Central Australia can be taken out of context in Melbourne and Sydney and used or performed inappropriately. Anangu Law is not recognised on the city streets.

The expressed intent of Western eco-tourists visiting Indigenous lands is to honour the traditional ecological and cultural knowledge of the people indigenous to the place. These travellers are often conscious of damaging the ecosystems they visit by bringing in foreign seeds on their boots, but are less conscious of the damage their foreign ideas and goods may bring. All visitors from one culture to another bring seeds of change, the process of trade that has transformed cultures around the world for thousands of years. However, the excess wealth that enables modern tourism emphasises the imbalance in this trade; the designer-backpack and runners carry the seeds of desire for Western goods and affluence that grow up along the roadsides they travel. Local Indigenous populations may expect a prolific flowering of Western money and goods if they water these feral plants, expectations not necessarily fulfilled.

This chapter examines the strengths and weaknesses of the Desert Tracks business plan regarding the knowledge exchange through inma. Anangu plan the tours to become a vehicle for sustaining traditional knowledge and teaching it to their children and grandchildren who are looking for cross-cultural value. Anangu also teach inma because they want Westerners to respect and value it, to redress the imbalance created by the hegemony of Western values and economy in their society. They hope that including Westerners in the performance of inma will transform their understanding of Anangu ontology and law. It is evident that tourists value this exchange, but in what way? Is it just another exotic dish to consume or an experience that truly transforms their perception of Indigenous people and place?

**Singing Land the Inma Way**
Ilyatjari has always been an intercultural teacher. As a young boy he briefly attended school at Warburton, then ran away and learned ‘bush way’ until he participated in the bilingual creekbed school at Ernabella with Nganyinytja in 1940. He left to go through initiation for several years and then worked on cattle
stations, including Curtin Springs, where he became an expert stockman. Ilyatjari, after marriage and with a young family, worked as a teacher at Amata School for many years. Both taught traditional alongside Western knowledge, understanding that both were essential for their people’s future. Ilyatjari maintained a distinctive traditional teaching style and technique, which he has adapted to teaching their new students, the tourists. As a renowned songman, dancer and ngankari medicine man he is an adept of the Inma Way, the Anangu law and practice of caring for country through song and dance. This teaching method is in direct contrast to Western education in which song, dance and story are peripheral. These are usually considered entertainment rather than core to the process and practice of memorising the vast amounts of knowledge necessary in an oral tradition.

The method of Pitjantjatjara traditional teaching through music is analysed by Catherine Ellis in her excellent book, Aboriginal Music: Education for Living (Ellis 1985). Her experience of how both Indigenous and white people learn when being taught inma by traditional teachers in bush camps and in city classrooms, is similar to my findings on the inma teaching in the intercultural performance space of tourism at Angatja. As Ellis found: ‘This process of indelible implantation of the features of the totemic songline, with its implications for every facet of living, is of great significance to each individual’ (ibid:123).

Though the performance space of the tour is short, only 4–5 days intensively with Anangu, the teaching of inma is maintained throughout and students are gradually led into an understanding of how the Ngintaka Songline has implications for all facets of Anangu life.

The song of country is the ontological ground of being for Anangu. Each totemic songline holds information regarding creation and sustenance of particular places and people; these songlines converge at nodes then travel on linking difference of specificity through commonality. The whole continent is patterned by the tracks of these totemic ancestors who met and traded objects, stories, song, dance, and shared food in each other’s country. The patterns of
modern tourist travellers and their trading business have been incorporated into these traditional patterns of travel and trade across the continent and beyond its shores with those who came in boats.

The ontological basis of Western and traditional Anangu business would appear at first glance to be antithetical. Western business claims sustainability can be measured by the ‘triple bottom line’ of environmental, social and economic accountability. However, this does not ensure a balanced equation, as in practice the economic values outweigh the other concerns. The ontological ground of Western economic rationalism is the belief that the free market works for the higher good of all. The sacred mantra repeated daily in all business houses is ‘profit is good’. The Money Story is the core Tjukurpa of Western Dreaming; its prophets chant profit and its laws are encoded in the sacred balance sheet which governments, society and companies constantly monitor. The daily news reports on the state of the nation by the government television station, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, include a special report on the health of financial markets, stocks and bonds after the news and before the weather. In contrast Anangu ‘daily news’, given by elders orating to the camp in the early pre-dawn light, prioritises the health of the people in their country and reports on individual and community responsibilities to kin and country. Anangu continually reinforce their Tjukurpa, the belief that the good of all depends on reciprocity of kin to country.

This is the uncommon ground of profound ontological difference between Western and Indigenous cultures, the performance space of cross-cultural tourism. Some travellers scorn the divide as an anachronism that will vanish as the global economy subsumes regional and cultural differences into the hegemony of the Western world. Other travellers try to ‘think themselves into country’, following the advice of Aboriginal leader Patrick Dodson (Westheimer 2005:12). Some are swallowed by the Dreaming of the place, as a few travellers to Angatja recount, before resurfacing with greater wisdom to continue their journey. However they respond, it becomes obvious to all that
there is a profound difference between Western and Anangu knowledge of persons and place, of how humans perform their culture nature relationship.

It is certainly very difficult for Westerners crossing the ontological divide to understand that *inma* performance by Anangu is more than a staged ‘performance’ for the tourist dollar. It is not until the visitors have been in the country for three days of intensive enculturation that the way they see song and dance performance changes. Only after they have repeatedly heard the stories of a few ancestral beings, seen their creations in the landscape and their journeys in the night skies, participated in hunting or gathering their descendants and eaten of them in plant or animal flesh, are they invited by Anangu to learn the dances of these ancestors. When they are painted with ochre and participate in dance their perception on all sensual levels changes and they glimpse a little, through Indigenous eyes and ears, the interconnectivity of people, plants, animals and land. Ilyatjari keeps reiterating that when they dance it is not just for fun; they are participating in the continuance of plant and animal species essential to the health and wellbeing of the land and her people. To enter the performance space of the Ngintaka *inma*, learn to listen and understand, to dance the song, is to be given the opportunity to open to a new knowing of the land and self. One thing is certain: the Inma Way is a process to be experienced, not a product to be sold.

**Listening to the Land**

Dawn in camp opens the tourists’ eyes to a world far away from their houses or comfortable apartments in urban landscapes. They are sleeping on the ground in a ‘swag’: a camping bedroll consisting of a high density thin foam mattress with pillow and sleeping bag, inside a canvas envelope with a flap that can be used to cover the head. Tourists learn to roll and unroll the swags and toss them onto the back of a truck when it time to pack up camp. Some are sleeping out under the stars but others have put their swags inside insect proof tents.

A dawn chorus of harsh notes from the ubiquitous crows greets the early risers as they perform their black-feathered dance in the pre-dawn chill. Lilting notes
come from further up the hills where butcherbirds gather on bare branches of dead trees. A few hardy souls climb out of bed and wrap beanies and scarfs around cold ears, stuff hands into coat pockets and venture up the rocky slope behind camp in the first rosy blush of dawn’s promise. They are rewarded by the blue-black rim of the Musgrave Ranges back-lit by golden fire spreading rapidly across the sand dune plains igniting the spinifex. These needle nests of grass begin to dance like spiky-haired children roused out of bed in the chill dawn. Anangu call the first light katjarungkunya, when the spark ignites from the sun rubbing his spear thrower to make fire. We, like old stiff grandparent trees too cold to move, watch with delight the child’s play of the ‘Piccaninny Dawn’ before the harsh light of day brings responsibilities and daily toil. The pure notes of bellbirds chime in our listening ears.

The watchers on the hill look down to see small fires spark around the camp. Anangu fires flare up beside mounds of blankets and sleeping body forms; the people of the earth have kept their fires glowing all night to keep off the cold. But the visitors, fearing sparks igniting their swags, have let their fires burn out to cold ash. Many won’t emerge until Jim has the billy boiling on the camp hearth fire. Fire is a familiar friend to Anangu: it provides warmth, cooks food and is a major land management aide. Even bushfire is not feared as it is by most Westerners. Like the spiky-haired children of the dawn their Anangu kids grow up around fires and dance among dry spinifex lighting it with joy. If the wind and temperature conditions are right the tourists will be shown, by the elders, the traditional patch-burning of areas of country to promote the growth of fresh grass, essential feed for kangaroos and other marsupials. Back at the fire, eating breakfast, the visitors complain about the harsh cawing of the crows. Nganyinyiŋa tells them a story:

In the beginning, the crow women were living without fire. All over the land then there was no fire, so it is said: Mungarulungu - total darkness. There was no real firewood like this (mulga); there was only other wood, black wood, burnt wood. No light or heat came from this wood. There were many different kinds of bird people living then, many crows. The crow people and the eagle people lived
then. In many different camps, this place and that place and many
different places were all without fire, except one man, the bush
turkey, who was carrying the good firewood on his head. The men
were following him trying to grab the wood off his head, but they
couldn’t. Then after they had tried to get this burning stick from the
bush turkey, from the kipara, and they couldn’t get it, they came back
and they just forgot about it. But it was really dark and they were
cold still – one man was thinking, thinking, ‘Who took that fire, the
really good fire?’ and then he said, ‘I remember, it was that kipara and
he’s gone west; I’m going to follow him.’

And he was like an eagle this one, but not an eagle, smaller, but like
that. He flew really high and really fast and he saw the bush turkey
by this stage was heading into the sea. And he watched from a
distance as the fire stick got further and further under the water but it
was still alight and he came down and went whoosh, just before it
went out, and flew back with it, all the way back to Mt. Lindsay
down here. He threw sparks into the country so that the whole
country became alight and he threw bits of this good wood across
with it. The Crow people were sitting there in the dark and it was
really cold and then they saw the fire coming towards them like a
bush fire and they jumped up really happy and started dancing and
singing that song, saying, ‘Look here comes the fire towards us –
we’ve been sitting without fire but here comes the fire, here comes
the fire,’ and they were jumping up and down really happy. All the
different places where the fire was coming everybody was dancing
and jumping for joy for this big bush fire coming towards them –
good wood, So now we all have good wood to live next to and are
very happy. That’s the story of wood. So now we all have good wood
to live next to and are very happy. That’s the story of fire.

(Ngayinytja1990, trans. by D James)

To dance this dance covered in black gritty charcoal is to enter into the power,
force and joy of fire. Fire is strong, cheeky and goes where it pleases, as do
women of the crow; it is a transformative performance for Westerners who
usually fear fire and often dislike crows. The visitors have heard the story but the experiences of transformation through dance are still in the future for our group of tourists. They are experiencing their first days in the desert and, for many, their first experience of camping out, some inside tents which protect them from the immense desert night while a few sleep out in swags and watch the transit of the stars. Not many sleep well; the strangeness keeps them awake.

Listening and Learning While Travelling Along Together
The second day unfolds in a similar pattern to the first. The priority for the morning is hunting and gathering, walking, listening and being in country. When visitors ask what Anangu expect them to learn from walking the land, Nganyinytja explains:

> We have no books; our history was not written by people with pen and paper. It is in the land; the footprints of our Creation Ancestors are on the rocks. The hills and creek beds they created as they dwelled through this land surround us. We learned from our grandmothers and grandfathers as they showed us these sacred sites, told us the stories, sang and danced with us the Tjukurpa (Dreaming). We remember it all, in our minds, our bodies and feet as we dance the stories. We continually recreate the Tjukurpa.

(Nganyinytja 1988, audio trans. D James)

She and Iyatjari, teach that the connectivity between people and the land needs to be experienced through walking the country, listening to the wind, watching for signs of the seasonal cycles of the life and death of animals, plants, water and shade. These signs and voices of the earth are seen and heard by those who know their country; the knowledge is embodied in the people who sing and dance the songlines. The songlines are maps of knowledge laid down in the tracks of ancestral Creation Beings of the Dreaming, the animals and plants who are the totemic ancestors of people today. Excited by these concepts, visitors ask if the interpreters and white guides can recommend any books on the subject. Although we encourage pre-tour reading, while on tour the white
guides reinforce aural methods by encouraging visitors to open their eyes and ears, now in this place, to directly experience the land being read and sung aloud by those who hear its song.

Where is it Written?
Knowing the Western preference for learning from the written word, a pre-trip reading list is recommended to travellers and Desert Tracks provides some reference books on local animals, plants, Anangu language and traditional land use and management of these physical resources. Books on the non-physical cultural and spiritual relationship of Anangu to the living and non-living things in their environment are more difficult to recommend. There have been many books that attempt to define or explain this inter-subjective connectivity of Aboriginal people with their country. These are variously praised or disparaged by Indigenous people, their white advisors and academics engaged in the field of Indigenous studies. The fact that there is a range of characters interpreting this borderlands performance space is neither surprising nor a disadvantage: it increases the perspectives from which the space can be viewed. It is an evolving performance within a space of indistinct and changing boundaries, an ecotone where hybrid varieties are adapting to the changing soil composition.

The characters who interpret this post-colonial space were initially anthropologists, linguists, early missionaries and government officials involved with Aboriginal people; their voices have been critiqued to some extent but also continue into the present with powerful authority sanctioned by their institutions. The translated voice of Indigenous traditional language oration now forms a genre of written English literature. This includes collations of myths such as The Speaking Land (Berndt & Berndt 1988; Harney & Elkin 1949). Another genre includes playwright Jack Davis, the voice of Indigenous people writing in English, often as their second language. The voice of the dispossessed Australian Indigenous people who have lost land and language is loudest in the coastal regions of the continent, and because it is largely an urban voice needs the least translation to the wider community. The poetry of Kevin Gilbert and
Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) is representative of this voice. Last, but not least in influence, is the 'new age' interpretation of Indigenous spirituality which blossomed in the form of interpretations of Native American teachings for the Western world and, as a popular written genre, has since colonised international Indigenous cultural and spiritual knowledge.

Some serious non-Indigenous writers are accused of being 'new age' when they genuinely attempt to enter the Indigenous space and let it transform their writing. David Abram (1996) has written such a book in *The Spell of the Sensuous*, an account of Western disconnection from the natural world based on his research with Balinese shamans. Unfortunately, less erudite and more popular writings on encounters with Indigenous peoples and their philosophies abound, catering to the Western enduring enthrallment with the 'exotic' and quest for the back-to-nature holy grail of Indigenous people living in harmony with their natural surroundings. Marlo Morgan's book *Mutant Message Down Under*, as previously discussed, is an example of this genre. Her story barely disguises the Western ethnologists' or explorers' myth of being the last person alive to witness true Aboriginal culture in a pristine state prior to desecration by Western society. Despite her warning that Aboriginal culture is now dead, many people are inspired to visit Indigenous Australia because of her book.

One such visitor was Craig Potter, an environmental engineer from England. He was inspired by *Mutant Message Down Under* to come to Australia and join a Desert Tracks tour in October 1999. His reflections on his experience are valuable; they recount the process of moving from stereotypical expectations of Indigenous people and culture to real face-to-face meetings that can change intercultural relationships. Craig wrote an article after the tour in which he tells his journey:

I came to learn about initiation and the aboriginal way of manhood. Sadly it is no longer part of my culture (or more accurately my homogenised/ hybridised, westernised amalgamation of people and I think we are worse off for it...I was told certain generalised things about the initiation process...but I was left wanting. My curious,
insatiable western mind wanted to know more. I wanted to research, analyse and interpret! But wait a minute. Is this really the only way to learn? What did I experience out there in the desert and what did I learn? To my surprise I realise I did learn about initiation and about living in the moment.

(Potter 2000:4)

His transformation from observer and analyst came unexpectedly:

On the third day after a witchetty grub hunt we were driving back to the camp at Angatja when a ngintaka (a two metre long perentie lizard) crossed our path...I was excited and drawn to the hunting of this animal. It seemed a natural part of life- the death of an animal to provide sustenance.

(ibid)

On the fourth day he travelled the Ngintaka Songline through country:

We were driven to specific features in the landscape, for example a rock feature or a cave and shown the dance and told the story associated with that place. It was wonderful to see all the aboriginal elders dancing and singing and telling the story. I felt extremely honoured to be there listening, looking and feeling the land as a living entity.

(ibid)

Craig, along with the other white men folk on the tour, was later taught parts of the Ngintaka dance. This was the initiatory experience that transformed Craig from a watcher and listener to a participant in an Anangu songline, he says, ‘I loved being part of it. It felt wonderful to be telling part of a story about a creature of the earth, and imparting a cultural message, which has been passed on for many thousands of years, from generation top generation’ (Potter 2000:4).
Writings on Song

Songlines by Bruce Chatwin is the second most widely read book by tourists to Indigenous Australia. The value of this book to the traveller is it presents the importance of song traditions in Aboriginal Australia, it is easy to read and well researched. He does not claim to be writing an anthropological text; rather as a travel writer he tells the story as he sees it, through his traveller’s gaze. While he visited only for only a few weeks, he had researched his area of interest beforehand, read widely and made contact with respected Aboriginal elders and their trusted non-Indigenous co-workers from the Central Lands Council in Alice Springs. His journey, though names of places and people are changed, can be plotted in time and space, to real places and people. The conversations he reports actually happened; how he interpreted what he was told is clearly differentiated from what the elders said.

One elder with whom he engages intensively is Patrick Dobson, barely disguised as Father Flynn, ex-Benedictine from Fitzroy Crossing. Chatwin tells Flynn directly why he has come on this journey: ‘I’m interested in the Songlines’ (Chatwin 1987:55). Flynn decides Chatwin is not ‘a nutter’ so discusses the concept of ‘songlines’ with him seriously. Flynn relates songlines to land tenure; he explains that Aboriginal people ‘could not imagine territory as a block of land hemmed in by frontiers’ but rather as an ‘interlocking network of “lines” or “ways through”’ (ibid:56). Layton agrees, citing anthropologists Berndt (1959) and O’Connell (1976) who have studied the land tenure of Western Desert peoples in central Australia: ‘an estate is a cluster of sites rather than a bounded block of land’ (Layton 1986:40). Flynn said his ‘own country’ was ‘the place in which I do not have to ask’ (Chatwin 1987:56). This was another way of saying what Peter Nyaningi said: that he has the right to refuse others entry to his country (Nyaningi, pers. comm., April 2005).

With the empathy of a good travel writer, Chatwin entered the country through the eyes and ears of his hosts; he heard the importance of keeping alive the Creation ancestral links across, through and under the land of Australia and her
people. He popularised the term ‘songline’, giving it a certain international currency as a descriptor of Aboriginal Dreaming tracks. Now it is widely used by Aboriginal people across Australia, and evokes the primacy and power of the song in the cultural traditions of this land.

Anthropologists Catherine and Ronald Berndt recognised the importance of the aural literature of Australian Aborigines in their book, *The Speaking Land*. Although this was designed specifically for general readership it is nevertheless not generally one which people pick off the bookstore shelves before visiting Indigenous Australia. This was published in 1988, the year Desert Tracks tours started to Angatja. The Berndts claim that until then, few non-Indigenous people took Aboriginal oral literature seriously (Berndt & Berndt 1988:xxv). They argue passionately for the relevance of Aboriginal story and myth today: ‘the mythology is a vibrant and ready source of messages about a past-in the present – messages that are for the most part as significant as they ever were to Aboriginal contemporary socio-cultural situations’ (ibid:xxvi). An advantage of the Berndts’ work is that they recognise Aboriginal oral storytelling and mythology as a valuable body of ‘literature’ rather than oral history or oral traditions. This approach focuses on the importance of words in Aboriginal oral literature: like Shakespeare or Homer, these words are intended to be performed, spoken or sung on a stage to an aural audience. The words in both narrative and song form are cleverly chosen by the bard, the storyteller or singer.

Homer is credited with creating a written version of oral epics. Bernard Knox comments on Homer’s ‘creation of epic verse’ in *The Odyssey*: ‘it is created, adapted and shaped to fit the epic meter, the hexameter’ (Fagles and Knox 1996:12). The language of Homer was an artificial, poetic language, not the familiar language of the fifth century Greeks; a language that had to be learned and ‘the meter is based on pronunciation time, not as in our language stress’ (ibid.). Similarly, the language of Western Desert song cycles is peculiar to their epic song style. While some song cycles involve archaic and restricted language
accessible only to elders of considerable knowledge and senior ceremonial status, some of the simpler versions of song cycles, like that of the Ngintaka performed for the whole community, use simpler everyday language. However, the translation of the text makes little sense outside knowledge of the whole saga and the importance of repeated lines in emphasising the character of the particular ancestor being sung.

Ellis talks of the difficulties Western students have in learning Anangu song cycles: 'The text and its associated rhythm are always presented together. They are not easily isolated and when a student asks for the text to be spoken it is usually presented in its metric form, with no clear starting point or word division' (Ellis 1985:115). Traditionally it was expected that the student would learn the song and myth behind it through repetition of verses, performing the songs and dances and finally putting the stanzas together in an understanding of the whole. Due to the limited time visitors have on tour, Anangu have developed the method of telling the whole story beforehand, then an elder calling out the story before each stanza is sung and danced during performance (listen to Inma Ngintaka, CD recording, Appendix 1). However, as Ellis notes and visitors on Desert Tracks tours realise, it is only by performing inma, Anangu song and dance that a deeper level of understanding can be reached; not by analysis alone (Ellis 1985:116).

**Archetypal Dialogue of Myth**

Anangu Tjukurpa acknowledges the coexistence of complementary opposites. Theirs is an ontology that recognises and respects oppositional forces, difference, duality and complementarity at the heart of all existence. This tjaka, 'how it is', shows that good and bad coexist in individual Creation Ancestors, in individual people, in the elements of climate, country and availability of food and water. There is generosity and greed; there is bounty and drought; there is life and death. The dualities must be acknowledged and the powers of opposition within nature and humans continually worked with to restore balance. The Creation Ancestors embody these archetypal forces of nature and humanity. Their mythic world, as is the social world of their descendants, is
divided into men’s and women’s work and knowledge, rights and responsibilities towards the family and country. Ceremonial knowledge and responsibilities are, likewise, divided between men’s and women’s business in which both the sun and shade skin groups must perform different roles together: the ontological system is performed to continually recreate unity, a holistic system. One’s skin name situates one within the kinship system of animals, plants, people and place. Within this, the elemental forces of fire, water, earth and sky are celebrated and performed in *inma* and in daily life.

Anangu emphasise the ethic of mutual exchange in their law of *ngaprųji-ngaprųji*, the ‘law of reciprocity’. Human and nature give to one another and for everything given there is a return, the obligations of mutuality are defined in the kinship system which includes all living things and those considered inanimate in the Western classification system: the rocks, earth, water, sunlight, shade, wind and rain. In the Anangu world all things have *kurunpa*, ‘spirit’; thus all are animate and the one spirit energises all. At the level of sub-atomic physics this is recognised in the Western world. All matter is made up of the same energetic particles in constant motion. One of the basic tenets of Western physics, Newton’s third law of motion, states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. These two laws are not the same but there is an overlap of the Anangu and Western concepts, a trans-cultural space where the laws of energy are the same in the different languages of physics or Tjukurpa.

Both believe in a universe where action creates reaction; where impulse towards another demands a response; all things change and are in constant motion; bodies exert force on each other; and for every force on another there is an equal and opposite force. One culture might label this a ‘reaction’ while the other calls it a ‘response’, but in both cultures reactions and responses are recognised. The law of *ngaprųji-ngaprųji* expresses the ethic that humans must honour this law in all their engagements with each other and their environments. The moral necessity of reciprocal obligation is continually performed in telling the stories, singing the songs and dancing the dances of Creators. Cultural performance
maintains the spiritual energy of country and is complementary to the physical caring for country by patch burning, rockhole cleaning, and selective hunting and harvesting of the seeds and fruits of the land. Anangu believe spirit energises the laws of physics through cultural performance.

**Skins of Land and People**

*Inma* performs the archetypal faces of the Creators who suffered the ethical consequences of contravening the laws of reciprocity and hospitality. Ilyatjari insists that the group participate in a *maku*, 'witchetty grub hunt', before they learn about its *Tjukurpa* through *inma* song and dance. This is his way of teaching visitors the Anangu knowledge of the interconnectivity between all living things. People must physically be in country, follow hunters through country looking for the signs of animal or plant presence, learn to live off and with the land, get their hands dirty digging up roots and cleaning out rockholes, and physically engage in the reciprocity of action that is caring for family and caring for country. This is Anangu way of teaching novices how to hear the voices of the land, how to engage in the dialogue with these voices by listening, watching and learning how to feel their bodies speak through language that mirrors the movements of their teachers.

It is my experience that only by becoming osmotic learners – by having skin that is permeable to the sensate knowledge of the land, feels the breath of the land in the changes of wind direction and force, responds to temperature by moving from sun to shade, monitors water moisture levels of the earth and atmosphere, sees and hears the signs of seasonal change in the landscape, walks on the ground with bare feet that feel the impact they make on plant, animal and soil – only then can we be part of the land and respond with biological knowing to our biologically diverse environments.

Returning to the subject of Anangu kinship and 'skin' groups, as previously stated Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people recognise two skin classifications, *tjintulu*, 'sun', and *wiltjalyuru*, 'shade'. While position and role in
ceremony is divided between these two groups, ownership of land is not. Country itself is part of this kinship system and has a skin group: country can either be sun or shade country. Bill Harney erroneously believed ‘that the south side of the Rock belonged to the ‘Shade Side’ people, the north side to the ‘Sun Side’ people (Harney 1963:75-77). Mountford recognised these as generational divisions but still thought that Uluru was divided between the generational groups. Layton’s research did not confirm this. His informants, Paddy Uluru and Nipper Winmati, both considered the Uluru estate as a unity (Layton 1986:42). Layton did not further investigate the confusion of earlier anthropologists of generational divisions with land ownership.

However, if one listens to how Anangu refer to country, the source of the confusion becomes obvious. Anangu refer to areas of country in the same terms they use for the generational divisions: people and country belong to the sun side or the shade side. Peter Nyaningu explained this to me in reference to his country on the north side of Mt Woodroffe; his country is ngura tjintulu wakalpa, ‘sun side country’ (Nyaningu, pers. comm, 2005). This northern face of Mt Woodroffe is called Ngintaka Pirlpirra, the ‘chest bone of the Perentie Lizard Man’. Nyaningu describes his walytja, ‘family clan’ as belonging to this country; therefore his clan is tjintulu, ‘sun side’. This does not preclude wiltjayluru, ‘shade side’, clan members from ownership rights. Nyaningu and the other senior owners of his generation are tjintulu, their children are wiltjayluru and also owners of tjintulu country.

In ceremony both sides are necessary for performance of song, dance and ritual; both sun and shade sides are necessary for the whole, a kinship system that divides people and country into a duality, which is complementary rather than oppositional. The two skin groups, ‘our’ side referred to as nguyamu ‘our skin’, and ‘their’ side or tjanimilytjampa ‘their flesh’, are complementary opposites. These groups are endogamous; people of one skin must marry one another because marriage or sexual relations with the other skin are forbidden. Caring for country involves both skin groups in complementary
responsibilities. The country itself is divided into these skin groups, sun and shade country. As at Uluru and Mt Woodroffe, one side of the mountain cannot stand without the other.

Dialogue of Dance
Day is drawing to a close. The buses and trucks have returned to camp and people; the quiet of the later afternoon glow infuses all. Ilyatjari and Nganyintja are sitting with their guests around the main campfire sipping mugs of tea. Robert is keen to ask questions about ngankari business but Ilyatjari sidesteps the question and tells everyone why he teaches the inma. Ilyatjari recounts the history of tourists at Angatja from his perspective:

I worked with the children in school, we taught and taught them. I was a schoolteacher then. We used to teach the children inma and take them to town, Darwin, where they would perform dancing. They learned well and became very good dancers. I told them the Tjukurpa, and they listened to all the Creation stories, the Seven Sisters and others. Like the Seven Sisters inma, that we danced recently at Umuwa. The story of the two men following their wives, seeking them, they followed them a long way. The children line up and follow the wives; they dance this inma well. They dance other Tjukurpa, the dance of Nyii-Nyii, ‘the zebra finch’ story, Ngiyami, ‘the thorny devil’, many stories, lots and lots.

But then later, many of the next generation of children turned to petrol sniffing and we took them out to Angatja to teach them the old ways. When the white people started coming as tourists they also learnt the inma. Jeremiah and our other grandchildren and the whitefellas all danced together, big inma. They danced the dances of Tjukurpa, Creation stories. The men danced in men’s style with stamping step strongly and the women learnt to do the jumping step.

The women did the Crow dance; that’s your dance, you and all the women. A long time ago the Crow women were living in the cold
and dark without fire. When they saw the fire they stood up and joyfully danced in a jumping step towards the fire. This makes the women happy, the fire is thrown out across the land. This dance and the fire dance spread out over the land making everyone happy.

Then all the kalaya, ‘emu’ men decided to teach the young people their dance. So they taught the boys the emu dance and the girls the parka-parka, ‘mistletoe’ dance. So our grandchildren and everybody, whitefellas included all became very clever at dancing. That is how the inma at Angatja became bigger and stronger. They danced the ngintaka, ‘perentie lizard’, the wangampi, ‘rainbow serpent’ and lots of different, different; it became very big. My grandchildren, my grandsons and my grand-daughters, learnt in our bush school and they didn’t sniff petrol, because they went to the school of inma. This work I’ve done for a long time, teaching inma. It is important.

(Ilyatjari 1999 trans. D James)

His story is cut short by a call, ‘Inma, pitjalaya! Dancing, come on you lot!’

Tjulkiwa, hidden behind some acacia bushes, has been painting up the children. The fire is lit at the dancing ground and a semicircle of bodies is rapidly forming. As each woman joins the women’s side she drops to the ground in a kneeling position and starts pounding her thighs creating a deep thudding sound in time with the men beating sticks into the ground. Older women who can’t kneel sit cross-legged clapping their hands to the syncopated rhythm and the song gains force. The tourists take across their little campstools and sit in a ring behind the singers. A few sit on the ground and try to emulate their hosts. Some others remain standing till I point out it is rude to stand at inma. Anangu encourage them to clap or beat in time to the music.

All eyes are on the bushes on the far side of the cleared ground. Tjulkiwa and a line of girls emerge with their backs towards the audience. They wait for the singing to start again and on a signal from Tjulkiwa all turn around and dance in a line, kept in time by peripheral vision trained laterally, particularly noting Tjulkiwa’s steps, her pauses and changes of hand movement. Some are shy and
uncertain but all strive to get it right and are constantly encouraged by calls from their watching relatives. Clapping and calls of praise erupt as they finish in front of the singers. Then it is the boys' turn led by Sandy Mutju, their chests painted in the distinctive emu foot markings. The song changes, a different beat and higher pitched song. The rhythm radically changes between the song stanza for walking and pecking seeking food, to a rapid running beat as they scatter from predators. My two sons, Linda's boy Pip, and the boys on tour enjoy joining in dance. Like Anangu boys, they are praised and corrected.

Then adult visitors are encouraged to try. They are not expected to strip off tops and be painted at this stage but just to join Tjulkiwa or Sandy in the women and men's dances that the children have just performed. Ilyatjari calls out instructions to the tourists: 'Kalila! Nyangatja ngunti wiya! Nyangatja Tjukurpa mulapa. Listen! This is not just pretend! This true Tjukurpa! You are the Ngintaka Man vomiting up the mistletoe seeds. Pay attention!' The tourists are being taught one of the simpler dances of the Ngintaka Tjukurpa song-cycle.

The women learn their dance of careful side-step-side with hips-controlled swing, to the beat of the first two line stanza often repeated, then they change to a jumping forward with accompanying dramatic hand flicking motions as the key changes for the second stanza. These steps seemed simple when watched but prove hard to replicate to the satisfaction of the leading Anangu women dancers. They are told to watch more carefully, move their hips and watch the dancers' feet. The women dancers' feet are always in contact with the ground, making tracks; the jump is only a lifting of the heels while the balls of the feet stay connected leaving a clear furrow in the sand. Easier said than done and much more complex than the 'women's shuffle' described in terms of the Western male anthropological gaze (see Elkin 1977).

The white male visitors are struggling to turn their gaze inward and be in their bodies as a lizard. They must find their inner warrior stance to perfect the strong stamping dance of Wati Ngintaka as he pounds the ground shaking the
berries from the trees and vomiting up the seeds. Ilyatjari tells them 'Nyangatja ngunti wiya! This is not make-believe!' This is not a game for giggling self-conscious white bodies on a black stage; this is not a 'performance' in the sense of a polished set of ballet moves; rather, it is an embodiment of Tjukurpa, performance of Dreaming Law. When visitors are taught to dance they enter the Dreaming; their dancing is part of the performance of the law that brings the spirit of the land alive. The singers en-tune the dancers and the dancing ground becomes a numinous liminal space where the Dreaming comes up out of the ground and takes over the bodies of the dancers.

The singers and the elder song men and women carefully monitor the extent to which dancers enter and exit this performance space. They know the danger of being taken over by the spirit of the Dreaming and not fully coming back into the world of the everyday. Physical acts are performed to cut the connection with the numinous awe-inspiring power of the Tjukurpa evoked in inma performance. The singers throw dust as the dancers finish, or singers may stand up to embrace the dancers, releasing them from the power of the song. Always there is sexual joking and fun poked at the physical characteristics of the dancers, light relief from the intensity of Inma (see Rose 2000).

Anangu are skilled shape shifters, moving in and out of the bodies of their Creation Ancestors, in and out of the numinous world of the Dreaming that coexists with the prosaic world only a song beat away. The danger for visitors who try enter into this world, even for a short time, or for those non-Indigenous people who become part of the Anangu kinship family of community and land, is that they may become sick or cause sickness in others through not being able to move back fully into their everyday world.

The Land is Sung

The surprising response from Diana, to appreciation of the Musgrave Ranges and the formations near the camp, was simply that the special beauty experienced was due to the fact that 'the land was sung' and 'cared for' through Anangu ceremonies. It is one thing to remember
that Anangu attach special importance to the land. It is quite another
to be confronted so early in the visit with the sense that there might
be some detectable response from the land itself. Can rocks feel ‘alive’
and ‘happy’? Certainly the contrast to the earlier part of the journey
through lands which were ‘not sung’ and ‘cared for’ was quite
striking. But again this could merely be subjective illusion – although
much of what the group came to learn [as discussed below] revolved
around the erosion and reframing of the subjective/objective
interface so important to westerners
(Judge 1997:4)

Storyline is a familiar concept in the West; the visitors to Angatja can grasp the
importance of the storyline or plot holding the various diverse elements of the
story together. The concept that Anangu Ancestral storylines map the
landscape and the landscape becomes the story is also understandable. Visitors
spent a day following the Ngintaka storyline along 40 km of its track around
the north-east edge of the Mann Ranges through Nganyinytja’s country. The
concept of a creation story of the landscape could be appreciated and
Nganyinytja’s injunction to them to learn to ‘read the land’ in which her
ancestors’ history was written became a physical possibility. Some responded
as sightseers to this story landscape; they found it ‘easy to disassociate from the
songline because of the manner in which the parts were unfolded’ (Judge
1997:7). They saw but did not kulini, know with understanding.

Judge suggests it was because the method of unfolding the story was unfamiliar
to Westerners. The bus travel along the songline, stopping at each site, piling
out and standing looking at non-dramatic aspects of landscape, hearing parts of
the story then the song verses all sounding the same to the untuned ear, could
be experienced as fragmented and lacking coherent meaning. In contrast to
being invited to ‘a full-blown ceremony’ with ‘multi-media effects’, the visitors
had experienced Anangu method of teaching the Ngintaka story. The story had
been told briefly one night, then parts were seen in evening dance performance,
then visitors are taken along part of it in the country and taught a single stanza
dance associated with the vomit site, ulkapatjunkunytja, of mistletoe berries, ngantja ngantja. Judge noted that most participants found this performance lacking coherent meaning ‘just as experiencing sections of the storyboard of any production would lack the meaning and effect they would have when integrated into the full production’ (Judge 1997:7).

The full production for Anangu is not just at major ceremonial gatherings; it is performed every time people of the country gather to sing and dance sections of their songlines. Each performance, however small, is a performance of recreative power if the song is correctly intoned with Tjukurpa.

Several times the American women on the tour, who were used to commanding board rooms rather than sitting on the ground and listening, missed the opportunity to join in women’s dance. They cocooned themselves in dialogue and did not hear or perceive signals that other ways were being offered to them. Only a few took up the offer to be painted up for the honey ant dance. Colleen and Nancy joined myself, Tjulkiwa and Rosemary in this dance. It was a truly transforming performance for those women who participated although the main group was still engaged in active dialogue with each other and only saw it as a show. One viewer made the comment later that we were ‘brave’, presumably referring to bare breasts covered in ochre, missing the point that these were not for show but were painted honey ants.

Interestingly it was Colleen, the principal architect of the ‘Thought Leaders of the Western World’ tour, who was most affected by the Tjukurpa and inma performance. She was the one who suffered physical effects consistent with the story, particularly vomiting, a sure sign to Ilyatjari that she had gone too far into the Ngintaka Dreaming. She had entered into dialogue with the sentient landscape that embodies the ancestral beings and doings. Anangu claim the land was sung into being, and from then has been continuously sung by Anangu through many generations to sustain its aliveness.
Conclusion

Anangu have expressed their desire to teach all non-Indigenous visitors to Anangu land about the importance of their Law and inma. All are considered ‘tourists’ whether they come as government officials, researchers, consultants, academics, specialists or visitors on a tour bus; they are all travelling through Indigenous lands, their homes are elsewhere and they are on a journey of return to their own lands. Anangu ask them to honour the Inma Way, listen to the storyteller and singer, and heed the bard, as did Odysseus.

This may be dismissed as interesting but irrelevant traditional culture by Western experts involved in development projects on Anangu lands: advisors on governance, housing, water, power, education, health, employment, stores, cattle, mining, other industries and land management. However, the evidence of the failure of most Western development projects to be effectively taken up by Anangu contradicts this view. The AP Lands have been declared a national disaster area after a coroner found that youth suicides and petrol sniffing were out of control in the communities. The South Australian Government took away local governance from the Land Council and appointed an administrator. Anangu, who have tried for many years to stem the tide of petrol sniffing, suicide and despair in their communities were stunned by this loss of self governance. Gary Lewis expressed their sense of betrayal, ‘We thought you were going to work with us’ (Lewis, pers. comm., 2004).

The interface of Western and Anangu culture has not taken seriously the integration of joint projects into their Law and Tjukurpa, into their stories and song, integration into an ontological present that sustains and empowers Anangu. The strength of their traditional ceremonial life and the increased resources of money, cars, people and time being put into initiation ceremonies across the Western Desert is an indication of where Anangu priorities lie. They are trying to maintain their core cultural structure to strengthen their youth during this destructive transition from traditional life to modern Western society. Anangu are developing a hybrid culture to sustain their people on their
land. Judge commented on the integration of the Desert Tracks tourism business under the Law of the Ngintaka Tjukurpa as a vital element of its success, 'for any project to be meaningful to Anangu, and to “take”, it has to be integrated or expressed in terms of the stories through which their lives are ordered' (Judge 1997:7). The Desert Tracks Board expressed the role of Wati Ngintaka as the one who watches over the business from the highest mountain of the region and the state, Mt Woodroffe, Ngintaka’s raised head.

The ethical principles embodied in the song saga of Wati Ngintaka pervade the reciprocal economics, cultural and environmental practice of the business. Anangu law of sustainable development arises from their ontological beliefs that all life is sustained through a balance of rights and responsibilities to use and replenish resources. Their world is divided into a duality of sun and shade; all things, people, animals, plants and places, belong to either one of these moieties that refer to the two generational divisions of parents and children. The daily and seasonal cycles of nature are reflected in the cycles of generations, which do not follow a linear descent line but return every four generations, the great-grandchild becoming the father or mother of their own great-grandparent. This pattern that connects all life on earth will be explored more fully in my concluding chapter, as it forms the basis of the model I suggest for sustainable cultural and natural resource management on Indigenous land.

In the next chapter we are sung the stanzas of the Ngintaka Song Cycle in which he steals the fine grindstone of his hosts and attempts to take it back to his home. Those who visit with Anangu, as Wati Ngintaka did with the Nyintjiri people, may taste the sweet seedcakes and desire the fine grindstone for themselves. They then may steal it to grind fine, sweet-tasting bread of the spirit for themselves or they may take information, song, story or dance to sell in another place without permission of the owners and thus bring sickness on themselves or others. We must listen to the stories of those who have founndered on these rocks and of those who, like Odysseus, have sailed through, following the advice of the God of the Underworld.
Chapter 13

TJUKURPA: ONTOLOGY AND LAW: STEALING THE GRINDSTONE

The Price of Plunder

Poseidon Pursues Odysseus

Odysseus consults the Blind Seer Tiresias in Hades:
‘A sweet smooth journey home, renowned Odysseus, that is what you seek but a god will make it hard for you - I know - you will never escape the one who shakes the earth, quaking with anger at you still, still enraged because you blinded the Cyclops, his dear son. Even so, you and your crew may still reach home. Suffering all the way, if you only have the power to curb their wild desire and curb your own, what’s more, from the day your good trim vessel first puts in at Thrinacia Island, flies the cruel blue sea.

There you will find then grazing, Herds and fat flocks, the cattle of Helios, God of the sun who sees all, hears all things. Leave the beasts unharmed, your mind set on home,

And you may still reach Ithaca - bent with hardship, True - but harm them in any way, and I can see it now: Your ship destroyed, your men destroyed as well.

And even if you escape, you’ll come home late And come a broken man - all shipmates lost. Alone in a stranger’s ship - And you will find a world of pain at home,’

(Parke 1990:253)

Wati Ngintaka Steals the Grindstone...

Dickie Minyintirri is Wati Ngintaka

(Photograph: Skipsey 1994)

Nganyinyija tells us:
‘Wati Ngintaka stayed with the Ninytjirri people for days hunting, eating, singing and dancing... then one day - Wati Ngintaka waited till everyone was gone, So then he saw where the tiwa - the grinding stone - had been left; he went straight over and took it!
He hid it in his tail, right at the end. Then he left, and lots of little lizards poured out of his skin, running around camp, covering his footprints.
When the Ninytjirri people returned, their grindstone was gone!
One small boy, he’d seen old Ngintaka take it, he’d seen which way he went, he pointed “That way!”
So they followed him, men, women and children. The men raced ahead with their spears and caught him, but he’d hidden it and they couldn’t find it.
Many times they caught him, searched him, but couldn’t find it.
Wati Ngintaka came near to his home, he put down the grindstone and went hunting.
The Nginitjirri men found it, they angry! Whump! Whump! Whump! Smashed it!
Then they circled old Wati Ngintaka spearing him, from all sides, till a left-handed spear thrower got him in the back. The men cut his body, they cut off his head.’

Introduction

In this chapter we enter the heart of the paradox of tourism by asking: is the traveller’s search for wider cross-cultural horizons an act of plunder and appropriation of that which rightly belongs to another, or is it a genuine attempt at translation across linguistic and cultural boundaries, an attempt to reconcile differences?

Australia remains a nation divided at its core; justice, equity and reconciliation with the first peoples of this land has not occurred; it is a journey still in progress. The nation swings between expressions of apology, in which hundreds of thousands of people joined in Reconciliation Bridge Walks in all capital cities in 2000, to the other extreme of political parties like One Nation rallying the voices of angry white Australia.

Indigenous tourism may offer both practical and symbolic reconciliation on a local and national level. It is an industry in which Anangu traditional knowledge is respected and rewarded financially by non-Indigenous people wanting to learn from Anangu about this land, a reversal of the colonial hierarchy of knowledge and authority. There is an opportunity for Anangu on the remote Indigenous Lands of Central Australia to manage the tourism exchange to their advantage. However, there is also the potential for tourism to be the final rip-off of Indigenous knowledge and spirituality in the modern global knowledge in which ‘new age’ spirituality is a valuable product. Indigenous people selling their souls to buy bread for their children is the equivalent of the Nyintjiri people having to pay Wati Ngintaka for seedcakes he has made on their grindstone.

This chapter views the dark and light sides of the tourism exchange through the eyes of academics, Indigenous hosts, tourists and journalists. The complexity of these aspects of performance space renders a simple ethical proscription of cultural appropriation difficult. Both protocol is too benign, relying on
friendships and extended kinship relationships, or copyright and permit laws become so restrictive that genuine cross-cultural exchange is thwarted and controlled by political correctness as defined by those in power at the time.

Dancing the uneven ground of this cultural exchange is difficult; the pitfalls are many. The archetypal heroes of the two cultures, Odysseus and Wati Ngintaka, lead us on a circuitous dance, visiting foreign lands disguised as friendly tourists who then steal from their hosts, but also leave gifts in their wake. En route, Odysseus steals the Sun god’s cattle and Wati Ngintaka steals the fine grinding stone of the Nyintjiri people. They are both pursued on their homeward journey by the angry people they have robbed and have to face a reckoning for their greed. On their way they also perform noble acts and bring new life and joy to the lands they travel through: Odysseus, the brave and clever warrior, shares his plunder fairly and tells fabulous tales, while Wati Ngintaka, another clever man, tricks and beguiles his pursuers while creating new edible seed grasses they can grind into bread. His song saga is a fine example of Anangu conceptualization of paradox: Ngintaka is both a thief and a creator of sustenance.

These two song sagas celebrate the heroes’ weaknesses and strengths; they take and give, deceive and befriend, fight and love. These complex archetypal creators reflect on a grand scale the universal qualities of being human. They record the relationship of shadow and light in people and in the landscapes they travel. Places are imbued with the fear or love our heroes experience there: Odysseus feared the cave of the Cyclops while his love enchants the forest glades of Circe’s Aegae. In the place where Wati Ngintaka’s head and shoulders face the sun on Mt Woodroffe’s peak, the land remembers the happy people dancing into forgetfulness here while the stolen grindstone is hidden in the dark side of the hill. In the Anangu kinship system these physical sites belong to either the shade or sun sides, land has moiety relationship and is part of the kinship duality found in all existence. These dualities of sun and shadow continue to dance today in the performance space of cross-cultural tourism.
The Western Cultural Cocoon

Westerners are cocooned by the global hegemony of their own cultural laws and protocols. They may be visitors in another country but they bring their ontology with them, a strong thread into which new experiences are woven. Indigenous people see this ontological cloud around Western heads. Joan Rophia says:

I am interested to know more precisely what it is that Westerners have about wanting to be one with Indigenous peoples ‘laws’ or ‘science’ etc. My feeling is that Westerners want a place in the Indigenous landscape, but it scares them to be absorbed into Indigenous ways, such that they want their own...that they can remain within, and look to Indigenous peoples’ ways (rather than the people themselves) to build up their cultural cocoon, so they can continue to be ‘Western’.

(Rophia, pers. comm., 3 June 1998)
This is the heart of the paradox: how to engage ethically in cross-cultural exchange. As one visitor, John Broomfield, expressed it, ‘Some of us would like to learn from the earth wisdom of indigenous peoples, but we hear warnings we may not always be welcome in this pursuit. We even hear accusations of cultural theft. What are we to make of this?’ (Broomfield 1999:17). Joan Rophobia suggests Westerners emerge from their cultural cocoons carefully as respectful learners in a new cultural milieu.

Nganyinytja and Ilyatjari intentionally teach visitors the Inma Way of song and dance to bring people out of their cultural cocoon and involve them in dancing the country alive.

A Cautionary Tale
Ilyatjari is circumspect when tourists ask to learn about traditional healing. He tells the story of young ngangkari, traditional medicine trainees, who must fly slowly to carry the souls of the sick to the place of healing.

Ilyatjari said that when one is learning to be a ngangkari, one can sometimes drop a patient, because one is inexperienced or over confident. The ngangkari learns a lot from this experience. ‘He must start again from the beginning and learn to fly safely’, Diana explains. …Often the sick person after such a ride wants to become a ngangkari, a medicine man, but Ilyatjari will say that he can’t. Only after many flights is that possible.

(Bosnak 1996:6-7)

He warns seekers of greater ‘connection with Indigenous knowledge’ of the dangers of using new knowledge wings to fly too fast and too high (see full story later in this chapter). They hear Anangu Law of the Land that knowledge is bestowed by elders on those who earn it, but some choose to adhere to the Western credo that knowledge can be traded and should be open to all in the global market.
Anangu generously include visitors, teaching them knowledge of their connectivity to country through inma, teaching their songs and dances of Tjukurpa, and ask in return that the knowledge be respected and held in the hearts and minds of their guests. Anangu expect visitors to hear their teachings and respect this kinship of song to country. But those of the written word, the people of the West, need to see the written law to understand the consequences of crossing the line between private and public, sacred and profane use of Anangu knowledge. Desert Tracks had to institute legal protections for Anangu intellectual property: oral story and song, visual arts and dance performance.

Communal Intellectual, Cultural and Spiritual Property

Translating Anangu traditional law regarding knowledge of site, songs and dances into a system of protocols and permits for a modern tourism business on Indigenous lands is complex. The elders and Board of Directors of Desert Tracks business must defer to the consensus view of Anangu of the region represented by the APY Land Council. Therefore the regional Land Council must vet the cultural and physical content of tours. As previously discussed, Anangu Tjukurpa is the law and culture of the Lands; it is memorized in song and embodied in dance, performance of which sustains the universe. Tjukurpa is above, below and within everything, it is ‘owned’ by no one yet owned by everyone; all Anangu are custodians responsible for continuance of this Law.

The Angatja nguratija, ‘those belonging to this place’, are born of one ancestor of one specific place within that country, perhaps of the ngintaka, ‘perentie lizard’, or the wanambi, ‘rainbow serpent’; each person is responsible for the song, dance and country of that place. They are also related to other places and other ancestors of their parents or grandparent’s country through ceremony, responsibilities for ritual objects and knowledge of songlines. Senior song men and women have the right to teach their Tjukurpa, the songs and dances of their country, to those they choose. However, only the tjiitji inma, or children’s version of the Tjukurpa stories, songs and dances, can be taught to tourists. The
extent of what can be taught and to whom it is taught is under the governance of the group of elders and owners of that songline and country, the *ngurritja tjuta*, 'many owners', under traditional Law. Anangu Pitjantjatjara Council is responsible for enforcing *Tjukurpa* law using Western by-laws under the Pitjantjatjara Act, transgressors can be fined or lose their permits.

The Anangu regional laws have restricted Desert Tracks' access to a couple of sites on Nganyinytja's estate. In 1987 Nganyinytja took the second ACF trip to her father's Wānampi rainbow serpent Dreaming site, the Piltarti rockhole west of Angatja. This is country for which Nganyinytja is a senior traditional owner and has the right to grant access to strangers. Her older brother Lionel, from neighbouring Kanypi agreed to the visit, but another *ngurritja* or owner, Robert Stevens, living in Fregon 300 km away, objected. Traditionally he may have speared trespassers at sacred water holes, but now Robert objected through the legal arm of the AP Council and future tourist access to Piltarti by Desert Tracks was prevented. These limits of tourist access to country have to be determined by group consensus so all tourist itineraries are cleared by Anangu Pitjantjatjara Council before being advertised.

**Inma Festivals of Dance and Song**

The Inma Festivals were designed by the Ilyatjari to combine the cross-cultural tourist exchange with Anangu inter-cultural exchange. They provided a significant opportunity for the elders of neighbouring estates and those on the Ngintaka Songline to gather and perform their songs and dances for each other and for visitors. Desert Tracks sought special permission from the AP Council to have the festivals declared 'open permit' events for visitors to self-drive or come in private tour groups.

The first Inma Festival was held in 1993 and over sixty tourists, including children, attended. This was composed of a Desert Tracks group of twenty, a group from the Centre for Human Transformation from Melbourne, a large Maori clan and a few self-drive families. Over one hundred Anangu from many
communities came and performed. Ilyatjari invited the Maoris to dance and the one American First Nations elder to perform his ceremonies. This was so successful, in terms of cross-cultural goodwill, if not financially for the company, that it was decided to hold the Festival annually. The elders involved in Desert Tracks considered that these Inma Festivals were their reciprocal gift to other Anangu who allowed teaching of their songs and dances on the tours. This inclusive performance ensured regional support for Desert Tracks and kept the business embedded in Anangu communal traditional law and country.

Conflict of Interest
The only private commercial tour group to attend the festival was organised by the Centre for Human Transformation, an alternative therapy centre at Yarra Glen outside Melbourne. This organization had previously brought a men’s group to Angatja in November 1993. This had been organized directly with Ilyatjari who had requested that Desert Tracks facilitate permits for the group. This presented a business risk obtaining permits for another tour group not operating under the Desert Tracks protocols and contract. To protect business exposure the AP Permits Officer was informed that this was not a usual Desert Tracks tour, with different itinerary and purpose (see Figure 33).

Figure 33: Itinerary of Men’s Group, November 1993 (Snowdon,pers. comm., 1993).

**MEN’S TRADITIONAL HEALING AND BUSH MEDICINE TOUR**

**DATE:** NOVEMBER 5TH - NOVEMBER 14TH, 1993  
**NUMBER OF PEOPLE:** BETWEEN 10-15  
**GROUP LEADERS:** GREG SNOWDON, DARICHA

**OBJECTIVE OF TRIP**
To take a group of men involved in various aspects of medicine and healing to visit Angatja, Kalitjukara and Mantarur to talk with traditional Pitjantjatjara healers about how they heal people and how they use bush medicines. This trip would help open dialogue between Western and traditional medicines and healing practices and give traditional healers a chance to share their knowledge and skills with Europeans.

**ITINERARY**
Nov 6  Meet in Alice Springs and drive to Angatja  
Nov 7-10  Angatja with Charlie Ilyatjari and other men  
Nov 11-12  Kalitjukara with Harry Tjutjuna  
Nov 13  Manturu with Dickie Minyintirri  
Nov 14-15  Uluru and Kata tjuta  
Nov 16  Return to Alice Springs
Despite the warning, AP Council gave permission for this tour to go ahead. After it finished, complaints came from Anangu expressing concern that the group had danced on dangerous sacred ground near Aparatjara. The ATSIC regional officer, Johui Robinson, was also concerned: ‘I witnessed white men dancing naked in the creek bed and performing strange healing ceremonies in a structure like an Indian sweat lodge. Is this the type of tourism Desert Tracks is promoting?’ (Robinson, pers. comm., November 1993). These reports did not help the Angatja Community application to ATSIC for business funding. Then a Melbourne Aboriginal dancer, Murrindindi, also complained.

**News of Dancing in a Strange Land**

In May 1994 Murrindindi rang Desert Tracks and queried an advertisement placed by Daricha in the May-June 1994 issue of The Whole Person magazine offering ‘Initiation into the new Wanampi Dreaming’ (see Figure 34). He asked if the Anangu elders knew what Daricha was doing with their traditional knowledge and ceremony learnt on Desert Tracks tours.

Murrindindi said he had rung the Center for Human Transformation and asked a number of questions.

He asked, ‘Is Daricha initiated?’
And received the answer, ‘yes’.
He asked, ‘Is Daricha an elder?’
And received the answer, ‘yes’.
He also asked why white men were dancing Central Australian dances at Yarra Glen?
Daricha did not return his call.

(Murrindindi, pers. comm., May 1994)
Meetings on Cultural Misappropriation

This communication from Murrindindi and a copy of the advertisement in The Whole Person (see Figure 33) necessitated a full Desert Tracks Board Meeting on 27 May 1994 at Amata. The AP lawyer, Ken Grime, informed the Directors that they were legally responsible to Anangu Pitjantjatjara Council for the conduct of their business within the terms of their contract. The first item on the agenda was the issue of cultural appropriation. Two separate cases were to be considered: firstly, the advertised claims and courses of Deva Daricha; secondly, chapters of a book written by Robert Bosnak about his visit to Angatja in 1993 on a Desert Tracks tour.

Case One: Deva Daricha.

Daricha’s advertisement claiming he was ‘a custodian of the ceremonial objects of the Wanga Water Serpent Dreaming’ (Figure 33) dismayed the elders. However, they chose to see his claims as mistakes of ignorance. A few of the key statements made by the elders follow:

ILYATJARI: There is no Wanga Dreaming in Melbourne. He is wrongly making Wanga in Melbourne. We did massage with him when he was sick the first time he came here. The second time we talked about Wanga. But he has taken that away and made it into something different.

TJAMUMALYI: You cannot take away Wanga and dance it somewhere else like that, in those hills on the coast where there are fish.

ILYATJARI: He is not to use the word ‘initiation’. He just can’t say that. Tell him this, but tell him he can still come to our Inma Festival. It is fine for him to teach his way, but he cannot teach others our way.

ILYATJARI: He is not a bad man, he has just misunderstood.

(Desert Tracks minutes, 27 May 1994).
Despite the lawyer’s advice, Anangu decided not to take legal action but to send a warning letter to Daricha. They thought he had misunderstood the protocols of shared Anangu inma.

The Desert Tracks Board of Directors letter to Deva Daricha read:

Iyatjari, the principal songman, mayatja, for this new Wanjampi Tjukurpa expressed deep concern that this inma is being taught and danced without the direction and participation of the Pitjantjatjara owners/custodians of the song. He is glad that you and your group were part of this dance whilst at Angatja, but he hoped you would take the knowledge back in your head and heart and not teach it as part of your courses.

We, Iyatjari and the Board of Directors:

i. ask you not to refer to ‘initiation into the Wanjampi Dreaming’ or to publicly refer to yourself as the ‘custodian of ceremonial objects of the Wanjampi Water Serpent Dreaming’, in any of your advertising, publications or teaching;

ii. remind you that you have not been given permission to ‘initiate’ other people into this Dreaming;

iii. are advising you that the new Wanjampi Dreaming is not to be danced on land other than Angatja, especially land that is the traditional land of other aboriginal people who have not been ceremonially approached and their permission sought;

iv. ask you to withdraw the forthcoming article to be published in Whole Person magazine under the title of ‘A New Dreaming for Australia’, an interview with yourself and Soni Stecker. If this article is not withdrawn within seven days and a copy sent to the Directors of Desert Tracks for our appraisal, we will approach the magazine directly.

(Desert Tracks Board of Directors, letter, 27 May 1994)

The letter was softened by an invitation for Daricha’s group to attend the next Inma Festival to be held later that year in November. The elders wanted to talk
face-to-face about the issues rather than take legal action: ‘We can all sit down together then and clear up any misunderstandings about use of our teachings away from Angatja’ (Desert Tracks Board of Directors, letter, 27 May 1994).

Case Two: Robert Bosnak
The meeting then considered a second possible instance of cultural appropriation in Robert Bosnak’s book Tracks Into the Wilderness of Dreaming. The first few chapters of his book recorded his meeting with Nganyinyija and Ilyatjari in August 1993 on a Desert Tracks tour. He had included Ilyatjari’s story of the ngankari traditional healers’ flight of the eagle. The story had been told at Angatja in a situation of trust similar to the teaching of Wanampi inma; the possibility of it being published later had not been discussed. So when Bosnak said he was writing this book it was requested that sections mentioning Angatja be sent to the elders for clearance. These sections were read and translated at the meeting.

A quote from the book is included to allow the reader to compare it with Daricha’s use of Ilyatjari’s teaching about ngangkari business. Bosnak included Ilyatjari’s story of how he works as a ngangkari verbatim as it had been translated it to him at the Angatja camp in August 1993:

‘At night he becomes an eagle,’ Diana translates... ‘He swoops down from above to grab the sleeping person whose illness he is to treat’ ...
‘He takes the sick person on his back and holds him carefully’ ...
‘Then he flies in a straight line to the Milky Way’... ‘Then he reaches the place in the Milky Way that is like a hand. There the dead ngangkaris are’...
‘Those are the sticks. They fall into the sticks, he and the sick man he carries. The sticks pierce them’... ‘Then he flies back in a zigzag way, very rough, while at the same time trying not to lose the sick person. If the sick person falls off, he will get sick again’...
The next morning he sucks out the sticks from the sick person. That’s it. Cured. Who’s next!

(Bosnak 1996:6-7)
The Anangu elders listened intently to Bosnak's story as it was read in the Board Meeting at Amata. Ilyatjari smiled after it was finished and said, 'Yes. That's what I said. Yes he can write that in his book. OK!' (Ilyatjari, Desert Tracks Board of Directors Meeting, 27 May 1994).

Winnowing the Seeds from the Chaff
The Directors made a clear distinction between the use of their teachings by Deva Daricha and Robert Bosnak. The book chapter provided much more information about Anangu ngangkari business than did Daricha's advertisement; however, the advertisement was banned and the book cleared.

Ilyatjari explained the distinction: Daricha claimed to be a ngangkari initiate of Wanampi Tjukurpa while Bosnak only wrote down what he had learned about ngangkari business from Ilyatjari. Bosnak did not claim to be able to initiate others into ngangkari business, or to perform healing like a ngangkari, nor was he performing Anangu Tjukurpa in another land without permission. His story was honest; he described what had happened and he credited Ilyatjari with the traditional knowledge rather than claiming it as his. Although he acknowledged he was envious of Ilyatjari's skills as a healer, he did not attempt to steal them but rather translated Ilyatjari's teaching into his own experience, his life and practice as a Western psychologist.

Daricha, on the other hand, claimed he was an 'initiate' of the new Wanampi Dreaming. Daricha continued to offer 'Advanced Shamanic Training – Initiation into the new Wanampi Dreaming', which he said he had the right to teach being a 'custodian of the ceremonial objects of the Wanampi Water Serpent Dreaming' and calling himself 'Warramur, “The Eagle”' (Daricha 1994:5-9). Ilyatjari was clear that no 'initiation' had taken place nor had permission been given for Daricha to teach the Wanampi Inma. The teachings had been shared to be 'kept in their heads and hearts not to sell to others' (Ilyatjari, Desert Tracks Board of Directors Meeting, 27 May 1994).
Search Me, I Haven’t Got It!

There is a song stanza in the Ngintaka *inma* that relates the story of the Ngintaka Man being searched for the grindstone by his pursuers, the Nyintjiri people. This dance depicts a lead male dancer, Wati Ngintaka, being followed by men, women and children who pretend to search his body all over when he stops and stands with arms spread, challenging them to find the stone he has hidden in faeces at the end of his tail (see performance on *Ngura Walytja*, DVD, Appendix 2). This performance always causes much ribald joking by the audience who goad the Nyintjiri people to search everywhere, under arms, between legs and in his tail. It is a fun performance in which Ngintaka outwits his pursuers; they cannot find the grindstone so believe they are mistaken: he did not take it; he has behaved properly as a guest and relative, so they forgive him and return home.

The misappropriation saga between the Anangu elders and the leaders of the group from the Centre for Human Transformation was a similar performance of repeated pursuit. They cleverly claimed innocent intent whilst their use of Anangu intellectual property was hidden in the hills of Melbourne. The elders wanted to believe that Daricha had misunderstood their law and that if asked to stop he would. They were welcome to dance with Anangu again if they came under Anangu Law. However, the Centre proceeded to design their own brochure, *Desert Dreaming*, for the October 1994 Inma Festival. Despite the earlier warning, references to ‘Wañampi Dreaming’ and ‘Ngangkari’ were central to the brochure and the final published article in *Whole Person* magazine.

Anangu Pitjantjaṭjarra Council after receiving copies of the brochure and article convened a meeting with Desert Tracks on 14 October 1994 to discuss the continuing problems with the Centre for Human Transformation (CHT) advertising and promotions. The key issues explicitly stated by the AP lawyer included:
‘Desert Dreaming’ was a private tour organized by CHT without AP permission; the Angatja Inma Festival permit did not cover special purpose private tours.

Desert Tracks images and names of Directors were used in CHT brochure in contravention of copyright law and threatened the good reputation of Desert Tracks by association with the CHT and could possibly destroy Desert Tracks goodwill with AP.

The brochure created a false perception in the market place of CHT approval by Desert Tracks and AP because it relied on the connection of Greg Snowdon and Suzy Bryce with Desert Tracks and AP to substantiate its claims of credibility and special access to ngankari.

(Desert Tracks Meeting Minutes, 14 October 1994)

The information that Desert Tracks was contravening its AP permit by allowing CHT to operate a special-purpose private tour under the umbrella of the Inma Festival was made clear to the Anangu Directors. The Directors considered this advice and decided that the Desert Dreaming brochure from CHT contravened the agreed AP licence under which Desert Tracks had permission to operate a public Inma Festival. It was decided to refuse permits to anyone associated with the Centre for Human Transformation who had booked to come to the Angatja Inma Festival of 14–20 November 1994.

Desert Tracks Business Under Threat

Public confusion of the tours organised by the Centre for Human Transformation with Desert Tracks tours had become a problem. Aboriginal Studies groups from universities were questioning Desert Tracks ethics in regard to ‘new age’ spiritual tourists after reading Daricha’s article in The Whole Person. Increasingly this confusion was threatening Desert Tracks’ reputation and permit to operate on the AP Lands. The Board decided to take the extraordinary step of publishing an advertisement in several major newspapers, including the Melbourne Age and the Weekend Australian on 12 November, and
the *Centralian Advocate* on 18 November 1994, disassociating Desert Tracks from the Centre for Human Transformation (see Figure 35).

**Figure 35:** Cultural Misappropriation (Advertisement in the Melbourne Age, 18 November 1994).

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**Anangu Pitjantjatjara, together with the Pitjantjatjara Elders**

who own and direct Desert Tracks, a cultural tour company, wish to publicly declare that they have no spiritual, financial or legal connection with the Centre for Human Transformation in Yarra Glen, Victoria. The Director for the Centre for Human Transformation, Mr Deva Daricha, is not a Pitjantjatjara Elder.

**The Pitjantjatjara Elders are the only custodians of all ceremonial objects in relation to Pitjantjatjara culture including the Wanampi Water Serpent Dreaming.**

The Pitjantjatjara Elders are the only people authorised to perform initiation ceremonies into any aspect of Pitjantjatjara culture.

The Pitjantjatjara Elders reserve their rights to permit or refuse entry to any person to land owned by them through Anangu Pitjantjatjara. The Centre for Human Transformation in Yarra Glen, Victoria, has requested the issue of a permit to attend an Inma Festival promoted by Desert Tracks on the land owned by the Pitjantjatjara Elders in November 1994, and that request has been denied. Placed by: Ilyatjari, Director of Angatja Pty Ltd, trading as Desert Tracks.

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**Whitefella Dreaming**

This controversy became public property after the advertisement in national newspapers that, as Alice Springs based journalist, Dave Richards, said, ‘constituted a ground breaking declaration of spiritual copyright’ (Richards 1995:62). Richards canvassed the issues of cultural and spiritual misappropriation fairly widely in his article, which appeared in the May/June, 1995, issues of *HQ* national glossy magazine. He quoted Australian anthropologist, Diane Bell, on her recent visit to Alice Springs: ‘spiritually starved Westerners are trying to blend the world’s indigenous cultures into a tasty, easily digested spiritual smoothie’ (ibid:61). However, as Richards points out, some say that this is just part of the never-ending process of cultural exchange engaged in by all peoples of all cultures throughout the history of humanity. When does trade become cultural plunder? In the case of Desert
Tracks versus Daricha the AP legal verdict was plunder, but the Anangu believed it was ignorance; public shaming was considered to be enough.

Stealing the Research Agenda
Tourists are not the only visitors to AP Lands who can disregard Anangu Law to their peril. Government agencies often encounter problems through lack of understanding Anangu law and culture. These misunderstandings can result in serious delays or derailment of funded development projects. The history of a recent Feasibility Study into the Ngintaka Heritage Trail through the AP Lands provides an instructive example of the persistence of the separation of nature and culture in Western theory and practice.

The Department of Industry Tourism and Resources (DITR) approved a proposal by Desert Tracks, in August 2004, for a feasibility study on the Ngintaka Heritage Trail. The manager of Discovery Ecotours, who had recently contracted to manage Desert Tracks and who initiated the application, was inexperienced at co-management of a business with Indigenous people on their lands. He did not consult with the Anangu Board of Directors when he found, in the Desert Tracks files, my own research proposal to AP Land Council regarding the Ngintaka Trail, and copied and pasted it into an application form for a Tourism and Conservation Initiative Grant. He had assumed that because there was approval for my research from AP Council, there was general approval for research into the Ngintaka Heritage Trail on AP Lands.

The DITR were impressed by the Discovery Ecotours submission and accepted it at face value, not requiring any verification of AP Land Council approval. The manager of the Sustainable and Indigenous Team Business Development Group Tourism Division wrote: ‘It was approved for funding because it had the potential to illustrate a business case study of a natural and cultural tourism venture owned and managed by Traditional Owners in a remote area of Australia’ (Tranter, pers. comm., 25 May 2005). However, by not consulting directly with AP Council the Department did not realise that a full
anthropological cultural study had to be undertaken prior to or concurrently with any economic and ecological study. When the AP Council was made aware, they refused permission for the study to proceed until the Executive meeting considered it fully on 1 June 2005. This Anangu timetable did not fit in with the Department’s dates requiring a final report by 4 June 2005. The delay frustrated the department and Anangu ‘cultural sensitivities’ were dismissed:

The Government’s interest is on delivering biodiversity outcomes through tourism. Hence detailed information relating to cultural sensitivities along the proposed Songlines Trail may not be essential for the purpose of the feasibility study, which should analyse the financial/business case for the trail and the potential for it to enhance the endemic flora and fauna of the area it passes through.

(Tranter, pers.comm., 25 May 2005)

The Department was non-comprehending of the importance of AP Council’s requirement for full cultural consultation over a longer time frame than that of the grant period. This resulted in an incomplete feasibility study in both the terms of reference of the Department and the Anangu Pitjanthjara Council. This lack of appropriate cross-cultural knowledge of the relationship of Indigenous people to their country, and the lack of respect for differences in protocols and laws, contributed to the breakdown of the project.

**Conclusion**

The value of these instances of misunderstanding and misappropriation of knowledge across cultural borders lies in the opportunities they present for new learning. Visitors to other lands, whether tourists or government representatives, need to abide by the rules of hospitality; they are guests in the country of their hosts. On AP Lands Tjukurpa is the law. Anangu have the right to share or secrete their traditional knowledge, inma and sacred sites. The group of nguraritja, traditional owners and custodians of country and songlines, govern this Law. The Land Council ensures that consensus decisions of the group are achieved through extensive consultations. The Land Council Executive then decides to support or overrule the decisions of individual
Anangu guides or non-Indigenous advisors regarding government or private enterprise development proposals.

Despite much research and publication regarding the importance of Indigenous natural resource management, the problems associated with lack of cross-cultural understanding persists in this arena. Indigenous people around Australia have long been proactive in promoting respect for their traditional knowledge and the recognition of it as a vibrant intellectual tradition specifically adapted to this continent's natural landscapes.

Scientists and park managers in the co-managed National Parks of Uluru and Kakadu have incorporated Indigenous knowledge into land management plans since the 1980s. The Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management was established in February 1997 at the Northern Territory University in Darwin. This centre, under the Foundation Directorship of Professor Marcia Langton, produced research that firmly established the Indigenous knowledge perspective that natural and cultural resource management are intrinsically linked. This has been incorporated widely into land management research and practice on Indigenous lands documented by many researchers (see ANCA 1995; Baker et al. 2001; Walsh & Mitchell 2002; Langton 1998, 2002). Yet the dualistic thinking that separates nature and culture still pervades institutions of Western knowledge and governance. Government agencies and funding bodies persist in knowledge frameworks that deny the holistic perceptions and values of Indigenous knowledge.

This problem of cross-cultural understanding can be alleviated by recognising the importance of translation between the protocols and practices of different cultures. The language and concepts of natural resource management need to include cross-cultural considerations in the arenas of government policy and administration of funding for projects involving Indigenous people. Holistic conceptualisation of the natural cultural environment can be facilitated by convergence of Western and Indigenous perceptions and values of community in country.
ACT III

CONVERGENCE OF THE TWO LAWS IN THE PERFORMANCE SPACE

Prologue: The pattern that connects.

Anangu say Ngura walitja, 'kinship with country', is the relationship pattern that connects people to the country, sustaining both community and country.

Figure 36: Kinship with Country: the patterns that sustain cultural and natural landscapes (Diagramatic schema D James, 2003, Artwork Minyma Kutjarra Tjukurpa by Uta Uta Tjangala 1998)

Act III is the finale of the acts of translation in the performance space. The performance space is the Indigenous and Western engagement in the culturally based natural resource management of Desert Tracks tourism on AP Lands. The acts of translation in Act II were considerations of particular parts of the whole performance space in which clusters of concepts were translated into the language and cultural metaphors of the other culture. Different inscriptions of tangible and intangible culture pattern the shared performance space; built,
sung, danced, and encoded into the landscape in spoken and written forms, in
European and Indigenous laws, and in official reports. The patterns map the
cultural landscape, the "combined works of nature and of man" (UNESCO
World Heritage Committee, website 2005).

In Anangu terms, this performance space is the Inma Ground, where the
dances, songs and stories of both cultures are performed as we dance the land
and waters of Australia alive again. In Western terms this performance space is
one of dialogue where people of different cultures, languages, technologies,
knowledge disciplines, spiritual beliefs and values, meet and share ideas
(Figure 39). The intent of both is to facilitate the integration of different
knowledge and practice of relationship to and management of our shared
cultural natural landscapes.

Just as biodiversity provides a gene pool for adaptation of species to
environmental change, cultural diversity provides a gene pool of knowledge
from which new adaptive ideas can emerge. Catherine Bateson commented in
1972 that one of the difficulties inherent in our attempts to stem the tide of
ecological destruction is the limited conceptual pool of knowledge from which
solutions are usually sought:

...the difficulty of suggesting corrective measures, since, if these were
devised with the same conceptual limitation as the original
interventions, they would probably produce the same pathologies.
(Bateson 1972:278)

As discussed in Chapter 1, attempts to rectify the ecological destruction caused
by Western land use have predominantly been sought in Western technological
solutions. Indigenous people of Australia have been offering to share their
knowledge of environmental management for many years, but as Marcia
Langton said, they have largely been ignored. Her comments are repeated here
for emphasis:
I suggest that Aboriginal people and their land management traditions have also been rendered invisible in Australian landscapes, not only by legal but also by ‘science fictions’ that arise from the assumption of superiority of Western knowledge over Indigenous knowledge systems, the result of which is, often, a failure to recognise the critical relevance of these latter to sustainable environmental management.

(Langton 1998:9)

Translation between knowledge systems needs to incorporate many forms of dialogue: political, academic, practical and artistic. In the performance space of Desert Tracks tourism co-management it was found that the languages of poetry, images and symbols contributed greatly to cross-cultural translation. Figures 37 and 38, in conjunction with Poem 4, are examples of the uses of the metaphoric language of image, symbol and poetry used in translation in the performance space. The photograph in Figure 37 appeared in an article by David Leser on his Desert Tracks journey; the image encapsulated his learning: ‘we all understood...how the concept of ngapartji – what you give, you get back in kind – brought people together’ (Leser 1988:35).

**Figure 37:** Sharing Country, Sharing Resources (in Leser 1988; Photo: C Murty, 24 September 1988:30)
Figure 38, *Pukulpa Tjunguringkunytja - Happily Working Together*, is a sketch of the collaborative design of five artists, three Anangu and two Western, who brought together their different perceptions of caring for country in the performance space of Uluru. This design as a large glass artwork toured the United Kingdom as part of an Australian art exhibition in 1996-67. It was purchased by a Scottish person who felt the design symbolised reconciliation in her homeland as well as Australia. Symbols can transcend barriers of language and culture, moving beyond the cross-cultural into the trans-cultural performance space. This is the language in which hands and feet metaphorically represent Western and Indigenous knowledges, as in the Translation Schema (see Figure 41). In Figure 38 bare black feet and shod white feet walk together and their hands reach up to the waterhole or meeting place (see Key in Figure 39). The associated poem translates the symbols into words.

*Figure 38:* Transcultural symbolic design for *Happily Working Together:* collaborative artwork for glass panel: by Anangu artists Rene Kallija, Jennifer Taylor and Joyce Tjaliri, with Laksar Burra and Diana James, Uluru 1995 (sketch D James, 1995).
Poem 4: ‘Pukulpa Tjunguringkunytja: Happily Working Together’  
(Poem by Diana James 1995)

PUKULPA TJUNGURINGKUNYTJA  
HAPPILY WORKING TOGETHER

We walk together on sacred ground,  
Black feet, white feet,  
Foot prints soft upon the land,  
The Tjukurpa moves beneath our feet,  
The landscape is alive.

Anangu maru and anangu piranpa,  
Blackfella, whitefella, working together.  
We stand firm in our laws of the two cultures,  
Keeping the culture and natural heritage strong.

Our feet on sacred ground,  
Our hands reach up to hold the new circle of life;  
The campfire, the waterhole,  
Where people of all cultures can meet and share.

Diana James
Chapter 14

CULTURAL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF ACTS 2 AND 3

Indigenous tourism in Australia is a performance space in which Aboriginal and Western knowledge is being shared today. Relationship, respect and responsibility are the three protocols of cross-cultural sharing emphasised in the *Welcome to Country* extended to all travellers by Aboriginal Tourism Australia (ATA & DEH 2000a, website). This thesis has been an exploration of the knowledge being shared in the specific case study of Desert Tracks tours on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands. However, the conclusions that arise from examination of this data provide a translation schema that can be used in other cross-cultural performance spaces, in all situations where peoples of different cultures and languages meet with the intent to share knowledge.

The *Translation Schema* seeks cross-cultural conceptual metaphors that trans-relate the perceptions and values of different peoples. In this Act III of the thesis, the translation schema of the five-toed eco-cultural footprint is explained. In the study each toe of the footprint left a story in the sand within the performance space of Desert Tracks Indigenous tourism enterprise. The five toes of the footprint are:

- **Kurunpa:** Spiritual connection to country
- **Ngura Walytja:** Ecological caring for country
- **Ngapartji-ngapartji:** Economic reciprocity with country
- **Inma Way:** Cultural connectivity to country through songlines
- **Tjukurpa:** Ontological belief, law and governance of country

**Envisioning Future Convergent Cultures**

To fulfil Nganyinytja's vision of 'the two laws becoming one to keep the land' (Nganyinytja 1993:23) the sharing of knowledge must be paralleled by the
sharing of the wealth derived from use of the cultural and natural resources. As discussed in the Prologue, the Aboriginal peoples of this land do not enjoy the level of wealth, health and wellbeing currently enjoyed by the majority of Australians. There can be no expectation of sharing knowledge without sharing wealth and power. Indigenous tourism, like other Indigenous enterprises, needs to secure Australia’s Indigenous people an equitable proportion of the wealth and wellbeing enjoyed by the majority of the population.

This inquiry has examined ways in which mainstream Western thinking on natural re-source management (NRM) is able to join with Indigenous concepts of caring for country in a shared holistic conception and practice of cultural natural resource management (CNRM), bridging both Indigenous and Western concepts.

**Bi-cultural methodology**
The research methodology employed was the self-reflective ontological and phenomenological approach derived from cross-cultural research practice suggested by Indigenous academics. This included the decolonizing methodologies of the Maori academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), the NYC Women’s Council Action Research model and the instructions of my Anangu teachers to listen, learn, translate and review, in discussion with them, my research findings. They emphasised the need to form kinship relationships between researchers and researched, to respect the knowledge and teachings of the elders, to always operate within Indigenous protocols governing access to and use of knowledge and, finally, to take responsibility for the use to which the research will be put. Indigenous people reject research for the sake of the researcher’s goals: it must have relevance to those being researched and provide empowering outcomes for them and their communities.
TWO-WAY RESEARCH METHOD
Sharing Cultural Natural Landscape
Re-sourcing and Caring Management

Indigenous
Anangu beliefs, ontology and law: interconnected culture and country

Western
RESPECT
**Malpara**
Western ontology in science and humanities: necessity of biological and cultural diversity

RELATIONSHIP
**Walytjanka**
Ongoing relationship of Indigenous people to their land: Anangu four generational cycle of kinship
Relationship of non-Indigenous to the land and water: to protect resources for future generations

RESPONSIBILITY
*Kulilkatinyi munu Nyakunkatinyi*
Ongoing Indigenous responsibility for the lands and waters of their ancestors' country: preserving the cultural natural landscapes in accord with traditional law
Ongoing Western responsibility to preserve the cultural natural landscapes and resources of the lands they live in

KEY: TRANSLATION OF SYMBOLS

= 3 Rs: Respect, Relationship, and Responsibility.
= Two people: black and white working together.
= Common meeting ground: waterhole, campfire or boardroom.
The Anangu methodologies that were used to analyse the acts of translation of the Desert Tracks performance space reflected the two cultural languages in which the research was carried out: oral and written, Indigenous and Western. Act I took a Western approach to collecting and analysing data while Act II followed a traditional storytelling method of analysing the Desert Tracks experience. Figure 39, ‘Two-Way Research Method’, presents a summary of my two-way translation methodology that recognises and respects both Western and Indigenous knowledge and ethics.

**Anangu Approval of Cultural Data**

All interview translations were checked with the participants for correctness of content and purpose of their statements. To fulfil the obligation to engage in research that is meaningful and empowering to those studied, the AP Land Council has been provided with two written reports on tourism and conservation issues at Walinynga and the cultural heritage aspects of the Ngintaka Trail (see Appendices 6 and 8). Desert Tracks and Anangu Arts and Culture Corporation have received copies of all material filmed during the research and a copy of the final thesis DVD, *Ngura Walytja: Kinship With Country* (Appendix 2). The content of these reports and films has been approved.

**Difficulties of the Method**

The promise and problem inherent in this model for bi-cultural research is its reliance on the third space: the person and process of reciprocal translation between the different languages and cultures involved in the dialogue. Skilled translators and interpreters agree that translation does not achieve equivalence of meaning; it is approximate and relies heavily on the translator’s knowledge of meaningful conceptual metaphors of each culture to trans-relate meaning (Fagles & Knox 1996, Lakoff & Johnston 1980, Le Guin 1989). The problems of translation experienced between Anangu and Western concepts of appropriate use of knowledge shared and knowledge dependent on place and people being performed elsewhere, were explored in Chapter 13.
However, the translation schema applied in the process of resolving such cultural conflicts in the performance space of Desert Tracks was found to greatly assist cross-cultural understanding. The key was identification of the cultural conceptual metaphors that could be used in translation to achieve understanding of complex divergent and convergent ideas and practices.

Due to changes in the political governance of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands over the research period between 2000 and 2005, the funding for a full cultural feasibility study of the proposed Ngintaka Trail was lost and the study was not completed. Therefore, the two-way methodology and translation schema developed in the performance space of Desert Tracks tourism could not be applied and tested in the wider arena of tourism development on AP Lands. The AP Council is now considering applying the recommendations of the first stage feasibility study report to researching the whole Ngintaka Heritage Songline Trail.

**Bi-cultural Theory**

My research is theoretically situated within the international recognition of the importance of cultural diversity to maintaining biodiversity:

Respect for biological diversity implies respect for human diversity. The key to creating forms of development that are sustainable and in harmony with the needs and aspirations of each culture implies breaking out of patterns that render invisible the lives and perspectives of those cultures.

(Klaus Topfer, in Posey 1999:xi)

Recognition of cultural diversity necessitates recognition of ontological diversity, which entails respect for diverse metaphysical theories on the nature of being. This thesis discusses both Anangu and Western ontologies of land and water, and examines the differences and similarities between the two cultural metaphysics of the lands and waters of Australia. Both cultures agree that language is the key repository of cultural ontology, of the knowledge,
perceptions and values, and relationship to land and water. Thus, the meaningful exchange of ideas between peoples of different languages relies on translation; it is key to cross-cultural ontological understanding.

Paul Carter’s theory of the ‘performance space’ was defined in Chapters 1 and 2 and has been expanded to incorporate the ‘third space of translation’. The evidence presented in Acts II and III confirms my proposition that to gain effective understanding between cultures there must be a ‘space of translation’ within the performance space Carter identified. It is within the acts of translation that cross-cultural concepts can be transformed into trans-cultural concepts. The performance space of translation is symbolically represented in Figure 40.

The theoretical basis for my discussion of the formation of ‘trans-cultural concepts’ is the work of Bob Hodge, who claims that trans-disciplinary concepts are not just intercultural or cross-cultural linkages ‘but are new potentially explosive density near some arbitrary margin that destabilizes the basic core-plus-periphery structure of the prior culture’ (Hodge 1995:37). These potentially explosive densities have been termed ‘idea-seeds’ in my thesis, drawing on the poet Shelly’s conceptual metaphor of translation as idea-seeds (Le Guin 1989:110). Idea-seeds can be blown or carried across cultural boundaries to take root and grow into convergent trans-cultural concepts in shared ground.

The shared ground of this performance space is the land of Australia on which the different laws, cultures and languages co-exist. The land itself influences the trans-relation of idea-seeds that occurs on its surface. The theory of land as a sentient being is the basis of a strand of Western philosophy that converges with Indigenous ontology. The philosophy of Merleau-Ponty as discussed by David (1996:69) and evident in the work of Ronald and Catherine Berndt (1988:6) was presented as being in tune with Anangu ontology which ascribes living ancestral spirits to the rocks, trees, waterholes and saltpans of their cultural natural landscapes.
People who journeyed on Desert Tracks tours said that they were taught to listen to this language and it transformed their relationship to the natural landscape. David Leser, a journalist who came on a week-long trip to Angatja in 1988, wrote of his transformed perceptions after being with Andy Tjilarri:

I went into the mountains with this preacher and warrior because he was a man who carried the land in his mind like a geographical and
cultural map and because, in him, one could detect, perhaps, a
universal message for modern man.
What did we learn...that a mountain was not just there to be
conquered. It was there in all its Dreaming, waiting to be understood.
(Leser 1988:30-35)

Recognition of the role of the land in the transformation of the perceptions and
values of people who live on it is a key trans-cultural concept. If Westerners
learn to listen to the land then the Anangu reference to ‘this rock is my ancestor’
can be heard and understood. This requires a ‘metaphorical imagination’ that
can be encouraged by translation through conceptual metaphors. The evidence
of the processes and success of the third space of translation in the performance
space of Desert Tracks supports the theory of George Lakoff and Mark
Johnston: that the way we think and act everyday is ‘fundamentally
metaphorical in nature’ (Lakoff & Johnston 1980:3).

The possibility of preserving cultural diversity within a shared ethic of caring
for our cultural natural landscapes draws on the theory of diversity within
unity proposed by Teilhard de Chardin:

...a state of unanimity; such a state, however, that in each grain of
thought, now taken to the extreme limit of its individual
consciousness, will simply be the incommunicable, partial,
elementary expression of a total consciousness which is common to
the whole earth; a spirit of the earth.
(De Chardin 1963:40)

The conclusion that follows identifies the trans-cultural perceptions and values
of caring for cultural natural resources of land and water that have been
developed in the performance space of Desert Tracks tourism on AP Lands. The
wider application of these trans-cultural concepts and the implications for
future research is then considered.
CHAPTER 15

DISCUSSION OF THE ACTS OF TRANSLATION: REVIEW OF ACT 1: THE WESTERN PERFORMANCE SPACE

Anangu Country, Place and People
The development of tourism on these remote traditional Indigenous communities on the AP Lands arose from the elders’ desire to establish an economically viable business that would sustain their children and grandchildren on their homelands while maintaining their cultural and natural heritage landscapes. It has evolved into a part-time business for a few small homeland communities on the AP Lands.

Tourism has been supported by government agencies as a potential growth industry in the Pitjantjatjara Lands. Hence the DITR interest in funding a feasibility study of the proposed Ngintaka Songline Heritage Trail in 2004-05. This study established that there is potential to link tourism to individual family clan estates and significant sites along a totemic Ancestor track under the governance of regional tourism associations. However, the regional AP Land Council has to agree before it can proceed (see Appendix 9).

National and International Ethics of Indigenous Tourism
Indigenous culture is a unique point of difference of the Australian experience that has long been used to promote Australia internationally (see Chapter 5). The Mataatua Declaration on the Cultural, Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1993) was referred to as the basis for the development of an Indigenous Tourism code of ethics:

Indigenous people are the guardians of their customary knowledge and have the right to protect and control dissemination of that knowledge. They also have the right to create new knowledge based on cultural traditions. (Mataatua 1993)
However, adoption of this ethic is voluntary, with the result that most of the profit from marketing Australia using Aboriginal cultural imagery goes to the mainstream tourism industry, not Indigenous people themselves. The 1998 report, *Our Culture: Our Future* identified two of the greatest difficulties Indigenous Australians have in protecting their cultural property: the Western ‘commercial interests are protected under copyright law rather than interests of cultural integrity’; and ‘individual notions of ownership are recognised, rather than the Indigenous concept of communal ownership’ (Janke 1998:xxiii).

Aboriginal Tourism Australia, one of the peak national Indigenous tourism associations, is proactively approaching key industry and government agencies to recognise Aboriginal rights to control and protect their cultural heritage. Their brochure, *Welcome to Country*, states ‘Remember the Three Rs: Relationship, Respect and Responsibility’ (ATA & DEH 2004, website). To act ethically the wider Australian tourism industry must support the sustainability and integrity of Indigenous culture by promoting authentic Indigenous product, building Indigenous capacity to be directly involved in the tourism industry and remunerating Indigenous people for use of their cultural heritage in marketing Australia.

**Indigenous Tourism Demand**

Australian government tourism ministers continue to claim that there is a high international demand for Indigenous experience (see Chapter 6). While the statistics reveal that over 70% and up to 85% of travellers to Australia from North America and Europe express a high level of interest, only 10–15% actually experience Indigenous product. Visiting art galleries and shops, theme parks or dance performances in the major cities is the extent of their experience. Domestic tourists are more likely to travel outside urban centres; therefore, they represent the market with the greatest unrealised potential demand for Indigenous tourism in Australia. Currently, DITR researches over the period from 1999 to 2004 shows that Australian domestic interest in nature-based tourism is almost double the interest in Indigenous tourism. Domestic tourists mostly visit art galleries and shops, theme parks and dance performances, with
less than 16% interested in the full-immersion experience of tours like Desert Tracks. In fact, all types of Indigenous tourism product only attracted 6% of ‘extremely interested’ domestic travellers, those likely to book a tour.

These statistics indicate that the Federal and State government promotion of Indigenous tourism, as the way forward for Indigenous people and communities seeking viable enterprises, is greatly overstated. In the opinion of researchers Chris Ryan and Jeremy Huyton, this is yet another scheme set up to fail for Aboriginal communities (Ryan & Huyton 2000:54). More sound research into demand for Indigenous tourism product, both domestically and internationally, is necessary before it is so widely promoted as a sustainable business option for remote Indigenous communities.

Desert Tracks has continued to attract sufficient numbers of tourists over the years to sustain a small eco-tourism business at a level that initially suited the elders and their communities. Anangu were cautious about starting tourism: from 1988 to 1994 the tour numbers and frequency were kept low to reduce the impacts of tourism on traditional lifestyle. When the business management moved to Uluru and one-day tours to Cave Hill began operating, visitor numbers greatly increased. However, this decreased the authenticity value of the cultural exchange for some elders (listen to Dickie Minyintirri’s comments on the DVD). Other Anangu have enjoyed the increased income from tourism.

Desert Tracks continues to attract the segment of the domestic and international market interested in the full-immersion ‘Bush College’. It is a niche ‘special interest’ type of tourism that is changing in response to generational change of the guides and managers as this recent email from John Broomfield indicates:

We saw none of the Anangu from our 1999 or 2001 adventures. Even Lee and Leah did not join us, even though expected. A young male relative had died the week before in Port Augusta, and many of the people were just arriving home. We were led on the walk by Sammy and wife Reenie; an older woman, whose name I did not master; and
Michelle, a teenage niece of Lee. Also in camp with us were Sammy’s and Reenie’s mischievous two sons of kindergarten age, who were constant fun. On the final evening, we were joined for inma by two pick-up loads of other adults and children. It was again a truly precious experience.

(Broomfield, pers. comm., 27 September 2005)

**Review of the Cultural Natural Resource Management of Desert Tracks**

The practice of Indigenous NRM as applied to Desert Tracks (see chapter 8) incorporated the two-way theories and practice of natural resource management in Central Australia (Walsh & Mitchell 2002; Baker et al. 2001). Some of these are evident in the conservation measures suggested in the Ngintaka Tjina, part two of the Ngintaka Heritage Songline Trail report attached as appendix 10. However, as Desert Tracks is primarily engaged in tourism, the most immediately relevant model of Indigenous and Western co-management of NRM was the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park. The World Heritage Natural and Cultural Landscapes recognised within the Park do not end at its boundaries but continue on into the Anangu Lands of South Australia. Anangu perceive and value these lands as having equal cultural significance to those within the Park. Therefore, they required Desert Tracks tourism business to operate with similar respect and responsibility towards both the cultural and natural landscapes of the AP Lands.

The Anangu elders envisaged a proactive role for Desert Tracks tourism in assisting to preserve traditional cultural knowledge by ascribing it a high value in the Western economic system. Within the Western system ecological knowledge and conservation holds a high value in gaining eco-tourism accreditation for Desert Tracks. Thus, it was ethically and commercially important that the company integrate the best principles of Indigenous and Western cultural and natural resource into its co-management plan.

One result has been that traditional cultural and ecological knowledge has provided a skill base for involvement in a modern tourism enterprise. This
adaptation to a new business has been assisted conceptually by the Anangu tradition of *Inma*, the song and dance performance of traditional knowledge, which has within it an adaptive mechanism for change. The elders, Ilyatjari and Andy Tjilari, incorporated new song and dance performances into the traditional Ngintaka song saga to communicate cross-culturally and involve tourists in the performance (see tourist performance of Ngintaka on DVD). This also provided cultural continuity for Anangu as their tourism business was incorporated under the law and governance of the Ngintaka Tjukurpa. This Law provided the ontology and the epistemology, the theory and the practice, of Anangu cultural natural resource management that was incorporated into the co-management of their tourism enterprise.

**Figure 41:** The Eco-Cultural Translation Schema (D James 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECO-CULTURAL TRANSLATION SCHEMA</th>
<th>Cultural Natural Resource Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Fingers</td>
<td>Five Toes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPIRITUAL**
- Dualistic/ separated nature/culture divide
- *Kurunpa*: health & wellbeing one spirit in culture & nature

**ECOLOGICAL**
- Property Ownership private /state resource
- *Ngura Walytja*: custodial communal family lands

**ECONOMIC**
- Capitalist competitive rationalism
- *Ngapartji-ngapartji*: reciprocal sharing and kinship

**CULTURAL**
- Individual borders and fences
- Communal/kinship Songline linkages

**ONTOSTICAL**
- Western Law civil/religious split
- Indigenous *Tjukurpa* holistic law
The Translation Schema

In the Translation Schema (Figure 41) the ‘five fingers’ and ‘five toes’ are conceptual metaphors for human impact on the environment; the fingers represent cultural manipulation of the environment and the toes are the impact of our cultural tread, known as our ecological footprint, on the land. In Western culture we tell a lot about peoples’ characters from their hands: we read a person’s hands to reveal their occupation, class, status and age. Alternatively, Anangu tell much more about a person from their footprint: if they walk fast or slowly and are aware or unaware of the ground beneath their feet. Thus the fingers of manipulation seem an appropriate metaphor for the impact of Western technological society on the earth, and the toes of the bare footprint seem an appropriate metaphor for Indigenous peoples’ imprint on the earth.

The Convergent Western-Indigenous Performance Space

The case study of Desert Tracks in terms of this Translation Schema was considered in Act II: in translation of the spiritual, ecological, economic, cultural and ontological bi-cultural perceptions and values operating in that performance space. These translation spaces are reviewed in this discussion.

Kurumpa: Spiritual Connection to Country

The spiritual relationship between people and country is explored in the context of Nganyinyija’s welcome of visitors to her country (see Chapter 9). Tourists who choose Desert Tracks leave the comforts of five-star luxury hotels and opt to sleep on the ground seeking another kind of comfort: spiritual wellbeing. They take the role of ‘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 offer them an understanding of their sacred law connecting people to place, nature to culture, and spirit to land. The hosts and guests on Desert Tracks tours are meeting in the performance space, as Dessaix says, ‘for wisdom’s sake’ (Dessaix 1998:197).
Nganyinytja says her heath revives when she is back in her country out at her homeland Angatja, where her spirit can be free. Anangu health is a complex pattern of spiritual and practical relationships to country of birth, totemic ancestors and their descendant animals or plants, performance of Inma song and dance and the reciprocal care of extended family (see also Reid 1982:ix-xvi). Health is related to meaningful cultural, social and spiritual continuity. Since colonisation and the movement to sedentary community living, Anangu control over these areas of their lives has weakened. The political rhetoric of Indigenous self-determination is not matched by the increasing employment of non-Indigenous staff to manage the complex technology and external agencies that ‘fund and fix’ communities.

Sustainable healthy living on Anangu Lands is not a ‘pipeline problem’, one that can be simply fixed by the ‘delivery of money or equipment’ (De Laet 2000). Health involves the body, mind and spirit of people. The Western standard public health provision of clean water, waste and sewerage disposal, nutritious food and suitable housing is acknowledged as essential but not sufficient conditions for health. Health is defined by the World Health organisation as a state of optimum physical, social, mental and spiritual well being (WHO 1948). Anangu traditional healers, ngankari, regard sickness and wellbeing as matters of spirit. Sickness is a sign of broken connections with self, family, community, country and sacred Law.

Nganyinytja speaks of the essential interrelationship of water, land and spirit with the health of all people. She believes that if this connection is broken it causes sickness for non-Indigenous and Indigenous people alike. Anangu kinship to land and water offers a model for healing the disassociation with place so often felt by new settlers and their descendants. People need to ‘belong’ to country to become responsible custodians of ecological, cultural and spiritual resources of place. If generations of non-Indigenous Australians feel that they do not belong, then they can continue to take more than they give to the land because ‘home’ is elsewhere. This is very important to people with the
immigrant ancestral heritage of many Australians. Barbara Huble commented in the visitors’ book about her ‘gratitude for the spirit of homeland from a first generation Australian with several continental roots’ (Huble pers. comm., 1991). Nganyinytja calls to us to learn how to belong to the land by listening to its Indigenous people and remembering our traditions of connectivity to place:

I’m holding the story and the Law for this land and water inviting others to come and learn. So they can remember that maybe this is the way their mothers and grandmothers taught them. They can learn from me and become connected again to the way of understanding this Land.

(Nganyinytja 1993:23)

*Ngura Walytja*: Ecological Caring for Country

The concept of *ngura walytja*, kinship to country, is central to Indigenous caring for ecological landscapes (explored in Chapter 10). The responsibility to ‘manage’ the land and waters of clan estates is usually transferred to the eldest child of the senior traditional owner. In Nganyinytja’s case she is an only child and has become recognized as the senior owner of her father’s estate through her birth near the significant site of Piltarti waterhole and her choice to move back to live and care for her country in 1980. She is *nguraritja* ‘traditional owner’ of Piltarti, the major permanent waterhole in the Mann Ranges and thus a critical source of water for her clan estate. Her kinship to this place and this law makes her a custodian of its water and she has a responsibility to teach visitors that this waterhole is sacred. All water in the desert is a scarce and sacred source of life.

Piltarti is guarded by *wanampi*, the rainbow serpent. Radcliffe-Brown found evidence of the Rainbow Serpent Dreaming all over Australia (Radcliffe-Brown 1930:342, see also Chapter 2). This Creation Ancestor was the bringer of an environmental law of great importance to all the first peoples of this dry continent: the law that water is sacred and must be respected not wasted.
‘The rainbow-serpent may be said to be the most important representation of the creative and destructive power of nature, principally in connection with rain and water’.

(Radcliffe-Brown 1930:347)

The Rainbow Serpent protects sources of fresh water in Australia. Strangers who approach without the proper respect will be devoured. If respectful, people can approach and sip the water (see Figure 42; also DVD, Appendix 2).

**Figure 42:** Water, a sacred resource under *Wanampi Tjukurpa*: Dickie Minyintirri being careful not to pollute the water in a *tjukula*, ‘rockhole’ (photo S James, 2005).

Traditionally, no one was allowed to swim or wash in the rockhole. The Law of the Rainbow Serpent protected fresh water supplies from being depleted by the greed or pollution of humans (Nganyinytja, pers.comm.1988).

In Australia today, we have inherited a degraded landscape in which the water supplies are running down. The current water crisis of the city of Sydney has brought to the fore those who seek ‘pipeline solutions’ of more dams and desalination plants as opposed to conservationists who argue for greater recycling of waste and storm water (Frew and Moore 2005:34).

Listening to and observing Indigenous peoples’ ecological management practices give us alternative models to consider. The idea-seed of perceiving and valuing water as a sacred source of life can transform our use and re-sourcing of water in our local communities and our shared natural
environment. To develop an appropriate sense of place involves listening to this land, learning to read it and to respect its scarce water.

**Ngapartji-ngapartji: Economics of Reciprocity**

The Anangu law of *ngapartji-ngapartji*, ‘giving and receiving’, instructs people to give back to the land and water that which is taken and consumed. This was the general principle under which the Anangu elders of Desert Tracks decided to operate the tourism business, specifically under the law of *Ngintaka Tjukurpa*. Every aspect of the modern Western business was translated into the framework of Anangu traditional law. The *Ngintaka* watched over the tour routes from his vantage point on Mt Woodroffe, the highest mountain in South Australia. He travelled with the bus and rode as a logo on the shoulder of every guide, black and white (Figure 43 and 44). The moral of his story was incorporated into the ethics of the business. As the *Ngintaka* was punished for stealing the grindstone, so were those who stole Indigenous knowledge shared on tour. Reciprocally, Wati Ngintaka brought many new edible seeds to the lands for Anangu to harvest and grind into bread. Similarly, as guardian of the tours, he ensured that tourism brought in money to feed the people in their homelands.

The *Ngintaka* model as a regional tourism organization for AP Lands would incorporate reciprocal economics of scale. The benefits of regional governance of standards of ecological and cultural best practice, intellectual property protection, visitor protocols and permits would accrue to all members, as would membership of the regional Ngintaka Tourism Association, entitling each small business to benefit from the region’s marketing, advertising, tourist information, booking, permit issue, guide training, route maintenance and interpretive signage along the connecting route.

This regional business structure would incorporate traditional obligations to share economic returns. When the estates, songs and ceremonies of specific clans are used in tourism enterprises then a payment to traditional owners is
appropriate. This business model combines traditional local clan independence within the traditional interconnectivity of Anangu law and culture. These concepts have been presented in the report to AP Council on the Ngintaka Heritage Songline Trail Proposal (see Appendix 9).

Figure 43: Ngintaka logo (D James 1989).

Figure 44: Tour bus operating under Ngintaka law (photo B Skipsey 1995)

The idea –seed being transplanted here is that Indigenous economics of reciprocity can be integrated successfully into a Western business. The discussion in Act II has described ways in which Indigenous people can transform Western business models to suit their economic aims.
Inma Way: Cultural Connectivity to Country

Anangu regard the singing and dancing of Tjukurpa, inma, to be the most important thing they share with visitors to their country. Knowledge in Anangu culture is held in the songlines of Tjukurpa that connect people to place and to food and water sources in their country (see Chapter 12).

Knowledge of Tjukurpa and the songlines links people to their environment in very practical ways. Permanent waterholes that support the greatest biodiversity are often the geographic nodes where songlines intersect. The songlines are sung by elders who know the multi-dimensional maps of country that their ancestors continually recreated in time and space through performance of dance and song. Andy Tjilari, as an elder songman, has been handed on the responsibility for many sections of Tjukurpa and songlines that traverse the tri-state border region by his uncles and fathers. He can travel in
through country that he has never seen before and find water by knowing the
song for that country (Tjilari, pers. comm., 1975). Songlines, like water sources,
link people, animals and place across central Australia.

Tourists who are taught a little Anangu Inma while visiting the AP Lands will
never know the complex maps of country encoded in the songlines. However,
they are encouraged by Ilyatjari to perform the dances believing they are
contributing to the renewal of food and water sources of the land. This act of
performance of the ontology of the ‘Other’ has a profound transformative effect
on the visitors’ perceptions and values of land and water. This is an embodied
act of translation in which the Indigenous concept of ‘singing the land alive’ is
transplanted into the Western consciousness by bodily performance of the idea.

I agree with Ursula le Guin, who says of the transformative power of trans-
relation of idea-seeds, ‘I believe because I have seen it happen’ (Le Guin1989:
112). Tourist comments recorded in visitor books and later articles confirm that
many non-Indigenous visitors to Anangu lands are transformed by their
experience of being taught to sing and dance the songlines of the Tjukurpa
Creation Ancestors. Craig Potter, introduced in Chapter 9, wrote of his
transformation through the embodied experience of dancing a songline:

We were driven to specific features in the landscape, for example, a
rock feature or a cave, and shown the dance, and told the story
associated with that place. Later, in the afternoon, the white men folk
were given the opportunity to dance individual parts of the Ngintaka
story. I danced the part where the Ngintaka started by resting in a
rock crevice. I felt extremely honoured to be there, listening, looking
and feeling the land as a living entity.

(Potter 2000:4)

Visitors enter the translation space of the performance and describe themselves
as emerging with new perceptions and understanding of themselves, their
environment and community.
Tjukurpa: Ontology of the Two Laws of the Land

There remains a profound difference between the ontological foundations of Indigenous and Western knowledge in Australia today (explored in Chapter 13). Cases where the ethics and protocols of engagement between the cultures have clashed are many and varied. The question then, for those seeking reconciliation between Aboriginal and Western peoples, law and culture in Australia today, must be how to respect difference within collaborative efforts in the cross-cultural performance space. The specifics of the appropriate protocols and ethics will be different in each place with different peoples, just as Anangu inma is specific to the people of each ngura walytja, each ‘home country’. Similarly, Western law consists of national laws that can be interpreted differently in each state and territory of Australia. Within Western culture there are also inter-culturally different languages, protocols and ethics for each academic discipline, government agency and private enterprise company. Considering this cross-cultural and inter-cultural diversity of knowledge languages it is not surprising that communication is so fraught with translation difficulties.

The key protocols suggested by Indigenous Australians to assist in understanding across this ontological divide are the ‘3Rs’ of relationship, respect and responsibility. They can be applied to all inter- or cross-disciplinary and inter- or cross-cultural exchanges of knowledge in the performance space that allows for translation.

Anangu Cultural Continuity and Change

A continuing theme throughout this thesis has been the acceptance and adaptation to change, which is inherent in Anangu ontology. Tjukurpa is a verb, a continually renewing process of creation, in which human ancestors of plant and animal form left their footprints as the formations of the land and waters of Australia (explored in Chapter 2). Cultural natural landscapes are the co-creations of humans and nature. Through singing and dancing the songlines of
Tjukurpa Anangu sustain their relationship with the natural world, respect their ancestors and laws, and take responsibility for caring for their country.

To explain this notion of continual change and adaptation with their cultural natural landscapes the Western Desert people of Hermannsburg tell a Creation story of the Desert Oak. This proud tree, with thick bark which is resistant to bushfires and termites, is only found in the sand-dune country of Central Australia (Urban1990:17). The adult tree has a luxuriant canopy of drooping branches adorned with needle leaves that whisper desert music in the wind. To walk under these trees on a carpet of thick, soft, dry needles; is to be silenced and dwarfed by the presence of the ancient sentinels.

Figure 46: Desert Oak Story: Elders Training the Young to Survive in a Dry land. (Photo. S James 2003)

The younger trees are spiky spindles of twig branches, like a bottlebrush, grouped in stands on the dunes (Figure 46). Anangu say they are young uninitiated men protected by, and learning from, the older men. It is not until their taproot reaches the water table that they too can become men and rear their own children. After many years of growth, when the trees are quite tall,
their canopy spreads and they seed and bear fruit, their shade protecting the young saplings.

The cycles of birth, growth, bearing children, and death, are the same in *Tjukurpa*, in human life and in nature. Time is a continuous recycling through four generations: seeds and youth; saplings tapping into water, the source of life and maturation; adults birthing and training their young; eldership and wisdom. These cycles are turned by birth and death; the spiritual life force continues in the next generation.
CHAPTER 16

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSLATION IN THE PERFORMANCE SPACE

Introduction

For true travellers the quest is to return to their beginnings and see them again with new eyes. At the conclusion of the journey described in the previous fifteen chapters, the oppositional position of Indigenous and Western perceptions and values of land in Australia is not resolved. This is a country in which the differences between the Native and the Stranger are not just of our past; they are the politics of our present. The performance space of Desert Tracks tours is not a romanticised version of reality; tourists like Craig Potter come face to face with the good and the bad aspects of life for Anangu on their lands today:

This was no package tourism perspective of Aboriginal culture. To me, I saw a people struggling between an Aboriginal past and an Australian Western culture, which is still largely discriminatory against its indigenous co-habitants and intolerant (like much of the modern world) to other ways of being. (Potter 2000:4)

Though many have attempted to meet in the performance space of the beaches that surround these two cultures, no mediation has successfully removed the inequalities of power and privilege enjoyed by one culture over the other. That misunderstandings persist is a condition of the uneven ground of the performance space.

The third space of translation is a difficult one to inhabit. As Dening recognised, the mediator or translator is not protected from the oppositional power within this performance space:
No one can hope to be mediator or interlocutor in that opposition of Native and Stranger, because no one is gazing at it untouched by the power that is in it. Nor can anyone speak just for the one, just for the other.

(Dening 2004:11)

My argument is that despite the difficulties and because none can speak just for one or the other, the third space of translation is a necessary space in which the process of trans-relation of cultural metaphors of understanding is able to be performed from one to the other and, reciprocally, from the other to the one. Translation is a process in which the translators or interpreters are not impartial mediators, but rather are those who have been deeply touched by the power within the opposition, wounded by it in fact, and who seek to move from that wounded knowledge towards a convergence of cultures that respects diversity in unity. In Anangu tradition the ngangkari healers who carry sick souls on their backs to the eagles’ nest in the Milky Way must themselves be pierced on the same spears that pierce those whom they seek to heal (Ilyatjari pers.comm., 1992). The concept of the ‘wounded healer’ is a transcultural one that is found in many Indigenous and shamanic traditions, including that of the Hanged Man of the Western Tarot, the Celtic Runes and the core symbol of healing in Christianity, the wounded Christ on the Cross.

This thesis has established that those who choose to enter the performance space of translation, whether Indigenous or Western people, want to understand not only one another, but also themselves. Their aim is to use the understanding to reconcile differences. In the year 2000 the reconciliation marches of hundreds of thousands of people were symbolically staged across the major capital city bridges right around Australia. People who had been wounded by the oppositional nature of the past and present relationship between Indigenous and Western peoples in this land were calling for a symbolic act to facilitate national healing which, unfortunately, many Australians did not understand. The request that Prime Minister say ‘Sorry’ to Indigenous people for past atrocities was not expected to cure the practical
issues of racial injustice in our society, but would have been a profound
symbolic act of national healing. If the nation’s leader had chosen to
acknowledge shame, he would have honoured the tradition of the wounded
healer, on behalf of the nation.

The person or persons who are in the position of being mediators between
Indigenous and Western people are placed in a third space of translation within
the cross-cultural performance space. This space of translation is a dynamic
space, which respects and preserves the diversity of all views while seeking to
meaningfully trans-relate these and facilitate convergence in understanding. In
policy and practice arenas of cultural natural landscape management, the
translation space is the space in which convergence is sought between
Indigenous and Western values and understandings of caring for country. The
translation schema developed during this study has implications for the
management of and caring for natural resources between any two culturally
distinct interpretations of natural resources. It can also be applied to the
management of or caring for any cultural natural landscapes to sustain cultural
and biological diversity.

The third space of translation facilitates the transplanting of idea-seeds from
one culture into another. If the conditions are favourable these idea-seeds have
the potential to form transcultural concepts that grow and adapt to their
common ground. The equitably shared ground, on which a culture of
convergence is possible, is one of sharing the wealth and wellbeing derived
from the use of the cultural natural resources of this country. This is still a
dream, but one which many people share. The Anangu tradition of dreaming
new dances and songs to perform change in society may offer a way to envisage
new convergent futures. Performers in the space of translation may need to
‘dream’ or ‘envision’ new futures before convergence can become a reality.
These visions will need to use the words and actions of politicians and poets to
create new movements that include difference in a convergent unity.
Trans-cultural Idea-seeds

Moving from the conceptual metaphors of culture, song and dance, we sum up the work of this thesis by returning to the ecology, seeds and growth of the lands and waters of Australia.

Convergence of Spirit

The Indigenous idea-seed being transplanted into Western consciousness is that health and wellbeing depends on people’s spiritual connection to the land, their interconnectivity with nature. The message from Nganyinyija to all who have lost their meaningful connection to the people and place where they live is:

It’s not that you take on some of my stories and make them yours, or that you take on an artefact of my culture and make it yours. It’s deeper; it’s deeper. You must take the teaching back into your own Tjukurpa, into your own heritage and into your own country. And you must bring that aliveness and connectedness with the Land right through your own heritage.

(Nganyinyija, pers. comm., 1989)

Convergence of Ecological Caring

The idea-seed conveyed in the concept of ngura walytja, kinship to country, is that we are related to the cultural natural environments of the places we call home. This is a relationship of belonging to people and place. All people, whether native born or immigrant, need to know they belong if they are going to take responsibility to care for country. Whether they live in cities, towns or the countryside all people need be involved in re-sourcing their cultural natural landscapes. For Western and Indigenous peoples, shared time in the same landscape allows for that mutual responsibility for country to develop.

Convergence of Economic Reciprocity

Many non-Indigenous Australians want to know how to ‘give back to the first people of this land, to share the wealth, heath and wellbeing possible in the
‘lucky country’ of Australia today. They ask how do we share, give back or pay the rent? Aboriginal people involved in welcoming people to their country say this can be done by forming relationships of respect and taking responsibility for our actions towards the people and places of this country.

A practical implication arising from this research for the Australian tourist industry would be to share with Indigenous people the wealth gained from the use of their cultural natural landscapes. Responsible eco-tourism businesses give a percentage of their profits towards environmental conservation. Responsible cultural tourism should return a percentage of profit to Indigenous Australians whose cultural images have been used to promote Australian tourism for many years. This principle of reciprocal economics would help sustain Indigenous cultural heritage and the tourism business that relies on it.

The idea-seed of reciprocal economics can be transplanted into many different cross-cultural performance spaces. The transcultural concept is that giving back to re-source that which has been used is a sound business principle and essential to sustainable living.

Convergence of Cultural Connectivity
Songlines are a translation of a concept of sung and storied cultural landscapes present in many cultures. The song sagas in many languages describe trails of cultural connectivity between peoples and places across many continents.

The research into the Ngintaka Heritage Songline Trail suggests that understanding of the complex Aboriginal maps of the continent of Australia could be facilitated by appropriate interpretative trails open to the public. These trails could provide interpretation of both the Indigenous and Western cultural landscapes that overlap and intersect in this country. Overlaying these maps may reveal nodes of convergence of valuing country that form new transcultural ways of perceiving the land and waters of Australia.
Recording of these songlines both orally and symbolically on maps is as important for Indigenous as non-Indigenous Australians as this heritage fades from the cultural landscape. The elders who hold these songs and stories are asking for them to be recorded, as was evident during this research. The importance of the Ngintaka Song recorded at Anataja in 1994 is already becoming evident, as John Broomfield remarked after his recent Desert Tracks trip:

Am I correct in thinking Sammy is Nganyintja’s and Ilyatjari’s son? In the vehicle, as we drove back to camp after the final afternoon’s walking, we played your *Inma Ngintaka* cassette over the PA system. Sammy and the women, who were singing along with the tape, were in tears, and Sammy said of the Anangu storyteller: ‘That’s my mother.’ It was very touching to see how moved they were by the recording.

(Broomfield, pers. comm., 27 September 2005)

The Indigenous tradition of performing knowledge of country in song and dance is usually seen as interesting but irrelevant to Western experts involved in development projects on Anangu lands. However, it may be that the failure of most Western development projects to be effectively taken up by Anangu is indicative of the lack of attempts to integrate these knowledge traditions into western management systems. The adoption of the Inma Way ethical principles embodied in the song saga of Wati Ngintaka into the reciprocal economics, cultural and environmental practice of Desert Tracks was essential for its success as an Anangu owned business.

The idea-seed being offered here is that the integration of traditional concepts and values may be essential for Indigenous uptake of projects that involve Western concepts and values of cultural natural resource use and management.

**Ontological Convergence**

The heart of the paradox of the meeting of Native and Stranger, Indigenous and Western Indigenous, host and guest in the performance space is how to expand
conceptual and real cultural boundaries in reciprocal acts of translation without plundering the knowledge or resources of the other. The continuing reality of inequalities of political and economic power and the privileging of Western above Indigenous knowledge unfortunately often result in plunder. Real power and resource sharing is a necessary condition for reciprocal knowledge sharing.

The extent to which Western tourists can gain an understanding of Indigenous culture by travelling the Wati Ngintaka Songline has been examined. Despite the presence of Desert Tracks Anangu guides and skilled translators, it must be admitted that the understanding gained on tour is only a glimpse into another worldview. We return to Kawaki Thompson’s question:

I am of the Ngintaka. How can we understand each other, we of the Ngintaka and you of the…? What is your Dreaming?

(Thompson, pers. comm., 12 November 1998)

This exploration has failed to answer him. The question remains a subject for future philosophical and cross-cultural investigation and translation.

Other suggestions for future research in the cross-cultural performance space include:

- Exploring the ontological divide in the specific languages of disciplines within cultural natural landscapes and resource management.
- The role of song and dance performance in adaptation to change in Indigenous Australian traditions.
- A comparative study of all Indigenous groups in Australia who have designed ‘bush colleges’ like Anmatja, the Yolngu GARMA Festival in Arnhem Land and the Ngarinyin Bush University in Western Australia.
- A study applying the Aboriginal ontology of the Rainbow Serpent to changing mainstream perceptions and values of water across Australia.
Summing Up

The translation schema and eco-cultural footprint are presented as ways of understanding the perceptions and values of the inter-cultural and cross-cultural languages that meet in the performance space of cultural natural resource management. They provide patterns within the knowledge gardens of each culture from which idea-seeds can be transplanted into other knowledge gardens and nurtured to grow into transcultural concepts as trees of knowledge that protect the cultural and biological diversity of this planet.

Applying these schemas of the metaphorical imagination to translation can assist in arenas of cross-cultural performance. The metaphor of the footprint is a transcultural image of human impact on the earth. Western sciences and humanities refer to the ecological footprint; the human economic, cultural and ecological use of our environments. However, the human foot balances better on five toes, and this can be achieved by the inclusion of our ontological and spiritual beliefs. The five toes of the Translation Schema provide a way to assess the cultural diversity of perceptions and values of CNRM in terms of our eco-cultural footprint (see Figure 47). While the schema applied to the five fingers of our technological hands would assist in the assessment of the cultural diversity of CNRM methods and practice. Together, the fingers and toes of the Translation Schema of Figure 41 can be applied to culturally diverse perceptions and values, methods and practices of managing our cultural natural landscapes and resources. With a strong ethical heel print of respect, relationship and responsibility towards the cultural and biological diversity of the earth the Translation Schema eco-cultural footprint supports a wide holistic approach towards caring for community and country.
Figure 47: Eco-cultural Footprint (D James 2005).
My thesis goes some way towards translating certain Indigenous idea-seeds into the Western concepts of NRM to suggest a trans-cultural conception of cultural natural re-source management (CNRM). If this approach is widely adopted, it will provide a translation schema and eco-cultural footprint in which the specialist fields within the performance space of cultural natural resource management can reconceptualize their disciplinary knowledge. The translation schema and footprint offer processes for transforming different perceptions and values of cultural natural landscapes and resources into transcultural concepts of caring for shared community and country.

Figure 48: Diversity in Unity (D James 2000)

Dickie Minyintiri said:

These two lizards, one white and one black, are meeting each other. This is very important, the story of Papulankunytja, of the place of two strangers meeting. A long time ago, the white lizard and the black lizard met as strangers, papulananyi, staring and trying to recognise each other. Like us today, we call each other blackfella and whitefella, now because we’re strangers.

But later, when we know each other, we’ll all just be people.

(Minyintirri pers. comm., Walinynga, 1999)
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1:

*Inma Ngintaka: The Perentie Lizard Dreaming Story and Song*

(Accompanying CD)

APPENDIX 2:

*Ngura Walytja: Kinship with Country*

(Accompanying DVD)