which they can grow it.

**Customary Economy**

The experience of Anangu traditional life that has been offered to the guests at Angatja, teachings about responsibilities to country and community, can be usefully summarised as aspects of Anangu customary economy. These must be sustained by the modern hybrid economy on Aboriginal Lands, and particularly by businesses like Desert Tracks that are designed to ensure cultural and environmental sustainability.

The results of my research into the components of Anangu customary economy, which are maintained today through a combination of traditional practice and the modern hybrid economy, are summarised in Figure 29. Some of these traditional practices have become institutionalised in Anangu organizations operating on the AP Lands.

In the field of spiritual health and wellbeing the traditional role of ngangkari, 'medicine men and women', is recognised by Nganampa Health and the NYP Women’s Council who employ two ngangkari, Andy Tjilari and Rupert Peter, to work in Anangu communities. In the ecological field AP Land Management employs regional and local Anangu experts in the traditional skills of patch-burning, rockhole clearing and tracking animal endangered species. Strong traditional law and obligation between kin enforce the ngapartji-ngapartji sharing system. Multi-generational care of the young, the sick, the disabled and the aged come under the organisational overview of the NYP Women’s Council who employ Anangu workers as specialised care providers in all communities.

Cultural traditional governance is changing as young men and women are elected to councils. However, most defer to their elders in regard to decisions affecting land and law. The traditional law governing men-making and land ownership is still strong on the AP Lands though change is occurring in the
system. Young men and women now have to learn the law and practices of two cultures, so the complete oral knowledge of their elders is not all passed on. Traditional ontology, the laws and beliefs of Tjukurpa, are maintained strongly by all Anangu but these beliefs are now held alongside Christian or Western beliefs about the origins of the universe and the laws that govern right behaviour. The Anangu world today is a complex response to a rapidly changing environment (see Figure 29).

**Figure 29: Anangu Customary Economy Sustaining CNRM (D James 2004)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANANGU CUSTOMARY ECONOMY SUSTAINING CULTURAL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health &amp; Wellbeing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecological:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Management</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food &amp; shelter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance &amp; Education</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Law &amp; beliefs</strong></td>
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</table>

**Desert Tracks Business Plan, 1994**

Ilyatjari’s aspirations and the priorities of the customary economy are reflected in the aims and objectives of the Angatja community tourism business plan drawn up in 1994. This business plan supports various aspects of the customary economy, as the traditional obligations to share resources mean that guide payments and company profits are quickly dispersed amongst a large number
of kin. Claims by relatives for a share of others' hard-earned wages is sometimes cited as a disincentive for individual Aboriginal people to get ahead in Western terms. However, the ability to produce excess income that can be shared amongst kin is highly respected by rank for whom it is the sign of a good hunter. Traditionally the best hunters could support the largest families that, in turn, were survival insurance in a harsh land. The more wives a man had the wealthier he was as women were the economic backbone of the communities. They gathered the grain and fruits that supplied most of the food; they built shelters, collected firewood, looked after the young and the aged and provided all the food during men’s initiation ceremonies.

Figure 30: Money Story
(D James, 1996:11)

The Hybrid Economy
Tourism is just one of the elements of the ‘hybrid economy’ made up of market, state and customary components that exists on Indigenous Lands in Australia today (Altman 2001). Desert Tracks brings in to the small homeland of Angatja, a cyclical income with the average ten tours contributing about $35,000 a year in guide wages and between $20,000 and $50,000 in art and artefact sales. This
income provides bonuses that supplement the regular incomes from the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) that was voluntarily adopted by communities on the AP Lands in the 1980s. It replaced access to the national parental support and unemployment pensions; entitlements per community are calculated on numbers of people of working age and numbers of dependent children. This is then administered by the community council as a ‘work for the dole’ scheme. Income from CDEP sustains most remote communities, as full time jobs are scarce and new enterprises or industries being developed to provide jobs, even scarcer. Average incomes barely cover the high cost of food from local stores and the cost of fuel necessary to travel to visit country and kin (Rainow [Nganampa Health Officer], pers. comm. 2000). Obligations to share income with extended kin relations further restrict opportunities to save. Most Anangu continue to live below the poverty level on remote communities on Indigenous Lands in Australia today.

Communal ownership of property is a strength in the customary economy but a disadvantage in the Western economic system because land cannot be traded or mortgaged to raise finance to develop private enterprise that would allow Anangu to participate in the wider market economy. The community at Angatja had no power to borrow money to purchase the Desert Tracks tourism business when it was for sale in 1993. Therefore, they were dependent on attracting a government grant to purchase and expand the business, which they did in 1994. This heavy dependence on CDEP schemes and government finance by Indigenous people is often derided by the wider Australian public as ‘welfare dependency’, but the ‘important Indigenous economic contributions remain unquantified in mainstream calculations’ (Altman 2001,226:1). Creative intercultural economic strategies are needed to build the capacity of local communities to develop enterprises that successfully interface the customary economy with the market economy. Desert Tracks is one such attempt which has fulfilled many of its obligations and expectations under the customary economy, while not being able to move into the economies of high profit valued by the Western economic system. The maintenance of cultural heritage and
ensuring employment of all traditional custodians who wish to be involved in
the business was a higher priority than generating large profits.

To achieve these goals the two economies, Western and Anangu customary
economy, had to be integrated to some extent or, at least, facilitated to co-exist.
Basically this was achieved by considering the requirements that needed to be
satisfied for the business to operate successfully in both the Western and
customary economic spheres. Under Western law the tourism business had
legal and economic accountability to Australian State and Federal statutes and
international laws regarding customer rights; there were annual budget
requirements for tax returns, auditing, insurance; advertising itineraries and
timetables; duty of care to customers; award rates for staff; licensing and tour
operator accreditation and distribution of profits to shareholders. Under
Anangu Law there were responsibilities to traditional owners of the lands
visited; other traditional owners of the songlines and totemic ancestors that
traversed that country and whose stories might be told to tourists; the
obligation to feed all guides and elders; for everyone who turned up and
participated in dance, storytelling or teaching to be paid; and for permits and
anthropological clearances with the regional Land Councils of AP and Central
Land Council to be negotiated, and permits paid per tourist. Fulfilling
obligations to the two economic systems was complex (see Figure 31).

**Regional Planning**

Desert Tracks Directors met with Anangu from other homelands at Kanypi in
1992 to discuss the development of tourism at other destinations across the AP
Lands. Anangu came from Kanypi, Angatja, Umpukulu, Iwarawara, Ulkiya and
Cave Hill. The AP land management coordinator convened the meeting, the
anthropologists and lawyers came from the Pitjantjatjara Council and
representatives of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission and ATSIC and
TAFE. It was at this meeting that Stanley Douglas spoke of starting tours at
Cave Hill, on the Desert Tracks model. Desert Tracks talked about their
Northern Territory Brolga Award and the National Tourism Award for
Cultural Tourism, which they won in 1992. This national recognition of the first

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customary Economy</th>
<th>Western Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Cultural: Ontology &amp; Law</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sustaining Tjukurpa Law, knowledge and practice.</td>
<td>Elders paid as senior guides &amp; trainers of younger guides in traditional cultural knowledge. Dancers and singers paid well. Traditional owners of Songline recognised and paid if present but not necessarily guiding. All brochures, advertising, photos or media film or articles subject to approval by the elders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b. Education &amp; Training</strong>&lt;br&gt;Training the young in traditional cultural and ecological knowledge</td>
<td>Desert Tracks Board of Directors was not elected but appointed by each family group of the land involved. Traditional authority basis to business management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Ecological: Relationship &amp; Management</strong>&lt;br&gt;Totemic kinship to animals, plants &amp; country.</td>
<td>Young children from primary school age to teenagers are involved in the tours, receiving on the job training with elders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhole maintenance. Cyclical hunting and gathering. Patch burning. Limited impact camping.</td>
<td>Important part of teaching tourists about country. Tourists are given the name of an animal or plant as their ‘totem’ – to know and relate to nature differently. Tourists helping clear rockholes. Bush food tasting by tourists, gathering and hunting restricted. Use of tour vehicles when appropriate. Eco-tour camp designed at Atal. Restricted small groups less impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Economic: Food &amp; Shelter</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ngapartji-ngapartji economics of reciprocity. Sharing of all food among kin.</td>
<td>Each tour group shares food with Anangu. Helps build shelters or put up tents for elders. Firewood is collected by tour participants for everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism provides employment for Anangu in their country. Nganykari work paid for by guests. First aid provided for Anangu and guests on tours. Visit to remote sacred sites on tour buses improves elders’ health.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unfortunately, Jim Miller from ATSIC Enterprises told them that there was no money to help start businesses for the next year. It was proposed by the meeting, 'that AP should find money to contract Desert Tracks and Angatja to go around and teach Anangu about getting ready for tourists' (AP Tourism Meeting minutes, Kanypi 1992).

This was the beginning of regional thinking and planning for tourism on the AP Lands. At a subsequent meeting held at Umpukulu in 1994, Ilyatjari proposed the development of a regional tourism company under a traditional governance law, the law of Tjukurpa:

ILIYATJARI: We could call it the ‘Ngintaka Company’. Ngintaka is a big story right through this land from Yami’s place to here. We want Yami to be included and take tourists to his place, Wallatina.
DIANA JAMES: Can the ngintaka be used as the logo, the sign, for the whole business?
NGANYINYJJA: The ngintaka is good, it is clear for everyone to use.
MEETING: General agreement with use of the ngintaka logo.

(AP Tourism Meeting Minutes, Umpukulu, 1994).

The 1994 regional tourism meeting decided not only could tourist routes follow the Dreaming tracks, but also the tourist enterprises at each homeland or art centre could be linked by the Dreaming track of the Ngintaka Tjukurpa. Each homeland enterprise could be part of an AP Lands tourism company operating under traditional Law of Tjukurpa connections between people and places. The Law of Tjukurpa would govern the AP tourism company.

Conclusion: Law of Reciprocity
Desert Tracks, the tourism business, now firmly under Anangu Tjukurpa Law, was specifically related into the kinship system through the Ngintaka. The story and song cycle of Wati Ngintaka that is told, sung and danced for tourists, is
one that embodies strong teachings on reciprocity: the rights and obligations of host to guests, the extension of hospitality to provide food, shelter, warmth, entertainment and sharing of story, song and dance with visitors. However, it also clearly states there are limits to sharing. Visitors have the right to ask for the finest seed cakes ground by the women but they do not have the right to steal the grindstone. The act of stealing what is not given is punishable by death under Anangu Tjukurpa.

Nganyinytja’s welcome included a subtle call to awareness for Western visitors. The ‘sample bag’ of the history of her people included the contrary winds that colonisation brought with its tall ships. The destructive effects of colonisation were told without malice or demands of those present to ‘pay the rent’. Rather, it was a story of the inevitable destruction caused by the Western land hungry gods of capitalism: settlement, pastoralism and mining. These industries devoured Indigenous land and waters, depriving Anangu traditional livelihoods on their own lands. If her guests, kulini, hear with understanding, they will of necessity question their own role now as tourists. Is the money they have paid for this tour of benefit to Anangu? Does it bring much needed economic security to people living in remote homeland communities where few other work opportunities exist, or is it a destructive injection of cash for commoditised culture? Is cultural tourism empowering and sustaining Anangu or does it further corrupt their sharing subsistence economy and reduce culture to a commodity on the global market?

The next chapter examines the good and bad seeds vomited by Wati Ngintaka as he rides through AP Lands now as a tourist bus.
Chapter 12

INMA WAY: CULTURAL CONNECTIVITY TO COUNTRY

Odyssey Book 8: A Day for Songs and Contests

Odysseus, seated in King Alcinous court, carved strip of loin, rich and crisp with fat, from the white tusked boar, and gave it to the famous blind bard Demodocus. Odysseus, master of many exploits, praised the singer:
‘I respect you, Demodocus, more than any man alive – surely the muse has taught you, Zeus’s daughter, or god Apollo himself. How true to life, all too true … you sing the Archaean’s fate, all they did and suffered, all they soldiered through, as if you were there yourself or heard from one who was’
(Fagles 1996; 8:545-551).

Demodocus, the blind bard

INMA NGIN'TAKA: PERENTIE LIZARD SONG

Women’s verse: Mistletoe Seed Sowing

Ngantja kuru kuru nyinara wananu
Ngantja kuru kuru nyinara wananu;
Ngayuluna winyinyipungu
Ngayulana winyinyipungu.

Following the ripe mistletoe berries
Following the ripe mistletoe berries;
I am spitting out the seeds
I am spitting out the seeds.

Men’s verse: Mistletoe Berry Seeds Vomiting

Manta kanturana ka patapatanu
Manta kanturana ka patapatanu;
Tjaangkuni karur-kanurmanu
Tjaangkuni karur-kanurmanu.

Stamping the ground the fruit falls off
Stamping the ground the fruit falls off;
My stomach churning from what I ate
My stomach churning from what I ate.

(Ngayinyija trans. D James 1994)

Kullikatinyi: Listening to Inma

Nyakukatinyi – Looking and Learning How to Dance
Introduction

Anangu regard the singing and dancing of Tjukurpa, inma, to be the most important thing they share with visitors to their country.

Ilyatjari says, 'Inma Way ngunti wiya, nganana inmakula mula-mula ngintiringanyi! The teaching of song and dance of our ancestors is not just for fun, we are truly teaching important knowledge!'

(Ilyatjari, pers.comm., 1990)

Is knowledge of inma, the song and dance performance of the Creation Ancestor epic song sagas, the thing most sought by tourists on Desert Tracks? What do both sides of this exchange believe they are giving and receiving and does the exchange fulfill the expectations of both in terms of understanding the cultural, environmental economic, and spiritual sharing? Dr Ian Player, of the World Wilderness Society, said in Adelaide in 1994 that eco-tourists seek much more than superficial look-see experiences: they are on a 'spiritual odyssey' (Player, pers. comm., 11 February). If this is true, then the desire by Anangu to teach through 'Inma Way', the spiritual practice of sustaining the environment through cultural performance of inma, is exactly what the eco-traveller is looking for.

It is a perfect fit of the willingness of both travellers and hosts to share not just the hospitality of hearth and home land but also deep stories of being that keep culture and country alive. However, the desire to share cultural knowledge at this level is not true of all Anangu on the AP Lands, and because the inma of each Creation Ancestor is not owned just by one person or family but is the property of all who were born along this ancestor’s songline, then all must be consulted before information can be shared with visitors. The process of negotiating the ethics of this intercultural knowledge trading is complex as the two laws are based on a different ontology of ownership: one of sharing but not giving away and the other of purchase by power or money and rights to resale on open market. Colonisation has changed the geographical extent of the influence of Indigenous law in Australia; information shared in an appropriate context of persons and place in